

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Monday 5 June 2016 - Estimates Committee B (Rockliff)

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Monday 5 June 2017

MEMBERS

Ms Armitage
Mr Dean
Mr Finch
Ms Lovell
Ms Rattray (Chair)
Mr Willie (Deputy Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE

Hon. Jeremy Rockliff MP, Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Primary Industries and Water, Minister for Racing

Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment

John Whittington, Secretary
Wes Ford, Deputy Secretary
Deidre Wilson, Acting Deputy Secretary
Tim Baker, Deputy Secretary
Adrian Pearce, Manager, Finance
Carole Rodger, Director, AgriGrowth Tasmania
Stuart Fletcher, General Manager, Land Tasmania
Lloyd Klumpp, General Manager, Biosecurity Tasmania
Fionna Bourne, General Manager, Water and Marine Resources
Tim Grant, Valuer-General
Neil Morrow, Acting Director, Inland Fisheries Service
Robert Gott, Director, Marine Resources
Jason Jacobi, General Manager, Parks & Wildlife Service

Office of Racing Integrity

Robin Thompson, Acting Director of Racing
Tim Baker, Deputy Secretary, DPIPWE

Department of Education

Jenny Gale, Secretary

Robert Williams, Deputy Secretary, Corporate and Business Services

Jenny Burgess, Deputy Secretary, Support and Development

Tim Bullard, Deputy Secretary, Strategy and Performance

Trudy Pearce, Deputy Secretary Learning

Kane Salter, Director, Finance and Business Services

Liz Jack, Director, LINC Tasmania

Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification

Katrina Beams, Executive Officer, Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification

TasTAFE

Mark Sayer, Acting CEO, TasTAFE

Scott Marston, Deputy CEO, People, Governance and Strategy

Nick May, Acting Deputy CEO, Education Services

Ministerial Staff

Leanne McLean, Chief of Staff

Ashley Bastock, Deputy Chief of Staff

Anna Jones, Adviser

Laura Richardson, Adviser

Megan O'Brien, Adviser

The committee met at 8.50 a.m.

DIVISION 8

Department of Primary Industries and Water -

CHAIR (Ms Rattray) - Good morning, everyone. Minister, Estimates Committee B feels we probably will need some extra time given we have that significant portfolio of Education. We will let the President know about that and we will use the time wisely. We invite you to now make a brief overview and then we will head into output group 1, Lands Tasmania.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Chair. I also welcome John Whittington, Secretary of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today to provide more detailed information on a portfolio that is clearly playing a very important role in supporting our farmers and growing our primary industries and fisheries sector.

The last 12 months have been a challenging time, but also an encouraging time for our primary industries. This time last year we had the devastating floods that tragically resulted in many lives

being lost and created considerable hardship for rural communities in the north and many parts of Tasmania. It is difficult to adequately describe the heartache of missing family members, farmers losing stock or a family seeing their home go under water. It has a different impact on every individual.

My thanks go to the many organisations such as local councils, the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association - TFGA - Dairy Tasmania, Rural Business Tasmania, Rural Alive and Well and the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, which all worked magnificently together to help affected families and their communities.

Natural disasters, as well as other vagaries, have been part of world markets, and commodity prices have highlighted the challenges of life on the land and/or water. Despite that, we continue to see resilience and optimism from our rural sector. Rabobank's latest rural confidence survey found Tasmanian farmers to be the most positive in the country, with confidence at its highest level since late 2015, with dairy farmers particularly more positive as farm-gate margins look to improve in 2017.

As I travel around the state talking to farmers, they recognise the long-term outlook for the agricultural sector remains positive. Agriculture is a key pillar of the Tasmanian economy, with an annual farm-gate value of \$1.44 billion in 2014-15. Along with fisheries, it underpins an agrifood sector with a gross value of \$2.26 billion. Tasmania's sustainable Agrifood Plan 2016-18, launched in September last year, articulates this system for sustainably growing Tasmania's agrifood sector. The plan focuses on three key themes - grow, make and protect. These themes are integral to the value chain and the key drivers of growth, investment, productivity and careers. Through the Agrifood Plan, the Government is investing in a wide range of initiatives targeting the key drivers of growth.

Adding to the successful 10 tranche 1 irrigation schemes, the five new tranche 2 irrigation schemes are on track and Tasmanian Irrigation is fast-tracking the feasibility studies for a potential tranche 3 irrigation program. After a successful pilot, the loan pool for the low interest HECS-style agrigrowth loan scheme has been doubled to \$20-million and the application period extended until 30 September 2018. The \$20 million over the forward Estimates continues our investment in the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture - TIA - to support its world-class work that is vital for growing Tasmania's agricultural productivity. Similarly, \$10.4 million for the Institute of Marine Antarctic Studies ensures fisheries are at the forefront.

The Government is working closely with farmers, researchers and agribusiness to set the future direction for advancing agricultural research in Tasmania and ultimately to make the world-class research undertaken by TIA even stronger. A green paper review is currently open for consultation and is the first vital step towards a white paper on growing Tasmanian agriculture, research development and extension to 2050. The \$1.5 million Water for Profit Program is equipping farmers with the right skills and information to increase profits and sustainability from their investments in irrigation. The Government has reduced red tape in relation to dam works approvals, crop protection permits and industrial hemp with a view to strengthening the state's right to farm legislation and modernising the regulation of the Tasmanian poppy industry.

When our oyster growers were affected by Pacific Oyster mortality syndrome - POMS - staff in DPI/PWE worked with industry to minimise movement of disease and enable market access for growers. Growing these industries, however, is also about ensuring we protect them through our biosecurity systems. Being part of a twenty-first century global market brings opportunity and

challenge, with increased risks of pests and disease. That is why we are investing in all levels of our biosecurity continuum - pre-border, at the border and post-border. We have doubled the number of dog detector teams and invested in biosecurity infrastructure such as a truck wash to be built at Powranna, new signage and refurbished laboratories. This Budget tackles pests, weeds and cats; delivers more frontline services; and addresses animal welfare and livestock productivity.

We are also focused on ensuring we have regulatory systems in place to ensure the growth happens sustainably.

The salmon industry, which has been a topic of discussion for some time, is the state's largest primary industry sector and a critically important industry for Tasmania's growth and development. We ensuring that industry regulations keep pace with industry expansion and maintain community and market confidence, which is vitally important to achieve sustainable growth. The Government has separated the ongoing environmental regulation of the salmonid farming industry from the development and planning regulatory functions. Since July 2016 the environmental regulation controls and day-to-day environmental management of the aquaculture industry of all salmon farms and hatcheries, both in marine and inland waters, has been the responsibility of the director of the Environment Protection Authority, the EPA. While environmental regulation is currently being effectively managed through delegation to the director, legislative amendments will be introduce to parliament in August this year to formalise the transfer of responsibility.

The Government is also developing a sustainable industry growth plan for the salmon industry. Marine farmers, such as salmon farmers, have a responsibility to ensure they appropriately manage their equipment so it does not pose a safety risk to recreational and commercial boat operators or allow debris to wash ashore in our waterways. Today I can confirm that tackling marine debris will be part of the industry growth plan. Marine and Safety Tasmania - MAST - officers will become authorised officers will become authorised officers under the Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995 to monitor and respond to breaches where marine farm equipment is found outside marine farm lease areas. This means MAST staff, in addition to DPIPWE authorised marine farming officers, will be able to monitor and issue infringement notices where marine farming equipment is found to be inappropriately out of area. The changes we are making will give the community greater confidence about the independence and transparency of environmental regulation and the enforcement functions that apply to Tasmanian salmonid aquaculture activities.

The Government is committed to supporting the industry's growth and ensuring our state's environmental assets are used sustainably. We are confident the environmental management frameworks we have in place will achieve this. This is a large and diverse portfolio, and I am very proud to see it is leading the way in support and regulation to help grow, make and protect this significant sector. On that note, I sincerely thank all departmental staff for their continued hard work, dedication and enthusiasm for progressing the Primary Industries and Water portfolio. I now welcome questions from committee members.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, minister. You will not get any argument from me around the importance of agriculture. When you hear a \$1.44 billion contribution to the state, it is significant. I believe the truck wash at Powranna is a restatement of last year. How far advanced is that project?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Last year I am not sure we had the federal funding committed to it.

CHAIR - Were we only talking about it last year?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. Before Mr Whittington provides that update, the truck wash is important at Powranna and is an example of biosecurity. When you talk about pre-border biosecurity and our TT-Line line inspections at the Port of Melbourne, border security with our detector dogs at our airports and post-border security - that is an example of weeds and pest management - the truck wash at Powranna is an example of post-border biosecurity infrastructure. I was there a number of months ago. I was keen to see that funding has finally come through both state and federally and that construction of the truck wash has now begun. I was very keen to see the truck wash set up. It is something I have been pushing since I saw an article about truck washes in the *Advocate* back in 2003.

CHAIR - So 14 years to get a truck wash?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, yes. I spent 12 years in opposition, but now we can finally get it there. I would like more of them. It is a partnership between industry, the Northern Midlands Council and federal and state governments.

CHAIR - Do we have a time frame around it?

Mr WHITTINGTON - The project is being led by the Northern Midlands Business Association in collaboration with Roberts, the landowner, with capital from state Government and the Commonwealth government. Design and approvals are well underway. A construction manager has been appointed and is leading that through the Northern Midlands Business Association.

It has taken longer to get to this point for a range of reasons. One of those was the design of our liquid effluent management solution for the site. We have to get that right. There is no point in washing the trucks and then creating a mess. That has been part of the problem. We hope to have construction commenced by September this year. I did say last year that I hoped to have it done by now but it has been a complex. We are well on the way now.

CHAIR - I declare an interest in that because I have an interest in a transport operation. Something that is always front and centre of our business is how we are going to sustainably undertake those roles.

Mr ROCKLIFF - They are going to be increasingly needed. This is for the livestock industry per se. When you consider the increased use of contractors cultivating paddocks with harvesting equipment and all those sorts of things going from farm to farm, on-farm hygiene becomes critically important, as does trying to avoid transferring weeds from one farmer's farm to another farmer's farm. Farmers have a responsibility but my vision is that down the track a number of these truck washes would be established in key areas of primary industry that contractors in, say, the vegetable industry - whether it be Scottsdale, the north-west coast or wherever - might be able to use to support the whole biosecurity, irrespective of livestock or the vegetable industry.

Output group 1 Land Tasmania

Lands title, survey and mapping services -

CHAIR - I know it is not the twenty-seventh pay this year, so can I have some understanding of the increase in the budget allocation? My second question is around the land registration

transaction processing times. There was a target of 75 per cent registered within one week and that was back in the June Estimates process of 2015. Can I have an idea of where we are tracking in regard to that area now?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am pleased to announce Land Tasmania expects to meet all its performance targets related to the land information system in Tasmania. There are 1544 land-related datasets available by the list, exceeding the target of 1300, which is good. There are now 66 land-related datasets available under open data provisions to 30 April 2017, on track to meet the target of 70. There have been 631 million Land Information System Tasmania web services sessions as at 30 April 2017, exceeding the target of 480 million. There have been 1.59 million total LIST website sessions to the 30 April 2017, on track to meet the target of 1.85 million. In terms of the efficiency of land registration processes, under the Land Titles Act 1980, the Recorder of Titles is to keep a register of titles to land. The Land Titles Office offers an early issue scheme, whereby documentation for sealed plans will have titles issued within 10 working days of the lodgement of the final sealed plan. Performance target for the scheme is 80 per cent. In the period up to 30 April 2017, this target was exceeded by 5 per cent. The number of dealings lodged in the 2016-17 up to 30 April 2017 was 67 250. For the corresponding period in 2015-16, the number lodged was 61 012. That is an increase of about 10.2 per cent in lodgements, which is market-driven.

CHAIR - And the increase in the Budget allocation?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Did you mention 27 pays?

CHAIR - I did. I said I do not think it is the twenty-seventh pay this time.

Mr WHITTINGTON - Whereabouts are you?

CHAIR - Output group 1.1. It has gone from 9924 to 10 547.

Mr WHITTINGTON - The corporate functions of the department are funded to each of the output groups, and we rebalance those on a regular basis. That slight movement through there is essentially a rebalancing of corporate to better reflect that output group's corporate relative to other corporates.

CHAIR - So there has not been any increase at all in the number of staff in that area?

Mr WHITTINGTON - No, as far as I am aware it is not that. You look at, for example, the expense summary for output 1.1, which will be on page 219, which is a total number of two. What you were looking at was appropriation revenue. That output group also receives revenue from the sales of various services, so the expenditure over time is 1.1. In our budget for next year it is marginally less than this year and that reflects the efficiencies we are driving in the system through the better use of electronic material.

CHAIR - Even though we are providing more services online, that efficiency is coming in, hence it is reflecting the reductions?

Mr WHITTINGTON - Expenditure against that output group up the top. It is a remarkable story looking back through time, seeing the number of transactions that have occurred through the titles office and the number of staff. Due to the use of electronic systems, there has been a

significant decrease in the number of staff, but an increase in the number of transactions through time. The performance indicators, as the minister mentioned, are all being met. It is a story of good use of technology.

CHAIR - Exceeding the targets. That is a good news story

1.2 Valuation Services

Mr ROCKLIFF - I invite Tim Grant, the Valuer-General.

Ms ARMITAGE - I might just start off with the redevelopment of the Valuation Information System. It is good to see that a Tasmanian company was awarded the tender. Can you advise if it is still on track for release in 2018? What are the main differences being developed with this?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is a \$1.4 million project. This redevelopment is underway and will replace the current antiquated, aging system with a contemporary property information system. The new system will provide an authoritative property and valuation register that underpins and supports the Government's and other stakeholders' revenue-generating and property management activities.

The new system will be developed by a Tasmanian IT company, Geometry Pty Ltd. It was awarded the tender process and the redevelopment is a priority project for the agency. Funding for its development will be met in existing agency funds. The new system is on track for release in mid 2018.

That is based on modern web-based IT architecture. It will meet the needs of the Office of the Valuer-General in a number of ways - delivering core valuation functionality; improving quality assurance of incoming data; increasing mobility using smart phones and tablets, including top-line capability; and providing greater integration of geospatial information and technologies and the valuation processes and operations. It will reduce our administrative overheads in the process.

Ms ARMITAGE - It will make it easier for people to input the data when they do the valuations? It is easier to access it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr GRANT - The administration side, yes, it will be a far easier response in relation to contractors' information coming into the system. A far more streamlined process for the quality assurance of data as it is returned from the contractors. The administration overheads, yes. Better reporting for us to do our reports, better reporting back to make sure we address our key performance indicators and other such issues.

Ms ARMITAGE - Talking about contractors, one of the issues we hear quite regularly, is that we often seem to have interstate valuers coming down to do valuations. I guess valuations are going on all the time. Are we still having mainland valuers come down? I understand it is a tender process, but do you not see Tasmanian valuers would be putting their money back into Tasmania?

Ms RATTRAY - More in touch with our prices in Tasmania.

Mr GRANT - The tender process was undertaken early last year, the revaluations have just been completed. Two mainland firms were successful in obtaining tenders. There were tenders from one other smaller Tasmanian firm; unfortunately, they did not win that particular tender.

The mainland tenderers use Tasmanian staff. One of the staff members lives and works in Tasmania; certainly the other firm - LG Valuations - has a Launceston office and uses Tasmanian staff members there.

I hear what you are saying in relation to the issue with tenderers from the mainland. We are certainly reviewing the tender and selection process for the current round of revaluations, which will be called towards the middle or the end of this year, to look at ways to improve the ability for Tasmanian staff to take on the work. By looking at the ability to break up those tender areas a bit smaller so there is not such a large area available for one smaller firm to undertake. It is hoped we will get a few more tenderers from within Tasmania at that stage.

Ms ARMITAGE - Do you think that is the reason we do not get many tenders from Tasmania? It looks too large? As opposed to cutting it up into smaller areas that perhaps people feel they could cope with without taking on extra staff that they may then have to put off once that job is finished?

Mr GRANT - Yes, certainly that is a concern, particularly for the area, say, of Launceston and Glenorchy, which are currently formed. Launceston is approximately 35 000 odd valuations; Glenorchy around about 30 000. It is a large amount of work for a small firm to undertake within the time frames we stipulate the work has to be completed. We consider the ability to break those areas down into smaller amounts may attract more interest from the smaller valuation firms in Tasmania.

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of delivering uniform valuations across all 29 councils, as you would appreciate, Ms Armitage, as of January this year, this consisted of 278 909 valuations with a capital value of \$96.7 billion.

Ms ARMITAGE - That is quite a lot. On that matter of the valuations and disputes, I noticed that the objections resulting in amended valuations have actually gone down, and you are hoping for less than 2 per cent in 2015-16 and 2016-17. Has the amount coming in gone down? I see the amended valuations have gone down, but are we getting more or less coming in? I wonder about the number compared with that number. Has that changed at all, or is that still in line with the results?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Valuation of Land Act 2001 provides that the landowner or rate-paying lessee may, within 60 days of receipt of a valuation notice, lodge an objection with the Valuer-General if they believe their property details or values are not correct. The objection process can take some time to complete, as you would appreciate, as the Valuer-General must consider and make a determination with respect to the objection. Of course, court processes are also available for objecting landowners or rate-paying lessees.

As at 31 May this year - last week - the Valuer-General had issued 8374 notices of valuation for supplementary valuations for 2016-17. Seventeen objections have been received, resulting in 10 valuations being amended, four valuations being upheld, one objection being withdrawn, and two matters are still outstanding. An additional 104 272 fresh valuation notices will be issued

before the end of 2016-17, which are likely to result in additional objections being received for the financial year.

It is a key performance measure for the Valuer-General that in any financial year the number of amended valuations following an objection is less than 2 per cent of the total number of valuations issued. So far this year, amendments have been made to 0.12 per cent of objections.

Ms ARMITAGE - So there are not more objections coming in. I see the amount that resulted in amended valuations. I wonder about each year - it is not more coming in; it is about the same amount coming in. My question really was whether we are getting more objections coming in. I notice the number of amended ones is going down. I wonder whether more people are complaining, or whether it was just as in 2013-14, when we have valuations - it is those years you would get more.

Mr GRANT - Certainly the number of objections has come down in more recent years. If we look at the valuation cycle, we have gone from a boom period back in 2003-04 through to 2010. Since 2010 until now, the market has been very steady, very static. When we issued the revaluations six years ago, we had about 1600 objections statewide. The most recent revaluations we have had resulted in about 500 or 600 objections. The market movement that has not given people reason to consider that perhaps the valuation is too high. At around 500 valuations when we have issued approximately nearly 100 000 valuations, it is still a very small percentage.

Ms ARMITAGE - Does the same person come back and revalue? If someone objected and they did a revaluation, does a different valuer comes and looks, or is it the same person who valued?

Mr GRANT - According to the contract the valuation contractor signed, they are required to carry out their own objection reviews, but they come through my office for quality assurance to ensure that the reasons they are amending the valuation are fair and reasonable,. It is also to ensure that if that reason would apply to other properties in that surrounding area, those properties are amended as well. If they have made an error in a land value in a street or something like that, which is consistent with other properties and they have to lower it, I will ensure that those valuations surrounding it are amended as well. Even though they had not objected, those valuations may be amended, either up or down, if an error has been made there.

Ms ARMITAGE - Obviously they cannot come to every house. Some houses may look wonderful on the outside. Thank you, Chair, those are my questions.

Mr DEAN - I have a couple of issues. You might have covered the first one, I am not sure. Minister, do these have to be site inspections or can they be done from an office by looking at the LIST? How are they done now? That was a complaint previously - that somebody sitting in an office was doing these evaluations or a by doing quick drive past.

Mr GRANT - The contract requires that contractors do a formal drive-by evaluation for all residential properties. They have to drive up the street to have a look at the property from the outside. That is a minimum requirement. If they drove down the street and found something that did not look right, that there appeared to be changes to the property, they would then go onto that property to review it.

For a commercial industrial property, they are required to make a formal inspection of that property. You need to obtain far more information on a commercial industrial property in relation

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to rents and occupations and they are required to physically inspect that property, internally and externally.

On rural properties they are required to go onto to the property and at least sight the improvements on the property, and, if possible, speak with the owner and undertake an inspection of the area. They are going onto these properties with all our data on the property; we have had over 50 years' worth of data built up on these properties. We have very good details of buildings, break-up of land and all those issues, so they have all that information when they go to the property. What they are undertaking is a review of that to ensure the data they have on the property is correct, and then they assess a fair evaluation based on the market at that time. The first part of the process is to analyse all their sales very carefully to establish the market level trends in that area.

Mr DEAN - I asked that question because - and the minister may be aware of the situation in the Westbury area where there are farming properties - there have been issues about a farm, how the evaluation was done and whether they came onto the property and walked over it. I believe the Attorney-General is aware of that. Is that a requirement?

Mr GRANT - Yes. The tender document or the requirements have been amended more recently in that respect in that they are required to inspect those properties to ensure they pick up more of the data on those properties - anything that has changed on those properties since the last inspection, which could be up to six years earlier.

Mr DEAN - I will be writing to the minister shortly in relation to that property. My other question is: are there any common issues coming out of the objections we are getting in this area to these evaluations that relate to most properties or is it ad hoc?

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of people being dissatisfied with their valuation and whether there is a theme?

Mr DEAN - Not satisfied with their valuations. Are there common issues coming from that - in other words, that the properties have not been inspected. What is the common issue?

Mr GRANT - There are no real common issues. The common issue is that they feel their rates are too high and they want to pay less in rates. The valuation is assessed according to sales that have occurred. As I explained, for a residential property, you may do a drive-by inspection and you are not going to pick up all the changes at that point. An owner may consider they want it reviewed. If it was reviewed, formal internal inspection of the property would be undertaken and therefore we have to establish the correct valuation on that property and whether there was an error in that valuation.

Mr DEAN - Are there any objections where the property is not valued high enough?

CHAIR - Only when they go to sell.

Mr GRANT - There have been some, yes.

Mr WILLIE - Minister, I have been contacted by a concerned person in relation to the Valuer-General's capital values of properties and their corresponding sale prices. One property in the Hobart CBD area was purchased by the Department of Health and Human Services for \$12 million and it had a capital value of rent of \$3 million. How do you explain that discrepancy?

Mr GRANT - That property sale for \$12.1 million included two other properties. It included a property in Glenorchy and it included the bank at New Norfolk as well. It was a combination of three properties that were purchased for \$12.1 million from one vendor, three separate properties.

Mr WILLIE - Why wasn't that information not presented on the LIST?

Mr GRANT - Because there was one contract of sale which includes multiple properties. The same can happen quite clearly when, for instance, the Woolnorth properties were sold. There was one sale notice for the Woolnorth property. There were about 10 or 15 other dairy farms, which were included in one other transaction, which was equivalent to that \$32 million. That will appear on each individual sale price, but it is a combination of all. The contract signed refers to the \$12.1 million and there are three separate properties.

Mr WILLIE - That is quite a large example, but there are other examples where there is a discrepancy between your valuation and the sale price.

Mr GRANT - In that particular case, it is clear there was no break up provided at the point of sale and the negotiations are around the combined sale price for those three properties. There is no requirement on the tenant on the title to break that sale price down to individual properties. But in analysing those sales, we are aware of the reasons and it will state on that sale that it includes other properties. It maybe not clear on what you are looking at there in relation to the sales notification, but once we interrogate those sales, we know they include other properties.

Mr WILLIE - I guess in the interests of transparency, minister, will you look at this and ensure that information is presented in a transparent way so people who are looking at these things closely do not become alarmed?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will take that question on notice, Mr Willie. I am happy to receive advice from my department on what the process would be to enable that to happen. I am not sure it happens in any other state per se.

Mr GRANT - The issue with the Woolnorth sale was a combined sale price of about \$180 million-odd. It was apportioned across various properties. Our office or the title does not declare individual values for individual properties, so there is no break up provided to the title office or my office showing what individual property has sold for. It has been an agreement between two parties to determine the total price paid for that property. To break it beyond that is very difficult. We are not provided with that information so I do not see how we can break it any further.

Mr WILLIE - If you were provided with that information, would that assist you in your duties?

Mr GRANT - In analysing those sales we break it up ourselves and obviously apportion the price between the various properties to analyse the property sales. That is something we would have to do in the office with someone analysing the sale. Other than speaking with the vendor and seeing whether there is any information available from him, but in the case of getting them off one, no, we do not have any further information on that one at this stage.

CHAIR - My question around this is: is there any relationship in Valuation Services and Land Tasmania's new datum called GDA2020? Is there any relationship between that particular project and the valuation services undertaken, given it provides very specific data?

Mr GRANT - We look in respect of identifying properties on maps and so on. We have been looking at it.

CHAIR - We have someone, thank you. Who do we have joining us?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Stuart Fletcher.

CHAIR - Welcome, Stuart.

Mr FLETCHER - In terms of your question, GDA2020 is a redevelopment of the datum for Australia. In terms of its relationship to valuation, it is only really the data they would show in terms of property boundaries that would shift.

CHAIR - It says accuracy within 10 cm.

Mr FLETCHER - In terms of the GDA2020, that is where we are using a GNSS GPS systems. GPS systems that are corrected will give us accuracies within 10 cm. Under the current datum we have in Australia, there is a shift in the continental plates that affects those sorts of accuracies. GDA2020 is an update of the datum as to where the continental plates are in 2020 and it is an interim step to moving to a dynamic datum where the datum shifts in real time with the continental plates.

CHAIR - Sounds like an evening meal, continental plates, doesn't it? As the lead jurisdiction, is that a cost to Tasmania or do we get reimbursed for that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am not sure it is a cost.

Mr FLETCHER - We have the Surveyor-General who chairs the ICSM, the Intergovernmental Committee on Surveying and Mapping. We also have a manager who is involved in leading the project of GDA2020 communications so -

CHAIR - There is a cost?

Mr FLETCHER - There is a minor cost to Tasmania. We are reimbursed for some of our costs from ICSM, but in reality the Commonwealth would bear most of the cost because they are doing all of the work on the grid shifts for the data.

CHAIR - But it does not necessarily provide any extra resources for the Valuer-General's office and that type of thing?

Mr FLETCHER - No, that has no relationship to the VG.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It does demonstrate - I commend Stuart and his team and Tim -

CHAIR - I am sure he is pleased to ask that question, minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This side of Tasmania is leading this space absolutely, nationally, which is really pleasing.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Any other questions around that particular area? If not, we will move onto 2.1, which is AgriGrowth Tasmania, a very important area, minister, given the figures we heard earlier.

Output group 2 Primary Industries

2.1 AgriGrowth Tasmania -

Mr WILLIE - Minister, I have been tracking the farm-gate value of the sector, and I am interested in what the figure is this year.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am pleased you are tracking it, Mr Willie, because we have a very clear commitment. Your question is related to that \$10 billion figure of farm-gate value by 2050. What that means is that, where we have grown by 1 per cent in real terms, our farm-gate value in the last 20 years, by 1 per cent every year, we have to grow by 3 per cent in real terms to achieve that target.

The last updated figure was \$1.438 billion. I imagine that last year - I have already mentioned the floods, the bushfires, the dairy prices and things like that - was going to be a very challenging year in terms of that. The ABS data on the total gross rate of agriculture for 2015-16 is not yet available. However, it is known that in 2015-16, the gross value of fisheries increased by \$99 million to \$924 million and overseas food exports grew by \$75.1 million to \$687 million. The 2015-16 data available for key agricultural commodities indicates that dairy remained the highest value agricultural commodity, even though the value of production dropped by \$56.3 million to \$386.1 million. Sheepmeat also decreased in value, dropping by \$12.2 million to \$75.5 million. Offsetting these decreases, the value of beef increased by \$67.1 million to \$314.3 million. Pleasingly - and I was able to get a good indication of this at the Campbell Town show on Friday -

CHAIR - I knew you were going to say that. I heard you had been to the Campbell Town Show.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Good. There were a few members of parliament there, which was great to see. Wool increased by \$3.8 million to \$95.1 million. I remember being at agriculture college in New Zealand in 1989 when that wool price crashed, and it has pretty much been since that time - we have actually managed some recovery. There was a spike about 10 or so years ago in the wool price but it is looking good now, which is great.

Mr WILLIE - Thank you for giving me that breakdown, but last year you said \$1.1 billion; what is a comparative figure to that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - When I made that commitment as part of our vision for agriculture in around 2013, that was my vision - 20 by 2050

Mr WILLIE - No, \$10 billion by 2050.

Mr ROCKLIFF - \$10 billion by 2050. The \$1.1 billion was a figure that was at that point in time. I think over the last three or four years, it has gone from \$1.1 billion to \$1.438 billion now, and we are waiting on the next figures.

Mr WILLIE - You do not have the point-in-time for right now?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have released those figures already. It just shows beef and wool going well; but lamb or sheep have decreased, as has dairy.

Mr WILLIE - I am talking about the total sector.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, the total sector; I am expecting it reasonably soon. It is usually released in July so I am expecting it in July. As I say, it was a challenging year with the dairy price -

Mr WILLIE - If it is usually released in July, last year you gave that \$1.1 billion figure in Estimates so you would have a point-in-time figure for right now to compare that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes but the \$1.1 billion figure was the figure a number of years ago. I think it was something like a \$1.3 billion figure in last year's Estimates.

Mr WHITTINGTON - The ABS released, if I am right, its figures earlier last year than this year. This year they are releasing them in July so what we have is individual sectors where we have some intelligence, which is what the minister has provided the data on, but we do not have data yet for vegetables or fruit or poppies, which will come out in the July ABS data. While last year we had that full aggregate, that was because the ABS released the data earlier than it is releasing it this year.

Mr ROCKLIFF - But I think the \$1.1 billion figure is a 2012-13 figure - I stand to be corrected on that - and then it went to \$1.2 billion-something, and then it was \$1.438 billion. Confidence, thankfully, in the sector is reasonably good but as you know, we copped a hammering in 2016. I think it was the worst year collectively across agricultural sectors you could probably have for a long time so I am not expecting -

Mr WILLIE - Are you expecting any growth or a reduction?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am eternally optimistic. The glass is half-full for me, Josh. I am happy to be challenged that figure at any time because it is going to be really challenging in effect to triple the real growth over the next 35 or 33 years compared to what we have had in the last 20.

Mr WILLIE - So if it goes backwards in one year, it is particularly challenging?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr WILLIE - You put the figure out there; it is my job to hold you to account for it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, and I am happy you are, but when you have droughts and floods and, of course, the sheep issue may well have been impacted by the drought -

CHAIR - Not to mention the dairy industry prices they could not control.

Mr ROCKLIFF - True, floods and the like but, thankfully, when it came to the drought, farmers were able to offload their stock at high prices, which lessened the financial impact of the drought. Of course, when you rebuild your stock, you are rebuilding into really high prices now and we have seen some challenging times in our abattoirs in terms of throughput. Cattle and sheep numbers are down simply because there is a shortage of stock nationwide. It is challenging but I

am happy to be held to account on that vision. If it increases marginally when the figures come out in July I will be pleasantly surprised.

Mr WILLIE - With the freight problems facing King Island, do you expect them to impact the figures, given there is no long-term solution on the horizon? What sort of percentage of the sector does King Island make up?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is a very good question and it is an important sector. The King Island beef industry provides around 23 per cent of the beef in Tasmania - certainly between 20 per cent and 25 per cent, so it is significant.

There are two main processing facilities, Greenham in Smithton and JBS in Longford, so there is the opportunity for beef producers to offload their stock. I understand, having been on the island last month, the very pressing need for the resumption of a reliable consistent shipping service. There is a solution - the one on the table, a purpose-built ship. According to my discussions with a number of people, these ships are very difficult to find in the marketplace. It is absolutely right for King Island. If there was one, it might require some modification, which would be expensive. We are committed to a purpose-built ship.

The solution at the moment with the *Investigator II* it is not ideal, I accept that. We will more than likely need another vessel.

Mr WILLIE - Why were you sent to King Island to sort through that? Shouldn't the transport minister go and engage with the people on King Island?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The minister, Mr Hidding, has been engaging with the islanders. Naturally, I get a lot of calls. It is my local patch. I have been representing the island, as Ms Rattray has been representing Flinders Island, for a long time.

Ms RATTRAY - I would rather you not talk about the boundaries, minister, today. It is too fragile for me.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I understand that, too.

I know them very well individually. Having met with the King Island Shipping Group, the chamber of commerce, beef producers themselves and the council, I know them all very well. So it was right I was over there as Deputy Premier and indeed as the local member to listen to people's views, and allow them to express their frustrations and ideas.

Mr WILLIE - Which area in the sector has been significantly impacted by the events of the past year? Which area do you expect to be doing it particularly tough when the figures are released?

Mr ROCKLIFF - In agriculture?

Mr WILLIE - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, the decrease in livestock has probably already been felt through the sheep numbers. Beef figures are up, which is good and is probably reflected in the high value of beef. Dairy has had a dip but, again, I am expecting in 12 months' time dairy will be back on its feet. We are still producing some 800 million litres of milk a year, which is good.

The poppy industry has had some challenges in recent times due to the global market and the decrease in demand. It has been particularly affected by the change in policies in the United States. There is a general over supply. So that cropping area has been reduced.

Mr WILLIE - Given one of the pillars is to protect, what is AgriGrowth doing with the poppy industry, with the dairy industry to protect their market given there are global forces at play?

Mr ROCKLIFF - With poppies, for example, despite the fact the global demand is down, Tasmania is still supplying, very reliably, 50 per cent of the raw narcotic material. As a percentage of the overall world supply, we are still around 50 per cent of the raw narcotic material. The long-term outlook for agricultural exports remains very positive. There is continued increasing demand for our product in Asia. That was evident when I went to South Korea and Japan in February.

We have mentioned the dairy industry has experienced challenging, difficult markets and seasonal conditions over the past two years. The total gross value of agriculture for 2015-16, the scheduled release by the ABS is 7 July. Data for international exports indicates food exports grew by almost \$75 million. The gross value of agriculture grew by 6 per cent in 2014-15 for that \$1.438 billion on top of new record growth in 2013-14.

An example of AgriGrowth and its very good work for the poppy industry was the downy mildew, which presented itself some 18 months or two years ago. AgriGrowth and three companies - TPI Enterprises, Tasmania Alkaloids and Sun Pharma with the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture - all worked together to address a very devastating strain of downy mildew. It happened very quickly and the Government contributed to that, as well as industry. AgriGrowth has been very good at bringing people together in challenging times, and the downy mildew in poppies is a very good example.

Mr DEAN - Where are the growing areas for agri crops export sales? What are the burgeoning areas? Cherries, I take it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Absolutely. The cherry exports into South Korea are off the scale in percentage increase. You are seeing the investment in the cherries now with people covering their orchards with netting to prevent rain damage at millions of dollars' cost. Reliability is the key. Cherries is a huge growth area. Apples are returning well.

Mr DEAN - While we are on cherries, recently the member for Rosevears and I had the pleasure of visiting an orchardist. They identified there is real growth in the cherry industry and orchards, but also Chinese interest in investment in that area. Is that the position occurring?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am aware of Chinese and foreign interest in agriculture more generally.

Mr DEAN - What areas of agriculture?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Dairy, for example; Moon Lake is an example in Circular Head.

There is increased interest - and I will not be specific about countries - the protected cropping area in Tasmania is going through a huge growth phase. That is, strawberries and blackberries - the Driscolls'/Costa's current investment, if I could put it that way - is going through some considerable positive growth.

Mr DEAN - You mentioned apples, is that increasing a lot?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We did not export a single apple out of the state about three or four years ago, or probably longer. One year we did not export any apples. Not a single apple, in terms of international export.

Chair - That is why we do not have 'Apple Isle' on our number plate anymore.

Mr ROCKLIFF - They are undergoing a resurgence now. Of course locally produced cider is becoming a big thing. There have been some big investments into cider apples as well. They are not very nice to eat, but they produce lovely cider, so that it is a burgeoning growth area. Industrial hemp is grown a lot. It is small, but industrial hemp has seen an increase in hectares and licences, which is very positive.

Mr DEAN - Where are those markets to?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is a very good question.

Chair - What, they are growing them without a market?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The industry needs to source the markets. The markets have naturally expanded as a result of the change in food policy recently by FSANZ, which is very good. In 2016-17, the number of licensed growers for hemp more than doubled compared to the previous year. The area sown to industrial hemp nearly tripled, with an increased farm-gate return of more than \$370 000. It is on the horizon as a growth area and Phil Reader and Tim Schmidt, who have been heading the Industrial Hemp Association for many years, finally put all the approvals through for food. Legislation went through both of our Houses in the last couple of years and reduced red tape in terms of licences from one year to five years. The THC level from 0.35 per cent to-

Mr DEAN - We will probably get onto that directly in another area. So I am clear: from the industrial hemp side, are you saying the markets are not in place at this stage?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, there is obviously a market. This is question for the industry because they are obviously selling their product to somewhere.

Mr DEAN - Surely you would know, as the minister, where the markets are? I find that interesting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Echofibre is an organisation that has a lot to do with the Industrial Hemp Association of Tasmania. Industrial hemp is a commodity and the uses for industrial hemp are enormous and hugely variable. The real markets to follow are the ones where we can value-add and differentiate ourselves in Tasmania as growing very high quality hemp seed. We are able to differentiate on that quality and our island brand status, as opposed to the difficulty to differentiate in a commodity-based fibre market, for example. China grows many hundreds of thousands of hectares of industrial hemp, for example. So competing in industrial hemp is going to be challenging for Tasmanians. Competing in hemp products for food will be less challenging, because of our ability to grow good quality product, but also differentiate as well.

Mr DEAN - I was going to ask about processing, but I will do that later.

CHAIR - We will do that when we get to that area. Minister, can I ask you about the Tasmanian Gene Technology Policy? In our notes, it says Australian Grain Technologies is to provide a report to the minister in three key areas. What is the status of that report?

Mr ROCKLIFF - November 2019 is when the five-year moratorium comes up again.

CHAIR - Will you have the report before then?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. The moratorium is in place until November 2019. It underpins our brand and provides certainty to industry. The moratorium will be reviewed before November 2019. This will enable us to understand eligible advances and the likely impacts on markets before a decision is made on whether to further extend or amend the moratorium.

Since 2014, AgriGrowth Tasmania has implemented an annual evidenced-based GMO monitoring program to continuously assess developments in gene technology. This includes understanding consumer sentiment in important and current potential future markets. The 2016 GMO environmental scan, which has been publicly released and is available on the department website, found there is no need to trigger a review of the moratorium at this time. When the moratorium went through last time, we put in place this commitment so we could keep monitoring each year.

CHAIR - Will be a report go to the minister well before the end of 2019 towards an assessment on whether we continue on that path?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will maintain the environmental scan every year. We are keeping an eye on consumer sentiment and trends and technological advances. On my recent trip to Japan and Korea, the view was strongly held that Tasmania's GMO moratorium is absolutely the right way to go. I would continue the moratorium if I were to listen to their sentiment.

CHAIR - That is only one country.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, Korea and Japan, correct. Two. They are very important trading partners and we appreciated it.

CHAIR - I am not denying that. We will take more advice than simply what Japan thinks, I trust?

Mr ROCKLIFF - They are very important markets. There are the technological advances. We have spoken about commodities this morning. Our future is in that premium, high-quality differentiated product in that quality brand space. If we grew GMO crops, the same as anyone else could, on a smaller area our economies of scale would be less and, I suggest, we would lose that competitive advantage.

CHAIR - Okay. That will be a watching brief. Can I take you to AGT's work in managing seasonal conditions? I managed to watch *Landline* before I left for Hobart yesterday.

Mr DEAN - I was watching football.

CHAIR - I watched *Landline* and your dad was featured.

Mr ROCKLIFF - My mother was very upset. He had a very dirty hat on.

CHAIR - It showed the aftermath of the serious weather event that caused so much devastation, particularly in the north-west around your own patch and on your family farm. This is still a pretty raw topic for you and your family. I saw the devastation portrayed in that program. The expectation I gleaned from the program was that the weather bureau did not do enough, and that governments, both state and federal, are not doing enough to address that event. Given that AGT is supposedly working in that space, are they helping prepare landowners with the resources they need to manage seasonal conditions?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, seasonal conditions would be drought. AgriGrowth and Tasmanian Irrigation are helping farmers manage their water resources and farmers are investing a lot themselves.

The partnerships between the farmers and natural resource management groups are very important to the rehabilitation of properties following the floods. We have announced funding for clean-up grants. A range of measures have been rolled out to support recovery efforts for the floods, including over \$3.3 million in clean-up grants, transport subsidies and concessional loans. The \$2 million agricultural landscape rehabilitation scheme was designed to support works aimed rehabilitating land and stream systems damaged as a result of the June 2016 floods.

The initial scheme was administered by the three regional natural resource management groups, and closed in early April 2017. They received 171 nominations. Funding for the agricultural landscape rehabilitation scheme has been extended by a further \$2 million through the Agrifood plan in the 2017-18 Budget to support on-farm landcare works in partnership with NRM groups. Assessment of nominations is nearly complete and the proposed allocation of funds for successful projects is expected to be announced in early June this year.

There were 334 applications for clean-up grants, totalling \$2.99 million; 87 applications for transport subsidies were approved, totalling \$312 000; and 8 loan applications, totalling \$1.199 million, were approved by the Department of State Growth under the Flood Recovery Loan Scheme, with a further 5 loans, totalling \$550 000, under consideration.

Another important area, which was referenced in your question, was the emotional impact on farmers. It was considerable, and is still being felt by -

Ms RATTRAY - It sounded raw yesterday on that show.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is still very raw. Three lives were lost in the floods. That, and those families, must be at the forefront of all our thinking. Hardened farmers were brought to tears seeing their cattle washed away. I am aware of certain farmers who had built up the genetics of their dairy herd for many decades, having to replace that stock and their heifers. Many people were very generous. The generosity of farmers toward other farmers was fantastic. A group of farmers came up from the Cole River Valley to help fence and so on, which is fantastic. These cattle were worth \$3000. To see 150 of them washed down the river, not to mention the humane and welfare aspects of that, was devastating.

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CHAIR - The list of support following that event was extensive. Is it the timeliness of that? We all know, with all due respect, that the wheels of government and departments can turn very slowly.

I know we must have a proper process in place, or things like the distribution of funds can go awry. Is it the timeliness of delivering that support which is a critical factor after an event like this? There appeared to me to be a level of criticism that things were not being done. Whether that is timeliness or whether the compliance is too high, I do not know - I am asking you as the minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Absolutely. I have feedback as well around timeliness. At the time we were also waiting for federal government commitment to support our state government commitment. There was a frustration at the state government level in relation to that. The feedback I hear from farmers is that they acknowledge the support and the funds that are on the table, but they naturally would have liked those funds rolled out sooner.

As you can appreciate, it is like building a farm dam. You cannot build a farm dam in the middle of winter. You have to build it in summer so you can do the earthworks when the water is not there. Some of stream rehabilitation needs to be done when the streams and rivers are lower, naturally. There has been an element of frustration from farmers in that sense that they would like to get in and get the works done. Some have. My understanding is that there is provision for funding the works which have already been done. Some farmers have not and have been cautious about ensuring funds were available first.

CHAIR - Not having the funds to stump up and pay the person doing the job and then waiting to be reimbursed is a difficult place for landowners and farmers to be in. That is a given, isn't it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Absolutely. A lot of the works are going to be done next summer when farmers are through their growing season and are able to start rehabilitating land when the streams are low and there is less water in the catchments. As to time frames for the application process, Tim Baker, Deputy Secretary, might be able to provide some more information.

Mr BAKER - We are very close in the current round. I will reinforce what the minister said. We are talking to the farmers and we are listening to them. We understand it is difficult. Your initial point was correct. You want to make sure you have the right procedures in place when you are allocating about \$4 million-worth of money. My other point relates to our last round, to the first time we engaged consultants to help farmers on the ground to assess upfront what the damage was. We had already spent about \$600 000 doing that because we knew that would be the first step for a lot of the farmers. They have that money and that has been paid for. Whether they then got all or some of the money in their requests to the schemes is a different question, but at least we were able to provide that expert advice quickly. As I said, we are a couple of weeks away, at most, from making a final determination about both the ALRS money and the Mersey-Dasher scheme money.

CHAIR - How was that program, having consultants come to your farm and telling you what you need? Most of the landowners I know are pretty smart. They know exactly what they need. Was that \$600 000 well spent, in your view?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can answer that question, but Tim might want to add something.

Mr BAKER - The feedback was very positive from the landowners because it wasn't just about what needed to be done. It was about how you could frame it in a way to maximise your bid in the

process. It was working really closely with the NRMs. It wasn't someone knocking on your door and saying, 'I am here to provide advice'. It was working closely with them to provide that advice. There has been strong feedback that it was a very good approach.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You are right. Farmers understand their land. There have been examples whereby there was damage done to certain areas of river systems that would have impacted further downstream if those areas had not been addressed. Individual farmers got together as a group in some circumstances with NRM groups and looked not just at an individual landholder's farm and fixing that farm, but also at fixing strategic areas in the catchment that would support the whole catchment - rehabilitate but also mitigate future floods. Of course it is difficult to mitigate 100-year floods.

CHAIR - That is fine but NRMs are already funded to do exactly what we have just paid potentially \$600 000 to do. Sometimes it seems to me as though we are not putting the money where the rubber hits the road.

Mr ROCKLIFF - As I understand it, there will be a lot of rubber hitting the road and the funds will be there. Naturally, we want to also make sure that any rehabilitation is done well, that something that is fixed here does not impact somewhere else negatively. All these things have to be brought into consideration; often river care engineers and the like are very helpful in that, and with working with farmers and NRMs.

Mr WILLIE - I have some questions on that, minister. Is there a conflict of interest there? How independent was that? If you have consultants working on farms and helping farmers with bids, and they have been employed by the department to do that, is there not a conflict of interest given they might try to limit the bid for a particular farmer?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I would not have thought so. No, no-one is limiting a farmer's bid.

Mr WILLIE - How independent was that consultancy work from the department?

Mr BAKER - This whole program was being delivered by the NRMs. It was not the Government sending the consultants in. It was done by the NRMs and they were providing technical assessment of a range of things. I take your point about farmers knowing the work they need to do, but some of this was quite technical, needing expertise on water management and how best to find the solution. It was done at arm's length. I have spoken to a lot of farmers about this and I can tell you they would not have allowed it to be limited. It is more about providing the best advice to fix the problems they had.

Mr WILLIE - I have another question about the floods. Minister, I am interested in your actions. Have you intervened or given directives to the department to try to speed up the process for some of those farmers who have applied for funds some time ago and are still waiting?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have been kept well briefed on where the matters are at. I have expressed frustration at times about where the federal government was at in its allocation of funds but I am very mindful of the fact that this is taxpayers' funds and it has to be done in a measured and purposeful way. The sooner we can support our farmers rehabilitating their land, the better. I have expressed that sentiment but due process has to take course. I get feedback from farmers that is good, bad or indifferent on a range of issues, and I feed that back to the department.

Mr WILLIE - Are you comfortable with how that process is unfolding?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am comfortable with the process, yes. If I were to reflect some farmers' sentiments, naturally they would have preferred the funds to be released sooner. However I also understand there has to be a thorough process when you are dealing with taxpayer resources.

From my point of view, it was important we were able to get the federal government to contribute, but also ensure the state Government supported our farmers as well. There was \$180 million damage done around Tasmania, not just to farmers, but all infrastructure. The \$10 000 grants were released in a reasonably timely manner. As were the transport subsidies, and I have already read those figures. I am very keen to see the landscape rehabilitation funds hit the road as soon as possible.

Mr WILLIE - Will there be a review of the response? So that if there is another flood, there may be improvements?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Mike Blake's report into the floods was released today. That was an independent and thorough analysis of the impact of the June floods covering early warning systems and recovery. There are 24 recommendations, which the Government will consider as a result of Mr Blake's independent report. In terms of reviewing the funding, Mr Willie, we will always learn. This was a one-in-100-year event that devastated many communities. Naturally -

CHAIR - One-in-100 or one-in-50?

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is a one-in-100. There was a one-in-50 flood in 2011, in mid-summer. The flood in 2016 was one-in-100.

CHAIR - Thank you. Obviously a terrible, terrible time for people. They are still grappling with that. This committee needed to give it the certainty it deserved.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Madam Chair, the support of Rural Business Tasmania, Rural Alive and Well and those organisations on the ground has been invaluable. Rural Business Tasmania administered the rural relief fund as well. There were many, many - in fact oversubscribed - \$2000 grants given to people in need. They did a terrific job in supporting our farmers emotionally as well as financially, those two organisations, and I know of many others.

2.2 Marine Resources -

CHAIR - There is more work to do, minister. I think that was very clear from what I am hearing and what I saw yesterday on that program. Thank you. I will now invite attention to 2.2, which is marine resources. This is for the newest member of our committee, the honourable member for Rumney, Sarah Lovell. Thank you, Sarah.

Ms LOVELL - Minister, I have a question about the change to the role of environmental regulation of the salmon farming industry. In the budget papers it says that additional resources will be required by the EPA to allow it to take on this extended role. It will be funded by an environmental levy of \$500 000 per year. It is anticipated that this will be collected from marine farming companies.

My first question is in relation to the financial impact on the companies themselves. What consultation has taken place with the industry? What that anticipated financial impact will be?

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of the levy, Ms Lovell?

Ms LOVELL - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Prior to announcing the levy I rang all three companies and spoke to their CEOs to let them know that this is where the Government was heading in terms of that levy. In terms of the implementation of the levy, that would be an operational matter. Mr Whittington will -

Mr WHITTINGTON - We collect the levies under one of our acts. That levy will be collected under the [inaudible - Living Marine Resources?] Management Act. Then the methodology will be based on lease area that they lease from us. That levy is then passed directly through into the EPA's output group for expenditure.

They will use that to undertake those environmental compliance activities. It is a \$500 000 levy on an industry that has a bench price value north of \$800 million, so we are talking about a relatively small part of the value chain.

Ms LOVELL - Just to clarify, the distribution of the levy will be based on the size of the lease?

Mr WHITTINGTON - The levy will be apportioned against licences, which are linked to leases.

Ms LOVELL - Will an amendment to the legislation be required for the collection of that?

Mr WHITTINGTON - No, the levies can be collected currently.

Ms LOVELL - Under the current legislation?

Mr WHITTINGTON - Yes.

Ms LOVELL - Minister, you stated that last year \$1.1 million was collected in levies, primarily through licensing the salmon farming industry. What are the projected figures for the 2017-18 financial year? Is that an appropriate return for the Government for regulating the industry and the investment and work required?

Ms BOURNE - The previous \$1.15 million was spread over four years for the forward Estimates. That existing levy was in relation to the planning and development of the industry. The EPA levy is an additional levy on top of that and it will be collected via exactly the same mechanism, which is section 270 of the Living Marine Resources Management Act.

CHAIR - We had quite a lengthy debate in the Chamber last week around the Local Government Amendment Act. There has been a piece of legislation pass our Chamber in regard to marine farm licences not needing to pay rates. That gained a lot of discussion in the Chamber, about why, when they generate so much economic value to their own business and to the state, they do not need to pay rates. Is the Government going to consider establishing a lease arrangement for these marine farms that would cover a rate component that would be given back to local government? Is that something you have considered?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, it is not something I have considered.

CHAIR - Is it something you think will be considered following the debate?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, it is not something I am considering or will consider. Land-based infrastructure is rated, but I have no intention, because of the High Court of Australia situation with *Coverdale v West Coast Council*. Apart from the legislation that has gone through the Parliament, I have no intention of going back and changing that.

CHAIR - Do you consider the lease arrangements and the cost of those lease arrangements - and I do not have those figures in front of me - are appropriate given the magnitude of the impact in some areas? I am not saying it will be in the future because we have a different regulatory regime in place following the changes. We never want to see another Macquarie Harbour. Do you think it is enough? Do you think there should be some increase in those lease arrangements?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have moved in that direction in terms of making the industry pay more of its way. Mr Whittington has just outlined figures of \$800 million which is a relatively small amount in terms of the impost on the industry. I wanted to make sure there were sufficient resources within the marine division and the EPA to support the regulation of the salmon industry and not take away those resources from other critical areas of, say, wild fisheries management and the abalone and rock lobster area. Those within the marine resources division over the years have had some savings measures applied. We are addressing that in our last couple of budgets but, with the expansion of the salmon industry and the resources that need to be applied in terms of the regulatory effect I wanted to make sure the salmon companies pay their way so as not to impact on other areas of the fishery.

Mr WHITTINGTON - I will reiterate what we said before. We can apply levies on industry under sections outlined. We imposed a levy to assist with the cost to Government of the planning. We imposed a levy through this Budget on the costs associated with the environmental management so industry is paying its way.

When it comes to local government, with salmon farming there are land-based facilities as well as in the ocean. The land-based facilities are able to be rated. The problem with the marine situation was it was dependent on whether or not marine leases were in the local government area. So it was highly inconsistent and it had odd impacts on the broader shellfish industry as well. So that needed to be cleaned up, which it was.

So we are transferring the cost of planning and regulation back on to the industry through previous budget (inaudible)

MADAM CHAIR - Again, my question is, is it enough given the amount of economic value that they deliver to Tasmania but also to their own businesses? That is a question the community is asking. Are they really paying their way given what they get?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I want to make sure it is enough in terms of the regulation and the cost of the salmon industry, if I can put it that way. I am not about imposing a tax. Salmon companies would be paying their way through other ranges of revenue measures, including payroll tax. So they are paying their way fairly like any other business.

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What I have been monitoring is the resources applied to the regulation and if the levy that covers that resource is sufficient -

MADAM CHAIR - I do not think there is any argument in the community that the self-regulation model was a failure. So, well done. That was definitely needed.

Ms ARMITAGE - I was going to check on the previous incursion of sea urchins. I am wondering on the east coast we have had -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Centrostephanus?

Ms ARMITAGE - That is it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, they are still there.

Ms ARMITAGE - How are we going? I know you were trying to build the stock up of the rock lobster because they eat sea urchins?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, and abalone divers have also been contributing some time as well. I can give you an update if you like.

Mr WHITTINGTON - There are a couple of things about the Centrostephanus, or sea urchin. One is that abalone divers have come through a process of collecting to see if that was an effective way.

MADAM CHAIR - Come and help Fiona and John. Welcome Rob Goff, who knows our committee very well.

Mr GOFF - Centrostephanus. The minister is correct in his summary that they are still there. We have currently engaged IMAS to do a follow-up survey of the work that was done about a decade ago. Hopefully towards the end of this year we should have a better understanding of what changes occurred in that time. It will inform us to answer the member's question, what is the exact status of the -

Ms ARMITAGE - I notice you were looking at the commercial viability in the past of processing their roe.

Mr GOFF - I suspect that information will inform our understanding of what is happening out in the deep blue. In the interim, as I have said in a previous presentation to this committee, there is no silver bullet to manage this species. This is a range extension where a species, as a result of the strengthening of the east Australian currents, the warming of the waters on the east coast, is establishing populations here.

The approach to date has been to try to develop a commercial fishery based on sea urchin roe. That has proven to be problematic as the quality of the roe is very seasonal and suitable to be harvested. Also it is a dark science as to how you process that roe to get it into the market.

There have been a number of efforts taken to try to encourage commercial operators to develop that as a fishery.

Ms ARMITAGE - It's supposed to be very good for you, isn't it?

MADAM CHAIR - It might be good for you but you have to be able to get it down.

Mr GOFF - As the Chair can attest to personally the consumption of *Centrostephanus* roe is an acquired taste. What we have done is we have amended the fisheries commercial dive rules to try to facilitate the establishment of a commercial industry. We have had dialogue with the Tasmanian Abalone Council that has been encouraging the harvest of *Centrostephanus*, with limited take-up.

We have an east coast rock lobster stock rebuilding strategy to increase rock lobster stocks because the IMAS tells us that rock lobster will predate the sea urchin. That is our current situation.

Mr DEAN - In relation to the support to the oyster industry, I notice there is \$225 000 per annum over three years -

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is for the levies?

Mr DEAN - Well, continues support of \$225 000 per annum for three years to support the oyster industry implement the biosecurity recovery measures in response to the Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome, the POM syndrome. What is being done in that area and how is that money expended?

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of supporting the industry's implementation of biosecurity and Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome recovery measures, the \$255 000 per annum for three years is to provide the support for the continued employment of two officers assisting the industry to adjust to the POMS-infected environment. These officers will continue to be employed by the department. One focuses on the aspect of biosecurity and the other on the recovery actions. There is also a loan. The \$5 million POMS Recovery Concessional Loan Scheme is administered by the Department of State Growth. It has been reopened for applications until 1 May 2018. To date \$1.25 million has been approved under the scheme. The loan scheme specifically provides for stock recovery and clean-up costs for affected farms, operating costs necessary to restart, continue and redevelop operations while farms recover from POMS and POMS-related infrastructure modifications and debt reconstruction. The loan scheme also allows for additional support for projects that provide broad benefits to the industry, for example, POMS-resistant spat. Unfortunately it did not come soon enough, as the hearing was two or three years away when POMS hit. It would also demonstrate the feasibility of improved farm practices to effectively mitigate future POMS events including biosecurity and industry certification.

Mr DEAN - That was going to be one of my questions. How can we try to get on top of the POMS situation occurring on a regular basis. It seems to come back fairly regularly, so can it be stopped?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It presented itself in the summer of 2015-16. I mentioned drought at the time. The waters were very warm. It presents itself in warmer water and did so again this summer. The investment into research and development of disease-resistant stock is important. That is the way we will combat it most effectively. I am hearing encouraging signs that quite possibly it will be achieved.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

This is a \$25 million industry that was pretty badly hit overnight. Thankfully no POMS were in the areas of the east coast or the north-west, which is good, but certainly ...

Mr DEAN - Was that good luck or was that simply colder water?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It might have been temperature-related in the north-west.

Mr GOTT - Our research efforts are working towards a better understanding of how POMS behaves in Tasmanian conditions. POMS disease affects oysters, it has affected oyster industries right across the world from France to Britain to New Zealand. It presented in oysters in Sydney. There is a lot of work to be done to understand the way it behaves in Tasmanian waters. There are areas on the north-west coast and at St Helens, where the disease has not presented. Steps have been taken around biosecurity to prevent the vectors that transfer disease in those areas.

In the areas where POMS has presented, such as Pittwater, Pipe Clay Lagoon, and Little Swanport, there is work being undertaken to understand how the disease behaves in our waters. Now that the disease has established, it is something that the farmers in those areas are going to have to adapt to and work around. Selective breeding will hopefully develop oyster that is resistant to the disease in our waters. The information we get from the science around how the disease (inaudible) may inform farmers how they might farm through specific windows, bring specific sized fish onto their leases which they grow out for the high-risk period when the water warms.

Mr DEAN - It is a virus that we have to try to control; stopping it getting into the oyster stock.

Mr DEAN - stopping it getting into the oyster stock.

MADAM CHAIR - You are so used to being at this committee and being in charge.

Laughter.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No one knows more than Mr Gott.

Mr DEAN - We are talking about a \$25 million industry. I don't know whether it is a growing industry. My question to the minister is, is the oyster area a growing industry or has the POMS disease restricted growth or control?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It has restricted growth but my understanding is that it will continue to grow from here. In terms of what Rob was talking about in terms of our advanced understanding of POMS, there are two key projects being conducted here - an \$11 million CRC future oysters project that commenced in late 2016. The overall objective of that is conducting research that will accelerate the breeding of disease-resistant oysters, improving disease management, increasing productivity and profitability and diversifying risks to allow the Australian and Tasmanian oyster aquaculture industry to grow both domestically and globally. Also a future oyster CRC project, the reliable hatchery production of POMS-resistant oysters.

This project will commence this year as part of that \$11 million CRC project and its specific purpose is to determine the best practices for breeding from previously exposed Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome stocks. That will inform us greatly in terms of the future of the industry. My understanding was it was on a growth trajectory prior to POMS. Key players in the industry are looking at expanding and growing their industry and we are supporting them.

Mr Dean, there is 24 months of fee relief for the growers. Last year's budget and this year's Budget includes a waiver of the Tasmanian shellfish quality assurance program levy, lease rental fees and licence fees. The waiver of lease rental and licence fees represents a reduction in revenue paid to the Consolidated Fund of some \$261 000 in 2015-16. The total fee relief for 2015-16 is \$889 000.

We are doing our best to take the cost pressures off our oyster growers so they can rebuild their businesses, but at the same time investing with the CRC to build disease-resistant stocks and get a better understanding of how we manage POMS now it is in our waters. This is what Rob was talking about.

MADAM CHAIR - Thank you. I think we probably need to move on. We have about 35 minutes left.

Mr DEAN - Can I ask about TARFish? What are we doing in the area of recreational fishing, Minister? We have \$146 000 extra to support it, but what is it doing? I know we have stopped the trawlers from about three nautical miles, which is about four or five kms out .

Mr ROCKLIFF - We regularly engage Mark Nikolai from TARFish. Funding of \$146 000 has been provided in this Budget to ensure that TARFish, which is the Tasmanian Association of Recreational Fishing has the capability to deliver services to the marine recreational fishing community in government. That was an increase in funds from the previous year. It provides representative and lobbying services to marine recreational fishers and supports government through the provision of advice in relation to fisheries management, particularly the marine recreational fishery. TARFish is also a certified fishing body pursuant to section 25 of the Living Marine Resources Act 1995, which means that the marine resources is required under the act to consult and engage with TARFish in such matters as development and amendment of fisheries management plans, orders and granting the permits. They play a very key role. They play a valuable role across many areas. It has approximately 2250 members.

Mr DEAN - Is that what it is? And that is in place, as I understand it, while we considering a sustainable long-term funding arrangement is negotiated, that is what it is all about.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is correct.

Mr DEAN - So you are looking at obviously the quantum that is necessary to provide the services to TARFish moving forward? Is that what this is all about?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, \$146 000, which is an increase on last year. We will talk further to TARFish over the next 12 months for a longer-term funding arrangement. The FishWise trust funding, made available due to the separate funding provided for TARFish in the 2017-18 Budget, will enable the FishWise program to fully fund an increased level of fish stock surveys to be carried out by IMAS. This includes general fishing surveys and off-shore surveys for the recreational tuna and striped trumpeter fisheries and to increase the surveys of the east coast rock lobster fishery from biannual to annual surveys.

Mr DEAN - The questions asked by a lot of these people, minister, is how is this audited? The \$146 000, what is the audit process that is in place to ensure that that money is expended in the right way and is getting the service that we require? What is the auditing process?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is a grant.

Mr GOTT - The previous allocations provided to TARFish by way of a grant spells out a whole range of expectations as to what services TARFish are going to deliver for the provision of the grant. There are audit processes in relation to that. The current CEO is very focussed on wanting to be able to demonstrate the activities of the association against the expected services it will deliver. There is a structured process around the provision of that grant and the expectations of the services that TARFish delivers, as the minister has alluded to, and then how that is disbursed. Any grant deed, how that will be audited.

Mr DEAN - As I used to harp on about with the fox funding, there needs to be a measurable process in place to ensure there is a good return for the moneys that are paid for these services. It has always been an issue of concern.

2.3 Supervision of poppy and hemp crops

MADAM CHAIR - Thank you. Mr Dean, seeing you have the floor I would like to invite you to look at 2.3 Supervision of poppy and hemp crops.

Mr DEAN - I think we have covered this already.

MADAM CHAIR - You have probably a couple of things there.

Mr DEAN - Minister, is there anything to identify that we could have downstream processing in this state in relation to the industrial hemp crop? Is that a consideration? We talked about the market and you were having difficulty in identifying where the markets were -

Mr ROCKLIFF - The markets have been in industrial hemp and I would like to Carole Rodger to join us. Mr Dean, the Government can best support the industry by getting out of the way. We have done that in terms of annual licences, in terms of applications for a change in food policy, to provide that opportunity. In terms of processing facilities, that will have to be driven by themselves. Like any industry, it has the opportunity to come to government for support - the AgriGrowth Loan Scheme, or whatever it might be.

Mr DEAN - I have no problem with that. With poppies you can tell us where the markets are and what is happening, but I would have thought the Government ought to have known a little more about it.

Ms RODGER - Sorry, and we do if I can come in there. Tasmania's hemp at the moment is the mostly grown for seed crop. That is lower volume, higher value. The fibre is mostly northern NSW-based. It is a much better climate for that kind of product. Our growers are mostly selling back to two suppliers who contract them to produce for them. One of them is primarily around seed and that is seed for next year's crops and seed that is being exported to New Zealand. The other is processed interstate and that is the cosmetic and topical or external use applications. That is being sold through health food shops nationally.

As the minister mentioned earlier, they are in the process of changing regulation to allow low-THC hemp as food. That will be in place in about five months time. That then does open up opportunities for further processing in the state.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

We are aware of a few business ventures that are starting off and looking to develop a range of products to service the national and export markets with food products.

Mr DEAN - Thank you. In the 2015-16 annual reports of DPIPWE and the Department of Justice, there were incorrectly stated figures. One was a \$719 error made. What caused the error and what are the correct figures there?

Mr WHITTINGTON - Allocated to what? The THCB?

Mr DEAN - Yes. The annual report is a document to provide on a calculation area is given as an explanation. It was a human error. The actual figures given were \$719.

Ms RODGER - Cost per license.

Mr DEAN - Was it? We are told in the Budget papers that there was an error. I am wondering what the correct figures were?

Mr WHITTINGTON - This is in relation to a performance measure which is essentially the expenditure of the Budget Control Board divided by the number of licences that it issues.

The correct number is \$857 per licence and the incorrect number that was in the papers provided to us during the transition from a different department, was \$719. It is important to know though that this is a global expenditure to run the Poppy Advisory Control Board divided by the number of licences.

It is not a fee that is imposed or anything like that. The Government completely covers the cost of running the Poppy Advisory Control Board. It is a performance measure, an error in calculation. We have gone back and said to the department now we are very confident of the numbers that we have.

Mr DEAN - My next question was, what is the cost of the Poppy Advisory Control Board now that DPIPWE have responsibility? What changes would we likely see there in relation to the way this will now operate.

There is a new measure here where it will be done on the number of licences and not on the number of hectares. I am also interested in knowing what say the board had in the number of hectares grown in this state? You made the comment somewhere that the board has less say over areas sown.

It's in the Budget papers and I am wondering why you would say that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The companies contract the crop based on the market.

Mr DEAN - That is right.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The licences have to be given to the farmers. Talking before with Mr Willie, we were mindful of the fact that we have to do what we can as a Government to maintain our competitive edge. Notwithstanding the 50 per cent of raw narcotic material we produce world wide, given the lower demand, we still have to maintain our competitive advantage.

The PACB, as you have said, has been transferred from the Justice portfolio to the Primary Industries and Water portfolio. That was back in March last year to better align the board with the portfolio expertise.

In October last year, the Government introduced members to the Poisons Act 1971 to support a continued role of the PACB and modernise regulation of the sector including directly empowering the PACB to regulate poppy growers.

Its an independent board, arms length from industry and government, as it should be, and is a key part of the necessary arrangements to comply with international and national obligations to safeguard the community from the spread of opiates.

Mr DEAN - Industry is no longer paying for it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The industry never paid for it. There was a proposal, you might recall, from the previous government to impose a levy and how that was going to be applied. I do not think the government worked through that, but we are not doing that. It is now separately funded, so the industry are not paying for it at all.

Mr DEAN - That's good. There will be no changes in the cost of the board from when it was -

Mr ROCKLIFF - My figure here is \$719 000 for the cost of the board in 2017-18 to cover both operational and administrative costs.

Mr DEAN - It would seem that their workload would be reduced as now they will be simply be looking at the number of licences rather than the number of hectares grown. I am not quite sure that would require -

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can see where you are coming from because back in 2011-12 there was about 30 000 odd hectares sown. I think this year there should be around 10 000, 11 000 maximum. I understand where that question is coming from but the PACB will now also have responsibility for industrial hemp as well.

Mr DEAN - That was going to be one of my questions - how much of the PACB's work will be in industrial hemp?

Mr ROCKLIFF - A lot less than poppies given the hectares are still relatively small compared to poppies. We are talking in the hundreds of hectares, not the tens of thousands of hectares in terms of industrial hemp and the poppy industry.

Mr DEAN - What is the security around the industrial hemp, is there any security or is it a police issue?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The PACB field officers, that is the right terminology for them, I imagine will be engaged with farmers in the same way they engage with farmers in the poppy industry. In terms of security, you would be aware of the signs on the farmers' fences and gates explaining the dangers of ingesting poppies and to keep out of the paddock. I do not believe there are any such signs for the industrial hemp industry. By comparison, the hectares grown of industrial hemp in 2014-15 was 98 and in 2016-17, 288. The licences have grown from 11 to 23. So it is growing,

more than doubling, which is a very positive sign. It is nowhere near the level of the hectares of poppies for example.

Mr DEAN - Does [11:08:54????] have any plans to support research and development in the poppy industry in respect of increasing productivity. That is increasing the kilograms per hectare of active material as opposed to increasing the number of available hectares?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The companies do the majority of their own research. R&D is closely guarded in terms of their own intellectual property. The Government and the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture come in when there is a need to support industry in R&D into disease, such as downy mildew. The Australian Research Council Linkage scheme is a poppy project investigating the epidemiology of poppy downy mildew. We have contributed \$64 000 to that project. The budget is over \$840 000, which includes \$360 000 from the Australian Government and \$110 000 from the Tasmanian Government in terms of the project. In relation to your question, the Precision Agricultural Project is a four-year \$530 000 initiative launched in May two years ago - 2015 - to demonstrate to farmers the benefits of adopting precision agriculture. I spoke about that at the precision agriculture expo just recently in Deloraine. The poppy industry has a very close association with the Tasmanian Agricultural Productivity Group who are overseeing the precision project. It would be to do with increasing our productivity. In terms of the kilograms, the active ingredient would be company-specific research and development capability.

Chair - Thank you. We have a seven-minute break. I will announce that we suspend and we are back at 11.20 a.m. to continue on, or otherwise we will cut into our lunch hour.

The committee suspended from 11:11 a.m. to 11.22 a.m.

Output group 3
Natural and Cultural Heritage

3.1 Resource management and conservation -

Mr FINCH - On page 242, the figures show there was almost \$12 million allocated this year for this output group. In the forward Estimates there is a diminution to the low \$8.25 million and then continuing around the \$8.3 million for the next couple of forward Estimates. What has occurred to see that diminution from this year by more than \$3 million into next year? Are there programs finishing?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is funding that is coming off, such as flood funding, for example.

Mr WHITTINGTON - It is quite complicated. You will recall that with the illness of the Attorney there was a splitting up of portfolio responsibilities. As part of that this output group, natural and cultural heritage, was split into two. A part was retained by Minister Groom and that now, you will see, is 3.5, output group 5, threatened species.

MADAM CHAIR - Which we do not have in our scrutiny.

Mr WHITTINGTON - That is right, but it is in the budget papers, on page 243. The balance of that output group has become 3.1, which has been transferred to Mr Rockliff's portfolio. In the

year 2016-17 there is zero dollars in 3.5 and the full cost of that output group is in 3.1. Then, by 2017-18, that threatened species number is this one for the forward Estimates. The reduction is apparent in 3.1. It is essentially transferring between portfolios. The whole story though is confused because of the additional funding for the ALRS, the flood recovery program, which is in 3.1 for the year 2017-18, which happens to be about the same sort of quantum as what was transferred to 3.5. I do not know if that has helped.

Mr FINCH - You are right, it is complicated and it is confusing, you nailed it. I am trying to grapple with your answer. Will this impact where the money goes to in the programs that will be retained? Do we see much of a change in this area?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No.

Mr FINCH - I want to get on to Landcare, but I will cover that in a moment. I want to talk about the criticism over the years by some who complain about the comprehensive stream monitoring program, particularly in streams affected by forestry and farming operations. Do you believe the present monitoring regime is adequate in this area?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, it is risk-based monitoring. I believe it is adequate. I can provide some more information on a monitoring regime. They are divided into three categories: broad-scale baseline monitoring to assess condition, monitoring undertaken as part of regulatory obligations, or targeted monitoring as part of discrete projects. The majority of water and monitoring activities are focused in developed catchments where good water information is required for informed management decisions. Minimal water monitoring has been undertaken in south-western Tasmania.

Collectively, Tasmanian water monitoring programs, particularly for stream flow and water quality, provide good coverage and long-term record of Tasmania's developed catchments. Water monitoring information is held by the various organisations or provided to Tasmanian Government agencies for regulatory purposes. Those organisations that collect stream flow and water quality information including salinity and nutrient information are required to provide this to the Bureau of Meteorology under the National Water Act 2007 and water regulations of 2008.

This information is centralised in the Australian Water Resources Information System, which is the AWRAS. In terms of monitoring chemicals - I sense your question was more in relation to that particular area?

Mr FINCH - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The pesticide water monitoring program commenced in 2005 and ended in July 2014. It was implemented as a means to increase knowledge and understanding as to the nature and extent of pesticide contamination in Tasmania. Sampling has been conducted in both 2016 and 2017 at eight sites from the former pesticide water monitoring program to ensure pesticide levels in waterways are either zero or below the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines' health guideline value.

The eight sampling sites were selected following an analysis of the pesticide water monitoring program testing results from 2011-2014, with each site selected recording more than five pesticide detections during this period. While some samples taken in 2016 and 2017 were found to contain pesticides, all of the pesticide detections were well below the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines'

health guideline value. These results are consistent with the results obtained under the Pesticide Water Monitoring Program, confirming that in Tasmania a number of rivers and streams are either free of pesticides or have extremely low levels of pesticides, significantly below the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

Mr FINCH - Could I get a breakdown of the allocation of the money going towards this program, and the water monitoring costs?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes you can. I can take that on notice and provide that answer so we can work out the details for you.

Ms LOVELL - I have a question about the Lewisham foreshore erosion trial. I know there was considerable time and effort put in by that local community to get a commitment from government to take action on erosion. The funding of \$100 000 in the 2017-18 financial year to support that trial, how did that compare to the funding they were seeking? I know they put in some funding submissions and there was quite a wide range of funding they were seeking.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Welcome to the table Mr Jacobi, Deputy Secretary of Parks and Wildlife.

Mr JACOBI - I am unaware of the financial figures or submissions that were made by the local community for previously funding of works on the foreshore. We have however identified there are a number of small works that would significantly mitigate erosion issues on the foreshore. The immediate erosion does not pose a risk to the residents that are enjoying the foreshore area. There does appear to be some works that can be undertaken to replenish the sand on the beach and to control movements across the beach access ways. The \$100 000 has been identified primarily to undertake sand-scraping trials, which is basically moving sand back on to the foreshore to replenish the dune and also clean up the foreshore with some re-vegetation and some fencing. There has been an endangered species identified in the immediate area of the foreshore and we are currently working with the Commonwealth and our colleagues in the nature conservation branch to determine the extent of that particular species and the risks that might pose to the sand-scraping trials.

Ms LOVELL - Have the details of that trial been provided to the Lewisham Foreshore Management Association?

Mr JACOBI - We have discussed the nature of the trial works and our intention to undertake those trials, if they prove to be an effective solution for the foreshore replenishment.

Ms LOVELL - One last question. Do you have any information on what is being done in terms of preventative measures or other early intervention measures in other parts of the state. This is an issue that will become more prevalent?

Mr JACOBI - In terms of erosion and rising waters?

Ms LOVELL - We have a heavily populated coastline and there have been issues in Lauderdale previously and now Lewisham. There is research that shows that different measures taken in different parts can move the problem further down.

Mr JACOBI - All I can add is that erosion of foreshore areas is an issue across the state. The majority of our foreshore areas are crown lands so we are aware of a number of situations where residents have expressed concern about wave action on the foreshore. In most circumstances

brought to my attention there is a substantial buffer between the coastal area and the residences. None are immediately at risk. Many of these instances are naturally occurring erosion. While there are instances of wave action causing damage to the foreshore, there are also many instances where that is naturally improved or revegetated over time.

CHAIR - That coastal erosion policy is still being undertaken, I expect?

Mr FINCH - The Landcare has very vibrant public support. The Tasmanian Government financial support seems to be diminishing. What Government support is planned for the future?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Mr Finch. Landcare is receiving continued support in line with its existing funding agreement with the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment. The department is in the process of working with Landcare Tasmania to draw up a new agreement of \$260 000 over the next two years, the same as the previous agreement. There are also additional opportunities for Landcare Tasmania through funding for the Agriculture Landscape Rehabilitation Scheme which we spoke about before in terms of the floods, which is now up to \$4 million. This will support on-farm landcare works to repair and rehabilitate rivers and streams and will offer further opportunities for Landcare Tasmania's involvement. We also significantly boosted funding to improve the management of weeds, vertebrate pests and invasive species. Biosecurity Tasmania will work with farmers and natural resource management groups, including Landcare, on this particular initiative. As part of the 2017-18 federal budget the Australian Government announced \$100 million funding from the now defunct Green Army initiative, which would be redirected to the national Landcare program. An announcement of exactly how this money will be spent and the level of support for Landcare organisations is expected by the end of June. I look forward to that. The \$100 million came about I think as a result of negotiations in the Senate around the backpacker tax. Landcare organisations around Tasmania play a very important role and a number of them have significant runs on the board. I think I went to the 25th anniversary of Wynyard Landcare a few years ago. I was a member of the Landcare group myself. The strong collaborative relationship between natural resource management groups, three regions, and Landcare Tasmania becomes really important. It is my aim that continues now that I have inherited responsibility for the three NRM regions.

Mr FINCH - The member for Windermere and I met with Rod Knight and Roger Tyshing from Landcare and they did not have a sense of that recognition and the support that you are mentioning now, minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have met with Mr Knight and Mr Tyshing. I am not sure if I met him with his Landcare hat on or not. I know Roger well. The department is working with Landcare Tasmania to establish a new agreement. I expect full and frank discussions regarding Landcare's involvement.

Mr FINCH - From what you mention, minister, it seems that the same funding is being extended to Landcare when their numbers are increasing and their groups are increasing. They have 3300 people who volunteer, 90 000 hours of work and, if my memory serves me correctly, there were 44 new groups in Landcare.

Mr DEAN - Forty I think.

Mr FINCH - Forty, but there does not seem to be that incremental increase in support from their way of thinking.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The increase in membership will be talked about. I am sensing a resurgence in Landcare. It went into a bit of a lull for a while. It was very big in the late 1980s, early 1990s. The value of Landcare, the increased membership, the role it plays in natural resource management will be a part of the discussions they will have with the department. I am always happy to meet with Landcare myself.

MADAM CHAIR - Do we have a final question, Mr Dean?

Mr DEAN - No, on Landcare I am happy.

MADAM CHAIR - Can I move to 4.1, which is water resource management. Thank you, minister. The contribution to water development in Tasmania has been phenomenal. Rolling out irrigation schemes right around Tasmania. We have got some funding for tranche 2 and tranche 3 in the Budget. I am really interested in the issue of salinity. How is that being managed when we are putting water into areas in Tasmania that have never seen this amount of water before? I do not need a long answer, but how are we managing that salinity issue?

Output Group 4 Water Resources -

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Water For Profit program is a very important part of this. You are right, Chair, when water is applied to non-traditional irrigated areas, you have to manage the water very carefully. An example of this is the Coal River Valley back in the late 1980s with the construction of the Craighourne Dam, where a lot more water was applied to that region as a result of that resource.

Farmers have demonstrated their ability to manage this extremely well in terms of salinity. We introduced the Water For Profit program in 2014 predominantly for farmers in areas such as the Midlands, where there is a huge increase in hectares able to be irrigated. Water management - the management of the water table and all aspects of the application of water - is critical to avoid erosion, leeching, and salinity.

When water is invested in those regions, farm water access plans are important for our farmers to take that water. That again is another way in which salinity comes into the equation.

MADAM CHAIR - Is that an annual compliance, the farm water management plan? Are they annual?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No. Farmers have to manage their water resource and they keep records, but the water management access plans are an initial requirement.

MADAM CHAIR - When you finish your operation, when you put in a different crop -

Mr WHITTINGTON - Your farm water access plan is linked to your licence agreement with TI. You are required to comply with your farm water access plan once you are using that water. If there is a significant change to the way you are doing business that would have to be reflected in your farm water access plan. Farm water access plans are audited by TI.

MADAM CHAIR - That is the annual -

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr WHITTINGTON - I do not think they do them to everybody, but they certainly have a water program that ensures that there is a compliance with the plan that you would generate at the start of the process.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Last year the applications for dams were down. Will they pick up again or are more farmers using irrigation and not putting in their own dams?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am not sure they were down.

Mrs ARMITAGE - As at 26 May 2016 there were 32 approved. You had a target in 2015-16 of 40.

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of efficiency of dams permit processing, we have simplified and streamlined the dam works approval process. We have abolished the Assessment Committee for Dam Construction and made amendments to the Water Management Act. They came into effect on 1 January 2016. I am pleased to say that as of April 2017, the average time for processing dam permit approvals in 2016-17 was well below the statutory 84 days or 12 weeks. Under the new division 3 process, approvals were accomplished in an average time of 62 days, while the new division 4 low-risk dams were processed on an average time period of six days only.

In 2016-17, a performance target of 30 dams was approved, with additional storage volume of 14 000 mega litres was set. As of 23 May 2017, 38 dams were approved, with a combined storage capability of 23 693 mega litres. These figures reflect a growing trend for farmers to build larger storages to enhance their water security and secure water supplies.

Ms ARMITAGE - Get the water while it is there.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It will enhance productivity. The imperative for secure irrigation water supplies has been given additional significance following the exceptionally dry climatic conditions of recent years. In the season of 2015-16, when we had some of the driest conditions on record, driest in that January-February period, farmers had a heightened awareness of the value of water.

MADAM CHAIR - I had a question about a large operator on the north-west coast wanting access to water all year around. Is that something we need to address through irrigation water access?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Like a farmer?

MADAM CHAIR - No, as in a business. Are we finding that more people want greater access to our irrigation water? Can the system cope?

Mr ROCKLIFF - People want access to water. People might want access if they build their own storages to access winter take to fill their dams to use during summer.

MADAM CHAIR - Do you know if there is an issue at the moment?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am not aware of ...

MADAM CHAIR - I had some information that one of the large berry companies wants more access than what the general farming person is taking.

Mr ROCKLIFF - In a protected cropping environment for utilisation throughout the year?

MADAM CHAIR - Is that going to become a problem? Is that a TI issue we need to talk to them about?

Mr WHITTINGTON - I am not aware of it so it may be something that is being dealt with.

MADAM CHAIR - It has not hit the minister's desk yet?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not that I am aware. It may in negotiations with TI, because it is irrigation. It all depends on [11:48:18??] resource but I am more than happy to take it up.

MADAM CHAIR - Thank you. It is always going to be an issue, people wanting more than there is available.

There are no other water resource management issues, I will move on.

Output group 6 Biosecurity Tasmania

6.1 Biosecurity -

Mr DEAN - I invite Lloyd Klumpp, general manager, Biosecurity Tasmania, to the table.

It might be worthwhile starting with the blueberry rust that was detected in the north-west, and near the first site, as I understand. What different strategies are being employed in quarantining sites as the current techniques are not enough to stop the spread? The small growers, when it appeared and happened previously, had to rid their properties of all blueberries. Will the same situation apply now it is in a bigger area? Will we see some changes in the way it is managed and handled?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thanks, Mr Dean.

Following a new incursion of blueberry rust, found in August 2016, on one large commercial property in the north of the state, two further detections were found in March 2017 on two organic blueberry farms near the first site. All infected properties are subject to quarantine control under the Plant Quarantine Act 1997, with conditions in place on the movement of host material off the property to prevent further spread. The department has successfully worked with interstate authorities and blueberry growers to maintain mainland market access for blueberry fruit and to manage the ongoing risks from the disease for the 2016-17 season despite additional protections. There is no evidence to suggest the 2016 blueberry rust outbreak is linked to the 2014 outbreak. Market access negotiations will need to occur for the following 2017-18 fruit season.

The department has also worked with Fruit Growers Tasmania to develop a farm hygiene program for berry growers. There has been \$65 000 made available to Fruit Growers Tasmania to implement the program, which will initially target blueberry growers. It will provide organised and practical farm hygiene initiatives such as workshops and access for berry growers to small grant

funds via Fruit Growers Tasmania. The aim is to assist small growers, in particular, to adapt their operations to protect their farms from a range of potential pests and diseases, support them to manage their market access and any market certification schemes, and to support their farm management practices so they can continue to grow their businesses. The farm hygiene program will enable blueberry growers operating during the 2016 outbreak to access funds to protect their properties against the rust.

Mr DEAN - Is it expected the outbreak now will be treated differently to the previous ones, where growers had to rid their properties, as I understand it, of all plants? That has been raised with me.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I met with blueberry growers who had their plants destroyed - the (inaudible) and Mays. I understand how very sad they were and how devastating that was. There was a process of eradication to try to get on top of this. It is all managed at arm's-length from me. Perhaps John or Lloyd can detail management regimes from here.

MADAM CHAIR - Who made the decision then for fruit to be deregulated?

Mr WHITTINGTON - There has been no decision to deregulate. There was erroneous material put on our website that implied that. What we have done -

MADAM CHAIR - That must be what I have then?

Mr WHITTINGTON - Maybe it is worth my going through the decision-making process I use. It is a really hard decision and it is worth understanding the framework I operate within.

When there is an incursion and infestation of a disease you have to make a decision about whether it is technically feasible to eradicate. That includes considering if you do eradicate will it reinfect straightaway or not? It includes logistical considerations such as is it possible to do? If you take POMS, for example, which we were talking about earlier, it is not technically possible to move the virus from the south-east. That is the first question.

There is also the question of whether it is economically and socially sensible to do that? Sometimes you can do it with all the will but it is not a sensible decision. That is the framework in very simple words that we operate within.

When we went through the first incursion in 2014 we worked out quickly where the blue rust came from. We found the blueberry plants in one of our quarantine premises and then we traced it back and forwards from there. So we knew where it was in the landscape. There were a relatively small numbers of plants. It was the first incursion into Tasmania. So our decision at the time, as painful as it was, was to attempt to eradicate, and we did. Unfortunately some people lost one or two plants because the plants came through a retail supplier not through the normal nursery chain. It affected those two growers the minister mentioned. It was a very tough decision and very difficult for them.

After that we did a whole lot of surveying and we believed, and we were confident at that time, we had eradicated blueberry rust from Tasmania. Then not two months later another infestation appeared on a very large property, a property that accounts for probably 75 per cent of the state's production and probably 80 per cent of the state's value in blueberries. The same decision framework was used. Was it technically feasible to eradicate the disease from this property? Was

it logistically possible? There were some significant questions when we are talking about a property of that size. What was the chance of reinfection? It has come in twice in a couple of years. It has moved around the world. We understand patterns of movement in other countries as well as in Australia. All those things come to bear. The same criteria was used as the first time. Was is appropriate in the circumstances of this particular invasion. It was the same decision framework, but a different outcome. The outcome of that analysis - it was a very difficult decision for me to make - was that containment was a better option than eradication. That is what was applied at that particular property. The two subsequent detections in March 2017 were about nine kilometres from that major property, and close to one another - about 300 metres apart. They were quite close to where one of the first 2014 infected properties was. They are subject to the same management controls that have been place on the August 2016 infected property. There are various quarantine arrangements put in place on that property.

We are managing for containment and that means imposing quite restrictive farm hygiene practices on those properties that are affected. We are also working with our interstate counterparts to ensure all the industry can export but under different arrangements depending on whether they are an infected property or a property that has freedom from the disease. In the summer just gone all those that wanted to export were able to export, except to Western Australia. There was a lot of effort by our biosecurity staff to maintain those markets. We are talking about a \$20 million industry. About 80 per cent of the value of the production rests with one supplier.

Mr FINCH - And starting to grow, too.

Mr WHITTINGTON - Yes, they have ambitious plans for expansion, not just in blueberries but a broader berry basket.

Mr DEAN - Have you been able to trace the cause in this instance?

Mr WHITTINGTON - No. Rust spores can travel in many ways. They are light and can remain viable for some time. A likely route, but I cannot say it is, would perhaps be on clothing. This is speculation. We have not been able to do a traceback. We were able to isolate the first infection to a quarantine premises with the disease. We knew which nursery they came from so we could physically trace the plant with the rust back to Victoria, which was supposed to be rust free. We could then trace forward to who purchased those plants. In this case we have not been able to do that kind of forensics.

Mr DEAN - I take it doesn't spread rapidly among the other plants?

Mr WHITTINGTON - It can spread very rapidly between farms. Once the spores are released, they can travel on the wind very quickly. It can travel quickly between plants. It is difficult to find it until it expresses itself. A farm could be infected without showing any clinical symptoms of infection. The decision to eradicate it sounds simple - find an infected plant and pull it out, but it is not that simple. You have to assess how far around that plant you need to isolate. It quickly becomes a complex matter.

CHAIR - Was the industry consulted before your decision was made?

Mr WHITTINGTON - There has been consultation with industry throughout the process.

CHAIR - Not just the big guy.

Mr WHITTINGTON - No. There has been consultation with the industry body as well. Lloyd can speak about that consultation. We need to improve our consultation processes and we are committed to doing that. In the rush for everything else that is one thing that has been -

CHAIR - I will hold the answer there. Was there consideration given to what this decision would do to certified organic growers?

Mr WHITTINGTON - As part of my decision-making process I commissioned Macquarie Franklin, a respected agricultural economists to provide a report on the economic consequences and social consequences of various options under various scenarios of eradication.

CHAIR - She chose to keep the big one and let the little ones suffer. Is that pretty much the -

Mr WHITTINGTON - You are putting words into my mouth. I commissioned work so I had an understanding of the consequences across the industry. That coupled with the evidence before me produced the decision I took.

Mr FINCH - I have a list of questions from blueberry growers. I do not intend to proceed with them, because you are aware of the issue, you have concern for the smaller growers as well as the bigger growers and that, minister, the blueberry rust issue is in hand. There will be concern given to all the growers in Tasmania?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not only that, I am aware that while we talk about larger farming operations, the smaller grower farmers are an increasingly important part of our agricultural landscape, particularly agri-tourism. I launched the agricultural trail for agri-tourism at the Farmgate Festival. Not only are the growers important in terms of production and the people they employ, but also to our Tasmanian brand by giving our visitors an appreciation of the premium food experience. I was upset for the smaller blueberry growers, such as the [12:02:45??] and the Mays. They invested their hard-earned resources into that and I am devastated for them.

Mr WILLIE - Were the smaller growers adequately compensated and how was that compensation determined? Where is the justice here when the same framework is applied, but a different decision is made because they are a bigger grower? Because of that decision, if that blueberry rust spreads into the smaller growers they will have their plants ripped out. It could end very badly for those smaller growers and I am interested in the compensation that was made.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It wasn't compensation. We are very supportive of the smaller growers. Everyone has a role to play in Tasmanian agriculture, whether you are a small grower or a large grower. We have to be fair to everyone. I accept that in terms of the arrangements with the two growers. I will ask John to comment there.

Mr WHITTINGTON - As the minister said it is not compensation, it is an ex gratia payment to recognise the hardship they have suffered. Our current regulatory regime does not provide compensation in the way you implied. One of the benefits of the proposed legislation is having a proper legislative framework for owner reimbursement to cover these types of things. In the future we might have a proper regulatory environment that provides owner reimbursement costs. These ex gratia payments are not part of the biosecurity package, they were made by the Government to recognise the growers' hardship.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Your broader question was that the decision favoured the big guys over the little guys. That is not what I said. What I was trying to make clear is that in making a decision you have to weigh up a whole lot of factors. The facts in the second incursion were different to the first and different to the most recent two. We have moved to containment rather than eradication for the incursion at the two small growers that have occurred this year.

Mr WILLIE - I did not say that it favoured the bigger growers, I said that if that framework had been applied and a different decision had been made, where is the justice if that rust spread to those smaller growers as a result of that decision?

CHAIR - Thank you. Mr Dean, then Mr Finch and then we need to move out of this area.

Mr DEAN - The next set of questions are on biosecurity.

CHAIR - I know. We have heaps of questions on everything.

Mr DEAN - I am trying to think of the important ones because I have to keep it open. I understand there are going to be barrier inspections of 100 per cent of passengers and vehicles coming into the state.

Mr ROCKLIFF - When we increased our detector dog teams from six to 12, my target was for 100 per cent for flights into major airports.

Mr DEAN - And ferries as well?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Perhaps Lloyd can deal with it.

Mr DEAN - I think it says that in the papers.

Mr ROCKLIFF - With the TT Line, the pre-border inspections are targeting every vehicle and as a result of that -

Mr DEAN - That is pre-boarding?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is pre-border, which means that the quarantine material, risk material, is stopped at the pre-border, Port Melbourne. The latest figures I have is that about 50 tonnes has been stopped since the December 2013 trial.

Mr DEAN - And what has it been?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, 46 000 kilograms of biosecurity risk material has been seized.

Mr DEAN - What has that been?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Would that be fruits and -

Mr KLUMPP - It is all biosecurity risk materials, so it is fruits, vegetables, meats, anything that is listed.

Mr ROCKLIFF - So since 1 December 2014 to 30 May 2017, 251 000 vehicles have been inspected at Port Melbourne, 46 000 kilograms of biosecurity risk material has been seized, 10 000 items were referred to Biosecurity Tasmania for further assessment and 1411 items were detected through random inspections, with most of those resulting from passengers declaring items. That is a good example of pre-border. The border biosecurity is the detector dog teams. There are about 16 dogs, but actual teams of 12. It has doubled in the past two or three years. Our target is for 100 per cent of flights. We are progressing very well with that, particularly in Hobart where it will be made easier when passengers disembark through a central point irrespective of airline.

Mr WHITTINGTON - It is difficult to manage Hobart because there are two entrance ways. You staff flights based on flight times, but if one flight moves you are trying to do two entrances with one team. With that one entrance it is going to make it very much easier to manage Hobart and Launceston.

Mr DEAN - The other big issue is the cat management program. I notice there is \$1.44 million in the Budget. What is the next step in the plan for feral cat eradication, how many FTEs will be employed in this area? I have harped on about feral cat management and feral cat control for 14 years and I am pleased to see at long the Government has done something about it.

CHAIR - And the question is - is the minister happy about that?

Mr DEAN - I have asked the question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, and I have had a bit to say over that 14 years. I supported the 2009 cat management legislation. It was not enacted until 2012. Then the previous government reviewed that legislation. We came in and wanted to have another look at it. That has been done. It is a contentious issue, which is why it has taken a while. The resource is also very important. The \$1.44 million over the next four years is provided to local government. Local government is a significant player in cat management, facilitating engagement with the community, land owners and key stakeholders to improve levels of responsible cat ownership and delivering a more effective approach to managing cats, including feral cats which are disruptive to the environment and affect livestock. Toxoplasmosis, if that is the right word for it.

In 2016 the Draft Tasmanian Cat Management Plan was developed with input from the Tasmanian Cat Management Reference Group. The plan was released for comment and 102 submissions were received. Responses to the draft plan were generally positive. The final cat management plan will be released before the end of this month and the Government will continue to consult with the Tasmanian Cat Management Reference Group to implement the plan across the state. It recognises that cat management is a shared community responsibility. Within individual members of the community, local government and state government there needs to be an awareness of responsible cat ownership.

Mr DEAN - It is a feral cat issue that we are looking at. They are running rampant out there, destroying our wild animals, feral animals - the good ones that is, endangering species and so on. We have these policies in place but what, on the ground, are we going to do about that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There are a number of areas we can work on. Feral acts are non-eradicable, however, there may be areas where they are having the greatest impact so we can target those areas that will be of benefit. That is how we will probably manage it. Rules could make it easier for land owners to manage feral cats.

Chair - Is the honourable member agreeable to the answer to that being tabled?

Mr DEAN - I have a lot of other questions in this area so we are going to have to leave this area open.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It will be released before the end of this month. The cat management plan will cover feral cats, stray cats and domestic cats. Those three areas need to be considered.

Mr DEAN - DIPIPWE is currently investigating foxes. What stage is that at, when is the report likely to be released and will it be released publicly?

Mr Whittington - I need to answer with more than a date. They considered the Tasmanian Police review material that you provided them, they made their findings and passed on their findings both to the department and to the Integrity Commission. I do not know what the integrity commission is doing. We are cooperating with everything that we have. The police review indicated some potential inappropriate behaviour by public servants. That is what we are investigating under the State Service Act. That process will be quickly completed. I cannot give an exact date. I will say that should either the Integrity Commission report or the work that is done through this process find any integrity issues we will be very public about that and we will make that very clear on all of our documentation.

Output group 6 Biosecurity Tasmania

6.2 Product Integrity -

CHAIR - We will now move to product integrity. The member for Rosevears has a question on berries.

Mr FINCH - I am pleased to report that non-eradicable is a real word. We are discussing Tasmanian products, but can you apprise us of the work being done by the state government on the possibility of Hepatitis A coming in through packaged Creative Gourmet berries?

Mr KLUMPP - We are responsible for primary produce food safety until the farm gate. Health is responsible for post-farm gate food safety, so packaged retail products are a matter for Health.

Mr WHITTINGTON - In this case imported product is a matter for Health.

CHAIR - Product integrity does not cover this?

Mr WHITTINGTON - It would if those berries were produced in Tasmania. We would be controlling the production systems and the quality of fruit coming out through those production systems. In this case the issue was within imported frozen berries. Once it is at that processed stage it is a matter for the health authorities.

Mr FINCH - It may come later when all of the product is produced in Tasmania.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And then it will be under the Primary Produce Safety Act 2011. Under that act meat and eggs, seafood, poultry, pet food, seed sprout sectors and food safety programs are made of regulation that sit under that legislation.

Mr KLUMPP - We do work with Health even though that is their responsibility. We have open lines of communication to understand what their requirements are. If restrictions were in place we would be assisting with that.

CHAIR - The product integrity line item reflects the end of the oyster industry support package. Are other products causing integrity issues in this area?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is for POMS. We have the biotoxin management, which is the quality assurance program called [12:18:49??] for the seafood sector incorporating rock lobster, mussels, oysters, scallops and sea scallops.

CHAIR - It is mostly related to seafoods.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Output group 8 Parks and Wildlife Management

8.2 Crown land services -

Mr WILLIE - How many Crown land properties have been sold in the past financial year?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I might get the Jason Jacobi to the table again.

Total Crown land sales amounted to \$4.495 million as of 31 March this year. It comprised 32 sales by Crown Land Services worth a total of \$488 000 and 18 sales by Treasury worth a total of \$4.006 million.

The total area of Crown land sold by Crown Land Services this financial year to 31 March is 44.04 hectares with an average parcel size of 1.57 hectares. The total area of Crown land sold by Treasury this financial year to 31 March is 14.42 hectares with an average parcel size of 0.8 hectares.

Mr WILLIE - I want to go to the floods and Crown Land Services managing that land during the floods. There was debris on Crown land and local government and people were not allowed to access that land to clean it up. Have systems changed since that time?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have had feedback of a similar nature. While a lot of the focus has been on Latrobe with the floods, Burnie also got hit very hard. They had some debris issues between local government and Crown Land Services about whose responsibility it was to clean it up.

Mr WILLIE - People were willing to clean it up but they could not get access to the land, from what I have heard.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will ask Mr Whittington to respond.

Mr WHITTINGTON - After the floods there was debris in a number of places. Some needed to be cleaned up, in some places it was arguable whether the damage caused by clean up would be greater than leaving the debris. Crown Land Services takes a sensible approach to this. If it needs to be cleaned up then permission is given very quickly. In some areas work needed to be done before people could start pulling down trees and things that might or might not have been in the way.

There is a process that Crown Land goes through to make decisions about authorising things to occur. There might be examples where, in hindsight, we should have done it quicker - I am not entirely sure about that - but certainly we can review it.

Mr JACOBI - Many of the strips of land in question that are Crown land are contingents with other parcels and they are very small, narrow parts of land. Many of them have also been subject to the grants scheme currently under consideration in terms of restoration of those foreshore areas. They are being assessed by the independent consultants working in partnership with property owners to determine the amount of work that might be required and how best to go about doing that work.

Mr WILLIE - So there has been no changes of how that will be done in the future.

Mr ROCKLIFF - If you have specific examples we would like to know about that so we can make it more user-friendly in the future. That would be good to know.

Mr WILLIE - If the forestry bill passes it is my understanding that Crown Land Services will manage that future production forest, is that correct?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr WILLIE - In the forward Estimates there is no increase in funding. Is that funding adequate if the bill passes? Given that there is no increase in funding, is that an admission the Government does not want the bill to pass?

Mr ROCKLIFF - My understanding is it will be adequate and each department can always put in a fresh submission for increased resources. Given that Crown Land Services manages it now then the funding should be adequate. Is that right, Mr Whittington?

Mr WHITTINGTON - We are responsible for its management at the moment and so we manage that using the full resources of the Parks Service, which includes Crown Land Services.

CHAIR - Minister, do you have any specific questions about grants and subsidies? . The notes on grants, subsidies and capital investment clearly outlines what the money is used for. It is not that the committee is not interested. It has been clearly outlined.

Inland Fisheries

Mr ROCKLIFF - I invite Neil Morrow, the Acting Director of Inland Fisheries.

Mr FINCH - The Government contribution to Inland Fisheries Service is static over the forward Estimates. Surely the costs are increasing? Why are the allocations static?

Mr ROCKLIFF - When there were savings measures across government in the 2014 budget, the IFS did not have any savings measures applied to it. There was an increased money for an additional IFS officer for the north west coast. The IFS manage their finances extremely well and have enormous capability among their team. Predominately they are involved with the carp management program, which is important to the IFS operations.

Mr FINCH - That is due to be completed in 2018-19 according to the budget papers. Is that on target?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is on target. I met with the carp management team recently in a workshop. They have done an extraordinary job in very difficult and sometimes heartbreaking circumstances. When there was a spurning back in 2009, Neil was there and did not have to quite go back to the drawing board, but still.

Mr FINCH - I thought you were going to mention limited funds they had to work with?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There has been federal and state government contribution to the carp management program. The funds will continue until every last carp is gone. If you go to the open day at Liawenee, as I have done for the last four years and did a few weekends ago, and see thousands of people turn up, you will see the value of the Fisheries Service and how important it is to Tasmania and the great recreational pursuit.

Mr FINCH - You should have a kill a carp day. Does that have a nice ring to it?

Mr MORROW - Unfortunately, or fortunately, there are not very many left so you wouldn't have a great level of participation.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is estimated that fewer than 200 carp remain in Lake Sorell and the population is on track to eradication by 2018-19. We won't be getting down to 10 carp and stopping. We will be getting rid of every single one of them. John Diggle's team and Neil have done a fantastic job.

CHAIR - The cat management team can take a leaf out of that book.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Any eradication project can look at Tasmania as a great example.

Mr MORROW - In some areas.

Mr FINCH - On a positive note, the World Fly Fishing Championships are coming here in 2019. Do we have any details of that? Locations and that sort of thing?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is late 2019. I met with the organising committee the other day who are liaising and working with Tourism Tasmania. It is a very exciting opportunity for Tasmania. Many hundreds of thousands of international visitors are coming to New Zealand to fish their fishery, and it is a huge income earner. We are not that far away, across ditch. The opportunity during the world championships for promotion will be important in capturing some of that market in the future.

Mr FINCH - Has the organising committee required funding?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. We are working with the organising committee now. We have had a very close relationship with the IFS to date.

Mr MORROW - The Inland Fisheries Service funded last year's visit to the world championships in Vail, Colorado by a representative from Fly Fish Australia, to investigate how that event was run, and to bring that knowledge back to Tasmania for us to use at the 2019 championship.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Teams from 30 countries will compete in a World Fly Fishing Championships in 2019; 800 anglers and support crew will stay in the north, predominantly between when the event is held on 30 November to 7 December 2019. We need to maximise the opportunity of the event so we can leverage off it to get more tourists here fishing our inland waters.

Mr DEAN - This is one area, Inland Fisheries, that is critical to Tasmania. I always sing their praises. I think they do a wonderful job. It is an important thing for Tasmania. My question is about trout fisheries. Are we sufficiently stocked throughout Tasmania for the championships that will be occurring?

Mr MORROW - You asked before where it was going to be based. The championships will be based at the Country Club in Launceston. The venues will need to be within a certain radius of the base, so will be predominantly around the north, but could also go into the central plateau. We are working with the organising committee before the event to monitor the performance of fisheries within that radius, so the best fisheries can be selected as part of the championship. We will supplement fish stocks to make sure the fishing is as good as we can make it. Environmental factors such as lake levels and river flows will help determine the final venues for the championship.

Mr DEAN - Will some of those lakes be cut off, minister, to the local fishermen during this period or prior to the championships occurring?

Mr ROCKLIFF - During the one-week period they will be.

Mr MORROW - There is some discussion between Fly Fish Australia and Inland Fisheries about whether any of those fisheries need their access limited. Some of the rivers that were available in the Vail championships, for instance, had their access limited for a short period prior to the championships. We have not made a decision at this stage. It will depend on the venues.

Mr DEAN - What area is causing concern in relation to fish poaching offences? Is there an increase in the number of offences being detected? I always ask the question and I always get the answer.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Compliance is an important role IFS plays in protecting our fishery so we can have fly fishing championships. There are 11 authorised officers who enforce the legislation. From the period of 1 July 2016 to 31 May 2017 fisheries officers inspected 4008 recreational angling licences and 101 recreational whitebait licences. Interagency cooperation with Tasmania Police and Parks and Wildlife is important. That collaboration and cooperation has resulted in significant enforcement activity in inland waters.

A total of 24 freshwater crayfish nets, four baited lines, nine whitebait nets and two graball nets were seized during the period. One person was convicted of two offences against an officer. Three people were convicted of seven whitebait and general fishery compliance offences. Six further

defendants are currently before the Magistrates Court for plea and sentencing on 54 charges. One person was convicted for possession of freshwater crayfish.

Mr DEAN - Is that an increase?

Mr MORROW - During inspection we get predominantly about 97 per cent compliance with the regulations. There is a very high level of compliance and always only a small incidence of non-compliance. We have not seen any significant increase.

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of infringement notice offences, for the 2015-16 year there were 129, for the 2016-17 year 78. Normal cautions and infringement notice offences issued as conditional cautions 47 in 2015-16, and 37 2016-17. There were 36 prosecution offences in the Magistrates Court in 2015-16 and 64 in 2016-17.

Mr DEAN - A big increase there.

Mr MORROW - A significant number of those were related to six defendants. Fifty-four charges were those six, which are currently before the courts.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Minister, that is the end of that particular area. I will invite you to put your racing hat on and we will invite your support team to the table for racing.

Minister for Racing

Output 5

5.1 Racing regulation and policy -

CHAIR - Welcome, Robin Thompson who is acting in the role and welcome to your first Estimates in the role. Minister, I am sure you have a very brief overview.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I do and it is brief. I welcome John Whittington and Tim Baker. The racing industry is a significant contributor to the Tasmanian economy, annually accounting for about 1000 full-time equivalent jobs resulting in an injection of around \$55 million as wages. The overall economic figure and benefit is over \$100 million.

The industry and Government are united in their endeavours to lead the nation in positive animal welfare outcomes. A significant component to maintaining social licence is ensuring the industry has an exemplary animal welfare record. To achieve this outcome the Government through the Office of Racing Integrity, ORI, is working closely with Tasracing and the peak industry groups representing three racing codes. The Director of Racing, through ORI, has a statutory responsibility for the delivery of integrity functions, separate from the business of racing - it is managed by Tasracing. While ORI and Tasracing have a collegiate working relationship it is appropriate their roles maintain sufficient separation so as to guarantee integrity can never be compromised or perceived to be compromised.

Ensuring best practice animal welfare in all racing codes is a high priority for our Government. We are working closely with the industry to implement our actions in response to the Joint Select Committee Report on Greyhound Racing. The appointments of a regulatory vet and an additional investigating steward within ORI have significantly enhanced animal welfare education compliance strategies. ORI has also completed implementing a whole-of-life racing live tracking system for

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greyhounds and has increased the frequency of inspections at private training facilities. While the work of ORI and animal welfare inspectors is supported by significant legislation, education is the preferred strategy for cultural change in the industry. Tasracing, ORI and other divisions within the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment are working collaboratively with industry and peak bodies to support the greyhound racing industry in making reforms that will help meet contemporary community expectations as they should.

CHAIR - Thank you. Some really important points there. I am pleased to see that the Government is taking on board the work of the enquiry into the greyhound industry.

Mr DEAN - Thank you. I have heaps of questions here. I will have to leave this open as well. The minister has indicated he does not support the position of the Greens, I do not need to go into that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have indicated that, yes. As has the Shadow Minister for Racing as well.

Mr DEAN - Are the number of people engaged in the business of racing in Tasmania and the number of people employed increasing? Are we stagnating? At one stage we were moving backwards.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Scrutiny is specific to the Office of Racing Integrity, which is separate from Tasracing. The industry is on a sustainable footing. Tasracing, for example, made its first ever profit last year. That was as a result of some challenging measures during the state's reset.

Certainty is good. People within the industry can gain some comfort that there is ongoing investment of \$43 million over the next five years in capital infrastructure on racecourses. The budget for ORI is significant. The \$30 million deed is also very important. If we can go to the deed?

CHAIR - We are not there yet. We are onto racing regulation. We have not got to the deed yet.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The persons licensed or registered in Performance Information Output Group 5, comprised 1 696 in 2014-15 and 1 675 in 2015-16. The target for this year and next year is that there be 1 700 in each of those years, so a slight increase.

CHAIR - Do we know how those reductions have spread across those three codes? Do we keep that data?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We would have the data.

CHAIR - I know it is only 29 or 30. But can we have that? The reduction of licences across the codes, licensed and registered?

Mr ROCKLIFF - You are talking about that reduction of 21.

CHAIR - 29.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The allocation of the licences in that figure and how they are broken up between harness and thoroughbred and greyhound? We can take that on notice and provide that information to the committee.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr DEAN - What is Tasracing and ORI doing about the official threshold for oripavine, which has contaminated some horse feed?

Is it going to continue to fine owners whose horses are tested and found to have oripavine in their systems, even though it has no official threshold to be tested against? Is Tasracing and ORI going to decide on an official threshold for the substance?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I won't discuss any matters in relation to a specific situation regarding this. In the general sense oripavine is a prohibited substance in horses presented for racing in Australia. If it is found to be present, that horse must be disqualified from any race in which it has participated on the day the substance was detected.

Stewards have discretion regarding the imposition of penalties on horse trainers presenting a horse to race with a prohibited substance. Stewards consider many factors including evidence, plea, societal expectations, penalty precedents in mitigating circumstances when determining the penalty. The argument that the commercial poppy industry in Tasmania results in contamination of locally grown horse feed and thus such contamination is beyond the control of horse trainers cannot be sustained. Racing Australia and Tasracing have confirmed that currently neither body has any plans to change the national or local rules respectively in relation to oripavine detected in thoroughbred horses presented for racing.

A continued dialogue with both bodies will keep the Office Of Racing Integrity informed of any changes to this situation but the Office Of Racing Integrity proposes to work with Poppy Growers Tasmania, AgriGrowth and the racing industry to develop and implement education strategies that will alert the racing industry to the risks of feeding opiate-contaminated feed stuffs to horses and the obligation of poppy growers to control the course poppy regrowth. Have you anything further to add there, Robin?

Mr THOMPSON - No it is a quite a complex area. The important point to remember is that the rules of racing are not the responsibility of ORI, they are determined by the code and the principal bodies relating to that code. ORI's role is to enforce the rules made by these alternative bodies. That is what we are doing through the actions of our stewards. That is what we have done in relation to oripavine.

Mr DEAN - Have you discussed with the industry what you think should happen?

Mr THOMPSON - We have had lots of discussions with Tasracing and peak bodies on the national and local scene about thoroughbreds. As the minister outlined, there is no appetite to change the rules on prohibited substances found in racing animals, in thoroughbreds. ORI is responsible for monitoring those prohibited substances and determining a consequence for those substances having been found in racing animals.

Mr FINCH - Drug testing is now described as more targeted. How is it more targeted? How are the targets identified?

Mr THOMPSON - We can be smarter in the way we detect incursions, whether it be an insect pest or a prohibited substance in an animal. We are doing risk analysis associated with determining which horses might be targeted or which racing dogs might be targeted. I think people come into this too.

Some of the triggers for targeting might be extraordinary performance - whether it is a very good performance or a very poor performance. It might be some history in relation to that animal and its management, rather than just a random event, which is not strategic and might mean that we have to test a lot more animals than we normally would in a more strategic approach.

Mr FINCH - Are there enough personnel to cover this testing program that you are talking about?

Mr THOMPSON - Yes. That is why we need to use our resources smarter, particularly with the appointment of our regulatory vet, who is leading the investigations unit on animal welfare and prohibited substances.

Mr DEAN - Referring to table 97 on suspensions and disqualifications and fines imposed, it is quite high. In 2015-16 the figure was 519. The target for this year is 450. How are we going with that target? Have we kept the number of fine suspensions down? Why are these actions being taken? Is there a lack of education, or are there too many people not wanting to do the right thing?

Mr ROCKLIFF - In the period between 1 July 2016 and 30 April this year, there were 684 fines, suspensions and disqualifications issued by stewards.

Mr DEAN - That has gone up significantly.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The level has remained relatively constant over the past number of years. Any determination by stewards to issue a suspension, disqualification or fine, has a right of appeal by the participant and the Tasmanian Racing Appeal Board, which is a statutory body. Of the 684 fines, suspensions and disqualifications in the period mentioned above, 24 progressed to appeal, resulting in three being upheld, three being varied and the remainder dismissed, withdrawn or pending. As to the breakdown of that -

Mr DEAN - Just an idea of the types of offences that are occurring to give cause.

Mr THOMPSON - Most of them happen on race tracks. It is transgression from the rules of racing in the various three codes. The harness code is perhaps much more complex than the other two codes in its rules. There are more indiscretions.

The area that is getting a lot of attention has been use of the whip and the rules associated with using the whip. Stewards have been persistent in their interpretation of that rule. As the minister said in his opening remarks, education is going to become a much more important way of managing racing. We have to use education as a compliance tool, certainly in the initial stages, rather than a fine or a penalty, which often does not lead to a change of behaviour. The ideal outcome would be no fines and no suspensions, but that is not how the world works.

Mr FINCH - When was that 684 for, minister?

Mr ROCKLIFF - 1 July 2016 to 30 April 2017.

Mr FINCH - There are figures in the rule book, 519 in 2015-16. Is that correct?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, it is. That is accurate.

Mr FINCH - Then it goes down -

CHAIR - That is only a target.

Mr FINCH - That is the target?

Mr ROCKLIFF - A target.

Mr FINCH - Then expecting an increase in the target in 2017-18 of 20. If you cleaned up the act, the target is interesting. You are expecting it to increase?

Mr THOMPSON - It depends on how many races there are each year. That does vary between the years. If you have more races, there is more probability of a transgression of the rules.

Mr DEAN - If education is right though, one should not expect more.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, you should not expect more.

Mr DEAN - Then if you have more stewards. Bringing in from the mainland is another question. What is ORI doing and TasRacing doing to train more stewards in this state? What is the cost of bringing in those stewards from the mainland? Do we have enough stewards? If stewards are returning this type of behaviour, then there are questions about that.

CHAIR - I am mindful that we are going to be taking a few minutes of our lunch hour, so we need to keep our answers and our questions brief.

Mr DEAN - I will not ask any more questions after this one. I have a heap that I will not ask.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Office of Racing Integrity is concentrating on job-specific training for full-time stewards to improve productivity, as well as up-skilling and possibly getting casual stewards. With recent shortages of racing stewards, ORI has engaged highly qualified and experienced stewards from mainland states. This has provided our Tasmanian stewards with access to alternative approaches and strategies that would improve their capabilities, and ensure local races remain professionally administered.

ORI is currently developing a stewards exchange program in conjunction with interstate integrity bodies. This will enable Tasmanian stewards to attend race meetings in other jurisdictions, initially at commencement of employment and at regular intervals during their career. Stewards have undertaken professional development with attendance at interstate conferences, as well as gaining international experience at the invitation of the New Zealand Racing Integrity body -

Mr DEAN - Cost?

Mr THOMPSON - I guess it is a little complicated as we are bringing a lot of stewards in at the moment because we have permanent stewards who are on leave or absent from the workplace. That is to fill the gap that has been created by those absences. It is not the long-term strategy to have a large contingent of -

Mr DEAN - Is that an industry cost or is it a cost to ORI?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is a cost to ORI. We funded two additional positions in the Office of Racing Integrity - that is, the racing integrity manager and a second steward investigator.

Mr DEAN - What has been the cost to ORI of bringing those mainland stewards over here when you compare it with what we are paying our stewards here?

Mr THOMPSON - We would need to take that on notice.

Mr WILLIE - Last year in GBE Estimates we talked about the Tascorp move and you said you had not had any introductory talks. This year you advised the shadow minister that representatives from Tabcorp and Tatts have met with the Government. As part of that merger there is \$20 million going to states that have a Tatts licence, except there is no money going to Tasmania. You said you were happy to take up the mantra on behalf of the racing industry, minister, but there does not seem to be a result there.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Notwithstanding that question is outside of the purview of this scrutiny of the Office of Racing Integrity, I am happy to answer it as a gesture of goodwill. It is different in Tasmania and I have said that to the shadow minister. The proposed merger between Tabcorp Holdings and the Tatts Group is supported by Tasracing. However, the merger remains subject to relevant approvals. Tabcorp and Tatts representatives have met with the Government, Tasracing and members of the racing industry. Tasracing continues to be kept updated on those developments. The Government and Tasracing will continue to work with Tabcorp and Tatts, as well as other wagering providers, to ensure the racing industry in Tasmania receives optimal returns from wagering on its Tasmanian products. You mentioned a \$20 million figure, \$50 million was the figure we used last year.

Mr WILLIE - It was \$50 million in total, but \$20 million going to the states with a Tatts licence. Tasmania is one of those but is not getting a share of that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Tabcorp has communicated its commitment to the Tasmanian racing industry and proposed plans for development in the state, including potential investment in new products. Digital wagering, for example. The relationship between Tabcorp and Tasracing is a good one. In 2016, they executed a 10-year deal for the broadcast of Tasmanian racing on Sky. This agreement also includes sponsorship arrangements. Suggestions that \$50 million has been paid to racing jurisdictions around Australia to ensure their support of the merger is incorrect. The \$50 million is an estimate of the benefits that may flow to jurisdictions where racing industry funding is directly linked to the local TOTE. It is different in Tasmania because our racing industry is funded by the deed, which is \$30 million. The race field fees is another source of revenue, which is probably between \$7 million-\$8 million.

The legislation we put through Parliament in 2014-15 enabled Tasracing to have greater flexibility in moving with the market conditions to set their level for Tasmanian racing product. That has resulted in increasing revenue to the Tasmanian racing industry. There are jurisdictions

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around Australia that are entirely funded from the proceeds of wagering and corporates. In Tasmania, \$30 million a year of taxpayer funds go into supporting our racing industry.

CHAIR - We know Tasracing determines the number of races, but it is ORI that looks at the harness races handicaps and the grading of greyhound races. There was some discussion about introducing different gradings, different levels of races for greyhounds. How are those negotiations with the industry progressing?

Mr THOMPSON - Am I interpreting your question to mean there have been changes in the types of races that have been offered, particularly for animals of lesser ability or older animals?

CHAIR - That was what was proposed with greyhounds.

Mr THOMPSON - That is happening. Last week at a Launceston Greyhound Club meeting it was obvious some of those races were happening. There was some competitive fields even though they are much slower than the more competitive animals. It is lengthening the racing life of those animals.

CHAIR - The committee heard about the racing life of the greyhound. That is good news.

The relationship between Tasracing and ORI has not always been harmonious, minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The arrangement is sound, that separation between commercial and integrity.

At times the relationship has been strained. In recent times, and Robin can probably back this up, there has been a stronger working relationship between Tasracing and the Office of Racing Integrity. It is important to keep commercial and integrity very separate and we chose deliberately to keep it so. We will increase our race field fees with people betting on our races. If punters do not have faith in the integrity of a racing jurisdiction, they will not bet on the races. It is important we continue our strong investment in integrity functions and keep them very separate.

CHAIR - I thank the minister and his team and members for helping catch up on time. I will do my best to be firmer in the afternoon, otherwise we will need all the time we have. We will suspend and recommence at 2 o'clock with Education. Thank you very much for all those who have assisted this morning.

The committee suspended from 1.03 p.m. to 2.01 p.m.

DIVISION 1

Department of Education

Minister for Education and Training

CHAIR - Welcome back members, welcome back minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have the Secretary of Education Jenny Gale and Deputy Secretary Tim Bullard at the table. Others will come in at other times.

Thanks, Chair, if I may proceed with an opening statement.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to investing in and improving educational outcomes in Tasmania. Education is fundamental to the success and growth of Tasmania. Every child has the right to receive a high quality education.

The 2017-18 Budget builds a strong investment in our education and training system, delivering a record \$6.36 billion commitment over the next four years. This investment will support the education of Tasmanian students to build Tasmania's future and to help grow our state. Importantly, we are fulfilling our Gonski pledge over the full six years of the original Gonski agreement. This represents \$134 million of state government funding over six years to 2019 including \$98 million for the government school sector and \$36 million for the non-government school sector.

A \$92.1 million investment of state and federal additional funding for government schools in 2017-18 is \$4.7 million more than the amount last year, with a primary focus on investment in supporting student learning and wellbeing initiatives.

There is also significant funding in this Budget to implement the new Education Act which provides a strong framework to support our commitment to provide every child with the opportunity to continue to learn and to reach their full potential. Total funding of \$56.9 million over four years to implement the provisions of the new act will ensure there is a contemporary and cohesive legislation framework in place to support the improvement of student outcomes, and support the education and care sector through the transition of a voluntary earlier school starting age.

The Government is committed to education reform and making the additional investment required to achieve it, with implementation of the new act to commence on 10 July 2017.

The first new education act in more than 20 years is the foundation that will support improved education results in Tasmania and a significant step in closing the gap where currently Tasmanian students can receive up to two years less education than their interstate counterparts.

Another important element of this Budget is recognising student wellbeing has a significant impact on their ability to learn. For this reason we have made significant investments in this area. Funding of \$1.6 million over four years will establish a child and student wellbeing unit responsible for implementing a new child and student wellbeing strategy in government schools and supporting on-ground delivery and development of the strategy and associated professional learning.

There is \$4 million over four years to extend school health nurses to district schools with a focus on school-wide health promotion, prevention and early detection. This will deliver a further 7.7 full-time equivalent nurses and an additional nurse manager. There will \$6.9 million over four years to employ an additional 14.8 full-time equivalent professional support staff to ensure the health and wellbeing needs of students in government schools including speech pathologists, psychologists and social workers. There will be \$5 million over four years for students' re-engagement programs, which will also include funding a project coordinator to work with external parties to determine the most effective evidence-based models.

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There is also a grant funding for Stay ChatTY, to assist suicide prevention and mental health awareness and strategies to help improve the well-being of our school principals in response to the Riley Report.

This Budget also provides ongoing funding reforms supporting students with disabilities, including \$12 million over four years to complement the 2014 ministerial taskforce reforms and recommendations.

There is \$6 million more for students with disabilities in the recent Budget than there was last year. Under this Government, the funding for students with disabilities is \$16 million more than it was under previous governments.

These reforms help schools to be disability ready and responsive, continuously improving teaching, and learning to work with communities in partnership and align resources to ensure inclusive education practice.

This includes the establishment of new autism support classes at two northern primary schools following the completion of a pilot model at Lindisfarne North Primary School and an introduction of a support class at Rose Bay High School.

This Budget continues our strong investment in the future of Tasmania's students with \$28.8 million over four years committed to government school infrastructure projects, including an additional \$4.5 million provided over three years for ongoing capital investment to ensure our year 11 and 12 extension schools can provide appropriate senior secondary learning environments. It builds on the significant investment in school infrastructure in recent budgets, to maintain the total school capital program for government schools at more than \$110 million over the forward Estimates.

I am also pleased to announce today, the Department of Education has released its critical incident and emergency procedures in a dynamic format. This app can be used by relevant staff across the department, and has been developed primarily for site managers, such as school principals.

It supports the procedures by providing step-by-step instructions and information at the user's fingertips. It contains all emergency contacts in a quick, portable and easy-to-use format.

These procedures are an important component of the department's emergency management framework and I believe this will be a very effective strategy in assisting to improve principal well being. It is another commitment of this Budget by providing them with a new tool that will assist them to deal with critical incidents in their work place.

I believe this will be a positive strategy for improving principal well being by providing senior staff with a tool that assists them to deal with critical incidents more effectively at their work place.

Another announcement I would like to make today relates to this Government's contribution to the increasing acknowledgment of our shared history with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community. As part of this, the department has developed a number of new resources to support the focus on Tasmanian Aboriginal history and culture in curriculum delivery.

This suite of resources ensures that our rich history is shared competently and effectively in the classroom, with a series of five classroom videos providing professional learning for teachers developed along with two videos supporting the implementation of the educational resource, Gumnuts to Buttons.

Additional multi media resources will also be available in classrooms this year.

This Government is committed to closing the gap in education outcomes for Aboriginal students, and these resources will be a valuable addition to all classrooms around the state, ensuring that Aboriginal culture and history is shared and learned by all our students. We are proud of this Government's strong investment in education and training in Tasmania, and of delivering a Budget that shows that we are committed to our promises to provide Tasmanians the opportunity to learn and to reach their full potential to lead fulfilling and productive lives and to contribute positively to the community. It is one of the single most important investments that we can make.

Education is the cornerstone of Tasmania's economic and social improvement and we will continue to build on our key policies to improve educational outcomes and raise the value of education in Tasmania. This Budget share is another example of our huge commitment to education in this state.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Minister. It was certainly a comprehensive overview. I know that we will spend some time on 1.1 In School Education. I am going to invite the member for Elwick, Mr Willie, to commence the questions.

Output group 1 Education

1.1 In School Education -

Mr WILLIE - Minister, what is the difference in dollar terms for public schools between the Gonski 2.0 federal funding in 2018 and 2019 and the original Gonski deal?

Mr ROCKLIFF - What it means is \$186 million more over 10 years, that was promised ...

Mr WILLIE - I am asking for 2018-19.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We cannot deal with those figures because an election was held, an election was won by the federal government and we have \$186 million more over 10 years more than was promised in the July election last year. Gonski 2.0 is about fairness and equity. I can accept your view, Mr Willie, as a teacher and as an educator that the more funds that we put into education the better. There will always be arguments and political parties putting forward alternatives regarding funding for education. When it comes to applying funding to education in Australia, the Gonski 2.0 model is the fairest system.

A conference of the Australian Education Union invited myself and the shadow minister for education to speak. I said good on them for arguing for as much funding for education as possible, but when you argue for that funding and you apply the funds it is fairer to apply it to Gonski 2.0 than it is to Gonski 1.0. Otherwise you would not have had David Gonski standing beside the Prime Minister launching Gonski 2.0. David Gonski and other architects such as Ken Boston realise that

the 27 different agreements around the country where you favoured wealthy, private schools at the expense of schools of disadvantaged -

Mr WILLIE - Minister, I have asked for a question on 2018 and 2019. I have let you go a little bit but I would prefer you to address my question. Are you going to give me a dollar figure in the difference between the two deals?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Can I just say, Mr Willie, that this Government is committed to the six years of Gonski and there has been various figures around about cuts to education. There is no cuts to education as a result of Gonski 2.0. None, absolutely no cuts at all.

Mr WILLIE - What is the difference in dollar terms between 2018 and 2019?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will tell you the difference. The difference is real money versus play money and magic money

Mr WILLIE - With the greatest respect, minister, you are the only Education minister in the country who is arguing this is a better deal. We had an unprecedented situation in New South Wales last week where Liberal, Labor, Greens education spokespeople, the AEU principal, parents, holding a joint press conference saying this was a bad deal.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The fairness of Gonski 2.0 is good. Gonski 2.0 is a fairer funding model. Bill Shorten or Malcolm Turnbull or whoever wants to promise more funds to education, good on them, but you apply those additional funds for education based on the Gonski 2.0 principles. Let us fix the system of fairness to make it fairer than Gonski 1.0. As someone who supports needs-based funding, I will always argue for more funding. The original deal, Mr Willie was not signed by the Tasmanian, unlike New South Wales which claimed to have some legal case, they actually signed. This Government did not. So when I look at a funding formula that is fairer, that does not favour wealthy mainland private schools and expensive schools to disadvantaged, I accept that this a fairer model. I accept that I would have liked more funding, along the lines of Gonski 1.0, 5.0 and 6.0. We committed to Gonski 5.0 and 6.0.

Mr WILLIE - Why are you not fighting for the original deal like every other education minister in the country?

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is a fairer system, Mr Willie. The system before was not fair. That is why you had David Gonski standing right beside the Prime Minister supporting the Gonski 2.0 funding deal. I am not going to say no to an extra \$186 million that I did not expect to get after the July election.

Mr WILLIE - So you are saying that our kids in school now can wait for that funding; is that what you are saying?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am saying our students in our classrooms can expect growth funding, real dollars over the next 10 years rather than magic money that has been proposed by the federal opposition. They were all over the place when it came to whether or not they supported it. They got themselves into a right tizz for a couple of days.

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What I am interested in is needs-based funding. I am always interested in more funding, but I am most interested when you apply funds to ensure that it is based on the Gonski principles of fairness and equity and needs-based funding.

Mr WILLIE - I think that would be pretty hard to swallow for a lot of parents and for our kids with high needs over the next couple of years if they are not going to receive the help they need.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You are assuming, Mr Willie, that I will not be advocating for more funding with my federal counterparts. That is not the case, but I want a fairer system. I am pleased we have \$186 million more over the next 10 years going into our schools. It is sector blind. This is where it is important. Sector-blind funding means irrespective of non-government, Catholic or government sector, the resources apply based on need. I have been to some non-government independent schools on the eastern shore, for example, that have high needs. The Catholic sector have high needs. Our government schools are in areas of high need as well. You take away the blinkers and all the special deals for non-govs and independents and you apply the resource fairly, based on need. That is what Gonski 2.0 is all about. That is why David Gonski supports it.

Mr WILLIE - We could go around in circles. If I could ask a couple of questions to put on notice and then I will move to another topic. I am happy for these to be put on notice, minister. I am interested in the growth in state funding in public schools each year since 2014-15 over the forward Estimates, in increase and percentage terms. I would like a school-by-school breakdown. I am also interested in the growth in state funding to non-government schools since 2014-15, increase and percentage, a total and school-by-school, too.

A total of \$56.9 million has been allocated for the implementation of the Education Act. How much of that money is going to professional learning? Can you guarantee that a teacher who has had training in play-based pedagogies will be in every kindergarten classroom? Not a primary school teacher, not an ECE teacher, someone who has had training in play-based pedagogies?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That \$57 million is largely about more staff. One hundred and sixty more teachers and support staff, for example. Also \$4.9 million has also been allocated to teacher aides in our prep classes, as part of that \$57 million. We have discussed this at length during scrutiny in the lower House with my opposite number, Ms O'Byrne. Our kindergartens will be based on the national quality standards. When it comes to professional learning, we have \$3 million funding over four years to refocus teaching and learning in the early years of education, from kindergarten to year 2 to ensure that high quality and age-appropriate pedagogies are used in all government primary schools.

Mr WILLIE - Can you guarantee there will be an appropriately qualified teacher in play-based pedagogy in every kindergarten in the state?

Mr ROCKLIFF - This initiative will take place over the three calendar years from 2018 to 2020 inclusive. The allocation this year is \$485 000. All I can guarantee, Mr Willie, is that everyone will be assessed against the National Quality Standard.

Mr WILLIE - So that includes that they would have had training in play-based pedagogies in every classroom?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

CHAIR - Minister, what happens if the ministerial order regarding the voluntary early starting age does not pass both Houses? Is any of this funding affected if it doesn't pass?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have to re-prioritise funding; I cannot say all of the funding but we would have to have another look at it and see where that funding is best placed and how we can utilise a resource to ensure quality early learning. I have always said here, this is really just extending our universal education system - voluntary, play-based and parents' choice. I cannot think of a fairer system or even a system aligned with the principles of Gonski. I struggle sometimes, with all due respect, with Mr Willie's side of politics and the Australian Education Union for not wanting to support more investment in teachers in our schools and allow, if parents want it, voluntary earlier access. I really struggle with that as a person committed to social justice.

Mr WILLIE - No, it is about the best policy response. I am not going to be verballed by the minister, Chair. There are other ways of doing things. That is your policy response. We are not saying to restrict access, that is wrong. We are saying let us find the best policy response. We have both acknowledged that play-based learning is advantageous for children's development. We need to make sure that the community is included in this change. Previous governments have made similar mistakes - and I have said this on the record before - top-down structural changes, as soon as the implementation is going badly, if there is division in the community, it will end badly and there will lots of money wasted.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We do not want to waste the money that your government wasted for so many years.

Mr WILLIE - You are making the same mistakes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I accept that and this is why we are consulting. Incidentally, on your previous questions, teachers must have an approved early childhood qualification.

Mr WILLIE - I acknowledged that at the start.

CHAIR - It was actually my question whether that money still remains in the Budget for what is planned should that ministerial order not progress through the Parliament.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The right of every child from kinder to year 2 to be supported by developmentally appropriate learning frameworks that support the delivery of an enquiry-based curriculum will stand regardless of the outcomes of the starting age. We will have to apply resources elsewhere to support that because it could clearly be a different model.

CHAIR - Possibly through the early childhood education and care sector?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I do not want to be specific about that. I do not want to privatise completely early childhood education either. I believe in a very strong universal government system of education. The alternative view from the Opposition is to invest in child and family centres and their policy is to have 12 less child and family centres in 2022 than they promised back in 2010.

Mr WILLIE - You acknowledged child and family centres are working very well, but you refuse to build any more.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I do not believe that at all. They are brilliant.

Mr WILLIE - Yet there is no allocation in the forward Estimates.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There has been an increased allocation to existing child and family centres that we have come up with as a result of Professor Sue Jenkins'[OK] work when she assessed child and family centres and suggested more resource would be of great value to those child and family centres. I think they are fantastic. I also remember a time, and you might remember this, when your government put forward the idea of child and family centres and it was fought against by the early education and care sector at the time. I am not sure what their view is. I think it is lukewarm about the idea of six more, but I support them. To the question, 'Do we need more?', I have always said, 'Yes, we do'.

Mr WILLIE - You are not fighting for that at the Cabinet table. There is no allocation in the Budget for it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - All my colleagues would say that I fight very hard for Education at the Cabinet table.

Mr WILLIE - I did not say Education. I said building new child and family centres.

Ms LOVELL - I am asking this question but I am anticipating that you will need to take it on notice because there is quite an amount of data required. I have it in writing to table as well and I am happy to do that. The question I have for you: is how many employees are employed at each school and in total, both in the numbers employed in FTEs, and in terms of a head count, and in each classification and band level? I am not expecting you to reel those numbers off the top of your head.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can take on notice the classification of band level. I do have some FTE figures somewhere on employees. If we go to employee number by sector, in the primary sector there are 3238.17 FTEs and 4318 heads, where the head count is a variation of plus 128 on the previous year and 93.46 plus on the previous year when it comes to FTEs. For combined schools - the district high schools, for example, I spoke about that with the district nurses - March 2016 to March 2017 it is 873.62 FTEs, an additional 38.45 FTEs on the previous year; the head count is 1109, which is an additional 34 compared to last year's 1075. For secondary schools it is 1505.22 FTEs, that is 6.03 more than the previous year; head count is 1793, which 10 more than the previous year, March to March again. For senior secondary schools it is 756.34 FTEs, up 5.86 compared to last year; head count is 954, up 12 from March 2016. For special schools it is 230.42 FTEs, up 12.86 on the previous year; head count is 340, compared to 327 the previous year, so 13 extra.

Student support is 160.58 FTEs, up 9.06 from the previous year; head count is 215, up 13 on the previous year. Learning Services is 45.57 FTEs, up 14.57 on the previous year; head count is 47, and there is a variation to the positive of 16. School support, in Learning Services, it is 59.23 FTE, a variation to the positive of 6.34; a head count of 71, a variation to the positive of 13. If you look at all the in-school sector total, we have 6869.15 FTE positions, which is 186.63 more than the previous year. If you look at the actual head count in-school, it is 8847 head count in March 2017; compared to the previous year, that is an increase of 239 variation.

Our key data report will be released this week, which will have school by school figures for staffing and schools resource allocations, which was your question.

Mr WILLIE - State funding - separated?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, well, total funding?

Mr WILLIE - No. My question was state-based funding, the two I put on notice.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We can endeavour -

Mr WILLIE - I am sure the Government is aware of how much money they have put into education.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, we have got it.

Mr WILLIE - I want a breakdown of state-based funding.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Are you talking about each state school?

Mr WILLIE - I want the amount of money the state is putting into each school, and a total figure, not a global figure with federal and state money together. I want the state breakdown from 14-15 onwards for private and public schools.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. We are applying those funds based on the original Gonski agreement when it comes to non government, catholic and state schools, which was signed in - it was not signed actually, in 2013. We are using the same allocation as the previous government. We can get those figures. You can access My School website. I do have some other figures which -

CHAIR - Relating to the question asked by the member for Rumney?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, and covers LINC. I can put those on notice.

Ms LOVELL - You have given me what I need so far. Can I clarify, were those figures current at March 2017? Was that correct?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Ms LOVELL - They are updated quarterly. Is that right?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Annually. They are annual figures. The previous figures were March 2016.

Ms LOVELL - There will not be new figures until March next year. Is that correct?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is my understanding.

Ms LOVELL - I will table that question, Chair.

Mr DEAN - There is a degree of complexity around the question. It is a question brought to my attention by a senior teacher, on behalf of many teachers in the state. I need to relay the question to you as given to me. Currently teachers have to assess students mid-year and end of year - report

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on a scale A to E. That is A, B, C, D or E. This is very difficult because the Tasmanian Department of Education will not tell teachers what the difference between an A and B or D and E is.

The National Assessment and Reporting Authority only assist teachers by showing them what students can do at a C standard. They have work samples above C standard, but do not say whether it is a B or an A.

Likewise the same for below C. They show a work sample, but do not say whether there is a D or an E. Some states have created their own guide to assist teachers such as Western Australia.

I have a website here but I have not had a chance to look at it. It clearly shows teachers what a student can do if the work is at an A standard or a B standard et cetera. Western Australia and other states have done this for learning new areas like maths, English et cetera.

Tasmania has nothing to assist teachers. The only thing Tasmania does, is it has a moderation meeting twice a year where teachers get together to discuss what an A, B, C, D or E looks like. As no one knows what the difference between an A and B or a D and E is, the conversation is always 'well we think this is an A because'.

We have had moderation days for five years, focused on the Australian curriculum and teachers are still asking for the same thing. Tell or show us the difference between A and B and D and E, so across the state assessment will be standardised.

How can teachers accurately assess student work? This is clearly an issue. How would a teacher answer a parent question? Question is 'my child has been assessed at a B rating. What would they need to do to be an A?'

The DOE has identified some schools ratings of students as being quite different from the NAPLAN ratings. That is another issue. The ratings the same student received. Perhaps this is one reason why this is occurring.

What is the difference between a student in Grade 2 who received a B rating in English and a student in Grade 2 who received an A rating. The question is what is the DOE doing to assist teachers to assist student's work on the A to E rating system?

CHAIR - Why have they not asked the question of learning services? We will ask the minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have asked Mr Dean. Mr Dean has relayed that question perhaps from a teacher.

Mr DEAN - It is from a senior teacher on behalf of many teachers wanting advice.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This budget allocated \$250 000 to engage an external consultant to undertake a review of assessment in supporting processes in Tasmanian Government schools. The aim of the review is to review current assessment and reporting of student progress against the curriculum and to provide parents with a better understanding of how their child is performing in core curriculum areas such as literacy and numeracy.

An improved assessment and reporting approach will assist in lifting educational outcomes for all Tasmanian students, which is the key priority of the Government and all of us.

The intention of the review is to inform of potential improvement in three key areas. Improve student learning, deliver recommendations that support teachers to understand and implement the assessment and reporting processes and procedures needed to measure and build on progress and report areas of the Australian curriculum.

More meaningful and contemporary reporting to parents and students. Determine the extent teachers understand and the current requirements. Confirm how the current A to E ratings are applied and understood by teachers, students and parents.

Examine contemporary systemic ways of reporting on student progress and increased efficiency of assessment and reporting for teachers which contribute to more efficient assessment and reporting by auditing a range of tools currently used by government schools with a view to informing the department's adoption of assessment and reporting approaches at a system level.

What I have answered there takes into account the concerns of your constituent. Your senior teacher appears to have been feeding that view throughout the department of Education. The allocation of \$250 000 is to support that work to make it clearer. The focus on the A to E ratings will assist in that.

Mr DEAN - There are five moderation days. These same teachers have raised exactly the same question, they could never be given an answer. I am not sure your answer satisfies that. They want to know what the difference is between an A and B rating and a D and E rating. Parents ask the question and teachers are at a loss and cannot tell them, because there is no standardised system in place. Western Australia has.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Which is why we have allocated the funding.

Ms GALE - All of our teachers participate in processes around moderation. They have common assessment tasks they look at, assess and then discuss to where it fits in the A-E ratings. They work collaboratively to assess each of those. If there are particular concerns, it would be great if the teacher was able to communicate those directly and we can look specifically at the issues they raise. I am very happy to do that.

Mr DEAN - Who attends moderation days? Is it just the teachers and then it does not go anywhere? They just come together and have a bit of a conflagration and that is the end of it? Is there some senior staff there as part of the process?

Ms GALE - There are curriculum representatives there who bring that back.

Mr DEAN - The question being asked by these teachers is why hasn't it been taken up?

Ms GALE - There are resources being produced all the time by Curriculum Services. I cannot answer the specific in relation to the A-E rating but can look into that. It is the Australian curriculum we are assessing and reporting against.

Mr DEAN - I would appreciate if you can come back to me, that would be good. I will go back to the teachers with the information provided here and see what that does for them.

What is the position with issues involved in schools with drugs and offence being committed within the schools? What is the number of incidents where students have brought drugs or weapons into schools? How are we controlling that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is why we are investing more into health and wellbeing into our schools. We are investing \$280 000 over four years to support our principals with workplace safety. You mentioned drugs and the Critical Incident and Emergency Procedures phone app, launched today covers five key areas: assault, emergency procedures and the like. It will be at teachers, support staff or the principal's fingertips in accessing information to support the students and the school community. This will cover drug and drug overdose related issues and self-harm. I commend the app to you. We have listened a lot and spoken to Malcolm Elliot, who is the head of the Tasmanian Principals Association. Malcolm is a very strong advocate and in particular the area of principal wellbeing. The resource around \$280 000 over four years has been developed through consultation. Malcolm has been very good advocating for other support in schools - schools psychologists, speech pathologists and the like - to support the school environment.

When it comes to suspensions, from 2012-16 because of illegal drugs - in 2015, 119 students. In 2016, that decreased to 105 students. Suspensions in 2015 there were 129 and has come down to 115. A really challenging issue in schools and one, sadly, our principals and our educators and support staff contend with every day. Albeit, it is pleasing the incidence of those matters have decreased over the course of the last 12 months.

Mr DEAN - How do suspensions correlate with the number involved with drugs in schools? I suspect there would be some cases where suspensions did not occur.

Ms GALE - It would be highly correlated.

Mr DEAN - Every drug offender, whatever, are suspended?

Ms GALE - I would not say every. I said it would be highly correlated. It is very likely to reflect the incidence in schools. I cannot guarantee.

CHAIR - Is there more information we need?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Onto Mr Dean's question, the department's Drug Education and Drug Management in Schools Policy is based on the National Drug Strategy and the Tasmanian Drug Strategy. These both advocate harm minimisation to reduce the health, social and economic consequences of drug use. Schools use a policy and procedures in dealing with the issues of students using or in possession of drugs including ice. This involves a balance between demand reduction, supply reduction and harm reduction strategies. School responses are planned, structured and consistent with the National School Drug Education Strategy which is referenced in their policy, where roles and responsibilities of school community members are stated.

There is mandatory reporting for any staff, volunteers or students who disclose or present with drug use. All Tasmanian schools, government and non-government, have a memorandum of understanding with the police, whereby schools and police work closely together to ensure an effective response to drugs in schools. The health and physical education curriculum has content that focuses on alcohol, other drugs, mental health and wellbeing. Through the health and physical education curriculum, drugs, including ice, is dealt with through drug education. These focus areas are covered with increasing complexity from prep through to year 10.

Mr DEAN - Are there any drug issues involving staff, teachers in the Education department?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have not been made aware of any.

CHAIR - There is no mandatory drug testing regime in place for staff?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No.

CHAIR - There is in most other workplaces.

Ms ARMITAGE - With regard to years 11 and 12, can you advise me how many of the high schools have taken up the extensions.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There are 30 high schools taken up the opportunity of high school extensions. They are either direct extension or in a group of schools, such as the teggana Collective, which is made of Rosny College and other surrounding schools, such as Bayview Secondary College, the old Rokeby, Triabunna, Clarence, and Rose Bay. As part of the 30 school extensions there are direct extensions such as Ulverstone High School which started this year and is approaching between 60 and 70 students in years 11 and 12. 38 schools will have participated in total from the commencement of term 1 in 2018 and combination of direct extension and coalitions.

In that context, we were very clear in our policy in 2014 that not one size fits all here and different models could be appropriate. We have encouraged the relationship between our colleges and high schools to strengthen. I see some good examples around the state between Smithton, which is a direct extension school, and Hellyer, between Scottsdale and Launceston College, between St Helens and St Marys and Newstead College, and between Hobart College and Huonville.

Ms ARMITAGE - When there is a connection, say, between Launceston and Scottsdale, exactly how is that working?

Mr ROCKLIFF - When I said not one size -

Ms ARMITAGE - No, I understand they are all different but I just need an example of how.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Communication, the opportunity of students participating at Scottsdale High School and doing a subject at Launceston College, for example.

Ms ARMITAGE - Via video or coming in?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Via video link. I saw a video link successfully used between the students at St Marys and St Helens and Newstead College. I walked into a classroom where there was a video link and some students were sitting at a table engaged in their classroom based at Newstead but engaging through video linkage as well. It is through a variety of mediums. Each college has been allocated the equivalent one full-time equivalent base grade teacher staffing to support their work with coalitions of extension schools as well, which is good. We have the resource there for the colleges to support that greater relationship building, which is important.

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My objective through the extensions of our high schools was not that every single high school should be exactly the same and all extend, it is about kids at the end of the day. Some students are more comfortable in their learning environment in their high school beyond year 10 and some would prefer the less structured model at a college environment. But as long as we can increase that retention and attainment, that is the important thing.

Ms ARMITAGE - Do we have any evidence to show that numbers are up? Do you have some modelling or some evidence to show that why it might be up at the schools and not necessarily down at the colleges?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, we have those figures.

CHAIR - They are not in the budget papers. Why wasn't that? For the 15- to 19-year-olds there isn't any data recorded in the budget papers, which is what the member is asking for.

Mr ROCKLIFF - When it comes to retention and attainment, in 2016, 56.4 per cent of the Tasmanian age cohort - that is 3767 students - received a Tasmanian Certificate of Education in year 12. That was up from 50.4 per cent in 2015 and 48.8 per cent in 2014. So there is evidence that the extensions and the colleges are working very well.

CHAIR - Do we have the breakup of those?

Ms ARMITAGE - It would be interesting to see if the colleges have lost students as well to the high schools because the colleges have specialised teachers.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Will I take that on notice or do you want it now?

Ms ARMITAGE - I am happy for you to table it. I think last year we had some figures about the numbers at Launceston and Newstead.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Overall, last year there was not a decrease in the college numbers. We looked at all of the eight colleges. There were some decreases but they did not necessarily correspond with a high school increase. For example, Huonville has been a very successful but it has not impacted on Hobart College.

We can go to first-term census numbers of students. Huonville High School had a baseline in 2014 of 36; in 2017 it is now 77; Scottsdale had 30 and now has 39; Smithton High had 32 in 2014 and has 47 in 2017; St Helens had 50 in 2014 and has 38 in 2017. Of our extension schools in the first round, in 2016 - I have just done the 2015 figures - Campbell Town District High School had 8 in 2016 and now has 17; Mountain Heights had a baseline of 13 in 2014 and now has 21; New Norfolk High School had 15 in 2016 and now has 28; Rosebery District High School had 5 in 2016 and has 2 now; Tasman District School had 2 in 2016 and has 8 in 2017.

Then I have the figures only for the extension schools this year. Bayview Secondary College - the old Rokeby High School has 16; Burnie High School has 11; Campania District School has 2; Clarence High has 8; Cressy has 9; Devonport has 1; Jordan River Learning Federation Senior School has 88; Latrobe has 1 - Latrobe is a coalition of Latrobe, Reece, Devonport and Don, which are all very close together; Lilydale has 5; Oatlands has 7; Port Dalrymple in George Town has 13; Reece High School has 3; Rose Bay has 7; Sheffield School has 13; Sorell School has 22; Ulverstone High School has 66; and Yolla District School has 2.

Ms ARMITAGE - When you have such low numbers in some of the schools with courses on offer, the situation there, to have specialised teachers and to be offering the same as the collage of colleges - and we have heard in the past that it is hard to find specific science teachers and specific maths teachers - if you are trying to give an equivalent course at a high school, I understand that, it would have to be fairly difficult.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is a challenge.

Mrs ARMITAGE - What are doing in that case when maybe you have two or one?

Mr ROCKLIFF - In the end it is about the choice and the opportunity, so largely that subject is driven by demand in the school area and the school communities. If a subject can be done at a high school because of the demand then that happens and they also do a subject in the college environment, say, Scottsdale and Launceston College.

College enrolments in the 2017 first-term census show that colleges continue to have a substantial majority of senior secondary students - 7727 students at colleges versus 553 students enrolled in years 11 and 12 at the 30 extension high schools in 2017. On the courses that are tailored for individual needs for the student, colleges and schools work together to ensure the appropriate learning environment.

Ms ARMITAGE - Time goes quickly, is this the second or the third year that we have had?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We've had 2015, 2016 and 2017 - the third year.

Ms ARMITAGE - We would have had some students that have completed year 12?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Grade 11 in 2015, grade 12 in 2016 - yes.

Ms ARMITAGE - Do we have any evidence of our how they compare with the colleges scholastically?

Mr DEAN - What they have achieved too.

Ms ARMITAGE - That is what I mean, because of the courses. If you have a high school and only have a couple of students, you are maybe not going to have a teacher with the same qualifications as one of the colleges. Are the students are getting the same benefit?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I understand that view. As this grows and we develop a kindergarten to grade 12 culture, we are going to grow the pie. With more and more students participating in years 11 and 12 at our colleges and schools, the resource will flow to that. Overall, there has been a 6 per cent increase in Tasmanian Certificate of Education achievement in just one year. Everyone is really attuned to the kids staying at school longer, which is very encouraging.

Mr WILLIE - Minister, are there kids who are enrolled in extension class schools spending more time at the college each week? Can you rule out they are actively being encouraged to enrol in those schools to bump data up by senior staff and others involved in that process?

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Mr ROCKLIFF - I have no interest in bumping data up, I am interested in kids and participation. I have read out some figures, which were transparent. Some schools, particularly in the more regional and isolated areas, have low participation in terms of numbers. Every time a student is willing to further education that is a celebration, irrespective of whether it is two students or whatever. Ulverstone High School, for example a school community that really advocated to be part of the 11 and 12 extensions. The original policy intent was to extend 21 rural and regional high schools across Tasmania in the first four years of our Government and there are now 38.

Mr WILLIE - My question is are there kids enrolled in extension high schools spending more of their time at school at colleges, but are counted as an extension enrolment?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are interested in the relationship between colleges and high schools in ensuring our education system meets the best needs of students. Whether in a college setting or a high school setting, or a combination of both.

Mr WILLIE - It is a fairly simple question. I am asking are there kids enrolled in extension high schools spending more time at the college each week than at their extension high school?

CHAIR - The answer is no?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Ms Gale can answer the question. The first thing you said about bumping, the answer is no. In terms of where kids spend, divide their time do you have an answer to that?

Ms GALE - We have dual enrolments between schools and colleges. Whichever school or college they spend the majority of their time in where the enrolment is counted.

Mr DEAN - On the one the member for Launceston was following up. The Newstead College is an interesting one. Did you mention what the enrolment at Newstead College is it continuing to go up, is it static or is it dropping off?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, it is going down, Mr Dean.

Mr DEAN - The point from that is we have accommodation at the Newstead College and the accommodation was set up, for the out of area students, the Scottsdale students and -

CHAIR - Particularly St. Helens, the east coast areas.

Mr DEAN - So what is happening with the student accommodation at Newstead College. The other question are the transport provisions sorted out. What would be the Commonwealth subsidy situation for year 11 and 12 students who go to college in Launceston?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, that has not changed. It stays as it is.

Mr DEAN - Okay. So the position with the student accommodation at Newstead College, how much have enrolments dropped off?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will take that on notice in terms of the accommodation subsidies unless I can answer it now. Student accommodation for the Newstead campus residence in Launceston, the capacity is 50. In 2017 there is 52.

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CHAIR - So where are the extra two sleeping?

Mr ROCKLIFF - So it has a capacity of 50, there are 52 students due to the temporary use of a spare supervisor's room.

Mr DEAN - The question there is are those students from out of area regions, St Helens and Scottsdale, still coming in to the college?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, unless restrained from their family environment locally.

Mr DEAN - And the number of drop-off students, are we able to get that? That is on notice from Newstead College.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, I can give that to you.

CHAIR - While you are answering that question, Minister, those students who live in those more isolated areas would get preference over children who come from around the CBD, even if they are under difficult circumstances. It was for that accommodation, not for those circumstances. Can I be reassured that is the case?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We expect that is the case, yes.

CHAIR - Can I have that confirmed at a later time, thank you.

Mr DEAN - And LC(?) figures if you can get them.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, sure.

Mr DEAN - The increases or decreases or whatever it is.

Mr ROCKLIFF - They are prioritised. Claremont College there has been a decrease in students, 208; Don College 27 less; Elizabeth College 95 more; Hellyer College 40 less; Hobart College 186 more; Launceston College 132 more; Newstead College 239 less; Rosny College 136 less. Now, this is from 2014 to 2017, not just one year. The grand total is overall 17 more at our colleges.

CHAIR - Minister, can we have the numbers from the year 2016 to this current year? In that report to be released later.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. The key data report will have all those numbers. In terms of numbers of those senior secondary enrolments down slightly from 2016, 8460 to 8339, this is a reflection of the smaller age cohort leading into year 11.

CHAIR - Those numbers always fluctuate, don't they? Can I ask you, minister, about the \$300 000 set aside in this year's Budget to assist the feasibility of a new inner city secondary school in Hobart. Will the consultancy be asked to examine why Cosgrove High School is not a school of choice. That is substantially undersubscribed

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have visited Cosgrove and you are right, it is undersubscribed. This investment is really there because there has been increasing feedback to me and to others about the

need to look at the possibility of an inner city high school in Hobart. Taroona of course is expanding, as you would appreciate.

CHAIR - But isn't the question about why students are not going to Cosgrove and why Taroona seems to be -

Mr ROCKLIFF - I would imagine that would form part of the feasibility study.

CHAIR - That is what I am asking, will it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

CHAIR - So there may well be initiatives put in place to address that matter rather than potentially have to expand a school. Are there students attending Taroona, which is outside their catchment area, and hence the problem?

Mr ROCKLIFF - More broadly though, we are developing education infrastructure planning framework to support future decision-making about what educational infrastructure is needed and where it is needed. The priority is to use the framework to assess the feasibility of a new secondary school in Hobart and it would then be applied to assess education infrastructure needs in other priority areas experiencing high population growth, including the West Tamar region encompassing Legana, and Brighton. Where is Mr Finch?

CHAIR - The honourable member has asked for a leave pass.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is fair enough but he is very keen on Legana having an assessment. I will be keen to talk to Mr Finch about that.

In 2017-18, the Budget provides \$300 000 to engage an external consultant to work with the Department of Education to review and refine the new education infrastructure planning framework.

CHAIR - It may just need some curriculum changes and some infrastructure needs at one particular school that may spread the load. Is that going to be the basis of the inquiry? You are not just looking at reasons to stack up why we need a new inner-city school?

Mr ROCKLIFF - All these issues will be canvassed, Chair. Mr Bullard might want to add some further information.

Mr BULLARD - The first part of the study will be to understand where people are going, which is your question, and future growth in different suburbs around Hobart to understand where the demand will go. That will give us a clearer picture of student movement and whether schools such as Cosgrove are being bypassed. The next part of the study will then be to come up with some recommendations. One of those recommendations, if you thought there was a large bypass of a school, would be what are you going to do about that first, before you would move on.

We do not have a clear picture of future demand at the moment. We are building our capacity working with DPIPWE to understand future demand. Once we have that, we will be able to make some decisions.

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Mr DEAN - Cosgrove has not had a good reputation, unfortunately, for many years.

CHAIR - But they can be turned around. There is not any reason why those sorts of things cannot be turned around.

Mr WILLIE - I worked in a feeder school for Cosgrove. Anecdotally, there are many families bypassing Cosgrove.

CHAIR - That is my question around understanding what could be done at one school before we say we need another school because one is overflowing and another is not.

Mr DEAN - You have Rosetta, New Town High and Ogilvie, all of those within a drop kick of one another as well, haven't you?

Mr ROCKLIFF - And Montrose Bay. Ogilvie and New Town are single-sex schools.

CHAIR - My little note here says, 'Isn't it ironic that the DoE divested itself of the Hobart High School site and converted Elizabeth College to a secondary college but now recognises there is a need for a central high school in Hobart?'. If only we had had a crystal ball.

I have someone who has been looking at these things for quite a while. I will be interested to have a look at the feasibility study and really understand what the true picture is. I guess that is something the consultants will need to understand: that we as members of parliament understand how you can manipulate particular things to make it look like you need something when there may be other ways to work it out.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is very much about future planning. We want to make sure that our education infrastructure is purpose-built for future needs. We want to make sure that we plan well for the future. We are upgrading significantly a number of schools around Tasmania - \$110 million again over the forward Estimates - to modern infrastructure, which is very important. It is just a sensible thing to do - allocate some funding to see what your needs are in the future.

Mr DEAN - Can we have the number of teaching staff and other staff within the school system that have had cases of abuse by students and by parents, also the number of assaults or altercations between teachers and students, and the number of teachers that are currently on stress leave - if that is the case, I suspect it is the case - and whether that is increasing?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, you can ask that. We will have the answers to it. Again, this particular subject has been a passion of Malcolm Elliott[OK], the head of the Tasmanian Principals Association. That is why we have allocated resources to support our school leaders in this field. You are right, it is a concern. We have the reasons for stress-related workers compensation. Perhaps I can get the Secretary to cover this as it is operational.

Ms GALE - In relation to teachers, without referring to this I know there have been only an additional three stress cases for teachers between last year and this year.

Mr DEAN - How many is that all told currently on stress leave?

Ms GALE - I will need to find that in a moment. For the year ending 31 March 2016, the number of teachers with a stress workers compensation claim was 25. At 31 March 2017, it was

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28. For principals, the number was the same, it was four last year and it is four this year. So the incidents are not increasing.

Ms LOVELL - Can I ask for clarification on that, is that the number of stress-related workers compensation claims that have been put in or cases that have been paid?

Ms GALE - Claims received.

Mr DEAN - How many teachers do we have on long-term, say, sick leave at the present time? That would be a different figure, I take it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Long-term sick leave.

Mr DEAN - Sick leave, injury leave.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am advised that it is best to put that on notice, we can get that.

Mr DEAN - The other one, minister, was the number of abuse cases involving teachers. It is an area that has been raised with me.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Physical assaults?

Mr DEAN - And abuse by students. I am not sure what the requirement is for recording by teachers, and abuse of teachers by parents or guardians as well. I understand is an issue that is arising.

Ms ARMITAGE - And bullying.

Mr DEAN - It is an interesting one, the member for Launceston raises complaints of bullying within the schools by - I guess - students against teachers, teachers against students, I suppose, if that is recorded.

Mr ROCKLIFF - A category such as behaviour likely to be detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the staff or other students, the suspensions in 2016 were 3 063. That makes up 46 per cent of the proportion of total suspensions.

Mr DEAN - Is there a breakdown there of bullying complaints? Is that not separate because it is now seen as a separate issue.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, it is not. It is a significant issue but it is not broken up.

Mr DEAN - Is it envisaged we will have a different category for that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are certainly investing a lot of funding in it and I think we will go down the category. Our \$3 million initiative is targeted at bullying of all forms. Of the \$3 million, \$630 000 is a partnership between the Alannah and Madeline Foundation with cyber bullying which is increasingly becoming an issue given the use of devices and the like.

Mr DEAN - The figures you have just given us of the 3 063. Is it possible to break that down against staff and teachers as opposed to students?

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is students suspended.

Mr DEAN - This is only against teacher.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You are talking about not the perpetrator, the person?

Mr DEAN - I want to know the numbers of abuse currently levelled at teachers and staff within the schools in a 12 month period.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Right. The figure I read out is for staff or other students. I am not sure.

Mr DEAN - Teachers tell me the situation is rife. It is continuing to increase. I want to get some figures to see if it is fact or not.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I do not have those figures in terms of that separation. The percentage is pretty stable in terms of the percentage of students. The proportion of suspensions for the reasons explained has been consistently in the 40 per cents for the last six years.

Mr DEAN - If it is possible to break that figure down then to teachers?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am not sure we can. If we can I will try. I have some sick leave figures. Total number of teachers paid sick leave in the 12 month period April to March, total days taken and average sick leave day per employee. These are days I am assuming.

Ms GALE - The total teaching headcount as at 30 March 2017 is 5 329 teachers. The teaching staff headcount paid sick leave during the period April to March is 4 228 (some form of sick leave).

Mr DEAN - What is that - 4 800 different teachers?

Ms GALE - It just says head count, so that is in total the number of teaching staff.

Mr DEAN - One teacher might have had four or five lots of sick leave in the one year. Does that count as one or five?

Ms GALE - That was the teaching staff who were paid sick leave, so would count once in respect to clarifying that.

Mr DEAN - We have 4800?

Ms GALE - No 4228. The average paid sick leave days of teaching staff is seven. Down on the previous year, which was 7.15, which was down from the previous year of 7.2. It fluctuates according to the types of lurgies and bugs there is around the place.

Ms ARMITAGE - How are we tracking with truancy? We had some figures from last year. Has that improved or not, particularly with more in year 11 and 12 that may not necessarily want to be there. What are numbers of truants across the board? Last year figures only went up to year 10. Do you have figures up to year 12 this year and how do they compare to the national average?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will get those figures for you. Clearly we need to do as much as we can as a Government to reduce truancy. Regular school attendance is a very high priority and a key factor in student attainment and proving student attainment. Schools in partnership with parents are committed to improving student attendance through a range of strategies and curriculum support. The 2016 annual attendance rate for students in prep to year 10 increased by 0.3 percentage points, compared to 2015. In 2016, the Tasmanian government school attendance rates for students in years 1 to 6 was 93.1 per cent and very similar to the national rate of 93.2 per cent. Attendance rate for each term in 2016 remain steady in comparison to 2015 with a slight improvement noted in term 3.

As observed in previous years, the most common reason for student absenteeism was illness. Department strategies to follow up unexplained absences with parents are working, with a marked improvement for 2016 of 14 percentage points from 2012. The proportion of absences that remained unexplained by the end of the school year increased by 1 percentage point for 2016 compared to 2015. From 10 July, the compulsory conciliation conferences in the new Education Act will be another valuable option in improving student attendance. We went through all that last year.

Ms ARMITAGE - Do we still have young people that go into the city? Can you remember there used to be young people that were not at school. The member for Windermere might remember.

Mr DEAN - I was involved in that as a commander.

CHAIR - A lot of students have free times or they do not start to this time and that time. I do not think there is such a thing as a full time school year in 11 and 12.

Ms ARMITAGE - I had an idea the Government had something similar to that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Ms Armitage what was that question?

Ms ARMITAGE - Previously you put money into people, truancy officers going in and just -

Mr ROCKLIFF - They were called truancy officers. I might get Ms Gale to talk about this further. The act allows for authorised personnel to act also truancy officers.

Ms GALE - We do not have people who have a dedicated role as a truancy officer. Under the new act, we will be able to have authorised officers who may well be specialist support staff, for example, social worker and the like. They would be authorised to approach young people and talk to them about whether they should be in school or colleges or not.

Ms ARMITAGE - That was an issue we discussed last year wasn't it, whether they could go up to these young people.

Mr WILLIE - Minister, how many students with a disability are there on the severe disability register?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will get that figure for you.

Mr WILLIE - While they are looking for that number, how many students with a disability are there with an IQ from 55 to 70? Do you want me to keep going?

Mr ROCKLIFF - If you would like to keep going, we can put some of these on notice.

Mr WILLIE - I am also interested in the average waiting time for students to see a speech therapist in primary school if there is a referral. Also, what is the average waiting time for a student to see a psychologist from a primary school?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Firstly, on the issue of waiting times for speech pathologists and school psychologists, compared to 2014 we have over 60 more full-time equivalent positions supporting. They are school nurses, social workers, speech pathologists and school psychologists. The resource has increased to address some of your issues.

Mr WILLIE - Can I have a breakdown of that 60?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can give you a breakdown of those if you would like.

CHAIR - Are we taking that on notice or are we having that now?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The total special needs budget is \$82.06 million in 2017 compared to \$75.99 million in 2017. Students supported through the severe disability register are allocated \$44.8 million from a total special needs budget. As I have indicated a few moments ago, there are 1545 students in 2017 with cognitive capacity between 55 and 70 full-scale IQ receiving up to \$5000 funding each to their school with a total budget of \$7.68 million.

Mr WILLIE - Minister, do you feel like that funding is adequate for some of those children given some of their behavioural needs or learning needs?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The reason why I set up the ministerial task force for students with a disability is to really take a good look at the issue of students with a disability and how we can better support our families and students with a disability. Parents then say that we can do better, irrespective of what colour a government is. We can improve, I agree with that. The funding has increased by \$6 million this year. It has gone up over the last three or four years for our support of students with disabilities. I have no doubt that a number of parents would like more resource and I cannot argue with them. I am not going to argue with them when it comes to what they want best for their students, except we have, in my view, been a government that has been very proactive in the area of students with disabilities and supporting their families. We need to implement the recommendations of the ministerial task force.

Mr WILLIE - Do you think the IQ model is a good way to determine need?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are looking at this very subject now, and we have to be very mindful when we move to a different model that some people do not lose out as well. That is important as well so we investigate this issue very methodically so that people do not miss out on any new model. As an interim measure, we are currently working with Victoria on a new funding model based on adjustments, as an example. That will take into account funding methodology and the learning adjustments necessary for each student. It is a project the Tasmanian Government and Victoria are working on. I am not sure, Ms Gale, if you want to talk further about that. That is what is happening.

Ms GALE - That work is underway, minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - To your question, the work is underway.

Mr WILLIE - Did we get that figure for the total number of kids on the severe disability register? You gave me the IQ.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I gave you the IQ figure. We have 1030.4 full-time equivalent students funded in 2017 on the severe disability register.

Mr WILLIE - And the average waiting times for speech therapists?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We do not collect waiting times.

Mr WILLIE - Does it concern you there are children waiting long periods to see speech therapists and psychologists?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Of course it does. Naturally, it would concern me as the Minister for Education - any waiting times. That is why we would call (inaudible) not excessive waits. That is why we have invested more in this area.

CHAIR - There has been an issue in the past of accessing the people with the right skills. Is that part of your answer?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Accessing in terms of school psychologists and speech pathologists?

CHAIR - Yes, people with the right skills.

Mr WILLIE - Being able to find the professionals. It is a recruitment question.

CHAIR - Yes, those who are willing to do the job.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I understand what you are saying. All the positions we have in the Department of Education in these areas are filled. There are no vacancies.

CHAIR - There should not be any waiting times then.

Ms LOVELL - That is my question then: if you are not collecting that data on waiting times, how do you know there is not a problem with accessing those services?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I did not say there was not a problem. I agreed with Mr Willie that we can do better in this area.

CHAIR - But that is good if all those positions have been filled.

Mr ROCKLIFF - As part of our \$17.8 million commitment to supporting students learning package in this Budget, \$6.9 million over four years has been provided for an additional 14.8 FTEs professional support staff into health and wellbeing areas. This funding will help meet the increasing demand, as you have identified, for professional support services within government

schools by building the capacity of existing trauma, autism, speech pathology and mental health services. These positions are in addition to the 6 FTEs already employed under the Safe Homes, Safe Families initiative and 6.8 FTEs for the departmental staff to support Strong Families - Safe Kids.

Currently, if I can go to the full-time equivalents of the special needs budget of \$82.306 million, the total full-time equivalent number into resourcing and supporting children with special needs has increased from 431.39 FTEs last year to 482.01 FTEs in 2017. In 2014, there were 391.99 FTEs and in 2015, 405.21 FTEs. Last year, it was 432.39 FTEs and now it is 482.01 FTEs. We are recognising the need for additional resources.

Mr WILLIE - More Gonski money would be handy, wouldn't it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are allocating our Gonski money very fairly and that is why we have committed to six years of Gonski as a state Government and are very strong believers in it.

CHAIR - Mr Dean, I know you have a question that you would like to get sorted before we move completely out of 1.1.

Mr DEAN - The retention rate in years 10 to 12 was 73.4 per cent in 2015-16. It was a drop out rate of 26.6 per cent. What happened to those 26.6 per cent that dropped out? It is compulsory unless they have employment or other areas to move into?

Mr ROCKLIFF - You are talking 11-12, and changes to the new act? At the moment when you turn 17 you can leave your education. In 2020, so if you are Grade 8 now it will affect you. You have to complete year 12 or turn 18 or be engaged in Certificate III of Vocational Education and Training or have a full-time job which is 35 hours, the Australian Bureau of Statistics's definition of full-time. If you are not in full-time employment and you are not engaged in Certificate III VET, not 18 you have to stay at school until you finish year 12.

Mr DEAN - So the position in 2015-16 of those that failed to complete years 11 and 12, there was no requirement for them to take on full employment or some vocational education because that was the position previously with the Labor Party when they were in power. If you had to drop out of year 11 and 12 you must have another job to go into or enrolment in other education?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am not sure the guaranteeing futures act specified that, but the changes back then was year 11 or 17. We were finding students might turn 17 in September of the year 11 year but then be allowed then to leave. This became the problem. A high school might have a reasonable retention figure from grade 10 to 11 in terms of following and tracking their students. The completion dropped off dramatically, because once people turn 17 they could leave. Completion means they complete a TCE.

Mr DEAN - What is the position in the department with long term truancy cases such as six months or longer from school?

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is where the change to the new act will be beneficial, coming into fruition on 10 July where the compulsory conciliation conferences take a deeper look at the reasons behind truancy. We are fortunate. The Department has done a wonderful job developing the new education information portal system. It started under the previous government. It is a good tracking system where you can identify NAPLAN results and attendance. You can see a pattern of how the

student and family might need to be supported in certain areas. The conciliation conference is about a deeper look into the reasons for truancy. Getting the family and others around the table to try and find out what are the real barriers in preventing the student going to school. It might not be the face value people assume, that they just do not like school. There might be other reasons behind that. The conferences will allow, a more meaningful and deeper look at addressing the issue, particularly of long term truancy.

Mr DEAN - I thank you and the department for the long-term strategy for students. We are still considering it in my electorate but I thank you and the Education department for your support. Sadly, there is a number of long-term truancy students.

1.2 School Support Services -

CHAIR - A question in regard to student engagement and flexible learning where \$5 million has been promised over four years to build on the extended successful student re-engagement programs delivered by the department. It is called EdZone, operates in Hobart and Radar in northern Tasmania.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There are various programs around the state - Radar, EdZone - that support flexible learning and add great values to student engagement. Those organisations and programs are supporting our schools, principals, teachers, support staff, students and their families. Student engagement is a key priority for all schools and it relies on that partnership between educators, students and their families. Schools work proactively to provide every student with their entitlement to relevant and meaningful learning within the curriculum framework in an environment that is safe, inclusive and responsive to their needs. You have mentioned the \$5 million over four years, commencing with \$720 000 in the 2017 year to build upon and extend successful student re-engagement programs being delivered by the department. These include Radar, Space, EdZone and Esol.

CHAIR - Are they all based in different areas? Is that how it works?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, and someone will inform me of exactly where. RADAR is in the north, EdZone is in Hobart; Esol and Space is on the north-west coast.

CHAIR - So everyone is adequately catered for?

Mr ROCKLIFF - In light of the new funding, we will work with the organisations to see where the funding is best applied. It will enable schools to build on, strengthen and elevate some of the work and programs in these areas. To commence new work in determining and implementing the most effective evidence-based models in all regions of the state. For example, a program such as , we are looking to extend statewide. We are looking at how that might work.

Ms PEARCE - Esol is an opportunity for a cluster of students to be linked through a tutor online. They work independently and meet twice a term with their tutor around a practical-based project. Currently that operates out of the south, but it has great engagement opportunities and we are looking to try to extend it in collaboration with our tier 4 programs, Radar and Space, or as a stand-alone. It has worked successfully in the south and we are trying to extend it.

CHAIR - So the program will be reassessed at the end of funding?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The funding is for four years, with \$720 000 this year. All programs need to be evaluated and I do not doubt it will be assessed and built upon. The draft student engagement and flexible learning plan incorporates two phases over four years, with the development and consultation phase occurring in the first year and including an audit of existing programs and supports. A number of other strategies and actions incorporated in this stage, including extensive consultation, the appointment of a project officer, championing best practice, student voice; partnering with external agencies, community groups and the University of Tasmania; and the establishment of a statewide committee. Data is used to identify possible disengagement early and to initiate prompt restorative action. In response to students' identified needs, schools provide a range of on-site targeted interventions and extra support in the academic, social or emotional domains. Some students' life experiences or health make attending and engaging successfully with learning in a regular school setting quite challenging. The quality-assured, community-based re-engagement programs are funded through Learning Services to meet the needs of those students. There are various levels of disengagement on a continuum from tier 1 to tier 4, tier 4 being the highest needs.

Mr WILLIE - Minister, how are you supporting staff to deliver these programs? They are very good programs but often staff might not have the IT skills or the time allocated, in some instances. Sometimes these programs are run by teachers who will give up their lunch hour, for example, because they have the IT skills to get the kids on the computer and things like that. Is there any additional funding and support for teachers with these programs?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The funding and support we are implementing now. On that particular issue, I have mentioned the other strategies and actions incorporated, including extensive consultation, the appointment of a project officer, championing of best practice, student voice; partnering with external agencies, community groups and the University of Tasmania; and the establishment of a statewide committee. Through this, we should be supporting our individual staff and what will support this work will be in the consultation stage and occurring in the first year, including an audit of existing programs and supports as well. We will get a better understanding of what is needed to support the staff to engage in the programs.

Mr WILLIE - Essentially, there is a lot of goodwill across the department from teachers who deliver some of these courses and they give up a lot of their own time. I am pleased to hear that there is an audit looking at support for staff delivering the programs.

Mr DEAN - I am certain this question this question is probably in this area but the Chair will pull me up if I am in the wrong place.

It relates to the levy situation that we are hearing a lot about at the present time. I have spoken to a number of teachers who say this is an issue for them, that there are parents, guardians and single-parent families who are struggling to pay these levies and consequently it is difficult for the schools to manage that and whether they prevent these kids, sadly, attending those activities that the levies cover. Is the complaint or the information we have seen in the media right that some schools are putting these cases into collection agencies?

CHAIR - The Chair can indicate that this is definitely the right area.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The debt collection has been an issue for some time. I have seen plenty of reporting in this area since 2010 and 2012. There is nothing new about this. My concern is that we must work with families in partnership to support them, to get an understanding of their payment,

their budgeting, how they can pay effectively and that includes, in some cases, a plan so not all upfront and work with those who are having a lot of difficulty budgeting.

It would never be my intention to exclude a student from participating in education. In my understanding that is against department policy to do so. But there are also people who refuse to pay even though they might have the means to pay. That is where the challenge really lies. Then you would use debt collection as an absolute last resort for people in those circumstances. The people who are unable to afford to pay and find it very challenging to pay their school levies, my expectation is that the schools very closely with those families.

As a government we are fully committed to inclusive and equitable access to education. As under the previous government, levies provide a contribution towards educational programs and costs. For 2015-16, the Department of Education's financial statement show that the government school levies were approximately \$11.7 million.

Mr DEAN - That is the money coming in under that system?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, which represents less than 2 per cent of the total expenses for in-school education output.

Mr DEAN - How much of that amount was outstanding and not paid? How deep-rooted is this problem and how much money is outstanding across the Education department for unpaid levies and whatever other fees that are paid into schools, and are students being kept away from school activities because their parents or guardians do not pay or cannot pay or whatever?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will take the amount on notice. There is an exemption for levies through families eligible for the Student Assistance Scheme, known as STAS. As at 31 March 2016, there were 22 353 government students eligible for STAS. It is approximately 35 per cent of all government students. On average, schools levies average less than \$350 per year and separate schools may also charge for costs above or beyond the scope of a standard educational program, for example for like interstate excursions.

I am confident that schools consciously work to match levy and other charges to community expectations. I take very seriously suggestions that some students are being excluded or threatened with exclusion from school due to their parents not being able to pay their schools fees. That is why I have asked the department to investigate this matter. The department has spoken to the Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations and is currently following up with some schools to review their communication. We will ensure that schools are reminded of the need to treat this very sensitively and work very closely with families.

Mr DEAN - There is a difference in a child being excluded - and I cannot understand the principle of a school wanting to do that - until it is paid, but what about the children who are excluded from the activities that the levies are being collected for? How many of those students are being prevented from participating in those activities because their parents or guardians have not paid?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I do not know the answer to that question, Mr Dean.

Mr DEAN - Is that fair? It cannot be fair.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr ROCKLIFF - We want to see students participating in education, inclusively and equitably. In many respects, inclusiveness and access to public education have been a hallmark of our Government's policy in the past three years.

Mr DEAN - I would suggest there might be a correlation between that and some of the schools in the lower socio-economic areas.

Ms GALE - In relation to those schools, many of the students would be on STAS and therefore they would not be required to pay for this. So there would not be a correlation there. I do not know of any examples where children are being excluded from school because of the non-payment of levies and we would be very disappointed if children were not being able to participate. They have to be able to participate in ordinary curriculum activities irrespective of payments and we would be very disappointed if students were excluded from other activities as a result of the non-payment of levies. We are looking at that now.

CHAIR - Can I take away from the minister's response that if there is a genuine effort by a parent or guardian to pay the fees in whatever arrangement they make, there is not any penalty but it is those who purely say, 'I am not paying' but can pay. Is that what we are getting here?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Debt collection is an absolute last resort in any case.

CHAIR - But if there is a genuine attempt by a family to make a payment, whatever that may be - \$5 a week or whatever - there is no penalty?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No.

Mr WILLIE - Even if there is a capacity for the parents to pay, the punishment should not be levelled at the children. You should deal with the parents directly.

CHAIR - I understand that, but I just wanted to get it clear, that we are not talking about genuine attempts to pay.

The Committee suspended from 4.01 p.m. to 4.16 p.m.

CHAIR - Welcome back. Minister, I would like to take you to the NAPLAN results. Despite school support services and the various remediation programs in place, NAPLAN testing indicates that some Tasmanian students in some grades are not improving their scores against the national minimum standards. Is any reason for this performance in NAPLAN testing by these two cohorts, years 5 and 7?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The NAPLAN is a snapshot of how Tasmania has performed since the national program began in 2008. The Government has committed that by the end of the first six years of government, if we achieve majority at the next election, we will be at or above the national average in every single NAPLAN measurement and we will meet national benchmarks in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Tasmania's 2016 results were statistically comparable with 2015 for all levels of assessment with the exception of year 3 numeracy, where the percentage of students achieving national minimum standards increased by a statistically significant margin. Slight

improvement from 2015 were recorded for most of the 20 assessments and Tasmania reduced gaps to Australia in 15 of the 20 average score comparisons.

Areas for future focus are spelling at all year levels, grammar and punctuation in years 3, 5 and 7, and numeracy in years 3, 5 and 9. Approximately 25 000 Tasmanian students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 across the government, catholic and independent schools were tested in May [2017?].

CHAIR - There continues to be some criticism about why we put our students through this comparison. Are you still comfortable that we need to be on this journey?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am comfortable. I understand in some circumstances though it is challenging for some students but it is important to have a benchmark of how we are tracking nationally. All states and the Commonwealth believe that some form of measure such as this is important and we support its continuation. Our challenge at the moment is developing NAPLAN online, which we are committed to introducing in Tasmania at the very least by 2019. It has some way to go there. It will require infrastructure investment and there have been some trials in other states. I am not sure of the outcome of those states, but NAPLAN on-line will be able to assess students. It will indicate where they are at, and will provide speedier results for teachers, students and their families to assist their current students. The challenge is you have to be able to use the data as much as possible. Receiving the results in October just before term 4, limits your ability to utilise that information. NAPLAN on-line will hopefully have the results a lot quicker. The benefit of NAPLAN on-line is if there is an identified need for students, it can be taken up with the teacher, the family and the student in term 2

Mr DEAN - I made reference in that in my first question. A number of teachers I have spoken are saying why participate in NAPLAN? They are saying nothing changes. It does not matter what the results are. Nothing has changed in education or delivery of education as a result of the NAPLAN results. If we are in a national curriculum, the results should be tested where we compare with other students at the end of the year, or mid year results?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I do challenge someone would have a view nothing has changed. There has been significant investment, for example in the Early Years, across all governments and persuasions since 2010-11. Launching into Learning, our LINC program, Learning in Families Together which is a continuation of LIL, literacy and numeracy parental engagement initiatives. A greater focus on the early years and on supporting our students, not just at school, but the services to schools to support students, particularly in need.

With a focus in the early years, over a number of years, we are starting to see the benefits. It is marginal. I accept that, but would challenge the view, why do you have NAPLAN, nothing has changed. In actual fact, NAPLAN started in 2008, next year it will be 2018, a lot has changed.

Mr DEAN - A lot of that has been natural change one would expect in any department. We change all the time, to get better and provide better services, to provide better educational requirements for students, so a lot of it has been natural change.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Ms Gale might want to add comments on the assessments.

Ms GALE - In the history of assessments in Tasmania for decades, we have had statewide assessments in literacy and numeracy. They used to be called the '10RandN', the 10 reading and numeracy and another age group, I have forgotten the exact age group there. They are important

for a couple of reasons. They are only one test on one day. We understand they cannot be the be all and end all of assessments. I do not know that anybody uses them in that way. They are important because they give a bench mark of relativity. Teachers look at the assessments which students get on these objective and now national tests, what they do in their classrooms, to see how they are assessing in light of what the national standard is. It does help to give that benchmark for teachers to understand whereabouts they are assessing.

If we did not have it and no statewide testing, or assessment, that would mean standards might vary from one school to another, and that is not fair for students. We need to make sure the standards are the same not only in Tasmania across schools, but across Australia.

Mr DEAN - If you have a national curriculum and students are being assessed and you have an assessment program in place without having to go off on a one day thing where some of the students are selected to go in to that in any event, so I am told. I am wondering why you are able to say there would not be an assessment in place if we did not have NAPLAN?

Ms GALE - I think it comes back to the earlier discussion that was had around the reliability of the assessments that individual teachers might make in relation to the curriculum. The Australian curriculum is a very broad curriculum. It is very content driven and it is up to individual interpretation to a degree. We do have moderation processes in place and we have common assessment tasks but an objective test gives a one point in time comparative point so that people can see how they are assessing against what the national benchmark is. It is a very useful reference and it is a condition of our funding agreement with the Commonwealth.

Ms ARMITAGE - Mine is in the same area. Do we still have a severe disability register?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Ms ARMITAGE - I thought we were looking at changing that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I might refer into the *Hansard* of an hour and a half ago, where did discuss this a bit. You might be having a different angle on your question.

Ms ARMITAGE - Just slightly.

CHAIR - We got the numbers.

Ms ARMITAGE - It wasn't so much the number, it was in 2015 we were looking at perhaps changing because it has changed nationally.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Are you talking about the National Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD)?

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes, it is, but it how many there are. I appreciate we did have some answers earlier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I think it was 1545.

Ms ARMITAGE - Are you still looking from the same type of register?

Ms GALE - 1 030.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I was looking at the Severe Disability Register and the 1 500 figure I mentioned was the cognitive capacity between 55 and 70 in receiving that \$5 000 funding each.

Ms ARMITAGE - So we haven't moved to a different model?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are moving towards a different model in the sense that we are working with the Victorian Government.

Mr WILLIE - Labor is committed to another model.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You have committed some funding towards looking.

Mr WILLIE - That is a new model.

Ms ARMITAGE - In 2015 there was a meeting the following day and I thought it was a fair while ago and it might have actually happened a little more quickly. Still nothing has been quite determined yet?

CHAIR - I want to ask about home educators. We heard a lot about home educators and the value to education that they provided. Can we have an up to date number for 2017 of the registered number of students participating in home education?

Mr WILLIE - And the success rate?

CHAIR - They were very active in the education reform process.

Mr ROCKLIFF - They were. 925 but if I look at the comparisons over the last three years of those engaged in home education, the number of registered students, 31 March 2015 there were 883. That would be K-12 home education. 894 in 2016 and 925 in May 2017. The number of families represented is 479 families both in 2015 and 2016 and 493 families engaged in home education in May 2017.

CHAIR - A slight increase in family numbers there.

Mr ROCKLIFF - A slight increase in students and families.

CHAIR - Are you aware that there are any issues in rolling out the home education packages for all those families? I have not had any.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, we have more robust legislation now that recognises the Tasmanian Home Education Advisory Council - THEAC - as well. From July 2017, the responsibility for registration and monitoring will sit with the registrar of education. THEAC monitors home educated students through a process which is primarily concerned with the home education program provided by parents for each student. From September 2016, monitoring officers and administration staff were employed by the Department of Education and there are approximately 50 monitoring visits taking place each month. The new act allows for dual enrolment in schools as well as home education.

CHAIR - We can expect that if there are going to be some teething problems we will talk about it in next year's Estimates because of the time in implementing the new changes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, but I have not had any negative feedback. We got a lot of feedback on the implementation of the act, and we listened to and engaged with the home education sector. There were a few different groups that were expressing their view on the legislative changes. The problem for me was that: first, THEAC was not recognised in the previous legislation and had to be; and, second, I thought that dual enrolment and encouraging kids if they wished and had the ability to be home educated but also be dually enrolled in a conventional school setting, that would be the right thing to do for the kids.

CHAIR - My last question in this area, before we head to early learning, is about the school farms. They are such a valuable resource for a number of our schools. Have any other schools put their hand up and talked about working in that space?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have developed an agricultural curriculum framework.

CHAIR - Is that for younger children?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, everyone. We have allocated \$300 000 over two years.

CHAIR - Tasmanian Agricultural Education Framework - grow, make, project.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Grow, make and protect. The 'protect' is the biosecurity part. There is \$300 000 over two years to employ a principal project officer to lead the implementation of the Agricultural Education Framework, which includes:

building connections with industry and working in collaboration with other agencies and organisations, including the University of Tasmania, TasTAFE, the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, other registered training organisations and agribusiness in the delivery of education and training and pathway options;

providing educational leadership and developing leadership capacity in schools specifically related to agricultural education and food and fibre production;

leading and coordinating the development of contemporary learning materials and resources in professional learning to support the primary industries initiative; and

the principal project officer will work in collaboration with curriculum officers, schools and other agencies and key stakeholders to develop the implementation of the Tasmanian Agricultural Education Framework and ensure quality agricultural learning opportunities in Tasmanian schools.

CHAIR - We do not have any other schools looking to head into a school farm situation, other than the ones already in place?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have the Hagley School Farm Centre of Excellence, which we have developed and that commenced operations in 2015. The lead teacher of agricultural education based

at the centre is providing key staff throughout the state with in-service professional learning opportunities, increased access to high-quality curriculum resources and clear connections to the Australian Curriculum.

We have the Jordan River Learning Federation School Farm, which I was at the other day. That caters for about 200 students a week, generally ranging in age from 12 to 18, with about 60 students regularly undertaking educational programs on the farm. That provides vocational educational opportunities in job creation and work skills programs and the like.

Two TASC-accredited agricultural courses have been developed for study in years 11 and 12 this year. Agricultural Enterprise is a level 2 course and Agricultural Systems is a level 3 course. I have met with students from Rosny, but I met them at Sorell, and that collaboration is working very well with the school farm at Sorell.

Six schools - St Marys, Campbell Town, St Helens, Huonville, Sorell and the Geneva Christian Academy[College] are piloting the level 2 course in 2017. One school, Scotch Oakburn College, is piloting the level 3 course. Thirty-nine students are enrolled in Agricultural Enterprise 2 and 20 students are enrolled in Agricultural Systems 3. I mentioned some non-government schools there and that is where TASC comes in.

This is an example of how the Grow, Make and Protect Tasmanian Agricultural Education Framework is covering student learning, curriculum facilities career connections, leadership, program support. That is available on the Department of Education website. It is one of the areas that I was keen to have a greater dialogue with, with my Primary Industries hat on and my Education hat on to see if we could build career opportunities in what is a growing area in our economy.

CHAIR - We might talk some more about that when we get to TasTAFE later, if that is all right. Members, we have to head into Early Learning, so are there any other questions in this area?

Mr DEAN - I just have a quick one on home education. What is the success rate of home education, of the numbers going on to, for instance, university? The member for Launceston reminded me that the Dux of Queechy in the year before last was home-educated. Last year's at Newstead College was home-educated. Do we have a measurement in place to show the success of home education?

CHAIR - I think that is a measurement.

Mr DEAN - That is only two.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, we don't.

CHAIR - Thank you.

1.3 Early Learning -

Ms LOVELL - My questions relate to the additional funding that has been allocated to supporting the early education and care sector through the transition.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is the \$5 million in the Budget?

Ms LOVELL - Yes, that is right. To support the sector through the early school starting age. There are two things in the description here. First of all, it says, 'The allocation will be reviewed once the Secretary's report on the social and economic impacts of lowering the voluntary school starting age on the education and care sector has been finalised.' Do you know when that is likely to be?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, the secretary can probably answer that question for you. It is required by September.

CHAIR - 1 September.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Very good, thank you Chair.

Ms GALE - We will meet that time frame. Currently, I am analysing the information coming back through the various consultative mechanisms. The KPMG work, the work of Michael White, and other discussions we have had. I am starting to populate the report, so we are on track to deliver on time.

Ms LOVELL - This funding is obviously subject to the bill being approved by both Houses of Parliament. If that bill is not approved by both Houses of Parliament, what is the plan for the funding and will it stay within the education and care sector?

Mr ROCKLIFF - A similar question to the one the Chair asked earlier. My anticipation is the implementation report will provide us with sufficient information to support the early education and care sector in the transition. That is why we had the \$5 million funding allocation, as an indication we are willing to support the sector in that transition. I cannot pre-empt what might or might not be in the report, but we are very committed to the early years and access to and funding for adjustment of the sector. If it does not go ahead, the sector will not need the adjustment. Irrespective of the change to the voluntary earlier starting age or not, my aim is to work very closely with the early education and care sector. They play a terrific role in our education system. I want the sector to be sustainable. We already work reasonably closely but we want to engage more closely when it comes to the transition to the earlier voluntary starting age.

Ms LOVELL - Given the consultation is still under way and the report is not yet finalised, are you confident the funding been allocated will meet the expectations and needs of the sector in that transition?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am confident to date, but I have not been informed of the secretary's report. It is an indication of our commitment to the sector. The findings of the secretary's report will no doubt provide us with more information as to how we need to support the sector and if it is greater than the \$5 million allocated or not. We already support the sector. The state Government contribution in 2017-18 to regulate and quality assess education and care services, in addition to the \$300 000 the Australian Government national partnership funding, the total education and care funding in 2017-18 is \$3.7 million.

Ms LOVELL - The funding has at this stage been allocated over the Forward Estimates until the 2018-19 financial year. The changes are not due to come into effect, provided it all goes through parliament, until 2020. The sector is saying there are more than 50 centres at risk of decreasing in size or closing, as a result of the changes. What support is there in the Budget or what plans are there to support families, particularly in rural and regional communities, who will not be able to

access education and care for their children, who do not fall into that age group of being able to go to school yet?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will be informed by the analysis presented with the secretary's report. I am more than willing to support families. The whole reason why we are having the voluntary early starting age is to support our kids first and foremost. I also want to support our early education peer sector. They would be a very important partner in that change.

Ms LOVELL - Are you expecting centres to close as a result of the change?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I do not want centres to close. I have to wait for the analysis. I am encouraging as many centres as possible to participate in the work being undertaken by the secretary. I want to be informed as to the impact. I do not want to see centres closed. There may be opportunities for centres in rural and regional areas with greater collaboration with schools. I will have to wait for the analysis to be done.

Ms LOVELL - I am after an explanation on some data. On page 22, table 2.3, the projected targets around service quality assessment visits are decreasing significantly over the Forward Estimates. Can you explain why that is expected to happen and what the model is?

Ms GALE - As the first round of assessments are done, they are much more detailed to get everybody registered and accredited. As the footnote says, beyond that, it is likely to be using a risk based approach. If there are no indicators services are not meeting the standards, it is likely they would not be prioritised for assessments. It is taking a risk based approach after getting the first round of assessments done. Tasmania was the first state to have assessed 100 per cent of their child care services. We were in advance of other states and territories. Once the first round is done then we move more to the more risk based assessment.

CHAIR - We would be first in doing that because we are smaller and we have less to assess.

Ms GALE - We also have fewer people to do the assessments. We were very well organised.

Mr WILLIE - Minister, will you release the KPMG report and Michael White's report to the public?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will, subject to privacy issues, remember there is analysis that involves individual business information. Reports will be released subject to privacy issues.

Mr WILLIE - Including the centres visited as part of that process? I have had this conversation with Tim Bullard. It is in the department's best interest to release in the interests of transparency, which centres were visited as part of the process. Tim previously said there were some sensitivities around there, while the process was taking place. Once that is concluded, it would be in the best interests of openness and transparency if that was released.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It will be up to the individual centres themselves. If they are okay, I have no objection to releasing that information.

Mr BULLARD - We have worked with the education and care sector very closely on the KPMG report and we would be guided by their views. There are some sensitivities in the LGAs that have a smaller number of centre because, from the data presented, it is easy to work out if there

are only three centres and they are talking about impacts, that it must be one of those. We would definitely take the guidance of the education and care representatives on the advisory group to the KPMG report as to their views on including that.

Mr WILLIE - What was the explanation given to you from the secretary, in relation to the conditions put on a speaking engagement by Steve Biddulph. You obviously received an explanation for those conditions sent to him to take that speaking engagement up. What was the explanation?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I would invite the secretary to say a few words, but there was certainly no direction from me, being always open and wanting people to engage in this debate. I recognise people do not agree with me in this debate and I have worn some criticism, but I have never been shy of open discussion. That was unfortunately an error of judgement and I accept that. I did not want Mr Biddulph to be restricted in any particular way, but I did apologise to him for that. Have you anything further to add?

Ms GALE - No, if I understood the question you asked if what restrictions were placed by me, there were no restrictions placed by me.

Mr WILLIE - The explanation on why that was done. Why was that said to him?

Ms GALE - Well, Minister, through you there was an error of judgement made and we apologies to Mr Biddulph and he accepted the apology. It was to do with a local workshop that local people were working on with the Devonport City Council. We made the wrong judgement call at that level, unfortunately.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I did apologise to Mr Biddulph and he accepted.

Mr WILLIE - I am not questioning your sincerity.

1.4 Statutory Offices -

Mr FINCH - Minister, there is a reference here to a new education registrars office and a restructure around that with the reports. Can the committee can be apprised of the progress?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The registrar has been appointed, Katherine O'Donnell and you would have met Katherine here for some briefings. The registrar is in charge of home education, schools registration, non-government school registration as a couple of examples and the conciliation conferences we spoke about before.

Mr FINCH - So they come into her purview and non-government schools registration board?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

CHAIR - Staffing numbers to go with that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Six to eight full-time equivalent state service employees attached to the office of carrying out various administrative and registration functions. It is managing the new compulsory process for non-attendance at school. Administering the non-government schools

registration process. The registration and monitoring of home education in Tasmania. They have an office in Hobart and Launceston.

Mr FINCH - Thanks and the Tasmanian Assessment Standards and Certification.

Mr ROCKLIFF - They did have an increased budget allocation.

Mr FINCH - Yes, one and a half million.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Over the Forward Estimates.

Mr FINCH - How is that going to be expended?

Mr ROCKLIFF - You can and Ms Katrina Beams might like to talk about that.

Ms BEAMS - Minister, thank you for the question. There was 1.3 allocated over a four year period. With 560 000 allocated in the first financial year.

Our intention is that funding supporting the extra costs for our sessional staff and their staff we employ at the end of the year, to run an external examination process.

We have greater numbers of students participating in external exams and also with increase in costs. That budget has been in shortfall for the last couple of years. This funding will help alleviate that for the financial year coming.

Mr FINCH - What are the other functions of the office?

Ms BEAMS - In relation to the powers of the office, it is ensuring the quality and standards of senior secondary education, vocational education and higher education. The majority of our work is in senior secondary education and we perform a range of functions ensuring the standards and quality of the TASC accredited courses are being delivered and ensuring those standards are being monitored.

We monitor then through a range of mechanisms from quality assurance meetings visits to schools and the external examination processes.

We have the responsibility to accredit the senior secretary courses as they come to me from curriculum services when they are in the Department of Education. There are a range of other functions we provide for example, assessment of overseas qualifications for newly arrived residents in Tasmania.

Mr FINCH - My mind was ticking over about visiting the various schools. When you go to the schools, do they welcome the visit from TASC?

Ms BEAMS - They do. It is quite interesting. We make sure we approach those visits in a partnership model. We are in this together, schools and the office. We both have a shared interest in ensuring Tasmanian students get the best quality education.

The principals recognise that as much as I do and so it is very much a partnership model. They see it as valuable professional learning.

Mr FINCH - Thank you.

CHAIR - It might have been about 12 months ago, there was some discussion around accreditation and the consistency of that from particularly, the college aspect. Has that been sorted?

Ms BEAMS - Yes. We have a consistent set of criteria we apply to accreditation of all of the courses. Under the new legislation, we are tasked to develop new accreditation framework. We have commenced work reviewing the current criteria and also looking at what happens nationally.

CHAIR - We are still not there yet. How long do you think that might take minister?

Ms BEAMS - It will be subject to the implementation of the recommendations from the 9 to 12 review. One of those recommendations the development of an accreditation framework within those recommendations.

CHAIR - I am sure there will be a principal at one of the colleges very interested in that response. Thank you. Any other questions members?

Mr WILLIE - I am happy for this one to go on notice. Could I have a school basis for the TCE and ATAR attainment data for the year ending 2016?

Ms BEAMS - We released on Friday school level direct continuation data.

Mr WILLIE - To schools?

Ms BEAMS - To schools. Also published on our website, the direct continuation data which shows of their Grade 10 cohort, how many of those went on in year 12 to achieve the TCE, to achieve an ATAR.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are informing the schools first, as part of the quality assurance process. This ensures schools are comfortable with the data presented to them and finalise the QA of that data incorporating the school's feedback. When we release the data publicly, it is not a surprise to the schools and the data aligns with what that schools' expectations are.

Ms BEAMS - That is the attainment data we sent to schools also on Friday.

CHAIR - That is all public.

Mr WILLIE - And when is that loaded up?

Ms BEAMS - We will await for the feedback from the schools to make sure, as I outlined before, that we will be in partnership with them and our intention is as soon as we have received feedback and making sure we have far more quality assurance processes, publish those through our website.

CHAIR - Can we ask we be made aware of that? A lot of us do not have enough time to search through the website and just check and see what has been put on. Can we be made aware of that so members can source that information when it becomes available?

Mr ROCKLIFF - You can and there is a lot more data been released in the last three years which is important for the discussion. I would likely make a public statement when that data is released, maybe in the form of a media release which might alert the public and indeed yourself to that data. If not a media release I will let you know.

CHAIR - That would be appreciated, because not all of us have access. Can I invite 2.1 which is LINC information services and community learning and I feel sure that Trudy will want to join us at the table. Ms Armitage?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I invite Trudy Pearce, as you said, to the table again to discuss the matters.

Output Group 2 - LINC Tasmania

2.1 Information services and community learning -

Ms ARMITAGE - Note number 2 says, 'Due to an increase in library services and products, physical visits are declining', but I notice on-line are also declining. The Government says, 'will consider strategies to increase physical visits to LINC Tasmania sites', so what strategies are going to be put in place?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Firstly invest in infrastructure and if you have visited the new Launceston, you were probably at the opening -

Ms ARMITAGE - I go there quite regularly.

Mr ROCKLIFF - of the LINC and that is very inviting. The new Burnie LINC, a wonderful piece of brutalist architecture, with improved accessibility for patrons and beautiful artwork commissioned at the front which invites people in. The new Devonport LINC is in construction. We have some investment happening in the Glenorchy LINC at this present time. A quadrangle to enhance accessibility. There is considerable investment infrastructure in our LINC's but also promotion of the services.

Ms PEARCE - It is an opportunity to engage, it is the most utilised social space in the Launceston area, the LINC. The promotion of visibility and Burnie is framed on exactly the same model. People can see in to the social space. We are looking at strategies to make it easier for library borrowing cards to be provided to our students and our community members to increase accessibility.

Ms ARMITAGE - To try and get more people in. And with the on-line services, why do you think the numbers have decreased? Do you think it is a lack of publicity with on-line? I note they have gone down as well from last year.

CHAIR - If only we knew why people did what they do.

Ms ARMITAGE - It says, 'physical visits are declining' because the others are going up and the others are actually going down, that is all.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I see what you mean.

Ms ARMITAGE - And our borrowings seem to be going down.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I see what you mean. You can never have promotions. The target for 2016-17 is more for on-line visits to LINC. It is only really one measure of on-line access. Family history research is increasing. They are using social media. When it comes to reference and information inquiries, that is going up from 60 920 in 2012-13 to 70 000 in 2014-15, and 2015-16 72 800. That is promising.

Ms ARMITAGE - The on-line access centres, the Government have closed a couple of those in the past. Are you likely to merge those back into LINC to try to get people back into the LINC outlets?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is very much up to the communities to decide what is best. Some rural libraries and on-line access centres have merged. There are now three-year agreements in place for on-line access centres. That gives them more certainty of funding, rather than the annual cycle, which was bone of contention for some of your people, Ms Rattray. But three years provides more certainty, which is good.

CHAIR - It is very good.

MS PEARCE - LINC staff have worked with the local groups to look at their strategies and what they want to work on in those three years.

Ms ARMITAGE - The volunteer hours have dropped considerably over the last couple of years. The target for this current financial year is higher than both at 115 000. Are there any services we cannot offer when we lose these volunteers? Are there any services we are not having now because of the lack of volunteers?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am not aware of any particular services will be impacted on lower volunteer numbers. That would depend on the volunteers' interests themselves. I can take that on notice though, Ms Armitage, if you would like me to.

Ms ARMITAGE - With the extra 18 000 volunteers hopefully targeted, whether there was something that was put in place they were hoping for extra volunteers for any extra services.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The number of volunteers is decreasing nationally, so Tasmania is in line with that trend.

Ms ARMITAGE - People do not have the time.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are able to deliver everything that is needed with our current numbers and service persons. The decrease in number of usage of on-line access centres has meant there are fewer volunteer hours needed there.

Mr FINCH - A question about the facility at the Launceston LINC and the improvement given to the facility because of the café there. There was some talk it might extend out further into Civic Square. Has there been any discussion about that or forward planning? Does the idea have any merit? Maybe have an easier access for people to go into the Launceston LINC through the Civic Square side of things?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am not aware of anything, Mr Finch.

Mr FINCH - I offer the idea anyway.

CHAIR - It has a nice ambience around it. I meet people regularly there and buy coffee. Any other questions in regard to that? The community learning part of the relationship between Ashley detainees and that particular aspect. Does that come under this particular area? How we are engaging with those detainees and their education. Does that come under this, community learning?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, there is the Ashley school, which comes under the schools section.

CHAIR - Can we then talk about the community learning aspect of inmates at Risdon Prison and what is happening with their engagement there? Can we get an update on that program?

Ms PEARCE - Part of a literacy program that has been running out of the prison system is about incentivising parents who would like to learn to read, and then videoing or taping them reading a book and, through the school system, sharing that with students and then linking up so the parents and the student can read the book with a parent who is incarcerated and is able to read the same book through a shared link[LINC?] service. We then provide the support for the student in the school system following that regular reading session.

CHAIR - Is that expanding? It is sad in some respects if it is, but is there a higher demand than there has been in the past because of the success of the program?

Ms PEARCE - It has been piloted and we have been able to increase it. To start with, it was only amongst a few schools and now we have been able to increase it to operating out of a number of schools on the north-west coast as well.

CHAIR - Is there any more demand, as we speak, for that program to be rolled out into other schools?

Ms PEARCE - The LINC Lap literacy strategy looks at that, but I would have to take it on notice.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There are 23 literacy coordinators supported by trained volunteer literacy tutors located in urban and regional communities across Tasmania, in Risdon Prison and two locations in Community Corrections. In the 2016-17 financial year up to 31 March 2017, 1631 adults received literacy and numeracy support.

Ms PEARCE - And the shared reading is only one of those strategies.

CHAIR - I thought it was a very useful program and we appreciated hearing about it. It should be on the public record so people know what is happening when they see an allocation of funds and then they have some understanding of what is involved in that.

2.2 Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office -

Mr FINCH - It is pleasing to see the increase in allocation in the forward Estimates. Can you give us an assessment of the capital investment?

Mr ROCKLIFF - In collaboration with the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, the Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office is addressing the issue of storage, preservation and accessibility of Tasmania's digital information assets. The physical collection is stored in specialised facilities and these storage facilities are almost close to full capacity. In this Budget, \$3 million has been allocated over 2018-19 and 2019-20 for the establishment of a larger and more suitable storage facility at Geilston Bay - at the old Lindisfarne North Primary School - which would enhance the preservation.

Mr FINCH - If people want to access that information through this digitalisation, are they able to do that online or do they need to go to that facility to access it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - To guarantee the preservation and accessibility of the Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office collection, an ongoing digitisation program is required. This will ensure a growing proportion of the collection is preserved and made publicly available online to meet increasing demand.

Mr FINCH - Minister, I am wondering what is driving that increased demand? Is it Tasmanians researching family history?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is a probably a good example, but also the accessibility of it. If you go in and research your family history or anything else regarding our history and seeing records dating back to the 1800s, it is fascinating and quite an exciting thing to do. That accessibility in itself would be generating more interest, I imagine.

Mr FINCH - Will we have a continuation of the development of that digitalisation into the future? Is that what this capital investment represents?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is my expectation, yes.

Grants and subsidies -

CHAIR - Only one school in the current Apsley electorate is receiving any new money, minister. That is a concern but I am sure that will be rectified in next year's budget. We will not have Apsley, we will have something else.

Mr DEAN - I want to raise the issue of the Queechy High School, minister. There is some funding in the Budget again this year. When is that likely to be spent? We know very well, on my advice, that is only going a small way to fixing the problems at Queechy. What is the projected position in relation to the further funding required to bring Queechy up to a contemporary standard and indeed to a standard to which students can use all facilities?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Queechy High School project provides refurbished contemporary learning environments. The 2016-17 Budget provided \$3 million, which was brought forward under the Northern Stimulus Package and the 2017-18 Budget provided an additional new allocation of \$2 million. Work is expected to commence in 2017, which is significant. It is almost \$5 million. I am not sure, there were capital expenses at Queechy High School in the last 10 years. I understand the needs for the upgrades. I have toured the school and I understand some of the needs of the school.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr DEAN - There was Building the Education Revolution funding which built a new section but Queechy other than that BER funding has really had very little spent on it over a long period. One corridor leaks like a sieve. They have to run buckets down it every time it rains to collect the water. I think I provided photographs to the Department of Education of that with the fairly scathing report I put in 18 months or so on it. I think you might have seen that. The students refused to use the gymnasium and change rooms it because they are unhygienic and would be condemned, I would suggest, if health inspectors were to see them. It is a disgrace.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There is a \$5 million investment in Queechy High School, accepting what you say. You have to be fair to all schools. Generally speaking, there has been an under-investment in school infrastructure for quite some time and we have to spend considerable funds to redress that, which we are. There is also an updated process with the valuation criteria for capital investment. That is demonstrating links to improved student learning outcomes by addressing space needs and/or optimising utilisation of facilities at the school or across the schools, improving building condition, addressing significant occupational health and safety issues, disability access, infrastructure issues, incorporating environmental sustainability, addressing strategic priorities and initiatives consistent with the school strategic plan and in line with government direction and policies, demonstrating community benefits and extending use of school facilities, for example, the capacity of local and wider community education facilities including schools to support education provision in the community.

There are proposals to address major safety and/or capacity issues, amenity or building condition issues and a proposal addressing administration and sustainability issues as well. That is all on a matrix. The first four items there I listed are weighted. It is weighted evaluation criteria: 30 per cent, 30 per cent, 30 per cent and 10 per cent. There is quite a set of criteria.

I understand the needs of Queechy High School. There is considerable funding being invested into the school as there are other schools as well. The school need not stop asking for funds.

Mr DEAN - There would be few schools, I would suggest, minister, where they line buckets up and down the corridor to collect the water and where windows cannot be opened because of certain problems with windows in the upper parts of the building, and a gymnasium that the students refuse to use because of the hygiene situation in it. It is just not an environment for students. They play their sport, they come back and they get changed. They would prefer to do that rather than have a shower and use the change rooms. You need to look at it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Leaking roofs and buckets and things like that, I am sure will be fixed and addressed by the \$5 million that was allocated.

Mr DEAN - Will the gymnasium, the toilet and shower block be a part of this funding?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will have to take that on notice. I do not think so.

Mr FINCH - Riverside High is in a similar situation and they just have to wait their time for the allocation of funding.

Mr DEAN - I will get health inspectors to come in and have a look at it.

CHAIR - One query before we leave this line item, minister, is about the Latrobe High School. There is a \$10 million allocation and in this Budget there is \$750 000 but then there is nothing in

the forward Estimates. Is that \$750 000 for the completion of that project? I am not familiar with the school.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Ms ARMITAGE - Can you fill us in where we are up to with East Launceston School's funding? What is the current situation?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The funding has been allocated for capital improvement.

Ms ARMITAGE - Is there any further that you can advise us on the current situation?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I know there has been some discussion in the community. My understanding is the school association itself is very keen for the development to proceed because the school needs greater room and capacity. The secretary has met with members of the community who have some concerns around placement of buildings and impact on the oval and the like.

Mr DEAN - That is a school that has a large out-of-area intake. Is that part of the consideration at that school? I raised this 12 months or so ago about the out-of-area intake and I was told that was going to be looked at and addressed.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will answer Ms Armitage's question first. Capital investment program funding of \$4.5 million, \$1 million in 2016-17 and \$3.5 million in 2017-18, was provided in the 2016-17 state Budget for the provision of new kindergarten facilities and a multipurpose facility at East Launceston Primary School. Due to the complexities of the site and a need for extensive consultation, the funding has now been budgeted for 2017-18, that is the \$4.3 million. Redevelopment options on the existing school site are limited due to the lack of vacant land. Part of the oval and its surrounds are owned by the Parents and Friends Association and the remainder is owned by the Department of Education. One option considered in the planning process was to build the new facilities on the bank of the oval and this would require a land swap deal to facilitate the building. The East Launceston Primary School Association and Parents and Friends Association are fully supportive of the proposed land swap option. The department also supports that option as the most viable option. That preferred option protects the oval and other green spaces for the future use of the school and the broader community.

We acknowledge there is some broader community concern about the proposed plans for redevelopment. The Department of Education secretary met with residents in January this year and noted the concerns raised and further considered other options and issues put forward by community members. One of those options was the proposed purchase of private residential land to support the proposed development. This option has been considered unviable as it is outside the affordability of the capital investment program. The secretary subsequently communicated with the Friends of the East Launceston Oval group, outlining the outcomes of the meeting and follow-up by the department. In that advice of 21 April this year, the secretary advised that the school community and the department remained committed to the preferred option and intended to proceed on that basis. The department is preparing a lodge a development application with the Launceston City Council which will include a traffic impact assessment and planning. Members of the public with any outstanding concerns will be able to have input into the council facilitated planning processes which I know you both would be familiar with.

On the out-of-area question, the new legislation has tightened this up somewhat with the Secretary's requirement to update the intake areas, as they are now called, every five years. That is an important change. It takes it out of the hands of the minister and puts it to the secretary so it become less political.

Ms PEARCE - There have been a number of suggestions that East Launceston has been taking out-of-area enrolments. Learning Services has been closely monitoring all of its enrolments in most recent years. We can assure you that all of the enrolments are legitimate and are either in-area or brothers and sisters of children currently attending the school. We have noted considerably more enrolments in all our inner-city Launceston primary schools. Glen Dhu, recently doing works there as well. All of them are feeling a demographic shift around younger families residing in the inner city. We are closely monitoring all the enrolments.

Mr DEAN - I will show that to the ones who are complaining.

Mr FINCH - On the East Launceston Primary School situation, the decision has been made. Will it proceed in 2017-18?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, subject to the planning processes through council.

CHAIR - There will be an opportunity for adjoining landowners to be part of that process, as is always the case.

Mr FINCH - They will be worn out, I reckon.

CHAIR - As is their right. Thank you very much. We have reached the time to provide some scrutiny to TasTAFE.

CHAIR - To anyone who is leaving, thank you very much and we appreciate the efforts that everyone goes to to put this together. We know it is a significant task. You don't get a weekend beforehand and neither do we.

TasTAFE

Mr ROCKLIFF - I understand that the events of recent weeks are of concern to all. It is important to highlight the achievements of the organisation over the past year and the Government's ongoing commitment to the organisation.

TasTAFE is our largest provider of training. It is also our public provider, therefore is an integral part of our training landscape.

It is a statutory authority set up under the Training and Workforce Development Act of 2013. As Minister for Training, I have responsibility for Part 5 of the act and the section relating to TasTAFE. The remainder of the act is the responsibility of the Minister for State Growth, as it relates to the broader training and workforce development system, including the purpose of training.

As minister, I meet regularly with the board and CEO and set annual expectations for the organisation as is required under the act.

There is no doubt recent events have unsettled staff and students in the organisation and the people with me today have done an outstanding job in stepping up and stepping in under difficult circumstances, to continue to take the organisation forward.

Since taking on this portfolio, my focus and that of this Government has been supporting TasTAFE to bed down and adapt to new levels of competition in the Tasmanian training market, while maintaining a level of funding to assure sustainability that will continue.

Competition has been in the market since the federal and state Labor governments encouraged it in 2012-13.

Since we came to government, we have maintained a guaranteed level of funding with TasTAFE receiving approximately 80 per cent of the Tasmanian skills development budget through the deed of purchasing arrangement. The deed funding is supplemented by TasTAFE's eligibility to apply for funding under contestable programs and statement(?) programs.

In last year's budget, we invested some \$3 million to ensure TasTAFE has the cutting edge equipment it needs to train a job ready generation.

The extra funding ensures TasTAFE has the buildings and technology to match the high quality training the organisation already provides.

This year we have allocated \$3.2 million over two years, including \$2.65 million in capital funding, and \$550 000 in recurrent funding.

Funding will be used to refurbish some areas of the Drysdale Hobart building to make it a more modern and flexible space which will be available for use by industry and other partners, including the community.

This is about working in partnership with industry for mutual benefit so the specifics of how the funding will be spent will be finalised in consultation with industry.

Some features will include a training kitchen for industry and other training providers to use as needed, and state of the art video conferencing technology to allow Drysdale to take its training to people in regional and remote areas

Our focus in the short term is around supporting the staff and students in TasTAFE towards the future, which is bright. There will soon be a new corporate plan setting out a new direction for the organisation a number have been working on.

Mr DEAN - One or two questions on the current position and what has been. I do not always accept what unions say, but the TasTAFE Union and I quote from a comment they recently made and that is:

We have been concerned about the culture for some time and this has been raised with managers and also identified in internal TasTAFE reports, but the government has failed to act.

He said, 'concerns have been revealed in TasTAFE internal reports.'

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An education department spokesperson said it had been aware of concerns raised by TasTAFE staff through the union and it was working with the state government to address any concerns to support staff.

It looks like the issues at TasTAFE have been well known, it would seem for quite some time. Is that right? How long has this issue been known with TasTAFE in relation to nepotism and cronyism. When was it first known?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I would put the Education Union's comment more around culture. TasTAFE and TAFE generally has had a lot of change over the last eight or nine years. We have had the Tasmania Tomorrow reforms where effectively TAFE Tasmania was abolished and set up the Polytechnic Academy and Skills Institute. Then TasTAFE was reformed in July 2013. I inherited an organisation, which was some nine months old.

The Australian Education Union have never raised concerns with me directly around the culture and issues pertaining to that. I am very mindful of the issues pertaining to the Integrity Commission report and is why we are instigating an audit process.

Mr DEAN - What state is that at now and who is undertaking the audit?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have appointed Mr Mark Sayer as the interim CEO who commenced the role on Friday, 26 May. I have written to and met with the board regarding the commencement of the independent audit. I will continue to pass on any concerns raised with my office to the interim CEO, to be captured in the audit or independently investigated. I have received some correspondence from individuals since the Integrity Commission reports, which will form part of the independent audit, so all these issues are captured.

In terms of the staff morale and the surveys you refer to, I take note. In recent surveys I also point to not so negative news. Perhaps Mr Sayer would like to comment on that.

Mr SAYER - To go to your earlier question about when were concerns first raised and why hasn't anything happened. Concerns were raised in February 2016 with the Integrity Commission by anonymous complainants, but obviously from TasTAFE. What that shows, and you would understand this really well, the system is working when people do have really serious concerns there is a mechanism like the Integrity Commission they can go to and get it investigated. When an investigation begins, you would understand that once that investigation is underway, those people who are being interviewed cannot talk about that investigation. I know it was a very long period before that report was tabled.

Mr DEAN - When was that, in February?

Mr SAYER - In 2016.

Mr DEAN - Is that the date you would have been made aware of, February 2016?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Made aware of what?

Mr DEAN - Of the issues at TAFE. When were you first advised there were issues in TAFE with the management structure and the culture? Was it as the time the Integrity Commission became involved?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The letter pertaining to the Integrity Commission was 30 August last year.

Mr DEAN - But this happened in February.

Mr SAYER - That is when the complainants -

Mr ROCKLIFF - There has been a number of complainants, anonymous, under the name of Rebecca Market[?].

Mr DEAN - I will let you continue.

Mr FINCH - Wasn't there a complaint that came through the Greens party, which referred it to the Integrity Commission?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is my understanding.

Mr FINCH - Rather than anonymous person going to the Integrity Commission, it was via the Greens party?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is correct. They forwarded an anonymous complaint.

Mr DEAN - Have you finished?

Mr SAYER - You went on to talk about culture. It is important to note that there were serious concerns raised, there was an investigation and a report has been tabled. That did not involve the 800 people who work at TasTAFE. I think we all have to be very careful at the moment about being negative about TasTAFE when they are delivering - the bulk of the business is working well with industry. I am keen and careful about the way public statements are made about TasTAFE. I have written to all staff on a couple of occasions and you might be aware of that, just making sure they know this negative publicity is not about their work at all.

Mr DEAN - I am aware of all that and I think the members of the public who have been to see me about it are as well. They are saying they want to be satisfied now, minister, that there is going to be a structure in place that would satisfy and identify this type of behaviour. Who is the CEO immediately responsible to, is that to you or to the board?

Mr SAYER - To the board.

Mr DEAN - Immediately responsibility is to the board. I have not seen the report and the question is, what did the board know about it and what were their attitudes and actions in relation to it? Are you aware of issues there? This audit you are now doing will look at all that - is that it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - One of the critical responses to the Integrity Commission report will be the need to undertake a thorough review of issues that have been revealed to that report to determine whether there are other examples of process failure or inappropriate behaviours associated with the day-to-day processes in TasTAFE. Given the findings of the report, it would be foolish to deny the potential for other problems to exist within TasTAFE and therefore it is important that a formal, independent review and audit is undertaken with a focus on a range of specific issues that have been identified. Presently, the following areas have been identified for review and audit across the 2017-

18 financial year: the use of a Tasmanian Government credit card, travel and entertainment; practices through which employees might inappropriately derive personal benefit; the management of conflict or declaration of interest; procurement of contact and consultancy services; recruitment selection processes, selection panel protocols, acting as referee - best practice, for example; induction at time of employment including board directors and SES appointees; remuneration package structuring, incentives, relocation arrangements and flexible working arrangements; internal policies and protocols relating to referral and approval of remuneration and position clarification changes; complaints and grievance management protocols and determination of management of delegations; policy and procedure framework; awareness and education accessibility.

I will be taking a very keen interest in these processes and will require the findings from these audits and any resulting actions to be reported to me.

Further to the question regarding the Australian Education Union, Mr Sayer has consulted with the Australian Education Union on their concerns and it is detailed in a letter to the Premier, and copied to me, with a view to capture their issues, where practicable, within the scope of the audit.

Mr DEAN - What was the promotional system in place at TAFE at the time this was occurring? Was it a responsibility of the CEO only for him to promote staff within the organisation and increase salary, or was there a promotional body or group brought in, in relation to the promotions? That seems to be one of the main issues.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Recruitment was one of the issues. I cannot answer that question directly because of the operational nature.

Mr DEAN - What was the recruitment process?

Mr SAYER - I was not there at the time but, Nick, could you answer that question?

Mr MAY - There was a process of establishing a new position, which was instigated through consultation within the executive. That was then referred to the board for consideration. On the basis of that consideration, it was submitted to the State Service Management Office for validation of the classification and the responsibilities of the position. Once that was established -

Mr DEAN - That did take place in this instance we are talking about?

Mr MAY - It did. Once that position was validated it was advertised. In the meantime, the CEO made an interim appointment of Lori Hocking[OK] to that position. I am trying to recall the exact process. There was a process of an interim appointment that was then accompanied by the rapid advancement to that which was the subject of a report. The position has subsequently been re-advertised because on the basis of the completion of the first selection process and in recognition of the imminent release of the Integrity Commission report, Lori Hocking, who won the position, chose not to accept the position.

Mr DEAN - She won the position after a selection panel was in place? She was in there in the interim period and a selection panel was in place and she was selected through that?

Mr MAY - That is correct. She was selected through that but at the point when she was recommended to be appointed, she declined that recommendation because of the imminent release

of the Integrity Commission report and my understanding of her concern about how that might be taken.

Mr DEAN - Was the CEO a part of that selection panel?

Mr MAY - I would not want to comment.

CHAIR - Can we have that advice, thank you?

Mr MAY - Yes.

Mr FINCH - You said it went through a process. It went to the head of the State Service for approval?

Mr MAY - Yes. The State Service Management Office has an obligation and Scott Marston can probably comment formally on the process of the State Service Management Office.

Mr MARSTON - I can talk in general, not about the specifics because I am new too. I am seven weeks in and I was not part of the process. At SES 3 and above, only the head of the State Service can appoint. My understanding is that process was going through but Ms Hocking declined the offer and wanted to go through. This is in very recent times, not what is referred to in the report, Mr Finch. She declined that so that they would go through an interview process and that interview process never occurred because the Integrity Commission reporters came down and at the moment we have that process suspended for now.

Mr FINCH - So it was without the approval of the head of the State Service is what I want clarified. That was in the report by the Integrity Commission?

Mr MARSTON - I am trying to avoid commenting on the Integrity Commission report. There is a number of different moves the Integrity Commission talked about. What Mr May was talking about is the recent Deputy CEO, Education Services role, an SES 3 that was never filled and I do not think forms part of the Integrity Commission report. However, the previous ones were the issue - I will talk very broadly and not specifically. The issue that has been raised is the TAFE Tasmania is under exactly the same policies and process of any other government agency. We are no different. So let me answer that. The Integrity Commission seemed to pick up the policies and process under the employment directions issued by the Premier were not necessarily followed.

Mr ROCKLIFF - These are detailed in the Integrity Commission report itself.

Mr FINCH - One concern is the process able to be circumvented in other departments, not just TasTAFE. Is there a possibility this could occur in other areas of the public service?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I cannot speak for other areas of the public service except to ensure our audit, depending on what investigation is undertaken. My responsibility is to the 800 employees, the 15 500 students and the future of TasTAFE. This has been very upsetting for many people and we have to ensure we learn from the Integrity Commission findings. Also learn from the independent audit process and ensure we have the absolute most robust mechanisms in place to ensure this does not happen again.

Mr FINCH - I would suggest it should be more far reaching than just TasTAFE, that there should be investigations into all of the areas where this might occur and that this sort of occurrence is circumvented.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We do not want this circumstance to happen again. It is very heart-wrenching our many employees within TasTAFE as you would appreciate. The Department of Treasury and Finance and the Department of Premier and Cabinet will develop a new induction process for board members and public authorities, new Chief Executive Officers and members of the senior executive service. A new pilot induction process will be trialled by the board of TasTAFE from tomorrow will be part of my response to the Integrity Commission.

Mr FINCH - I want to be assured the anonymous person who made the complaint, that there is no witch hunt going on through TasTAFE to try to find out the person who might have been the whistleblower. Has TasTAFE moved on from that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There is no witch hunt. We are very keen to address the concerns through the findings of the Integrity Commission, through the independent audit investigation and to ensure this never happens again. Our public training provider is too valuable to this state, to industry, to not be the most robust training organisation absolutely possible. We need a very strong public training provider in Tasmania simply because of our decentralised state and the fact in some markets around Tasmania public RTOs or training providers simply cannot make a profit out of some of those markets and that is why you need a very strong public provider and strong industry links of that public provider to ensure the training needs are there to support industry and those engaging in vocational education and training.

Mr WILLIE - The Integrity Commission was informed in February 2016, so did anybody raise with you anecdotally or informally this type of thing was occurring within TasTAFE?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I was first aware of the Integrity Commission investigation - and I have checked all my records - on 30 August 2016, about 3.15 p.m.

Mr WILLIE - So you had not heard anything, people talking to you?

Mr ROCKLIFF - If someone knew about an investigation and told me, they would be breaking the law. That is why on 30 August, when I got off the phone to the CEO of the Integrity Commission, I could not tell anyone either. It was not until I had a more informal briefing by the CEO of the Integrity Commission some seven months later, that I was more informed about the report and saw the report in detail after that. If someone was to inform me about Integrity Commission investigations, they would be breaking the law, as you know.

Mr DEAN - I want to follow up on the board situation, as to whether the board appreciated what their responsibilities were and what functions they play in some of these issues. It often concerns me with board members that they do not. It is hard to accept other senior people sitting around the CEO, did not have a fair idea of what was going on. Where do they fit into this? Did they not have some responsibility to bring these issues out? It happened over a fairly long period, it was not a matter that happened very quickly. The audit will cover all of that. I am not quite sure who the current board members are, but how many are on the board?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We can provide a list of the board members. There are some new appointments and some soon to be appointed. I want to restate on this board member issue - and

you are right, Mr Dean, and is why the Treasury and Finance and the Department of Premier and Cabinet are all taking this very seriously. Why we are developing a new induction process for board members of public authorities, new chief executive officers, members of senior executive service, and the new pilot induction process will be trailed by the board of TasTAFE. We will learn from this experience, not just the TasTAFE board but right across the State Service, and we need to.

Mr DEAN - The audit report you have now sanctioned, when is that to come back to you? What is the time frame?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Firstly, the Integrity Commission gave us a series of recommendations to implement over a 12-month period. We are implementing those recommendations now. As to a time frame, I will take that on notice. I want to make sure this is a very thorough investigation and no corners are cut so we have the opportunity for all those who contribute to the audit process and would like various matters investigated and that work is done.

Mr DEAN - The concern is that if the audit report you are doing now is going to take something like six months, I suspect there will be further promotions within TAFE between now and perhaps when that is handed down. What faith can we have that the proper structures will be adhered to and put into place? What is the controlling position? I have faith in Mr Sayer; there is no attack on you. There is no attack on Mr Sayer at all.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am sure you have faith in Mr Sayer and I have absolute faith in Mr Sayer. There is no-one more credentialed for this very challenging job.

Mr SAYER - The independent board starts on 1 July 2017 and it deals with all of those matters that the minister just outlined.

The audit is really all about compliance in the first 12 months. It is all about compliance issues and the reason that is so important at the moment is - and I wrote to all staff about this today - that we as an organisation and the community and industry need to raise the level of trust in the organisation by ensuring that we have the best systems and procedures in place. That is what the 12 months is going to be all about. It is broken up into quarters so it will be quite intense and along the way, after each quarter, we will be able to advise the minister on the progress that is being made through the board.

Mr DEAN - And I suspect you have morale issues to work with as well within TAFE, or is morale - I read the report.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Mr Sayer has visited a number of people in the organisation.

Mr SAYER - My job at the moment is to really listen to people's concerns and make sure that some action is taken around those concerns. I have certainly spoken to a lot of people in the south employed at TasTAFE. In the second half of June and July, Scott Marston and I will be visiting every campus of TasTAFE to have very open discussions with all staff about what it means to be a public servant, how the Westminster system works, to give it context. Then we will be rolling out the corporate plan and discussing the corporate plan with all staff. It is going to be quite an intensive consultation period with staff and at the same time they know that we have this comprehensive audit process going on in the agency to clean up any inconsistencies around compliance issues. We have a very strong focus on compliance.

Mr DEAN - This demonstrates another weakness in the whistleblower legislation really. This has been festering for quite a while and people are reluctant to come forward - but anyway, that is another issue.

Mr FINCH - Minister, the Integrity Commission report said that Mr Conway and Ms Hocking had a shared association through the South Australian company VETNetwork and both their families were based in Adelaide. In addition, the investigation found that a friend and professional colleague of Mr Conway and Ms Hocking was awarded an \$18 000 contract without a competitive process. What I want to clarify is: was VETNetwork hired by TasTAFE, or were they hired on an individual basis as people applying for the job, or did we have a contract with VETNetwork?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I would like to take that question on notice.

Mr MAY - I can answer that. Stephen Conway was employed on the basis of a fully advertised position. Lori Hocking was similarly employed on the basis of a fully advertised position and thorough selection process. Both went through formal State Service advertising and selection processes.

Mr FINCH - So VETNetwork is outside of the TasTAFE contracts?

Mr MAY - That is absolutely correct, yes.

Mr WILLIE - Minister, can you guarantee that all TAFE courses comply with ASQA - Australian Skills Quality Authority?

Mr ROCKLIFF - ASQA is an independent auditing process in itself. I can provide an answer for you there. In addition to maintaining the quality standards that are driven by TasTAFE's commitment to its clients, TasTAFE also maintains two key registrations, ASQA registration, which enables TasTAFE to operate as a registered training organisation, and CRICOS - Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students -registration, which enables TasTAFE to provide services to international students. These standards are subject to strict controls and regular audits. TasTAFE maintains a quality management system to ensure that these standards are met. TasTAFE's quality management system is used to assist teams to not only meet TasTAFE's expectations, but to attain and maintain compliance against the standards of registered training organisations as regulated by the Australian Skills Quality Authority.

The standards are the tool which ASQA uses to regulate the VET sector in relation to all parts of the training and assessment function of TasTAFE. The quality management system guides teaching staff to ensure that training is valuable to our clients through meeting standards that recognise and build their accountability, training and assessment. In addition to its ASQA registration, TasTAFE also holds a Commonwealth CRICOS registration through which it is able to offer training to overseas students.

Both of these registrations lie at the heart of TasTAFE's operations and the daily behaviours are built heavily around the responsibility of these registrations. TasTAFE manages this scope of registration in accordance with ASQA's requirements and standards. An ASQA compliance audit to confirm TasTAFE's adherence to the RTO standards was undertaken during March 2016. This was an extensive audit process involving 12 qualifications across two regions. TasTAFE fulfilled all rectification requirements.

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ASQA also conducted a compliance audit of TasTAFE's offshore delivery at Bangda [TBC - can't find] Technical College in Shanghai, China. ASQA did not identify any non-compliance areas.

In 2016 ASQA received two complaints about TasTAFE. In both instances ASQA determined that these were to be unfounded, as the practices in question were in line with ASQA requirements.

In 2017 TasTAFE initiated a new internal audit framework to support the systemic monitoring of training and assessment practices in line with the ASQA standards.

The Department of Education conducted an internal audit of six components of TasTAFE's quality management system in July 2016. TasTAFE has subsequently implemented a range of improvement strategies in the areas of record keeping, student feedback and continuous improvement.

TasTAFE continues to invest in dedicated staffing resources with a focus on adherence to compliant vocational education and training practices, with almost 40 per cent of TasTAFE's scope of registration being impacted by training package changes in 2017. A significant amount of work is occurring to transition across to the new requirements. TasTAFE systems pay particular attention to the integrity of processes relating to the finalisation of testamurs and statements of attainment for students who have been assessed as competent against their training package or accredited course.

Earlier this year, TasTAFE extended this focus to offshore programs. ASQA has been advised of the material agent. This is CEO change in line with the TasTAFE's reporting obligation to ASQA.

Mr WILLIE - I am glad I asked that question because someone has put a bit of time into that response.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I was asked about it the other day, so I thought I would provide the comprehensive response.

Ms ARMITAGE - Hopefully after all this, this is such a quantum cause. It is to do with young plumbers wanting to undertake their Certificate 4. You may remember last year they were able to undertake it in Launceston.

They start work at 7.30 in the morning. They finish work and they have to go to Devonport to do the Certificate 4. They come back that night and the next morning they are off to work again, which really is not safe working hours.

Either Plumbing Alliance or one of those plumbing groups made representations and I recall going along with them and we did speak with the Treasurer and also minister Barnett with regard to training and with regard to this gentleman.

Last year, they were able to undertake their training for the Certificate 4 in Launceston. Unfortunately, this year they have been told they have to go back to Devonport again. It might be two nights a week. It is getting to winter.

The question has been raised these plumbers, wanting to undertake their further training so they can be tradesman and work for themselves are having to go to Devonport. There are 14 of them at the moment going down. I understand the TAFE trainer might be in Devonport.

I would have thought it would have been economically and safer for one trainer to come up and stay overnight than 14 young plumbers go to Devonport and have to drive back that night ready to work again the next day.

Can you explain to me why, after last year it was working okay and they were able to do it up here, this year they have told they have to go to Devonport again a couple of nights a week.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have received representation on this issue over the weekend. Certificate 4 qualifications in plumbing are post-apprenticeship training. There are 29 students currently undertaking Cert 4 qualifications, 14 of whom come from the greater Launceston area as you have identified Ms Armitage.

The remainder come from areas ranging from the West Coast through to the East Coast. Part of the course is delivered in Devonport with other elements delivered in Launceston. TasTAFE is seeking to expedite a technology solution that will remove the present barriers to remote training.

TasTAFE's aim is to have arrangements in place sooner than the 16 weeks recently suggested. TasTAFE has developed a strategy through which, to the greatest extent possible, the requirement to travel would be reduced by offering technology assisted remote learning opportunities.

Facilities will be established in Hobart, Devonport and Launceston using funding in the 2017-18 State Budget to enable teaching staff in one location to deliver plumbing theory classes to other locations.

Wi-Fi upgrades are currently being arranged and smart boards, projectors and teleconference technology is currently being organised. These new capabilities are a priority for TasTAFE and will be in place and operational as soon as possible, to start to limit these travel requirements you speak of. I empathise with individuals that have expressed the view to you, the Treasurer, minister for Work Place Standards and indeed myself.

Ms ARMITAGE - We have had meetings.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, and thank you for representing.

Ms ARMITAGE - You say as soon as possible. I appreciate it is hard to have a timeframe, but is it likely they will have to travel down again this winter?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I accept that. They have done a day's work.

Ms ARMITAGE - Last year they did not have to. It was sorted out and they were actually able to do it in Launceston.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will endeavour to find a solution to this as soon as possible.

Ms LOVELL - I will ask this question but accept that it is most likely you will need to take it on notice and I can table it.

I am after some staffing figures similar to the question I asked around the Department of Education.

FTE numbers and head count for TasTAFE teachers at each band and level.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Band and level might be a challenge. I take that on notice.

Ms LOVELL - If you have got general figures there, can I expand that question to say what is the current number and percentage of all staff in TasTAFE who are teachers compared to the current number and percentage of TasTAFE staff who are non teachers. Do you have those figures?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Total employees head count 803. FTE 688.14 which is of March 2017. the SES officer level 7, March 2017, teachers 410.43 FTE and TSSA general 261.71, TSSA professional 6, civility attendance 3. That makes up the 688.14 FTE. Is that enough?

Ms LOVELL - One further question to do with the work placement, your incentive program. How much money has been paid to TasTAFE employees in the last 12 months? In the form of either a redundancy and/or a RIP and how many FTE employee's does this represent?

Mr SAYER - We will take that on notice Ms Lovell.

Mr WILLIE - In the annual reports last year it was viewed TasTAFE had lost 4 000 enrolments in one year. Minister, do you expect enrolments to decrease again this year?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is a good question.

CHAIR - I will let members the new minister in your team know we need to finish by 6.35 p.m. We might need to tighten up the answers.

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of student numbers. TasTAFE student numbers in recent years have been impacted by the effects of competition essentially. The number of Tasmanians being supported at TasTAFE on the basis of a deed of purchasing agreement with the Department of State Growth has remained stable in recent years. The effects of competition are impacting on student numbers and other parts of TasTAFE's training domain. I have mentioned, TasTAFE along with all TAFE's across Australia having to change.

This is not just a Tasmanian issue, it is national, all TAFE's realise the status quo is not an option and they need to modernise and become more demand focused and to do so quickly. It is not just us but it is across the nation. TasTAFE student profile changes from year to year and recent years one of the significant factors in that variation, has been the effect of competition. The introduction of National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform came into effect in 2012 which formalised the agenda to introduce far greater competition into the national VET sector.

Farms that were regarded as traditional domain of TAFE's became more accessible to organisations in the private sector. This is an agenda that has delivered many different outcomes from the of unscrupulous providers you would be aware about to effective competition giving rise to significant changes that have shaped the TAFE sector. In this setting our Government is very pleased with the level of continued support offered to TasTAFE, Tasmania's public VET provider in 2016 TasTAFE received 82 per cent of a total skills and training funding.

TasTAFE has not suffered in the manner TAFE's and other jurisdiction have. Unlike some of those jurisdictions, TasTAFE still services the major proportion of the Government subsidised

training market. Notwithstanding that support, TasTAFE has not been immune from the effects of the competitive market and the underlying metric to TasTAFE's activities. Half the number of students and the number of courses they enrol in and the number of hours they undertake the course.

In terms of the students projected for the previous year I am hoping that decrease stabilises. I do not know if you have got any more information, Mr Marston.

Mr MARSTON - I am really excited about the next 12 months. The revised corporate plans which the board and ourselves have worked on is a significant departure from the business model we have been pursuing. It follows the minister's message there completely. If we have moved to more demand driven products more people will come. We have a number of advantages being the public provider with regard to our facilities and our reach and range. You asked a number of questions about culture, Mr Dean, and I get a sense our staff are really excited about what we can do with regard to the products we offer. There is no lack of commitment and energy. The purpose of TasTAFE as a relative new entity really needed to be fully explained. That is going to be the chore Mark referred to, that Mark and I are doing. We are really excited following the Government's message with regard to industry engagement. To take that to a new level will result in an amendment in the decline you refer to.

Mr WILLIE - What is the financial impact of those 4000 students? I agree with what Scott is saying too. The brand of TAFE is strong. It is not the staff fault. Whilst all this turmoil is unfolding I do acknowledge that.

Mr MAY - Speaking only in broad terms, the variation in enrolments and the variation in revenues tend to track together. As the minister has indicated the underlying funding comes from the Government to TasTAFE has been maintained very consistently over recent years. That is the deed of purchasing through which Skills Tasmania buys services off us. There are other elements of our revenue streams and operations that vary on the basis of what the market brings. For example, in recent years the TasTAFE's access to contestable resources through tenders Skills Tasmania run. We have secured less business through that process on the basis of competition so our funding has declined and our enrolments have declined simultaneously. We do not get money for not doing the things we are no longer being asked to do.

At the same time, for example, we are trying very hard this year to boost our involvement in the international market. An environments where competition allows us to try harder to come up with more innovative products to work better with overseas providers to improve our revenue sources and our student numbers. We are almost a business.

Mr WILLIE - What was the percentage of State Growth money going to TasTAFE?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well 82 per cent of the training fund is from the state Government. Is the break down from State Growth to TasTAFE?

Mr MAY - That is the basis on which not only does TasTAFE get funded directly but also the basis on which Skills Tasmania puts money into the market place to compete. We secure 82 per cent.

Mr WILLIE - The 46 per cent cut of federal funding foreshadowed in the federal budget, how are you going to manage that, minister, because that going to have a significant impact?

CHAIR - Particularly if you are going to expand TasTAFE services.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am not sure that figure is right. I will get some more information for you, Mr Willie. The Australian Government announced in the 2017-18 Budget on 9 May that the National Partnership for Skilling Australians Fund will replace the expiring National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform. The new Skilling Australians Fund is aimed at delivering more apprentices, trainees, pre-apprenticeships at higher level, skilled Australians in occupations in high demand or with future growth potential, including in regional Australia. The \$1.5 billion Skilling Australians Fund runs over four years, \$375 million per year. On an annualised basis it is comparable to the expiring \$1.75 billion National Partnership on Skills Reform was ran over five years at \$350 million per year.

Mr WILLIE - They are national figures, minister. What is Tasmania's portion of that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is right it is a national system. The fund commences on 1 July this year and payments to Tasmania on an annualised basis are anticipated to be similar to those available under the expiring National Partnership on Skills Reform. Time frames for negotiation and agreement on the National Partnership are not yet fully established and a COAG Industry and Skills Council was held on 2 June. Skilling Australians Fund was listed there for discussion.

The funding coming to Tasmania nationally should not alter too much. We will keep a close eye on it. I do not want to be cut either. My information is there will be no such cuts of any magnitude in terms of your question.

Mr WILLIE - You are saying there is not going to be a reduction in Tasmania's portion of those federal figures we receive?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The National Partnership on Skills Reform ran over five years at \$350 million per year. Skilling Australians Fund runs over four years at \$375 million per year, so I am not anticipating any cut. I stand to be corrected and I will be keeping a very close eye on this. It is my expectation that it will not be cut.

Mr MARSTON - I think the minister is right. The only thing we are unsure about are some of the rules around the new schemes still being worked up.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are keeping a very close eye on it.

CHAIR - My question is around the communities targeted for the expansion of the TasTAFE services. Do you have any idea which communities they will be and what industries they will be concentrated in? You have time for only a couple of more questions.

Mr MARSTON - There is no answer to your question right now. We have done some analysis of regional need with those communities, however we now have to look at how those things are actually serviced. We are very keen to move out of a very strict campus-based learning environment and more into industry. But also using community facilities as compared to our own facilities and become more embedded in the community. That is our intention. A scan of the requirements, but we have not got to the next phase of the project. I think it will make some really interesting reading.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is an important part of the Education Architecture Project about access to products, TasTAFE products and services regardless of physical location, learning style and

capability. TasTAFE aims to strengthen its ability to compete in the Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training marketplace, offer alternatives to Tasmanians in regional and more remote locations. Phase 2 of the architecture project concluded in March this year with a primary focus being an extensive community consultation process right throughout the state. The consultation presented a sense of the importance of TasTAFE for industry, communities and individuals. The consultation phase has provided critical information regarding training needs of students, communities and industry and these finds will provide TasTAFE with an evidence-base in which to develop the what, the where and indeed the how its programs will be delivered in the future.

CHAIR - Will they be available by the end of this year so they are in place for 2018?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The findings will also assist TasTAFE to make strategic decisions about how the \$3 million of new funding across the 2017-18 and 2018-19 financial years can be invested to support this agenda. The next stage in the project is the finalisation of recommendations and the identification of specific actions to demonstrate the potential of this initiative to improve access to TasTAFE's services.

Mr DEAN - Where are our current skill shortages in the state, minister?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is a very good question for the Minister for State Growth.

Mr DEAN - I thought I would ask you whether TAFE target any new students and I would think there is an educational -

Mr ROCKLIFF - In hospitality, we would like to develop more; in agriculture, which is an important part of what we were discussing before. I have had a lot to do with the advanced manufacturing area. When I chaired the Caterpillar Transition Taskforce as a result of the direct loss of those 280 jobs in Burnie, I became far more acutely aware of the importance of advanced manufacturing and visited a lot of advanced manufacturing businesses in the north and the north-west. I always asked them about their training needs and particularly how TasTAFE, if they were engaged with TasTAFE, is servicing their particular needs. I had some really great feedback about TasTAFE from one business near the airport in Launceston: the flexibility on offer, and the fact that the TasTAFE teacher came to the workplace on a regular basis and was able to engage with the trainees on modern, up-to-date equipment. The feedback I received was very positive. In my view, that is a growing sector because, once again, it is in that premium branded space. When people come from overseas to look at what advanced manufacturing capabilities we have in Tasmania, they are blown away with the quality of the workmanship of employees in these small to medium businesses, let alone the larger businesses such as Elphinstone and the like.

Advanced manufacturing, agriculture, health and aged care - we have an ageing population, disability, information technology and construction. Given the amount of construction around the state at the present time, there is also an identified skill shortage in this area.

Mr DEAN - Is TAFE suitably set up to provide all of those courses and training in all of these areas?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is why we are engaging very closely with industry to ensure that we are catering for industry needs. Again, we are in a very competitive marketplace and contestable funding et cetera. We know that TasTAFE as an organisation has to work extremely hard as a public provider to ensure they meet the needs of industry and the flexibility industry needs.

CHAIR - I have just had a look at the makeup of the board and given all the things you have outlined about what needs to happen, does the board have the suitable skills to be of use to TasTAFE?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, it does. I have confidence in the board and the skills set. There have been some changes to the board over the course of the last 12 months. It has gone through a period of renewal. Mr Neville Smith's term is almost up and so there is a process underway to appoint a new board member.

Mr MARSTON - Interviews were held this morning.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Interviews were held this morning. Thanks, Mr Marston.

CHAIR - Let us hope we get a board member who maybe has some on-the-ground skills and can identify some of these areas that are lacking, which might be useful. That was a comment not a question.

We need to conclude this committee. On behalf of the committee, minister and staff, thank you very much for the work you have done today. It is a huge task.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank them as well. They are a great team.

The committee adjourned at 6.35 p.m.