

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

LC Thursday 11 September 2014 - Estimates Committee B (Rockliff)

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Thursday 11 September 2014

MEMBERS

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

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

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
Michele Moseley, Deputy Secretary
Wes Ford, Acting Deputy Secretary
Adrian Pearce, Manager, Finance
Deidre Wilson, Director, Policy Division
Kate Kent, General Manager (Information & Land Services)
Lloyd Klumpp, General Manager Biosecurity Tasmania
Warrick Coverdale, Valuer-General
John Diggle, Director, Inland Fisheries

Department of State Growth - Racing

Bob Rutherford, Deputy Secretary, Transport, Regulatory and Customer Services
Tony Murray, General Manager, Racing Services Tasmania
Graham Murray, A/G Budget Accountant

Department of Education

Colin Pettit, Secretary

Liz Banks, Deputy Secretary, Early Years and Schools

Paul Murphy, Deputy Secretary, Skills, Community, International and Education Services

Andrew Finch, Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services

Kane Salter, Director, Finance and Business Services

Jenny Rayner, Director, LINC Tasmania

Stephen Conway, CEO, TasTAFE

Nick May, Executive Manager Finance and Resources, TasTAFE

Gail Eaton-Briggs, General Manager Operations Organisational and Business Development, TasTAFE

Ministerial Staff

Jenny Gale, Chief of Staff

Bronwyn Perry, Deputy Chief of Staff

Ashley Bastock, Senior Adviser

The committee met at 9 a.m.

CHAIR (Mrs Taylor) - Good morning, minister, and everyone. Thank you for being here again, day four. It is the first time for you, minister, and we are very pleased to have you here. We can take nine hours today so we can extend the time but I have asked the members to be as focused as they can and, minister, I want to ask you that, too. We would like you to give an opening statement at the beginning but, generally speaking, if you could be focused in your answers, and you possibly are. You may be very focused and to the point in answers but there have been occasions when some ministers take it as an opportunity to give a broader picture on almost every topic and that is fine when we have the time.

Before you start, would you mind introducing the people at the table, for the sake of *Hansard*.

Mr ROCKLIFF - To my right is John Whittington, the Secretary of DPIPWE, who is now the permanent Secretary and I congratulate John on his appointment. And Michele Moseley, the Deputy Secretary of DPIPWE.

CHAIR - Thank you. An opening statement from you would be lovely.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Chair, and indeed it is a pleasure to be here.

Our Government has a clear vision to grow our state's economy. Agriculture is a major part of that vision with our target to grow the agricultural sector to \$10 billion by 2050. In our Government's 2014-15 Budget we delivered on our policy commitments to start providing the platform for that target to be reached.

Our funding is about strategic investment in key areas of irrigation, agricultural research, development and extension as well as investing in our rural communities. Funding includes \$1.5 million, for the Water for Profit program to ensure farmers maximise their investment in irrigation; \$500 000 to identify the potential and to further enhance and connect existing irrigation schemes; \$800 000 for additional agricultural research development and extension that better aligns with the goals of farmers and industry; \$600 000 to help farmers to improve on-farm productivity and \$1 million for farm forestry development and improved returns from residues. There is funding for agricultural skills development and improved farm safety, and also for grants to groups such as Women in Agriculture and Rural Youth Tasmania.

Our funding is not just about growing these sectors but protecting them and enhancing their reputation. Tasmania's reputation for its primary industries relies on its relative freedom from a range of pests and diseases. Our Government is committed to providing a biosecurity framework that reflects the value of our primary industries sector, quality of life and environment. We have established Biosecurity Tasmania to align all our core biosecurity responsibilities. We are delivering our election commitment and investing \$900 000 in strengthening our biosecurity front line.

Aquaculture and fisheries are also a part of the key strengths on which our economy is built. Our Government recognises the value of this sector to the future growth of our economy and investing in it appropriately. We are delivering on our election commitment to support our wild capture fisheries, both commercial and recreational, by investing in resource security and improved biosecurity.

We are also partnering with the shellfish industry to enhance measures in place to maintain our international reputation of our shellfish industry. Our Government will provide an additional \$200 000 per year to the Tasmanian Shellfish Quality Assurance Program, which plays a critical role in managing risks to the shellfish industry.

Our Government is focused on growing the reputation of our state as a centre of excellence for fish health. To enhance this reputation we are investing \$500 000 towards the Fish Health Centre of Excellence at Mount Pleasant and \$500 000 to IMAS for salmon industry research. The Government recognises the benefits of the recreational fishing sector also makes to the economy and it is investing additional funds to support the sector to increase its economic contribution.

Regional and rural communities are at the heart of our agricultural sector and our Government is recognising them as well. King Island, with approximately 20 per cent of the Tasmanian beef industry, is an important part of fulfilling our vision for the agricultural sector. Our Government recognises the difficulty faced by beef producers on the island and the importance of the Target 120 program in assisting them. The Target 120 program provides transport assistance and industry capacity-building with the appointment of a specialist extension officer. Our Government is extending the transport assistance component to the package for a further six months or until the funds are exhausted to enable beef producers to adjust and equip them to further the potential of the beef industry on the island and we are also extending the provision of the extension officer for a further year.

Our Government has identified the key areas to help our agricultural sector and our economy grow overall, however, it is not about reckless spending. We have identified the strategic areas to invest and assist industry achieving its potential. We are also identifying the areas where we can

allow industry and farmers to get on with the job without over regulation from state government. To achieve this our Government is structuring a State Service that delivers the right services to meet the needs of the community when these needs can only be provided by government.

It is a State Service that is lean and targeted towards delivering the appropriate government services to support our communities. It is an approach our Government believes will foster growth in our agricultural sector and help drive our state's economic growth overall.

I welcome the opportunity to provide more detail and discussion on the points I have raised and the output groups in my budget responsibility. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, minister. We will go straight in.

DIVISION 9

(Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment)

Output group 1

Information and land services

1.1 Land titles, survey and mapping services -

Mr VALENTINE - I will lead on that. The exciting area of land titles, survey and mapping services. How many FTEs in this area, minister?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will get to the output folder and invite Kate Kent to the table. At 14 June this year, you want total output group 1?

Mr VALENTINE - Just lands, titles survey and mapping services.

Mr ROCKLIFF - 96.08.

Mr VALENTINE - The question I have, after having looked at the expenses as well as the appropriation, is, what has caused the expenses of this line item to drop by \$391 000? My follow up question is, how is the net loss of \$99 000 going to be covered this year? What has caused the drop in expenses?

Mr WHITTINGTON - This is a general reduction across the division and we will be doing that by a range of mechanisms and looking to do things better and more efficiently. Members will recall the launch of the redeveloped LIST - Land Information System Tasmania - last year. Those sorts of products and applications that we can run off for all sorts of things will improve the efficiency of our processing. We are doing a lot of work in the back end to improve our systems in titles. Perhaps Kate can speak to the National Electronic Conveyancing System - NECS - and how that will help with the sorts of efficiencies that are going to be required to deliver the services we are providing.

Ms KENT - There are several branches that come into this output. That includes the Land Titles Office, Geodata Services, and Geospatial Infrastructure which are surveyors. In all of those areas much of that work is based on systems and moving to more digitised production of maps, for example, and in land titles having a system that can have much more electronic transfer of details. As part of the National Electronic Conveyancing System, which we are preparing to enter

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towards the end of 2015, we have been working through ways to ensure better electronic registration of dealing and other parts of the Lands Titles system.

Mr VALENTINE - And that reduces your expense, as a result?

Ms KENT -Yes, it does.

Mr VALENTINE - Then you have the proposed wage freeze, so that is part of that reduction in expenses?

Ms KENT -Yes, that's right.

Mr VALENTINE - At the end of the day you will end up, according to the figures, with \$99 000 less to play with.

Then there is an increase of \$329 000 in 2015-16 and we presume that is the 27th pay. Is that the reason for that net increase in 2015-16? It is an increase actual appropriation of \$153 000.

Mr WHITTINGTON - Yes. That is the indexation that starts kicking in in the forward Estimates.

Mr VALENTINE - Expenses for 2015-16 are down from 2014-15 again by a further \$176 000. You have made a reduction in expense in the first year, this year, to the tune of \$391 000 but somehow you are reducing it again by \$176 000 in the following year. Over those two years it is a significant amount. What are you doing to add to that reduction in expenses?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There are efficiencies that we have to have right across government and as minister I make choices - difficult decisions - about savings strategies. Part of our election commitment is to invest in areas across the portfolio that are going to produce the highest amount of productivity. That is why we are investing heavily in research and development, and those areas in the department that are going to generate economic activity. But, given the Budget circumstances we have to be mindful of where we can save and provide for operational efficiencies. For example, in the information land services division which includes Service Tasmania, we are examining options in trialling an integrated client services unit for better client services. We are investing in improved systems to ensure greater efficiencies in the delivery of products and services and providing some administration and financial functions in a shared services hub. These are all areas where we think we can provide greater efficiencies to give us a balanced Budget.

Mr VALENTINE - The land titles, survey and mapping service is a well-established service and the number of FTEs it takes to deliver those services is well understood - 96. But when you are making a significant cut of \$391 000 in the first year, I cannot see how you can make another \$175 000 cut in the following year. I can't see what it is further out - \$358 000 is the net figure. Minus \$358 000 in 2016-17 and then minus \$11 000 in the following year. Surely there is not that much that can be gained from an established service like that. I would have thought over the years it has been cut so badly.

CHAIR - Minister, if I could focus that question. You are saying these are operational cuts, and it's a good thing if your department is able to make efficiencies, but the question is - where,

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specifically, are those cuts being made? Is it in staff or is it in systems? Can you be more specific? Perhaps your staff could be more specific.

Mr ROCKLIFF - These will be worked through with the secretary and the department over the course of the next few years. These are the savings we have to make and will deliver on, and that will be through consultation throughout the department to identify efficiencies. This is an area that is also improving with technological advances.

CHAIR - So this is a target? You have not earmarked anything specific or any services to be cut?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We do not expect any services to be cut as a result of this.

Mr VALENTINE - I guess my worry is that it gets to a point where it might become dysfunctional because it cannot operate properly. I am wondering how you can say you are going to save \$391 000 there and do another \$175 000 in the following year without really knowing what the impact of the \$391 000 cut is on expenses.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We do not want any impact on service delivery and we have to be very mindful of that. I take your point. There have been some savings in this output group over successive years, and I acknowledge that, and that is a real challenge for Ms Kent and the department. However, we have to do better with a little less across the whole of government, particularly in areas towards the back line. I am confident the secretary will work through these matters and the appropriate savings strategy will be put in place with little detriment, if any, to frontline service delivery or the direct interface with the public.

Mr VALENTINE - It will be interesting to see how this comes out in following years and no doubt we will revisit this. I see in 2016-17 you have a net position of \$358 000 less. While in the overall Budget they are small amounts, they are not for a particular unit. It is one I will be watching with interest.

Mr DEAN - When we talk about better and more efficient operations, they are throwaway words. I would have thought we would be looking at continual improvement in these departments, not just waiting for this sort of thing to happen. Minister, your efficiencies here are prefaced on the fact the salary pause bill will get through the Council. It is a hypothetical question: what is in the pipeline should that pay pause not get through this place? Has that been addressed? Mr Valentine makes a very valid point. How functional can you be continuing to go down this path?

CHAIR - Please do not tell us that if the pay pause does not come through that means an extra 500 public service jobs will go.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is exactly what it will mean. I had these discussions with the Premier - and questions of that nature should be directed to the Premier - we are taking a very balanced approach to this Budget. There are some challenging decisions to make and the pay pause is one of those challenges. We have to bring the Budget back under control. We had \$1.1 billion worth of accumulated deficits over successive years, they are not sustainable, and the pay pause is critical to this Budget.

CHAIR - I will allow that to be said just once today. We have said it to every minister and we have addressed it to the Premier. Our suggestion to the Premier is that there is usually more than one solution to any problem, but you have made that point and the minister has responded. We will not do that again today.

1.2 Valuation services -

Mr FINCH - I have a concern about valuations and that is the reduction of them in Tasmania. The big reductions explained in note 1 are the decrease in the valuation services required by the Office of the Valuer-General for the implementation of the valuation and municipal rating review. Can I be apprised, minister, of the progress of that: where we are, when it is likely to be released, and what the major impacts will be?

Mr WHITTINGTON - That review was undertaken by the previous Government and came to conclusion, and as a result of that we are not changing the valuation cycle. Therefore the additional appropriation that was provided several years ago - which has never been spent, by the way, because it was taken as a saving in consecutive years and just appeared in the Budget papers every year waiting for the outcome of that review - has now been taken off permanently through the forward Estimates. It is money that was appropriated but never spent over several years, pending the outcome of that review. The previous Government finalised that review and the decision was not to amend the valuation cycle. The additional funds required to go to a shorter valuation cycle are not required - they are the saving you can see, the \$1.5 million this year and into the forward Estimates.

Mr FINCH - What were the implications of the review and what it would have meant had it been implemented?

Mr WHITTINGTON - The review was being undertaken through the Department of Premier and Cabinet. They are the custodian of the review and probably the better group to ask. From a purely valuation perspective, it was looking at shortening the valuation cycle so the valuation shocks you get in a longer cycle would be less likely. We have, at the same time, been working through the Office of the Valuer-General on much better systems for valuations. The shocks we saw with the last property boom are unlikely to happen again because of the much better systems we have in place - putting in adjustment factors on a regular basis.

CHAIR - It is the adjustment factor that has made the difference?

Mr WHITTINGTON - The decision was taken that the additional cost of shortening the valuation cycle would not be reflected in a benefit to the public. That is why we are retaining the six-year cycle with the adjustment factors.

Some other work is being done with valuation and different models of valuation and we are working with local government on those. It is getting closer to the edge of my understanding of those and I am happy to either have Kate or perhaps the Valuer-General, if that is all right with the minister, speak to some of those different valuation models.

Mr FINCH - Minister, I have a concern that if someone were to seek a new valuation on their property, to perhaps put it on the market, they would find a marked reduction in the value, be it land or be it a house. This is something that I understand is being imposed from on high, via some industry valuation test, and Tasmania has been marked down. The explanation I received

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was that our valuations went through the roof when we had our boom, and now we have some adjustment taking place. It means that people might have a sense that their house is valued at a certain figure, but that is now going to change. When they go to get a valuation - when they get their property revalued to deal with banks - their valuation will go south. Can I get a comment on that or an understanding on that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will invite Warrick Coverdale, the Valuer-General, to speak to that.

Mr FINCH - It is of concern that people feel their investment has a certain value, but -

CHAIR - Would you mind formally introducing him? He is not on the list of people you provided.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Valuer-General, Warrick Coverdale.

Mr COVERDALE - Good morning. A few different questions were asked there. One was about the adjustment factors and one was about the market, and then there was something about the process that came out of the review. I am happy to answer all or part.

I will start with the review. There was a review undertaken that involved local government and the Office of the Valuer-General. The outcome was that there were recommendations. One of those was for a shorter evaluation cycle of four years and doing away with assessed annual value (AAV) which has been in place for a number of years. It was putting land value on a two-year cycle which put my staff out in the field, and part of the revaluation cycle.

We are still in the same cycle as we were with a six year re-evaluation cycle and three values still having to be determined - AAV, capital value and land value. We have nine municipalities being revalued this year by 1 July so effectively we are the same as we were before. The review did make recommendation but it was put into the longer term so there were no changes made. At this stage I am doing re-evaluations under the same act, same process, as we were doing before.

Mr FINCH - I imagine keeping it at the six-year cycle takes a certain amount of pressure off your office?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The adjustment factor included?

Mr FINCH - Yes, rather than four years.

Mr COVERDALE - It is part of that process. One of the values being dropped out of that process was AAV, so if there were efficiencies to be made in shortening the cycle doing land value on capital value, the AAV was not going to form part of the equation.

CHAIR - Was one of the recommendations that you keep that?

Mr COVERDALE - One of the recommendations of the review was that AAV was to be ceased and the transition for councils towards capital value.

CHAIR - Can we ask you, minister, why that particular recommendation was not carried through? It sounds as though none of the recommendations have been taken up from the previous government.

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Mr ROCKLIFF - The previous government made a decision.

CHAIR - Will you have another look at that? If there was a report that made recommendations, then being a new Government, you might like to look at what the recommendations were.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will have to discuss that with the range of ministerial stakeholders that are involved. The minister for local government would be an important stakeholder to consult with. I am happy for my department to provide me with some options for review. The thinking behind the government's previous decision, that is for them, but I will take a question on those.

CHAIR - What is the point in having reviews - and recommendations made - unless recommendations are carried out or there is good reason why you would not do that. That is why I am asking and I understand that you are saying it is the previous government but you are now the Government.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There are various reviews that go on. I have a number of reviews under way across my department - biosecurity is one of those that will come across my desk at some stage. I guess we can take on board as a Government the recommendations or not, but the decision for all those will need to be clearly articulated at the time.

CHAIR - Absolutely, but one would hope that we would get reasons for both, why the recommendations are accepted or are not accepted.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, and happy to do that.

Mrs ARMITAGE - I believe the recommendations did go through. I know with Launceston City Council they had the recommendations regarding the AAV with capital and the land value and I believe the previous government did not insist on what councils did. The recommendations came through council about whether to keep AAV capital and land value and then my understanding is it is up to the individual councils to make their own decisions. I am sure the information was passed on. I know in the case of Launceston it was. I know we discussed the review.

Mr WHITTINGTON - The answer I have given is in the context of the valuation services. It is a part of a bigger picture so in the context of valuation the decision was to retain the cycle we have now. There are other options around evaluation and I am happy for Warwick to discuss the merits of capital value as its assessed, annual value, and land value. From the context of this agency and this agency and this output group, not the broader review, the reduction of \$1.5 million was to reflect the fact that we are not changing the valuation cycle and the decision from my output group's perspective was that it did not represent good public value to expend the extra amount for the benefit received. That is not to say that there is not good reform to be had around valuation and I am happy for the minister or Warwick to answer the question.

Mr FINCH - Was it \$1.4 million or \$1.5 million?

Mr WHITTINGTON - \$1.5 million, sorry. There was initially a \$4 million appropriation to improve the valuation services, of which \$2.5 million has been retained and is embedded in those figures. That was to remove some of the need for the Valuer-General's office to seek commercial

work. There was an initial appropriation four years ago, Warwick, of \$4 million[?]; \$2.5 million is still very much in there and that is driving a better valuation system in the office, but the additional \$1.5 million to change the valuation cycle was a saving because it is not required, it has never been spent.

Mr COVERDALE - The additional \$2.5 million that was provided changed the funding model for the OVG. If we go back a few years ago, it was 30 per cent funded, for the 70 per cent I was having to do commercial work to fund everything in the background. That money has changed that to 35 per cent where I do commercial work - that is how I balance the books each year. There is still a commercial component that I do and that is for various agencies, councils, financial reporting. That is a component in the body of work that I do so that we can balance the books at the end of the day and it is ongoing. Part of that is work for councils on supplementary valuations.

CHAIR - Even when you do the revaluation of the municipality, it is the council that actually pays for valuation, doesn't it? It reimburses you for the cost?

Mr COVERDALE - They do. They pay for the revaluation cost as we sit at the moment. My cost is through the quality assurance of that process and that is why I have changed a lot of the documentation, the specifications and the requirements to improve that process because if I am paying for the quality assurance of that, I want a better product to come back in front of me. I streamlined a lot of processes from better GIS systems and mobility in the field so that we can check and view a lot of data more easily and spatially. Again, it is all about trying to get a more efficient, better use of the physical and financial resources from my side so that the QA process does not blow out.

Mr VALENTINE - On valuation reassessments, you undertake that work, how often are the valuations challenged? And do you have to go back and reassess? You are talking about quality control and presumably you do get people coming in and challenging your valuation.

Mr COVERDALE - We do but it is quite good now that we have had some time, I have been in this role for six years but that whole time it has been a pretty downward trend on objections and objections to it. Going back to 2008-09, we did have big shifts in values at that time, I had a 2.8 per cent objection rate to the valuations. We move forward to 2010 revaluations when I was down to 1.9 per cent. We move forward to the 10 municipalities I did in 2012-13 and I was at 0.6 per cent.

Mr VALENTINE - So it is improving every year.

Mr COVERDALE - I have defiantly been trying to work that through. It is a whole raft of processes to try to get a better outcome through brochures, publications, and doing a better product. I deal with a lot of stakeholders in the background -

Mr VALENTINE - They are still drive-by, aren't they?

Mr COVERDALE - There a couple of parts to the inspections. The rural residential is done on the kerbside but with about 50 years' worth of data which I have now digitally captured so that every valuer has it at their fingertips, including the old scanned plans from 1950. A lot of work is done trying to capture digital data.

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Mrs ARMITAGE - I need them to come in and see that I don't have a kitchen, so they will charge me less.

CHAIR - No. Your house might not be habitable. I wouldn't pursue that if I were you.

Mr COVERDALE - I have changed the rules and regulations with inspections on certain occasions - for commercial, industrial, and specialist properties - to tighten them up, to get the contractors and my staff to do it properly. I can't tell you how many times I have told my staff, 'You were there. It was your opportunity to pick up what is necessary, and make sure it is correct. Look at what is around you while you are there'.

CHAIR - It is lovely to see your enthusiastic attitude to your job. I am delighted to hear that. We have a number of specific questions. Kerry, you asked for the Valuer-General to come to the table because you were worried about that specific issue.

Mr FINCH - Yes. I would like some explanation about the possibility of a person getting their property re-valued to deal with a bank, and finding the valuation of their property has gone down dramatically.

CHAIR - Might have gone down.

Mr FINCH - No - it will. That is my understanding of it. We have been valued down.

CHAIR - Every property in Launceston, every property in Tasmania?

Mr COVERDALE - Revaluations are done at a point in time. Everything has what we call a base date. Nine or 10 municipalities this year have a base date - 1 July 2014. That is the date everything is worked to. Launceston had a base date in 2010 - 1 July. The market is pegged as at that time. Sales evidence up to and just past that date is used to derive values as at that time. What happens subsequent to that is picked up in adjustment factors. We do adjustment factors for land every year, and assessed annual value every two years. I have now put capital value with that, which is every two years as well. You are right. The adjustment factors go up and down. I have had adjustment factors significantly reduced, for example on the west coast.

Ms RATTRAY - The north east.

Mr COVERDALE - Commercial/industrial in Launceston was wound down to 0.95. It was less than 1. My role is to adjust for the market at a given point in time and analyse the sales evidence to reflect that. In the last adjustment, King Island was wound down 20 per cent because the market there had changed. The difference with a shorter cycle is that adjustments are picked up more regularly. A six-year cycle is still okay, as long as you have adjustment factors in between. They are broad factors.

Mr VALENTINE - It is important for local government.

Mr COVERDALE - Well, it is. People say values only keep going up and we never bring them down, but I have numerous examples over the years where I have considered adjustment factors. They are not property specific. An adjustment factor reflects a property class within a locality.

Mr FINCH - Aside from the role that your office plays, is there another element, commercially, in valuations. Does the commercial side of property trading make its own valuation - its own assessment - that might not correlate with your figures? Or do they have their own agenda and just give it a cursory glance?

Mr COVERDALE - Correct. I am the statutory officer, and the act specifies how I have to undertake valuations. A private valuer doing a job for a mortgage valuation, so to speak, that is different. That is as at a point in time, it is as at date of inspection and as at today based on what evidence is there as at today. That is a different role from what I am doing. I can understand that because I have to do market valuations for certain scenarios for government entities as at a point in time so I have to be aware of what is happening in the market but the private valuers are doing their work, separate to myself, and we have different dates of valuation.

Mr FINCH - Is my suggestion right or wrong that the valuation industry - commercial and private - has marked Tasmania down in respect of valuations? That they will, as a matter of course, because there is a new bar set for Tasmania which is lower than it has been, not so much in the past but in previous years?

Mr COVERDALE - I would say not. There are rules and regulations in holding your ticket as a valuer within Tasmania and their role is to determine a market value within the definition of 'market value' at a point in time. I cannot comment on what is happening in specific firms or industry, but I can say that their role should be to provide fair and independent valuation of a property at a point in time. It is not marked down because of *x*, *y*, *z* or some other scenario, it should be under the rules and regulations as we work with. Under the Australian Property Institute there is a definition for market value and they must work to that. That is based on evidence. We interpret the market and we interpret the sales evidence. That is their job.

Mr FINCH - Minister, would you be concerned if what I am suggesting is correct?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I would have to look at the scenarios and some examples of what you are suggesting, Kerry. The Valuer-General has explained the process for this and it is independent of government. I would prefer to reserve my comment on that. Our job, as a Government, is to set the right policy settings to make sure that people participate in a growing economy.

Ms RATTRAY - I am interested because I have one of those houses that has gone down by 15 or 20 per cent and I know it is real. I am interested in whether you do anything with the real estate industry? Do you have a conversation about what they perceive the market is for given properties at any given time?

Mr COVERDALE - We do in certain aspects. I have given a presentation which has been at the same time as the Real Estate Institute and that type of thing. There are numerous pieces of data, on a weekly basis, that talk about the market at a point in time. We all work with the same sales evidence and what occurs within that market. How I interpret it and how someone else interprets it, or whether we come up with the same statistics - I have to work with what I am doing. But I have regard to what other commentators and others are saying. Does that line up with my thought process and, if not, is there something that we need to discuss?

A good example is Michael Warren, at Harcourts, who does a lot of work on the rural side. We have a conversation and we bounce it around, 'This is my take on it; is that what you see?' He might be a bit further on because the deals are being done, rather than at a point in time. We get

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the evidence after that but we are aware of what is happening. I think overall my staff and myself, we try to be on top of it.

Mrs ARMITAGE - I know we are not supposed to make comments. I am leading on to something. It depends whether you are a seller. If you are a seller you want your price to be high. If you have rates you want your price to be low.

Ms RATTRAY - You want it to be at valuation.

Mrs ARMITAGE - You do, but depending where you are. I asked this question last year. You may remember, Mr Coverdale, it is much the same thing. The problem I have discovered and assuming is still the area that the government valuations are high but the bank valuations are low because they are looking at borrowing. I have several questions. Would you consider that is more the issue? That the banks are putting their valuations lower, not because Tasmania has been marked down but because they are looking at lending money as opposed to a valuation on the house? Would you consider that would be more the reason that our valuations are down?

Mr COVERDALE - In my view, that should not be the case and that is what I was articulating before. But I am not working in that industry. We are both looking at the same sales evidence, the houses that are selling, the properties, et cetera. I do not think I am high. I think I am correct at a point in time in what I am doing, as I would expect the private side to be. If there is a different interpretation from your side -

Mrs ARMITAGE - I only heard that the banks were marking houses down as opposed to the government valuation.

Mr COVERDALE - If you look back in time, the market changes and even through a six-year cycle we go through changes in volumes of sales.

Mrs ARMITAGE - I thought it might have been that they are conservative in their borrowing.

CHAIR - You would have to ask the banks that question rather than the Valuer-General.

Mr COVERDALE - That is right. People remember pretty closely what happened last week, last month. What happened in 2010 with levels of value seems a fair bit in the past.

Mrs ARMITAGE - You were saying that the appeals process is down on valuations. The council pays, originally, for the valuation. Who pays for the appeal, for it to come back, is that for you, or does the council still pick up that bill?

Mr COVERDALE - I pick up that. If we ended up in a significant court process it would be back to having a discussion with the relevant council in regard to that. To date, in six years, I have resolved most matters without significant court costs involved in that.

Mrs ARMITAGE - The costs aren't extremely high?

Mr COVERDALE - No.

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Mrs ARMITAGE - Lastly, AAV - capital land value. Would you consider land value to be the most pure?

Mr COVERDALE - I might have to get a politician to answer this one, the reason being is that my role is to implement the legislation and what is there. My personal opinion on that is different.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Your opinion as the Valuer-General was what I was asking because AAV is accepted in the community. I think you have answered me in the past and I wondered if you still have this opinion.

Mr COVERDALE - I think I have given a similar answer on that.

Mrs ARMITAGE - You gave me an answer but I was wondering if you had the same answer.

Mr DEAN - I need to give an example without mentioning the name in raising this question. A property at Pipers River was valued recently. It was a very elderly gentleman and the valuation was clearly right over the top. There were a number of plantations on the property and it was clear that the valuer had not taken into account the drop in the valuation of the plantations on this property. It wasn't until his daughter found out and I am happy to say that you revalued and you valued it down. Do your valuers keep up with what is happening in the area on plantations, for instance? Are they educated on these issues, the ups and downs in different rural properties?

Mr COVERDALE - Certainly within the industries. But there were instances in the last revaluation where there were sections of plantation on certain properties, not over in the back blocks, that we may or may not have been aware of at the time. The tools are there now, we can view whether we have a plantation on there or not. The requirements are greater to get to the bottom of those.

With the changes that happened in forestry, I think I spoke last time that there was a disproportionate change in the rural valuations where with plantations, that sector, we did write down those values. Through the objection process, which is where some of these things come out, we picked up some properties that had plantation on them and it was adjusted accordingly. That is probably one of your examples.

Mr DEAN - And you adjusted it, so thank you for that.

Mr FINCH - The figures you gave us before about dealing with issues that are raised with your office, does this mean you are open to people to question, to object, and make suggestions in respect of values that might be done?

Mr COVERDALE - Absolutely. I accept correspondence all year. Varying questions come in every week and I send my staff out to review, or if there is something raised to discuss it with the property owner. I make a point of that because it is two-fold. We get to view the block again and if there is something - it may not lead to a change in value, but it may lead to a better understanding in the community as to what the process is.

Mr ROCKLIFF - In relation to both those question, it is an example that the system is working.

Mr FINCH - Can I get the numbers and the price your office may have paid in respect of the reduction of budget savings?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The office of the Valuer General has 33 permanent staff, 17 qualified valuers, and a number of administration staff.

Mr FINCH - And numbers that have been diminished through the office with budget savings?

Mr ROCKLIFF - These things are being worked through now. We would have comparison figures from last year and we could put those on notice.

Mr WHITTINGTON - The Valuer-General's office was the recipient of a significant funding increase several years ago which has enabled them to move much more onto budget. They have also built an enormous number of very complex but exciting GIS systems that help them do their work better. They are in very good shape at the moment.

1.3 Service Tasmania

Mrs ARMITAGE - Minister, we believe the Service Tasmania shop in Launceston is the busiest shop in Tasmania?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I understand it is a very busy shop and there have been some issues with queues.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Not may have been - still.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There are seven other shops servicing the broader northern region as well.

Mrs ARMITAGE - I would like more opening hours but I realise that is not your area; that is the Premier's remit. Previously, the 27 shops were delivering 574 services. Has that increased and, if so, what are the new services?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I think it has increased. Working with Children is an example of extra service delivery.

[10.00 a.m.]

Mrs ARMITAGE - Can you explain what that is, Working With Children, and what Service Tasmania does in that regard?

Ms KENT - It's those checks under that new legislation that came in about Working With Children checks.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I guess it is processing those police checks.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Wouldn't that have been a service they would have already been performing - police checks?

Ms KENT - That program only started on 1 July in the Department of Justice.

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Mrs ARMITAGE - It is a program. But I would have thought that police checks were police checks irrespective of what they were for.

Mr ROCKLIFF - My understanding is that it was previously done through various agencies, rather than Service Tasmania itself.

Mrs ARMITAGE - I have been in Service Tasmania years ago and had to get police checks.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I went to a police station last time, but in this new Working With Children system, it is being done with various agencies responsible and now it is available at Service Tasmania, which is good news for accessibility.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Is that the only new service?

Ms KENT - There are 599 services now offered through Service Tasmania.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Can you table the list?

Ms KENT - I probably could table the list.

CHAIR - That would be lovely.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Are you looking at working with local councils to perhaps be able to pay rates at Service Tasmania? That is a difficulty for people sometimes, that they can't pay their rates at Service Tasmania at the moment, can they?

Mr WHITTINGTON - That is a policy question around the services delivered, but it is managed through the Service Tasmania Unit in Premier and Cabinet, and working with the agencies that want the services delivered. We are in effect a shopfront that provides services on behalf of the Government, so it is up to agencies to decide what services they want to put through our shops. Our job is to deliver the services that are given to us to deliver. Decisions around what services should be delivered are decisions of the policy group in Premier and Cabinet.

Mrs ARMITAGE - As you take on more services, yet you have budget cuts, and possibly staff cuts, does that make delivery of the services more difficult?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The budget is increasing.

Mrs ARMITAGE - We still have the pay pause to be looked at.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The budget is increasing and the pay pause would not impact on any service delivery whatsoever.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Would the pay pause be affecting Service Tasmania at all?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, they are government employees, so yes.

Mrs ARMITAGE - I thought that would have to impact. That won't be impacting on service?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Why would a pay pause impact on the service?

Mrs ARMITAGE - If you lose staff it might.

CHAIR - The number of staff won't be going down.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The idea of pay pause is to retain staff.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Well it is, but if it doesn't get through the other threat that we have had is that staff would go, so it is just balancing.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Good point.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Has that been looked at, that possibly staff could go from Service Tasmania if the pay pause does not come in? We do not see figures factored in there for the pay pause for Service Tasmania. Are you quarantined from the pay pause in your department?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are making savings right across agencies in terms of the equivalent number of FTEs, right across the whole of government, up to 700. The pay pause is equivalent to 500 of those FTEs.

Mrs ARMITAGE - I am just asking about Service Tasmania.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am just saying it is right across government.

CHAIR - No, the pay pause is not about the 700 FTEs that you are going to lose anyway. You have told us if you don't have the pay pause it will be another 500. So it is not 500 out of that 700.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, the pay pause is equivalent to 500; we have already announced 700 equivalent FTEs across the whole of government.

Mr DEAN - That is not necessarily right either, is it? It could be resources going.

CHAIR - You have budget reductions.

Mr FERGUSON - I said equivalent to 700 FTEs, correct.

Mrs ARMITAGE - That was my question with regard to the fact that the Budget does not seem to have altered a lot when the pay pause might come in.

Have you seen an increase in complaints, and what are your mechanisms for dealing with complaints?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Complaints against service delivery?

Mrs ARMITAGE - Basically.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We can get that answer for you.

Mrs ARMITAGE - It is always good to get an opinion from another minister.

Ms KENT - You had the Department of Premier and Cabinet on Monday. Complaints have stayed fairly settled through the year. We address all complaints that we receive, written complaints. Sometimes they are a complaint about the service and that is referred back to the agency. It might be someone complaining about the cost to get a particular licence or something like that so we provide a response in conjunction with the agency where that service is provided. If there are complaints about service we address that immediately with the officer involved or if there are complaints about opening hours -

Mrs ARMITAGE - Lack of opening hours.

CHAIR - We have gone down that track and had the responses.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Yes, exactly. You mentioned the integrated client services unit, was that to do with Service Tasmania? Can you explain that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, this is the government contact centre. Staff of the government contact centre were transferred from the Department of Premier and Cabinet to the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment on 10 April this year. This was a key milestone of the integrated Tasmanian government contact centre project. The transfer was well-managed. There was no loss of service quality or other related issues and nine staff were transferred - seven in Hobart and two in Launceston - which should be of interest to you, Mrs Armitage.

The staff in Hobart did not physically move, however a new contact centre facility was built within the Service Tasmania Launceston shop, to facilitate the integrated location.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Thank you, it is of interest but probably would be more of interest if the hours could be extended. One of the main complaints I get is that the hours are limited. People can't always get in and many people feel they are being pushed to go to either phone or electronic service. Older people, particularly, like face-to-face service and may not always have access to computers.

Mr DEAN - How closely, minister, do you look at staffing levels in the offices? Launceston is still the busiest Service Tasmania office in the state. I ask the question every year and I have never really had any satisfaction, because Hobart -

CHAIR - With respect, we asked that question and we received an answer about the extra staff that have been employed in the last year. You got numbers on that the other day.

Mr DEAN - Yes, but when you look at the staff in Hobart and compare it with the staff in Launceston, there are larger numbers in Hobart doing less work. Minister, how can that be addressed?

Mr ROCKLIFF - In previous years there has been some satisfaction. The physical limitations of the Launceston shop have been raised - the lengthy queues and delays experienced by some customers. As a result of those complaints changes were made to facilities, rosters, and staffing management practices that have substantially improved the customer experience. It is my

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understanding that with improved rostering and more staff available during peak periods, any queues that arise are being dealt with as efficiently as possible. No complaints related to customer dissatisfaction with queues or delays have been received since the changes took effect in March 2014.

Mr DEAN - I understand that changes have been made at Launceston and that is good but I keep asking the question - how can the larger staffing levels in Hobart be justified? I don't want to be parochial about this - when you start raising these issues, people see you as being parochial - that is not it at all. But that is the question I keep asking - what is the justification for it? When the workload is greater in Launceston

Mr ROCKLIFF - I guess it is done on population base and the regionality of other centres would be a factor, I guess, in terms of staffing levels.

Mr DEAN - Shouldn't it be done on the amount of work that offices are getting? Shouldn't that be the criterion?

Mrs ARMITAGE - I thought there were more Service Tasmania's in the Hobart region than Launceston.

Mr ROCKLIFF - My understanding is a comprehensive service provision review of the operations, including development of a service delivery model for opening days and hours for all shops based on the number of transactions conducted by each shop, was done in 2012. Four categories were developed based on shop transaction levels with corresponding consistent opening hours.

The Launceston shop has the highest number of transactions statewide and was rated as category A, so that is 90 000-plus contacts per annum, and it is therefore open eight hours per day from 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Other shops in category A include Hobart, Rosny, Glenorchy, Burnie and Devonport.

Ms KENT - Hobart doesn't have more staff than Launceston.

Mrs ARMITAGE - And the hours of opening at Launceston?

Ms KENT - They are 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

CHAIR - Could you repeat that comment because I think Mrs Armitage might have missed that.

Ms KENT - Launceston has slightly more staff than Hobart.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The new shop opening hours commenced in January 2013, Mrs Armitage.

Mrs ARMITAGE - That is fine. Just checking.

CHAIR - Thank you. I know it is a community issue but we have discussed this at length and you are now getting to the stage of offering comments rather than questions. Unless you have another question on Service Tasmania can we move on?

Output group 2
Primary Industries

2.1 AgriGrowth Tasmania

CHAIR - Thank you. Do you want to bring some other people to the table.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. At the table we have the deputy secretary, Wes Ford.

CHAIR - AgriGrowth is an exciting initiative. Significantly more funding or changes, I suppose. We have looked at the notes incorporating the former agriculture policy branch. Resources from the Department of State Growth - I am not quite sure how that fits in. You might give us an overview of not only what you have done but also how you see this fits in because we are all excited about the fact that agriculture is a growing, burgeoning, hopefully economic opportunity for Tasmania but you have to balance that against agriculture being a cyclical and targeted industry at times. If you have some more general comments that would be good.

Mr ROCKLIFF - AgriGrowth Tasmania has been established officially on 1 July this year. It aligns with our policy commitment to have a more whole of government focus for the primary industry sector. In other words, ensuring that the Department of Primary Industries and Water are more responsive to the needs of agriculture. That aligns with our objectives as a new Government to grow our agricultural sector farm gate value from the current \$1.1 billion at farm gate to \$10 billion by 2050.

AgriGrowth Tasmania has whole of government focus - people from State Growth and the strong links with State Growth and strong links with the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture and Tas Irrigation, but also good communication channels with Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association and the Tasmanian Agricultural Productivity Group. It is a more responsive entity within the Department to the concerns of agriculture, but also to the opportunities that agriculture might present, and need to be focused on, and looked on in a very efficient and timely manner.

The feedback I have had over a number of years is that, while the Department has always done an excellent job, they are seen in some quarters as being too compliance focused. In other words telling farmers, for example, what they cannot do rather than how we can help them progress water development or progress a new crop opportunity, or whatever the case may be. It is an entity within current resources.. Our commitment was to refocus and restructure the Department of Primary Industries into AgriGrowth Tasmania to be far more proactive and assertive when it comes to responding to new opportunities and dealing with other barriers that present themselves to farmers and industry.

CHAIR - Does the function of research come into this, and policy making, and implementation? All of those?

[10.15 a.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. The links with the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, with AgriGrowth Tasmania, are strong so research is a very important component of the Government's agenda. There has been great investment in this Budget in terms of research and development capability. We have our ongoing commitment to the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) of some \$5 million per year.

CHAIR - That is not funded through this, the TIA?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is funded through the Budget, yes.

CHAIR - But not through AgriGrowth?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not technically through AgriGrowth, but the issue is the links to AgriGrowth and that strong communication channel. What is an additional expenditure, through this output group, would be the areas of on-farm productivity, \$600 000, which the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture has a key role in, and also \$800 000 additional for a research and development collaboration fund. What I am trying to encourage is for the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture's research to be more applied to practical, driven outcomes on the ground. In other words, for less theoretical and far more practical, in terms of investment in research and development that will have flow on benefits to farmers on the ground and will generate economic activity.

CHAIR - Does the UTAS Sense-T have a connection with this or is that just with TIA?

Mr ROCKLIFF - A very good example of innovation and a tool that will assist agriculture and other industries. Sense-T is a part of it. It is all about AgriGrowth looking right across the whole of government. Given that agriculture is such a crucial part of our economy, and a key competitive strength of Tasmania on which we need to build, and we are, and we have a strong vision for it, this is ensuring that this Department has the linkages to every aspect that might touch agriculture.

CHAIR - FTEs?

Mr ROCKLIFF - AgriGrowth is a relatively small, but dynamic unit; 12 FTEs.

Mr WHITTINGTON - I think you said TIA's funding does not come through this output group, it in part does. The answer is, in part. Part of it is through administered expense, which you are seeing in the budget papers at table 9.17 and part of it is through a grant that is through that output group. It is a function of the way TIA's funding has emerged through time. Part of TIA's grant you will see is inside of that, and part is not. It is a small number of people but it administers and looks after a large area of expenditure.

The other part on that is that AgriGrowth leverages off the rest of the agency, whether it is in biosecurity or fisheries or, as the minister said, from State Growth. It is a small focus group leveraging a much larger group.

Mr ROCKLIFF - When I developed the policy in Opposition my thinking was not a large bureaucracy, it was meant to be a small focus, so it would be responsive and targeted to industries' needs. Already we have had feedback via email from stakeholders and the agriculture sector who have noticed a difference in how responsive the department has been under AgriGrowth Tasmania to some of the concerns that presented to the Department. One particular person has not always been terribly complimentary.

CHAIR - Have you had complaints as well as compliments?

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Mr ROCKLIFF - No, I have not had any complaints. There are always issues that are dealt with. One is the issue of industrial hemp, on which there has been a lot of discussion. I know Mr Valentine has an interest in this area. AgriGrowth Tasmania will be reporting to me within a 90-day period on how we can cut the red tape for the industrial hemp industry. Government can get off the industrial hemp industry's back. There are various stages in the process, requiring various licensing conditions, et cetera, that have come off in recent times, which is a good thing, but AgriGrowth Tasmania will be detailing to me how we can make it easier for that fledgling industry to be less restricted in its growth opportunities.

CHAIR - I would imagine you must be hearing that from quite a number of primary industry businesses - about that red and green tape. Ms Rattray, you had questions?

Ms RATTRAY - Can you identify any other areas where you are going to give the farming community a reprieve from red and green tape?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I can. One of the important things going on at the present time is COAG mapping regulation across all jurisdictions around Australia. Tasmania has chosen agriculture as a particular focus, in terms of what regulations are impeding farmers and agricultural industries and preventing them from getting on and doing what they do best.

Ms RATTRAY - You must have a list already of areas you have identified over your last 16 years in opposition.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have identified some areas since coming to government. We are reviewing the biosecurity legislation - we already have that under way.

Ms RATTRAY - We will get to that; that is further down.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are not progressing with the previous government's intention to ban the use of 1080. We have asked AgriGrowth Tasmania to -

Mr DEAN - What was that about 1080, sorry?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are not banning 1080 by 2015. We are asking AgriGrowth Tasmania to investigate how to simplify the regulatory requirements for industrial hemp, as I have already said. We announced in the Budget we are winding up the assessment committee for dam construction and simplifying the dam approval process.

Ms RATTRAY - Farmers will not need a licence from now on?

Mr ROCKLIFF - They will need the required permits.

Ms RATTRAY - They will need a permit, but they just will not need 15 layers of permits?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Dam safety is a key aspect of that, of course. It is in the farmers' interests that dams are appropriately engineered, but by removing the assessment committee for dam construction we are getting rid of another layer, if you like. An unelected body of faceless people making decisions that I can make, as minister, and take responsibility for.

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We are also winding up the Marine Farm Planning Review Panel and Board of Advice and Reference and simplifying the planning process there. We are streamlining the abalone industry and the administration of over-catch and obtaining additional quota to cover the over-catch. We are simplifying the rules for possessing commercial rock lobster pots in enclosed areas. So, there are a number of things we have got on to already but we are soon to be establishing a regulation reduction coordinator who will be looking at every aspect of red and green tape, not just in agriculture but right across the small business sector.

Ms RATTRAY - How long is that going to take? We have heard about that for the last six weeks. Has a person been appointed in that role and are they getting on with things?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not as yet. That is a question for the minister, Mr Groom.

Ms RATTRAY - I thought you would be really interested in it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I am very interested.

CHAIR - We hope you have talked about this thing together. We do not get to see Mr Groom.

Mr ROCKLIFF - He is well and truly on to it. We are hoping for an announcement on that relatively soon. Our commitment is to reduce red and green tape by 20 per cent and we are setting up the mechanisms to do just that with the COAG mapping reforms, with the regulation reduction coordinator, and with ministers individually, as we have done already, with AgriGrowth Tasmania identifying areas where we can cut red and green tape.

Ms RATTRAY - Chair, I have one more question in that area, but not about red and green tape; I am not sure if anyone else has questions about that. I am not sure if this is the right place, AgriGrowth, but I think it fits. In your overview, minister, you talked about the transport assistance package for King Island and how necessary it is for them to have that. What about Flinders Island, where is their support package, minister?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The support package for King Island was done on the basis of the closure of the abattoir. There was a very real need to support the King Island beef producers as it is some 20 per cent of the beef herd of Tasmania. That had a huge impact on the beef producers.

Ms RATTRAY - I am not disputing any of those good facts, I am just asking, where is equity?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The assistance package for King Island was based on the need to assist farmers and through the transition -

Ms RATTRAY - To get their produce off the island into market, that's exactly what I'm asking for.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is right, some 38 000 head of cattle were processed through that abattoir and there were a whole range of concerns around transport, impact on MSA accreditation and all those sorts of things, which is money at the end of the day. There needed to be a transition package in place for King Island and that was directly in response to the closure of the abattoir.

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CHAIR - What will that transition package do because it's only there for a year? What is the solution?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have extended it, so we recognise that it has been of value particularly the extension officer has been of value. In conjunction with the assistance package with the freight being an important component, the area of research and development is assisting the farmers to be more productive and look at how they can innovate. How can R&D and innovation play a role to ensure that farmers are producing more efficiently at less cost? That is where research and development comes in for the longer term.

CHAIR - You are always going to have the freight problem though if there is not processing on the island.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, if there is no processing on the island, freight will be a barrier. This is a transition package and a key component of that is to assist beef producers to be more profitable. When you are more profitable you then you can absorb additional costs.

CHAIR - You can afford the freight.

Ms RATTRAY - With all due respect, Madam Chair, that is not my question. I absolutely appreciate everything the minister has said but I looking for equity for the same beef producers that live on another island in our state. That is what I am asking for, nothing more, nothing less.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I understand where you are coming from.

Ms RATTRAY - There is a lot of cattle on the island now, sheep are not as prevalent as they were in the past. They don't need as many head and they can still make a good buck, but they need to be competitive.

Mr ROCKLIFF - In many respects King Island and Flinders Island are just micro-examples of where Tasmania sits in the world as well and the freight impacts on the state.

Ms RATTRAY - Bruny Island is another island that has a number. I am just looking for that equity. I am asking if you will consider equity for the islands.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Again, of course, it is about -

Ms RATTRAY - It is about dollars, I know exactly what it is about but it is about supporting our agriculture industry as well.

Mr ROCKLIFF - But you have to see it in the context of the King Island example. It is about a transition program assisting with research and development. These programs are available also to Flinders Island producers. You must see it in the context of a transition rather than a subsidy.

Ms RATTRAY - I think that is a no, Madam Chair.

Mr VALENTINE - I had my staff do a bit of a scan on the promises and where they were highlighted in the Budget. I am presuming you have carriage of the 2050 vision for agriculture? One of the line items in that is to facilitate commercial development of forestry residues,

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including biomass and biofuels, engineered wood and carbon products. It is about \$550 000 but it does not appear to be in the Budget anywhere. Can you point me to where that is?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is in the Budget. Mr Harriss will be taking charge of that program.

Mr VALENTINE - I can understand it would be associated with forestry, but it is part of the vision.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The program is going to be delivered by State Growth - table 9.1, Investigate alternative uses for forest residues.

CHAIR - I was surprised that you mentioned it in your overview because I thought that meant some of the money is coming out of your budget.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, it is.

CHAIR - Which line item is it coming out of?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is table 9.1, Investigate alternative uses for forest residues.

CHAIR - Which output is that under?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is under 2.1, AgriGrowth.

CHAIR - So it is out of this budget?

Mr VALENTINE - Yes.

CHAIR - And the amount of money was?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It was \$138 000 a year over four years.

Mrs ARMITAGE - I understand the Government takes no responsibility for what has happened in the past but to do with contracts of Tasmanian producers to our hospitals and prisons, does your Government have a policy that Tasmanian producers will be used for those contracts? I know in the past caged eggs were coming in from the mainland, so are we looking at Tasmanian producers?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is a question for the Treasurer.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Last year it came under agriculture.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We took a local benefits test policy to the election and we are committed to using local producers. I made some comments in the last couple of years about how ridiculous it was that, on one hand we were banning caged eggs in Tasmania, and on the other hand importing 200 000 dozen eggs from Queensland from caged hen farms and not using local producers. The local producers were concerned about that, and quite rightly.

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Mrs ARMITAGE - Are you able to get details about the contracts for the eggs and produce for the hospital and prison to see if they are coming from Tasmanian producers or from the mainland?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am not sure. Individual departments probably could report on that in their annual reports. I know we report on consultancies and the like. It is really a question for the Treasurer. I guess individual agencies would provide information to the Treasurer.

Mrs ARMITAGE - I will ask the question on notice to find out if we are buying Tasmanian, as we purport.

CHAIR - Coming back to the previous point, minister, I am still trying to get my head around the fact the money for that residue research is coming from output group 2.1, which is \$138 000 a year but you said it comes under the responsibility of the Minister for Resources.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It will be delivered by the Department of State Growth. The Minister for Resources is under the Department of State Growth.

CHAIR - Is it a wrong line item? Should that amount be in someone else's line item?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, it shouldn't be.

CHAIR - It is your responsibility.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Payment will be delivered under the Department of State Growth but the funding has come from AgriGrowth Tasmania. It links with agriculture and farm forestry and it affects farmers on the ground, but the delivery will come from the Department of State Growth. It is about improving the use of farm and forest residues - investigating options such as bio-energy and bio-fuel, harvesting renewable energy from crop residues, weed infestations and animal effluent and generating products such as biochar, that offer both economic and environmental benefits. The program will consider wood-based energy systems and investigate the generation of renewable energy from agricultural activities and the potential manufacturer of biochar. In addition, there will be a study into the manufacture of torrefied wood pellets that can be exported into the rapidly growing market for green energy.

Mr VALENTINE - Is that federal money that is being redirected through there? Is that part of the old TFA funding, or is it state funding?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, it is state money. This came from our cultivating prosperity policy document, which was released prior to the election. Cultivating prosperity is all about looking at all the opportunities right across the agriculture sector. This is just one of them. We have a very diverse agricultural sector, which is one of our key competitive strengths. One of our challenges, of course, is poorer economies of scale and that is why we are investing heavily in research and development, so we can improve our economies of scale.

Ms RATTRAY - Is there one specific person or group that can be identified as the point of contact for people who are interested in that program?

Mr ROCKLIFF - If you are interested in that program -

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Ms RATTRAY - Or in accessing funds through that program or having input into those initiatives. Is there a one-stop contact place?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is exactly what AgriGrowth Tasmania is all about.

Ms RATTRAY - Is there one person's name that you could put on the *Hansard* that I could use as a contact today?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes I can put on a number.

Ms RATTRAY - I would like the key person.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Wes Ford, Debbie Wilson.

Ms RATTRAY - We get so many initiatives put to our offices, particularly from areas of desperate need and we do not know where to go. I do not know where to go, so how are they going to know where to go?

CHAIR - There are people who are doing this research off their own bat and sometimes we do not even know about it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - AgriGrowth Tasmania will provide a one-stop shop for those people who either want to engage in the opportunities for agriculture, or are frustrated with the level of bureaucratic red tape. AgriGrowth Tasmania can get it sorted out. It has been established for people in the agriculture industry.

CHAIR - Okay, thank you for that, we have some names. Let us go for morning tea.

The committee suspended from 10.39 a.m. to 10.50 a.m.

CHAIR - We move straight on to Marine Resources.

Output Group 2

2.2 Marine resources -

Mr VALENTINE - The note talks about supporting a world-class Tasmanian fisheries and seafood sector and rock lobster policy. Perhaps minister, you could outline the targeting of the dollars for the various industries mentioned in that note and how those dollars will reduce risk. In your opening statement you talked about providing funds to various industries to reduce risk

Mr ROCKLIFF - There are a number of areas here. It is an important question. The biggest risk that the fisheries sector has and the expanding aquaculture sector and salmon industry - salmon now a half a billion dollar industry, expected to grow to a \$1 billion by 2030 - is around biosecurity and the impact of disease, both in our wild fishery and our aquaculture sector and our salmon industry.

It is all part of the aquaculture industry. That is why we are investing a further \$900 000 for biosecurity at the front line. Tare examples around the world. I think it was Chile that had a

\$4 billion aquaculture industry which was virtually wiped out overnight by a disease that came in very quickly. That industry was shut down overnight. So we have set up Biosecurity Tasmania, which we officially set up on 1 May this year, which ended all the fragmentation of the biosecurity aspect. We brought in Invasive Species Branch and the other areas around biosecurity and product integrity under one banner for a far more streamlined and focused biosecurity and quarantine outfit to protect our industries.

There was a lot of fragmentation but the other positive aspect about that is that the skills within Quarantine at the time and now Biosecurity Tasmania, will be transferable right across the area of invasive species. Previously we had experts within the biosecurity regime overall that focused just on foxes, for example.

CHAIR - I wish you hadn't mentioned that word.

Laughter.

Mr VALENTINE - Don't mention the war.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Those skills will be transferable. There will be experts across the biosecurity regime whether it is weeds, pests, diseases, dare I say foxes, any potential incursion. Everyone will have responsibility and knowledge of how to deal with that biosecurity risk and that also includes the aquaculture area.

Mr VALENTINE - The question was: in putting dollars into the various industries, how are they going to assist with reducing risk?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The word risk, from a biosecurity point of view, is about supporting our industries to grow but also to protect those industries. You will see on table 9.1 all the initiatives. We have the Tasmanian Shellfish Quality Assurance Program and you would be well aware of some of the concerns around biotoxins and the need to invest in a robust quality assurance program so we can prevent the loss of markets. On that point, Tasmania's bivalve shellfish marine farming industry produces, as you well know, an internationally recognised product. The industry's annual production is worth more than \$25 million per annum at the 'farm gate'. In recent years it has been challenged by a change in the risk profile from algae blooms and other events that threaten its premium brand. This has required the upgrading of the Tasmanian Shellfish Quality Assurance Program, resulting in a substantial increase in the program's cost -

CHAIR - Is that coming out of the Marine Resources budget, 2.2?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. We recognise the critical importance of this program to the industry and that is why we have committed a further \$200 000, or \$600 000 over the next three years, to assist with that program.

Mr VALENTINE - Maybe it belongs further down under Biosecurity about sea urchins and the damage they are doing to habitat so I will not ask that question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We can touch on it if you like. The other important thing to mention is the additional contribution to the Fish Health Centre that is now being constructed at Mount Pleasant. That is a crucial aspect of biosecurity and disease monitoring. It is a world-class

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facility and I had the pleasure to launch it or turn the sod, whatever it was a few months ago. It is expected to be finished by, I think, the end of this year.

CHAIR - Again, that is coming out of 2.2, not out of Biosecurity? You have a pretty big budget in 6.1, which is Biosecurity.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, it is obviously biosecurity-related.

Mr WHITTINGTON - It is about growing the salmon industry and there are a number of initiatives in the world-class Tasmanian fisheries and seafood sector policy implementation. One of those is an extra \$500 000 to the fish health unit. As the minister said, that is going into building a facility that will be much more able to support research into vaccine development and disease.

CHAIR - Is that coming out of 2.2?

Ms RATTRAY - Or 6.1?

CHAIR - I am trying to focus on 2.2 at the moment and Rob has asked what that money is for.

Mr VALENTINE - The Tasmanian Abalone Council is receiving some money matching the industry contribution to the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation. It is really: how is the money you are putting out addressing the risk issues? But you have covered a fair bit and I can pretty well understand what you are getting at.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It includes additional funding for IMAS as well.

Ms RATTRAY - Is the facility in Launceston out of 2.2 or 6.1? That is all I need to know.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is out of 6.1.

Ms RATTRAY - Thank you.

[11.00 a.m.]

Mr VALENTINE - It appears to me that you have a lower cap on the number of abalone licences. Is that because you have reduced the royalty rate on abalone, or is it some other scenario?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The quota is based on science and the sustainability of the fishery. It is well monitored for the sustainability of the fishery. If you over fish it impacts -

CHAIR - We understand that. He has asked a specific question - is it a fewer quota or is it -

Mr FORD - If the question you are asking relates to the recent change to the rules to reduce the number of diving/fishing licences, there has been a fall from 125 to the current number because a couple have been surrendered or cancelled because of legal action.

Mr VALENTINE - I was going to say, 'How has that occurred?'. People do not give up abalone licences willingly.

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Mr FORD - There was reduction in licences as a consequence of what was known as the Furneaux Divers Investigation, that has been carried out over a number of years.

Mr VALENTINE - So you were able to reduce the cap.

Mr FORD - Those licences no longer exist.

CHAIR - And you did not replace them.

Mr FORD - The law requires there to be a maximum number of licences. So it is resetting the maximum number of licences for the ones that are currently there.

CHAIR - That is what this does.

Mr VALENTINE - How much is a licence now? What are they trading at, roughly?

Mr FORD - About \$150 000 for the licence.

Mr VALENTINE - Is that \$150 000 to the department?

Mr FORD - No, no. There is a commercial market for licences.

Mr VALENTINE - And they are only worth \$150 000?

Mr FORD - Yes. You have to look at the licences as well as the quota units.

Mr VALENTINE - There are quota units on top of that, that are separate? I remember when they were \$20 each. It was back in 1965.

Ms RATTRAY - Is there any legal action still pending from the Furneaux group matter? I think there is one still unresolved or am I incorrect?

Mr FORD - There is one that is as yet not fully resolved.

Ms RATTRAY - When are we going to get that completed?

Mr FORD - It is really in the hands of the individual. There is still an opportunity for that individual to pursue action against the Government, but there is currently no action in the courts.

Ms RATTRAY - So are we just waiting around until that person decides they want to do something?

Mr FORD - That is the nature of some of these situations.

CHAIR - Is that licence cancelled or not?

Mr FORD - That is not yet determined. There is a question mark over that licence.

CHAIR - Does that answer your question?

Ms RATTRAY - Not really. The Government is waiting.

CHAIR - Does the person have a time limit on when they can do this?

Mr FORD - If we are talking about the same person.

Ms RATTRAY - Well, there is only one person still outstanding.

CHAIR - I suspect if there is only one pending, it is probably the same person you are talking about.

Mr FORD - The act precludes that person from holding a licence or applying for a licence for a period of five years after conviction. That five years has not quite expired but is about to. That person has an opportunity to come back and test the system further at the end of that five years.

CHAIR - To see whether they can get their licence back.

Ms RATTRAY - Okay, thank you.

Mr VALENTINE - Part of this income is related to environment fees and marine resources. Is that right?

What does the department do to monitor pollution from aquaculture sites and what action is expected of salmonid farms? I am interested in that. It is a burgeoning industry and obviously there are certain environmental problems association with salmon farming. Can you tell me exactly what the department does to make sure they are operating in a good, sustainable manner without environmental degradation? You get a fee, so you must be doing something to justify that fee.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is the responsibility of the department to ensure the industry is monitored. We know there is expansion on the horizon and it has expanded very rapidly. We need to be mindful of the impact to the environment, absolutely. Whenever there are new marine leases put out there is a heavy consultation phase, and public submissions come in. I will then receive advice from the department with respect to any marine lease expansions and make that decision according to all the facts and figures. It is like monitoring our water sites for pesticide residues in intensive crop areas and it is always ongoing. Monitoring which is essential and the agriculture companies themselves value this because it is part of their brand.

If we do not manage expansion which is a huge opportunity for us around Tasmania, huge projected growth, we risk impacts on the environment which affects production loss. The biosecurity aspect of it also comes in there.

Mr VALENTINE - The reason I asked the question is that many years ago I visited the Esperance area and there was this plethora of sea lettuce growth, really bright green. There were nutrients getting out from the salmon farming area and I am interested to know what the Government does to monitor sea bed damage, distribution of nutrients, those sorts of things.

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Mr ROCKLIFF - In 2012-13, revenue from marine farming lease, rent, tender of payments and licence fees total around \$1 million. Industries are required to comply with requirements to monitor sediment condition in the water quality against limits prescribed in marine farming licence conditions; and organic enrichment of sediment associated with operations of subleases has been identified through compliance monitoring surveys. The department is required to manage those responses in conjunction with industries. They are frequent issues and have to be addressed.

Mr VALENTINE - Do they have a responsibility to vacuum up? You can understand that underneath a fish farm you have heaps of food that is going in to feed the fish, there is residue from the food, there is residue from the excrement of the fish and it all goes to the bottom, a big nutrient pile. Do they remove that or do they move the farms around to stop that from being overtly impacting?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Nothing is vacuumed up or any such thing as that.

Mr VALENTINE - I am wondering what we do as a Government?

Mr WHITTINGTON - Industry is required to have a licence commission system monitor the sea floor under their leases and at compliance points beyond that. They report back to us and the way they do that is through the use of remote video cameras. They put them down, swim them over the lease sites, and they provide us with footage of what they see and we both look at that.

They have to meet performance criteria under their leases which is described in their licence. If they exceed that we work with industry to move, so that the lane underneath or the sea bed can fallow and then return. They cannot go back farming there until the sea bed is at an appropriate level. It is adapted management. There is a long history of farming so we have good ideas of how long fish can be in a certain area with certain densities to not have unsustainable impacts.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The policy commitment for the fish health centre, which I know we will get to, is important because ongoing monitoring is done of the fish and any potential irregularities picked up through that process.

Mr VALENTINE - That is all to do with stuffing the gills and all those sorts of things, what do you call it? I cannot think of it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Amoebic gill disease.

CHAIR - Mr Valentine's questioning has gone to the fact that your output group expense is \$10.8 million this year and that appropriation from budget is \$4.9 million so you have a huge amount of unsourced revenue which we presume comes mostly from licences. Is that correct? If you are spending \$6 million of licence fee money, is that all directed towards marine research and monitoring or does some of it go into consolidated revenue?

Mr FORD - The own-source licence revenue retained is in a number of areas: recreational sector, that is recreational licence fees to the Fishwise Fund, part of the rock lobster licence fees. When those licence fees were established progressively over the last couple of decades, there were agreements with Treasury that there would be revenue-shared arrangements. There is a whole suite of services that are delivered across the Marine Resources Group to a range of the

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fishing sectors based on licence revenue that is retained. It is not just about marine farming, it is about right across the sector.

CHAIR - Absolutely, but does that revenue go towards Marine Resources and is not directed elsewhere, say, to the Consolidated Fund?

Mr FORD - It is in part but it is a shared arrangement.

CHAIR - What's the share?

Ms RATTRAY - How much does Treasury take and how much do you keep - what is the split?

Mr FORD - It depends on the fishery. There is a different funding arrangement in place for each separate fishery.

CHAIR - If you could give us a dollar amount out of \$6 million, roughly?

Mr FORD - It is a question you would have to take on notice. It is a complex mix of funding arrangements.

Ms RATTRAY - You will be ready to answer that question first up next year?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We can take it on notice.

CHAIR - Thank you. I am not asking for every little detail. Most people who pay licence fees do not object to doing so if there is good reason for doing it, for that purpose.

Mr VALENTINE - On page 9.40, table 9.16, what industries comprise the roughly \$2.3 million royalty income and their contributions? Can you give me a split of that or is that something you have to take on notice?

Mr WHITTINGTON - The royalty income is water and sewerage licence fees that we get from TasWater. It is not related.

Mr VALENTINE - It has nothing to do with fishery at all?

Mr WHITTINGTON - No.

Mr VALENTINE - I thought there was a royalty on other aspects of marine resources.

Mr WHITTINGTON - That is the abalone licences.

Mr VALENTINE - It is only abalone in 2.3, is it?

Mr FORD - No. Abalone royalties is at the top of the page, the abalone licence fees. The other marine fees are incorporated within the other revenue component of this state. Other fishing licences fall into that category. For royalty income -

Mr VALENTINE - That is the one I am looking at, 2.3.

Mr FORD - That relates to water.

Mr VALENTINE - That is fine, thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - On fish health and risk, I thought you might be interested, Mr Valentine, about antibiotic usage and how much that has come down. One of your questions was in that area.

Mr VALENTINE - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is an important environmental consideration the industry is addressing. In 2006, the antibiotic usage was 4 536 kilograms. It went up the next year to 9 295 kilograms. It is now, 2013 usage, at 368 kilograms. It has dramatically decreased, as has antifoulant paint, which has now ceased. In 2013, 11 400 litres was used; in 2012, 119 000 litres. There have been significant reductions from 2009 when it was in excess of 200 000 litres of antifouling paint. The industry is very mindful its brand, its potential environmental impact, and always looking at ways to reduce that impact on the environment.

Mr VALENTINE - I am aware of Huon Aquaculture's efforts and they are up there doing their thing. It is good for the consumer as well. But anyway, no personal comments.

Output group 4 Water Resources

4.1 Water resources management

Ms RATTRAY - Minister, you told the committee earlier that we were going to reduce red and green tape for water development. This output group has a reduction but it goes on to tell me that it 'develops and implements a range of legislation and policies for water management'. What is going on there, are we looking at more regulation?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, we are looking at streamlining the Water Management Act and I think there was some discussion about that in your House a few years ago with respect to the review of the Water Legislation Amendment Bill.

Ms RATTRAY - It did not progress. I think the word got around - 'don't bring it'.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It did not progress, and one of the concerns I have with respect to that particular matter is that one act was coming in and was expected to be passed, and some areas would be tidied up in the second act that was coming in. We have gone back to the drawing board now and we want to take a good look at that and ensure that whatever is presented to Parliament is in one bill.

Ms RATTRAY - They needed to be together to be effective.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The bill was first introduced in 1999 so a review is timely. There has been a changing landscape over the course of the last decade in terms of water potability and all those sorts of things. We need to modify the act and that will be done in due course.

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Ms RATTRAY - Under your watch, minister, will we be licensing or charging people for water that falls from the sky in any way, shape or form? It has been of concern to the farming community for some time.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The farming community often raises these issues.

Ms RATTRAY - You know yourself, minister, you are a farmer.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I am. The Government has no intention in those areas.

Ms RATTRAY - Fantastic. My second question - can you apprise me of the role this department has with urban water and sewerage?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The last involvement was the development of the risk mitigation program in Launceston, but as it relates TasWater, I will ask Mr Ford.

Mr FORD - The role of the minister under the act is to deal with things like service provision, and service standards. It provides the oversight. TasWater is responsible for operating within the act. As part of the process, we work with TasWater in terms of dealing with things like service standards, whereas Treasury has responsibility for all matters associated with the financial transactions.

Ms RATTRAY - If there was a requirement for an amendment to that act, would a member of parliament come to this area and make contact and make some suggestions about where the act is not working?

Mr FORD - If it relates to service. If it relates to pricing, then it is the Treasurer.

Ms RATTRAY - It is in relation to service so, thank you. There is another on Wes's list -

CHAIR - You asked a double question, about waste water as well, and you have only referred to the provision of water. Are you responsible for waste water as well?

Mr FORD - With the context, yes, but the EPA is also responsible for waste water. Again, it depends on which element of waste water we are talking about.

CHAIR - Because the provision of that service is currently still undertaken by local government.

Mr FORD - For example, regulation of trade waste standards sits with the minister, but the environmental monitoring of trade waste sits with the EPA.

Ms RATTRAY - The Simplot of the north-west coast would come under your auspice?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will be engaging with Simplot, not only with that aspect, but the importance to the agricultural sector with my Primary Industries hat on.

Ms RATTRAY - Are there any issues with our somewhat limited larger industries in Tasmania that you are aware of at this time?

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Mr ROCKLIFF - I have had discussions previously with Simplot around their trade waste, discussions with dairy companies in Smithton, for example, and some companies in that region wanting to collaborate to upgrade systems and the like, which is a good thing to do when you have large industries wanting to collaborate to share the cost of upgrades.

CHAIR - Is this limited to primary industry or water resources, this output group 4? For instance, there is wastewater that comes from other major industries like Nyrstar?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is all waterways right across Tasmania.

Mr WHITTINGTON - The environmental regulation is a matter for the ERPA.

CHAIR - And the monitoring is not paid for out of this?

Mr WHITTINGTON - No.

Ms RATTRAY - In relation to the legislation that the Government is reviewing that did not progress recently -

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Water Management Act.

Ms RATTRAY - When can members of Parliament and the community expect to see something in draft form or is it going to be a bill out for consultation? I want to know where we are.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It will be out for consultation. It aligns with one of our commitments to reduce bureaucracy and red and green tape by 20 per cent in the first term. The two key areas we are going to focus on are legislative reform and water licence reform. We intend to restructure, consolidate and simplify the Water Management Act 1999, and related legislation, through one amendment bill and that is to be expected late in 2015. We are also simplifying and standardising water licence conditions and removing unnecessary regulatory measures that are potentially burdensome to farmers, which would be of interest to you, Ms Rattray. Continued legislative and policy reform is essential to providing certainty to farmers and other investors. I get the feedback that you get around this particular matter and we are mindful of the need to ensure that we consult with industry stakeholders, the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association, individual farmers themselves and that is exactly what we will be doing.

CHAIR - There are lots of farmers who are not in TFGA.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is right. The farmers are represented through industry, the Tasmanian Agriculture Productivity Group, TFGA, Tasmanian Poppy Growers and we get feedback from farmers individually everyday just about.

Ms RATTRAY - In relation to the water licence fees that are on the table, there is not a very big increase considering you are going to make it so much easier for farmers to build dams, store water and get into increasing production from \$1.1 billion to \$10 billion in 2050, yet with the licence fees, the increase seems quite low. Can you give me some explanation around that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is probably a good thing.

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Ms RATTRAY - I am assuming that you are not going to give everyone a discount price but you are not expecting to have a lot more licence fees, so that means there is not a lot of new development, or am I not reading that correctly, minister?

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of in-stream empowerment, dams, if you like, they have probably lessened over the decades. You have seen tranche 1 of the irrigation schemes around the state; we have tranche 2 coming on line and Circular Head, Evandale, Scottsdale, Southern Highlands and Swan Valley. That is dependent on Commonwealth contribution of \$110 million or thereabouts over the course of the second tranche when it is rolled out. We have committed \$30 million to that program.

Ms RATTRAY - I am talking about the on-farm storage. That is fantastic but people also need to be able to store some of that water. Are we expecting the increase to translate into licence fees?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Some of these fees are collected through Tasmanian Irrigation and are not reflected in those figures. That is probably further explanation of what I have provided.

Mr WHITTINGTON - Tasmanian Irrigation charges full cost recovery on new schemes. It generates wealth to reinvest in the scheme.

Ms RATTRAY - But that is not the dam component, it is not the on-farm water storage component, is it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can see where your train of thought is going, but what I saying is that prior to the investment in irrigation schemes - tranche 1 and tranche 2 coming on line - farmers had to find every single corner of their paddocks, stream or waterway they could legally use with the required permits and engineering, to build a dam. That need is lessening in those areas because irrigation schemes are taking their place.

Ms RATTRAY - So your Government is not expecting a large increase in on-farm water storage in the future to support your vision?

Mr ROCKLIFF - If there are opportunities, we will make them available.

Ms RATTRAY - But you are not expecting to see it come to fruition?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The assessment committee for dam construction has approved fewer dams but the average size of those dams has increased.

Ms RATTRAY - Because it has been too hard, minister, and you know that. It has been onerous and they have thrown their hands up in the air and said, 'We can't do it'. Your Government has said, 'We are going to get out of way. We are going to remove this red and green tape and let you get into it'.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Absolutely, that is exactly what we are doing.

Ms RATTRAY - But it does not reflect here, in what you are predicting for the future.

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Mr ROCKLIFF - The dams have been fewer in number but bigger in size. In conjunction with the irrigation schemes being rolled out, farmers will be able to take the opportunity of tapping into those schemes rather than building their own on-farm dams.

Ms RATTRAY - You are expecting the increase to be in the take up of irrigation opportunities and therefore Tasmanian Irrigation will be getting the benefit of those increased water licences?

Mr ROCKLIFF - At a cost recovery.

Ms RATTRAY - But that organisation is going to be getting the full benefit, or the larger benefit?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That organisation is charged with developing the schemes, ensuring there is a partnership between state and federal Government and farmers.

Ms RATTRAY - I was going to talk about them when I get to output 4.2.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We can touch on the fact that in this Budget we have given Tasmanian Irrigation an extra \$500 000 to look at existing schemes around Tasmania and what possible options there are for interconnectivity with schemes that were developed pre tranche 1. To see if there are opportunities for those schemes to connect up with each other and create a water grid across regional Tasmania, which is very exciting.

Ms RATTRAY - I am not sure if we have wandered into 4.2. Do other members have questions on 4.1?

Mr VALENTINE - I have some questions on 4.1. Leachate monitoring. A lot of councils have tip sites -

CHAIR - That is EPA again.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It comes under Environmental Protection.

Mr WHITTINGTON - It comes under Mr Groom.

[11.30 a.m.]

Mr VALENTINE - Okay. You might say this is up to the farmer, but there is such a huge opportunity with irrigation being trucked out to those areas that are not normally resplendent with water. How do you assess the level of possible salinity that occurs and the damage that might cause through over-irrigation? You might get to a point where farmers are getting all this water and are able to grow all these crops, but are basically creating a problem for themselves well into the future because the profile of the soil does not prevent salinity from occurring. I am a bit concerned that while we have this grand vision, we might be leading ourselves into a corral of problems.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is a very good question and everyone was mindful of this when the Craigbourne dam was constructed in the 1980s, and in what was then a less traditional intensive cropping area. It has to have constant monitoring but the farm water access plan is an important part of the whole process for farmers who are investing in the irrigation schemes. They have to

demonstrate a commitment to environmental sustainability and adopt best practice in irrigation and water management. The water is not inexpensive depending on your point of view and farmers need to be mindful that their greatest asset is their soil.

Nations are built on the quality of their soil. We have to be very careful that when we are putting water on areas that are not traditionally intensive cropping areas, that there needs to be ongoing monitoring and farmers are investing heavily here. When you think of the figures around investment from state and Federal government and farmers buying into the water entitlements to construct the scheme. That is just getting the tap to the farm gate, let alone the distribution around the farm, holding dams, and the like

Mr VALENTINE - Some are quite large farms

Mr ROCKLIFF - There are very large farms and there is an enormous amount of investment, so farmers will not want to be wasting water. Why water access plans are so important in those less traditional areas is because, for example, when the Sassafras-Lesley Vale irrigation scheme went ahead, there were farmers who grew up with, and there was a culture of, intensive cropping, and it was nothing new to them. What it provided them with was extra insurance so they know that crops won't wither and die at the end of the season.

If we are going onto traditional grazing areas for example, converting to dairies and the like, the farmers have to ensure skills in what is a transition in their agricultural enterprise. I have seen some research done and I have been at Canterbury Plains in New Zealand for example, and one of the reasons why you are seeing for the first time in 60 years lamb production levels about where they were 60 years ago in New Zealand, is because of the massive increase in dairy conversions, particularly in the Canterbury Plains area. The Canterbury Plains in New Zealand has aquifers and the like, and there is leaching with dairy, and the effluent and the water quality monitoring. How that relates for irrigation is extremely important. The Government is very mindful of that and that is why we are investing. TEA are looking now at an Irrigation Centre of Excellence proposal. That is why we are investing in the water for profit program

Mr VALENTINE - Is this an extension service available for farmers to tap into?

Mr ROCKLIFF - They will be tapping into TEA. But the \$1.5 billion water for profit program is about how to maximise opportunities with water by also ensuring we have sustainability on farms because irrigation investment is intergenerational infrastructure that I don't think we will see a federal or state contribution to for a very long time. Given that intergenerational infrastructure, we have to make sure that these farms are sustainable for many generations to come, forever. Your point is very important.

Mr VALENTINE - Are those extension services in this budget or are they contracted services?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am excited about the partnership being developed and the collaboration between Tasmanian Irrigation and the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture. They are working on a model which can probably go into areas of extension. We have seen over the course of the last probably two decades a greater increase in private service providers offering those extension services and less so from the department. Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture plays a key role in their research farms, at Forth and Elliott for example, for dairy, which taps into some of those extension services and communicating with farmers.

4.2 Water resource assessment -

Ms RATTRAY - Minister, we have already touched on water development somewhat but if I take you to the table on page 9.19, it again reinforces that we have spent all this money on irrigation but our targets don't appear to be stretching out. Can I take you to efficiency of the dam permit process? If we are getting rid of a lot of red and green tape, your target is 84 days when it was 79 this year. I am not reading what you are saying in the budget papers.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The targets are a statutory time frame and the statutory time frame is always the target. It is great that over successive years we have achieved better than the target and I would expect that that target will be most certainly under that, or one would hope so. Cutting out that assessment committee for dam construction will most likely assist in ensuring that we are far more efficient in processing some of these applications.

Ms RATTRAY - Why wouldn't that target have gone back to previous years?

Mr ROCKLIFF - When we bring in the new legislation that you first raised a question about, it is also an opportunity for us to reassess the statutory time frames which may well come down.

Ms RATTRAY - So these targets will follow on from previous years. They weren't reassessed to align with your aspirations as minister and your Government?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is important to have the statutory time frame there and the department has done a great job in not exceeding that statutory time frame and we would hope that it comes down.

Ms RATTRAY - Even for the level of farm water development, the target is five dams fewer than the actual number last year. I'm not seeing your aspirations into these budget papers but next year I know it will be different. You will have had more time to deal with them.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We all have to be very strong advocates for second tranche irrigation schemes which is very much aligned with our target of increasing the farmgate value of agriculture tenfold by 2050. We need the Commonwealth to partner with us and collaborate with farmers and the State Government to realise that potential and I encourage all members to get onto their federal colleagues of all political persuasions to encourage that to happen.

Ms RATTRAY - Even for the amount of water available for irrigation, the target for 2014 is only an additional 11 000 megalitres. The targets don't appear to be lining up with what you have planned for the future. But, as I said, I think they are probably a hangover from previous years and not your Government's aspirations.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will be looking at the targets over the next 12 months but 11 000 megalitres is not a small figure.

Ms RATTRAY - I know it is not insignificant.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is five times as much as the Swan Valley.

Ms RATTRAY - It won't grow the industry from a \$1.1 billion industry to a \$10 billion industry by 2050 if we don't up some of those targets. I know you are working on it.

I am interested in Tasmanian Irrigation. It has been suggested that with not so many major developments on their books at the moment, we might be losing some of their intellectual capital. Can you comment on that? Do you agree with that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Tasmanian Irrigation is a separate statutory body and the GBE hearings will allow for scrutiny.

Ms RATTRAY - You have talked about the cooperative model - that you are working with them.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I have. It is very cooperative and that is the reason why we need to ensure the second tranche of irrigation schemes comes on line and we security the Commonwealth funding as soon as possible.

Ms RATTRAY - If we don't secure that funding, you are going to have a lot of people in the organisation twiddling their thumbs, and then they will be gone. That is my concern and the concern of others.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I recognise those concerns, but at the moment I am working on ensuring they have plenty work by securing Commonwealth funding for the second tranche. We have engaged with Infrastructure Australia and the Commonwealth ministers on this matter. My understanding is the Prime Minister is in Tasmania today visiting a farmer in the Midlands Scheme for example.

Ms RATTRAY - To announce more funding?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I would love that to be the case, but I don't think it is today.

Ms RATTRAY - But you are confident?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am confident. I am not over-confident but we all need to be strong advocates for that Commonwealth funding.

Ms RATTRAY - It is the best time ever. It is your colour of government sitting up there in Canberra with all dollars. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR - Are there any further questions on Output Group 4? I am conscious of the time. We are over time now and we have a couple of big areas to go.

Output Group 5 Policy advice

5.1 Policy Advice -

Mrs ARMITAGE - Would you be able to table a list of the 22 strategic projects. I know some are listed here, but could you table the complete list?

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Mr ROCKLIFF - I can do that, but not at this point in time.

Mrs ARMITAGE - No, not know - take it as a question on notice.

Mr ROCKLIFF - A question on notice - that would be good.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Some of the larger ones have been noted here but it would be interesting to see the list of the 22 for 2013-14.

Mr ROCKLIFF - They will be along the lines of co-ordinating advice relating to six irrigation schemes being developed by Tasmanian Irrigation Pty Ltd, coordination of risk assessments for aquaculture expansion proposals in south-east Tasmania, coordination of the expressions of interest process for development of parks and reserves, Midlands Water Scheme strategic assessment, advice on Agrilac's Ponderosa Dam proposal in the north-east of Tasmania, which will be of interest to you -

Ms RATTRAY - Watching with interest. I've been waiting for about 15 years now, minister, so I am hopeful.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have met with their representatives already.

Mrs ARMITAGE - If you table that list it is fine. What would your FTEs be in this department or this area?

[11.45 a.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF - Sorry, welcome to the table Deidre Wilson.

CHAIR - Would you like that list tabled?

Mrs ARMITAGE - Yes, I asked for it to be tabled.

[11.45 a.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have 14.25 FTEs.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Is that up or down from last year, or the same?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is slightly down.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Is that because you are expecting the target to be lower next year? I see you have 23 for 2016, 22 for target 2015, because you are expecting less work?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, but we are expecting to be busy next year.

Mrs ARMITAGE - You have forestry, rebuilding the forest industry.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will be very busy.

Ms RATTRAY - Less people doing more.

Output group 6 Biosecurity Tasmania

6.1 Biosecurity

Mr ROCKLIFF - Welcome to the table Deidre Wilson, Director of Policy Division, and Lloyd Klumpp, General Manager of Biosecurity Tasmania.

CHAIR - It is a big budget item and it is vitally important. You have already spoken a little about it and Mr Dean is going to ask you a few targeted questions. I would be glad, minister, if we could have targeted answers. All the things you say, the broad spectrum stuff is true but if you give a seven minute answer to every question we are going to be here till very late tonight.

Mr DEAN - Under the output group expenses summary, under point 8 on page 9.11, the note says the increase in biosecurity 2014-15 reflects an output group restructure and goes into a lot of detail. Then we go over to the revenue for appropriation by output and the note there says that decrease in biosecurity in 2014 reflects a reduction in funding for the intensive animal farming industry development and a number of other things, and including the changes in the reduction in the fox funding. Is there an explanation on those two, where one is an increase and one is a decrease.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Certainly. The policy commitment is to strengthen the biosecurity front line to the tune of \$900 000 bringing together the invasive species unit and other areas of biosecurity under the one banner of Biosecurity Tasmania and has resulted in some efficiencies and less duplication which is good. As the footnote says, the ending of the intensive animal farming assistance program is part of that decrease and there is \$1.5 million less going in as a result of a policy commitment to reduce the fox eradication project.

Mr DEAN - How many are employed in the fox eradication program? What is happening there?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is now under Biosecurity Tasmania.

Mr KLUMPP - We were given 28 FTEs in the invasive species area. We have restructured that to fit the same model of biosecurity that we have in the emergency animal disease area and the emergency plant pest area. What that means is we now have those staff separated. There was a dedicated group of about 13 which were essentially fox staff. Not all supported by state funds. Some supported by Commonwealth funding, CRC funds, and the Department of Agriculture funds. Those 13 staff were essentially the fox taskforce.

Mr DEAN - As we sit here today, the 13 staff members devoted to that program?

Mr KLUMPP - No. We don't have a fox program.

Mr DEAN - It is a part of the invasive species unit looking at all of -

Mr ROCKLIFF - An holistic approach to biosecurity and that was one of the reasons for our policy commitment to reduce the size of the fox task force and then reinvest that funding elsewhere across government, say in health or education, but also establish Biosecurity Tasmania

so that we did not have specialists and experts in one aspect of biosecurity rather than a multiskilled approach right across the agency.

Mr DEAN - I see it as a good move, minister.

CHAIR - Yes, Mr Dean, no comment, just questions.

Mr DEAN - How will the new arrangement ensure that scientifically grounded risk assessment criteria are satisfied before any public policy is applied and to the appropriation of taxpayer funds into forward Estimates? How can I be assured of that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - You can be assured and Lloyd will outline exactly the reasons.

Mr DEAN - It didn't happen previously.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is very important.

Mr KLUMPP - One of the things we do is evidence-based risk analysis. We have done that for many years in the emergency animal disease area and in the emergency plant pest and disease area. Part of the formation now of a focused Invasive Species Branch and a separate Operations Branch is that that Invasive Species Branch will now use the same systems, the same methodology, the same technologies that we are using for other scientific-based, evidence-based decision-making.

Mr DEAN - That's good to see that there is a significant change that requires planning. What has the department learnt about the criteria applied to risk assessment? The importance of verifiable and empirical evidence and a need for critical independent oversight from the approach applied to fox eradication since 2001. I am interested to see what has been learnt, if anything.

Mr KLUMPP - I cannot talk about the past. I can talk about what we are doing.

Mr DEAN - Well, to the minister, I am sorry.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I guess we are always learning and you are leading to the area of foxes, evidence and a group of scientists saying one thing and group of scientists saying another. I have every confidence in my department and how they have gone about this quite challenging issue.

To your question previously, the important thing is it's all about moving forward. Of course departments and ministers and we all learn based on past experiences and it's about continuous improvement. That is exactly what we will do.

Mr DEAN - My next question relates to an area of real concern in this state. It has been a concern for the last 12 years and one that I harassed the previous government on and got absolutely nowhere, and that is feral cats. I think, minister, you would be aware of the May report in *The Australian* in relation to feral cats in the country, where feral cats were found to be the most damaging pest of our threatened and endangered species throughout the country. On the mainland feral cats were the number one danger to these animals. If they are number one there and foxes I think were number three on the mainland, where there are foxes, so here in Tasmania feral cats are a very significant danger. What are we doing in relation to the feral cat issue that has been a problem forever in this state? What are we doing to reduce those numbers, what are

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we doing to control feral cats because they are causing problems to our threatened and endangered species?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thanks for the question, Mr Dean. I agree with everything you have said, this is an issue that goes across the environment. Farmers are concerned about toxoplasmosis -

Mr DEAN - And a number of other diseases. It is not the only one.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, that is right. There is no doubt that the feral cat population is very damaging across a range of areas. They are never going to be eradicated. It would be very difficult and very costly to ever eradicate feral cats. We need to do what we can to decrease the migration from the domestic cat population through to the feral cat population and the Cat Management Act 2009 is in place to try to address some of that. Notwithstanding that, the act which came in in 2009 I don't think was even enforced until June 2012 - was it? - and I think it was delayed by a resourcing issue. We need to have another look at the Cat Management Act 2009 and I will be soon announcing terms of reference to review the act. That will be undertaken by Biosecurity Tasmania. The act is one of the tools we can use to manage this unwanted feral pest.

CHAIR - If we cut to the chase, the question is - what are you doing? And you are reviewing the Cat Management Act.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are reviewing the act, preliminary work is already under way.

CHAIR - And?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Discussion papers are now in preparation and we will be communicating with all stakeholders across Tasmania.

CHAIR - Do you have any other initiatives?

Mr DEAN - My question was going to be exactly that. You said we are not going to completely eradicate them and I agree. However, there are probably millions of them out there at the present time causing havoc with our wildlife. So what are we doing to eradicate them? We used 1080 baiting to try to get rid of phantom foxes, so what are we doing to get rid of a real pest?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is a pest, and we will be informed by the review and what comes out of the discussion, both at the community level and the other stakeholder level, about what we can do to be more proactive in this area.

CHAIR - There is lots of information already from previous reviews. Do you have a timeline for the review?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We expect it will be sooner rather than later. We should see it towards the end of the year.

Mr KLUMPP - We are very close to releasing a discussion paper.

CHAIR - Very close to?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Releasing a discussion paper - before the end of the year.

Mr DEAN - It is causing grave concern out there and that is the reason I raise it.

CHAIR - You are absolutely right, Mr Dean.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The department is also advocating that people sterilise their domestic cats and stop the migration to the feral cat population.

CHAIR - Is there an advertising campaign?

Mr DEAN - Minister, that is not going to eradicate the feral cats that are already out there. Tamar NRM set up a trapping process about three years ago. They had the trap set for a very short time and they caught 50 feral cats in a very small area. That is an indication of the problem that we have.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, it is an indication of the problems we have. Devonport City Council has previously paid to euthanase feral cats and I think it was some 4 000 a year.

CHAIR - I am not going to enter into a debate about this because you are talking the same language, but something needs to be done and the minister is on to it. Do you have another specific question?

Mr DEAN - My next question relates to a study that was done by a mainland university, and a recent publication in the Australian Veterinary Journal in relation to hydatids. The frightening situation here, minister, is that more than 1 100 samples of dog faeces from mainland Australia were tested, and more than 300 samples from Tasmania. Dr Jenkins' research, and I quote -

Has found the parasite affecting a significant number of the dogs tested on the island state and also some cattle and sheep ...

Of the samples from mainland Australia we found 2 per cent were positive for the hydatid tapeworm, but in Tasmania we found considerably more, with close to 8 per cent affected.

To say that hydatids is gone from Tasmania does not reflect the true situation. I do not know whether we are still bringing fox scats into the state, but I raised this question 18 months ago, about bringing those scats into the state and whether they were tested for hydatids. Minister, what are we doing in relation to the possible presence of hydatids in Tasmania, because we were always said to be clear of it, as I understand it, but that is apparently not true, it would seem, from tests that have been done recently. So where are we?

[12.00 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF - First, before I go to Lloyd for a more comprehensive answer, I am aware of the report. I have read the report. I am aware of some of the concerns around the fox scat program and the importation of fox scats. I raised those issues a number of years ago. We no longer have a fox scat program in operation. Lloyd, you have some detail.

Mr KLUMPP - A couple of points. First, it is a misconception that we are free of hydatids.

Mr DEAN - It was being said though, wasn't it?

Mr KLUMPP - No. The term that is used is 'provisionally free'. That is a defined biosecurity status which says that we have programs in place to control events. We are below a certain level of incidences. We have programs in place to control incidences. We will never be in a position where we won't find hydatids in Tasmania because we have cattle and sheep being imported and exported all the time. What it means is we have programs in place to maintain the level of incidences to essentially a freedom level. So we are provisionally free.

The other point I would make is that that paper has biosampling because the samples that were done on the mainland are random samples. The samples that were done here were focused on our programs and the samples we gave them. The 8 per cent represents notifications of incidences that we found. Those two figures are not comparable. We are confident that the programs we have in place keep the level of hydatids to essentially a freedom status and that minimises risk. One of the things this paper has done for us, however, is demonstrate that we need to go back to the community and recommunicate all the measures that need to be put in place by the community to continue to minimise that risk and that is what we are doing.

Mr DEAN - That seems like it is being looked at and considered. That is good.

You have said that it is not this Government's position to stop the 1080 baiting in the state. I think there are places for it but is there some assurance that the 1080 baiting program that was in place with the fox program will not be reintroduced. You would be aware of the contents of that report, I would suggest.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have seen a number of reports in relation to 1080 baiting but there is no 1080 baiting done for foxes.

Mr DEAN - It is not proposed to reintroduce that at this time?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, but it is an important management tool for farmers and that is why in cutting the red and green tape we said, no, this is part of the tools along with shooting and fencing that farmers need, to allow them to increase their productivity and a ban on 1080 would have sent some farmers to the wall. That is an irresponsible thing for the Government to do. As popular in some circles as that decision may well have been, when I first became minister it is one that I stand by and it is an example of why a practical government, allowing farmers to use practical alternatives, particularly when the Federal Government spent \$4 million on an alternative 1080 program, which effectively found there were no alternatives.

Mr DEAN - This department has been responsible over past years, and I could not find it in this Budget, in providing the Tasmanian Conservation Trust with money and previously they provided them with about \$30 000 annually. Is that going to be provided to the Tasmanian Conservation Trust now to continue that program and if it is, for what purpose is it provided to them and what do they buy from the Tasmanian Conservation Trust?

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is not my portfolio area. It is under Mr Groom as minister for environment.

Mr DEAN - The money was coming out of this department.

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Mr KLUMPP - But not out of Mr Rockliff's portfolio.

Mr DEAN - It was coming out of Fauna and Flora which is now under this.

Mr KLUMPP - That is output group 3 which is part of Mr Groom's portfolio. This agency has two ministers - Primary Industries and Water, and Environment, Parks and Heritage. It is the Environment, Parks and Heritage part of the portfolio that is responsible for natural resource management and conservation, which is where that money from the TCT was sourced.

CHAIR - We could still ask you the question, minister, seeing that your department would know the answer, is that money still going to be given to them?

Mr ROCKLIFF - My understanding is it is, but I stand to be corrected on that. We don't have the department representatives here.

Mr WHITTINGTON - It is a question for Mr Groom.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, it is a question for Mr Groom.

Mr DEAN - I can pursue that by way of questions on notice, et cetera.

I have a number of other questions. How is the control program of the Indian myna bird and the rainbow lorikeets and so on progressing?

Mr ROCKLIFF - They are biosecurity threats, certainly the Indian myna bird is. It is part of the ongoing monitoring as is the introduction of another invasive species, the Bathurst burr, which hit our shores unfortunately, I think in April this year. Is that right? The program very quickly responded to that, but Lloyd, if you could answer that one.

Mr KLUMPP - I can't give you any detail about where the program is but that rainbow lorikeet program is still in place and still running.

Mr DEAN - Are they still a real threat here? The numbers?

Mr KLUMPP - Oh yes. Not in terms of numbers but, like in any other biosecurity program, we go through a process of surveillance, identification, response; we are in the response phase still. Then after that, there is a process of monitoring to ensure that we have got rid of them all. I think we are at the cusp of that phase. We believe we have got them but we need to be sure we have got them. However, I can provide further information if you need it.

Mr DEAN - I probably would and that is in relation to both species, I take it, the lorikeets and the Indian myna bird? Maybe we can get that further information, minister, if it is available.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

CHAIR - I am sorry, I know how passionate you are about many of those topics and there is so much you could say, Mr Dean, and you have been very good.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is good to be passionate about biosecurity.

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Ms RATTRAY - Minister, in relation to the maintenance of animal health and welfare standards, can I have the number of infringement or show cause notices - whatever the proper terminology is for those. Also, how many legal cases are we dealing with at this point in time, and how many have been resolved over the past 12 months? Can I have officers as well related to each of those infringement notices? I want to see if there is any pattern here in relation to particular officers. It might not be available right now. I am happy to take it on notice.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have the information for you.

Ms RATTRAY - Would you like to table it, minister?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can table it and as I do, Lloyd, perhaps you would like to further explain it.

Mr KLUMPP - I could talk about it; I wouldn't like quality control to be part of it. In the 2013-14 year we have four prosecutions that have commenced. We have had 16 infringements issued. Currently we have seven offence briefs waiting for lodgement. In that year we have one major prosecution finalised.

Ms RATTRAY - Can I have the reference to officers, please. I do not need that in the open forum. I am happy to take that on notice.

Mr ROCKLIFF - What are you trying to link? Whether there is a spike in offences or a link between investigations and personalities?

Ms RATTRAY - Yes, relating to particular areas and some officers might be a little bit more zealous than others. That is what I am looking to drill down into but I don't want to do it right now. I just want to get those figures so I can do some homework on them.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We could provide some other information for you regarding the Animal Welfare Act and the RSPCA inspectors.

Ms RATTRAY - Not necessary. I am hearing a few things on the ground and I want to get my own homework in order before I progress any further.

Mr VALENTINE - I want to follow up on the sea urchin matter. How are we dealing with this?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We know it has spread into Tasmanian waters and there is no easy solution to the issue. As lobster predate on the centrostephanus, management introduced to the rock lobster fishery to boost stocks on the east coast should impact on those populations, which is a positive step. Modelling undertaken by the University of Tasmania suggests the rebuilding of the lobster population planned for the east coast, rock lobster harvest strategy, will have a significant impact.

CHAIR - It is only big lobster that can deal with them?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, that is my understanding.

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Mr VALENTINE - I know you are taking spawn onto the east coast. Are they being released into areas where kelp is still flourishing?

Mr ROCKLIFF - They will be released into a habitat that is conducive to their growth.

Mr VALENTINE - I am presuming it is being done in a scientific way to get the best outcome.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, in a very scientific way. It has been going on for some time.

Mr VALENTINE - Are you doing monitoring of those coastal areas to see how effective it is?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. The abalone industry also plays a role in reducing the numbers, as well as an entrepreneur who is harvesting them for the roe. It is a potential opportunity for him.

Mr VALENTINE - Are abalone divers collecting them?

Mr FORD - The abalone industry has had a trial program to smash the urchins, with a view to seeing whether they will come back and whether the weed will recover. They are only very localised trials on the east coast in the vicinity of Wineglass Bay.

Mr DEAN - On page 9.23 where it says 'progress in the eradication of foxes' and the comment says 'evidence of foxes established behind the precautionary baiting control front is nought and nought'. Behind the baiting lines there is no evidence, what about in front of the baiting lines? What supportive evidence is there of foxes being there?

[12.15 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF - No evidence of foxes has been detected since July. However, it is important we remain vigilant. We have spoken about the overall biosecurity aspect of it to prevent the incursion of foxes. Precautionary baiting ceased in early 2013. Monitoring on a landscape scale using detector dogs has continued and now covers, on a sample basis, well over a third of the area considered to be potential fox habitat. In the context of our wider invasive species program, monitoring will continue with biologists looking at various ways of completing the task more efficiently without compromising statistical detection probability. The department has the capacity to respond to any new evidence with strategic localised baiting capability if it was determined that was going to be of use.

CHAIR - So the answer is zero.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Just a couple of quick questions regarding confiscations and restrictions. I notice on page 9.22 that the actuals for 2013-14 was a huge increase on previous years. We had 363 and 372 and 2013-14 an actual of 1 182. Can you give me some examples of the high risk material that was identified, and was there a reason for such a huge jump?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The huge jump was related to the little cherry virus, which you would have been aware of through media reporting either late last year or early this year. Lloyd will speak about this, but given it was thought to be a new incursion of the little cherry virus into

Tasmania, there was obviously increased sampling for potential risk. In fact, on 20 January 2014, the department's plant pathologist identified little cherry virus 2 in a sample of cherry tree leaves submitted by a private agronomist in southern Tasmania. As it is exotic to Australia the department initiated and led a formal national response. The department expended at least \$150 000 on this response in operational costs and diverted resources but subsequent investigations suggested the virus has been present in Tasmania for at least 20 years at low levels and symptomatic trees had previously been put down to being poor performers or water logging, so it was not picked up.

The subsequent detection in a Victorian production nursery and a likely extensive distribution of infected planting material from the nursery over a number of decades led to the response being stood down on 7 April 2014. Through that process it is now been determined it is a non-eradicable disease, albeit at very low levels. We were not aware of that when we had a very active program and more checking for potential threats or risks associated with little cherry virus 2.

Mr KLUMPP - During the period when we first identified the little cherry virus 2 and when it was determined what its status was, we were targeting high risk material. It is the system working. It is the system saying, 'We do not know what is happening with the little cherry virus so we will target any root stock coming in'. That is why there is a spike.

Mrs ARMITAGE - And fruit fly? Can you tell me how many cases were identified? I notice in the previous year it was two cases.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, zero, but there were previous cases and there was some activity a few years ago. But zero last year.

Mrs ARMITAGE - The last question I have is with regard to the private quarantine material - the material confiscations. There was 1 693 kilograms last year. What type of material would be confiscated, and how do you destroy it? Do you burn it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is fruit and vegetables and whatever else comes in, or is put in the bins -

Mrs ARMITAGE - So generally it is fruit and vegetables?

Mr ROCKLIFF - voluntarily, or detected by quarantine detector dogs at airports and the like. Then it is taken away and disposed of in a safe manner.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Would the main things be fruit and vegetables?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, fruit and vegetables, but any material that is defined under the Plant Quarantine Act 1997.

6.2 Product integrity -

Ms RATTRAY - Minister, this is to do with framework legislation to regulate and manage food safety. Are we overregulating here? Every industry I am aware of in this area already has national compliance; you cannot sell your product unless you comply under national standards.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Are you talking about the egg industry?

Ms RATTRAY - I am talking anything - strawberries, meat, everything. Are we overregulating?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is important to get the balance right and regulations have to reflect the potential risk and also be mindful of the fact we do not want to be overly burdensome on our primary producers. The Primary Produce Safety Act 2011 commenced on 13 February 2014.

Ms RATTRAY - Are you confident we are not overregulating?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am mindful we do not want to overregulate. There have been discussions around eggs, for example. Around Australia there are some 12 800 cases of egg-related salmonella poisoning, with approximately four cases a week in Tasmania. It is important to have that balance.

Ms RATTRAY - Eggs are something out of left field. What about the general produce that Tasmania produces, that have compliance requirements to sell across Bass Strait. Are we overregulating, having two levels of regulation? Are you comfortable with what we have or do you believe it is too much?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The regulation will be assessed by the mapping that is being done currently through COAG on Tasmanian agriculture. The regulation reduction coordinator will have a role to play there. We cannot compromise food safety.

Ms RATTRAY - The producers will not do that because it is their livelihood.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is their livelihood but, as every producer knows, you have to have a certain environmental management system, quality assurance standard, or whatever the case may be, to protect your markets. People can die from food poisoning and we have to be mindful of that. Notwithstanding that, much of the food poisoning happens domestically on the kitchen bench. So you can put all the regulations you want in place but it does not stop that.

We have to get the balance right and protect our markets, and protect the community. Eggs are a good example because it is where we can do better than perhaps the regulations that were put forward late last year. I am reviewing those at the moment and focusing on the amount of risk in production rather than the number of chooks one might be producing from.

Ms RATTRAY - As minister, you are not interested in licensing the former Governor at Government House and those who have fewer than 20 chooks?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are working through those at the moment. We have taken a number of submissions already on that review and we will be making some determinations in the near future. I am not interested in making it overly burdensome.

Ms RATTRAY - I can assure you if it were, it would be front page tomorrow of every regional newspaper.

Grants and subsidies -

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Mr FINCH - Minister, you talked earlier about the Tasmanian Abalone Council. I am wondering how that \$800 000 contribution to the Abalone Council will be spent.

Mr FORD - It is part of a grant deed that the previous government entered into with the abalone industry to deliver a range of industry development services, including some research and development, some marketing work and so the funding commitment allows that grant deed to be met over the next four years. The funds are delivered to the Abalone Council.

Mr FINCH - Is that \$200 000 a year?

Mr FORD - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister and the staff associated with this. If you don't mind, we will go straight on to Inland Fisheries.

Inland Fisheries

Mr ROCKLIFF - I welcome John Diggle, the Director of Inland Fisheries Service, and thank all my department representatives.

CHAIR - Do you have a short opening statement, minister?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, but I want to commend the Inland Fisheries Service on what it does in protecting our pristine waterways, growing our fishery and being very proactive in supporting and encouraging new entrants to utilise Inland Fisheries from interstate, overseas and local. This year we are celebrating 150 years of recreational trout fishing, which provides wonderful activities and recreational opportunities for the community.

CHAIR - Would you like to say anything or are we going to go straight onto questions?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will go to questions then.

CHAIR - No, I was asking if there was something specific that the authority might like to say.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have a competition going. If you sign up for an annual licence or a five-yearly licence you go into the draw for a new Ford Ranger four-wheel drive. You need to sign up before March next year, is that right, John?

Mr DIGGLE - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is an exciting initiative to encourage participation in our fishery. I am also excited about bringing back the Inland Fisheries Service officer to be based on the north-west coast so we can look after compliance there. There is a \$40 000 per year commitment to that position, and we look forward to that position starting. We are once again working very closely with Biosecurity Tasmania. The Liawenee office has been re-established as well, which is important.

CHAIR - Is Inland Fisheries going to stay at New Norfolk?

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Mr DIGGLE - Yes.

CHAIR - Good. There was some question in the House earlier in the budget discussions about the possibility of them moving to Burnie as everyone else is moving to Burnie. Mr Farrell was very concerned.

Mr FINCH - Salmon Ponds, is it, at New Norfolk?

Mr DIGGLE - No, we are in New Norfolk itself.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There is also the Carp Management Program.

[12.30 p.m.]

CHAIR - I was going to ask about the carp, so that is good. How is the carp control going because it is not a matter of eradication, it is a matter of control, isn't it? Or are you hoping to eradicate?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is a matter of eradication. It has been eradicated in Lake Crescent. In Lake Sorell there are a few more to get. It has been an excellent program, with a huge amount of success.

CHAIR - Is it possible to eradicate it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is possible -

CHAIR - Because our lakes are connected, obviously.

Mr DEAN - How does eradication work?

CHAIR - You catch them.

Mr DIGGLE - At the moment the strategies are to contain carp in Lake Sorell and Lake Crescent, so we have screens to stop them going down the Clyde River. We exclude access to habitat for spawning, so we have barriers to limit their opportunities for spawning.

CHAIR - They spawn in shallow water, don't they?

Mr DIGGLE - Edge water. That is usually when the lake is rising in spring or early summer, so we can exclude that habitat availability and also fish the population down. So, there is lots of gill netting at the moment.

Mr VALENTINE - Electronic, too.

Mr DIGGLE - Yes, electro-fishing. We use that to control them as well

Mr ROCKLIFF - So 39 380 carp have been removed from Lake Sorell since 1995. We have committed \$400 000 a year of annual funding and we will continue to support the program. The Australian Government has allocated matching funding until December 2015, so we are actively trying to make sure we get rid of them by then, or ask for more funding.

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On a general note, to get an appreciation of what the community feels about inland fisheries and recreational fishing, go to the open day and see the many thousands of people attending. There were about four thousand over the weekend, which is tremendous. People of all ages - dads and mums bringing their kids. It was really a pleasure to see, and a testament to the work of our Inland Fisheries Department under John's leadership.

CHAIR - It is also a significant tourism drawcard, isn't it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, it is a significant tourism drawcard.

CHAIR - Any idea of the figures?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We need to make more of that. John?

Mr DINGLE - Roughly 20 per cent of our total licence sales are to mainlanders, and that is about 6 000 licences per season. A number of people are drawn to the state to go fishing.

CHAIR - What happens on private lakes - like London Lakes for instance? Do they need to be licensed?

Mr DINGLE - No, that is a registered private fishery. They pay us a registration fee and then people can fish there without an Inland Fisheries licence.

CHAIR - So that is another source of tourism dollars - the private lakes. How many of them are there?

Mr DINGLE - There are several. They are not all operating that efficiently at the moment, but we have about 21 from my last count.

CHAIR - Registered?

Mr DINGLE - Registered private fisheries. The bigger ones are ones like Highland Waters.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Another good investment in local fisheries such as the Mersey River has been investment in stiles and fish access points. They allow fishermen to more easily access private property, for example on the banks of the Mersey River, by providing safe ways of getting over fences, et cetera.

There are also opportunities to donate to maintain that infrastructure expansion. There are some positive things going on at a local level to encourage people into the fisheries, and good collaboration between IFS, and local fishing groups and local landholders. Allowing people to get onto their properties and visit their dams, is a big call in terms of liability and potential risk. It is good news.

CHAIR - This is your responsibility, but the supporting agency is the Department of Primary Industry, Parks, Water and Environment. Is there funding for the Inland Fisheries service?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

CHAIR - Does it come from a line item from their budget?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is a separate line item and it is under mine. There should be one in 24.2.

CHAIR - In 24.2 there is a statement of comprehensive income. Is that what you have?

Mr DIGGLE - Administrative payments from primary industries. That is a bit over \$1 million.

CHAIR - It is a grant?

Mr DIGGLE - It is an administered payment, a grant by the department.

Mr FINCH - In respect of staff numbers for the Inland Fisheries, how many people do you have on the ground throughout the state?

Mr ROCKLIFF - In Inland Fisheries we have 20.39 FTEs as of June 2014.

CHAIR - They would include field officers?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

CHAIR - I imagine you do not have too many office staff.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I would not imagine so.

Mr DIGGLE - We do have administration staff.

CHAIR - You have to have some. Out of the 20 how many would be?

Mr DIGGLE - Four, I would say.

CHAIR - And the rest are people out on the ground, inspectors.

Mr DIGGLE - And people in a hatchery. There are different roles.

Mr FINCH - Are these people based at New Norfolk, or are they around the state?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Liawenee, New Norfolk, in the north-west in terms of field service.

Mr DIGGLE - Salmon Ponds.

CHAIR - Your office staff is at New Norfolk?

Mr DIGGLE - Head office.

Mr FINCH - Licences, you alluded to the fact 6 000 is 20 per cent of the total licences, so around 30 000?

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Mr DIGGLE - Yes, it ranges. This last season it was down a bit. We had about 6 per cent decline so a bit over 27 000 but it goes from that to close to 30 000 over the last five or six years.

Mr FINCH - It gives you better opportunity to catch more people without their licences.

CHAIR - The season started on 1 August? So we are only a month in.

Mr DIGGLE - Yes, the first Saturday.

Mr FINCH - Minister, it is good that approximately 30 000 every year are taking up the opportunity to get licences for recreational fishing.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is very good and I would expect, with the promotion and celebration of the 150 years of trout fishing, hopefully that will not only be maintained but increased because it is a great family activity.

CHAIR - Do you have any idea what it is worth to the economy because it is not just the licence fees, it is also accommodation, rods and reels, fishery equipment?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not off the top of my head but the flow-on effects would be enormous. I would imagine many millions of dollars, given the tourism aspect, the tackle shops.

CHAIR - It is an interesting question, isn't it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I reckon you could place a value on it. I am not sure whether any studies have been done.

Mr DIGGLE - There have been no recent studies to ascertain the value of the greater fishery in terms -

CHAIR - You might like to take that on board, minister, and we will ask you next year.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will have a look at that because it has been a good strong advocate point for the service.

Mr FINCH - In respect of those 6 000 licence holders on the mainland who want to come to Tasmania and perhaps bring their boats, do you have any discussions, or maybe future discussions, about people wanting to travel and bring their boats and the cost that is involved in getting their boats across Bass Strait? I have had a lot of complaints in the past when we had the investigation into TT-Line, from people who try to bring boats here for fishing competitions and things like that because you need your own equipment. You cannot hire a boat or pick up a boat while you are here. The cost prohibits them from coming to Tasmania for those sorts of tourist activities and competition.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have had similar feedback in the past. The Minister for Infrastructure is working hard to address that issue but we need to ensure that Tasmanian shores are as accessible as possible in terms of not being too costly, particularly for those people who bring their boats. They are going to stay for some time and spend their money in the local economy. We need to do what we can to encourage them.

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Mr DEAN - Did we cover the number of offences that have been identified in this area over the previous 12 months? Are people doing the right thing?

Mr DIGGLE - I do not have the exact number here. Our numbers are similar to last year, with about 150 infringement either issued or issued as endorsed cautions. There are usually between 10 and 20 matters in court each year.

Mr DEAN - Are the infringements a threat to any of the inland fisheries species? I specifically mention white bait, which has always been a concern for the department. What is the position with white bait and the infringements in that area? It was fairly high at one stage.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, it was. The impact on the fishery depends on the quantity that is taken illegally. My hope is that any risk of that happening on the north-west coast will be reduced by having a compliance officer based there on the ground, and more visible. I hope that would have some impact on people thinking they can get away with fishing illegally. Do you have anything further to add, John?

Mr DIGGLE - Last season there was not a big spike. There is always non-compliance on the white bait issue. It has been like that for years and years but there has not been any particular spike. We did have some noteworthy cases through the year - up to \$10 000 in fines being issued for white bait offences for an individual.

Mr DEAN - Is it proposed to continue with the season for white bait at this state? There is no threat to the species?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not to my knowledge.

Mr DEAN - I take it carp were introduced by humans.

Mrs TAYLOR - Otherwise they would have had to swim across Bass Strait.

Mr DEAN - What processes are in place to ensure it does not occur again? Are there penalties in the legislation in relation to that? Is there any position there? Is it adequate and is it doing what it is supposed to do?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There was a decision made a decade or so ago about live bait. I am not sure if it is relevant, and you can correct me, John, but the introduction of European carp may have been through using live bait.

Mr DIGGLE - Live bait, possibly.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You cannot do that anymore. That avenue for baiting is gone. That reduces the risk again. The only risk would probably be someone deliberately and maliciously doing the wrong thing.

CHAIR - It is really only a goldfish, isn't it?

Mr DIGGLE - No, it is a different species.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, it is different.

CHAIR - But goldfish will grow to that size because they keep growing all their life.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Goldfish can very big. You see some of the goldfish in farm dams.

CHAIR - Do they live in our inland fisheries, in our lakes, goldfish?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

CHAIR - When we talk about carp, there are many countries in Europe and Asia where they farm and fish carp. There might be people who consider it a desirable fish.

Mr DEAN - Japan does.

CHAIR - Also Europe. You can see that unless people were alerted to this and told we didn't want carp in Tasmania, they could -

Mr DEAN - I am glad to know there is some other use for my goldfish.

CHAIR - No, no. I suppose my question is are we keeping that alert up because there might be people who out of ignorance might say, we will put them in our dam or our pond.

Mr DIGGLE - There are very strong barrier controls into the state now, with Service Tasmania and the airlines.

CHAIR - I am talking about fish that might already be here. It's not deliberate.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You are talking about a post-water, high-security risk, so people who are in Tasmania doing the wrong thing, I suppose.

CHAIR - It is the same kind of thing as weeds which often are garden plants, that are beautiful garden plants in the city, and then spread.

Mr DIGGLE - We have closed Lake Sorell to public access as one of the measures to limit people's access to carp. That's the only known population in the state so we excluded people from that at this point to help manage that risk.

CHAIR - They must have been brought in from interstate, do you think.

Mr DIGGLE - In the first instance, yes, they have to have been but into Lake Crescent most likely as bait, as the minister was indicating.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. That concludes our questioning on Inland Fisheries Service.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you very much.

CHAIR - Minister, if you are happy, we will keep going into Racing.

Mr VALENTINE - Sorry, there was one question.

CHAIR - Sorry - Rob did say there was an overarching question he wanted to ask.

Mr VALENTINE - It was something I have asked each of the departments. That is, how you are doing knowledge management within your department as staff are either made redundant or retired out of the department. There is a chance that a lot of corporate knowledge goes out the door. Do you have any specific mechanisms in place to make sure there is knowledge transfer that occurs before significant knowledge goes out the door when staff leave through retirement or redundancy or whatever?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That would be an operational matter for the secretary John Whittington to answer. I am not sure if the deputy secretary can assist in that.

Ms MOSELEY - When people leave the agency we have a fairly comprehensive debriefing as part of them leaving, so discussions with their manager and to address all those issues that you have talked about, to make sure that we have captured all of the information. We have a lot of electronic systems, IT, quite sophisticated knowledge management systems in the agency and the water information system and the natural values atlas that captures that information on a very regular basis and then we have very specific exit interviews to make sure that it is a comprehensive capture. We have an electronic document management system that covers all the information across the agency.

Mr VALENTINE - Do you have a wikibase system like Confluence, a knowledge base, like that or not? Do you know of that?

Ms MOSELEY - No.

Mr WHITTINGTON - Another thing that we do in critical positions, is that we try to overlap, so if we know someone is retiring we will recruit prior to their retirement to cover the gap and so we have examples of that in the agency where we have done that and that is a really important way of getting that knowledge transferred across.

Mr VALENTINE - Without too much explanation, it is obviously an opportunity for mistakes to be made because people simply don't know what has been done in the past. That is the reason I ask the question especially given the targeting that is likely to happen with regard to budget restraint.

Ms MOSELEY - The biggest risk is usually around delegation and so a gap in time where there is no appropriate delegation in place. So we have one of the projects that will be on the list for the policy division. Someone asked for a list of major projects, with a comprehensive review of the course of the last 12 months of our delegations. To make sure that as people leave those delegations flow seamlessly.

Mr VALENTINE - I would encourage you to look at Confluence which is an appellation software.

DIVISION 10

(Department of State Growth)

Output group 5

Racing regulation and policy

5.1 Racing regulation and policy -

The committee suspended from 12.51 p.m. to 12.55 p.m.

CHAIR - Welcome, Minister for Racing.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Chair. I have a brief opening statement if that is all right.

CHAIR - Could you introduce the people at the table for *Hansard*, please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes we have Bob Rutherford, Department of State Growth.

Mr RUTHERFORD - Deputy Secretary, Transport, Regulatory and Customer Services. It is a mouthful so I will say it for the minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Bob. We have Tony Murray, Director of Racing Services Tasmania, and Graham Murray, the Budget Accountant for the Department of State Growth.

The Government recognises the importance of the Racing portfolio in the Department of State Growth, and to the Tasmanian economy. I am very pleased to have Racing as one of my portfolio responsibilities. Also, I am very pleased to work with my colleague ministers to bring all of the economic levers under one roof of the Department of State Growth. The racing integrity aspect of this portfolio is key to ensuring that we continue to have best practice for a sustainable racing industry.

The Government recognises that the Tasmanian racing industry is a significant contributor to employment in Tasmania and the direct and indirect economic benefits it provides to the wider Tasmanian community. It is committed to safeguarding the industry's sustainability over the longer term. There is no doubt that the integrity of the racing industry is the cornerstone of its well being and sustainability. The Director of Racing, through Racing Services Tasmania, is responsible for the delivery of integrity functions right across the industry. In Racing Services Tasmania's role, there are a number of key integrity areas that are considered essential for the delivery of best-practice integrity. These include: the Director of Racing in his statutory role; stewarding, both race day and non-race day; a sophisticated drug control regime; a best-practice system of licensing persons to participate in the industry; modern and effective communication with participants; and the provision of integrity in a fair, transparent and accountable manner.

It is fair to say that the delivery of integrity to the racing industry, especially in the view of the constantly changing wagering landscape nationally and internationally, is more challenging than ever before. In this regard, there continues to be a high priority placed on the training of stewards, which is achieved by the conduct of regular training days and also through a stewards' exchange program that exists with interstate racing jurisdictions. Racing Services Tasmania is well equipped to meet the integrity challenges and the Director continues to work closely with key industry stakeholders to maintain an effective and robust regulatory regime.

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I look forward to having some discussion on Racing Services Tasmania and its integrity functions.

Mr DEAN - Taken directly from page 10.41 of budget paper 2, Government Services, minister, you refer to, and I quote:

Over the coming year, the Government will establish a Racing Industry Strategic Planning Working Group to work with the Government and Tasracing Pty Ltd to create a plan to help put the Tasmanian racing industry onto a more self-sustainable footing.

My question is: what is this going to accomplish? There have been previous, similar types of inquiries into and reviews of Tasracing over a number of years but nothing really seems to have changed, so what will this do? What will we get out of this review that is now likely to have some impact?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Based on the feedback from grassroots participants in the racing industry, we came up with a policy of establishing a working group. The allocation in the budget papers of \$50 000 is not just for the working group, it is also to do with racing policy implementation. In accordance with our election commitment, the purpose of the working group is to create a long-term plan to help the local racing industry grow and put it on a path to a more self-sustaining industry. I will come to the terms of reference which the working group is working under in a minute, but in the end when it comes to the deed, which I think is into its fifth year of a 20-year cycle, there is no more money for Racing.

CHAIR - After this 20-year deed, you are saying?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am saying the deed is in place during this time, and that means we have to develop a model of racing within the confines of the existing deed to ensure that it is self-sufficient.

The working group comprises an excellent cross section of each of the racing codes. It is chaired by Dale Monteith who brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the role. The working group has recently convened and it is envisaged that it will report by 31 October.

CHAIR - This year?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. We are implementing the Government's election commitment to establish the working group. I wrote to all clubs and associations recognised by the act and asking for nominations for the working group. These nominations were considered by a selection panel that was independent from TasRacing, from Racing Services Tasmania, and my office. This panel made four recommendations to me. I also made three ministerial appointees to the working group. There are seven working group members covering all the codes and geographic locations and they have the required skills and knowledge to represent not only the best interests of their code but also the best interests of the racing industry as a whole, and also make a very meaningful contribution to the outcomes of the working group and putting the racing industry on a path to sustainability.

The members of the group are David Adams, Justin Crawford, Denise Fish, Kevin Ring, David Sales, Joel Wallace and Robin Wishaw. I have appointed an independent chair to the

working group charged with facilitating the discussions, providing advice on how things are done in other jurisdictions, seeking any necessary clarification and eventually writing the report with respect to the working group's recommendations to me as per the terms of reference which I will detail.

Dale Monteith is that independent chair. He comes with a wealth of experience in racing. He has assisted with similar projects. I will quickly go through some of his CV. He was Chief Executive Director of the Victorian Racing Club from 2000 to 2012 -

CHAIR - We probably don't need his CV, minister. We will trust that you have appointed a sensible person.

Mr DEAN - It is helpful to know a little about his ability and capacity because of some of the things that have happened previously.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There are a number of things he has done. There is one item that is important to the committee - 'TabCorp joint venture management committee representing three racing codes from 1995 to 2010' - so he has experience across the three racing codes which is important. Also Dale has done a review of the Northern Territory racing for the Northern Territory Government, this year, 2014.

The terms of reference.

CHAIR - Are they on the website? I would like to see the terms of reference. If they are publicly available then tell me where to find them.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, they are not publicly available but we can circulate them.

Just quickly so we get the context of the working group. Working with stakeholders to identify the industry's key challenges and ways to meet those challenges without additional funding from Government. Identifying any enablers of, or barriers to, the industry's progress towards a self-sufficient model. Advising on the long term industry priorities and ways to address the priorities. Encouraging dialogue and consensus building within the industry regarding sustainability issues and providing the minister with recommendations in the written report by the external chairperson by the end of October 2014. An update will be provided to myself by the Chair by 30 September 2014.

I met with the group in mid August at their first meeting, just to say hello, and it is up to them now to engage with TasRacing and Racing Services Tasmania through the Racing Director and I look forward to their recommendations.

Mr DEAN - The working group will be able to deliver by 31 October. You are satisfied they will deliver.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, they will.

Mr DEAN - I have confidence in that working group with some of the members on it. I have the greatest of admiration for Robin Wishaw and some of the other members on it. I have the greatest admiration for Robin Wishaw and some of the other members of that group. What is the cost of that working group? Are they volunteering or is there a cost attached to it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There will be incidentals - they will be paid allowances and expenses, et cetera. It is voluntary. Mr Monteith comes at a cost but that has not been finalised yet. It is a \$50 000 allocation and I do not expect the working group will take up any more than two-thirds of that.

Mr DEAN - I was provided with an answer a couple of weeks ago about the funding and the debts Tasracing has. I take it that it came from your office, minister, and I quote -

Tasracing receives support from the Government for the \$2.5 million loan. This support expires on 30 June 2015 and has no conditions attached.

What support is that answer referring to, in relation to that amount?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are looking at Racing Services Tasmania and we have to scrutinise that area now. Tasracing will be up for scrutiny at the GBE hearings at the end of the year. I can answer those questions then if Tasracing is being scrutinised by the Legislative Council. But we have to stick to this output group. I have no Tasracing representatives here, but we have a couple of Racing Services Tasmania representatives, so we will stick to the Racing Services Tasmania questions. I know it is of interest to you, and I respect that, but Tasracing will be scrutinised at GBE hearings.

Mr DEAN - We know Tasracing is not sustainable in its present form, and hasn't been for many years.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is not to say it couldn't be.

Mr DEAN - No, I'm not saying that at all. How many personnel are there in Tasracing at the present time?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I do not have that information. Racing Services Tasmania, is it? Racing Services Tasmania has 30.5 FTEs, made up of 22 full time staff and 26 casual staff members.

Mr DEAN - Where are their offices?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The head office is in Launceston in Henty House.

Mr MURRAY - Of the full-time staff, we have 21 based in Launceston and one based in Hobart out of Elwick.

Mr DEAN - Are the budget savings strategies going to impact here?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There is a minimal impact, Mr Dean, not a substantial one. It is one Mr Murray, as Racing Services Director, will work through to ensure the integrity functions are not impacted on at all.

Ms RATTRAY - Is it the \$109 000?

Mr T. MURRAY - We will look at all our functions and activities, but I am confident we can work within those budget cuts and still deliver the highest level integrity.

Mr DEAN - The TOTE monies - and I think it is up to \$29 231 000 this year. The Government's decision to fund Tasmanian racing with the TOTE sale proceeds - how long is that in place for?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The deed is 20 years and we are five years into the deed.

Mr DEAN - You have to honour that, I suppose?

CHAIR - This review you are doing is looking just into Racing Services Tasmania?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, the review is looking into TasRacing, Racing Services Tasmania, structure of, and opportunities, barriers for growth, and given the experience that is around the table of the working group, I am sure there will be ideas generated.

CHAIR - Our problem, generally, is not with Racing Services Tasmania, but with TasRacing's sustainability.

Mr DEAN - Absolutely. I have received a number of anonymous letters - and that is why I am careful with the use of those - painting a very bad picture of TasRacing, sadly.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have to be careful there. One of the good things about establishing the working group is that they have a comprehensive briefing from the Director of Racing Services Tasmania and a comprehensive briefing from the CEO of TasRacing, Eliot Forbes, on aspects of their respective responsibilities. The working group are fully informed of the challenges across the whole sector and that better informs them to make decisions in terms of recommendations.

Mr DEAN - As part of that they will be looking at the staffing levels in TasRacing and the board?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It will be covering a huge range of areas. They can pretty much ask any question they want of Mr Murray, Mr Forbes or Brian Spears, the Chairman of TasRacing. The feedback recently of TasRacing has been very positive. Eliot Forbes, the CEO, is highly thought of around the tracks and engages with industry very well.

Ms RATTRAY - I have a question in relation to the TasRacing Appeals Board, minister. You are amalgamating with who? Which other board is going to take over that role, considering that they look at disqualifications and fines? There were 18 appeals last year and six convictions quashed, so where do those people go now?

Mr ROCKLIFF - What we are doing is transferring the functions of the Integrity Assurance Board. In April 2014, in line with the Government's pre-election commitment, the Treasurer commenced a review of government boards and committees to identify savings which can be incorporated into the Budget.

Included in the list of boards and committees currently registered on the Government boards database, relevant to this output group are the Integrity Assurance Board and the Racing Appeal Board. The Department of State Growth is responsible for funding both those boards with remuneration for the members met from funds through Racing Services Tasmania. The ensuing

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review of the boards in terms of their purpose, roles, size, composition and cost and other relevant aspects, identified that it was feasible for a single board to undertake the duties and responsibilities for both boards. The transfer of the Integrity Assurance Board's functions to the Racing Appeal Board will deliver savings without compromising integrity.

Ms RATTRAY - Will any of the members on the Tas Racing Appeals Board get a gig on the Integrity Assurance Board or are we staying with the same make up that is on the one board? How does that knowledge get transferred over, to be undertaking both functions?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are working through that transition process now, but in many respects they are similar in terms of the roles they play. The director could shed further light on it.

Ms RATTRAY - You do not see any issue with it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No issue at all.

Mr T. MURRAY - Currently, the Tasmanian Racing Appeal Board hears appeals against decisions of stewards, whereas the Integrity Assurance Board hears decisions against decisions of myself, the Director of Racing.

Ms RATTRAY - Well, 462 suspensions is quite high.

[1.15 p.m.]

Mr T. MURRAY - The Tasmanian Racing Appeal Board is the one that hears the majority. Looking at the figures they have heard 18 appeals in the past year, then 23 in 2013, so they stay intact. It is the Integrity Assurance Board which has heard three appeals, two and four over the last three years, which have been merged with the Tasmanian Racing Appeal Board.

Ms RATTRAY - So Tasracing stays and it is the Integrity Assurance Board that has gone?

Mr T. MURRAY - The Tasmanian Racing Appeal Board -

Ms RATTRAY - It didn't make that very clear on the list.

Mr T. MURRAY - The Tasmanian Racing Appeal Board stays and the Integrity Assurance Board has its functions merged with the main appeal board.

Ms RATTRAY - Thank you.

CHAIR - Will that retain its name?

Mr T. MURRAY - There will need to be legislative amendments.

Ms RATTRAY - That is fine. It did not make it very clear on the list who was going to be what.

CHAIR - I have a couple of questions but again they are a bit more related to Tasracing rather than Racing Services Tasmania, except to the degree that you have the oversight of this review. No?

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Mr ROCKLIFF - Sorry?

CHAIR - Are you having the oversight of this review?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The working group review? Yes, it reports to me and comes out of the budget of State Growth.

CHAIR - When this report comes to you, will you make it public?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will take that on notice.

CHAIR - Even making its recommendations public would be sufficient.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Could be. I will give that some considered thought to ensure that the public is well informed of the process and what the recommendations were.

CHAIR - I ask this because you are talking about this being a review into the entire racing industry, not into Racing Services Tasmania, that is not the aim -

Mr ROCKLIFF - No.

CHAIR - When I go to Administered Expenses in the Budget, and Mr Dean has raised that, but at the moment Tasracing assistance is more than \$29 million a year and will grow in the forward Estimates to over \$30 million a year because it is indexed for the next 15 years. It is crucial that some way be found, it at all possible, for the racing industry not to have to rely on that subsidy year after year because one presumes that after 15 years it is going to stop. It ought not to be constantly a \$30 million grant a year, in my opinion. No industry should, with the amount it generates itself, which I understand is only maybe less than \$5 million a year itself. Its costs are something like \$40 million a year, which leaves a shortfall every year in any case, which is why I presume you are doing the review.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The economic generation from racing is over \$100 million a year, employing directly up to 3 000 or 4 000 people but I think what you are talking about is the race fields' fees and income generated from that, which is in the order of \$6 million a year.

CHAIR - I would have a figure a little less than that, but I am sure you are right. I have been told a figure a little less than that. Even so, we are not looking at this industry currently making any growth as far as I can see in income. I understand that originally the hope was that it would be offshore racing fees - being connected to Foxtel 1 or Sky 1 or any of those kinds of things. Because Elwick is in my electorate, I am aware of the situation, I do have discussions with people there. It appears to me that over the last few years since TOTE has been sold that those opportunities are not being fulfilled.

I am sure and I hope that you will get this out of the review, but there have been a number of instances where racing times and dates have changed: they have gone from Saturday to Thursday evening in Launceston and Sundays in Hobart in the hope that they would catch those of interest. Indeed, there have been times when they were of interest to Foxtel 1 or whatever and as I see it, other racing bodies around Australia like Vic Racing, for instance, have seen that that has been a really good opportunity, a much bigger market than we are and therefore have been able to replace us in those slots.

Every time Tasracing comes up with an opportunity, because we are so small we are overtaken by a bigger player that can offer far more to the same outlet. It looks to me like the future capacity of Tasracing, by itself, to generate enough income to replace this kind of subsidy, is pretty limited.

I hope this review of yours will look at the long term sustainability of Tasracing. I would be very pleased to hear some recommendations and outcomes from that review that would lead to a way forward, whether that be something like Tasracing and Vic Racing joining together. There have been those sorts of suggestions made in the past. There needs to be something drastic done, minister, or we are going to have to put in \$30 million-plus a year, every year.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have some way to go until the expiry of the deed and whatever government is there at the time will make those decisions - whether or not to continue the deed, or lower it or chop it off altogether. But an opportunity for Tasracing scrutiny will be available at the GBEs.

Tasracing has been very active in promoting its product and there has been quite a substantial increase in turnover for both the harness, the greyhound and the thoroughbred races over the last 12 months.

CHAIR - I look forward to seeing the figures.

Mr VALENTINE - A question about the \$30 million subsidy - that comes from Finance-General presumably?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Consolidated revenue.

CHAIR - I am sure the Government could do with it, though - to be redirected to other sources.

Mr DEAN - How many people within Tasmania are currently earning a living from racing, directly and indirectly? Do we have those numbers?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I don't have the report in front of me that was released earlier this year or late last year, from memory. The report that was released in December 2007 highlighted a \$90 million value for the racing industry and the number in terms of direct employment was around 2 000. The recent report showed a larger increase of the value to the community.

As to earning a direct living, there would be some thousands of people - probably about 1 500 to 2 000 - directly employed, with indirect jobs flowing from that like farmers who earn an income providing chaff and those sorts of things. But don't hold me to it.

From a social perspective, the racing industry provides opportunities for people who don't have a high skills base, or are developing a skills base, to work in stables, or as track work riders in rural and regional communities. That is an important social aspect of the racing industry.

These sorts of things were discussed a lot and, as a result of the sale of TOTE, people are now talking a lot more about the \$30 million and they are saying, 'Could that be better spend elsewhere?'. When the TOTE was in existence and funding the racing industry to a certain extent

that was less of an issue for them. People thought the racing industry was generating its own revenues and now they are making comparisons, which is challenging for the racing industry. But the industry, I think, has considerable social value for rural and regional Tasmania.

Mr DEAN - This could be taken on notice, minister - can you get any more updated figures on that? People get onto me and onto others as well.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will make a commitment to send you the government report. The report that was done for government.

CHAIR - Minister, can we have the working group's terms of reference and numbers on that committee as a question on notice?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. How does that work?

CHAIR - We send it to you.

CHAIR - Thank you. That means we can go to lunch.

The committee suspended from 1.25 p.m. to 2.28 p.m.

CHAIR - Good afternoon, minister. Thank you very much for returning to do Education.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for that and also I welcome to the table the Secretary of the Department of Education, Mr Colin Pettit, and Deputy Secretary, Andrew Finch, and I will give a brief overview.

The 2014-15 State Budget recognises that the economic and social improvement of Tasmania as a whole is strongly linked to education. As a recently elected Government we are determined to keep our election promises and our long-term goal is to lead the nation in education.

In constructing this Budget, we recognise that education and training is one of the most crucial investments a government can make. For this reason we have committed to invest in a record \$1.4 billion into education and training in the next year alone. With \$1.25 billion allocated to schools and to LINC Tasmania.

This recognises our fundamental commitment to raising educational standards in Tasmania and to work with and support our education professionals. If we can lift education we can lift Tasmania. I believe that all Tasmanian children deserve the best possible start to life and that valuing education is every Tasmanian's responsibility. We have incremental targets in place over the next six years in an endeavour for Tasmania to be at or above the national standard in every single NAPLAN measure for reading and numeracy. This plan is supported by the Government's additional stake investment in education for the Students First education reforms and this Budget delivers on all the promises we made, as well as addressing the economic challenges we currently face as we create a job-ready generation of young Tasmanians.

We have increased funding to all government schools, honouring our commitment to the Students First, the Gonski funding, and educational reforms for the full six years, providing

funding for schools on the basis of need. This means that all government schools will receive a minimum 5 per cent increase in their Fairer Funding allocation through the school resource package for 2015. This funding is a significant boost for Tasmania's government schools and will go directly towards supporting improved learning outcomes for all Tasmanian students.

An additional \$2 million is being provided to support students identified with need to ensure they receive the support required to reach their full potential. We have committed \$45.5 million to extend 21 rural high schools to years 11 and 12 in rural and regional communities by 2018. We have already commenced this process with six schools identified to begin delivering years 11 and 12 programs from next year. This commitment will ensure all students have the choice, wherever they live, to complete year 12 in their local area, helping to address Tasmania's retention rates.

An amount of \$8.63 million will fund 25 new specialist literacy and numeracy teachers to work directly with years 7 to 9 students who are performing below the national average in literacy and numeracy. These specialist teachers are already working in schools across Tasmania. To further support students, we have also introduced a \$4.43 million contemporary model of child and youth health nurses across all Tasmanian government schools, as well as \$4.4 million to provide one week of additional employment for teacher assistants during the school year to provide extra support time for students and teachers.

Other funding commitments in this year's Budget include \$800 000 over four years to provide the Bravehearts Child Safety Program in primary schools, funding for the Hagley Farm School to establish a centre of excellence in agriculture, as well as \$150 000 to deliver restorative practice training to teachers for staff in primary and secondary schools.

Through this Budget we have met all our election commitments and are working hard to implement our long-term strategy to lay the foundations for the future of Tasmania. This long-term plan ensures everything we do supports our goal to lift education so we can lift Tasmania and lead the nation in education.

As part of this plan, today I announce a review of the education act, the act which governs school education in Tasmania across government - Catholic, independent and home education sectors - is now more than 20 years old. As a Government we have been clear in our objective to ensure more Tasmanian students go on to complete year 12 with strong literacy and numeracy skills, a meaningful qualification providing them with real choices for their future. To help us achieve this we need a legislative framework that is contemporary and cohesive and provides Tasmania with the best framework for a strong education system now and into the future.

The discussion paper I have released in relation to this review - and I have copies here for members - will provide all education stakeholders and the broader community with an opportunity to provide their feedback and ideas into this important review. I will be encouraging all stakeholders and the community to share their thoughts and ideas for reform and it is important we all work together to provide the best possible outcomes for all Tasmanian students now and into the future. I welcome the opportunity to discuss the Budget further.

Output group 1

Pre-compulsory and compulsory education

1.1 In school education -

CHAIR - I hope you noted the comments made by this House in our second reading Budget speeches, otherwise we will have to say a lot this afternoon.

Minister, this is a large amount of money and we are all concerned about the same things - we want to improve the education standards throughout the state from the early years through to post-compulsory and training education. For me, a few things in this Budget are of great concern. I will go straight to a few of those points. One of them is classroom sizes. I do not know that I saw anything in the Budget papers about classroom sizes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Current classroom sizes?

CHAIR - Current and future. The Education Department had a standard for numbers of students in classes and I want to know how that is going, and what the future effects of your budget cuts will be. Despite the fact that you have a 5 per cent increase in funding, you are making significant cuts to classroom availability for classroom teachers.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are making \$148 million worth of savings over the course of the next four years. There are no cuts.

CHAIR - I am talking about 'by default', and we will get to that, but can I have the classroom figures?

Mr ROCKLIFF - For the average class, sized by school type - primary school 2014, 23.3.

CHAIR - Is that your average across the state? Does that take into account all the little schools that only have three children in a class? What is your maximum number of students in a class? There is not much point in saying 23 students on average, when you have a lot of schools - the regional schools - that do not have 23 children in every class.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The regional schools have combined grades, which increases the class sizes in terms of the classroom. But the average class size is an indicative figure and we have to start somewhere. I will answer your question - secondary is 23.9 and the median class size by school type for 2014 is 24, 24 and combined, 22. The combined average class size by school type is 21.3.

CHAIR - Do you have a maximum? How many children would you allow in a classroom in primary school or in secondary school?

Mr PETTIT - It is a school decision. I was in a school the other day that made a decision that it was in their best interests to have 30 children in a room for the morning with two or three additional helpers, and that is a school decision. Every school is staffed in a similar way so they can meet the average class size requirement. It then becomes a school decision as to how they use their resources to achieve that.

CHAIR - I am thinking of a particular high school that had a program - and I am not sure whether it was federally funded or state funded - that said there would be no more than 25 students in a grade 7 classroom. Was that federally funded? Did that stop at the end of last year?

Mr PETTIT - No. We have some recommendations to schools about class sizes is and we have discussions with the union about how that should be managed. We fund schools to make sure they can achieve those figures, but what happens in every school is up to the individual school in consultation with the community.

CHAIR - I am aware of one high school where I understood that the extra staff to keep numbers in grade 7 down to 25 or fewer was withdrawn. The decision of the school was that it is very important to keep the class sizes no bigger than 25 because it is the first year of high school and it is important that the kids from a whole lot of feeder schools get a good grounding there. Instead it has kept the student number at 25, but the year 8s are at 34-35 as a result of that. I don't think that is at all desirable, nor do they think it is desirable. As you say, it was a choice that the school made but it seems to me to a bit counterproductive to have withdrawn the extra teacher who was keeping those numbers at 25.

Mr PETTIT - Unless I get hold of the school details I couldn't give you -

CHAIR - I am very happy to talk to you outside of this forum.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That would be of interest to me as well, Chair. The trend has remained quite steady in terms of the average over the last few years: in 2012 for primary schools it was 23.3; in 2013, 23.2; and I have mentioned 23.3 in 2014 as the average class size by school type. In secondary schools, it has been 24 in 2012; 24 in 2013; and 23.9 in 2014.

CHAIR - That is primary schools.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, secondary schools.

CHAIR - Then a broader question to this, and you may not have those figures but I am happy to take this question on notice: how many schoolchildren did we have in 1984, 1994, 2004 and this year, and how many schools did we have? I just want to know whether there have been significant changes in school populations - not in specific schools but just in the totals of students we have.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have some data - FTE data for all students, FTE first term census 2010 to 2014 by educational sector. If I go to primary schools, in 2010 we had 32 684.7 FTE students, and in 2014, 32 479.8 students. The difference between 2013 and 2014 in that context in primary schools was 491, and that would be a 1.5 per cent increase. There has been a slight decrease in kindergarten and early special education, and a decrease of 2 per cent within secondary schools. That was the difference in FTEs in 2013-14, but in 2010, the difference in secondary schools was 18 009 FTE students, down to 16 747 FTE students - a drop in the last 12 months of 340.4 FTEs.

CHAIR - Can I have the 1984, 1994 and 2004 figures, please - just a total of the number of students we had.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You want the decades?

CHAIR - If we could. I just want to see what the trend is in numbers of students and, therefore, ratio of teachers to students and also the number of schools required as a result of that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am sure we can get that information for you.

CHAIR - Happy to take it on notice.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It will be interesting information for me as well over the course of the last three or four decades. As to schools, there were 196 government schools, including senior secondary schools, at the start of 2014, compared to 203 in 2013. It's a difference of seven. So 127 primary, 28 secondary, 25 combined, eight senior secondary schools and eight special education, including the four early childhood intervention centres.

The reasons for those changes: Penguin High and Primary merged to form Penguin District High School and commenced in 2014. Mayfield and Rocherlea Primary Schools merged to form East Tamar Primary School. Railton Primary School merged to become part of Sheffield School, and the Jordan River Learning Federation, Middle School Campus, and Jordan River Learning Federation, Senior School Campus, merged to form the Jordan River Learning Federation Senior School. Levendale Primary School closed, and Geilston Bay High School closed.

CHAIR - You will be aware of the previous government's original plans four years ago to close 20 schools and some of those schools, in the last year but some in previous years, have chosen to amalgamate. There was a report done then and recommendations made as to how any future school closure or school amalgamations might happen. I am sure you have seen that report and the recommendations on it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Fairbrother report?

CHAIR - Yes the Fairbrother report.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I am aware of the report and I'm reviewing the report at the present time. It's of interest to me, that information. We have a clear commitment not to forcibly close schools, to give school communities some security and certainty. Unfortunately with the debate a number of years ago, in 2011 from memory, some of the schools that were on the list for closure such as Edith Creek Primary School, and those sorts of schools, suffered a crisis of confidence in the local community so their numbers have fallen since that time. We have to provide the opportunity for school communities to have discussions about the future of their schools.

CHAIR - That was the point of the report.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Basically, to allow communities to have that conversation, particularly in the best interests of the students and, whether its dialogue between schools that want to merge, there have been good examples of that over the course of the last decade. For quite sensible reasons we would not stand in the way of those discussions if that is what the school communities thought.

CHAIR - Someone may have to initiate those discussions and it's unlikely that school communities or local communities might initiate that. However, in my electorate I am aware of five primary schools that have merged with others and very successfully and it's been done well and it was a consultation and a progressive coming together of the communities.

Mr ROCKLIFF - In my electorate in Burnie, we have had Acton and Montello that chose to get together and form a new school.

CHAIR - They sometimes need incentives to do that in terms of new property.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, and incentives have been important to encourage that discussion. A school transition fund was set up to allow those discussions to happen, at least with some confidence that schools would not be

CHAIR - My question is, are you intending to continue looking at how many schools there are, and whether -

Mr ROCKLIFF - There is \$635 000 in the Budget for schools to have that discussion and we'll go through future budget processes to see what other funds might be available for a school transition fund if and when schools decide to have that conversation.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister.

Mr DEAN - Currently, how many schools, minister, is your department looking at insofar as they believe that they could unite with another school or amalgamate.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am not sure if that work has been done. The most important thing is that we do not force schools to close. As minister, I have said it before and I will say it again, we rule out forced school closures and that is why it is important that once people know the Government's position, people can have these discussions with confidence. As to the number of schools that could merge, or potentially merge, I do not have that figure with me, or even whether that work has been done. I guess it is on a case-by-case basis as the community start to have these discussions.

Mr DEAN - When you look around the state and you are saying student numbers are still tending to drop, I would have thought that your department would have been looking at the areas to determine what they believe would be the right schools, the right number of schools. Particularly when we are looking at budget issues, I would have thought that the department would have a very clear situation on how many schools they ought to be looking at or at least being considered for change. I find that difficult to understand.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The School Transition Fund is set up for the purpose of encouraging school communities to engage in that conversation. There has been no direction from me to do an audit of what schools are placed in that situation. That would be born out of discussions that communities themselves have on these matters.

Mr DEAN - There has been no work done on that at all; is that what you are saying?

CHAIR - But there is money in the Budget for it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not under my direction it has not been.

Mr DEAN - Under someone else's direction?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am not sure.

Mr DEAN - Under another government's direction, has that occurred?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Mr Pettit might want to comment further on that.

Mr PETTIT - No, there is no work being done on which schools should or should not be looked at. We wait for the communities, under this Government's promise, to come to us, to discuss what options might be available to them and then we will work with those communities. As the minister has said, it is a community decision because they need to be confident that when they make that decision, it is in the best interests of their children.

Mr DEAN - Realistically, will that happen?

Mr PETTIT - We have already had half a dozen last year, and we have a number of schools having conversations at the moment.

Mr DEAN - That has not happened because of the community. Rocherlea is a good example and that did not happen because of the community saying they wanted to bring the schools together. That happened as a result of discussions initiated by the department and/or by the government at the time. I say that because I was involved in the steering group and the group involved in trying to bring that together. It did not happen from the school communities.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It may well not have happened, but school communities can have mature discussions about this. The difference is that we have a clear policy commitment from this Government to have no forced school closures. That remains in place. Notwithstanding that, we have funding in the Budget for school transition funds, which can encourage that conversation to happen.

Mr DEAN - Minister, that does not say that you would not talk to these schools and these communities. You are not going to force them, but it does not mean that the Government would not, at least, initiate some discussion or conversation around areas if you think -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Conversation will be initiated at the local level so it is important that the local school communities are empowered to make their own decisions and it is important then once that initiation has happened at a school level, that the department provides the appropriate support to make sure that any further conversation around the mergers of schools is done in a very sensible and non-emotive way because there are highly emotive issues at play, given the history that each school has. That is why there is funding in the Budget, in the School Transition Fund, to at least be a signal to schools that there is funding available should they wish to partake in that conversation.

CHAIR - If I recall correctly, though the minister, that Fairbrother report made recommendations as to what conditions there might be which might encourage school communities to look at whether they should consider closing. I hear what you say about no forced closures and I know every school will be happy to hear that. But there was a set of criteria, and a suggestion that if a school fell within some or all of the criteria then there should probably be a conversation about whether they wanted to continue as a separate school, or whether they might, in consultation with the department and the community, think about other possibilities.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I guess that report would be a reference for school communities, but at the moment I am still looking at the report and how it fits with the new policies of this Government.

CHAIR - Thank you.

I want to ask about two things that are happening within schools - the pay pause and the 2 per cent pay freeze for the following years. You would understand we have all had a lot of communications from teachers.

The other big issue members have received communications about is the pathway planning officers. Have you considered alternatives to losing pathway planning officers? The Government said it would not be cutting frontline positions, and they are absolutely frontline positions in our high schools.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Pathway planning will be embedded in the curriculum under the new model My Education. I have some information on that model, from kindergarten to grade 12. The evidence at the Tasmanian level, and more contemporary international research, suggests that pathway planning embedded in the curriculum in the early years is far more effective than the existing model of 'Guaranteeing Futures', which starts at grade 10.

CHAIR - Eight, nine and 10.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It used to be a three-year model. A report by the University Tasmania back in -

Ms RATTRAY - 2007, minister. A long time ago.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Back in 2007, suggested that you need at least three years to ensure the success of pathway planning. Following that report, the Government at the time ceased years 8 and 9 - just having it in year 10 - and so reduced the effectiveness of the 'Guaranteeing Futures' pathway planning program.

Ms RATTRAY - So why not take it back to 8, 9 and 10?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Because international research suggests that it is best started in the early years. The university report provides one lens for the Tasmanian context and it identified that futures planning must be, and I quote -

A mainstream component that can inform learning, contribute to retention and assist students to make informed decision about their future lives.

The majority of kindergarten to grade 12 career development research and programs have been conducted internationally and therefore provide an international benchmark to which Tasmania should be striving. In the very best models, pathway and career planning is integrated into the curriculum with teachers fully involved. International research from the University of Derby -

Ms RATTRAY - That is where my mother went to school, minister, the University of Derby.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There you go. Excellent. - indicates that career development is most meaningful when it is integrated with academic curricula, begins early and leverages the benefits of technology and involves a variety of stakeholders. Career development is an evolutionary process that begins in early childhood and extends throughout adulthood. Career development competencies and indicators are the basis for integrating career planning into the total school

program. Exemplary education programs consistently place and reinforce career education and career planning with a framework of career and life skills.

The University of Derby also found that there is evidence to suggest that career development, if combined with core academic learning, can improve our retention, and this is particularly the case where career development is introduced with younger students. There are many examples and research. There is a kindergarten to year 12 approach to career and life planning in Tasmanian government schools; My Education, of which the information there is to help engage students in their learning in every year of their education.

The Ontario Ministry of Education has recognised that and I quote:

In an environment that encourages such learning, students develop confidence in knowing that their school programs are created with them in mind, that the world beyond school has something to offer them, and that they have something to offer the world.

I can table this document which references all the research about why it is important that pathway planning and career planning is embedded into the curriculum, and that it starts as early as possible. That is why My Education is an exciting new way; it is a new model about going about career planning. It has been well thought through, it has been backed up by evidence, both at the state level and internationally. I am embracing this with great enthusiasm because I believe this program can improve retention. It aligns with our policies as a Government to extend high schools from year 10 to years 11 and 12, and it aligns with our policies of creating that culture where education - notwithstanding the fact how important the 0-4 years are, but we can come to those discussions a bit later on - when it comes to the curriculum for kindergarten to grade 12, we have to create a culture of that, rather than the kindergarten to grade 10, so we can keep our kids in school longer.

CHAIR - I am not arguing with any of your aspirations, but by taking pathway planners away you have removed physical resources of people who are dedicated to that from the schools. An online program is not going to replace that, in my opinion.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is much more than an online program. Teachers are involved -

CHAIR - What teachers are involved; the teachers they now have?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is embedded in the curriculum and teachers will have -

CHAIR - But you are asking teachers, therefore, to do more.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is part of the Australian Curriculum. Pathway planning is part of the Australian Curriculum. It is important also to realise that we are not rushing into this new model. We are commencing professional learning for those teachers who will be in the classroom with grade 10 students, commencing next year.

CHAIR - Are you giving time release to do that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - My Education will be fully integrated into the education system, commencing 2017.

CHAIR - Is there going to be time release and funding to give support to those teachers to be trained?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Resources are available from the Department of Education to ensure there is the required professional development -

CHAIR - Before you commence it. Next year will you still have pathway planners, it will not start until 2017?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No. Our Guaranteeing Futures program ceases at the end of this year and the new My Education rolls out in grade 10, commencing 2015 and then through to 2017, commencing through the entire curriculum from K.

CHAIR - It is an American-based program, being tailored to Australian students?

Mr PETTIT - There has been a little bit of confusion. My Education is a Tasmanian program. We are looking worldwide at what other resources will support that. One we are looking at is an international program that will support it, but the My Education program is a Tasmanian-based program connected to the Australian Curriculum, and all our teachers will be supported. In each of the Learning Services there will be a dedicated officer for My Education.

CHAIR - In each of the Learning Services? So that is three across the state.

Mr PETTIT - Two.

CHAIR - Two across the state?

Mr PETTIT - With the new Learning Service structure. They will support schools, but schools that have teachers of year 10 will be supported, as the minister said, with resources for next year. That will start this year and we will have, through our professional learning institute, another officer there dedicated to My Education, to support the ongoing learning both face to face and online.

CHAIR - One in each teaching area?

Mr PETTIT - One in the professional learning institute and one in each of the Learning Services.

CHAIR - You are talking about three people or thereabouts.

Mr PETTIT - That is correct.

CHAIR - Can I read you, minister, and I am sure other members have received them, there are dozens of them, from one of my principals:

Pathway Planners are the absolute backbone of our year 9/10 structures. The work that ours does on a weekly basis basically saves lives and it gives students with no hope a future.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

I understand what you are saying about integrating it into the curriculum but what I am saying is you could do that and still have your pathway planning officers rejigged. It finishes with saying:

We have had many ups and downs in education in the past 10 years but the demise of pathway planners and youth learning officers is the most disappointing I have been privy to.

That is from one of your principals. I have a number here and you would be probably aware of the website and the Facebook page that are asking you to take action.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am aware of some of the feedback and the committee should be aware, that the previous Labor government butchered this program - cut it by two thirds and reduced its effectiveness. We have to do things in new ways and My Education is a new model, a new way of going about things so we can improve our retention and get our students engaged and engaged with their parents from that very early age right through to grade 12 so they can have a proper pathway planning process embedded into the curriculum and the Australian curriculum.

CHAIR - Minister, it depends where you are talking about. When you are talking about lower socioeconomic communities you do not have parents engaged. You do not have the IT support for capacity. If you have a school where the parents are fully engaged and where you have a great social network I do not see the need for a pathway planner in the same way. But in the lower socioeconomic areas and in remoter areas where they do not have those opportunities there is no other opportunity to get this. People are saying, in terms of retention and wanting to do exactly what you want to do such as increasing capacity and helping students stay at school and have aspirations, you are taking that away.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There is a range of support programs that already exists for students of disadvantaged schools. In many respects the new model also complements a Launching Into Learning as it complements our child and family centres.

Ms RATTRAY - That is down here, minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is where education needs to start.

CHAIR - Absolutely, but it needs to continue. You are taking resources away.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It needs to start from birth right through - lifelong learning. Child and family centres based in areas of disadvantage around Tasmania are tremendous facilities. They are about also engaging parents which is fundamental to education. Launching Into Learning is also along those lines. Our kindergarten, 15 hours a week. Going to Prep right through, and so it is all about engaging parents right throughout the student's development. From birth right through.

CHAIR - If you could imagine how school communities and parents are shuddering at the statement you made that said 'There will be a new way of delivering education '. They have had that over the last 10 or 15 years, successive new ways of delivering education.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is a new way for pathway planning. We are introducing My Education - it is part of the Australian Curriculum, embedded into the curriculum. The research and evidence suggests that this is the best way to tackle proper pathway planning.

CHAIR - Did you consult with schools?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Based on the research I have outlined, and I have referred to a number of bodies of research -

Ms RATTRAY - I would appreciate a list of the schools that were consulted.

CHAIR - Yes, that would be a great idea.

Ms RATTRAY - Also what sort of consultation with the Guaranteeing Futures group has the minister had? We need that to know that, to understand this.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is a new way of pathway planning, embedded in the Australian Curriculum and that is important for the success of pathway planning. You mentioned Essential Learnings, and the Tasmania Tomorrow reforms, and I recognise some of the turmoil that has gone on in the education environment over the course of the last decade. This is why we do not want to rush any of these reforms. We are not rushing the My Education reforms.

Ms RATTRAY - You are starting in 2015.

CHAIR - You are, you are doing it next year.

Mr ROCKLIFF - For one grade, and then transitioning for the entire K to 12 by 2017. We are not rushing the implementation of extending high schools from year 10 to years 11 and 12. We are starting with 21 rural and regional high schools in the first four years, and going through a proper consultative, measured process so we do not have what has happened in the past, where we have rushed reform only to back down on that reform at a cost. Essential Learnings and Tasmania Tomorrow are examples of that.

Mr DEAN - It will not work unless teachers embrace it. It will not work unless it is embraced by the schools. That is the problem - you leave them out.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is why the secretary is meeting with the Australian Education Union, the Tasmanian Principals Association, and the Tasmanian Association of State Schools Organisation to provide information on My Education.

Ms RATTRAY - It is all after the event, minister. After the event.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There is going to be a Department of Education Steering Committee providing strategic oversight and decision making for implementation of My Education.

CHAIR - Minister, my question was - has there been consultation on the change, not are you giving them information about what you are going to do?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are implementing a new model for pathway planning -

CHAIR - So there has been no consultation?

Mr ROCKLIFF - and there is going to be a My Education consultation group comprised of key stakeholders for the Department of Education to consult with and provide feedback and advice on the implementation of My Education. They will include the Secretary and Deputy Secretary - Early Years and Schools, a number of organisations including the AEU, Tasmanian Association of State Schools Organisation, Tasmanian Principals Association, the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, University of Tasmania, TasTAFE, Curriculum Services, the Professional Learning Institute, Educational Performance Services, principal representatives and the general managers of learning services. The general managers of learning services will also facilitate regional consultation with principals, commencing this month. There will be a My Education Curriculum Working Group that will research, evaluate and develop resources at the direction of the Department of Education Steering Committee.

CHAIR - All before the beginning of the next school year?

Mr ROCKLIFF - From September. It will be ongoing, the Curriculum Working Group.

CHAIR - You are taking the pathway planning officers away from the beginning of next year. Even if you wanted to introduce a new program and start it from the beginning, how does that work if you start it in year 1 next year? You are taking away the resources at the top end, while you work it up year by year.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are only doing year 10, commencing next year in line with the current year 10, and then we are rolling it out throughout the entire curriculum, commencing in 2017, in a measured and sensible way.

CHAIR - Minister, you have also released an e-strategy. I believe the Department of Education has just released an e-strategy?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is still in draft.

CHAIR - Okay, because you have also announced in this Budget that you will cut IT support to schools. One of my schools is saying, 'I found out yesterday that IT support will be cut from 1.8 people to 0.6 and this will start to happen in a couple of weeks'. How do you see the withdrawal of both ICT support and the Guaranteeing Futures program is consistent with making sure that students of the greatest need are supported most? If you are decreasing IT support, and I believe the move is to encourage students to bring their own device, outlined in the new strategy to schools, with diminishing IT support, how is that going to happen? Some of these schools are not ever going to have children being able to bring their own devices to school.

Mr DEAN - My area won't.

Mr ROCKLIFF - What is important is to realise that with part of the record education spend every school will receive a minimum of 5 per cent extra in their school resource package. A minimum of 5 per cent and based on the Fairer Funding model.

CHAIR - That is Gonski money, isn't it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

CHAIR - So it is not state money? Or it is state money?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is state money. Gonski is a combination of state and federal.

Mr VALENTINE - Is that funding in this line item, the Gonski?

CHAIR - Yes, the 5 per cent is included in that isn't it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, it is included. Based on the Fairer Funding model that is based on need and disadvantage and location to ensure that schools, particularly those with disadvantage, are well catered for. One thing that is very exciting - all schools receiving a minimum 5 per cent increase in the school resources package. With respect to IT no schools will be disadvantaged as a result of this measure because IT is moving quickly. Schools will still have access to on-ground support. They will also have a robust help desk arrangement and that is the other way now that you address IT issues.

CHAIR - Who is going to do it in schools? Are you going to rely on teachers because we have children and schools that -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Schools will still have access to on-ground IT support.

CHAIR - One of my other principals says:

Perhaps one of the most confusing things is the effective cut to IT support in schools. This is badged as restructure efficiencies but we principals believe that less on the ground support for IT will mean that we will need to spend our small increase of the 5 per cent of Gonski on employing IT staff.

That is cost-shifting from one area to the other.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We all know that information technology and how you address issues that come up through IT network, are rapidly changing and these issues can be addressed through enhanced help desk facilities. Every single school will also have access to on-the-ground support.

Mr PETTIT - To clarify the IT, we have not settled on a position yet so I am not sure how a principal said they are going to lose.

CHAIR - They are obviously fearful, so you have been doing something.

Mr PETIT - We have had some discussion but we have not had that depth of discussion.

CHAIR - That is not true. My principal is saying that she has been told her IT support will be cut from 1.8 to -.

Mr PETIT - We have not finalised that so she may have had that discussion elsewhere but nothing has been finalised to that point.

CHAIR - She says it is happening in a couple of weeks so one presumes it is happening.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr DEAN - Bad information or something?

Mr PETIT - Maybe it is misinformation being heard. At the time of this discussion we had around the e-strategy was, how could we support schools in this way. As the minister said IT will be a very important part of where we go in the future. There will still be at least a 100 FTE in support in the system in IT; that is guaranteed.

Mr VALENTINE - What is the level now? Is it the same as the level now?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is slightly more than that but it varies day-to-day because of different things like the schools themselves already buy in numbers of people. Schools are already doing some of this stuff if they see a need. It is often related to what is happening in a school at the time and it can change when either principals or teachers leave - it can be raised or lowered.

Under the new IT process, there will still be on-the-ground support, and there will be an improved help desk. The strategy is to assist every school to find a mechanism and a device that suits their needs, and they will be supported through this process.

CHAIR - Are you talking about families having to provide their own devices?

Mr PETTIT - No.

CHAIR - The schools are still going to provide them?

Mr PETTIT - Schools will always be funded to provide any resource they deem is important.

CHAIR - From their school package? Or is this special funding?

Mr PETTIT - Normal funding for schools.

CHAIR - So the school has to fund it out of its standard funding package?

Mr PETTIT - It has always been in the funding package. In terms of bringing your own devices, students have a whole range of devices they prefer to use and we are happy to try to accommodate that, providing the platforms can be supported, not the device itself.

CHAIR - That would vary hugely across socioeconomic groups, and across the suburbs and schools.

Mr PETTIT - Even in low socioeconomic areas, we are seeing large numbers of students with devices we do not provide at school. If we can accommodate them to use those, we will certainly do so, providing the device can deliver the platform that schools need to make their teaching work.

CHAIR - My original question was, minister - have you considered other ways of cutting the education budget, rather than getting rid of pathway planners?

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr ROCKLIFF - I believe this is the right way to go. A pathway planning model embedded in the curriculum, based on the Australian Curriculum from kindergarten to grade 12, is the best way to go.

CHAIR - You have not consulted with schools or school communities on this - it has been a decision based on research?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Based on research at the state level and the latest international research. I have tabled the references to that research. I am very mindful of how important it is to take a very measured and considered approach to implementing the new My Education model. That is why we have teacher focus groups and student focus groups, a parent consultation group, and an industry and community focus group. I have mentioned the My Education curriculum working group that will be led by the department.

CHAIR - Will you commit to monitoring this program and evaluating it at the end of next year and at the end of the following year to see how it has affected student retention rates?

Mr PETTIT - That is a very good question. Of course I will, because it is important that we keep evaluating. The evaluation that was done on Guaranteeing Futures said, back in 2007, that you need to have more than three years if you are serious about creating a proper pathway planning model. After that report, the Government decided, in their wisdom, to cut two-thirds of that program out, reducing the effectiveness of the Guaranteeing Futures model.

Ms RATTRAY - Minister, you acknowledged that program was doing a good job and I have a quote here - 'It does a fantastic job'.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Absolutely, that is right.

Ms RATTRAY - Well, what are we changing it for?

Mr ROCKLIFF - And I have acknowledged that in the brochure. I thanked the Guaranteeing Futures team for the work they have done -

CHAIR - But we do not need you anymore. There is a better way of doing it now.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have never, ever put it that way because -

Ms RATTRAY - That is certainly how they feel.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I know how passionate they are. I have heard many stories of good experiences with pathway planners and their relationships with their students, but we need to have a more effective model. In discussions with colleges and the like, half the students who go through pathway planning and the year 10 model that currently exists - and I say again grade 10 is too late to start this. More than half have changed their pathway by Easter 2011. Cutting years 8 and 9 has reduced its effectiveness and the evidence and research would suggest putting it all over, from kindergarten to year 12, is the best way to go.

Mr VALENTINE - Is it not better to bring the school community, the teaching community and the unions, with you in a change like this rather than trying to impose it? Is that not what brought ELs undone? It would seem that would be a better way to go.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is why we have a very good process. We are implementing now the consultation and how we are rolling out My Education. I am aware of some of the good aspects of Essential Learnings - my sister is a teacher in Launceston.

CHAIR - It came unstuck because of lack of professional learning, lack of consultation and preparation. I want to put a scenario to you, minister - and I am talking about one of the high schools in my area. They are losing pathway planners, their IT support has been cut, so they believe, and you are saying teachers are going to have a pay pause and pay freeze after that. You are losing pathway planners. We are going to introduce a new program at the beginning of next year which, regardless of whether you think that is a long time preparation or not, I can assure you most people on the ground do not think it is - if you are telling them now and it is going to be effective as from the beginning of next year - and you are saying to them, 'All is well, because you are getting a 5 per cent increase'.

The specialist literacy and numeracy teachers you have put across the system is a fantastic idea but do you realise where they have come from? They are the best literacy and numeracy teachers you have in schools and this same high school has lost its best literacy teacher. That is fantastic in one way but in another way the effect on the school is that you have lost your best literacy teacher, and they have lost half their ICT support and are losing their pathway planners at the beginning of next year. You are saying to them, 'All is fantastic because we are spending more on education and you're getting a 5 per cent increase'. It sounds a bit hollow, I have to tell you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is not hollow at all, and I would not put it in that context. I am not saying all is well. Our principals and educators work in very challenging environments every single day and that is not lost on me. I have visited a number of schools since becoming Education minister six months ago and never before has there been such investment in education in Tasmania.

I am pleased that since I became Education minister we are talking as a community more about education. Yesterday the discussion paper I released on the review of the Education Act has sparked some discussion and interest about education, our literacy and numeracy investment. I recognise the feedback, that it was implemented in term 3 of this year and caused some issues for some schools. Every single forum I am in front of - principals' forum and when I visit schools - I acknowledge that. It is good news to have specialist literacy and numeracy additional resources in our schools for those students who value that more intensive support. It is not just about the one-on-one or in small groups with the students, it is also about those specialist teachers imparting their knowledge to other teachers. That is part of the program. The 25 specialist literacy and numeracy teachers will start working with students in term 3 in years 6 and 8 and that will transition through to years 7 and 9 to ensure continuity.

The NAPLAN measures highlight the fact that Tasmania is below the national average in 20 measures in years 7 and 9. There has to be some intervention. This is why we are investing in those areas. Investing in literacy and numeracy - that additional support where it is most needed. I hope, with the investments in Launching into Learning, and the child and family centres, we are going to start to see some improved results in years 4 and 5, which is where we have some indications that students drop off.

Mr VALENTINE - Aren't you talking about bringing children into schools at age 3? Isn't that only going to exacerbate the situation, where you have greater numbers of children in schools, and therefore you need greater resources. How is that going to work? If you are trying to cut \$140 million over four years -

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, we are investing more money in education and we are investing in the right areas. I do not accept the characterisation that what we are doing in education is somehow not a good thing. Never before in the history of any Tasmanian government has \$1.4 billion been spent on education. This is a good thing. Literacy and numeracy specialists in our schools. It is a great thing. Child health and youth health nurses in our schools is a good thing.

Extension to years 11 and 12 and the \$45.5 million investment extending high schools is a good thing.

CHAIR - In some cases it is an absolute nonsense. My high schools have a college five minutes away. Why would you want to put years 11 and 12 on top of that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Once again, this is a decade long reform.

CHAIR - I can see the point in some areas, but to say we will do this across the system -

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is not about rushing. It is about learning from the mistakes of the past, and ensuring that we take a measured approach to this. Twenty-one rural and regional high schools around Tasmania is the first stage of that program - the first four years. This is all about getting more students into the system - more people in education. It is not about taking away from colleges. Colleges are crucial to implementing these reforms.

Mr VALENTINE - Going back to my point about 3-year olds going to school - can you expand a little bit on that? When I heard that this morning, I thought to myself, how can bringing children into school at such an early age not but exacerbate the problems of resources and teaching workforce, and all those sorts of things? As well as the impact on childcare organisations - fewer of those would be required. There would be redundancies in that area, so there would be more people on the dole. How does that work? I would be interested to hear you talk about that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is what the discussion paper is all about. I want you to talk about it as well, and every single person around this table. I want every single member of the Tasmania community to talk about this review of the Education Act. At the moment we have the oldest starting age in Australia. I think the youngest is NSW at four years and five months going to kindergarten. The options we are presenting are four years and six months, or four years and eight months. So really it is a matter of six months difference at the most.

There will be a spike in the need for resources as that first year goes through, but we should not be afraid to spend resources in this area, if the discussion paper and the community consultation comes back, and the recommendations come back that it is the right way to go.

Mr VALENTINE - You have still to achieve \$148 million in cuts over four years. That is what I cannot understand. How you can get the cuts but at the same time bring more students into the fold, so to speak, and work with the same amount of resources?

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr ROCKLIFF - Once again, it is important that we have the discussion paper for consultation which will be ongoing to the end of this year.

Mr VALENTINE - So it is not set in stone at this point?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Nothing is set in stone. The way the discussion is framed is -

Ms RATTRAY - But we have to do it differently from what we have done the Guaranteeing Future program?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have provided some information on the Education Act which is 20 years old and we need to have a modern legal framework for our education system. It poses questions for the community to think about across a range of areas. For example - the guiding principles for education, parents committing to education partnerships, should school associations have a stronger role in the school communities. It talks about safe schools, enrolment, including starting and leaving age, attendance and participation, government school operations, non-government schools and home education. At the end, anything else you want to feed into the discussion, the opportunity is there for you to do so.

Rob, I do not envisage that we will be bringing legislation to the Parliament before the end of 2016. There is plenty of time to have a community discussion about this. If the legislation went through the Parliament and we lowered the compulsory starting age to four years and six months that reform would not officially start until around 2020.

Mr VALENTINE - I thought it was age three you were looking at.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No.

Mr VALENTINE - That is what was quoted in the media.

CHAIR - You cannot believe everything you hear in the media.

Mr VALENTINE - No, but they have to get it from somewhere. They did not get it from me, I can tell you that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - If you have discussions around kinder then generally, by default, people will be engaged in the process at an earlier age, whether that is Launching into Learning and kinder and moving in to prep, grade one, et cetera. But the reforms would not start until 2020. So it gives parents who have a child in 2016 plenty of time to plan the start.

CHAIR - Why on earth did you not do that kind of consultation and forward thinking with the changes you are bringing in next year? I will not ask you again because you will give the same answer.

Mrs ARMITAGE - There are some thoughts that experts warn starting school too young harms learning and wellbeing, and children should not start proper full schooling until they are seven.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That may be a New South Wales principals' report I saw the other day and that is not the position of the New South Wales Government.

Mrs ARMITAGE - This was not New South Wales.

CHAIR - Minister, if I could ask you one more question. This is about the Youth Connections Program. Again, it is from a principal in my area saying we are devastated that the funding for the Youth Connection Program is cut from the end of the year. This is run in all our Wellington-aligned schools and a worker from Colony 47 who works with children in years 5 and 6 who are at risk of disengaging from school. Over the last four years this program has supported and helped a number of our most vulnerable children with very complex circumstances, and it goes on. Is it correct that this is being cut?

Mr ROCKLIFF - My understanding is that it is a Commonwealth Government-funded initiative.

CHAIR - So it is Commonwealth funding and it is being stopped by the Commonwealth, is it? Thank you. I will take that question back from you.

Ms RATTRAY - I am interested in how the Guaranteeing Futures staff are going to be redeployed within the public service and also how much, by the axing of the Guaranteeing Futures program, the pathway planners. How much is the department going to save by axing that program?

Mr ROCKLIFF - As I said yesterday, \$3.5 million next year.

Ms RATTRAY - I was not here yesterday.

CHAIR - You were in a different place and we haven't had time to get it on *Hansard* - you are going to save \$3.5 million?

Ms RATTRAY - Per annum?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Ms RATTRAY - What about those staff? What happens with those?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Some people will be permanent and redeployed within the department.

Mr PETTIT - We have been meeting with the pathway planners since the announcement and we will continue to meet with them. We have put a range of supports in for them.

As the minister said, permanent officers will have the opportunity to move into other permanent positions that become vacant.

Ms RATTRAY - Am I right to say that there are around 50 pathway planners?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There are around 44 FTEs. We will work through where the positions will be redeployed.

Ms RATTRAY - If you are redeploying 44 of 50, how can you save \$3.5 million?

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr ROCKLIFF - Some will be on contracts and there will be vacancy control.

Ms RATTRAY - I wasn't top of the class in maths but that doesn't add up.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Vacancy control, workplace renewal incentive program; there is another tool to be utilised - redeployment options.

Ms RATTRAY - Redeployment within the education system, is that what we are talking about? So how do you save \$3.5 million if you have to find them other work if they are permanent staff? How do you do that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - People leave the department all the time for various reasons and people then replace those positions from Guaranteeing Futures. That is how it will be.

CHAIR - It is a similar situation we were talking about earlier in a committee that you have a science and maths teacher and a job somewhere else, and a pathway planner needs a job, well, there we go.

Ms RATTRAY - Minister, you said that over the next two years, if you are going to implement the new program and you will have a teacher's job ready, how much is that training going to cost the department over those next two years to have everyone ready? I read that my eight-year-old granddaughter who wants to become a princess will have an opportunity to be a princess because her teacher will be trained. That is what she wants to be - a princess. I am trying to make it realistic about what she expects as an eight-year-old.

Mr ROCKLIFF - With all due respect, it is not a very good way of putting that and that is quite dismissive.

Ms RATTRAY - No, it is real because you are telling me that they will be ready.

Mr ROCKLIFF - My five-year-old too has various aspirations and they will change throughout. That is why we need to start this conversation with our children at this young age from kindergarten right through to grade 12.

Ms RATTRAY - How will the teachers be job-ready by 2017 to be the new pathway planners or whatever their new role is -

CHAIR - Or 2016, the beginning of next year for year 10s.

Ms RATTRAY - Yes, how will they be job-ready and how much will that cost to have all those 6 000 teachers job-ready?

CHAIR - And what will the program cost?

Ms RATTRAY - We have just saved \$3.5 million so I am trying to work out how we are going to get this.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The professional learning and development will all be done within departmental resources.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr PETTIT - To clarify, in the first year there will only be teachers from schools who had year 10 students so there won't be the whole 6 000.

Ms RATTRAY - No, I understand that but you want the program implemented by 2017- and we have about 6 000 teachers, give or take?

Mr PETTIT - Not quite that many.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Just under that.

Ms RATTRAY - Okay, just under - we have around that - so how do we get those teachers job-ready and how much is it going to cost?

CHAIR - And how much does the new online curriculum cost?

Mr PETTIT - This is not different from last year when we ran out through the national curriculum a new element of history, for example. It is no different. We work with our schools, we provide them with pupil-free days where they can get together and work through new initiatives and this would be -

[3.45 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY - Okay, so we are going to have more days off; we are going to have more education training days.

Mr PETTIT - No, this is normal practice in schools. As we roll-out any new initiative, we use those days to work with our staff so that they are trained up. On top of that there are opportunities through the Professional Learning Institute and other alternatives which schools themselves seek out to find training. This is normal practice that when you roll-out a new curriculum, for example, a new element of the curriculum, we build in a practice all the way through.

Ms RATTRAY - Okay, so there will be no additional costs to the department to implement that new program next year and the year after other than what you normally do in your every-year functions of education, personal development and the like.

Mr PETTIT - For the most part that would be true, but I'm not sure exactly; sometimes we may have to, as we have in the past, present a particular course element and that then does come at a cost. This program may throw that up, and if it does, we will have find it within resource, which is normal practice with our supporting our schools to use the curriculum as well as they can in their classrooms. That is not only at the school level but through the Professional Learning Institute.

Ms RATTRAY - Minister, you are confident that there will be no impact on the budget in this current Budget and forward Budget with implementing this new program?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am confident.

Ms RATTRAY - At this stage I will leave my questions until the next item.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr K. FINCH - I cannot help but think you are going to have a hell of a problem selling this idea of your career planning program through the system.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is why we have an approach for consultation. It will be well thought through and that is why it is being rolled out over the next two years rather the whole curriculum being rushed.

Mr K. FINCH - Having been part of the process with the teachers and the way they have been treated by the previous government, and their attempts at revitalisation of the education industry through various aspects, the teachers' heads must be spinning. They have been spinning for years and now to have this negative - it seems to me, and you must get a sense of that. I am not portraying it as a negative, I am saying you just get feeling from what we are hearing here that it's going to be a negative for you to sell.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Any change is challenging, Mr Finch, and changes are happening all the time. Sometimes change is difficult and confronting but I am prepared as a minister to make the changes that I believe are necessary to give our kids the best possible future.

Mr K. FINCH - I will hone in on two things. I want to drill down again on the 50 pathway planners and their welfare as people in the system who are now - not uncertain, they know they are cactus. How are they going to be dealt with, and how many of the 50, 44 I think you might have said, are going have some sort of secure operation within the education system from next year?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The exact number is yet to be determined, Mr Finch, but there are programs in place with the Education department which have shown initiative to assist with the transition.

Mr A. FINCH - In these situations we work with everyone on a case-by-case basis. Wherever possible we aim to find alternative placements for people. It is what we were referring to before, in the earlier question about redeploying people: we look at putting people into existing funded positions, for example, some of those positions in frontline services. We have a number of positions in school offices and within corporate services supporting schools that we can move people into. We work with everyone on a case-by-case basis to try to get the best outcome for everyone. We have actually taken one of our manager's offline to help us with this so that she is able to support people and provide a case-by-case approach. We also work across government through vacancy control mechanisms to look at opportunities that may arise right across government. We try to get people into alternative positions as quickly as possible.

Mr K. FINCH - Minister, with their skills as pathway planners, I would have thought they would have been excited about the prospects that you detail here through My Education because they are pathway planners. You are talking about pathway planning right through the system, so surely they have the skills that can be scooped up and utilised in your vision?

Ms RATTRAY - Some of them are not teachers; some of them do not have teacher qualifications.

CHAIR - And we are going to do it online instead.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr ROCKLIFF - All permanent staff will have permanent positions. Some may come back to the classroom and be involved in the permanent teaching staff, involved in the new My Education model.

Mr K. FINCH - If I could make a point from some investigation that I did on pathway planners. Someone who was involved in Beacon, which I want to move onto in a moment, because that is part of the transition program, her suggestion was that teachers will never be suitable for pathway planning as most of them go from uni to teaching with no experience in industry.

Mr DEAN - They have never left school.

Mr K. FINCH - They have never left school. This was a highlighting of the pathway planners importance and the role they play, and that Beacon plays. I see you have an allocation going to Beacon. My concerns - the pathway planners is one concern - the other is for students who might not be picked up in your transition process, who might normally have that guidance. I agree with you that year 10 is too late to start. It should have been the 8, 9, 10 program. I do not know about the whole of school for pathway planning, but the 8, 9, 10 would be the preferred model. I am wondering if you could tell me about the students. Are they going to be at the top of the consideration regarding this changeover and are we going to see some kids lose out on the opportunity, with the Beacon Foundation work at Brooks High School for example, in their progression to keep them off the dole.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Students are at the centre of every decision we make. That is why we are here. That is why we are sitting around this table talking so passionately about education. It is all about the students.

Mr FINCH - Sorry, the fullness of my question was about the Beacon Foundation and the extra support they are being given and what that money will enable them to do in the scheme of things as far as your pathway planning is now concerned?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Beacon Foundation is a great model and engages with school communities and has been doing so for many years now. The extra funding will enable them to add value to what they already do. They have great relationships with school communities, including Brooks and other schools across Tasmania. As a result of the funding, 12 extra schools will be involved in the program, which is very positive. Beacon has a very good name and it does an excellent job. I went to a function recently, a promotion they had for Beacon. It is about supporting them and making sure they can spread their wings at other schools.

Mr FINCH - To pick up those kids, to make sure they have transition into jobs. That was mainly about the link up with industry, but the pathway planners help them with going on to colleges and universities, and those sorts of things, which is where the change is going to be with the My Education extending high schools through to 11 and 12.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Could I get some figures on truancy and some comparisons over the last couple of years?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, it has gone down slightly.

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Mrs ARMITAGE - Do you have a breakdown of class or school? It would be important to see the different truancy in different schools. Do you do that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There is a new program - an educational tool called EDI.

Mrs ARMITAGE - I am aware of EDI.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Are you aware of EDI? I encourage you to have a briefing on EDI, which is a tremendous tool for principals to use. It enables a student to be monitored - their attendance rates right throughout their school career, irrespective of which government school they go to. It has been implemented and rolled out in the last 12 months or so.

Mrs ARMITAGE - If the Government has access to EDI, they could see which schools have -more trancies?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, but there are privacy issues around those sorts of things.

Mrs ARMITAGE - I appreciate that, but for public schools I assume that the education department would check. If one school is having a lot more truancy in particular classes than others it would have to raise a flag. You do check that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, and an example of the implementation of EDI is a parent who was having some challenges in the home environment. Her child was absent from school for a considerable period of time and she did not realise until the principal sat down and explained exactly how many days. The parent got very emotional and my understanding is that child has not missed a day of school since, as a result of the principal being able to use than tool and engage the parent and provide the evidence to the parent.

Mrs ARMITAGE - EDI stands for, just for *Hansard*.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Education Information.

Mrs ARMITAGE - If you could give the figures that would be lovely.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The summary of attendance rates data - 2010-13 average daily attendance rates by selected characteristics. Totals.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Or even the percentage. Whether it has gone up or down, so the trends really.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Average daily absence rate, proportion of students that are absent, in 2010, 8.69 per cent; 2011, 9.47 per cent; 2012, 9.81 per cent; and 2013, 9.31 per cent.

Mrs ARMITAGE - So it is not trending down.

CHAIR - What classes are we talking about? Are we talking about overall?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is overall figures.

CHAIR - You would have it for, say, years 8, 9 and 10.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Do you have a break down for class?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We can get that information for you.

CHAIR - Can we have that on notice please?

Mrs ARMITAGE - I am happy if you table that.

CHAIR - I would like 8, 9 and 10. Do you want more than 8, 9 and 10?

Mrs ARMITAGE - I think high school would be good. Probably 6 to 10 or 6 to 12 if you have it, because that is a question I have coming up later about years 10 and 12. So, 6 to 10 if you can and I will bring the other questions up later with retention.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Do you want that on notice.

Mr PETTIT - This is attendance and absence rates right through.

CHAIR - You've got that now?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Average daily attendance rates by student year level we have. I will just go -

Mrs ARMITAGE - Just the last three years.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The last three years - grade 8 is 88.1 per cent attendance rate. Grade 9 is 86.5 percent. Grade 10 is 84.2. The highest of all those years, 2013, was grade 4, which is fairly consistent across the years.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Grade 4?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Grade 4. The best attenders at school.

CHAIR - What is the percentage there?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is 93 per cent.

Mrs ARMITAGE - They are very keen in junior school.

CHAIR - That's right. When you say 8 per cent across the board, there is a big difference between primary school and secondary school.

Ms RATTRAY - It is probably when they realise they can't be a princess, I reckon.

CHAIR - If you say 90 per cent attendance, that means they miss one day a fortnight. Well it is 10 per cent, so over 10 days you miss one. Lower rates than that you are looking at more days absent.

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Mr DEAN - Absenteeism is not the same as truancy, so I want to get away from that. I am quoting from a document I have on the impact of non-attendance over time. The implications of regular absenteeism are startling. You raised what absenteeism can amount to in a school so I want to know whether the Education department tracks absenteeism as opposed to truancy, suspensions and those other things?

This is where the kid has a day off every week, or two days off every month. If a child has one day per week it probably adds up to about 451 days in their school career, which is a tremendous amount of time lost at school. Is absenteeism addressed in the Education department?

CHAIR - Those figures are for absenteeism, are they not?

Mr PETTIT - No, the 93 per cent for year 4 was attendance.

CHAIR - So 7 per cent absenteeism. It is not related to truancy or any particular

Mr PETTIT - That is correct. Absenteeism predominantly is around sickness. It is not necessarily around - it can be around a whole range of things.

Mr DEAN - It can be sickness or a parent keeping them home for whatever reason. It could be that each week they go off for whatever reason.

Mr PETTIT - That is true, but I want to be clear that absentees are not always truants. It is predominantly around illness and other factors where families need to take their children out of school for a range of reasons. Truancy is very low in comparison to the absentee rate.

As to your question about monitoring, the minister has already offered for the committee to have a look at EDI at some time. You will see it is the most contemporary tool to monitor students in every way, particularly their attendance and absenteeism. It is very visual and clear for principals and teachers to see up-to-date information on every student. We are starting to track students in a much more refined way than we have in the past. I would urge you to take the opportunity to have a look at EDI to see how powerful it can be in addressing the issue you have raised.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It was developed in Tasmania with the Department of Education and is now being sought after elsewhere.

Mr PETTIT - Absolutely. We have two states that are keen to look at it.

Mr DEAN - In the future will we be keeping those figures? I will quote from this document: 'Chronic absenteeism means missing 10 per cent of school year for any reason'. I would be interested in the number of students who fit into that category in this state, and I suspect it would be many.

CHAIR - If we have 83 per cent attendance in grade 10 that is almost a day a week.

Mr PETTIT - EDI tracks every student for every teacher and every principal on a daily basis, 12-hour data. It can be tracked to that level. As to the example the minister gave, schools are now using this tool to bring parents in to say, 'Do you know this is what is happening to your child?' and it is making an enormous difference in a range of areas.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It can also track students' results and NAPLAN results. If there is an issue that is highlighted as to a dip in performance, it can match that up with other data. It might be around attendance or non-attendance, as the case may be, and a picture is formed.

CHAIR - I would like to have a look sometime.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The invitation is there and we will make it happen.

Mr DEAN - Where a child reports in sick on a very regular basis and there are some who do that - I am aware of one who does it - is there any checking at all done by the department? Are you able to see whether that is right or whether it is simply the kid taking a day off school?

Mr PETTIT - Every school has an obligation to monitor the absentee rates of all students, starting with the teachers. But now, with this tool, we have it so that on a daily basis it will throw up alerts on particular children. Schools can monitor that, and do, and we are hearing some good feedback from principals who are monitoring that in a positive way. The short answer is yes.

CHAIR - There are lots of schools now that, every day, if a student is missing, contact to see what the reason is, they try to follow up every day on every child who is unaccounted for.

Mr DEAN - There was a headline yesterday in *The Examiner* newspaper, minister, 'Distraught parents say system failing their children - Bullied kids opt for online'. The article said:

Distraught parents of bullied children are removing them from mainstream schools and turning to alternative education.

They claim the system is failing their kids.

The government's Tasmanian eSchool, which offers live, online classroom learning from kindergarten to year 10, is experiencing a rise in enrolments due to 'medical reasons'.

I don't know if it is many parent or not, but it is saying that bullied kids opt for online education. It would seem there is a number of parents concerned about their kids and bullying in schools and they take them out of school for that reason. Is that an issue? Are the numbers high, and whereabouts?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will ask Mr Pettit to address the question around the online area. But of course the department and I as minister take bullying in schools extremely seriously. The Respectful Schools framework is very much now embedded in our schools. It is doing an excellent job in the initiatives around that Respectful Schools. The department, on its own initiative, invited Professor Donna Cross from Western Australia down earlier this year. She had a number of forums right across Tasmania about bullying and cyberbullying in particular, and a lot of parents and educators, and students no doubt, turned up to those forums. It has engaged 1 500 people across the state when Professor Cross was here for that short time.

As minister I have the privilege of giving an award every year. The previous minister had an award for Thinking Globally, Acting Locally, you would remember. My award this year and for future years will be the Respectful Student Award, in line with how important your question is.

The Respectful Student Award will be presented this year for the first time. We present it to the student completing their final year at school, and the successful student should demonstrate positive and effective interactions with others in their environment on the basis of responsibility, integrity and accountability to an outstanding degree. Some of the criteria are shows respect for self, adopts high personal standards, shows resilience in the face of challenge, behaves ethically and demonstrates a high standard of positive behaviour, shows respect for others, embraces diversity in others, is compassionate, builds positive relationships, cooperates and collaborates, shows respect for the school vision and environment, and contributes to a safe and inclusive learning and working environment, encourages a positive school culture, cares for the physical environment, and models agreed rights and responsibilities. I hope that would also play an important part on top of the Respectful Schools initiative to encouraging people to be mindful of inclusiveness and embracing diversity, and caring for others, to stop that bullying behaviour.

Mr DEAN - Do we have any record of the numbers that have been taken out of schools for this reason?

CHAIR - Going into eSchool. Have eSchool enrolments increased?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Tasmanian eSchool enrolments by attendance, 2011-14. In 2011 - and these are full-time and part-time students presented in FTE, so 221 students in 2011, 197.2 FTEs; 261 students in 2012 which is 233.2 FTEs; 2013 - 187 students which equates to 178.4 FTEs; 2014 - 216 students, so an increase from the previous year but not as high as 2012, which equates to 199.5 FTEs.

Mr PETTIT - These numbers are total student enrolments in February and they are not only students who have fronted with a supposed problem. They could be travellers, people who have taken their children away overseas, or interstate. So these numbers are fairly consistent year to year. They do shift a little bit depending upon the number who come and go, particularly travelling students.

In terms of the bullying article, while it was a bit disappointing it was listed in that way the department does not tolerate bullying. We have a very strong program called Respectful Schools, Respectful Behaviour and I am pleased the minister has now supported that with his award. We have advised schools that they need to work on making sure there is zero tolerance, and every school actively works on that, but bullying occurs right across society and we need to work together.

There are alternative programs to support children who may feel they are being bullied. One of them is the eSchool and we are very proud that we are able to support children in times of difficulty, but we do have a zero tolerance policy in all our schools. It does not mean that it does not happen; it means we have to act on it when it does.

Mr DEAN - Pretty loosely used words today.

Mr PETTIT - Absolutely.

Mr DEAN - Minister, last year we were told that cyber bullying data was not retained within the Department of Education. Is it now being recorded?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No.

Mr DEAN - Why not? It seems to be a major issue. We read a lot about it, and you mentioned it yourself earlier today. Why aren't those records being kept?

Mr PETTIT - Most cyber bullying occurs well outside of school time and it would be very difficult to quantify whether it is a school issue or a societal issue. Where we find incidents, we act on them immediately.

I will give you an example where a school was informed of cyber bullying after hours. The school was terrific. It acted really promptly with the parents involved and cleaned up the issue very well. So schools act responsibly in this area. Cyber bullying is a problem for society that we all need to address and our schools play an important role in that. Equally, so does the rest of society. Where we can identify it has happened at a school, then it is obviously dealt with, but by most of the activity is outside of school.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Because of the high prevalence of cyber bullying, Professor Donna Cross was brought down to Tasmania. In many respects it can be the worst form of bullying because the Facebook message and the text are there forever. I have seen, even within my own family, how upsetting it can be for young kids. It is an issue we are always going to be actively addressing.

Mr DEAN - So cyber bullying in schools is not recorded? If there is a case of cyber bullying in a school there is no record kept?

[4.15 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is correct. 'No' is the answer. We are mindful of your question and we will have a look at it.

Mr DEAN - I was going to take the matter up, and I know we had the evidence in a committee but it is not part of this: it is the science and maths teachers and whether there is a shortage within the department of those teachers? Will the continuing of years 11 and 12 at some of the other schools next year create the need for more teachers across the whole? Will there be more teachers employed to be able to accommodate those years 11 and 12?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The idea of the investment is to employ more teachers, yes. In fact, over the next four years, years 11 and 12 in 21 high schools rolls out and we expect another 105 teachers. That is part of the Budget, the \$45.5 million.

Mr DEAN - That is 105 more, when, sorry?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Over the next four years.

CHAIR - That is in the extra years 11 and 12.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am mindful of what you are saying. I think there is a national shortage of maths and science teachers and this is why workforce development is so important and why the department is always very active in this space.

CHAIR - I don't want to go into that much more if we can help it because, as you say, we have discussed this in other places.

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Mr DEAN - It is here with the minister that I needed to raise it.

CHAIR - I am happy that you have raised it but the point is, is there a question that he can answer, yes, no or - ?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There are initiatives at an Australian Government level -

Mr DEAN - That was my next question - what are we doing?

Mr ROCKLIFF - to encourage people to start teaching or getting people into the system a lot quicker. The program escapes me. It is working with the University of Tasmania on some initiatives to try to address the issue.

Mr DEAN - There has been a lot of concern and it is being raised in the media as well that there are many teachers within our state who are currently seen to be teaching outside of their comfort areas, outside of areas they have been properly trained in, trying to teach in areas where the schools are requiring them to teach when they are not qualified to teach in those areas. Is that being addressed? Is this whole thing addressing that? What is happening with the university? I understand there is discussion with the university in relation to this so, minister, are you able to expand on that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am aware that there is an issue with the physical education teachers and crossing over with maths and science and issues associated with that. I am very mindful of that.

Mr PETTIT - We are working with the university to find a program that I am sure will be announced shortly around workforce development, particularly addressing the shortfall in maths and science. We are very close to having that partnership arranged with the university. Once that is done, we can announce that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is very positive that the University of Tasmania and the Department of Education are working very closely together; it is an excellent initiative from the department.

Mr VALENTINE - We've just had the briefing on it.

CHAIR - I know that, we have had this discussion. Mr Dean wants to make sure that the minister is aware of this as well and he obviously is.

Mr DEAN - I wanted to know where we are going and so that it is on *Hansard*.

Mr VALENTINE - Can I just ask a question with regard to this line item? Funding to non-government schools - is this part of the Grants and Financial Assistance, not under this line item? Thank you, that is fine.

CHAIR - We will deal with that later when we get to Grants.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I was nodding because you were going to ask me a question, sorry. The funding for non-government schools increased by -

Mr VALENTINE - I just wanted to know if it was under this line item or under Grants and Assistance.

CHAIR - We have the figures.

Mr DEAN - What is the cost today of educating a kid - I don't know how it is done - from year 1 to year 12, or from prep-kindergarten through to year 12, in this state and in comparison with the other states? A student, I should say, not a kid.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Per capita expenditure rates for Australian Government schools and the primary, per student - 2011-12 figures for primary is \$13 734.

Mr DEAN - That is in a primary school?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is the Australian average, \$13 734; Tasmanian Government schools, \$14 654.

Mr DEAN - We are above the average in some primary schools? What about the high school years? Do we have any figures?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Average in secondary school is \$16 965 Australian average for 2011-12 and secondary is \$16 989, so marginally above that.

Mr DEAN - And year 11 and 12, do we have those years?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Secondary includes 11 and 12.

CHAIR - They are the latest figures we have? Year 11 and 12?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr DEAN - So I will make that comparison again next year.

CHAIR - I am not trying to stop you asking questions but I am trying to limit comments so that we can move on from item 1. Do you have any more questions on this line item?

Ms RATTRAY - I have a question about year 11 and 12.

CHAIR - Which comes into Tasmanian Academy, I think, 2.1. Unless you wanted to talk about 11 and 12 extensions.

Ms RATTRAY - Into schools.

CHAIR - Yes, do it now then.

Ms RATTRAY - Minister, it has been announced that five additional teachers will be available to the schools who have taken up the year 11 and 12?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Depending on the model. We have announced six schools which will be offering 11 and 12 and in terms of the resource available, each school will have a \$10 000 cash allocation. Schools identified for phase 1 will receive an extra staffing of 1.5 FTEs minimum in the first year. It is important to know that the schools will be funded on the college model, so

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comments from St Helens High School principal, who has welcomed this initiative, is that they no longer have to scrape together resources from their years 7 to 10 allocation to fund years 11 and 12 that were based on the college model which effectively means the comparisons vary slightly.

On average, currently, per student, a student will be funded with the existing 11 and 12 programs at schools such as St Helens: between \$6 000 and \$7 000 per student and with extra allocation that will go up to between \$10 000 and \$12 000.

It is going to be funding per student to enable this transition to happen.

Ms RATTRAY - It is only on student numbers. It has nothing to do with offering that opportunity?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is based on the college model per student and additional FTEs.

Ms RATTRAY - My information tells me one school is not increasing their staffing, they are going to use their existing resources. That is acceptable as well?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I would expect that they would be getting an extra staff member.

Ms RATTRAY - But they are not obliged to employ 1.5 FTEs more in teaching resource, that is what I am asking.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I don't like forcing schools to take extra but it is definitely available and I would encourage them. The resource is there.

Ms RATTRAY - They can use existing resources within the school to offer year 11 under this new model?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I guess they could but I don't know why they would because the funding is available for them to have additional FTEs, additional resources, and additional cash allocation to ensure the transition happens.

Mr VALENTINE - You are saying it is not just teaching resources we are talking about. We are talking about physical resources like extra equipment in laboratories and the like, that might be needed to provide science at that level?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is a good question. In terms of the human resource the funding is for \$39.5 million over the course of the next four years. The capital allocation to make it up to the \$45.5 million, those \$6 million are available to those schools, so \$1.5 million per year over the next four years to grab that capital, if they need to restructure a classroom or whatever the case may be. In addition to wherever they are in the line for capital repairs and maintenance and capital development, they will get that additional also, allocations are welcome.

Mr VALENTINE - Will they get the same level of education, there, as they would, say, in a college in Launceston.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is not a one-size-fits-all model. We are not trying to replicate everything that the colleges do. It is offering a greater range of subject choice to ensure we can keep our kids in education longer in their local communities, encourage them to further education,

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so they don't drop out. It's all about improving our retention rates. The years 11-12 program will provide a sufficient subject range to allow the kids to stay at school in that 11-12 program but also what is important is the partnership and collaboration with colleges. For example in the North East, Scottsdale High School has a partnership with Launceston College to enable greater opportunities for students who want to remain in local communities, stay at school at 11-12 program, and through the use of information technology be able to have access to a classroom in Launceston.

Ms RATTRAY - Which they were already doing - year 11 and some 12 classes - this is just officiating it if you like.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is more that officiating it because there is greater allocation to make the funding model work and so schools don't have to beg borrow and steal to fund their 11-12 program but it can be funded on that college model and that resource is there specifically to offer a broader subject range to encourage the kids from 10 to 11 and 12 and increase the retention rate.

Ms RATTRAY - There is no number around that. If they get six students in an English class then that class will go ahead in a year 11?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I think Huonville High had around 35 in 11-12 engagement. It will vary from year to year, but after a decade-long reform, we would hope to have 2000 more students participating in the system.

Mr VALENTINE - Will they get the same breadth of subject cover?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I know what you are getting at and it is a sensible question but they will get the breadth of subject cover when a combination of what is offered in their local high school and those subjects will increase in range and the partnership with a college will be offered as well. Access to IT and those sorts of things, so there will be a greater range of subject choice and it is all about improving retention, which is currently at 68.4 per cent. It has increased marginally over the course of last year which is encouraging. The national average is around 76 per cent; the Australian target in 90 per cent. We can do a lot better and we need to.

CHAIR - Were you finished or did you have another question in this line up? Let's have a quick break, 10 minutes max.

The committee suspended from 4.29 to xxxx

CHAIR - We are moving on to 1.2 Learning Services, except we are not because Ms Rattray is not here. Ask your question then on 1.1, Rob.

Mr VALENTINE - With regard to the age profile of your teaching staff, where is the average age sitting? I suppose the question is: what is the likelihood of resignations in the next few years as opposed to the ability to replace people?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The workforce average age is 46.56, slightly higher than the teaching workforce of 44.74 - that is across the department.

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Mr VALENTINE - It's 44.74 for teaching staff?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, 44.74 for teaching staff and the largest percentage group of employees, the 45 to 55 age group, is 32 per cent.

Mr VALENTINE - What percentage is in the upper area leading into retirement, shall we say?

Mr ROCKLIFF - For the 55 to 64 age group, 25 per cent, a quarter.

Mr VALENTINE - Of teachers?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Total workforce across the department. The 65+ group is only 3 per cent; 15 to 24 age group, 2 per cent; 25 to 34 age group, 16 per cent; and 35 to 44, 22 per cent.

Mr VALENTINE - You don't foresee any issues with staffing over the next few years, as people are retiring the ability? Can you replace them?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I don't see that as an issue. I understand in the college workforce there is quite a senior cohort, so some renewal will naturally happen in the college system.

CHAIR - Not a bad thing if you can get the teachers, minister.

Mr VALENTINE - There is another school of thought on this, of course.

CHAIR - They tell me they are now going to be the worst paid in Australia if the pay pause comes through.

Mr VALENTINE - The other school of thought is that it is a one-off opportunity to make changes without a huge impact on teachers themselves. Like reorganisation of certain classes and things like that. I don't know whether it is something that has been considered. Someone was on radio the other day talking about it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Oh, okay.

Mr DEAN - Principal vacancies around the state, minister. Where are they at?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Across the state there are 12 principal vacancies.

CHAIR - So there are people acting in those positions.

Mr DEAN - Are they likely to be filled. Obviously you are trying to fill these positions permanently.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

1.2 Learning services.

Ms RATTRAY - Bravehearts student safety program. How will the program be delivered, minister? It's \$800 000 over four years.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Bravehearts - student safety in our primary schools.

Ms RATTRAY - Including non-government schools? Is that correct?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Just in government schools. Funding over four years will be \$800 000. It has been allocated to provide the Braveheart child safety program in primary schools. The program will focus on protecting children from sexual assault.

Ms RATTRAY - How will it be delivered?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Braveheart's key purpose is to educate, empower and protect Australian kids from sexual assault. Their vision, which is commendable, is to make Australia the safest place in the world to raise a child by 2020. To achieve that vision they depend on business and government, which is where we come in, and community support. We will ensure continued delivery of the school-based prevention programs as well as training, counselling support, and advocacy for survivors. The funding will also allow for continued research and important legislative reform.

Ms RATTRAY - How will it be delivered?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are currently developing a model.

Ms RATTRAY - So we have allocated \$200 000 for a program, and we do not know how it is going to be delivered yet?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We know the objectives of Bravehearts, and Colin will speak about the engagement.

Mr PETTIT - The Bravehearts programs are already in some of our schools. We know their program is successful. It has been taken on board by schools, so we are developing an MOU with Bravehearts so we can assist them into schools that wish to take up their programs.

Ms RATTRAY - So it will not necessarily be for all Tasmanian government schools?

Mr PETTIT - No. Bravehearts itself could not get into every school overnight so we are working with them to see how they can get into schools that wish to engage with them on this program.

Ms RATTRAY - It is a bit like the Beacon Foundation initiative. A school decides to take it up. How are we going to measure? How is the department going to measure what it is getting for its \$200 000 per year?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is part of the memorandum of understanding, which is currently being struck by Bravehearts and the Department of Education.

Mr FINCH - Do they have that in Queensland? That is where the program has come from isn't it? Bravehearts originated in Queensland. Is it in schools there?

Mr PETTIT - I am not sure where it originated but it is in schools there.

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Ms RATTRAY - In Youth Justice, the JLD Restorative Justice program, the Government has allocated \$150 000 per year for three years. I am interested in how the department uses JLD. How does the department use this particular restorative practices model?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Restorative practices is an evidence-based approach model for establishing a whole-of-school approach to respectful behaviours. Data collected in relation to restorative practices in Learning Services North has shown reduced suspension rates and fewer incidents of physical assaults. We are supporting a further implementation of the restorative practices through a three-year funding agreement with JLD Restorative Practices. It aims to assist teachers, students, parents and carers to build, maintain and restore relationships using a no-blame approach. It also helps build capacity to enable students to self-regulate behaviour and contributes to the improvement of learning outcomes. The restorative practices project was established in 2009 in Learning Services North. As a result, the suspensions in the north have reduced by 13 per cent and physical assaults have reduced by 17.75 per cent.

Ms RATTRAY - Is the \$150 000 a retainer type of payment?

Mr ROCKLIFF - What do you mean by 'retainer'?

Ms RATTRAY - Just to have the information available.

Mr PETTIT - The Restorative Justice people have been terrific to work with. With the money the Government has put into the Budget for them, they are working with us in the Professional Learning Institute and have dedicated some of that funding to supporting schools with teacher relief. It has been a very good project to get into.

Ms RATTRAY - So it is definitely not a retainer?

Mr PETTIT - No.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Professional Learning Institute is currently negotiating a three-year formal agreement with JLD for delivery of workshops. It is anticipated that 2 000 school staff will have access to a two-day workshop. I have to give credit Liz Banks who was instrumental in developing this program, particularly in the north. Liz, would you like to comment?

Ms BANKS - There has been for a long time now, probably seven years, an agreement between the Education department and the Police department where we have deliberately encouraged schools to use restorative practice techniques where there are issues, particularly of violence between students. In turn, the police support us by attending whenever there is an issue and helping us work through the program both at school and in the home. It has been going for a long time now and is very successful. Incidents of violence have diminished considerably and Learning Services in the north tracks that.

Ms RATTRAY - Minister, my next question is related to the Hagley centre. Is this new money or have you taken it from somewhere else?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, it is a \$500 000 commitment - \$100 000 each year to Hagley Farm School.

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Ms RATTRAY - To construct facilities and create a centre of excellence?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, \$100 000 will be expended to construct the facilities. All school farms are guided by a business plan. At Hagley Farm School a farm manager is paid for out of the profit generated from the mixed farming activities, predominately a small dairy herd and fat lambs. The appointment of an agricultural education lead teacher will provide support for other schools with farms by providing regular professional learning opportunities, developing entrepreneurship and business planning skills and advising on appropriate curriculum. It will allow the building of connections to industry and tertiary education, and develop partnerships with other schools.

Ms RATTRAY - No other programs have been lost at the expense of that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No. We have a number of - about 38 - schools around Tasmania with some type of farm school arrangement, which is positive. Some have greater programs than others

Ms RATTRAY - You obviously appreciate how well supported they are by communities. There was an attempt to shut one down recently.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There was -

CHAIR - To move one, not to shut one down.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Move the animals, you might as well shut down a farm if you haven't got any animals, Madam Chair.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I commend the council, and we had some very good discussions.

Ms RATTRAY - You stepped in, minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I stepped in with all my hats on - Primary Industries and Water and Education - and it has been resolved. I would like to look at what other broader opportunities are available so we can better enhance the capacity of the farm. Obviously it was valued, given the community reaction to what was proposed in terms of zoning changes. I would like to see greater engagement, perhaps from the Brighton Primary School, mixed with local industry. There is increased dairy production in the local area, and horse facilities in the local area as well. At the last board meeting with Tasracing I asked what involvement they could have around the Brighton area.

Mrs ARMITAGE - While I commend the Government on their commitment to Bravehearts, do you put any money into the Life Education vans?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No direct funding -

Mrs ARMITAGE - Have they in the past?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not to my knowledge. In the north perhaps?

Mr FINCH - Many years ago. It would be 15-18 years ago.

Mr ROCKLIFF - At the request of the member for Rosevears, I met with Life Education very recently. It was a good discussion. It made me aware of what they are doing in other jurisdictions, which seemed very positive. The discussions were about what was happening in the northern program, and looking at expanding it state wide. I am open to further discussions, but we are resource constrained at this present time. Obviously they are a highly valued organisation in other jurisdictions.

Mrs ARMITAGE - They fit very well with Bravehearts, in that they cover the drug and health education aspect. I can remember when my children were at school the Life Education vans were there, and I wondered why the Government was not putting money into something like the Life Education programs in schools. There's no real reason why they are not doing it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There has been no formal application. Conversations have started.

Mrs ARMITAGE - It has happened in the past, so somewhere along the line it has dropped off.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is before my time -15 or so years ago. It is supported through Rotary and other organisations now. The community organisations value what they do - but I am happy to continue the conversation

Mrs ARMITAGE - We had meetings with Michael Ferguson last year as well. So we can look forward to something in next year's Budget?

CHAIR - Further discussions anyway.

Mr FINCH - It is successful in every state in Australia and overseas.

Mr ROCKLIFF - They present a very compelling case. We are in a very challenging resource environment at the moment, but I have an open mind.

Mr VALENTINE - This is something the Chair and I have been interested in for some time. It is about the teaching of indigenous history in schools. What curriculum elements are there? Has the inclusion of something solid in terms of Tasmanian, or Australian, indigenous history been addressed? There have been programs in the past that have been very poorly funded - something called 'Gumnuts to Buttons' from years ago. It should be deeper than that, so what is happening in that area? It is something we should not let go any longer.

Ms BANKS - There are two elements within the department. We have our curriculum team and Tasmania is a signatory to the National Education Agreement, which includes implementing the national curriculum. Sitting inside the national curriculum one of the through lines is Aboriginal education. That is one component of it.

Mr VALENTINE - That is Aboriginal education as in education about Aboriginal history, not education of Aboriginal persons?

Ms BANKS - That is right.

Mr VALENTINE - I thought I would clarify that.

Ms BANKS - We also have the Aboriginal Education Services which is the business unit that comes through our construct and they are responsible for both of those elements, so looking after the particular needs of their Aboriginal students and supporting good curriculum development in the Tasmanian context. Things like Gumnuts to Buttons, and I am pleased that you raised that because this morning I was talking to the leader in that area who is saying we need to go back and do that training for other business unit leaders, and that is our intent straight after the holidays. They provide resource development for schools to use, as well as an extensive library and ongoing resources to support implementation of the curriculum for all our schools.

CHAIR - Is it embedded into the curriculum? Is it a requirement that it be taught now?

Ms BANKS - Yes.

Mr VALENTINE - That is good. It is not relying on volunteers to go into schools?

Ms BANKS - No, although we still have Aboriginal education officers and Aboriginal education workers, particularly to support schools that have larger numbers of Aboriginal students enrolled, and that starts in the early years. For example, we had one of those officers at Bridgewater in the Child and Family Centre.

Mr VALENTINE - My other question is to do with diversion strategies. We were talking with the Attorney-General yesterday about the Department of Justice having certain programs designed to help divert people away from a life of crime. Is there a connection with the Education Department that you can talk about from your end - we have heard what Justice had to say - that gives the opportunity to educate children about the impact that crime has on individuals and how best to educate them to not seek to go into a life of crime. I do not think every child is about to, but it is important education where they are taught what impact committing crime has on individuals in the community.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is what Restorative Justice Practices program is about. It fits nicely into exactly what you are talking about.

CHAIR - That is for young people who are already heading that way or is it across the curriculum?

Ms BANKS - Restorative Practice is across the curriculum and it is an approach to making it right. It does not matter what has happened, it is the approach to making it right. It is about what the impact on others is.

Mr VALENTINE - It is broad? Every student gets an opportunity to hear this?

Ms BANKS - That is a whole school approach.

Mr VALENTINE - Thanks.

CHAIR - I would like to ask, in light of the note, what is your new revised operational model for Learning Services?

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr ROCKLIFF - Learning Services have undergone change in the last few years. There was a Learning Services South East and Learning Services South combined, and as a result of this Budget there will be some savings to combine the Learning Services North and Learning Services North West. They will merge to create a combined Learning Services North. This is in part due to a budget measure designed to identify savings across the whole of government. This restructure will assist in improving efficiencies and service delivery to schools, particularly in relation to school and support services. There are acting positions now in the north-west and in the north and there is a process now of appointing a permanent position across the region.

CHAIR - My specific questions are how much will you save, how many jobs will be lost if any, and will the north west still get the services it needs? I am presuming the north-west includes as far as Queenstown and you are going to be centred in Launceston and north-east.

Ms RATTRAY - And right down to the middle, across the east coast.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Of course all those areas will be serviced.

CHAIR - How many FTEs?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are working through that now. That is for the secretary to work through. There was a permanent position in the north where Laurie went to the Northern Territory. That is why the two acting positions are there now and that is being worked through and redesigned at this time.

Mr PETTIT - Particularly in the north we are still working the model. It is around the functions of making sure schools are supported. In the north, there will be one general manager across the whole northern region but there will be a presence with an assistant general manager in both the north and the north-west. There will be an office in both areas so that all schools are well supported. On the total FTEs, we are still working through how that will be reduced but still make the effort to support schools.

CHAIR - But you are expecting a reduction?

Mr PETTIT - There will be some reduction.

CHAIR - How many FTEs do you have now?

Mr PETTIT - I will have to get that figure for you. I think it is around 30.

Mr ROCKLIFF - As the secretary said, they are working through a redesign at the present time.

Mr DEAN - There is no saving in resources; they are all office space. Are they domiciled in the Education department buildings that are there already in the north?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Devonport and -

Mr PETTIT - That will be part of the model. We are looking at reducing our footprint and if we can relocate some of these people into schools that are vacant, we will do that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The south has gone through this process in recent times and it is working.

CHAIR - Where is the south centred?

Mr PETTIT - Currently at Warrane.

1.3 Education performance services -

Mr DEAN - How many staff are employed in this area and where are they domiciled?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Murray Street.

Mr PETTIT - Can we take that on notice and we will come back to you?

Mr DEAN - That is okay. Last year there was some discussion about the data warehouse. I don't think it was fully functional this time last year. I take it that is now fully up and running. Where is it at this stage?

Mr PETTIT - That is now called EDI.

Mr DEAN - That, as I understand, brings together a central point for all the data held in relation to students, their activities, what they are doing. Does it cover all that information in a central point? Whom is the EDI system accessible to?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The principals.

Mr PETTIT - Every staff member has a password element that determines their security level and what they can see and what they cannot see. The teacher can see their class and parts of the school because they have to know all the students in their school. But they cannot see beyond that.

Mr DEAN - A principal in Hobart, for instance, cannot look at the detail of a school at Burnie or Launceston?

Mr PETTIT - No.

Mr DEAN - It only relates to their own school?

Mr PETTIT - That is correct and there is very strong security across the whole board for that.

Mr DEAN - I take it that senior management would have access to all data?

Mr PETTIT - That is correct.

Mr DEAN - It is obviously working well?

Mr PETIT - The feedback has been outstanding.

Mr VALENTINE - How far has that rolled out, is that right across?

Mr PETIT - All schools have not accessed that.

Ms RATTRAY - I have a question about the NAPLAN standards. Minister, in the Budget papers it stated that within six years Tasmania will be at or above the national standard in every NAPLAN measurement and meet the national benchmarks. How are you going to do that? I would have thought that is more aspirational than achievable.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I believe it is achievable. We need to do better than we are currently doing. What the Auditor-General recently highlighted in the report he produced was that, taking into consideration Tasmania's challenging economic status, teachers and educators are doing a very good job. If we are going to pick Tasmania up we need to invest more heavily in education and particularly around some diagnostic, more targeted support. Literacy and numeracy specialists are part of that which is why the NAPLAN results for years 7 and 9

Ms RATTRAY - Those additional staffing measures you put in place to address that is going to get us in six years either up to or above the national average?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I would hope that the investment we are putting in to early years with Launching in to Learning, child and family centres, kindergarten through to prep or grade 12, that we do lift our NAPLAN results. There is no sugar coating, we are still ranked 6th or 7th out of all states and territories on most indicators and the gaps are between three and 20 across a range of measures and we need to close that gap.

Ms RATTRAY - I acknowledge they are aspirational targets but I thought it was going over the top a bit to say you were going to achieve it but I will be watching with interest.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am in the job to make a change and to ensure that we improve educational outcomes in Tasmania. It is critical for Tasmania's future prosperity and we are very passionate about it and our Budget reflects the investment we are putting into education to achieve those measures.

Ms RATTRAY - So \$8.4 million over the next four years, we are going to see that achieved?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not in isolation. The \$1.25 billion into schools and including LINC'S and the zero years, right through the educational curriculum.

Ms RATTRAY - The \$8.4 million over four years was targeted for years 7 to 9?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is correct.

Mr FINCH - I would like to go to one of the election commitments and probably out of context here but I am sure you will have the answer. Supporting Tasmanian teacher assistants.

Mr ROCKLIFF - \$4.4 million.

Mr FINCH - \$1.1 million for 2014-15 and the forward years \$3.3 million. What I want to know is some detail around what exactly your teacher assistant will have to do to earn the extra \$11.80 a week.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr ROCKLIFF - These are very different issues. An extra week's work and I recognise the fact that teacher assistants are not paid in school holidays. They can choose to spread their salary across the 12 months. As recognition of that we are offering them another week's work within the school year.

CHAIR - Will they be at work for that week, in the school holidays?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Within term time.

CHAIR - I am sorry, I do not understand. Are you giving them extra hours within term time?

Mr PETTIT - That is correct. I might get Mr Finch to go through it because we are in negotiations at the moment.

CHAIR - I wondered how you were going to do that.

Mr A. FINCH - We are currently negotiating with the two unions, the CPSU and the AEU, and also the Tasmanian School Administrators about how we implement this. We are looking to implement it from the start of term 4. We will be getting schools to work with each teacher assistant to offer them that one extra week and if the teacher assistants want to take it up it will be on the basis that they will do it within term time.

CHAIR - Aren't some of them full-time?

Mr A. FINCH - Some of them would be, so they probably will not be able to get it. But most of them are part time.

CHAIR - They won't get it?

Mr A. FINCH - Most of them will have the opportunity to take it up but the requirement will be that they do it within the school term.

CHAIR - It is really an extra week's pay?

Mr A. FINCH - No, it is an extra week's work, and they get paid for it. We will be working with each school to implement this.

CHAIR - Most school assistants I know do far more than the casual hours they are paid for so I am sure that won't be hard to do.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I agree. They do a tremendous job.

Mr VALENTINE - And very important work.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There was some discussion yesterday about this. The \$11.80 is an allowance for providing some medical support in schools. It is voluntary and teacher assistants have been providing that support for a number of years and were never paid for it.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

We are going to pay them an allowance for the first time and we are also paying for the training, which is done during their paid time. I stress that it is voluntary. But for the first time they will be paid for the work they do in terms of some of that medical support in schools.

Mr K. FINCH - How does that medical support work? What are they required to do? To help anyone who is ill?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, there will be a range of things they will be required to do. It is not just one thing, it depends on the needs of the student.

Ms BANKS - Administering medication, supporting students, for example, with diabetes. Some kiddies need support feeding and that whole range of activities.

Mr K. FINCH - There will need to be some training for that?

Ms BANKS - Absolutely.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Training is provided in paid time.

Mr K. FINCH - Thanks very much.

Mr DEAN - When you say there will be training in that area, how far does the training go? Will they be certified to administer all of the things that need to be administered, and will they have refresher courses? Will there be an ongoing training system to ensure they are up to speed with the medical procedures? How far does that go, minister?

Mr ROCKLIFF - A good question, Liz?

Ms BANKS - It will be case-specific. We seek the appropriate levels of training according to the needs of the student. For example, if a student comes into a school and they have anaphylaxis then the school puts in place an anaphylaxis plan and people get training to support the anaphylaxis. It is always a medical approach and I am sure that the new school nurses will further support that approach.

Mr DEAN - Are you saying it will be dependent on the student's needs in each school, as to the qualifications of each person that is able to administer medication? Is that what is being said?

CHAIR - They are not prescribing; they are only administering.

Mr DEAN - No, they are administering and to administer medications, you have to meet certain criteria, like sisters and nurses in hospitals. Not everyone can administer medication, and that is where they have had lots of trouble in hospitals - with people administering medications who have not fully understood and appreciated the situation. I want to know whether -

Mr ROCKLIFF - If it got to that level, it would be taken out of the teacher assistant's hands, and appropriate medical -

Mr DEAN - That is what I want to find out.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

CHAIR - The schools do that now and very often it is the school secretary who does it, because the student brings their medication.

Mr VALENTINE - Well, it is not always that type of medication either.

Mr DEAN - No it's not. It is physical contact and it is medical procedures, really, in administering some of these medications. That is why I am asking about the extent of what they will be able to do, whether they will be able to physically administer some medications, as I understand it. Does it go that far, and what is the training they have. It takes doctors in some case to do that - people with special qualifications.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I guess the point is that teacher assistants have been doing this for years. We have now recognised where your concerns are coming from. Not only are they getting an allowance, which has never been done before, we are also providing the training. Liz, can you talk about individual student plans?

Ms BANKS - Students have a medical action plan and who is doing what, where, when and the rules around it are all agreed to with the providers. For example, if a student has diabetes then the medical stuff provided is by a diabetes nurse educator, the student has a medical action plan and that is implemented inside the school context accordingly.

Mr DEAN - Will they be forced to do that?

CHAIR - No, the minister has already said that it's voluntary.

Mr DEAN - It is a voluntary situation, so if in a school a student is required to have a certain type of medication, and it is a physically administered medication, and that person doesn't want to administer that, they don't have to, so what happens? Who do they bring in to do it, a parent or a doctor?

CHAIR - Correct. Same thing as happens now.

Mr DEAN - I am just trying to find out.

Mr ROCKLIFF - A medical facility, whatever the commonsense thing is to do.

Mr DEAN - I take it, minister, they are covered by the school liability insurance if something goes wrong in administering those medications?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr VALENTINE - Is your concern that, because it is now being recognised officially by an award payment, it increases the risk for the school if something goes wrong?

Mr DEAN - Absolutely, that is the point I have been trying to make.

CHAIR - That's why the school plan exists for each student.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr VALENTINE - I was wondering if that is what is was and because of what was in the press today about these medicines can be rectally administered and all sorts of things - is that a problem? Do you see that as a risk?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There are 85 000 students going to school every day, across independent and government schools - things happen. It is about managing that risk. This is actually being proactive in managing that risk because you have a program where teacher assistants have been involved in this for some time; we recognise we need to offer them formal training, and also, in recognition of the training and the important role and responsibility, that there should be an allowance for it. It is managing the risk.

Mr VALENTINE - So it's voluntary and they are indemnified if something goes wrong.

CHAIR - Yes, all of the above. Are there any further questions on 1.3?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Just to pick up, Chair, on the Educational Performance Services, there are 22.9 FTEs, in answer to Mr Dean's question.

CHAIR - Good, thank you. Most of the Education Performance Services would be people then, that's where your money goes.

1.4 Early years -

Mr K. FINCH - Minister, what I could do here is present you with an opportunity to talk to about the Early Years program because it is in your My Education pamphlet, and I'm pleased to see that. It is assisting students with their understanding and to follow and extend their own interests, so in those early years of K - year 2. There is great support of the Beaconsfield Child and Family Centre, which is great success story for our West Tamar community, and also our Early Learning Centre, in fact I have just been looking at some photos they have posted of kids enjoying that experience of early learning at Beaky. You probably want to, and I know the member for Windermere has the development of a child and family centre at George Town which is one of the initiatives of the Government. I thought the minister might like to say something about it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - George Town, we fully support it. There has been a lot of debate and contention around it.

Mr DEAN - Location?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Around location, but I believe 100 per cent the correct decision was made and that is going to be opened in the near future. Towards the end of the year.

Mr DEAN - The concept was never knocked by anyone. That should be made clear. It was just location.

Mr FINCH - What happens to the early learning program that was initiated by the previous government?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Launching into Learning? It started off in schools of recognised social disadvantage and has now extended to all schools. It is a very good opportunity for parents and kids to engage in pre-school if you want to call it that. That still exists and we are very supportive and will continue to be so. It is aimed to give Tasmania's youngest children the best possible start in life - supporting families as the child's first and most influential teacher. And reaching families with highest need and facilitating that very positive transition into kindergarten. It is an excellent initiative and I would hope with child and family centres and Launching into Learning, we will start to see some positive results reflected in NAPLAN results coming through in the next couple of years.

CHAIR - We have already, minister. Year 3 results are a lot better than they used to be. That cohort has not moved through yet into 5 and 7.

Ms RATTRAY - Has the Commonwealth Government funding finished for that program?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Are you talking about kindergarten?

Ms RATTRAY - The Commonwealth funding we received. Has that finished under the National Partnership Agreement.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Are you talking about the 15 hours, the extra 5 hours for kindergarten?

Ms RATTRAY - The early years funding has dropped and I am wondering if the Commonwealth funding is still in that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is reflected in the footnote 4, 1.4. The decrease in the early years 2015-16 reflects the cessation of the Australian Government funding under the National Partnership Agreement.

Ms BANKS - There is ongoing conversations with the Commonwealth Government about their early years national partnerships. Recently the Commonwealth has agreed that they will continue to fund 15 hours kindergarten for next year but we are not sure of the total amount yet. That is why it looks like a smaller amount. It has not stopped but it has been reduced.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This was quite a frustrating process. Regarding the 15 hours, which is a national partnership, the state government funds 10 hours and the Federal Government funds an extra five hours so it allows three days a week for kindergarten. It goes very well in Tasmania and the Productivity Commission reported that Tasmania does extremely well in this particular area. I think 95 per cent attendance at kindergarten plus, which is an excellent result, and probably that high attendance reflects some of the Launching into Learning aspect as well.

Ms RATTRAY - You would not want to reduce the age of school children without additional funding from the Commonwealth or it would put an even bigger strain on the state.

Mr ROCKLIFF - With Australian and state government partnerships across education we are always having these discussions. The most important point is that it was getting quite concerning that while the Federal Government had provision for the five hours, in addition to the 10 hours, as a contingency in the federal Budget, there was no clear indication of when they were going to fund it, commencing in 2015. We have had strong engagement with the federal minister. We have spoken to him and sent a written expression of concern because schools were becoming

very anxious about making staff allocation resource choices for next year if the state Government did not pick up the tab of that extra five hours per week.

If the 10 hours of kindergarten remained and it went back to two days or was spread across a three-day period with less contact hours per day, it would have been very disruptive for parents and schools that were used to three days, five hours a day. Thankfully we have security of the 15 hours for next year and we need to work for another partnership beyond that for the 15 hours, because it is an accepted part of the curriculum. It would be quite a severe state budgetary impact if we had to fork out that five hours ourselves to the tune of, say, \$40 million over the course of the next four years. It would be \$10 million a year to fund that five hours. The federal Government not paying that five hours would have a severe impact on our state Budget of \$10 million a year, which is difficult to find.

Mr K. FINCH - As you recognise, minister, it is so important the foundation work is done in the early years. There was talk earlier about childcare centres and the work they do. Not so much the Government centres but the private ones, too. The skills of those people are being employed better to help ground the youngsters in play and socialisation in their learning processes. This is where the foundation work needs to be done. I think you will agree, minister?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I agree, Mr Finch, and this is why investment in early childhood is so crucial. All the evidence suggests that investment at that level - in a quality educational experience in early childhood - has a positive effect right throughout the school years. Every dollar spent on early education can be multiplied many times in terms of its overall economic benefit.

Mr K. FINCH - When you have a chance, minister, I would to invite you to the Beaconsfield Child and Family Centre - the early learning, the child and family centre and the primary school. It is a great success story.

Ms RATTRAY - Will you come, minister?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will come. I have been to a number of child and family centres. To George Town and East Devonport, which has a great facility. I have been to tagari lia in Bridgewater.

CHAIR - We hear you. I am sure you will visit them all, minister.

Does the Early Years Foundation come under your portfolio, minister? Has that been funded by the Government?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Mr VALENTINE - So you have nothing to do with any of the operations of that foundation?

Ms RATTRAY - It's gone.

CHAIR - That is why I am asking. Why has it gone? But if it's not to do with this minister, I can't ask him.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have responsibility under the act but the Department of Premier and Cabinet funds it.

CHAIR - Used to fund it.

Mr VALENTINE - It was \$10 000, I think, but it provided a very significant benefit.

CHAIR - If you fund it, do you not have some responsibility?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have responsibility under the act but the Department of Premier and Cabinet funds it.

CHAIR - You did not ask them to fund it? You did not ask them to continue its funding?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, the Premier is responsible for DPAC. We have had reviews of forward committees right across the whole of government and decisions have been made.

CHAIR - If it is in your area of responsibility, did you make the decision that it should be funded or not?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I supported the decision.

Mr VALENTINE - If the decision is supported it would be nice to get some understanding as to why because what they are saying is they would be prepared to keep this alive and almost operate on a voluntary basis.

CHAIR - They have been given a grant expenditure of \$500 000 each year, or whatever it was, \$250 000, I do not know. They would be quite happy to operate without the money to keep the foundation alive, only because they create other money. They get grant funding, and so forth, that would keep them going. All they are asking for is the \$10 000 to keep the foundation going, not anything else.

Mr VALENTINE - Can I take the time to read this?

CHAIR - No. Does it make a difference?

Mr VALENTINE - I am hoping it will.

CHAIR - Okay, read it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Before you do, I will be meeting with the Chair, Liz Daly, very soon.

CHAIR - Is there a possibility you might reverse that decision?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will have a discussion with Liz and we will see. They have asked to meet with me and I am always accessible and available.

Mr VALENTINE - Their concern is that they have attracted \$260 000 in grants in the past two years, and in-kind support from sponsors on top of that. They are concerned that what is happening is that for the sake of \$10 000, some really valuable work that is being undertaken is

being sacrificed for the sake of that \$10 000 and yet provides much more in value. So in meeting with the Chair, I am encouraged to hear that, but it would be useful to see that continue so they do not lose momentum and impetus for the sake of \$10 000 because they may be able to attract more funding that assists with the maintenance of that foundation.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I look forward to the discussions.

Mr VALENTINE - I am making you aware of those real concerns they have.

1.5 Grants and financial assistance -

Mr VALENTINE - This is where grants are made available to non-government schools for funding of their operations, is that right? I still get to read that this is where you are funding non-government schools, passing on the Federal funding to non-government schools.

CHAIR - The state also does some funding of non-government schools.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Chair, it comes under the grants and subsidies section.

Mr VALENTINE - This is under grants and financial assistance and that is why I thought it was under 1.5. Is it true that non-government schools are receiving 7.9 per cent extra funding this year and, if so, perhaps you can explain why and how the 5 per cent extra provided to state schools with the consequent \$148 million cut is equitable?

Mr ROCKLIFF - State schools get more than 5 per cent.

Mr VALENTINE - But you said they had a 5 per cent increase.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Minimum.

CHAIR - That is Gonski money.

Mr PETTIT - State schools will definitely receive a minimum of 5 per cent, as the minister has indicated. That is the cash component into the SRP.

Mr VALENTINE - Sorry, SRP?

Mr PETTIT - The Schools Resource Package. There is additional funding for disabilities and that will be another cash component into schools, which is about \$2 million.

Mr VALENTINE - Is that under the NDIS payment?

Mr PETTIT - No, it is under Students First. When you start to accumulate those sorts of figures, the money is similar to the non-government sector.

Mr VALENTINE - That brings it up to the same sort of level.

Mr PETTIT - Very similar.

Mr VALENTINE - Why the increase of 7 per cent to non-government schools? Is this just a natural increase?

CHAIR - There are no natural increases.

Mr VALENTINE - No, I mean indexation.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is part of the Gonski model.

Mr VALENTINE - It is purely on the Gonski model? It is not some annual increase? With that, what sort of reporting back do you receive from the non-government schools as to how they expend that, or is it not tied to how they perform in any way?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Schools Registration Board has a reporting mechanism. I always engage with the Catholic school sector and independent school sector. The Schools Registration Board is being abolished and there will be a statutory officer put in place. There will still be an independent process for registering schools, which in has been welcomed by some in the independent school community, most notably the Catholic school community, because there was a lot of duplication with the Catholic school system and the Schools Registration Board. This might be an opportunity for the Catholic schools to reduce that duplication and this will be more efficient for them.

Mr VALENTINE - What happens to home schooling in that case? Are people who want to educate their children at home in any way vetted?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is a very good question. Part of the review of the Education Act has home education as one of the areas that needs to be focused on. It presents the current situation in Tasmania and possible options for reform in home education, including the responsibilities for parents as educators in the act, as well as a key definition of the Home Education Advisory Council. It also includes the requirement that monitoring officers have an educational background.

With respect to home education and to what happens elsewhere, other states generally regulate home education in a similar way to Tasmania, although there are some differences. The legislation in some jurisdictions is more explicit about the requirements that must be met. For example, most other states require monitoring visits every 12 months and for registration to be cancelled where a home educator does not allow that monitoring to occur.

In Victoria, learning areas in which a child must receive regular instructions are specified and include: arts, English, maths, science, health and physical education, and technology. The instruction can be consistent with the principles of Australian democracy, including a commitment to the elected government, the rule of law, freedom of religion and equal rights before the law.

In Queensland, a child's parents must ensure the child receives a high quality of education. It is similar but there are different aspects to the requirements. This is the debate and the discussion we need to have, and it poses the question on the discussion paper: how do you think the act should reflect responsibilities of parents as educators, as well as to find the role of the Home Education Advisory Council?

CHAIR - Watch this space.

[5.45 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF - I guess watch this space but also, if you have some interested stakeholders, get them to respond. In Tasmania, home education is a legal education option, as it is in all states and territories in Australia. The administration and accountability of home education differs in some areas around the country. Registration trends of the number of students and families who are home educating are higher than at this time last year, and the number of registered students has been increasing over the past decade.

When it comes to NAPLAN participation, all home education students are invited to participate in NAPLAN. In 2013, 35 students, out of approximately 241 eligible, sat the NAPLAN tests. In terms of monitoring, the Tasmanian home education advisory council monitors home educated students. Monitoring is primarily concerned with the home education program provided by parents for each student. The parent is required to have clear aims and purposes for the educational program and to make provision for opportunities for student development in literacy and numeracy, opportunities for social interaction and strategies for keeping a record of each student's program and educational progress.

Mr VALENTINE - The number of FTEs in this area of grants and financial assistance. How many FTEs in that group? I presume they are taking a bit of a hit to help meet the department's targets.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will take that on notice if that is all right, Chair.

Mr VALENTINE - Once I get that information there will be more.

Mr DEAN - Can I ask a supplementary question on in-home education? Can we have the numbers in in-home education, minister, compared with the last couple of years? Is it moving up, or down, or staying the same?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is moving up slightly. As of 31 March 2014 the number of registered in-home students in Tasmania was 769.

CHAIR - Does that include your eSchool?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No.

Mr DEAN - The eSchool is on top of that. So it is 769?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There are 402 families represented in that. Obviously there are families with two and three kids. It appears to be trending upwards over the course of the last five or six years. The lowest point was six years ago in 2009, when there were 551 registered students.

Mr VALENTINE - So, 769 students are being home schooled.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is right. Last year it was 682, and while that might seem a lot, we have to remember that we have around 60 000 students in government schools in Tasmania, and another 15 000 or so in independent schools.

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Mr DEAN - Minister, are there any records available to identify whether or not in-home education is achieving similar results to school education? Is it as successful as school education?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I guess NAPLAN would be a measure -

Mr DEAN - I wondered if there was some sort of measure.

Mr VALENTINE - Presumably they have to take the NAPLAN test?

CHAIR - They don't have to.

Mr VALENTINE - They don't have to?

CHAIR - The minister read the figures a while ago on how many had taken them.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Of those eligible - 241 - only 35 participated in 2013 figure. They don't have to. I am not sure whether we can measure and compare. You could anecdotally work it out, I suppose.

Mr DEAN - Can they can go right through to year 12 in in-home education?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr DEAN - Are there any figures for the number of those students going on to university studies?

Mr ROCKLIFF - A measurement of retention for home schooling.

Mr DEAN - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will take that on notice.

CHAIR - Are there any further questions on 1.5? We will move onto Output group 2

Mrs ARMITAGE - I notice there is a large increase, and the note mentions the Student First education reform. Minister, can you give more clarification on the Student First education reforms? Mentioned in Note 4 that goes with the large increase in output.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is the allocation of the Gonski funding for years 11 and 12.

Mrs ARMITAGE - You also have the percentages of the year 10 students who go on to year 12, and the retention rate and whether they are full-time or part-time and whether they stay to the end and get their TCE in year 12. Do we have something that tracks where these year 10 students go?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have those figures and they represent the reasons why we are investing in years 11 and 12 so heavily.

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For 2012, completion rate - in other words, after year 12, was 47 per cent. In 2011 it was 43 per cent. The apparent retention rate in 2012 was 67.1 per cent; 2013 it was 68.4 per cent and the national average is 76 per cent. The national target is over 80 per cent.

CHAIR - Regarding students who may drop out, are you tracking which particular schools they may drop out from, to see if there is a pattern? Can you provide something along those lines? I don't expect to see the names of the schools.

Mr PETTIT - We track every student from year 10 through to year 11 and that is mainly done through the colleges and we make sure we track every student. We know where they are. Many of them have left the state, but we track them all the way through.

Mrs ARMITAGE - With the Australian Training College there were a lot of students who weren't perhaps academically suited for year 11 and 12, but by having the technical college, it allowed them to get a trade, as well as doing their year 11 and 12. Is there some consideration with the changes we have to the Tasmanian Academy, and the retention of year 11 and 12, of going back to a similar model, or including a similar model, or is that already included? So that some students who are completing years 11 and 12 can be doing a trade base at the same time?

That was one of the things we found in the ATC - another government came in and dropped it. It worked well, and I have been to Inveresk where it was based. They worked so well for those children who really wanted to achieve years 11 and 12, but gave them the opportunity to learn a trade at the end of it.

Mr MURPHY - The senior secondary schools, and the schools that have taken up the option to deliver years 11 and 12 programs from January of next year, all of them will have a fairly vibrant vocational education and training program. In some cases that would involve individual students who will be participating in school-based apprenticeships. There are about 500 students across the year 9 to year 12 cohort who are employed as well as being enrolled in a VET program. Our sense is that the training programs that were provided by the Australian Training Colleges, that work has been replicated in government schools to date.

Mrs ARMITAGE - That is very important, so thank you for that.

CHAIR - Are the trade training centres in some of the schools your responsibility, or are they private schools?

Mr MURPHY - They are the department's. The trade training centres are located in the main in district high schools because we are anxious to get a trade training capacity out there. The trade training centres are operated by the schools but are accessed by TasTAFE and schools, and on occasion they are accessed by external registered training organisations that want to run training programs mainly for adults in the regions.

CHAIR - So they are another resource for that same cohort, and more.

Mr MURPHY - That is correct.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Would the majority of students who take that up continue on to year 12 or do you have many who drop out after starting something like a trade and decide they do not want to continue to year 12, and they then go sideways into the trade they have been doing?

Mr MURPHY - I can only provide an anecdotal answer to that question because I do not have numbers. In the main, our experience is that employers tend to select the better students who are engaged in workplace experiences through the course of their study. It is an interesting conundrum because while on the one hand one would wish to encourage young people to remain at school until the end of year 12, it is a desirable outcome for a young person to gain employment, irrespective of whether or not they have finished a formal education program, if that employment leads through to finishing a trade qualification and a useful career out of that.

CHAIR - Are you talking about apprenticeships or a traineeships?

Mr MURPHY - Yes, either or.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There are currently eight operational public sector trade training centres located in Smithton, Deloraine, George Town, Scottsdale, St Helens, St Marys, Bridgewater, Sorell, Triabunna and Huonville, providing education and training to more than 1 250 students.

Mrs ARMITAGE - So we don't have anything in the north particularly? I am talking more that the last ATC was based at Inveresk, something that was more central to a lot of the areas such as Scottsdale and Dorset - particularly when we have that accommodation unit now.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Australian Coalition Government honoured the commitment and approved two centres under a rebadged Skills Centres program - the Tasman Trade Skills Centre - and north-west and west coast Trade Skill Centre at Mountain Heights School and Hellyer College. The trade school centres are due to be operational for the start of the 2015 school year. The proposed new facility at Mountain Heights School will provide opportunities for training in hospitality and engineering. Further funding for trade skill centres and trade training centres has been discontinued and a review of the effectiveness into trade training centres was announced by the Assistant Minister for Education, Sussan Ley, in July 2014. That report is due to be completed by the end of the year. The state provides \$1.8 million per annum for the operation of trade training centres and trade skills centres.

I have information, due to the very good work of the department, on the figures from 1984-94, 2004-14 on Tasmanian government school enrolments by educational sector. The 1984 figures do not have the full-time equivalents, unfortunately, but I can table that if you would like.

CHAIR - Thank you, we were going to ask for it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - On the grants and financial assistance, the Department of Education does not employ anyone directly for this as funds are managed by the in-house finance group. Individual recipients may employ staff.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Is consideration to be given to expanding trade training centres to other areas?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have them in quite a few areas - St Marys, St Helens, Scottsdale.

Mrs ARMITAGE - I was thinking mainly of somewhere like Launceston that would have quite a large number of students. That is where the ATC was mainly based and they had a huge number of students from the surrounding feeder schools.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Commonwealth Government money has been discontinued -

Mrs ARMITAGE - Will the state pick it up?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The state is contributing \$1.8 million per annum. But if you would like to contact the federal member for Bass, Mr Andrew Nikolic, regarding that, because it is federally funding. Notwithstanding that we make a substantial commitment. We look forward to TasTAFE having a chat to us at some stage. We understand the valuable role they play in this area.

Mrs ARMITAGE - It is an area we could explore a little further, but not today.

Ms RATTRAY - Are there any issues with staff availability in trade training centres? My information tells me it is hard to get staff. Your cut a program in Dorset - the agriculture one - because you did not have the right teacher.

Mr MURPHY - I cannot comment on that specific example. As a general rule of thumb, it can often be difficult to attract trade qualified staff into a teaching environment because the employment prospects for trade qualified staff tend to be quite attractive. However, schools have access to resources of their own and they also have the capacity to work collaboratively with TasTAFE. TasTAFE works with a lot of regional schools with a view to developing programs where TasTAFE teachers can be made available.

Ms RATTRAY - The Chair might ask that later if I am not around.

CHAIR - Sure.

Mr MURPHY - In terms of a there being a common, constant problem recruiting trade teacher, it is not a barrier to progress.

Ms RATTRAY - Thank you.

2.2 Post-compulsory education in schools -

Ms RATTRAY - If you go to the performance table on page 2.12, minister. There has been a reduction in the number of students undertaking this type of education. Can I have some indication what the issues are? Are we lacking in student numbers? The number in 'some vocational education and training' has decreased by about 1 400 students from 2011-12 to 2012-13. There are no numbers for 2013-14. It is a bit too early, so my notes tell me. Does the department have some indication of why we have such a reduced number of students? Are they just not around or are they not taking up that option? Are they all going on to further education?

Mr MURPHY - I do not have a comment on that at the moment.

Ms RATTRAY - Am I in the right area, post-compulsory education?

CHAIR - You are.

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Mr ROCKLIFF - There are some statistical issues, Mr Murphy has said. We will take that question on notice.

Ms RATTRAY - That is fine. Some explanation about why we have such a drop in numbers would be good. Because we do not have a figure for 2013-14, I wonder if it is trending down. You have a target of 6 500 for 2014-15. I am not sure how you arrived at that target when you do not know what the number is for 2013-14.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There is a footnote that points to note 2.

Ms RATTRAY - Yes, too early to tell - waiting on data. I thought you might have that by now. You have an increase in funding -

Chair, I do not have anything else about that. Obviously we have some new processes in place and it will make a difference to that area over the next 12 to 18 months, I expect.

CHAIR - Do the UTAS courses now being conducted in some of the colleges come into this? Would you like to talk about those, minister?

Mr PETTIT - The colleges engage, particularly Hobart college, with the university and we have a great partnership with the University of Tasmania who offer a number of TCE courses to fast track some students and that will continue.

CHAIR - I am not up with it in the last year or two but there were some units of university degrees being offered. Is that still occurring?

Mr PETTIT - That is still occurring.

CHAIR - So a student can do one or two units of a university course before they get there which, again, is a transition.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is a good transition.

Mr FINCH - Minister, could you explain the logic behind transferring Skills Tasmania from education to the department of the ever popular State Growth?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is a question effectively for State Growth and the minister, Mr Groom, was in charge of that procurement. I have been charged with the delivery which is why TasTafe is here, and it is about increasing that competitive space and ensuring that training has a more competitive framework so we are ensuring that the nomenclatures within industry and, whereas TasTafe are doing quite well now, they are responding to industry needs and setting up for more competitive environment for TasTafe to compete in but also for private service providers to compete in and we thought that the separation of Skills Tasmania into the Department of State Growth was a better way of addressing the need for a more competitive training environment rather than being housed in the Department of Education.

Mr FINCH - As long as that is recognised and it is a good move as you have explained there so I imagine that would be somebody like Mr Murphy to develop that cooperation between Skills Tasmania and industry which would be the strong link and where the skills might lead towards employment, towards jobs.

Mr MURPHY - The primary responsibility for working collaboratory with industry to determine the funding arrangement, sits now with Skills Tasmania and with the minister, Mr Groom. The responsibility that sits with the minister, Mr Rockliff, is to ensure that the priorities that are set by Mr Groom for the delivery of training to support the state's industry growth, are met by our department to the extent that we are supposed to do so.

That includes our colleagues from TasTafe who will be here in a moment to speak for themselves but it also includes what happens in years 11 and 12 in schools because we are very anxious to maintain a focus on the fact that for a lot of students in years 11 and 12, what they are doing at school is preparing them for the world of work. That is not true for all but it is true for a significant body of students who are clear in their own minds what it is that they would like to do and it is very important that for those students who are following a vocational pathway, that we are trying to provide the programs for them that are consistent with the employment opportunities that are likely to exist in their local region, particularly in a situation where those young people were going to stay there.

A good example is that the trade training centre in Huonville has a priority focus on aquaculture because aquaculture is one of the growth industries in the Huon valley and we would anticipate that many of the students who have been undertaking vocational programs at Huonville High School would be interested in considering employment in the aquaculture industry after they have left school. The vocational program the school will offer will provide them with the opportunity to develop the job skills for that employment opportunity.

Mr FINCH - Minister, are we dealing here also with apprenticeships? Is that part of the suggestion here, with the link to industry and business? Is it that apprenticeships might be a focus on the radar for the future in the development of our young people?

Mr MURPHY - The main apprenticeship training in Tasmania is done by TasTAFE. Schools have a school-based apprenticeship scheme and we have somewhere in the region of - I am sorry I do not have a precise figure - 540 or thereabouts school-based apprentices who are employed by employers in their local region, usually for two days a week, but who are also engaged in a program of study at school that supports that apprenticeship. To the extent that there are approximately 500 students in schools who are apprentices, the Department of Education does have an apprenticeship program, but that is quite small in relation to the program that TasTAFE operates.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The data I have here, Mr Finch, is around those numbers and various subjects ranging from accommodation and food services to manufacturing, transport, postal and warehousing, wholesale trade, information, media and telecommunications. I have a list of all the participants, all the school-based training contracts by industry classification, including year 12 students transferred to full-time or part-time studies; government schools, non-government schools with a total of 408. Accommodation and food services has 128 participants and public administration and safety has 1. There is quite a range. Agriculture, floristry and fishing has 37; manufacturing, 30; wholesale trade, 43.

Mr FINCH - Into the future that pathway planning can dovetail in with this program to capture the imagination of the kids at a young age and see them through to apprenticeships and employment.

2.3 Tasmanian Qualifications Authority

CHAIR - It seems there is a significant cut in funding from last year to this year.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There is.

CHAIR - Would you like to comment on why that is so? Is it just the 2 per cent pay pause?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, it is more significant than that, Mrs Taylor, because this Government, has had discussions about reducing the number of government boards and committees. Subject to the passage of legislation the functions currently performed by the TQA to accredit courses and manage qualifications will be performed by an independent statutory officer. Senior secondary course development, which has been left under-resourced previously and it has become a quite concerning issue for a number of stakeholders, will now be undertaken in the Department of Education, including direct input from the non-government sector. What we will have now is a curriculum development right from K to grade 12, whereas the TQA was responsible for curriculum in years 11 and 12. We are abolishing the Tasmanian Qualifications Authority Board.

CHAIR - And the jobs associated with it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - They will be shifting. It is a specific amount of funding because the Education department will be taking up that particular role. It has been very much welcomed by the colleges and various education stakeholders. I believe it is a move that has been on the radar for quite some time and we have made the decision to do that and have more consistency in curriculum development from kindergarten right through to year 12. Importantly, input will involve stakeholders across the Catholic sector, and independent schools and colleges.

CHAIR - Which is interesting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Which is good.

CHAIR - It is good, yes. When I read the 'implementation of a new operating model for year 11 and 12, course development and accreditation', I didn't quite realise that is what you meant. However, it has been a matter of concern to me for many years that the TQA recognises only the completion of year 12. We have talked about good students who would get a TQA at the end of year 12 if they stayed, but many of the good students in trade areas are often picked up by an apprenticeship or a traineeship. They continue their education because, in the end, they get a qualification, but they are not in school. So they don't get the qualification for having completed year 12 and it seems to me that isn't quite right.

They still get a qualification. Many of them end up with a trade certificate at the end of an apprenticeship or a traineeship but there is no recognition of that in our education system. Will this new model address that at all?

Mr PETTIT - If I can address that -

CHAIR - Do you understand what I am talking about?

Mr PETTIT - Absolutely, the TQA has done a brilliant job, and all students who are entitled assessments have been given those assessments. That has been really good for Tasmania.

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However, now is the time for a new look at that and as part of this review we will be looking at how we accredit students right the way through to year 12.

CHAIR - Yes, but what about those students who might go into an apprenticeship or a traineeship half way through year 12? They will get a trade qualification, but currently it is not recognised under the TQA system?

Mr PETTIT - Generally they do - working with TasTAFE we make sure that information is followed through. We are confident that this new model will pick up those things.

CHAIR - Good, because that has been a gap for me. Students have completed their education, or gone on to further education but it has not been recognised.

Mr VALENTINE - It is not a true picture - is that what you are saying?

CHAIR - Yes, they look like drop-outs because they have not completed year 12. But they are not drop-outs if they are continuing their education in another area.

Mr PETTIT - What they do through TasTAFE is accredited and that is always monitored between the two groups.

CHAIR - Thank you. Are there further questions on the TQA?

Mr VALENTINE - The activities of the previous authority was focused on years 11 and 12. Were there any other activities they undertook that are now not going to be undertaken by pulling it back into the department? Did they look at courses and verify content and things like that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, curriculum development and the like, but everything will continue on the statutory officer model within the department.

CHAIR - Good. Can you tell us where that will sit within the department?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The statutory officer will be independent. Do you mean location?

CHAIR - No, I meant in what area - like learning services.

Mr PETTIT - No, it will be in the main office.

CHAIR - So directly responsible to you, if responsible to anybody?

Mr PETTIT - Under the new act they will be directly responsible to the minister as are most statutory officers.

CHAIR - Good, thank you.

Output group 3 LINC Tasmania

3.1 Information services and community learning -

Mr DEAN - Do you have the number of staff employed in this area? The number of people employed in LINC's?

Mr ROCKLIFF - On LINC, 379.

Mr DEAN - That is 379 FTEs right around the state.

Are there any changes, minister, envisaged for the LINC's in this area? We are looking at closing hours. Is there any movement in that area or changing opening hours? Is it all set? Are there any new developments in this area?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There are always discussions in this area of opening and closing hours. Is it for LINC's specifically or libraries as well?

Mr DEAN - LINC's, libraries, I thought they were all one thing.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I was thinking of Scottsdale LINC and Devonport LINC.

Mr DEAN - I am looking at LINC's and libraries. Are there any changes envisaged in these areas?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There will be some changes and those changes will be worked through. Tasmania's rural libraries and Online Access Centres of course always need to adapt to a changing environment. Online Access Centres were set up some 16 years ago. Now we have a technology uptake rate I think approaching 80 per cent so we need to modernise our approach to Online Access Centres and school libraries. I guess the amount of borrowings are steadily decreasing in our rural libraries and I believe there are opportunities in recognising the fact that the rural libraries are of value to those who use them notwithstanding the fact there is declining demand, or participation or borrowings. There are I think some models that we need to consider with making sure that we strengthen schools by bringing rural libraries in to coexist with schools, which I think will work well. There is an example in Lilydale which I believe works very well. There are opportunities for increasing the visibility of rural libraries but also strengthening the rural school environment as well.

CHAIR - That is an interesting concept if you are going to have the public come into school libraries. What are you going to do then about police checks and so forth? The public cannot just wander around in schools.

Mr ROCKLIFF - These matters have been worked through and it all depended on the particular site and everything else. It is a good question and it is working well in other areas.

CHAIR - What are the protocols?

Mr PETTIT - There are different protocols in different locations and that is worked out at a local level. For the example of Lilydale, they open their library post-school closure. The library is one room but is available for whoever.

CHAIR - It is not open while students are there.

Mr MURPHY - But in other locations they do a crossover and people in the LINC do checks et cetera on the way through. There are different models in each location to suit the location, more than anything else.

CHAIR - But you do have to maintain that separation between school students and - ?

Mr PETTIT - Not always. You can work with them so that there is co-location.

Mr VALENTINE - It is no different to a normal library, I suppose.

Mr PETTIT - No, not really.

CHAIR - Except that there are rules around people in schools who do not have -

Mr VALENTINE - But it is not a teaching environment.

CHAIR - No, but it is about being in schools at all.

Mr VALENTINE - No different to a normal library.

Mr PETTIT - The minister said that depending on the location of the library, some of them are on the boundaries of the school. That is a lot easier to do and that is why it is a local decision. People have to take that into consideration when they do this in terms of how they would make it operate. In Lilydale's case you have to come into the school, therefore they do it after hours and it seems to be working very effectively. The school and the community benefit because there is a great facility.

CHAIR - I think it is a great idea. I was just wondering on the logistics of how you are going to work through that when I know about -

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thought the same thing when the idea was presented to me. Then having been informed about how the coexistence arrangements are working now, I think it is a good opportunity for schools.

CHAIR - If you can make it work, that is good.

Mr DEAN - Will they be entitled to full library services, accessing school libraries, in other words the borrowings and the online access?

Mr ROCKLIFF - All rural communities will have access to services and borrowings.

CHAIR - It would be the opportunity for better services, at the same time, for the same sort of money.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Modernising the approach is always important.

Mr DEAN - Visits to LINC online and this year the target was an unrealistic target. Is the target likely to be met with an increase of somewhere near almost 400 000, 350 000, online contacts. I think the previous two years had dropped.

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Mr ROCKLIFF - It has dropped, that is granted, so a fair increase in target but a lot of advertising opportunities and the way that the LINC are engaging with the communities and trying to increase that participation and be innovative in how they get their message out. It is a fair old target but I would be pleased if they exceed it, certainly last year's.

Mr DEAN - The physical numbers coming into the libraries, is that mentioned here? Is there an indication that is increasing, minister? I think with the online contacts it would be probably be decreasing.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It has been increasing particularly where LINC have been co-located in certain areas. For example, Devonport is co-located with Customer Services Tasmania, same thing in Scottsdale. The new LINC in Scottsdale has a co-located opportunity, so that is a good thing because getting a service from another government department, LINC is next door, I might go in and access a service and borrow a book there, whatever the case may be.

Mr DEAN - The next one was on the work and lifeskills program enrolments and the enrolment numbers there are quite high, although they have been recently higher I suppose. How does that work? What is the setup behind that?

Mr MURPHY - LINC operates a number of different programs in the community education area and we try to divide them into three different groups. There is one program which is called Work and Life Skills. These programs are designed primarily for people who need assistance with basic IT, how to put a CV together, how you behave at an interview and run practical job related programs of that nature at a simple level.

Enrolments in that area have held reasonably consistent at around 9 000 but you tend to float between 8 500 and 9 200 a year and they are very popular. The second type of program that LINC operate are under the 26TEN banner, the action plan program. We have around 1 600 and that has increased from 900 a year ago. We planned to have a target for this year around 1 600 people who will have some contact with LINC through the 26TEN program that may involve tuition through literacy and numeracy or being referred to another destination.

The third program we have is what is now described as the Adult Education program which has in the recent past been described as Lifestyle and Leisure. This is a program which is running into the headwinds of changing contemporary experiences. A lot of the programs that used to run there were how to hang a door, how to lay a floor, all of those are now available through large hardware people like Bunnings.

A very popular program 10 years ago would have been introduction to IT, how to use your computer. People have acquired all that knowledge now and increasingly a lot of programs would be about information about a particular topic or a particular hobby and that stuff is all available on Google. So people can access that information. That program is being overtaken by the change in technology. There are more program providers - U3A is a big player in this area as, indeed, is the School for Seniors, both of whom work in collaboration with LINC in various parts of the state, particularly in the south.

We have been unable to effectively promote a point of difference for the lifestyle and leisure programs. Quite simply, the environment we are operating in today is quite different to what it was 10 or 15 years ago.

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Mr DEAN - Most of that is being accessed through the LINC Centres - online and in person I take it?

Mr MURPHY - You are quite right.

Mr DEAN - Is there a cost to that?

Mr MURPHY - No.

CHAIR - Adult Ed had a cost.

Mr MURPHY - If people choose to access an internet connection through a LINC centre, there is no charge for that.

Mr DEAN - Right, sounds good.

Mr DEAN - Adult Education - I want to touch on that, minister. With the numbers dropping off as steeply as they are, what is the future of Adult Education in this state? Where is it at? What is going to happen in that area, because it seems to me you are not getting the numbers you would like?

CHAIR - That has just been explained. He was just talking about the Adult Ed program.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have re-established the brand.

Mr DEAN - There are two things here - there's the work and life skills program enrolments and the other one is the Adult Education program. I was trying differentiate between the two.

Mr MURPHY - I apologise, I probably didn't explain.

Mr DEAN - The numbers in Adult Education have dropped right off to almost nil.

CHAIR - I was having a chuckle, because the target for 2014-15 is 4 000.

Mr DEAN - Yes, I was going to talk about that as well. That is hardly realistic, is it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are doing all we can. We have re-established the Adult Education brand to increase brand awareness, which hopefully will help, but clearly the price point wasn't right.

CHAIR - Exactly right.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We need to have a look at that to see how we can remodel it, particularly the areas of literacy and numeracy in Adult Education. They are very important. We have the 26TEN program, which has been in existence for a couple of years now, to add value to adult education. We need to do some very proactive work in this area, but it's about getting the price point right, so the price is not such a significant barrier to participation. Particularly for people in areas of social disadvantage that would most value an adult education opportunity.

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Mr DEAN - The School for Seniors is such a success story at Launceston, and it probably is in other areas in the state.

CHAIR - And U3A.

Mr DEAN - In Launceston, the School for Seniors is very successful indeed and their number continue to increase year after year. In fact, the Education Department has commended them on their facilities, and the renovation of their facilities.

Is there some opportunity for Adult Education to enter into an agreement or arrangement with the School for Seniors because it is working so well.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There are always opportunities for collaboration if they are in the interests of both parties. I would never discourage that. I am not sure what discussions have happened up to this point but if you want to have a chat.

Mr DEAN - It seems to me there's probably an opportunity there. I don't know how it would work but seems like a real opportunity.

Mr ROCKLIFF - If the idea comes through we can look at how it might work.

Mr DEAN - Okay.

CHAIR - I have a supplementary to that. In my opinion, I think Adult Education has had its day because U3As, School for Seniors, Men's Sheds and a number of places, are picking that up. There are several reasons why Adult Education has been superseded. One is cost while the others are very inexpensive. It is annual fee, generally speaking, or a very small course fee.

You used to publish the Adult Education booklet per term in the major newspapers and that is no longer happening. It was in people's faces three or four times a year and they had easy access to look at the courses. The third reason I have been given, and it is only anecdotal but I think it is nevertheless true, there were some excellent teachers in the Adult Education program but there were also people who would do the Adult Education course one term and then consider themselves experts because there was no accreditation of any kind as to who could run the course. If you applied to run a course in anything, as long as you had the number of students required you could run it. I believe the quality was not always what people were expecting for the money they were paying.

If something has been superseded there is no reason to -

Mr DEAN - The School for Seniors runs a course on just about everything and the cost is minimal. The members for Rosevears and Launceston went up there recently and the cost was about \$40, minimal, just enough to cover immediate expenses and they have excellent facilities. They will probably be turning students away in time the way they are going.

Mrs ARMITAGE - They provide a booklet, very similar to the Adult Education one.

Mr VALENTINE - On Information Services Community [inaudible], looking at the line item, I am trying to figure out what is happening. You have in your first year - of the difference between last year's budget and this year's - you are \$515 000 up but your expenses have changed

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and you have a net position of minus-\$1.4 million. What has caused that? In the forward Estimates, you flat line. I am trying to figure out what is going on.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You are on 3.1?

Mr VALENTINE -No, 3.1.

Mr Andrew FINCH - I am trying to understand the question.

Mr VALENTINE - If you have a look at your expenses, go to page 2.7, table 2.2, your expenses are up \$1.9 million and your appropriation is up, plus five on five.

Mr Andrew FINCH - Where are you looking at?

Mr VALENTINE - This is revenue from appropriation in table 2.21 - revenue from appropriation by output. You are increasing your expenses by \$1.9 million -

Mr Andrew FINCH - Table 2.21 - what page?

Mr VALENTINE - No, table 2.9, page 2.21. Sorry.

CHAIR - I don't understand your question, Rob.

Mr VALENTINE - I have just explained it. So, you have an expense. You are increasing your expenses by \$1.9 million -

CHAIR - No, no. Expenditure not expenses.

Mr VALENTINE - It is output group Expense Summary. Increasing your expenditure by \$1.9 million but they are getting \$515 000, which means they have a net loss of \$1.4 million so what is happening?

Mr A. FINCH - What happens is the expenses that are reported in table 2.2 are done on an accrual basis, which covers cash appropriation, plus items, for example, like depreciation of books and so on as the assets are brought to account, so there is depreciation. Then changes in leave liabilities and so on. They also include a total source of funds, which is broader than government appropriation. For example, funds brought through in trust accounts and so on.

Mr VALENTINE - It is not a true position that they are down \$1.4 million on that year.

Mr A. FINCH - Down \$1.4 million?

Mr VALENTINE - Your expenses go up by \$1.9 million and you are giving them \$515 000.

Mr A. FINCH - The correct way to look at it is in the expense table, which is table 2.2 and that shows the increase from \$31.1 million to \$33 million so that is the appropriate way to look at it.

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CHAIR - There are things like own source revenue or revenue from the Federal government and that is why I say it is expenditure not expenses. That is what they put out, but the amount from the appropriation bill is that second amount.

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, I understand that. I thought that you equate the two. You have your expenses on the one hand and you have your income in the other and there must be a difference overall. That is okay.

CHAIR - There is because there is money coming in from other sources.

Mr VALENTINE - I need to learn more about tables and I appreciate that. Let us stick to the revenue from appropriation by output in that case.

CHAIR - That is what is coming out of the Budget.

Mr VALENTINE - I realise that, and I was trying to look at the expense of it as well, but clearly that is not the way to look at it. I will take a lesson on that at a later stage from Mr Finch. You are saying you have plus \$515 000 for this year, next is minus \$445 000 and then you have plus \$573 000, plus \$648 000 and I am wondering why the interesting movements there. It is the twenty-seventh pay again we are dealing with in that negative situation of minus \$445 000?

Mr A. FINCH - No, it would not be the twenty-seventh pay, there are just variations.

Mr VALENTINE - Where is the twenty-seventh pay?

CHAIR - That is the 2015-16 year, the twenty-seventh pay. In most of the others there has been more there because you have had to pay an extra pay.

Mr A FINCH - We have things like the effect of the wage pause where funds are taken away and then come back again.

Mr VALENTINE - That is the \$445 000?

Mr A. FINCH - It would not be totally attributed to that, but it is a contribution.

Mr VALENTINE - Then in 2015-16 you are giving them extra for presumably the twenty-seventh pay situation, or are you not? Are you on a different cycle to the rest?

Mr A. FINCH - No, the twenty-seventh pay does affect it.

Mr VALENTINE - Sometimes departments are on a different cycle.

Mr A. FINCH - DHHS, I think, Rob you are referring to. That does affect us and that will be taken into account in the department's budget.

CHAIR - It is out of line with most of the other budget departments where you have a bit of a blip in 2015-16 because there is an extra pay in that year. Yours is down rather than up.

Mr VALENTINE - Yes. There is nothing strange in that that we should be concerned about. Thank you very much.

CHAIR - Are there any further questions? Did you have one, Kerry, on information services?

Mr K. FINCH - It was really a comment about the superb library service that we have in Tasmania, probably as good as the United Kingdom I would say. Is there a way of demonstrating efficiency, and I really appreciated seeing those numbers increasing at libraries, the visitations, so that was a good sign because you would hate to think it was going south. Is there a figure for demonstrating efficiency, like a cost per book issued or something like that? Is there an efficiency method you use in regard to library services?

[6.45 p.m.]

Mr MURPHY - We would have to take that question on notice. There is, but I am not entirely sure and I am not sure either whether we use it as a benchmark. Typically, libraries use as benchmarks the number of borrowings per hour or the number of visitors. That is why the number of visitations is an important measure here. Unfortunately, the state librarian is not with me this evening. I do have a sense that there is a figure somewhere of cost per book borrowed but I am uncertain about the degree to which that is a valuable benchmark figure when comparing. You can see the visitations are increasing to LINC's but a lot of those visitations are to do with activities that are underway at the LINC rather than somebody necessarily coming to borrow a book, although, as the minister pointed out, it is a really useful way of getting people into libraries and to access the services.

CHAIR - Minister, I would like comment on the volunteer hours because they are extraordinary. What do you do to recognise volunteers?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We celebrate volunteers across the Government.

CHAIR - What do you do to celebrate 114 852 volunteers in the LINC service?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is an amazing contribution, it really is. Any formal recognition?

CHAIR - My question is directed at the fact that if you don't. You might like to think about what you might do because it is an extraordinary number of volunteer hours. I know there are volunteers in all kinds of areas but in each specific area we try to recognise them for their contribution. What do you do in the LINC?

Mr A. FINCH - Each of the LINC's have their own process to respect and honour the volunteers that come through and we certainly value what they do. But in a formal sense, we have the RBF Education Awards in which we have a Volunteer of the Year nomination. That comes up in October and anyone is entitled to nominate people who volunteer for anywhere across the agency. We do have people who are recognised as they are volunteering for LINC and other places.

CHAIR - There are a lot of organisations who make people life members or the equivalent or Volunteer of the Year - as the minister was talking about the respect in schools award.

Mr DEAN - On security around the use of the internet services within the libraries. That was a concern at one stage. Last year we were told there were still no filters within the systems and that

it was an issue that was being considered and looked at. Have there been breaches during the year, and have we made any changes there to ensure people cannot access inappropriate sites?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I haven't been informed of any breaches, nor has Mr Murphy. I am not sure what discussions there were last year on addressing that issue. I will take that on notice if you like.

Mr DEAN - It would seem it is pretty well under control if there have been no breaches and it has been watched very closely. Unless there are any breaches, we don't need to take it on notice. If there are any breaches it would be good to be aware of those situations.

Mr ROCKLIFF - If there are any, we will correct the record.

3.2 Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office -

Mr FINCH - Minister, according to the budget papers, the allocation for the Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office - I suppose it is called TAHO - is to be reduced in the 2014-15 financial year by approximately \$596 000, as stated. Savings are to be made as a result of the amalgamation of the TAHO, reference and online service sections within LINC Tasmania. Can you explain, minister, how the savings are to be made? Is that through redundancies? Will there be a reduction in the services provided in Tasmania because of that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I do not anticipate reduction in service.

Mr A. FINCH - That is an accounting transfer between the two outputs. It is realigning the output expenditure to get it more accurate. We have transferred \$611 000 associated with reference and online services from output 3.2, into output 3.1. There are no savings or no change, it is just accounting.

Mr K. FINCH - It was a little confusing because table 2.9 footnote 7, reclassified to output group 3.1, the appropriation of which has increased by \$515 000. There was a bit of confusion there.

I am curious about whether the integrity and the cultural image of the Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office, as a repository for Tasmanian records and documentary heritage of the state, is going to be retained with this proposed amalgamation. I am wondering whether that standard that we have and that wonderful resource is going to maintain its integrity.

Mr ROCKLIFF - My view is that it will. How is that for a direct answer? But it will be monitored, I will say.

CHAIR - Some of 3.2 has gone into 3.1. Does that solve Mr Valentine's problem about where the extra money came from?

Mr VALENTINE - I still think there is an interesting situation there.

CHAIR - I agree with you.

Mr K. FINCH - I highlight that because people come from around the world to use this as a resource and our standard is very high. I remember Helen Reddy, in tracing her family, used to

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come from America and she used to sneak into Tassie and go to the Archives Office to trace her family tree. The records are so good and so well kept that I hope that is maintained and recognised.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Absolutely, and gets more valuable every single year.

Capital investment program -

Mr DEAN - I am not sure where it comes under but I raised it during the Budget and you are aware of the issue in relation to the Kings Meadows High School, minister. This is in relation to the retention basin that is going to be used there.

I have consulted with the School Association and there are considerable concerns from the school in relation to some of the things that will create for the school if it continues in the way in which it is currently planned. Some of the issues raised with me have been the occupational health issues that will raise for the school because of their lines of sight, being able to view students which they now do and they ensure is done on a regular basis. Being close to Hobart Road it allows for movement of people off the street down into the school ground and from kids from the school ground up onto the street. The oval will be dropped. The levee is going to be lifted to some degree around it, so the oval becomes the retention basin. I will just read out a couple of the issues that have been identified to me.

With the proposed increase in wall height and lowering of the oval this would greatly impact on staff line of sight across the area and oval. Document attached showing lines of sight, et cetera.

The school already has a large land area to supervise and has no additional resources available to increase supervision in this area. It would be difficult to monitor people entering the school from Hobart Road, trespassers, et cetera, as we would not see them from the administration building.

This is a document

Mr DEAN - et cetera, as we would not see them from the administration building.

This is a document received from the School Association. This is a very recent document and I will continue -

Similarly, this could impact on student attendance, truancy, as students may leave via the area so as not to be seen. With the oval lower this could become an unsafe area after hours with people accessing this from Hobart Road ... lack of facilities during working in times it will take to do it ... et cetera. If the work proceeds with the oval, does this include all aspects, cricket pitch ...?

The association has a number of concerns with it and the community involved with them have also raised a number of issues. Where are we with that, minister? Has there been proper consultation with the staff of the school about this?

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Mrs ARMITAGE - I might add there is a round table meeting organised to do with the education department at the school and I have asked to attend as the member for Launceston with the Kings Meadows area -

Mr ROCKLIFF - The honourable member for Launceston is correct. It has come to the attention of the department some of the issues that you have outlined and there is a round table between Launceston City Council, Kings Meadows High School, the school association and Department of Education officers.

CHAIR - There is a date for this, minister?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Next week. To discuss the restructure and improvement plans and provide feedback into those plans and the Department of Education will continue to work with and engage with the school community.

Mr DEAN - That sounds good because the association has raised issues and the community has raised issues with me and other users of the oval as well. It is a community-used oval, which is great.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It sounds like you are both across this which is very good. The department has just been made aware of it, meeting next week at the round table with those discussions.

CHAIR - You are aware of that so you will deal with this, minister. Are you going to this meeting?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Parliament is sitting next week but I will be going to the school at some stage.

Mr DEAN - Excellent, things are being done and that is great. That is all they are asking for.

CHAIR - It might be useful if you heard from the school association as well if the school association is concerned.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is the best way to understand the issue, get there first-hand and have a look.

CHAIR - Minister, that finishes the Education department. We only have TAFE to go now.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you very much to my secretary, Colin Pettit, and to Andrew, and all the representatives from the department behind me. There is a lot of work that goes into preparation of Estimates and I appreciate it very much. Thanks, Chair.

CHAIR - We will send you the questions on notice.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, and the work will continue.

TasTAFE -

[7.00 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF - Chair, I have Stephen Conway, CEO of TasTAFE, and Nick May, Chief Financial Director of TasTAFE, at the table. I commend TAFE on the good work they have done in recent years in bringing together TasTAFE once again under the leadership of Stephen, the team and the board. They have done a tremendous job under difficult circumstances with minimal disruption to staff and anxiety in bringing the two organisations together.

I was very proud to see Stephen accept an award from the Minister for State Growth on behalf of TasTAFE for a large service training provider last Friday at the award ceremony, which was tremendous and a testimony to Stephen and his team.

Mr CONWAY - Thank you very much, I appreciate it.

CHAIR - Do you want to make an opening statement about TasTAFE, minister?

Mr ROCKLIFF - You may take that as my opening statement.

CHAIR - There has been universal joy at TasTAFE coming together again, as there was when you were talking about the disruption that occurred when Polytechnic came in. I am sure everyone is quite happy.

I imagine it will take some time, minister, do you think, to rebuild the reputation that some particular areas of TAFE had which they lost in that intervening period. Drysdale, for instance, is it under TAFE again?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

CHAIR - Drysdale had a fantastic reputation as a hospitality trainer and provider and it was a little bit lost in those intervening years. How they are going?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Certainly the brand will help and I think that rebuilding has started. There are still some issues to work through with the merger and creation of TasTAFE but TAFE has a very strong and recognised brand. I know Tasmanians value it highly.

A member interjecting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, obviously given that the Tasmania Tomorrow reforms had an impact but TasTAFE is doing a lot of work and the board is very engaged in ensuring that TasTAFE positions itself in what is an increasingly competitive marketplace for training. The Government is going to work with TasTAFE and assist them through that process because it is a competitive environment. Certainly the new structure allows for heightened competition and TasTAFE I believe is very much well positioned to compete successfully in that marketplace.

Mr CONWAY - It is fair to say that it will take us a little while to really drive the brand into people's psyches, that TAFE is back in Tasmania. In regard to Drysdale, just today my colleague Gail Eaton-Briggs and some senior staff met with the Tourism and Hospitality Association. Whilst I don't want to put words into their mouth, they are highly supportive of the fact the Drysdale brand is back and that we are doing whatever we can for the growing visitor economy in Tasmania and doing our bit to train and produce people for the hospitality and tourism industry. That is just one example of many I could recount.

CHAIR - Drysdale was very visible, almost as a separate stand-alone entity, which I know it wasn't but you know what I mean.

A little tongue-in-cheek, minister, but I presume then it is not one of the boards you are about to axe?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No. The TasTAFE board -

CHAIR - I am asking so they can be secure.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. I have been very impressed with the level of engagement the board has had with me and the Minister for State Growth. We met the TasTAFE board together, and we are both taking responsibility for training systems in Tasmania, with Mr Groom in charge of the procurement side of things through Skills Tasmania and my responsibility being service delivery.

When I visited the board and engaged with them, I noted there is a huge cross-section of the community on the TasTAFE board, which is very pleasing to see. There are members from the business sector and the social sector, and it is a really energised group. You know they want to position TasTAFE so it can compete in the competitive market for training.

CHAIR - A question in relation to Skills Tasmania, because most of their responsibilities and the training they do was part of TAFE originally, before the Polytechnic/Skills Institute split. I know it is totally industry focused, so why did you decide not to bring that component back into TAFE.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You are talking about the Skills Institute? Perhaps I will ask Stephen.

Mr CONWAY - Thank you. We have to be careful because the Skills Institute and Skills Tasmania quite often get mixed up.

CHAIR - Yes, sorry, I meant the Skills Institute.

Mr CONWAY - The Skills Institute was the second component of the Tasmanian publicly funded VET system in Tasmania under Tasmania Tomorrow. It was an important component that was merged into what is now TasTAFE, and brought to TasTAFE an incredibly strong connection with industry to support industry workforce development. Also the Skills Institute of Tasmania was at the forefront of Australian VET provision in respect of getting out of the campus and getting into the workforce and industry. The beauty of TasTAFE, as it is now constructed, is that we have all the strengths and advantages that flowed on from the Polytechnic, plus the work the Skills Institute has done in establishing industry connections. I have met every industry leader in Tasmania and they have been resounding in their support for what has been done.

CHAIR - Are you saying the Skills Institute sits within TasTAFE?

Mr CONWAY - It does indeed.

CHAIR - Okay, I am pleased to hear that. That was the question I was asking you. When you were talking about it being in Mr Groom's -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Sorry, that was Skills Tasmania.

CHAIR - Sorry, that is where my confusion was. Thank you for clearing that up.

Mr DEAN - In November last year an agreement was signed between TasTAFE and the University of Tasmania to work together in the use of the facilities and provision of courses and so on. Minister, how is that working and what is happening in regard to that? It seems like an interesting concept.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is an interesting concept. I am encouraging collaboration between the university, the Department of Education and TasTAFE. I am encouraging them to work together and create very strong linkages. Steve, do you want to talk about the university?

Mr CONWAY - I would be delighted to, minister. Tasmanians are very lucky - the university has agreements with both TasTAFE and the school sector.

In November last year we signed a memorandum of understanding and MOU was quite clear that it was to be used as an instrument for TasTAFE and the university to work together as you have described in relation to learning resources, facilities and initiatives.

Since that signing, I have worked very closely with a senior officer in the university. We meet regularly in respect of a steering committee that oversees the actions that emanate from that MOU and there are several working groups, along industry lines, and we have a tremendous arrangement where TasTAFE is able to bring to a post-compulsory tertiary education in Tasmania those strong industry links and a sense of applied learning so that the practical knowledge that is required for our workforce is provided. Then there is the opportunity for students from TasTAFE to articulate into degree courses and beyond. I am also delighted to say we have quite a large number of students who come back to us having started at the university and then come to TasTAFE to undertake a more practical-based course component so that they can go into, hopefully, the Tasmanian workforce with the theoretical and research-based knowledge and then have that lovely mixture of practical application.

Mr DEAN - There was one concern raised at the time, minister, and you might be able to identify whether it was sorted out. These growth opportunities will only be realised if Tasmania has the skilled and capable people to pursue and deliver them. Were there any concerns there?

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of the educators?

Mr CONWAY - Yes. The educators. The teachers.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It stands to reason why that would be a concern.

Mr MURPHY - I am not sure what you are referencing that from.

Mr DEAN - It was a report in the *Mercury*. It was a Professor Peter Rathjen comment at the time of the identifying of this agreement with TasTAFE.

Mr CONWAY - Since day one of TasTAFE we have focused our internal development on ensuring that we have the best equipped professional practising teachers that we can put in front of classrooms, and behind computers for online learning, et cetera. And why TasTAFE has so

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quickly regained its reputation in the tertiary section, is because we have put such a large focus on our teachers, their capacity and their capability and also their ongoing development.

CHAIR - In relation to that, the member for Aspley asked a question earlier about the agricultural course in Dorset. She said that was cancelled because you could not find an appropriate teacher.

Mr CONWAY - I was in the House when that question was asked. I do not know the details. I assume it might have related to a Department of Education teacher and the only reason I indicate that is we have a very strong dairy educational delivery team inside TasTAFE and from time to time we work with the Department of Education in respect of their agricultural program and their specialist farms. Without knowing the details of the cancellation, I cannot comment but I am very happy, as I think the minister has indicated, to find the answer to that inquiry.

Mr DEAN - The only other question I had was the number of enrolled persons in TasTAFE currently this year. Do you have that number?

Mr CONWAY - In terms of quarter 1 2014, we have a total number of students of 13 983. That is around the state and total enrolments, and those two figures are slightly different, of 15 870. They are the figures at the end of quarter 1 2014. Our final figures for 2013 were we had a total student number of 32 711 and a total of 42 291 enrolments. It is a significant player in the post-compulsory tertiary space in Tasmania.

[7.15 p.m.]

Mr DEAN - You are indeed.

CHAIR - A question about your relationship with the art school. From memory, you can go to the art school and do the woodworking course and you can choose to do either the TAFE one or - is that correct? I am not sure of the details.

Mr CONWAY - Yes, we do. In both Hobart and in Launceston, TasTAFE and the University of Tasmania share facilities and we share them in the truer sense of the word. In your question you have referred to workshops for carpentry or that part of artwork and graphic design. The delightful thing for me is, I can walk either into the art centre at Inveresk or Hunter Street and it is very difficult to differentiate - and why should you? - who is a UTAS or a TasTAFE student. It is tremendous to see the collaboration and the cooperation that occurs there.

CHAIR - If student then go on from TAFE into a degree course there, do they get accreditation?

Mr CONWAY - They do indeed. They get full recognition as they articulate from perhaps a diploma level course with us into a degree. Equally, if there is a University of Tasmania art student who hasn't had the opportunity to understand some of the more practical skills of using hand and power tools or operating safety with machinery or some of those what we might describe as technical competencies of working with material that has both a practical function but also an artistic function, then is it generally the TasTAFE teachers who provide that.

CHAIR - That is how it came to my attention, from a student who wanted to go the art school to do the woodwork course and it was recommended that he should first do the TAFE

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course so he would develop the skills before he went on to do the diploma and then go on to the degree.

Mr VALENTINE - Do you have any relationship with Contemporary Art Tasmania in Tasma Street?

Mr CONWAY - Yes, we do. I can't detail the specific nature of the relationship, but the arts program is one of those many programs in TasTAFE where we have a good relationship with the industry and we work very closely with a range of artistic associations both preparing artists for work, and we might all acknowledge that artists are sometimes very good artists and not very good enterprise operators, and we support them in that regard.

Mr VALENTINE - I had another question that is not about TAFE, it is about adult education, whether that is going to happen again.

CHAIR - We talked about this, where were you?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We've had that discussion but it has been rebranded, onwards and upwards for adult education.

Mr DEAN - We just got to the centre of the operating and where that is in Launceston, on the north-west coast, here and Devonport. They are all operating well.

CHAIR - Obviously you are cooperating in other places too, if you are providing someone at Dorset, for instance, in the agricultural course.

Mr DEAN - For instance, is Drysdale still operating from Drysdale House?

Mr CONWAY - We have Drysdale House in Hobart. We have a very contemporary training facility in Launceston and we also have a very good training facility in Devonport. We operate across the state and working backwards from the north-west we have a facility in Smithton, Burnie, Devonport. We have several facilities in Launceston and a facility in Hobart. We are also funded through our grant from Skills Tasmania to operate across all of Tasmania so whether we have a campus in a regional area is to a large degree, we hope, irrelevant. We are able to provide training into those regions and we are part of a range of support training networks going in to operate in Smithton, for instance.

Mr DEAN - What about the trade centres within the schools that are currently operating. Is there any connection between you?

Mr CONWAY - Yes, we are one of the most common users of the trade training centres and we are generally engaged by the area high schools to operate a range of vocational educational and training courses. Recently, I had the opportunity to be in discussions around the Huonville trade training centre and that is an incredibly busy trade training centre. Whether we are talking carpentry and joinery or hospitality, we are the provider in that place and a similar example can be given for Bridgewater and all of the trade training centres.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is a great initiative.

Mr DEAN - A great story.

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Mrs ARMITAGE - I notice you have quite a few functions in Drysdale in Launceston with the students participating as chefs and waiting staff. How many days a week is the restaurant open? Do you make a considerable amount of income from the functions or does it go back into the school or back into the Department of Education?

Mr CONWAY - We do not run it 52 weeks a year and four or five nights a week and at various times for lunches. Like all of our Drysdale centres, it depends upon where the students are at with their course. I think it is fair to say Launceston is generally open three days a week for lunches and dinners.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Which days would they be?

Mr CONWAY - I think they are Wednesday, Thursday and Friday but I am giving a very general answer.

In respect of how we operate from a financial perspective - we have to do this very sensitively. We cannot operate in a manner that has any adverse impact on commercial operations. Launceston is a very good example of where we operate those dining experiences in full cooperation with industry whether that is local wineries, local food producers, or local restaurants. We do not generally make a profit from what we do but any money that comes in through customers partaking of the meals that are produced, or the beverages that are served, generally goes into a well audited account and we make sure that money is put back into replacement of equipment.

Mrs ARMITAGE - It goes back into you, which is nice.

Mr CONWAY - It very much does, yes.

Mrs ARMITAGE - I was thinking mainly of the functions you occasionally have. I have been to functions there in the evening and there might be 150 people there.

Mr VALENTINE - It is near the tram sheds?

Mrs ARMITAGE - No, Paterson Street.

Mr CONWAY - It is opposite the old campus.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister. A grand effort since 9 o'clock this morning.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thanks very much for the engagement and scrutiny. I appreciated that and look forward to nine months' time.

CHAIR - Thank you.

The committee adjourned at 7.24 p.m.