

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Monday 23 June 2008 - Estimates Committee B (O'Byrne) - Part 1

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Monday 23 June 2008

MEMBERS

Mr Dean
Mr Finch
Mr Wing
Mrs Jamieson
Mrs Rattray-Wagner (Chair)
Ms Ritchie

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

IN ATTENDANCE

Hon. Michelle O'Byrne, Minister for Parks, Heritage and the Arts; Minister for Sport and Recreation

Ministerial Office

Norm Andrews, Head of Office
Peter Robinson, Adviser
Brad Arkell, Adviser
Anne Cameron, Adviser
Luke Badcock, Adviser

Department of Environment, Parks, Heritage and the Arts

Scott Gadd, Secretary
David Hudson, Deputy Secretary, DEPHA
Brett Noble, Director, Office of the Secretary, DEPHA
Peter Mooney, General Manager, Parks and Wildlife
Pete Smith, Director, Tasmanian Heritage Office
Kane Salter, Acting General Manager, Corporate Services, DEPHA
Lesley Kirby, Director, Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens

Katherine Hough, Director, Arts Tasmania
Bill Bleathman, Director Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery
Warren Jones, General Manager, Environment
Steve Gall, Manager, Aboriginal Heritage Office
Stephen Large, CEO, Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority

Sport and Recreation Tasmania

Craig Martin, Acting Director, Sport & Recreation Tasmania
Patti Johnson, Finance and Facilities Director
Peter Robinson, Adviser

The committee met at 9.30 a.m.

CHAIR (Mrs Rattray-Wagner) - Thank you coming along today.-We will start, as we have advised, with output group 2, sport and recreation, and then move on to grants and subsidies, capital investment.

Minister, I think it would be appropriate at this point in time to place on the public record Committee B's acknowledgement of thanks to the previous chair of this committee, the Honourable Sue Smith.-She has been a wonderful chair of this committee; so I would just like to record our acknowledgement of and thanks to the previous chair.-I know she will be listening from somewhere.

Ms O'BYRNE - Can I join you in adding my thanks to her.-I think she was first ever committee chair, this being only my second round of estimates.

CHAIR - I invite you to give a 10-minute overview.

Ms O'BYRNE - It will not take that long.

DIVISION 4

(Department of Environment, Parks, Heritage and the Arts)

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms O'BYRNE - First of all, I thank the committee today for the approach they are taking to go through the output group.-It does make it a lot easier for staff to be there for the appropriate time as opposed to coming in and out, which tends to happen if we spend too much time on the overview.-Can I introduce the Acting Director, Sport and Recreation Tasmania, Craig Martin.-I think this is the first time we have not had Liz Jack in quite a very long period of time.-I would like to put on record my thanks to her for her work in Sport and Recreation as well.-She is now a deputy secretary in Economic Development.

Can I also introduce Patti Johnson.-Patti is the Finance and Facilities Director from the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, along with my ministerial adviser, Peter Robinson, and my chief of staff; Norm Andrews, who I think most of you will have come across in other portfolios before.

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I start by saying that I think Sport and Recreation is probably one of the drivers in having a truly socially inclusive society where community as a whole, not just in isolation or in certain areas, can take advantage of the economic and social opportunities which are presented to us.

Our aims are to provide the best possible infrastructure, which we believe does encourage an active and healthy community, and help maximise our levels of participation, which nurtures and stimulates those who aspire to elite levels and provides great health and social outcomes for people who are not aspiring to elite levels.-I am really pleased when we do discuss the elite level that we are well on the way to having a record number of Tasmanians at the Olympics this year.- We already have 10 Olympic and Paralympic athletes who have been selected to go to Beijing.- We have got six who are still in contention and, in the bulk of the cases, a very strong chance of being up there and certainly a chance for the others.

There were nine in the 2004 games in Athens, to give you a comparison of how well we are doing.-I must say, for a state of less than 500 000 people, to produce so many Olympic athletes is a remarkable achievement.-I think it actually confirms our reputation of performing at such a high standard, at the highest standard in the world.

Their qualification, their acceptance into the games, is a testament of the incredible hard work that they as individuals have put through but, also, it is a reflection of what I think are excellent programs being run at the Tasmanian Institute of Sport.-I have got to know quite a few of the athletes over the last couple of years, and it has been good to be able to watch their progress.-I think that each of them individually is also a tremendous role model for our community.-They provide a great deal of incentive for all of us, but particularly I find that when they do roll out to speak to young people - the TIS spends a lot of time working with them on their presentation and on their capacity to be part of community engagement - they are delivering really good, strong role model messages about being active and the things that you can achieve.

This year's Budget continues our commitment to ensuring that we do have the best in sport and recreation infrastructure.-Funding has risen from \$7.2 million in 2004-05 to \$11.9 million in 2008-09, which is an increase of well over 60 per cent.-We know from the latest ERAS survey - the exercise, recreation and sport survey - that Tasmanians in 2006 were slightly more likely than the national average to achieve the minimum amount of exercise per week of 150 minutes over at least five sessions.-However, we also know that we always need to find ways of increasing opportunities and access to participation.-The way our society has evolved and changed, the change in the nature of work demand and the times around that, the prevalence of, and the ease of obtaining, fast food, sugar-based drinks and, I suppose you could call it, non-interactive entertainment makes it more important and increasingly more difficult to provide and engage at that level.

Through Sport and Recreation we provide a whole range of programs, grants, service and infrastructure to increase participation in healthy activities.-One of the ways that we are doing this in this year's Budget is the new \$4 million allocation to support the development of a well-planned and integrated network of community trail and city bike ways.-This initiative will not only provide infrastructure for recreation but also provide alternate transport opportunities as well as increasing some of the connectivities between our communities.-This has obvious implications for reducing greenhouse gases and for helping to meet our greenhouse gas emission targets.-We look forward to working with local government, in particular, in this area.

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The trails and bike ways funding is part of a \$6.4 million package of new funding in this year's Budget for sport and recreation initiatives.-In addition to the trails network, the Budget provides \$2.2 million to the Central Coast Council for a major upgrade of the old Liston site; \$150 000 to the Northern Midlands Council to upgrade Evandale's Northern Park recreation ground; and \$50 000 for the Waratah-Wynyard Council to develop a master plan for the development of a holistic sports precinct for that area.

The additional funding continues the State Government's commitment to creating an active and healthy Tasmania and to provide the best possible sporting opportunities and infrastructure.-In the past three years, we have funded some pretty big sport and recreation infrastructure projects, including the hockey centre at Cornelian Bay, the Northern Regional Aquatic and Tennis Centres, the Silverdome, Clarence and Moonah sports stadiums and the Aurora Netball Centre at a cost of more than \$15 million.

There has also been several million dollars allocated in that time through our grants programs to community-based organisations to assist them in their provision of opportunities.-It is true to say - it is a hard thing to have to admit to ourselves - that when you are dealing with the reality of a finite budget, there is never going to be enough money, but I believe we do have a strong record in sport and recreation, and I believe that it is going to continue into the coming years.-With that, Madam Chair, I am happy to hand over to questions.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister.-Obviously, there has been the 60 per cent increase since 2004-05 - I believe that is what you said - yet the participation levels on table 2.6 have actually decreased.-I note that there has actually been a different way of measuring, but I would like you to tell the committee why you believe our participation number has decreased and why the target is to stay at that same level?

Ms O'BYRNE - I am happy to talk about the particular modelling that we have used, but can I put it in the context of a larger participation issue that we are facing around the nation.-One of the things that we do as sport and recreation ministers is meet regularly, and the issue of participation is probably one of the key ones.-We are finding that people are requiring different things in order to get them to engage and to participate.-You will notice in the Premier's Physical Activity Council that they do a 'Find 30' - that is, three times a week, find 30 minutes.-You will also notice that when I talk about what we think is the minimum people should be doing, it is actually in excess of that.-What we are dealing with in a lot of cases is perceptions and buckets of information that we think people can take in in order to get them to change behaviours.-There are key times when people stop participating. They stop participating in their early teens when life gets a little bit more fulsome, perhaps.

CHAIR - 'Social' may be the word.

Ms O'BYRNE - I think social, but also educational.-There are a lot of different demands, and quite a lot of people in their teens are taking on work, and work is no longer something that does not occur on a Saturday and a Sunday.-There are implications for how they might be able to participate there.-But there is also those fitness gap years, which are the times from when you start having a family until your family has got to an age where you have enough time to engage again.-So there are some key times that we need to focus on.-There is also a belief in the older community that they might not be fit enough to exercise; so a lot of the participation work we do is about encouraging them and finding ways to step around that.

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One of the key programs that we have set up last year, and we spent a little bit of time talking about it last year, involves the community recreation grants.-That is focused on finding what are the barriers to participation and responding to them.-This is because barriers might be a whole host of things.-We automatically think of things like physical barriers and, in many cases, that is that. We have been able to fund some disability infrastructure in some facilities to allow them to deal with that.-But it can also be economic; it can be cultural; it can be geographical.-It might be too hard to get somewhere.-In a lot of cases, it is about having that opportunity provided in an environment that you feel safe and comfortable with, particularly if you have been out of sport and recreation or out of being physically active for some time.-That first step in is actually a really big one.-We might not get people to go to the gym, but we might get them to go along to the local community centre and do something else that is not as invasive and is not as threatening at that time.

I am happy to talk about a number of the initiatives, but I might get the department to explain the different modelling that is there in the first place.

CHAIR - The number has actually decreased.-It is a significant decrease.

Mr MARTIN - That is right.-We have taken out the state grants component of the participation opportunities facilitated.-The State grants funding exists each year anyway, and these bodies are going to get funded each year anyway; so we have taken that out of the reckoning with regards to calculating the number of participation opportunities that are facilitated. Hence, that number reflects the fact that those state grants participation opportunities have been taken out.

Ms O'BYRNE - Could you take the committee through the different State grants areas, just for the record?

Mr MARTIN - The state grants are provided to state sporting organisations up to a total of \$50 000.-They are bodies like Athletics Tasmania, the Football Federation of Tasmania, those sorts of bodies.-They receive funding each year of \$50 000 to help them function and operate.

Ms O'BYRNE - One of the other issues is that whilst we are seeing nationally a decrease in engagement in organised sport, we are seeing an increase in activity that is not organised.-So we are getting more people walking or taking up recreational fishing and those sorts of things.-There is also a change in nature of the type of participation that people will have.-Now, I think organised sport is good for a whole host of other lessons and community infrastructure points that we need.-I think it provides you with that social engagement, that community support and, particularly for younger people, the lessons in life that you learn from being part of a team.-So I think that it is important that we continue to support organised sport.-But there does have to be a recognition that a lot more people are choosing more passive engagements or engagements that do not require them to hit to a particular time.-One of the reasons for investing in tracks and trails and cycle ways is because that is an opportunity that a lot of people are now considering.-As we change as a society and as our times are no longer as discrete, we are going to have to find different ways of responding to that.

Ms RITCHIE - Thank you, Madam Chair.-Minister, you did comment earlier in relation to barriers that may be present in relation to preventing participation.-I just wondered if you could drill down a little bit further to discuss two areas that I am interested in - that is, I notice on the Sport and Recreation website that the TASRAD strategic plan runs from 2005 to 2008 in relation to supporting people with disabilities participating in sport.-The other area that I am interested in

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is how we are better enabling Indigenous peoples to increase their participation in sport, if we have, indeed, identified that there is a problem there.-I appreciate there are two separate questions.

Ms O'BYRNE - I am happy with that.-In a way, some of them have a little overlap.-We do fund and support TASRAD - the Tasmanian Sport and Recreation Association for People with a Disability - to increase opportunities.-They include the delivery of initiatives and programs of the Australian Sports Commission, who they work closely with, including Project Connect and disability education programs.-In 2008-09, we will consult with TASRAD and other key disability in sport organisations to develop a Tasmanian Sport and Recreation for People with a Disability framework. That will actually provide us a whole-of-sport and whole-of-government approach.

Ms RITCHIE - To take effect next year?

Ms O'BYRNE - They will be developing it in consultation.-I am not wanting to put a time line around how those conversations might pan out.

Mr MARTIN - We have already had initial consultations with Lee Carlin (tbc) from TASRAD.

Ms O'BYRNE - Okay.-One of the key things, though, in terms of people with disability is that there are a couple of ways you can philosophically go with providing opportunities for them. You can say, 'Here is sport and here is sport for people with disabilities'.-I have a different view.-I actually think that what we should have is, 'Here is sport, and sport provides a whole host of opportunities for people with a range of barriers that impact on them'.-So, if we fund the Football Federation of Tasmania, we should have an expectation that the Football Federation of Tasmania - I am just using them as an example, not that there is any issue with them - should be able to provide an opportunity for people with disabilities to participate.-So I have a personal view - and I think this is the sort of thing we will be teasing out with the framework - that whilst there are occasions when there are sporting organisations that are for people with disabilities - I am thinking particularly of a group in Launceston that provides opportunities on a whole range of different participation options - if we are looking at how we fund sport, we should be funding sport so that anyone can participate.-Whilst having a disability might be an issue that requires an infrastructure assistance, that should be able to be managed within the sport.-I think we are making differences with that.-We did not have anyone in the Paralympics last time and we have Dominic Money Penny competing this year.-He is providing a role model for people that it is not about going and doing something separate; it is about participating in the broad spectrum.-I know that Dominic does that, because he raced past me in the Burnie10 one year and he only had one wheel at the time.-The fact is that we should actually be able to have a broad range of sporting initiatives within one structure.

In theory, the same should be said for Indigenous sport, and I know that most sports have their own programs for encouraging Indigenous participation.-We do have an Indigenous sport program as well, which is managed by Sport and Recreation, and we have an Indigenous sport development officer who works with state sporting organisations to provide opportunities for Indigenous Tasmanians to participate.-The sort of barriers they are experiencing might not be about getting the gear, and it might not be about making sure you have got the right kind of ramps.-There might be some other issues that are more of a key to them that they need assistance with.

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We have had programs offered in swimming, surf lifesaving, cricket, touch footy, AFL, soccer and basketball.-During this time, we actually had a minimum of 190 young Indigenous Tasmanians who participated in that.-Often it is just that first engagement that allows them to tick on.-For them, often it is a step through as opposed to a physical barrier that occurs.-We have also got the Aboriginal outdoor recreation program, which I imagine that you are probably familiar with, Ms Ritchie, because of their engagement with Wirksworth in particular.-That works with various Aboriginal organisations to deliver recreation programs that do focus on issues such as cultural identity, personal growth issues and self-esteem.-Whilst the program was inactive from mid-2007, we have actually got a client officer appointed in March 2008, and we will ensure a minimum of 50 Aboriginal people participate in programs in 2007-08.-During this time, we actually think we will be able to offer sporting programs to family groups, school groups, the general Aboriginal community, Aboriginal members who may have issues with employment - those sorts of focuses.

Ms RITCHIE - I just want to dovetail that into the educative side.-Are you satisfied, given all the things that you have just said about not having sport for people with disabilities separate per se or sport for Indigenous people separate to just sport, with the level of education that is out there that is enabling the community to share that same view, or do you feel that that would be better teased out as you go forward with these frameworks?

Ms O'BYRNE - I think we need to do more to change the perceptions that there are some people who should participate in a different way.-I do not think that people form that view out of any unkindness or wanting to segregate.-But we need to change the way we view sport on a whole.-You could actually argue the same for women's sport.-We still only watch men's sport on television.-Until such time as we have women's sport participating at the same level, then we are still going to have that -

Ms RITCHIE - Netball.

Ms O'BYRNE - Netball is not televised in the same way that football is televised.-It is not cast and televised and communicated in the same way.-But it is only because of the strength of the netball lobbying, in fact, and the fact that they have been able to get better contracts that we have been able to change that.-I think the same needs to happen when we have sports that cater for people with a range of other barriers.-While some pay TV stations ran a lot of the Aboriginal sports channel, Imparja, they are still not mainstream to that extent.-So, the challenge is more for us to create an argument about why things should be mainstreamed - I think 'mainstreamed' is a scary word - and why every opportunity should be treated the same as opposed to segregated off.

Ms RITCHIE - Just one final one - I am sure other members have questions - while we are on the point of education, I am interested to know what the department is doing, if anything, in relation to education as it pertains to parents who attend sporting matches.-We have all seen things in the media about this where parents are perhaps not being as constructive as they should be in sporting children's sports matches, for example.-I just wonder if you could elaborate on that.

Ms O'BYRNE - The ugly parent syndrome, yes.

Ms RITCHIE - Some say 'passionate'.

Ms O'BYRNE - I think there is a difference between passionate supporting of sport - and I think we have all passionately supported games, and even children's games.-The difference is

when that turns out to be something that creates a less than appropriate environment for children.- We want children to learn really good lessons from sport.-We want them to learn about team work, about fighting for something together, about coping with disappointment.-One of the best lessons in life is how to cope when things do not go the way you want them to.-So, we need to make sure that everything around sport actually mirrors those lessons.-I know that Craig is going to want to talk a little about this, so I am going to let him do that.-But one of the things that we have been engaged in is the Play by the Rules program.-I am not sure if you have seen the television ads.-We ran them as community service ads for just a short period of time.

Ms RITCHIE - Yes.

Ms O'BYRNE - There were a couple of them, and it really was a transfer of roles whereby you had the parent playing the sport and the child yelling at them completely inappropriately.- There was the golfing one where the father is ready to do the shot, and he is little bit away from the hole, and his son is there yelling at him saying, 'Come on! Focus, focus'.-Then, when his father, under the pressure, misses the shot, he walks away going, 'Useless'.-It sounds quite trite, but some parents do not think about the impact of their behaviour.-When you put it in that kind of context, it can change.-The other one was the shopping trolley one where somebody accidentally knocks into the mother's shopping trolley and the daughter is going, 'Are you going to take that? - Go after her', and these are the messages which unfortunately you do hear in some sporting environments.-Now, a number of teams and clubs are putting in there own rules, and I know that there are certain codes that have banned some parents from coming to games.-But what we are doing with the Australian Sports Commission under Play by the Rules is primarily about providing information, because it is not only the ugly parent; it is also the discrimination that might occur in a game.-I am referring to harassment and, in some cases, it goes as far as child abuse.-Whilst I cannot refer to any in Tasmania, there have been issues from other States that have been quite disturbing.

Ms RITCHIE - This approach is a nationally consistent approach, obviously?

Ms O'BYRNE - Yes, the Australian Sports Commission is doing this.-It is about trying to increase the capacity of sports to deal with these issues.-How does a voluntary group of people running a sport deal with the fact that one of their parents, who might even volunteer in that sport, is behaving inappropriately?-So, the program has four main aims: it is to increase the capacity of community sport to deal with issues of harassment, discrimination and unlawful behaviour; to educate community sport about where to seek support, advice or to refer issues; to clarify the role of Government agencies who provide sport and identify further potential support; and identify training and processes that will assist in providing that support to sport as well.-We have eight sports who have agreed to participate in the pilot project: AFL Tasmania, Football Federation Tasmania, Tasmania Netball Association, Tasmania Cricket Association, Surf Lifesaving Society, Swimming Tasmania, Tennis Tasmania and Basketball Tasmania.

The Government agencies involved in the project have formed a reference group that is dealing with the issues that sports raise and are developing information sheets particularly on some of the grey issues that might face sports.-We have a reference group which includes the Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Child Protection Advice and Referral Service, the Department of Police and Emergency Management, Local Government Positive Solutions, Legal Aid, the Department of Education, Active After-School Communities, Sport and Recreation Tasmania and Play by the Rules.-It commenced in December.-We think it will run for 12 months.-But I think you are right, Alison,

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with the point you made before about disability and Aboriginal inclusion in sport.-It is about changing community attitudes about what is or is not acceptable in sporting facilities.

The other thing is that parents who behave badly might not see that they are behaving badly.- They might see themselves as being passionate and excited and supporting their child and just getting involved in the rough and tumble of the game in a sense.-But the idea of the ad was to change how you image those things so that you get a focus of what it might be like being a child being yelled at from the side, even from a parent who you know loves you but is saying things that might hurt you or embarrass you as well.

Mr MARTIN - We are actually running the pilot program at a grass roots level as well for clubs.-We recently held a very successful forum at the Kingborough Football Club.-More than 30 people came along to that.-My understanding is they already have really good systems in place.- They have codes of conduct and things like that, but they were proactive.-They wanted to learn a little bit more, and that session went really well.

I have been a junior AFL football coach now for many years, and I am currently with the North Hobart Football Club, which has outstanding procedures in place to deal with these sorts of issues, but it is an issue, and it can have a very negative impact on the whole fabric of the sporting organisation or sporting club.

Ms RITCHIE - Yes, there is one in my electorate that I know about.

Mr MARTIN - We had an issue when I was at Lindisfarne as well.-If the club has the right tools and has the processes in place to deal with things like this, it can be dealt with very quickly.- We had an instance earlier this year that was dealt with very quickly because the club had a code of conduct and the particular parent, much the way the minister was describing earlier, thought that their behaviour was passionate and joining in when, in fact, the behaviour was quite inappropriate.-It was abusive towards the children in a verbal sense and abusive towards the umpire and it was inappropriate.-It was dealt with really well because the club had a code of conduct.-This particular person breached the code of conduct.-It was outlined to that person that it was unacceptable behaviour and if there were further breaches, he would be banned from attending games.

CHAIR - Have those workshops been held in other parts of the State, or is it intended that they will be?

Mr MARTIN - Yes, I understand that to be the case.-They will be held in other parts of the State.-The intention is to get to the grass roots level.-We have engaged with those particular sports that the minister has just outlined.-We intend to take it a step below that and deal directly with the sporting clubs themselves.

Ms O'BYRNE - Just to add to that, we are currently in the process of identifying clubs that may need differing levels of support, and if any members do have clubs that they feel we could provide useful information and service to -

Mrs JAMIESON - The East Devonport Junior Cricket Club.

CHAIR - I was about to say that would be a fairly bold thing to do.

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Ms O'BYRNE - I would not necessarily put them on the record here, but if members do have issues or they have spoken to parents or clubs and they feel we could provide support or assistance, then we are more than happy to have those discussions with them.

Mr FINCH - I just want to go back to the trails situation.-The State Government wanted public comment on a discussion paper about trails and set up a website for people to respond -

Ms O'BYRNE - The Tasmanian trails report.

Mr FINCH - Yes.-Can you tell me something about the response to that?

Ms O'BYRNE - Really happy to.-In fact, do we have a copy of the trails strategy.-We could get you a copy of the trails strategy.-Late last year we launched the trails strategy, which was in response to a whole host of community discussion about trails.-I know Mrs Jamieson has a particular view on this, because there are a whole host of issues on how you develop trails.-In Mrs Jamieson's case, one of the cases that we talked about quite extensively is the legality of where those trails might go when they do cross private land, when the cross Crown land.-It is great to say, 'Here is a trail', but we actually need to be able to say that it is also a safe thing to do.

The other key thing that came out of it was an understanding and expectation of what you might get from that trail.-So, it is not to say, 'Here are the 500 trails that exist in Tasmania'.-You need to be able to say, 'This trail is appropriate for an elderly person on a walking frame.-This trail is appropriate for you to take your program.-This trail is appropriate for somebody of moderate health who is happy to do a few challenges.-These are difficult ones and these are some of our iconic trails that there is a whole host of other marketing around'.

The key things that came out needed to have a plan, a structural plan, about what it is that we want to achieve.-That can only happen by working with and leveraging off not only other funding sources but also other strategies within local government in particular.-Local government fund a lot of trails already.-State Government funds some as well.-We have seen in the last federal election that there were some specific trails that were funded by the Federal Government.-What we need to do is create a structure around those that says, 'These are the priority trails as identified by community.-These are what we anticipate they will be used for', so that people have a clarity around that, and then that allows us to start leveraging funding to make sure that they are appropriately funded.

We have a copy of the Tasmania trails strategy, which we will try and get for you by the end of the day.-That does respond to the community consultations, but, overall, people want to have a really good trails strategy.-As I said before, the greatest increase in participation is now in walking.-I think the other one is probably riding, whether it be cycling or mountain biking.-They are both very big participation opportunities that revolve around trails.-So we need to respond to that.

On the other side, there is also the health and well-being aspect of it, because we do want people to engage in a particular activity, but there is also the impact on the environment.-I think the Premier in his budget speech on Thursday gave some figures about the amount of cars that you would need to take off a road.-You only need to take off 25 cars to have a significant impact on our climate change objectives.-Was there something in particular?

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Mr FINCH - I am going to get around the Cawston one in my electorate of Rosevears, but do you have an ongoing commitment to funding for trails?-Has that been established, or are you waiting the results of the investigation before you set a program for the future?

Ms O'BYRNE - I am fully supportive of the trails strategy that was identified in the report that we released late last year.-In the Budget where we talk about the \$4 million for trails, tracks and cycle ways, that is about expanding that.-We will be setting up a statewide reference group, and that group is to work with communities about identifying priorities and then working through.-We have set aside \$4 million now.-It is clear that you could spend the entire Budget on trails and tracks.-I think that we do need an ongoing commitment.-I think this is key investment point.-There are many different ways you can do it, from having roads that are wide enough to put in cycle tracks to having identified cycle tracks, to those tracks that connect communities, such as the one that we have seen being built up on the north-west coast now, which I think is a great opportunity of connecting coastal towns, to the development that we might want to do in some of our national park walks.-We are engaged in a program called Healthy by Design.-That is about looking at the communities that we have and saying, 'Let's see about how we can put in opportunities for people to participate.'-It is no good having a walking track that you cannot take your pram or a double pram on, because if you cannot do that you are going to get the bus; so you already have changed people's behaviour.-The key around all of this is about behavioural change and opportunity.

Mr MARTIN - That particular program the minister talked about then, it is designed to provide a set of guidelines for town planners so they can design their communities, their local environments, in a way that encourages healthy activities with things like cycle ways, walking paths, that sort of thing, to encourage participation in healthy activities.-It is a \$60 000 initiative.-We hope to have the guidelines for town planners in place by October this year.

Ms O'BYRNE - The key is working with local councils, in particular.

CHAIR - I note here - just butting in there - that the steering group has established with representatives from Sport and Recreation, Forestry, Parks, Tourism and Hydro, but you have not listed DIER.-Why would DIER not be part of that steering group for tracks?

Ms O'BYRNE - That is a steering group that was part of doing the trails strategy.-The trails strategy was not so much road cycling as opportunities that were specifically for trail experiences.-One of the drivers was really the establishment of the Tasmania Trail, which is a trail which goes from the northwest all the way down south.-One of the key things - and there are people who have done it who absolutely love it - that we are aware of is that in an attempt to be all things to all users, there are parts which are just not appropriate for some.-You can take your horse the whole way, but people who ride horses do not necessarily want to ride their horses on the road.-You can walk the whole way, but people do not normally want to walk along the road either.-It did have issues of crossing different types of landownership.-The group that we will set up will be - I have not formalised it yet - about making sure that all the players are engaged, but also local government is a key engagement in terms of where you go with cycle trails.-The Premier also said that models such as that produced by the Greater Hobart Council have got together with a strategy for cycling tracks.

Ms RITCHIE - Is that the southern bike strategy?

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Ms O'BYRNE - Yes, that is the sort of thing that is exactly what we want to do on a statewide basis.-We really want to encourage that kind of cross-local government engagement in order to ensure that we can support them but also use it as an opportunity to leverage funds as well to make sure that we spend the best dollars.-I am trying to think of the cost of the northwest track, from Turners Beach to Ulverstone.

Mr ROBINSON - Approximately \$1 million, I think.

Ms O'BYRNE - They are actually very expensive to do if you want to make them appropriate for all people to participate in.-That is one of the other reasons you need to scale them so that you fund them appropriately for what their usage might be.-You have a particular one, though, Mr Finch?

Mr FINCH - Yes, my community has been agitating for quite a number of years now for a trail between Beauty Point and Beaconsfield.-There have been some stumbling blocks.-With this allocation of funding and the fact that these trails and walks have been highlighted by your department, I am just wondering how my group, having been knocked back twice by the Tasmania Community Fund, would go about it.-The feeling is still there that the community needs it.-For the edification of other members, it is between Beauty Point and Beaconsfield, a distance of about 6 kilometres, which would link those two communities.-What advice would you give to that community group and those people in respect of realising their dream?

Ms O'BYRNE - I think the problem that they have had is going to places like the Tasmania Community Fund, which has such a broad amount of applications to deal with.-There has not been a specific place that they can go.-They can apply to us for grants, but a trail like that will cost a fair bit of money and would eat in fairly substantially to our limited grant pool.-This, I think, is a significant shift in Government policy.-We are now saying that we actually say these things are not only important but important enough for Government to do a strategy around.-When we have the steering group formalised, or the reference group or whatever language we use around it, the key will be for that contact to happen there so that that can form part of it.-They are going to need local government engagement and support in order to make that happen.-What we do not want to get into a habit of saying is, 'Here is X amount of dollars and we are just going to build projects'.-We actually want to have a strategy about increasing participation, creating community links, providing opportunities to people who might not have them.-We actually need to see that there is a structure that you can tick the boxes against.-If they are not getting support, it will be because they are not hitting a particular criterion.-Then they can work on what that is.

Those sorts of connectivity trails, though, are key because they would change people's behaviours, because they would stop people driving from the two communities, and they would encourage a community engagement.-That is the sort of thing that you would imagine would be reasonably well received.-But I do not want to overstep the boundaries.

CHAIR - Third time lucky, I would suggest.

Ms O'BYRNE - It is actually a fund that is designed to recognise those kind of things now as opposed to, 'Here is a bucket of money.-We are going to give you a whole host of great ideas and maybe our great idea will get up'.-This is going to be about providing those connectivities and those opportunities.-I expect the \$4 million can be spent very quickly, though.

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Mr FINCH - Minister, when do you think that process will be in place for the community to go through?

Ms O'BYRNE - I am hoping to have the names of the committee organised in the next couple of weeks.-I want to get this going as quickly as possible.-I have also already spoken to Launceston City Council and I need to have the same conversation with West Tamar and a whole host of other councils about their need to talk to each other as well so that they are putting in combined strategies, as we have seen with the Greater Hobart strategy, where they have got together and said, 'Okay, we've got a whole host of competing demands, but we're going to start saying that these are our priorities and this is how we want to work with them'.-I am also happy to get Sport and Recreation to meet with those people.

Mr MARTIN - We will be happy to meet with your constituents.

Mrs JAMIESON - And on behalf of our constituents as well?

Ms O'BYRNE - Indeed.

Mrs JAMIESON - Needless to say, I would like an update on the progress of Dooley trail, because that has been an ongoing issue since about 2001.-Then, the issues you have mentioned of having to go through various departments has certainly been one of the hindrances.

Ms O'BYRNE - I am just going to check where we finally are with Dooley, because I think some of the issues -

Mrs JAMIESON - That was one that was going to be suitable for people with disabilities and the elderly to have a bush experience, at least on part of the track.

Ms O'BYRNE - I think part of the problem that we still have is actually resolving the liability issues around that.-I do not think we have got any closer to resolving the nature of the Dooley track.

Mrs JAMIESON - People are using the track.

Ms O'BYRNE - And people will choose to do that, and we know that people walk on tracks all over the State that may or may not be part of a register that says, 'This is what it means to be able to walk that track.'

Mrs JAMIESON - The trouble is that we just cannot get it finished now because we have not got the other legalities in place.

Ms O'BYRNE - Yes.

Mrs JAMIESON - The different departments have not agreed on A, B, C and D; so the whole program cannot proceed.

Ms O'BYRNE - I cannot give you an answer right now.-I will try and get one before the end of today, but, if not, I will also undertake to get information back to you.-I am actually not sure that we have resolved a lot of the liability issues when crossing individual land.-Can I say, though,

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that I do really feel for the people who put so much time and effort into building the track, because they are really passionate about it, and it is a very pretty walk.

Mrs JAMIESON - A lot of it has been voluntary, too.

Ms O'BYRNE - Yes, and we need to encourage that as well.-One of the things that we are hoping with the framework is that we can structure that as well so people know what they are participating in, and that helps as well.-We do not want positions where people put in so many voluntary hours then to be told, 'Look, I'm sorry, we can't resolve a legal issue about access along part of this track', because that is not fair.-Certainly, wearing my Parks hat, we get a lot of great support from volunteers in Parks.-We want to maximise the opportunities for them to engage.-To do that, you actually need to get them an output at the end of the day that says, 'People are now able to use your track'.-That has been one of the ongoing challenges with the Dooley trail.

Mrs JAMIESON - Would you mind elaborating on the training subsidy program you have in your grant?

Ms O'BYRNE - Yes.

Mrs JAMIESON - I am just not sure about the number of grants and so on.

Ms O'BYRNE - It is a continuous program which opens on 1 July and closes on 30 April next year.-It provides a subsidy of up to \$4 250 to organisations that employ trainees in the sport or recreation sector.-That can also be to provide funding that they might get from the Australian Government.-There are a lot of young people who want to get involved in sport and want to be an athlete.-Sometimes that opportunity is not necessarily there.-There also is a great career opportunity for work in administration of sports.

Mrs JAMIESON - Could you give some examples?

Ms O'BYRNE - AFL has some programs.

Mr MARTIN - Yes, we have.-We have actually got one at North Hobart that does a lot of work with the junior development side of things.

Ms O'BYRNE - We have eight AFL ones around the State, including one in Burnie, I have just been reliably informed.-One of the problems that we have, though, is they end up being poached by the sports, too.-We have lost a couple in the north for that reason.-Don College has got a trainee for outdoor education and a number of fitness centres are also engaging and taking people on in the program now.-The idea is that they will then step through to a career in sports administration or coaching and those sorts of areas.

Having said that, people do not always then stay in the industry, but we think that the investment in their skills is still great.-Whilst we might not get them to stay employed in the industry full time, they create a resource in the community for whom the coaching opportunities then exist or the volunteer sports administration exists.

Mrs JAMIESON - So the amount of the grant would be roughly what?-Will it vary?

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Ms O'BYRNE - We provide \$4,250, but that does not stop the sport leveraging funding from the Australian government or individual sports themselves.

Mr MARTIN - They are an outstanding development opportunity for people.-We have found that it gives them skills that they can use in the community.-They have a very positive impact.-The ones I have been associated with have had a very positive impact on the sporting organisations that they have been involved in.-There is a lot of wins all around with this particular program.

Mrs JAMIESON - The age group, is there any age range at all?

Ms O'BYRNE - No, there is no preclusion on age.

CHAIR - Is it possible to table a copy of the number and the placements for that particular program?

Ms O'BYRNE - We might need to take that on notice.-If we can get it today, we will.-Otherwise, we will put it in the on-notice pile, if that is okay.-Education, for instance, poached one of our AFL ones recently for some programs.-Whilst he is not staying in this sport, he is actually doing some work for education.

Mrs JAMIESON - Does your department also make available grants to early intervention programs.-I am thinking of PCYC, White Line and other groups that are struggling out there to help with kids who are falling off the track.

Ms O'BYRNE - With the community recreation grants, one of the most difficult things that we had was the ability to write a grants program that was utterly flexible and yet still remain subject to scrutiny and appropriate. The defining thing that the community recreation grants must have is the capacity to identify and work towards a resolution of the barrier to participation.-We have not said what those barriers to participation might be.-It is up to the organisation to say, 'Look, we've got this group of young people or older people.-We see this as a barrier for them being engaged, and this is the strategy that we are going to put around that'.-I am trying to think of some examples of different projects.

Mrs JAMIESON - That is my next question, and the amount of money that is made available for that sort of thing.

Ms O'BYRNE - That is a \$1 million grant program that we started last year.-It is the only one that I actually got to kick off.-I think it is about \$100 000 in administration costs.

Mr MARTIN - It is considerably less than that.

CHAIR - That is better.

Mr MARTIN - It is around about \$48 000.

Mrs JAMIESON - Has there been much promotion about it in the community?

Mr MARTIN - Yes.

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Mrs JAMIESON - And they have to fill out the submissions.

Ms O'BYRNE - We have made the grant application much easier.-I think we can do more to advertise it, and we are looking at organisations such as neighbourhood houses and getting notices up in schools.-The sorts of engagements that we have had are from regional sporting facilities who have contacted us about opportunities that might exist.-The PCYC in Launceston has said, 'Our biggest problem is that disabled athletes will not come here because we don't have toilets'.-So they were able to get that sort of thing done.-There is nothing to preclude an opportunity to say, 'The biggest barrier for kids in my community is that their parents cannot afford to buy them the gear'.-There is nothing to stop the neighbourhood house or a sporting club saying, 'Can you support us?-Can we work with you in order to provide those opportunities?'

Mr MARTIN - A full list of all the community recreation grants for 2007-08 is on our website.

Mrs JAMIESON - Good.

Mr MARTIN - As well as the amounts that were allocated.-There were 34.

Mrs JAMIESON - Are any of those grants recurrent at all?-If you've got a good program up and running and you just need the extra 12 months funding, is that available?

Ms O'BYRNE - It is not really for recurrent funding.

Mrs JAMIESON - Right.

Ms O'BYRNE - It is about identifying the barrier, in a sense.-Recurrent funding is a very difficult thing to do with sport.

Mrs JAMIESON - Do you have the capacity to advise people where to go to for recurrent funding if they have a program that you can see the value of?

Ms O'BYRNE - We have been very flexible with the grant program.

Mrs JAMIESON - Right.

Ms O'BYRNE - For exactly that reason.-It might be that the barrier for these people is that they actually need to be in it long enough for it to be part of their life.-I am not precluding anything.

Mr MARTIN - Some will be funded for longer than 12 months.-Some have been funded for two years because of the issue they identified was there.

Ms O'BYRNE - One of the other things that we have talked about as well as is that there has been a really good program run through Meander Valley Council, which is about training community people to provide opportunities themselves.-We have looked at whether or not that is an opportunity, too, because giving people the skills in regional communities in particular to be able to coach or to train or to mentor can often be the thing that creates the different engagement as well.

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Mr MARTIN - That is a very important point.-The training and coaching and development of volunteers for sporting organisations and bodies that undertake recreational pursuits is an issue that is facing the sector not only here in Tasmania but nationally as well.

Mr DEAN - I just want to get back on to tracks, trails and civil bike ways.-It is \$4 million over three years, and it is \$500 000 that you are looking at for this current year.-I think you have indicated that you will be asking for submissions to come through in relation to bike ways.-Can we be assured that the funding in relation to bike ways will be fairly evenly distributed throughout this State, from the south, north and northwest, in particular.-There are some concerns already that this is targeted towards the south because of the Greater Hobart bike ways submission?

Ms O'BYRNE - I think the key is going to be to ensure that the planning and the cooperation exists.-We could just do a grant program that we divvy it up three ways amongst three regions.-That would be an easy way to do it.-What we want to do is encourage an engagement to make sure that there is a plan for the entire region.-Now, in the case of the northern councils, they are pretty well on their way to having done that.-As individual councils, they have done it.-What they need to do is then get together for where those synergies take place.-There is no intention to make this a Hobart grant fund.-As a minister from the north, I can assure you that I do not want it be to a Hobart grant fund.-But the difference is, and the reason that we have had conversations and started talking about what Hobart has done, that those councils have already got together and worked out how the connections work between their individual local government areas.-Launceston has done a very good bike plan.-West Tamar has done some very good work on trails and bikes as well.-The key is getting that together so that we are actually saying that as a community, these are the priorities that we have, so that we are not going into each community and then having a competition about why we will fund different ones.-There is no intention to keep it as a Hobart-based one.

The \$4 million is a small amount of money in the scheme of funding trails at this stage.-What it recognises and what I think is the strong thing is that it is a fundamental shift in terms of how we have been able to approach these things.-The reason that it is scaled the way that it is is that in that first year, we really want to encourage opportunities to engage in good planning to make sure that we are funding things based on good planning.-With people, particularly like Keith Ryan in Launceston and Nick Decker (tbc) in the north-west, I would be very surprised if they did not come up with extremely well developed bike plans in a reasonably short time frame, because these people have passionately driven these things in their communities already.-I am happy to be on the record as saying that I do not see this as a Hobart-centric thing.

Mr DEAN - Thank you; that's what I wanted to hear.-The next thing I want to talk about is the Elphin sports centre.-Recently the Government condemned the seating in the Elphin sports centre, which you would be aware of.-It was taken out and removed.-Currently we have a national event about to take place there which will attract 1 800 to 1 900 students plus all of the other spectators who will arrive, et-cetera.-There is no seating; so what can we expect from the Government over the next few weeks to ensure that there is appropriate seating put back in that stadium?

Ms O'BYRNE - The reason I have had to check is that whilst we are aware of this issue, it is not that we are actually funding.-It is actually the Crown that has taken responsibility for the issue here.-As I understand it, they are in receipt of quotes now for the cost of replacing them.-I am not sure whether I can give any further information today on where that is up to.-It might be

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something appropriate to put to the Minister for Primary Industry when you have him in front of you.

Mr DEAN - So it will come from that area and not Sport and Recreation?

Ms O'BYRNE - They have taken responsibility for it.

Mr DEAN - The minister for what, sorry?

Ms O'BYRNE - Crown land services.

Mr DEAN - Crown land.

Ms O'BYRNE - They have taken responsibility for the engagement with the building.-We can try and get the further position, but I am not sure whether you will have Minister Llewellyn here this week.

CHAIR - No.

Ms O'BYRNE - It might be an appropriate question to put to Crown Lands Services.

Mr DEAN - My next question relates to the lower socioeconomic areas. I specifically refer to Ravenswood. What has Sport and Recreation got in mind to provide for those people who live in those areas who are unable to pay fees, for instance, or to get to the other areas where there are other recreational opportunities and so on? What do you have in mind for Ravenswood now?

Ms O'BYRNE - Can I tell you first of all that the community recreation grants are written in such a way as to provide that flexibility to deal with barriers to participation. As I said before, the barrier to participation might be the ability to afford the kit out; it might be the ability to afford the fees; it might be the transport to get somewhere. The program is available for these purposes. I have had some discussions with the Ravenswood neighbourhood house about some funding applications that they are looking at driving to put through into that. They were looking, in particular; at a fishing program for some of the kids up there and some other ones that they are just fleshing out at the moment, so it is probably not appropriate for me to talk about those.

In relation to the specific issue of Ravenswood, without going into the other issues that you and I have had discussions about already, we have been having conversations with Outdoor Tasmania about opportunities for sporting assistance up there. The key for Ravenswood is about getting people to actually go and participate. What we will be trying to do is increase an interest in the games. If we have kids who are prepared to make that commitment for a club, then we can make application to the community recreation grants to deal with those financial or geographic barriers that may exist. They are conversations that we have had ongoing for a couple of weeks. We are happy to keep you informed as that process develops. It is about assisting the community to find those solutions for those engagement opportunities themselves. There is always an opportunity for the community recreation leaders awards and the Active Launceston project as well, but the areas that you are talking about are specific opportunities in the short term. They are opportunities that do exist, and we will continue working with them.

Can I say that if you do an audit of Ravenswood in terms of the opportunities in community engagement, you will find that there is a lot up there. It is about us trying to work with them to

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deliver solutions that they see on the ground. I think it is not that they are bereft of people who can say, 'I've got some really good ideas about how we might pursue this'. It is our responsibility to try and assist them when they do come up with those strategies.

Mr DEAN - I think you would understand that most of it is for age nought to age 12 or 14; nothing else.

Ms O'BYRNE - A lot of the engagement has been about parenting and prevention, so that issues that we have seen recently do not occur in the future. We want to work with them as well on those immediate things that we can do in this current situation.

Mr FINCH - Minister, in budget paper 2, page 2.6, Sport and Recreation, there is the forward estimate for 2009-10, which is \$11 000 085. It drops down in 2011-12 to \$10 000 026. I know that point 9 explains some of the structures that you are funding and programs that you are funding and that they will drop off the radar, but I am just curious about how the process works in respect of when you have got your budget, you need to set everything to fit into that figure and also for your forward estimates, you are not given a general sum. Do you mean you have done forward estimates to 2011-12 to actually give you that figure?

Ms O'BYRNE - In terms of the programs that we have as an ongoing opportunity, they are things such as the state grants, the community recreation grants, the trainee subsidy program, the major grants program and the minor grants program. A lot of these are driven by communities coming together and leveraging off their own opportunities for funding. Where we see different projects being supported at any given time, I do not know what projects we are going to have in 2011-12. They really are going to be identified by communities saying - I do not even want to say one in case I then create it for them.

Mr FINCH - It would create some excitement.

Ms O'BYRNE - If we look at the Waratah-Wynyard sports precincts plan - that was not in the Budget a couple of years ago because they had not decided that that was something they were going to do - these things tend to be driven by our capacity to assist communities leverage off other projects that they may have. It would be very rare for Sport and Recreation or the Government to completely fund a project. Even if you look at the hockey development that we have done here, I think \$1.5 million was raised by the organisations themselves through our private loans let alone the fund raising that they did and the assistance they got from their national bodies. So those sort of things tend to be based on the projects that come up at any given time. I am sure that there will be a host more projects coming up. I would not be surprised if football clubs in the electorate that you are representing, Mr Finch, might not come to us with a major project at some stage.

Mr FINCH - You might be right. What I am really curious about is that here you are with a forward estimate for 2011-12 that is so specific, \$10 000 026, with these things dropping off the radar and others coming on board, you might get submissions that might take that figure to \$14 million or \$15 million.

Ms O'BYRNE - I will be banging on the Treasurer's door if that is the case.

Mr FINCH - That is right. That is why it seems you have got yourself limited there with that figure in 2011-12.

Ms O'BYRNE - I do not think that it does limit it. It would limit us if there was no opportunity to leverage other government funds for opportunities that arise. What these are around are the projects that we know we have a commitment to, when we think the peak of those fundings will be and when they will ease out. The reality is that there will be more projects that come to us, and Government will assess them as well, but they are not coming from a defined Sport and Recreation budget, the money that we would seek to get from the Treasurer in order to support those projects. This does not necessarily say that there would be never be another dollar for another project.

Mr WING - There is, on a regular basis, funding made available for sports teams. I would like to ask what the Government's policy is for funding individuals who excel in a particular sport to have the opportunity to travel interstate and overseas?

Ms O'BYRNE - Can I get a picture of where you are meaning? You are not necessarily meaning your TIS-identified elite athlete?

Mr WING - No.

Ms O'BYRNE - You might be mentioning somebody who is at high school for instance?

Mr WING - No, I will mention one specific case. A young man, who is a paraplegic, Rowan Bowles, who has excelled in what I understand is called handcycling, he was last year the fastest cyclist in Australia. He had competed in Perth, WA, at great personal family expense because his parents need to travel with him because of his condition. He was then invited to participate in an event in Italy about 18 months ago, but there was no funding available for him -

Ms O'BYRNE - Can I just check - was he invited to participate, or was he selected to participate by his sport?

Mr WING - I think he was invited by the organisers in Italy to participate. That involved very great expense.

Ms O'BYRNE - If he had been selected by his sport nationally, then his national organisation would generally have a responsibility to assist him. If he is, as an individual, invited, it is a slightly different opportunity because the national sport would not necessarily then sport him to do so.

Mr WING - Could not the rules be more flexible to help somebody in that situation who was the leading, fastest handcyclist in Australia with very good times, competitive on an international scale to participate?

Ms O'BYRNE - I would have to look at how the selection process, particularly for him, took place and whether or not there was a team that went that he was not part of, for instance, which would seem unusual given the standard he was participating at. In one sense it comes back to the discussion we were having with Ms Ritchie about the obligations of sports clubs to provide for a whole host of people within their sports. That is a discussion that we need to continue having so that those opportunities are provided. But we do not actually provide assistance for individual athletes to participate in things unless they are nationally representing us in a competition as an identified competitor, who has been selected to do so, or is part of TIS. I am happy to have a look

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at the case, because I guess that the key is going to be whether or not there were other people who were selected but he was not and, therefore, he was invited and whether or not there is something about the way they structured this particular competition. I am happy for Sport and Recreation to have a look at that issue. That seems to be the general key: if you are nationally selected to compete, then your sport then has an obligation to provide assistance. They did not pay for everything, but they generally support or underwrite part of the cost of competition. If you have been invited, I am not sure what that means in terms of whether or not there was a process for selection or whether it is a private race. I am happy to have a look at that.

Mr WING - I think he was invited because he was the fastest in Australia.

Ms O'BYRNE - That makes sense. It may be that there would be no sport structure around that, which might be just what we have to look at. I am happy to have a look at that. The reality is, like all members of Parliament, we get hundreds of letters from people who request assistance within our own electorates -

Mr WING - I respond to every one.

Ms O'BYRNE - In your electorate?

Mr WING - Yes.

Ms O'BYRNE - Within our own electorates, we often provide assistance to a number of community members. Beyond that, there are other organisations that do fund raise and do provide assistance. Rotary and Lions clubs, for instance, regularly provide assistance for people to attend things. Can I, Madam Chair, also table for the interest, particularly of Mr Finch, but other members, the trails strategy, which was prepared for the Tasmanian Government by Inspiring Place. We released it in December 2007.

Mr WING - As we are dealing with cycling and cycling tracks, I observed in Budapest in Hungary cycle tracks beside the kerb and cars parked further out from them rather than having the cars parked at the kerb and the cycle tracks more exposed on the roadside. I pass that on for information. It seemed to me that that gave greater protection for cyclists where the tracks are on main roads rather than off roads. I wonder if that can be advocated.

Ms O'BYRNE - I am actually really interested in the process of retrofitting our cities, because our cities are older, rather than creating a lot of newer opportunities. When you are looking at new suburbs and new development and new roads, you have got opportunities there to create new opportunities, but in many of the cases, it is an issue of looking at retrofitting. When you then look at comparisons between different nations and the way that they have approached them, there are a number of cultural things that need to be taken into consideration. For instance, I am not sure whether it is Sweden or Denmark, so I will check, they do not have rules for wearing helmets when you cycle. They have a huge number of people who cycle, and they have a limited amount of accidents, and the key to that is that they have such a different focus on cycling. Cycling there is instead of walking whereas cycling here is instead of driving or catching a bus. So the speeds are different. A lot of the things that are done are based around the community's understanding and aptitude around cycling. They might not necessarily be going at great speeds, so that means that you can change the way that you might actually structure the city.

We are interested in looking at what Melbourne has done. It has done some very interesting work on retrofitting, and we are having a little bit of a look at the way that they have done that. Vancouver is another city that has done a lot of work in identifying ways to change the city to provide opportunities based on existing infrastructure. But a key to is about how you change behaviours. If you are looking at people cycling extremely fast, you are still going to have a risk of hitting pedestrians. If you are looking at people cycling at a different rate, then you have got a lot safer opportunity for hopping out of your car and getting to the kerb. So, those kinds of things have to be taken into consideration in broader strategies.

The other key part and something I think we are going to notice is that with the increasing petrol costs, we are going to see more people relying on different forms of transport. In Canberra, where they have had for many years - it is a purpose-designed city so it is a slightly different thing as retrofitting is not really their issue - a lot of people cycling. They are not noticing as much of an impact on their public transport system because people are, as an option, going straight to cycling. I think older cities who do need to retrofit are going to have that challenge presented to them in a different way.

I am not ruling anything out, but one of the things that we do need to be aware of is that the culture that a different community might have around cycling might also impact on how they then provide that facility. Speed is a particular one, as we do ride extremely fast in Tasmania. That is not necessarily a bad thing. It just means that we then need to structure cycling around that so it is not necessarily a good thing always to have people and cycles on the same track if they are going to be going at those kinds of speeds.

Mr WING - On the question of tennis, I appreciate the State Government's very firm commitment of half a million dollars to the Regional Tennis Centre in Launceston. Minister, I appreciate your personal interest and support and that of your office in trying to get the Federal Government to contribute, which ultimately was successful in contributing a similar amount. I would just like to ask for an update on what the current situation is.

Ms O'BYRNE - All right. As you said, we have committed \$500 000 to the Northern Regional Tennis Centre. It has not been without its long journey. I think that is probably a safe way of saying it. We have also provided some additional land within the Elphin sporting precinct valued at \$500 000. Launceston City Council has also committed \$400 000 and has said that they will accept ownership of the land, project manage the development and own the centre once operational. I think those of us who have been involved in the debate for a while realise that that was a key issue in terms of the ongoing viability.

Confirmation of funding for the project has been received from the Australian Government. Sport and Recreation and Launceston City Council met last week, and they are continuing to do so to progress the project, with completion expected by the end of 2009. I am not sure if anyone has any further information.

Mr WING - Is that financial or calendar year?

Ms O'BYRNE - Calendar year. I am advised from the department that they feel that the working relationship is very good.

Mr WING - I was hoping it would have been completed before then.

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Ms O'BYRNE - Yes, I think we all would.

Mr WING - It is federal money that has caused the delay, and I appreciate the support of the former mayor, the honourable member for Windermere and his council for their staunch support. Also on tennis, I know that there is the desire to upgrade the Domain Tennis Centre and to continue the holding of the women's international championships is dependant on that. The last I heard about this was that Tennis Tasmania were to provide a plan, a business plan, and also design information.

Ms O'BYRNE - I am happy to give you an update on where we are up to with that. Over the years, we have provided considerable financial support to the Domain Tennis Centre and the needs of Tennis Tasmania. I think if you look at this iconic event, it is the Moorilla Hobart International that has driven a lot of the desire of Tennis Australia. We have provided \$100 000 in 2003-04 through our sport and recreation grants for the construction of five new synthetic clay courts. In June 2005 there was \$750 000 for significant upgrades. Some \$4 622 was allocated through the minor grants program to develop an activity area and also to improve wheelchair access. Tennis Tasmania have advised us of the issues relating particularly to additional seating in the main court but also some surface upgrades to plexi-cushion, which will be required, they argue, to secure the Moorilla Hobart International past 2009. There is no guarantee that if they have that surface they will necessarily get it, but it is the requirement in order to be part of the options to get it.

Economic Development and Tourism provided Tennis Tasmania with \$11 810 to engage a consultant to do a social and economic impact study as a basis for support for the upgrades. They have engaged Inspiring Places to do that, and I think we are anticipating that we will get that by the end of August in terms of an argument about why this will be a reasonable investment.

We have also urged them to get some confirmation to really try and lock in the fact that they will get the event post-2009, because it is a significant amount of money to spend on a hope and a prayer. I am reasonably confident that they are in a good position. Their role now is to really get that engagement nationally that, so long as they have got this done, they will definitely get it. That is the challenge that they have got.

Because any further investment would be reasonably significant, I think the one thing that we want to ensure ourselves of is that we actually are going to get a benefit from it. We will be meeting with them again reasonably soon. I think I have a meeting with Tennis Tasmania about the project. They will have their report hopefully by the end of August. But the key is really trying to get the national commitment that we will be able to continue with this event. It is a significant cost if we then do not get it. Having said that, it does not mean that they would never be able to get other competitions, and we would need to factor in the chances of them being able to attract other events if it was not the Moorilla.

Mr WING - If you do get that commitment by the end of August, there would be time to have whatever the necessary work is done?

Ms O'BYRNE - I am hoping we would be able to flesh that out in the meeting with them in the next few weeks about how they feel that they can do it. I am sure that they would not still be pursuing it if they did not think they were a reasonable chance of getting the work completed.

Mr WING - Good.

CHAIR - Mrs Jamieson is going to ask her most important question at this time, because we have still got to get around the table.

Ms O'BYRNE - Can I just give you one more piece of information. It would have to be sorted by the end of August, because there would be a process of moving some of the tennis events around in order to cater for Moorilla and allow work to be completed.

Mr WING - Thank you.

Mrs JAMIESON - Have you any concerns with the huge media focus on fitness and what have you? Have you any comment to make about the opposite effect that we might, in fact, encourage people into eating disorders, bulimia and anorexia?

Ms O'BYRNE - I assure people that I did not ask you to ask me this, because it is one of my personal bugbears. I think the language around what we talk about has to be crucial. I have always been disturbed about the use of the term 'obesity' all of the time because, particularly we have seen rises in the amount of people of all ages having eating disorders. The key messages that we want to talk about and the reason that we have physical activity and we talk about participation is about people having better, healthier outcomes. There is some really good work by Professor Baumann from the University of Sydney who does an amazing amount of work on what you can ask people to do, how you can change behaviours, what engagement points you should have.

Some of the key things that he found is that you can be thin and unhealthy just as easily, in fact, possibly more easily. You can have a thin, unhealthy person and an overweight or a larger body shape person who is actually quite healthy. So the messages are not actually supposed to be about your physical image, although there is a lot of evidence to show that the pressure on the heart from particular body shapes. The key has to be about being healthy, because not everyone is going to be the perfect image of one of our elite athletes. That is a key thing that we need to get the message out on. You would have seen the recent ads about finding 30 minutes a day. They are not about being an athlete; they are also possibly not enough to massively change a health outcome, but they are about giving people messages that they will accept and they will under. People can get, 'I can do 30 minutes in the garden' better than, 'I have to do 90 minutes on a treadmill'.

A lot of it is about messaging, about healthy active lifestyles. People who walk, there is research to show that if you are a 60-year-old person who walks every day, then you are probably going to have a healthy body of around about a 50-year-old. You might not look like one of our beautiful athletes who are about to head off to the games, but you will be a healthier person and, therefore, far better able to deal with any illnesses. If you get heart disease or, in some cases, there is evidence of cancer, where, if you are a generally a healthy person, you have a much better opportunity for your body to manage those illnesses, to manage diabetes, to manage heart disease and those sorts of areas.

All of our messages in sport and recreation are about participation, they are about engagement, they are about living healthy, active lifestyles. We do not focus on the outcome of it all being about the physical shape that you are, particularly because we are finding that that becomes then a driving factor for a lot of young people who try to create an unattainable image for themselves and then distort that image in their minds as well, so that they never reach the goal

that they created in themselves. The other key is getting reliable data as well. There are so many different pictures and images about what it is that people should or should not do.

Ms RITCHIE - We are not sure that measurement tools are all that they should be? We hear that Tasmania and Australia has the most unhealthy and fattest people, and yet we have the third highest in terms of life expectancy. How does that measure up?

Ms O'BYRNE - It is that sort of thing, the type of data that we collect. The ERAS report is probably the one that we use nationally the most, but even those of us who use ERAS know that there are gaps within its ability to get the information and the type of information you can use. For instance, it will talk about the people who have done some kind of physical activity over a year, but what kind of physical activity? At what pace was that physical activity? Did they do it more than once? Where did they do it? What was the sort of engagement they had? Those things are still harder to get. Getting accurate data costs a lot of money. We had a recent ministerial council with the Australian Government only a couple of weeks ago where the key point that I was driving - I think I did get support around the table - was the need to investigate better recording opportunities. One of the discussions was whether or not we could use the health surveys that they do nationally to actually spin those out a little bit further to get some real information on participation data.

I am happy to table this document, 'Midlife - Get Moving'. It is beautifully presented and is the Tasmanian physical activity plan. In it there is a page that talks about the fact that 71 per cent of Tasmanians do not undertake sufficient physical activity. 'Sufficient physical activity' is a really interesting phrase. How do you explain to someone who does nothing at all what 'sufficient' might be. This has got some really good information, so it actually talks about active transport; it talks about the sort of things that you can do, the sort of benefits that you get from exercising. If you exercise more, you sleep better. As a parent of small children, I know there are others at this table who will join me in the fact that getting more sleep is always something that we are craving. There is also information about cardiovascular and type 2 diabetes controls. I might table that for the interest of the committee.

The focus really has to be on being active and being healthy. It is not about looking as fabulous as Hanny Alston or Donna McFarlane who are absolutely wonderful in their field and have great opportunities. What we can do is have more active lives and have a better health outcome, and that is really what we have to be driving for.

Can I just add something to the issue of Moorilla? We are okay for 2009 apparently. It is beyond 2009; so we would need a commitment for upgrading by September-October, if we were going to confirm the event past 2009. The focus now is on getting Tennis Australia to give us a commitment beyond 2009. But we are okay for 2009.

Mr WING - Even without the work been done?

Ms O'BYRNE - Work can be done before or after the event.

Mr WING - I see. Even if it is not done before?

Ms O'BYRNE - As long as we have a commitment. That is the key. The key is a commitment to ongoing.

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Mr WING - Will the Government then provide the funding to have it done either before or after?

Ms O'BYRNE - Depending on the outcomes of the socioeconomic study.

Mr MARTIN - That is going to guide us to a degree, the outcomes of that study will inform us a lot better.

Mr WING - But, generally, would it be fair to say that the Government could be inclined to be supportive, subject to that?

Ms O'BYRNE - I think Moorilla has provided us with some great opportunities. We would need to make a decision about the investment if we were not sure. I am not sure - I know Tennis Tasmania are working very hard to get this commitment - that they will be able to deliver the commitment. I think the biggest challenge is not do we get the commitment or not; it is what we do on either side of that, which is why we need the study to justify State Government expenditure on something which we might then have a chance of not actually using. As I said before, the Budget tends to be finite, and that is a decision that we have to make.

Having said that, I do think that Moorilla has provided great opportunities to see tennis played at its finest. I think it has been very good for the sport and for young people to see how well it can be played and the engagement that that has given them and the excitement and the drive to participate.

Mr WING - It has been well supported by the public.

Ms O'BYRNE - The public and also local businesses have also supported the facility as well. I do want to see this study. I was surprised that Tennis Tasmania did not put in an application to whichever Federal Government was going to win, but I think that possibly might have been one of the prerequisites as well - some sort of commitment from Tennis Australia about its ongoing viability. We will be meeting with Michael Robertson and a few others in the next couple of weeks.

Mr DEAN - I just want to revisit the Elphin sports centre. Would that not fit more comfortably under Sport and Recreation rather than the minister for Crown lands? I just cannot understand why it is fitting where it does.

Ms O'BYRNE - It is their building.

Mr DEAN - Pardon?

Ms O'BYRNE - It is their building, as I understand it.

Mr DEAN - Yes, but I would have thought that there would have been some discussion between the two groups here, because it is a Sport and Recreation facility.

Ms O'BYRNE - There has been conversation about it. Certainly, Sport and Recreation people in the north have been engaged in it. I have been down there and I have spoken to people, but the funding and the quotes for the funding have gone to Crown Land Services because they own the building.

Mr DEAN - I see. You have had an input into it?

Ms O'BYRNE - We have certainly had discussion about it, because it is a community sporting facility, yes.

Mr DEAN - Right.

Ms O'BYRNE - But because it is owned by Crown Land Services, they are the ones who would receive the quotes and make a decision on the quotes.

Mr DEAN - The next one is on the Silverdome. There has been quite a lot of press in the last few months about boxing to take place there. Minister, my question is, it is great to have these wonderful facilities around the State and so on, but if we start pricing ourselves out of bringing that sort of activity into some of these centres, we are really defeating what it is all about. Where are we going with the fees for a structure like the Silverdome?

Ms O'BYRNE - I will take you through the particular instance in relation to the boxing first and then we can talk about the sort of cost structures that might exist for a whole range of things. Can I say that the key role of the Silverdome is to provide sporting participation opportunities. That is its job. When it does hold events that provide a commercial return, it needs to actually get a commercial return, because we provide supporting opportunities to local community organisations as an affordable opportunity as we can. There is an obligation for them when they can make money to make money in order to be able to do the things that we need to do for the people who participate there all the time. We all know that netball is there on an ongoing basis.

We were approached in February 2008, or the Silverdome was approached to hold a world title middleweight fight featuring Daniel Geale. Can I say that I think Daniel truly does want to fight in Tasmania. I know that there are suggestions that this might have been a bit of a furphy. I think that Daniel does want to have a home fight. Whether or not it provides the sort of returns to the sport itself in terms of their market, I am not sure, but I know that Daniel, as an individual, desperately would like to fight here, so I want to put that one clearly.

Following a meeting on the site, the Silverdome provided a costing estimate to the promoters based on their general outline of requirements to hold such an event. It was a general sort of response to the kind of things that they might need. Contained within the estimate were a number of variables, including security, medical coverage, venue setup, including in broadcast requirements, catering, cleaning and staff. We do not provide catering, so the catering cost came externally and, obviously, you could then negotiate with the caterers about how they provide the services, but we do not provide catering, so that is not an internal cost that we control.

These were to be refined with ongoing negotiations to the promoter once the venue providers were provided with more specific requirements. It was a rough, "Based on what you've told us, this is what we think it will be". That is not unusual when we get commercial opportunities. People give a bit of a scope; they get a bit of an idea and then they say, 'Okay, let's sharpen the pencil and we really want to do that here and we don't want to do that there'. These variations can significantly impact the cost of hosting an event at a large facility like the Silverdome but are primarily determined by the number of patrons attending. The costs included in the estimates are in line with similar large events. I suppose the similar large event most people would think of

would be Alice Cooper, which was July last year. That would be a similar large event in terms of the numbers of people who might come through.

At the meeting, the promoter was informed that any requests for financial assistance to hold the event would need to be submitted to Events Tasmania and should include a proposed budget with details of the level of Government funding being sought and also detailing the benefits to Tasmania through conducting the event. Although Events Tasmania received an initial request for financial assistance to bring the fight to Launceston on 9 April 2008, they did not get the further details that the promoter was required to give them. Following receipt of the Silverdome's estimate and despite several attempts by officers at the Silverdome, there was no further communication with Daniel's management for almost a month. That was around 26 days they waited to hear back from Daniel's management.

An announcement was subsequently published in the *Examiner* on 23 April 2008 declaring that the title defence was to be held in Sydney on 27 June 2008 rather than in Tasmania. In the broader sense, I think it is regrettable that Launceston people do not get the opportunity and Tasmanian people do not get the opportunity to see that in Launceston, but we would welcome further advances by Daniel's management regarding opportunities. They are not cheap things to run, and the Silverdome does have an obligation to ensure that we do not lose money on events such as this because we do provision of sport to local communities on a shoe string. There are a range of different fees that would be approached for different things, and they do depend very much on the type of infrastructure and support that is required. For instance, I think that the fee for having an ambulance on site was something like \$4000 for the day for the actual fight. I can check that figure, but there are a lot of fees that would be additional that Silverdome could not create the cost around that we would be requiring to do. There was some criticism about the catering costs. What Silverdome did was ring the person who normally caters for events up there and said, 'Can you give us a quote based on these type of numbers, rough figures only'. We did not have confirmed numbers of how many corporate tables there would be versus how many other opportunities, so that caterer provided that quote, but there is no reason that those things cannot be negotiated further.

Mr DEAN - The other concern was that Silverdome, I think, is quite happy to have retail activities within the centre from time to time, but it is folly that they did not negotiate in the right way in relation to this event, which is a sporting event, and it involves a lot of people.

Ms O'BYRNE - I am not making a judgment on whether it is boxing or anything else, Mr Dean. We would treat each opportunity as an opportunity in terms of usage. We do have an obligation to give first opportunity to sporting organisations. That has been the case, and I have had conversations with local businesses about the commercial opportunities that have been used. We have not knocked over major sporting events in order to have commercial opportunities. The sort of pricing structures that we would have, we have a type of price for local season rosters, a regular sporting use, so primarily you would be thinking netball, a round-robin series, those sort of things. They would have a session cost, usually per court per game cost. Bearing in mind, they do not require massive security and ticketing and all of those sorts of things, so you can actually charge for the service that is being provided.

When there is statewide and national rosters, they can have venue hire fees, depending on the type of audience there is often a recovery of cost figure for goods and services, catering, wages, power, generator, if they use it, first aid, emergency coverage, cleaning, consumables, and they are negotiated by contract and are represented as either an hourly or daily or event rate. For larger

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sporting and sports-related events, competitions and carnivals, we have venue hire fees and the oncosts I talked about before. Where tickets are sold on a hirer's behalf, there can be a fee for managing the ticketing and credit charge opportunities as well. They are based on the sort of event where you get 3500 or 4000 to the cycling carnival, for instance.

For professional sports entertainment, go-karts, professional boxing, professional wrestling, there are venue hire fees, the oncosts that apply, an in-house fee for tickets that are sold, credit card charges, but, once again, things like security and equipment hire and catering will have an impact on that. For non-sporting use, for expos and exhibitions, for instance, the home renovation expo, we negotiate prices around security, catering, beverage services. That usually goes for three days. Concerts tend to be based on audience size of roughly 1500, that is probably the average size. Extra requirements with regard to pre-event ticketing, security and such things must also be taken into account. For not-for-profit and community groups, charges are once again negotiated by contract, and, once again, recovery of costs is the aim. For example, religious groups regularly use the facility as well. So we do respond to the needs, but the needs are generally about the recovery of costs. We do not make a bundle of money out of the Silverdome, as you would have noticed from the budget papers, but we do need to run it at a level that allows us to make sure that we can provide local sporting community opportunities at the most cost-effective way.

Mr FINCH - That explanation was fulsome, and thank you, but it just concerns me that you said that you suspect that it may have been a furphy in respect of arrangements for the fight.

Ms O'BYRNE - No, I am saying that there had been suggestions raised locally that it was not really going to happen. I wanted to put on record that I actually think Daniel was absolutely passionate about fighting there.

Mr FINCH - Okay.

Ms O'BYRNE - I was actually trying to put on the record that there had been some suggestion that this was just a local thing, but I think Daniel really would like to fight locally, not only in Tasmania but in Launceston.

Mr FINCH - He made that clear.

Ms O'BYRNE - Yes. I did not mean to misrepresent that. I think Daniel was incredibly genuine and he really does want to fight here.

Mr FINCH - I think they were frightened off by that \$50 000 figure, and I think just that initial thing just set them back and that was why they did not pursue it more.

Ms O'BYRNE - We would be happy to take further representation from them in future times and work with them. But the figure that they got was very much a case of, 'This is roughly what it is going to cost you, given all the costs that we actually have to outsource. We have to bring the services in in order to provide them'. We are not a function centre that has catering and health facilities and all of those sorts of areas on site. We have to pay to get those in, so there is a whole host of costs that we cannot control. But those decisions could be made by the promoter. They could say, 'Okay, yes, we talked about doing this kind of catering, but maybe we don't want to do it that way. Maybe we've got another way, or we want to use another caterer'. There are no preclusions around that, but they are conversations you generally have after your initial quote. I

really wanted to indicate that I was trying to be very genuine in saying that I think Daniel does want to fight locally.

Mr FINCH - Yes.

Ms O'BYRNE - I think he would love to fight in front of a home crowd.

CHAIR - Minister, I am conscious of the time that we were going to attempt to finish this particular output group, but that is not going to happen as committee members have more questions.

Ms O'BYRNE - Sport and recreation is something that often gets sidelined, and I think that this is something that is intrinsic to the way we live our lives and the opportunity that we give people. I am very happy to keep going.

CHAIR - We will take this opportunity to break.

The committee suspended from 11.03 a.m. to 11.19 a.m.

CHAIR - I invite Ms Ritchie to move into the next line of questioning.

Ms RITCHIE - Thank you, Madam Chair. I just have one final question, minister. It relates to the issue Mr Dean touched on earlier of economic impediment as a barrier to sport and recreation. One of the issues that has become apparent in my electorate is participation of new Tasmanians or children of migrant families. We have an example where we have nine or 10 new Tasmanians who have become part of the local basketball team, but getting one-off funding from Multicultural Tasmania and when that funding runs out, the clubs are concerned about the fact that the kids have just started to love the sport and then they have the fear that the money will run out and they will not be able to keep going, particularly when they may have nine or 10 people that they have to find a way to kit out and pay their fees and all the rest. Can you respond to that?

Ms O'BYRNE - I think it is something that we are seeing in a number of communities at the moment. Having previously been the minister with responsibility for community development and therefore, migrant Tasmania I know that they are limited in terms of that, that they cannot give recurrent grant funds. One of the things that we did notice - we actually got Sport and Recreation meeting a whole host of managers in community development - is that most of the community development units, whether they be Women Tasmania or the Office of Aboriginal Affairs or Multicultural Tasmania or whatever all use sport as a mechanism for social inclusion and engagement. We actually set a process now where the acting director will now meet with the managers of those divisions as well to see where we can actually assist and leverage opportunities within that. But you come back to the key reason that we set up the community recreation grants - that is, there are barriers that are sometimes intangible but sometimes also quite tangible. They are about distance; they are about money in many cases.

One of the reasons for that grant program being written as flexibly as it is that you should be able to say, "This is our barrier and this is how we want to deal with it". You mentioned that things might only last a season, and that is not enough to make sure they turn up for the next roster. Within the community recreation grants, we have already had some grants that go over for a longer period of time to two years, which is a quite a long period of time for a non-recurrent grant, to allow them to do that transition work.

Ms RITCHIE - So they can apply for that longer period?

Ms O'BYRNE - We have written the grant program really flexibly so they can come to us and say, 'This is what we think is our barrier'. If their barrier is, 'Look, we can get them in and teach them; our problem is getting them to get the consistency of playing and the engagement so they'll make the effort long term', that's a reasonable thing to look at.

Ms RITCHIE - There needs to be time for the families to get themselves settled as a family unit.

Ms O'BYRNE - Yes, it takes a while to get to the point of being able to do those things and to make those long-term commitments as well. In Launceston they run a lot of soccer programs. That has been the key to keeping people engaged in migrant communities there. There are a couple of issues with getting everyone to the games on time, but they are working through that at migrant resources in Launceston. They have done a really good job there. But the community recreation grants are about trying to respond to the things that we might not have known about.

Ms RITCHIE - Transport and things.

Ms O'BYRNE - Yes, and not being prescriptive. We are not saying, "You can have a grant for transport and you can have a grant for this and you can have a grant for that", because that necessarily creates a barrier for somebody else for whom that is not the easy fix for them.

Ms RITCHIE - If they have had their one-off allocation from Multicultural Tasmania, you are saying that they can apply for up to a two-year period?

Ms O'BYRNE - They can make an application to deal with their needs for reducing barriers to participation. That is the key. So long as what they are doing is removing a barrier to participation, I am not going to say that we are going to underwrite particular players to play their entire sporting career, because that is not what it is about. It is about the thing that stops them participating. If your basketball clubs says, "We are convinced that unless we provide additional sport, these players will not come back because it is just too hard for them", that is an appropriate thing to write an application for.

Mr MARTIN - It is just a matter of them coming along and talking to us about what their requirements are.

Ms RITCHIE - They may not have been aware that they could do that. I suspect they have probably gone back to Multicultural Tasmania and been told it is only a one-off and they hit the panic button about how to support the kids.

Ms O'BYRNE - Many times when people get grants, they know it is for a defined period and they know they have to try and make it sustainable, but by the time they get around to doing that, it actually can be quite a difficult thing to do. I appreciate that. But the other thing is, can I just remind all members, that we have sport and recreation officers around the State who are really, really good at what they do. They are happy to talk people through any of those kinds of suggestions that come up on occasion, newer ways to deal with some of the issues that they might be facing. So please take the opportunity to talk to them about that.

Mr MARTIN - They are there to sit down with groups and explain the grants process and how you apply and all that sort of thing.

Ms RITCHIE - That might be useful for them.

Ms O'BYRNE - This grant program is quite a nice easy one to fill in as well. But, it is an issue for a lot of organisations about the capacity for writing grants, and we accept that, which is why we provide support about the type of things you might want to have in it in order to achieve it.

Mr FINCH - Minister, we have been talking a bit this morning about participation in sport. I am just wondering what programs exist or are envisaged to include the middle aged and old Tasmanians.

Ms O'BYRNE - After the fitness gap years, you mean?

Mr FINCH - I have moved through to the next stage. What is available?

Ms O'BYRNE - Thank you, Mr Finch.

Mr FINCH - I am probably thinking in respect of masters and veterans and those sorts of competitions or participation in bowls and other things.

Ms O'BYRNE - I guess part of the key thing is that when we are talking about participation from a whole range of things, we are talking about everybody being able to participate. When I mentioned before about sports providing an opportunity for anyone to participate, it is not just people who have been identified barrier, that they should actually be providing opportunities at all levels for all people. That is the sort of conversations that we want to have with sports. That can be at the masters, but it can also be running different types of competitions, but also competitions on different days. I have recently spoken to the Football Federation Tasmania and they are talking about getting older soccer teams together, older football teams together, but they do not necessarily want to play on a Saturday morning when the kids are playing. They do not want to be on the pitch next to them. But they also might not have the time. They are looking at different structures around how they might provide opportunities during the week. So there are a whole host of different ways that sports can provide different engagements and different opportunities.

Healthy Active Launceston is a model about providing opportunities on a broader perspective as well. They tend to be the ones that are traditionally not for high level elite competition development. They are the sort of things that talk about how you engage in community activity. We also produce a booklet - I am going to shamelessly talk about the north one - you have seen the booklets, "What's happening in the North", "What's happening in the South" and "What's happening in the Northwest", and the people we are targeting are generally older people after their fitness gap years. I am not identifying a particular age. I am hoping I have just come out of my fitness gap. They talk about all the different opportunities. They might be everything from playing lawn bowls to participating in a walking club or soccer or any kind of thing. It is about providing that information and those sorts of key things. I think it is fair to say that we probably need to do more about that particular group. The key is how you engage with them, how you find ways to connect. That is the sort of thing that we are doing. Personally, I think we need to do more. We have a lot of work to help with individual clubs and sporting organisations to help them provide opportunities internally.

Mr DEAN - I just want to ask a question on the Tasmanian AFL team. Is there any part we are playing in this?

Ms O'BYRNE - It is actually the responsibility of the Minister for Economic Development and Tourism

Mr DEAN - You are playing no part in the negotiations?

Ms O'BYRNE - Not in the negotiations and those things. What we do know and what we do get from it is that we had discussions with them about the community camps that they run and the community engagement levels that the Hawthorn Football Club will do. We are not part of their contract requirements or their ongoing obligations, no.

Mr DEAN - In relation to those camps that Hawthorn run, what is your involvement there? Are you identifying areas where you would like them to occur and the groups you would like them to target?

Ms O'BYRNE - We certainly provide input into them as to the sort of areas that we think might be key target groups. We have recent conversations about an area in our combined electorate where they might be able to do some work. But, in terms of their community camps, they generally set the time frame of that. They let us know they are coming, and we suggest different opportunities that might exist.

One of the things that I think young people have got a great benefit from that they have run - they have run a whole host of different things about wellbeing and activity and engagement and leadership - is they do a session with young people on life balance, how you balance the fact that you might be at school when you might have a part-time job and you want to play sport as well and how to get those things appropriate in your life. We mentioned before about how kids often drop out of sport in their teenage years because they have suddenly got a whole host of other things. They actually run a very good session on how you create that balance and yet still have a social life and still get to see your friends and still have time with your family and about how to do measurements around that.

The other one is the support they do for coaches as well. They do a lot of coach development work in terms of skills and new opportunities and training initiatives that may have come up that they know because they are operating at that elite level but regional coaches take a little bit more time to get to and might not be able to afford to do the courses on. That is the sort of engagement we have with it. The actual contract itself is an Economic Development and Tourism issue.

Mr DEAN - My last question at this stage is, what have you got moving in the Georgetown area so far as sport and recreation is concerned? What involvement are you having in that area, because sometimes it is neglected?

Ms O'BYRNE - I think we have had some really good successes in Georgetown recently. You would have to be aware that they have an identified sporting precinct, and we have worked with them, particularly in relation to the netball courts. We have done some work for the sealing of the cycling track down there. We also worked with one of the bowls clubs recently about a grant application. I am not sure how that one is developing at the moment.

Mr DEAN - I heard there were some issues with the bowls club.

Ms O'BYRNE - There are, because the grant applications need to be read in terms of increasing participation, and you need to be able to establish that what you do will increase participation. That has to be the key. We have done the netball courts. That was not without its clever negotiations. Certainly the people involved in netball down there worked very hard on that. They have got pretty active cricket and football opportunities down there. They have got federal funding for their walk which we have participated in and engaged with them. These are all off the top of my head, and no-one has provided me with a list. There is another really good program we have done down there, but it has gone out of my head. I will undertake to get it.

I think Georgetown has done a lot of good work recently. One of the key things is having that identified sporting precinct and it does make it easier to leverage funding as well. That has been really good. There have been some suggestions of moving things off that site. They have to be treated on merit each time, but I think from a parent perspective, particularly if you have children playing, it is so much easier to take your kids to one place where they can all run off to play their different sports within what is a safe environment. That is a good thing rather than having to ferry children everywhere. I think we noticed with what the northeast did, where they did this model really well. They had their football and netball all played in the same towns. That deals not only with the issue of making it easy in terms of the management and infrastructure but it also deals with increasing petrol prices as well, which is not as big an issue in Tasmania yet, but it is becoming a significant issue for regional communities, particularly in New South Wales and Queensland where it is costing so much money that they are not going. They are making a choice about whether the girl does footy or the girl does netball. Unfortunately, I am disappointed but not surprised at the choices the parents are making.

Mr DEAN - The costs incurred in those areas is much higher than it is in the built-up areas. The costs incurred by children particularly involved in sport in those areas is far greater than what it is in the built-up areas, and the junior football club is one area that comes to mind. The parents have to transport them all around the area.

Ms O'BYRNE - I guess it depends, though. If you are playing in a competition where it has some city and some country, you still get those kinds of cost imperatives on parents as well. You are right, though, in terms of fielding kids around to different competitions, it is becoming a greater challenge for sporting clubs as a whole; it is not just footy. We have the same for most competitive sport. Also, if you are a cyclist, you cannot actually cycle to your competition and your competition can be held anywhere in the State. Transport costs have always been an issue for sport.

Mr DEAN - Yes, they certainly have.

Ms O'BYRNE - It is one I think we are going to have to grapple with. When we talk about climate change and talk about fuel costs, I do not want to lose the debate about what it means in terms of participation in sport, particularly for children, because parents have to make decisions about what they can afford. It might mean that clubs have to make different decisions about what they provide.

Mrs JAMIESON - Will the department actually offer the equivalent amount of money to the private sector that the Government is offering for their employees to get fit and healthy?

Ms O'BYRNE - Will we be offering it to the private sector?

Mrs JAMIESON - Yes.

Ms O'BYRNE - That is a very good question.

Mrs JAMIESON - It is certainly seen as a little unfair when you have well-paid public servants being able to access that.

Ms O'BYRNE - We have been working with the private sector for a little while, and the initiative of the Government is about public sector employees, because they are the employees of the State. We have been working on a resource kit for workplace health and wellbeing programs which I think I launched October last year. That is the Get Moving at Work program, so we have already been providing a resource and infrastructure to employers who are not necessarily our employers on how to provide those opportunities. We have done it on an argument about how you are actually going to get a more productive and active work force if they are healthy and if they are engaged and if they are not getting sick and are not tired and grumpy all the time.

Some of the key things have been organisations saying like, 'I can't afford to put in a gym. I can't afford to do that for my staff'. The reality is that that is probably not going to change behaviours of any of the staff members, because if you were going to go to a gym, you are probably going to go to a gym. It is probably not going to be about where it is. What might change is having shower facilities at work so people could cycle to work or walk or run into work. Those are the sort of things that we are talking to them about and just making sure that those workplaces themselves understand different models.

The Premier's Physical Activity Council do things like the Steps Challenge. I am going to have to get the figures on the challenge, because I cannot remember how many steps it is to climb Mt Everest.

Mr MARTIN - I will have to take that on notice.

Ms O'BYRNE - Individual work places and schools and community groups can sign up as a group of 10 people and agree to climb Mt Everest. Fortunately, you do not actually have to get cold to do it, because the idea is that you actually climb a couple of flights of stairs a day each and that will, as a team, get you the amount of steps to say that you have climbed Mt Everest. So it is about having individual little challenges that you can do. I am happy to encourage all members to do that. I will send you the information. My office did it last time, and we, in fact, climbed Mt Everest twice, nearly. That is because we are on the ninth floor, so everybody had to do a number of floors to get up there.

But, if you go to the Premier's Physical Activity Council website, what we are trying to establish through that it a process whereby at any stage you can actually do a new project. So you might train to walk or run in the Launceston 10 or the Burnie 10. You might do the Steps Challenge. You might engage in during the summer months some of the range of programs within national parks. But it actually gives you a program whereby you can choose to do little goal-setting. Instead of saying, 'I'm going to commit for 12 months to something ', which can be very hard for people, you could say, 'But I'm going to commit to do something for four weeks', and then you find something else in four weeks.

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Mrs JAMIESON - Do you have a definition for 'short', 'medium' and 'long term' when it comes to looking at the strategies and actions time frames? Do you have an actual definition for that?

Ms O'BYRNE - A finite definition?

Mrs JAMIESON - What is 'long term', what is 'medium term' and what is 'short term'?

Ms O'BYRNE - Short term would be this financial year, I am advised. I am not sure that we actually have a finite time frame around them rather than things that we can do reasonably quickly. The long-term ones probably require a fair bit of planning before you get to the stage of engaging. Short-term ones are probably ready to go and medium, I would imagine, generally, when you think about things that are medium term are things that you have progressed some way down the planning process and can start to roll out but are not within the next five or six months. I am happy to provide some information on the sort of things that fit in that to give you a picture of that. We could do that. It is not necessarily defined as if it takes six months and one day it becomes something else. It is a bit nebulous.

Mr FINCH - The surgeon Dr Gary Fedke (TBC) said recently that he was frustrated at the growing number of injuries to young off road motorcyclists. He said that he had operated on an average of six patients a weekend for the past few years.

Ms O'BYRNE - He is not happy about giving up his weekend every weekend.

Mr FINCH - Launceston Junior Motorcycle Club president, George Chamberlain, responded to that by saying, 'As well as income tax, we pay tax to the Government for the purchase of bikes, tyres, fuel, et cetera, and the Government offers no assistance to clubs like ours who are trying to establish a safe place for people to ride'. He went on to say, 'We are an entry level club, and you would think the Government would be interested in spreading the safety message through clubs like ours'. Can I just have a response from you and your advice on this issue?

Ms O'BYRNE - This is where I am really happy to say I am also the Minister for Environment, Parks, Heritage and the Arts, because, under that department, we have just had a two-day recreational vehicle summit, in a sense, with representatives from off road vehicle users from a whole range of motorbikes through to quad bikes and the larger vehicles as well to talk about how you actually provide strategies and structures around doing that. We are in the process of defining a strategy document of where we might go. That is about defining places, defining the sort of things that we might want around that.

Mr FINCH - Is this Sport and Recreation Tasmania you are talking about?

Ms O'BYRNE - This is actually happening through the Department of Environment, Parks, Heritage and the Arts as a recreational vehicle strategy, because they tend to be the locations that people do their off road vehicle use of whatever nature that might be. The other thing is I have had a little bit of a look at what Victoria has been doing in terms of creating defined places for motorbike use in particular and how we might do that, the type of land we might need to use. We have had some initial discussions with other government landowners about how we might progress that as an option. I am happy to talk to you about the recreational vehicle use strategy. If you have an interest in it, it is something that we are developing an interest in right now.

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In terms of Sport and Recreation, it does not tend to be something that we fund as an entity. It is more of an issue that we are experiencing as a result of land managers in terms of the places that they will do it and the safety around that.

Mr FINCH - But with these clubs, this might be a way to start their educative process with these young motor cyclists to perhaps help allay the fears and concerns of Dr Gary Fedke about the number of injuries.

Ms O'BYRNE - I am really pleased that the amount of organisations that actually wanted to participate in the strategy, because I think they are clearly saying that they see a need for structure around off road vehicle use, which has always been seen as a kind of, "I'm just going to go off there and do it". Every now and then, clubs form around particular interest groups, but I think there is far more structure occurring now, and we are happy to work with them. I know you have an interest, and when we have the department here, we might touch a bit on that because it has an impact for a whole host of other land management issues for us.

CHAIR - Minister, I am interested to know, given that there quite a lot of initiatives and programs, how many outside consultants has the department used in the last 12 months and for what programs? I can appreciate that we can always take this information on notice.

Ms O'BYRNE - In terms of giving you a detailed one, we probably would take it on notice, because we do use consultants on occasion. But our sport and recreation consultants are internal staff, people who are directly employed, but they consult in the community.

CHAIR - I am talking about outside.

Ms O'BYRNE - We can take that on notice. Predominantly, I am advised when consultants are used that they are engaged by organisations that we provided funding to and we would rarely actually directly engage people to do something ourselves.

CHAIR - What about the staffing?

Ms O'BYRNE - Again, I will get that for you on notice. Most of the Sport and Recreation people probably ride to work.

CHAIR - They probably do, but given that they cover large areas, there is probably a vehicle component in there as well. Mr Wing, you had one question.

Mr WING - Thank you, just another one as a result of the minister's answer. There seems to be a significant imbalance in the number of staff in the north and north-west.

Ms O'BYRNE - You have not met them.

Mr WING - Why is that, and can that be redressed?

Ms O'BYRNE - We have staff in administrative and grant programs who do the grant administration. In terms of sport and recreation consultants, there is not an imbalance, as I understand it.

Mr WING - So, could they not do their work just as effectively in the northern half of Tasmania, and would you look at that to see if we could redress that imbalance?

Ms O'BYRNE - I think they would probably hate it if I relocated them at this point. There is the internal administrative stuff that occurs that is done in the south. The other thing that tends to happen in the south of the State is engagement with State sporting organisations because most of them have their head offices in the south of the State. But there is not, as I am advised, an imbalance in terms of Sport and Recreation consultants that are actually out engaging with sports and providing opportunities for them.

Mr WING - Will you have a close look at that and see if when it becomes necessary to replace staff whether you can have them located in the north or north-west?

Ms O'BYRNE - I am happy to look at those things. It would depend very much on what additional costs would be in housing them, but I am happy to look at that. I am advised that, as a matter of course, when the department looks at new positions, they investigate where the most appropriate place to house that position might be. I am happy to have another look.

Mr WING - Thank you. Now, the question of replacing the damaged grandstand at Aurora Stadium in Launceston, that would not come within your department?

Ms O'BYRNE - I have it in Heritage, actually, as an obligation under the Heritage portfolio.

Mr WING - I will raise it then.

Ms O'BYRNE - At this stage we are still waiting for the Launceston City Council and the Heritage Council to give advice, I understand.

CHAIR - Minister, a topical point was taking photos of your child at a sporting venue. Does your department intend to put out a policy direction on that particular issue?

Ms O'BYRNE - Apparently there is an existing policy that Surf Lifesaving Tasmania have identified, which we are now looking at promulgating and sharing with other sporting organisations. It appears to be a really good model. I am happy to get a copy of that for the committee.

CHAIR - Minister, I believe that that adequately covers sport and recreation. Some would say that we have given it more time than we have in the past. I thank your people who have come to the table today.

Ms O'BYRNE - Thank you very much for giving it that amount of time. I am pleased to see that it is playing the role and having the high profile that it should get in terms of scrutiny as well as support.

**Output group 1
Environment Protection and Analytical Services**

1.1 Environmental and pollution control -

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CHAIR - I invite you, minister, to give a brief overview of this particular area of environment protection and analytical services, output group 1, but generally the overview for environment.

Ms O'BYRNE - Can I thank the committee again for their time and introduce Norm Andrews, my chief of staff and Scott Gadd, the Secretary of the Department of Environment, Parks Heritage and the Arts, or DEPHA. I am really pleased to be at this Estimates Committee, and that might surprise you, but this is my first in my new role as Minister for Environment, Parks, Heritage and the Arts, and I have really enjoyed what I think has been a great opportunity. It is a really rewarding time to be part of these portfolios.

CHAIR - I should add our congratulations as well, Minister.

Ms O'BYRNE - Thank you. I think Tasmania is in a really good position in terms of the opportunities we have in this area for showcasing what we do really well. We actually manage, protect and support our natural and cultural assets and our creativity extremely well. Since beginning this portfolio a very short time ago - I think it was the end of February - it has flown past so fast. I have been impressed with the way that so many of our day-to-day living experiences are actually enhanced by the diversity and the culture that is provided within the State. Tasmanians also benefit from the support and encouragement the department gives to creativity and innovation, for Environment, Heritage and Arts projects and programs aimed at connecting, educating and engaging communities around the State.

I would like to reaffirm the seriousness with which this Government and I in particular take to our environmental responsibilities. We continue to give strong commitment to conservative cultural icons and assisting in growing the Heritage and Arts sector through allocating funds for key initiatives. Tasmanians creativity, including encouraging a vibrant arts community with a robust and professional industry base and our environment, from Aboriginal and environmental heritage to our national parks, reserves and botanic gardens, to the regulation and protection of the environmental qualities which Tasmanians value are the foundations, I think, of what we all think about when we say we are Tasmanian and this is what we love about being here. Those are the tangible attributes and benefits that add value to what we have when we think about our education, our health and/or social inclusion policies of the Government. The tangible thing on top of that is who we are, where we are and what we can do.

The creativity of our communities connects us to our environment and our heritage, and through the sustainable management protection and enhancement of these core attributes, Tasmania can flourish. Last week I announced the appointment of the inaugural board of the Tasmanian Environment Protection Authority. As you would be aware, this Budget allocates \$2.5 million to fund the commencement of the EPA so it can effectively fulfil its responsibilities from 1 July this year.

This funding to establish the EPA is in addition to more than \$10 million in the Budget for environmental initiatives this year, including funding for parks infrastructure and maintenance, water and sewerage reform and Tamar Estuary sedimentation. This Budget has also confirmed the Government's commitment to ensure the long-term sustainability of Tasmania's water resources with improvements to the quality of water and sewerage services. The EPA will play a key role as the environmental regulator for these reforms.

The Government is also helping to address sedimentation problems in the Tamar Estuary, providing support to the TEER program. This year \$250 000 has been allocated to the TEER program, \$100,000 of which is a direct contribution to a study initiated by the Launceston City Council to review the ongoing dredging program and management options for addressing sedimentation of the Upper Tamar Estuary.

Estimates is also a very good time to remind my parliamentary colleagues of the value of our natural heritage - our national parks, our reserves and our gardens that represent the biodiversity of our world and add a lot of colour and enjoyment to our lives. A publication released recently *The value of parks* compiled by the Parks Forum reiterates that local, regional and State economies benefit significantly from parks. This is particularly so in Tasmania where parks are natural icons and are the central focus of our tourism industry, which provides significant sources of employment and flow-on economic benefits for local communities. Parks and reserves also have positive health benefits for the community, providing the opportunity for physical activity and recreation. Clearly, by having many and easy access to these remarkable areas, we cannot only enjoy what is our renowned natural environment but we can also have that healthy and engaged lifestyle that we have spent a fair bit of the morning talking about already.

Maintenance funding of \$3 million will be spent in the parks this year, along with an additional \$5.9 million to go towards the new Cradle Mountain central sewerage treatment project. My department is responsible for the top visitor destinations in the State - the Port Arthur historic site, the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, the Royal Tasmanian Botanic Gardens, our two world heritage areas, 19 national parks and over 400 reserves. The Government's commitment to supporting these sites and enhancing their sustainability through appropriate funding frameworks is evidenced in this year's Budget. For example, as part of the government's \$30 million pledge with the exciting redevelopment project at TMAG; \$5.8 million has been allocated this financial year for a site development plan, engagement of architects to design buildings and the development of a heritage strategy. You would also be aware that Home Hill, the landmark home of the famous Lyons family - while everyone talks about former Prime Minister Joe Lyons, we must not forget that Enid was, in fact, the first woman to get such an exalted role. We need to always give credit to that as a significant step and also her work in ensuring that Home Hill was maintained. It is going to receive a facelift with one-off funding of \$425 000 in recognition of its cultural heritage significance. So that is an interesting site in that it has both the collection maintained by the National Trust and the site itself maintained by the city council. That requires a really exciting partnership that has worked very well.

As arts minister, I am proud to say that the Government has made a commitment to fund Australia's only statewide arts festival, Ten Days on the Island, on an ongoing basis. I am also pleased to confirm that Australia's longest continually operating theatre, the much loved Theatre Royal, will have its contribution from the Government as an ongoing indexed payment for this year. Apart from that, I am absolutely loving my portfolio, and I am looking forward to the questions.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister. Mr Dean is going to take the lead for output group 1.

Mr DEAN - This is a very big area, of course, and probably one of the most important. Firstly, minister, I just want to ask the normal question, which is a fairly important question, about staff issues. I do not want the issues that are already on the website and in the annual report. I am after those details that are not in those reports, like, for instance, the number of staff, how many new appointment and redundancies over the past 12-month period, how many staff on long-term

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sick leave or workers compensation leave, how many staff have accrued study leave, the costs of salaries and other benefits and how much accrued annual and long service leave is the agency liable for? Also, how many staff are supplied with vehicles as part of their employment, and on what basis are those vehicles supplied?

Ms O'BYRNE - Mr Dean, are you asking this in terms of the entire department or are you asking just in terms of the environment division?

Mr DEAN - On the entire department.

Ms O'BYRNE - Okay. I may have to take on notice the issues of the liabilities and workers compensation and we might be able to get that before the end of the day. If not, we will put that on notice for you. I am hoping that I am going to cover all of the things that you listed then.

Mr DEAN - You can take it on notice because it is on *Hansard*.

Ms O'BYRNE - Please remind me if I have missed any when I go through. We have 516 bodies, in a sense, employed in the Department of Environment, Parks, Heritage and the Arts. That is 470.74 full-time equivalents. That breaks up to 11 in Arts Tasmania, 10 in the Office of the Secretary, 33 in information management, 29 in corporate services, seven in the Aboriginal Heritage Office -

Mr DEAN - Minister, I think most of that is in the annual report and on the web. My question was how many new appointments and redundancies have there been?

Ms O'BYRNE - I am going to have to get that on notice. I will try and get it for you before the end of the day. I do not have it in front of me now.

Mr DEAN - Most of that is already on the web. I can get that.

Ms O'BYRNE - Sure. Do you mean the new ones in terms of over the year?

Mr DEAN - Yes, over the year.

Ms O'BYRNE - In 2007-08, how many new people were engaged?

Mr DEAN - The 2007-08 year is what I want. The financial year.

Ms O'BYRNE - In 2006-07, we had eight people in Arts Tasmania, in 2007-08, we have 11. Is that the sort of data that you're after?

Mr DEAN - Yes. I want to know the changes.

Ms O'BYRNE - Okay. Two more in Arts Tasmania. We have lost one in the Office of the Secretary, two in information management, we lost six in corporate services. There has been no change in Aboriginal Heritage Office, we have 14 new positions in Parks and Wildlife, six in Heritage Tasmania, two at the TMAG five less at the botanical gardens -

Mr DEAN - That is 14 new officers in Parks and Wildlife?

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Ms O'BYRNE - Yes, and 13 new people in the environment division. Is that the sort of information that you're after?

Mr DEAN - Yes.

Ms O'BYRNE - That is physical bodies as opposed to paid FTEs. Those staff that we lost are related to the fact that when the department was split in order to send tourism back to Economic Development, that was part of the transport process. So you can see that they are predominantly information and corporate service positions that have been transferred back through. I'm sorry, I'm going to ask you to take me through the other bits of information again. The motor vehicle fleet, we have a total number of motor vehicles in the department's fleet as at 16 May is 148. That is 131 leased vehicles and 17 owned vehicles. That does not include quad bikes, trailers and tractors, which is probably not something that most departments have to own. Within the fleet, there are 14 private-plated vehicles under SES contracts and 134 Government-plated vehicles. The annual lease costs of the department's fleet is \$1.3 million. I think we have an additional one car in the last 12 months.

Some 85 per cent of the department's existing fleet meets the Government's minimal greenhouse emission ratings. All future acquisitions are required to meet the specified greenhouse emission ratings. Of the combined fleet - that is the owned fleet and the leased fleet - 70 per cent are four cylinder vehicles and 69 per cent are diesel fuelled. The department is conscious of the impact of its vehicle fleet on the environment, and we actually currently lease two Toyota Priuses, the hybrid vehicles. The department continues to review its vehicle fleet to optimise use, economy and fuel consumption as part of its broader sustainability initiatives. In fact, we are even looking at using mountain bikes in some of our national parks. We are currently discussing with some of our department people for when they are travelling very close to their work place - I am not trying to make them ride all the way to Burnie, for instance - that they might be able to use bicycles on those opportunities as well to try to minimise that impact.

The liability in the workers compensation, we will put that on notice. We will just clarify with the secretary what workers compensation issue we need to provide. Actually, we do have some information on workers compensation. We have had a 14 per cent reduction - this is as to 30 April - in the cost of workers compensation claims occurring in 2007-08.

Mr DEAN - 14 or 40?

Ms O'BYRNE - That was 14 per cent. The number of workers compensation claims submitted in 2007-08 reduced by 38 per cent. Only 42 per cent of employee injuries have resulted in claims for workers compensation, and 82 per cent of our department have actually undertaken occupational health and safety training.

Ms RITCHIE - Is that funding under Parks?

Ms O'BYRNE - Primarily in Parks. Workers compensation by injury, we have had two in the gardens, two in the environment division and 21 in Parks. It is the nature of Parks. It is also where we have the bulk of our workforce as well.

Mr DEAN - What about stress leave?

Ms O'BYRNE - No stress claims as at 30 April.

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Mr DEAN - The accrued leave and the long service leave.

Ms O'BYRNE - We will have to get that one on notice, thank you.

Mr DEAN - The other one I was interested in is the number of outside consultants engaged by the department in the past 12 months and how many are expected to be engaged in the year ahead?

Ms O'BYRNE - Consultants and contractors cost \$50 000. The department has entered into 22 contract agreements valued in excess of \$50 000. The combined value of the contract is approximately \$11.4 million. Significant contracts were the Cradle Valley sewerage treatment scheme reticulation system, which is a \$4 million project, the Cradle Valley sewerage treatment scheme waste water treatment plant, approximately \$2.9 million, and the Cradle Mountain Lake St Clair National Park construction of walker accommodation and ranger huts at Windy Ridge \$819 900. Of the 22 contractor agreements, 19 were awarded to Tasmanian suppliers for the combined value of approximately \$8.2 million. We have entered into eight consultancy agreements, each valued in excess of \$50 000, and the combined value of the consultancy agreements is approximately \$1 million.

Of the eight consultancy agreements, six contracts were awarded to Tasmanian consultants for a combined value of \$446 572. Of the two that were award to an interstate firm, one was actually a consortium that included a local provider, a Tasmanian architectural firm. These are not the figures that would include Tourism Tasmania since they have been put off to the other portfolio as well. I am not sure if you actually want the detailed individual ones of the projects.

Mr DEAN - The question was the number of consultants - we have got that - and the cost to the department. That is covered.

Ms O'BYRNE - We have actually got a break down of each individual one if that is useful at all for the committee.

Mr DEAN - I will have a look at the answer.

Ms O'BYRNE - Sure, we will come back to you if you need anything further.

Mr DEAN - I want to go through the wood heater program. I am specifically looking at the Launceston area. I know this crosses over into housing as well where wood heaters are identified as a huge problem in the Launceston area. You went through the different phases here of electric heaters in homes; you removed electric heaters, we went into wood heaters in these homes, now we're returning again to removing them from those homes and into electric heating again. I do not know whether you are in a position to provide me with the number of housing department properties currently with wood heaters in the area around Launceston and what is happening? What is the position in relation to that?

Ms O'BYRNE - I think that is something you are probably going to have to ask the minister responsible. I am not sure if Warren has any information he would like to add to it.

Mr JONES - I have not got the figures at the moment. It used to be somewhere between 400 and 500.

Mr DEAN - Right. There is no program under your area of control where they are working to do anything about that?

Ms O'BYRNE - We have been involved in a number of programs. I might just take you through the sort of progress that we have had. In 1997, Launceston had 50 exceedances of the national daily particulate matter, which is the PM10 standard of 50 micrograms per cubic meter for particles less than 10 millionths of a meter in diameter. Now, the national goal for PM10 is to have no more than five exceedances in one year. So, the fact that we had 50 in 1997 was a significant problem. I know that within your role in local government as well you have had an interest in there.

Since 1997, PM10 levels in Launceston have fallen. In 2006, there were six exceedances of the standard. In 2007, the national goal was met for the first time with only five exceedances of the standard. So, we have made significant progress since 1997, probably due to several programs, I think, including, as you mentioned, the wood heater replacement program and associated community education and, I guess, also the smoke patrol programs. These were joint initiatives undertaken by the Commonwealth and Tasmanian governments and the Launceston City Council. In industrial emissions have also been reduced with the application of the Environmental Protection Policy (Air Quality) Act 2004. Notwithstanding that, the particles in Launceston are still considered to be too high and further reduction in wood heater emissions are necessary to reduce the exposure of residents to health impacts.

As part of the Tasmanian air quality strategy 2006, new regulations have now been developed to control the import, sale and installation of wood heaters, which commenced in August 2007. That actually prohibits the sale of wood heaters that do not meet Australian standards for heater emissions. They also make emission of excessive smoke and wood heaters an offence, assisting councils to address persistent smoke from households and other premises.

As required under the national environment protection ambient air quality measure, monitoring and reporting of particles for diameter less than 2.5 millionths of a meter, which is PM2.5. That commenced in Launceston in 2005. These smaller particles are considered to pose a much greater risk to health than the larger particulates. Further reductions in particulate levels are likely to be required in order to meet the new national standards for PM2.5 expected in current years. A lot of the focus, as we said, has been on education. I think we have seen behavioural change in Launceston. In relation to the actual housing department homes, it probably would be something you would need to ask directly of the Minister for Health and Human Services.

Mr DEAN - Thank you for that. One further question, there has been huge public disquiet about this in recent times, and I have been inundated with much evidence, and that is in relation to burn-offs by forestry, private landowners and many other people. Have there been any prosecutions in this area at all? What is the plan for the future in relation to these deep burns? They appear to be prolific now. There are certainly many, many days now when the State is covered in burn-off smoke and so on. It seems to be building up. It is a tremendous problem. I want to know the number of prosecutions, because a number of offences have been disclosed in this area. Perhaps we could start with the number of offences disclosed in the area of wildfire burn-offs or cleanup burn-offs or what have you, and then look at what your department is doing on this.

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Ms O'BYRNE - We probably need to start with identifying the whole range of things that actually impact in terms of burning, because there is a view that it occurs in one area and not in others, I think. There is commercial forestry, there is fire hazard reduction, ecological management and agricultural burns as well. All of those, regardless of what kind of burning they are, they should be managed in accordance with best practice. However, I do acknowledge the particular significance of a forestry planned burning. The forestry industry is responsible for around two-thirds of planned burns in autumn, which is the period where you get most of the concern about the impacts.

The air quality strategy that I mentioned before proposes that smoke management procedures be established and incorporated into the forest practices code. It also proposes improved coordination of planned burns and investigation of the most appropriate management system for complaints. Tasmania's environment protection policy and air quality also addresses planned burning, and it specifies best practice principles for smoke management, especially the need to take account of health and amenity and impacts of smoke on individuals in the community. My department has been working with the Forestry Practices Advisory Council to arrange for appropriate changes to forest practices. Once the changes are made, the authority will then be able to regulate the management of smoke from planned burning by forest industry, although, through the forest practices regulatory system.

During the recent burning season, the forest industry trialled a standard for management of planned burn smoke. I might get warn to talk a little bit about that in a moment which specifies a method of predicting planned burn smoke travel and dispersion. Standards aid decision making on whether a burn should proceed on a particular day and provides for communication with people who may be affected. The standard will be finalised after an evaluation of the trial and consideration will be given to an appropriate amendment to the Forest Practices Code to require compliance with the standard.

We measure airborne particle levels at monitoring stations in Hobart, Launceston and Georgetown. We are in the process of establishing another one in Devonport. They can be used to assess the impact of planned burning smoke in those centres. I acknowledge, and I have a view, that we should look at monitoring planned burning smoke in a more comprehensive manner. We are currently investigating those options. There is actually research that the University of Tasmania is doing at the moment which we think could be the initial step to that, to actually ensuring that the data that we get will actually allow us to predict better what happens when you light more than one fire in a particular region.

Mr Jones and I have had some conversations about where we might go with this. One of the problems is the efficiency of the data that we get and whether or not there are better ways of getting that data. That is what we are talking with the university about at the moment, to get some kind of picture of how we might better get data. There are a couple of issues at play. It is not just whether you should light a fire; it is how much smoke should be allowed on that particular day as well. One of the things that we do have is that if somebody sees that somebody has lit a fire, they assume that they have done the test be and the modelling and that that's okay, so everybody else lights their fire on the same day. It is not that individually any one of those things would actually cause significant damage. Would you get is just too much on one day. They are the discussions that we have been having about how we might better progress that.

Mr DEAN - I just want to add a bit to that. This is an extremely serious issue. During April this year, you really could not live in the Nunamara area. That is what a lot of people are telling

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me, because of the incessant fire and smoke that was wafting around the area and through their homes. It was causing illness. That happened pretty well right through April - on 11, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25. For almost the entire month of April, including 29 and 30 April, and then again, in May it was almost daily. A lot of people live in that area. There has to be some other way of controlling this and getting on top of it.

Ms O'BYRNE - These are the discussions that we have been having about how we might better create a modelling that allows us to work better. In isolation, I think most generally, the people who do the planned burns, whether they be agricultural or they be hazard reduction or regeneration burning by Forestry Tasmania are doing so based on the information that they have in front of them that says it is okay to do it. The problem is that everybody lights up at the same time. I think that is a significant problem.

The Fire Service Act actually provides that fires that are lit and controlled in accordance with a fire permit during the fire permit period are exempt from the provisions of EMPCA. We cannot take regulatory action against those at that time. What we can do is what we are doing now, which is looking at the research that has been commissioned by the university and trying to find better ways of managing the amount of smoke that is happening on any given time. I might let Warren add anything that he has to that.

Mr DEAN - What I want to know and what the people want to know is whether or not you are treating this as a critical issue.

Ms O'BYRNE - Absolutely.

Mr DEAN - You are addressing it with a view to trying to control it, I suppose? I know burn-offs have to occur.

Ms O'BYRNE - There is no suggestion that we are treating this as anything other than incredibly important. Air quality is something that we take extremely seriously. What we do need to do is manage things that occur during that time. There are agricultural burn-offs; there are burns for fire reduction. The fires on the east coast have led us to see what happens if we do not take action to remediate that in advance. There are good reasons for doing a number of burns. The question is how we better model and how we better create an opportunity so that we limit the impact on people whilst doing that. There is a defined time for burns. There is community consultation. But, as I said, somebody will actually act within the information that they have got in terms of the modelling, but then you will find that other people see that they have lit up so they copy. You quite often cannot even trace it down to only one person lighting one fire on one day.

Mrs JAMIESON - Perhaps, Madam Chair, I might have half an answer. If you have a spare \$114 000, we will have the answer.

Ms O'BYRNE - If you do it for that, you are doing better than me, because my costings are a bit dearer than that at the moment.

CHAIR - I will indulge the member because I believe that she has something worthwhile.

Mrs JAMIESON - Has your department ever actually considered the use of the air curtain burners that they use in Canada and America?

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Mr JONES - I think in terms of this particular problem, we are aware of those burners, but we did not think they would have application with the majority of the planned burns that take place here in terms of wide scale use.

Mrs JAMIESON - But Canada and America are much bigger than Tasmania, and they certainly are proving to be quite satisfactory over there, and you can buy them, would you believe, for \$114 000 American.

Ms O'BYRNE - Each?

Mrs JAMIESON - Each.

Ms O'BYRNE - How big an area do they cover?

Mrs JAMIESON - You need to look at that, of course, but there are some things that I got off the Internet which are really quite interesting. Of course, you can burn green, low transport costs and all this. I am just wondering why it has not been considered when we have such a major problem. I certainly endorse what Mr Dean said, because I had real sinus problems.

Ms O'BYRNE - I am happy to have a look at that, but as I understand, the curtains actually operate on quite defined container size areas.

Mrs JAMIESON - They can be moved around and moved within the area.

Ms O'BYRNE - I am happy to get some further information.

Mrs JAMIESON - When you consider the angst that all this is causing and the health problems as well, one thinks we should seriously be attempting to find a better way of doing it.

Ms O'BYRNE - Part of our problem is the proper modelling that we have in terms of the impact. We give people permits to light fires because we accept that they need to light those fires. What we need is better information about what happens top smoke dispersal so that we can control that better.

Mrs JAMIESON - Is it worth your pursuing -

Ms O'BYRNE - I have said I am happy to have a look at it. Apparently, we have already had a bit of a look at them.

Mr DEAN - The other question was, have there been any prosecutions in relation to this area I am talking about, wildfire, burn-offs and so on?

Ms O'BYRNE - No. There is one case currently before the courts. There is no prosecution that I am aware of.

Mr DEAN - What case was that?

Mr JONES - That was the episode at Bridport, where the road was closed and a school was evacuated. I guess we thought that was a particularly severe incident that appeared to have a cause and effect. That is an example of the difficulty of taking legal action in this area. We are

still in the courts two years later with the matter being very vigorously defended. Just on that point about taking action, if I could just make an extra point there, there are effectively three authorities, if you like, who would have jurisdiction in this area and would be able to take action. The focus of the Forest Practices Authority and, as the principle regulator of the impacts of forestry, our focus over the last few years has been to ensure that the Forest Practices Code deals more effectively with forest burn-offs, but there is then also, as the minister pointed out, outside of the fire burning period - we have this fairly weird scenario of where one day something is within the scope and the next day it is not when the fire permit period ends - under EMPCA, either myself as director or, indeed, any council officer would be able to take action. Out of these three authorities we have, as I have said, attempted to prosecute and still have in the courts the episode I referred to earlier. I am not aware of any actions that have been taken. As I said, I suppose part of the reason for that is not because people do not believe it is a serious issue but because of the difficulty of proof where the smoke is often not attributable to one particular fire and the lengths that you have to go to to demonstrate that cause and effect are quite significant.

Mr WING - I would have thought that was quite easy. You just go to the area where the fires are and you can see where they are burning. Surely there could not be anything more simple.

Mr JONES - Mr Wing, I would agree with you. My assessment was that it would be a simple matter, but I am led to believe that that is not the case.

Mr WING - How on earth could it not be the case?

Mr JONES - Well, we have certainly expended considerable effort on this particular case, which appeared to be very straightforward to me. That included getting information on all the other fires that were burning in the area, getting satellite photography and so on, but, in essence, the DPP's advice is that we are still do not have a strong case at this stage. We are still pursuing it.

Mr WING - I am not thinking just about prosecutions.

Ms O'BYRNE - The compliance investigations unit get the data that they believe will provide the evidence. They then forward that to the DPP, who then makes a determination.

Mr WING - But quite apart from prosecutions, what is your department doing to try and stop the fires from occurring several at a time? You just need to go to Patersonia. I have had numerous complaints and there are people who have suffered healthwise. I would have thought somebody from the department going there and just driving around would see exactly where the problem is and surely take some action. It is quite disgraceful that no action has been taken at all. I am not talking about prosecutions; I am talking about stopping this, because there was one day in particular, a pall of smoke hung all over Launceston. That happened on a regular basis, almost daily in Patersonia for most of the whole of April. Irrespective of prosecutions, it was just allowed to go unchecked.

Mr JONES - Firstly, if I could respond to that by saying that, in terms of forestry fires, the Forest Practices Authority is the frontline regulator in relation to that. But in relation to what we have done, we certainly regard what happened this year in particular as an unacceptable event in terms of air quality. As a result of that, I have had discussions with the Forest Practices Authority, the Forest Practices Advisory Council, the Director of Public Health, the Asthma Foundation and the chief fire officer with a view to try to work out how this can be done better

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next year. I guess probably the simplest way of presenting where our air quality people have got to on this is, if you like, a three-point plan which says that, firstly, we need better predictive modelling. The modelling that has been undertaken this year has certainly moved. We have future this on the agenda as an environmental issue that needs to be addressed over the past five years.

The modelling that has been developed over the past few years has taken us a step well beyond where we were back five years ago with that issue. But the modelling that was used this year that was available through the Bureau of Meteorology had its limitations in the sense that it did not take into account the existing levels of smoke that was in the air, in particular, nor did it take into account the number of fires that were lit up in a particular area. So while there was a technique there to use, it certainly has its limitations. The first thing we think needs to happen is that needs to be better modelling that can take account of, as you said, the number of fires but also the pre-existing levels of smoke that are in the atmosphere. That clearly was a major contributing factor this year.

The second part of that plan is better monitoring. At the moment, we have monitoring in Launceston, Hobart and Rowella. Some monitoring happens in George Town now, and we will have monitoring in Devonport later this year. But, to be useful in terms of managing planned burns better, we think we need to have a wider monitoring network than that. The monitoring stations are very expensive to set up - \$150 000 to \$200 000 all up by the time you put in a proper monitoring station. So we have been looking at cheaper ways of doing that to enable us to have a broader monitoring network. Those are the discussions I have been having with the minister.

Mr WING - I appreciate what you are saying as far as the future is concerned, but I am very concerned about the past, because people with respiratory problems, particularly with emphysema, have been suffering on a daily basis, particularly during April. I would like to ask: what, if any, action, your department, which is responsible overall for the environment and the protection of people, took, if any, to try and reduce the number of fires and burn-offs or to control them?

Mr JONES - There is currently no permitting system. There is a fire permit period during the fire permit season. I cannot remember off the top of my head when that cut out. It was some time during April, I think, this year. So, up until that point, I had no jurisdiction and the permit system that regulates who can burn was with the fire service. Once that fire permit system is finished, then there is not a permit system to say whether a fire can go ahead or not, whether that is administered by myself, by councils, by the Forest Practices Authority or by the fire service. The third point of that plan was that that may be something we need to look at in the future to have a system whereby -

Mr WING - So for those -

Ms O'BYRNE - To take it back -

Mr WING - Could I just continue. For those reasons, your answer is that you did nothing during that month?

Ms O'BYRNE - No.

Mr WING - Is that right?

Ms O'BYRNE - No, that is what I was just about to say. To take it back a step, what occurs during that period is that the modelling that currently exists allows you as a farmer or you as a parks officer or you as a council person or whoever to say, 'This is what I'm going to check out. Is this an okay day for me to light a fire?'. In isolation, they make the right decision based on that. The problem is that there might be five fires happening that day, and they have no way of knowing that other people are doing them. That is the problem that we are trying to resolve at the moment. In isolation, lighting one fire within that zone based on the modelling that we have, you have not done anything wrong. The problem is that the modelling does not tell you if you light five fires or six fires or more. That is the problem. That is why we are having discussions now about better modelling and permits so you can actually say, 'Fine, yes you could light a fire based on the weather conditions today, but we are not going to let you, because we have already given a permit to somebody else to do it so you can't'. That's the sort of discussion that we have to try to resolve. The existing modelling, which we hoped would give us a better picture, has not worked. We accept that it did not work with what happened over this burn season. It was unacceptable.

Mr WING - Because no action was taken. I mean, clearly, Minister, with respect, what you have said does not indicate that any action was taken to stop this. Surely some officer could have gone out there and gone around to the properties -

Ms O'BYRNE - We do not have the jurisdiction during that period.

Mr WING - But even in a persuasive way. People were choking on the smoke day after day after day. It was an environmental disgrace. People were lighting the fires with gay abandon, no control at all. Surely the department could send somebody out there after the first few days to say, 'Look, would you not burn. Please don't do this. It's creating a disturbance'. Even if there was no power to stop them, surely some power should have been exercised to persuade them rather than allowing this to go on unchecked.

Mr DEAN - If I could just take that one step further to say that these people are saying that they have photographs of it, and I think most members received them. What they are saying, Minister, is that in April and May each year they will need to get out of the area to survive. Now whilst those are probably the better months to burn, surely there has to be some controlling mechanism -

Ms O'BYRNE - This is what Mr Jones has just said and what I have just said. We accept that what occurred was an unacceptable outcome. There was too much smoke. That is why we are saying that obviously what is there is not working and that is why we are now talking about the type of modelling that we can do and the monitoring around that. At the moment, in isolation, they are not doing anything wrong. The problem is in conjunction they are doing something that is terribly wrong, but there is no capacity for us to deal with that. The only way for us to deal with it is to change the monitoring so they have better information when they make their decision and also the conversation that we have had is whether or not we actually limit it to a permit system that says, 'Okay, you can't light a fire today because we've given permits to somebody else'. That what is why we are doing what we are doing now. I think it is wrong to say that the department has done nothing. The department has worked really hard. The department is also limited, because the EPA act could does not apply.

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Mr DEAN - These people, Minister, also ask a legitimate question. If they need to relocate, will the department pay up for them to relocate for that month or that six-week period that they need to each year to live?

Ms O'BYRNE - Which department?

Mr DEAN - I guess environmental services or through the Government. What responsibility does the Government have?

Ms O'BYRNE - The responsibility of the Government is to try to manage this situation, which is what we are doing. That is why we are working with the university. That is why we are looking at the different type of monitoring so that we can actually resolve this. If you accept that we have to do planned burning, that is the base that we start from. I am not going to tell councils not to do fire reduction burning. I am not going to tell agricultural people not to do it. I do not have any control over the Forestry one because that is part of forest practices.

Mr WING - You could ask them not to do it, though, when it is affecting people's health.

Ms O'BYRNE - We have, and I think there has been work there. One of the roles that I see the EPA playing is one not only of a monitoring and a regulation role, but also an education and community role. I see those things as being things that we can now do.

Mr WING - And could have done.

Mr GADD - The weakness in the system is the individuals who decide to burn. We can control through the Forest Practices Authority the planned burns through forestry. Certainly we use our modelling through Parks to determine that. What we cannot determine in advance is how many individuals are going to light up. It is really hard then to determine which particular fire then tips the scale. That is where we need a better system, and that is what Warren has been talking to the FPA and others about. We are going to endeavour to not have a repeat next year of what we had this year.

Mr WING - You can request people not to do it. Surely the department could have come out in the media and requested people who have forest plantations, in view of the effect on people's health and what is happening with smoke everywhere day after day, to cooperate. You may have no power to do anything, but they could be asked to cooperate. It seems the department sat on its hands while people were suffering all through that month at least. It is not as if this was unexpected. It has been building up over four years. The department has had adequate time to plan all this modelling, et cetera, that it is going to do in the future. Why did it not do it two years ago?

Mr GADD - Part of the answer we have got is we have a fuel reduction plan burning program happening throughout the parks and reserves system. What we do as part of that - we have just been gearing that up over the last year, year and a half - is whenever we are going to do a parks reserve burn, we then go and talk to the local landowners, the neighbours, and we offer to do their properties at the same time as we do ourselves. That way, we bring them under our wing and bring them in under our modelling. So we have been proactive in that sense now for a year and a half. But that still gearing up, that program. We are going to drive it that way. But we also probably need a system, potentially a permit system, to bring those people to account, which is the bit that is missing at the moment.

Mr WING - While that is all hopping, at least something should have been done to try to persuade people not to all burn off at the same time. I think it is quite disgraceful that that did not happen. Not even requests were made.

Mrs JAMIESON - Through you, Madam Chair, I would say that we are just so overregulated. We have too many departments involved in this. We need a one-stop-shop that people can actually relate to, and go and buy a couple of air curtains at the same time.

Mr FINCH - Just on Launceston's air quality, in table 4.4, there is a jump in air pollution in 2006-07, then back to a target of five PM10 for the next two years. That is the actual level for 2005-06. Just having a look there, in 2006-07, the PM10 quantity increased by a factor of two, and then it is back down again and our target in the future is going to be back at five. I am just curious about what caused that increase in that year.

Mr JONES - The table shows five exceedances in the 2005-06 financial year and seven in the 2006-07 year. If we had a chart that would take us back to 1997, you would see that that started at 50. There is a very nice almost straight-line curve that reduces down there. When you are looking at five or seven, in the context of 50 10 years ago, it is really just what you would call climatic variation. The number of exceedances of the 50 standard that we have in Launceston is very weather dependent. If you have a lot of inversions in one year, even though you have the same amount of smoke or less smoke going in from wood heaters, then you will probably end up with more exceedances. So, we would expect it to sort of bobble around a little bit depending upon the weather in each year.

This year, for example, we have had very few inversions in Launceston during what we call the wood heater season. There have been correspondingly fewer exceedances of that. So, the only exceedance that I have got into well into May was one in March, which was due to a bush fire. There were no exceedances of the PM10 level during the planned burning smoke haze problem. While we have seen a pick up in numbers towards the end of May, beyond where, again, things were with the planned burning period, I have not yet got any exceedances for that period. So this year, for example, it may drop down to two or three if we are lucky, depending upon what happens in July and August, which are usually very windy, which also, again, prevents build up. So, the short answer to your question is that it is weather dependent. You would probably expect, even once we have got things down to a low and stable level, that you will get small variations from year to year which simply depend on what the weather is like.

Mr DEAN - Can you differentiate between the wood smoke causing exceedances in Launceston and the wildfire causing the exceedances in Launceston? It seems to me to be a bit of a nonsense that Launceston is judged on the environmental issues in Launceston and the council is stomped on as well if the exceedances go over and above the five mark, but they have no control over it. The wildfires are occurring outside their district and causing some of those difficulties and the council has no control over that. It just seems to me a bit of a nonsense.

Mr JONES - If I can just answer the first question: there is a very definite pattern with wood heaters, so when we get into wood heaters as being the majority of the cause of the smoke, you can see that by looking through the 24-hour pattern over the day. There is that. Secondly, I would say certainly I am not sure who you were suggesting was stomping on councils. It is not me.

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Mr DEAN - They are criticised -

Mr JONES - We think the council, together with the State Government and the Commonwealth Government, has really done a remarkable job over the decades.

Ms O'BYRNE - To get from 50 to five in that period of time is significant.

Mr JONES - Part of that is that the council has honed the issue as a local issue and has done something about it.

Ms O'BYRNE - You can clearly tell the difference in the smoke.

Mr DEAN - The council and the Commonwealth Government in the main have caused the turnaround.

Mr JONES - I think it has been a good team.

Mr FINCH - Just while we are on the subject of air quality, there has been some publicity recently about rectification of an issue in the Tamar Valley with Gunn's establishment at Lindsay Street where there is a smokestack. I am curious about the number of complaints that it has taken for us to get to this stage. I mean complaints about the amount of smoke.

Ms O'BYRNE - There have been three reported incidents in the last four months.

Mr FINCH - Just complaints by the general public in respect of contacting environment department with a suggestion that this smoke might be harmful to the residents of Launceston and to the environment.

Mr JONES - We had zero complaints in 2006, zero in 2007 and - if I am reading my bar chart correctly - we have had five complaints this year. There were some other numbers in 2003 and 2004 when the new boiler was commissioned.

Mr FINCH - Only small numbers.

Mr JONES - As I said, no complaints for two years, and five this year, which were related to the incidents that the minister outlined. We have had two principal incidents that have generated the complaints. I think probably four of those would have come in February where there was a particularly bad weekend when the smokestack was visibly emitting smoke for probably about a day, I think, which started on Saturday and went into a Sunday. Then there was another incident in March, which we had one complaint about. Again, there were some pictures of smoke being emitted, but the pictures we received were only over a fairly short period - about a minute or so. The complainant said there was a little bit of smoke for a longer period, but the main really bad look was just for that very short time.

What we have done, I guess as a result of that, is, firstly, find out why these problems were occurring, why they were occurring on weekends, and that basically boiled down to the way that Gunn's feed the boiler with shavings and material from their planing room, which is operative during the week but does not operate at weekends. There is no fresh material coming on to that pile at weekends. What they found was in these particular incidents, the feed system had received some clumps of material because there was not fresh stuff coming in and that caused more

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material to go into the boiler than should have. The first thing was to find out what the problem was and rectify that, which Gunn's have undertaken to do. They have someone manually disturbing the feed pile over the weekend.

More importantly, we have also asked them or, in fact, required them - I issued a notice requiring them - to put in a new bag house filter. They had a bag house filter there for a time, but it did not get down to the levels that we all expected it to. It turns out that the bag house was undersized for the size of the boiler. So I have issued them a notice requiring them to put in another bag house by 30 September and also put in continuous monitoring equipment which should provide them with quicker and more effective feedback in terms of when and if a problem arises.

Mrs JAMIESON - I will get off the smoke subject in a moment. I would just like some information, please, on the effect of the Litter Act that we have in place, the number of penalties and public response and involvement in actually reporting.

Ms O'BYRNE - As members would be aware, we enacted the Litter Act in 2007. It came in December last year. We launched it and the hotline in January. I did that on behalf of the previous minister. That hotline and associated web page allows members of the public to report litter by phone or by completing an online or hard copy report. A public education campaign was designed to inform the public about the hotline and the significant penalties for littering. In particular, it focused on people who tossed things from the car and people who dumped rubbish on the roadside or out in the bush. The new laws and education campaign are intended to impress upon the community the seriousness of littering. So it is about behavioural change and trying to change people's focus around it.

We have had an excellent response to the education hotline. The public has welcomed the chance to do something about littering. Between 17 January and 17 June 2008, there have been 255 reports on the litter hotline. This week more than 150 infringement notices and warning letters have begun to be issued to Tasmanians who have contravened the laws. The most frequently reported offence so far is cigarette butts from motor vehicles. I think most of us who have participated in Clean Up Australia Days will say that is the thing that we find the most of. The fine for this is \$120, and at the other end of the scale there is a \$6 000 court penalty for a significant litter dumping. Infringement notices will be enforced under the new Monetary Penalties Enforcement Act. If alleged offenders do not pay, make arrangements to pay or elect a court hearing after receiving a notice, they are deemed to be convicted of the offence 28 days after it is issued. Non-payments will then go to be enforced by the Monetary Penalties Enforcement Service. I am actually pretty pleased that people have taken this on board. To give you some information here, we had 158 reports made to the telephone hotline; 255 formal reports have been received comprising 153 online lodgements and 102 reports through mail and fax.

Mrs JAMIESON - Prosecutions?

Ms O'BYRNE - There has been a small number of anonymous reports that have been received, and we keep them for analysis and data. We record them, but there is not an awful lot you can do about that. Completion of the environment division's case management system for littering offences has been delayed by the commencement of the new system. There were some complexities in integrating the systems. That has delayed the issue of infringement notices from the system. However, those notices are now being issued and, as at 18 June, a total of

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33 infringement notices and 81 warning letters have been issued in respect of littering offences reported to the hotline. As I said before, there is 28 days after being issued.

Mr WING - Obviously you do not have any benchmarks.

Ms O'BYRNE - I do not think I have anything to add to that.

Ms RITCHIE - I just wanted to briefly ask about noise pollution. I have some very interested parties in my electorate, whom you would know. I just wondered if you could give an update. It has been an ongoing issue well before your time, Minister, but I just wondered if you could provide some information.

Ms O'BYRNE - I still receive letters nationally from my former life where I campaigned against loud television ads and became an expert in noise compression technology.

Ms RITCHIE - My husband is complaining still about the noise of the programs as compared to the regular programs.

Ms O'BYRNE - I can let you know that Australian-made ads actually confirm to a standard after our raising that issue. But ads that are made elsewhere do not conform to the Australian standards. But, anyway, that is not what we are talking about. The environment division is preparing a draft environment protection policy on noise, which comprises best five principles and objectives for noise control. Its main purpose is to guide high level planning processes, such as council planning scheme amendments. It also takes into account human health issues in response to a landmark report on noise which was issued in 2004 by Australia's health council. The environment protection policy's review panel has reviewed public submissions on the draft policy and the division's responses to the issues raised in the submissions. I am expecting to get that report soon. That will include an amended draft policy and a number of other recommendations that relate to the policy's implementation.

Ms RITCHIE - Including enforcement? That is one of the issues.

Ms O'BYRNE - The recent amendments to EMPCA have actually provided council with some help for council officers and police offers to respond effectively to instances of neighbourhood noise nuisances. Amongst other things, the changes to EMPCA allows officers to make a subjective judgment on whether a noise is audible in another residence without actually having to enter into the affected property, which was one of the problems in the past. That actually reduces reliance on technical measurements and also helps to avoid identifying the person who has made the complaint, because that has been a significant precluder from people actually getting the police or the council to turn up. They do not want the neighbours to know that they made a complaint. People still have to live in these environments.

Amendments are also proposed to the environmental management and pollution control noise regulations, which will address contemporary noise issues, such as amplified music, security alarms and chain saw usage, which have become more significant in recent years. I was surprised about the chain saw usage. I am hoping that licences and training courses are also a bit more prolific. We will be releasing those for public comment in August. I think we are still on track for that. I have not seen the recommendations yet because they have not come to me.

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Mrs JAMIESON - One of the problems certainly seems to be the implementation of these guidelines, because the councils will say, 'That is not our role', then the police will say, 'I'll go back to the council'. We end up with absolutely nothing being done about it.

Ms RITCHIE - That is why I was raising the issue of enforcement. That on-the-ground stuff is important.

Ms O'BYRNE - One of the issues that I know local government made some significant submissions to under the Dog Control Act was actually about noise abatement and about putting restrictions around that. There is a lot more discussion happening about mechanisms that might be able to be used now. But I do not want to pre-empt what will come in this report to me.

CHAIR - We will come back after the lunch break.

The committee suspended from 12.53 p.m. to 2 p.m.