

**Tuesday 24 June 2008 - Estimates Committee B (Bartlett) - Part 2**

**CHAIR** - We have all members at the table now so we will begin, Premier, if that is agreeable with you and we will get straight into it because one could say we have been spending a fair bit of time on areas that are certainly important, but we have more important things as well to get to.

**Mr BARTLETT** - I will try to keep my answers short.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, because I do have a timer on the table and I am prepared to use it this afternoon. So we will get onto output 1.2, climate change.

**1.2 Climate change -**

**Mr BARTLETT** - I am going to ask Greg Johannes who is the Director of the Office of Climate Change to come to the table.

**Mr WING** - Premier, I was very pleased to see the initiative you have taken with the energy-saving project in the Education department and I understand you intend that to spread and I hope that will be the case. I had intended to write to Mr Lennon suggesting that we adopt policies in this Parliament and government offices for energy saving and also recycling. I have written to you about that following your announcement about the Education department saving and I will come back to that. In recent weeks I saw in the Western Australian Parliament evidence of what they are doing there. For example, in the foyer outside the Clerk's and I think the Speaker's offices there were no lights on. There was no direct sunlight; it was rather dim but the lighting was adequate. I think we could do the same here and if we can encourage members and government officers to turn off the lights when they are not using their rooms we will save hundreds of thousands of dollars with those and other measures.

Also, regarding paper recycling, when Mr Field was Premier, each office had a little cardboard box for clean paper to be put into rather than mixing it in with apple cores and soup cartons and so on, making it unsuitable. I will hand you the letter I have written, which contains a photograph of recycling bins that I saw in the foyer of the Parliament in Scotland. I have copies if anybody else would like those. If we did that and had smaller ones in each individual office I am sure we would collect a large amount of paper suitable for recycling.

At Henty House where my electorate office is, there is a big cardboard box in the central room for those who wish to take large quantities of clean paper, but not in individual offices. On the question of energy saving, I often see the lights on in Henty House in the hallway at weekends when there is nobody there and they are totally unnecessary. Perhaps you could give us an outline of your intentions regarding further actions and policies in connection with climate change.

**Mr BARTLETT** - I am informed that within the Department of Premier and Cabinet they already have those sorts of bins around the place and it we will be very happy to go back and look at how we can continue to roll those out right across government including in Parliament House - that is an excellent idea. Of course, as part of the framework for action we have energy-efficiency audits of 25 key government buildings happening at the moment being undertaken by Parsons Brinckerhoff and we will be making recommendations on measures for reducing our energy consumption in those buildings. I am not sure if that 25 includes Parliament House.

**Mr JOHANNES** - I understand Parliament House is one of those.

**Mr BARTLETT** - But we are also not waiting for the audit to be completed of course. Individual agencies and so on are pressing on with things. I think the key point of the energy guide we released for all schools is that the change in policy now means that now every dollar that a school saves on energy can be spent in their school resource package on anything else they want. In the past the department would Hoover up all that money and take it back centrally and the school would save energy costs but not actually gain anything from it materially. We expect that up to \$1 million a year will therefore be saved off energy costs and put into education, which is fantastic. This was a suggestion from some girls at Ogilvie, so we implemented it.

We are looking at the car fleet. I talked about the ministerial car fleet yesterday and am happy to reiterate some of the points I made then about why we are delaying that decision, but for the rest of the car fleet, all passenger vehicles purchased since 4 March this year will meet the minimum green vehicle greenhouse rating of 5.5. There will be some exceptions for special purpose vehicles of course. The government agencies will immediately offset emissions arising from all air travel into a Tasmanian-based carbon offset scheme that we have developed in partnership with Greening Australia.

All new government office buildings, education and health care facilities including the new Royal Hobart Hospital, Kingston High School and Bridgewater education redevelopment will be required to meet minimum green star ratings. Government procurement policies are being reviewed to ensure that climate change is taken into account in future purchasing decisions as well. We want to use our purchasing power to drive change in local industries, whether it is paper production or other such things. We will be using our purchasing power to effect those sorts of outcomes as well. So there is a lot going on. I have released draft legislation for 2050 emissions targets and we have also established the Tasmanian Climate Change Advisory Council which will advise on interim emissions targets for Tasmania and a range of other activities we can do to reduce our energy usage and therefore emissions.

**Mr WING** - That is good to hear. I remember in 1975 Malcolm Fraser had a policy called Turn on the Lights. You may not have approved of that but I am sure if you have a policy called Turn off the Lights that will have very good long-term beneficial effects.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Why would he want to turn on the lights? I was only seven years old in 1975. Maybe you can tell me why he wanted to turn on the lights.

**CHAIR** - I think he was looking to get elected.

**Mr WING** - The cartoon said because you couldn't trust him in the dark.

*Laughter.*

**Mr WING** - I think if we can encourage all staff and members here and in government offices to turn off the lights when the room is unoccupied it will save hundreds of thousands - maybe millions - of dollars.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Agreed.

**CHAIR** - Premier, I have a question. Yesterday I asked the Minister for the Environment why this particular office was not part of the minister's portfolio and whether she thought it was a political or an environmental issue.

**Mr BARTLETT** - No, this is absolutely an environmental issue but one of the things one can do as Premier, as I am discovering over the past four weeks, is bring the weight of the office behind particular issues you want to bring to the fore. That is the reason I have the Office of the Chief Scientist with DPAC as well as this office, which was determined by the former Premier but I agree with his decision in that what it does is create weight of resources, political momentum, debate and a whole range of other things by having it within this portfolio. While the new Environmental Protection Agency will have statutory regulatory authority around the regulation of environmental protection, this is different from that in that it is about leadership and changing people's habits as individuals. It is about what government can do but it is at least as much about what the community and we as individuals can do as well.

**Mr DEAN** - I am not sure if this was asked during my absence but I notice that your target in 2008-09 is to reach 60 per cent of the population and I wonder why we would have that as a target and not 100 per cent.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - He is being a realist.

**Mr DEAN** - I think I am being realistic. There is a lot of talk out there about it now, Minister, and I would have thought that we could be looking at 100 per cent.

**Mr BARTLETT** - I do not know how that target was set; maybe I can ask the director. I would also add that even brands like Coca-Cola only have 95 per cent brand recognition. This was asked about Tasmania Together yesterday, that our target was 50 per cent or something, and I would have thought if we could get 50 per cent of Tasmanians engaged in Tasmania Together we are doing pretty well. I do not know. How do we set this target?

**Mr JOHANNES** - It is on the same basis as the Premier has argued. To start with, the climate change office actually commenced operation in February this year so we start from that basis. There is a comprehensive agenda in place around helping the Government get its act together and articulating a framework for the broader community to adopt and participating in national forums. Underpinning all of that is community engagement and at any point in time there is only so much of the community that a limited group of people can get to. We have given over 100 presentations in the past four or five months and that gets you to an audience in the thousands. More broadly, through appropriate use of the Internet and not inexpensive advertising on television and the like you can reach a broader audience but getting penetration beyond 60 per cent in that time frame would be a monumental achievement.

**Mr BARTLETT** - I do not doubt that the issue of climate change is acknowledged by more than 60 per cent of Tasmanians but this target is about what the Office of Climate Change is able to achieve.

**Mr DEAN** - Yes. This is not about gauging climate change; as I understand it, this is about notifying people about climate change issues.

**Mr JOHANNES** - That's right; it is about involving them in the State's approach to dealing with climate change as opposed to a percentage of the population that is aware, per se, of climate change.

**Mr FINCH** - Sometimes we even have to be satisfied with 47 per cent.

### **1.3 Social Inclusion -**

**CHAIR** - In regard to this new initiative which has had allocated to it \$11.2 million, Premier, when do you see that there will no longer be a need for this?

**Mr BARTLETT** - That's a very good question. Well, wouldn't it be an incredibly great achievement if that were the case? The facts are that 39 000 more Tasmanians are participating in the world of work than some five years ago and I believe our communities are essentially stronger, although global trends like the fact that we do not go to the local footy club any more but watch our footy clubs on television these days and stay at home -

**CHAIR** - Some still do, Premier.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Well, I do too, as a big North Hobart fan. For a variety of reasons, I believe that the social, economic and cultural connectedness in any given community has improved in Tasmania over recent years but there are still those people who are not included. We have low participation rates still in our work force; even though we have improved the number of jobs available in Tasmania by 39 000 there are still relatively low participation rates, and there are still people who are socially excluded through being disadvantaged and many of those things are related.

The first two elements of the social inclusion strategy were kicked off by the former Premier and are both dear to my heart, particular the one to do with literacy. An investment in literacy and getting more of those children - and adults as well - in less advantaged communities to become literate is absolutely a fundamentally key plank of being included in a modern society. Homelessness is the other major thrust of the social inclusion work to date, and of course having a roof over your head and somewhere to call home is important - and this is the Common Ground model that has been talked about by Rosanne Hegarty and others - but also providing services around those homes that allow people to become connected to their communities and the services that will get them out of extreme levels of disadvantage.

I do not see social inclusion as a passing fad. There might be different words used for it over the years, but I have talked for a long time before coming into politics of something I am interested in, and that is building social capital. I see this as the heart of those sorts of things and I think there will be much more for this unit to do.

[2.30 p.m.]

Having said that, I do not see the unit as a doing unit. It is not responsible for rolling out the programs to improve our literacy rates in Tasmania or rolling out the programs to improve our homelessness rates in Tasmania. It is a body established within the Department of Premier and Cabinet that can be - and I deliberately use the term - a conductor of the orchestra. There are a lot of things going on in education, in health, in human services and in other agencies, but the Social Inclusion Unit will take a lead role in innovative policy approaches to challenging ingrained,

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entrenched, third-generation problems that we face in Tasmania and will coordinate that policy being implemented through the line agencies.

**CHAIR** - So it is really the whole approach in that respect, and that is what you see as being its main function with its work never really being done, so to speak, until we are all housed, all the levels are up and we are doing everything perfectly.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Wouldn't that be a great achievement.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - Which raises the question, why do we have to have a budget of over \$3 million to get this unit established and then an ongoing budget, which I note is decreasing as well, when we have so many increasing problems?

**Mr BARTLETT** - I am happy to go through the budget and talk about what elements are in there.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - Thank you. My other question would be: Has the commissioner commenced yet or been appointed or whatever?

**Mr BARTLETT** - No, the commissioner hasn't been appointed as yet. The thinking around appointing a commissioner was probably well advanced by the former Premier in his own head and with his advisers, but I want to rethink that because I want to shape this unit to meet the view that I have of it.

I should introduce Mellissa Astrinakis who is the inaugural director of the Tasmanian Government's Social Inclusion Unit. Mellissa started her career as a lecturer in the School of Government but brings with her a bachelor of arts degree with first-class honours in public policy from the University of Tasmania and a wealth of experience around these sorts of issues.

The funding within the department is made up of staff: a director position at SES2 level; a deputy director at SES1; senior policy and project officer at level 12; senior policy officer at level 10; policy officer at level 8; and an executive officer at level 5, plus a secondment at the moment from the Australian Bureau of Statistics which is being used to inform policy through data and evidence, which is very important.

Then there will be the Social Inclusion Commissioner for Tasmania, which again I do not see as a statutory position like the Commissioner for Children but as the Government's chief adviser on innovative policy approaches and one who can engage the community in those debates. My view is that we need innovative policy approaches here. What we have done over the last 10 years in creating a growing economy, people with roofs over their heads and so on, is that we are left with the much more intractable, complex problems that we have not been able to solve over many years. We need new thinking, new policy ideas and new policy approaches to address those sorts of problems. Hence the common ground approach that Roseanne Haggerty was espousing in Tasmania and also when the former Premier announced that we would be looking at the old Highfield House. A pre-feasibility study has been completed there, which essentially indicates that it is feasible for us to do a common ground style of approach to addressing homelessness at that place. We will now move to a full feasibility study. Those things are new ideas and new ways, although sometimes they are old ideas dusted off and re-engineered for a new challenge. I would argue that our approach in literacy - and I will talk more about that in the education outputs - is in many ways a return to the old days of explicit teaching of literacy one on one, face to face,

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by four-year trained teachers who are experts in literacy working with the children who are not meeting the benchmarks effectively.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - My final question: Why do we have a decreasing forward Estimate for this particular position where we are going from \$3.2 million down to \$3.064 million?

**Mr BARTLETT** - I am advised that in the first year there are a number of start-up costs and also in the first year there is a \$200 000 differential provided for consultancies and specialist advice to set up some of the programs we want to do, and that decreases from \$455 000 to \$255 000 thereafter.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - Thank you.

**Mr DEAN** - It appears right throughout the documents and they are Government documents, and I will just read this part under Social Inclusion Unit:

'This Output facilitates activities which will develop innovative solutions to overcome social disadvantage and to ensure that they deliver practical results in the Tasmanian community.'

If you read that you would say to yourself that there will be no social disadvantages in Tasmania - and I do not know what the time frame is. But to me I have difficulty with it just in the way it is written. I can use what is planned for an area like Ravenswood, for instance, which currently is socially disadvantaged -

**Mr BARTLETT** - Absolutely.

**Mr DEAN** - What will occur there and when will it occur? If this could happen, it would be wonderful but it is not going to happen. We know that you can work towards it and we know you can do a lot of things to change things, but you will never be able to exclude social disadvantage. There will always be some social disadvantage.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Well, advantage and disadvantage are on a relative scale, so there is always going to be somebody less advantaged than somebody else - that is very clear - and you will never ever change that. But what you can do, and I will go to the literacy strategy that stemmed out of work between my now two departments, the Department of Education and the Social Inclusion Unit, which is deliberately and completely targeted to those schools and those children that are the least advantaged in terms of their literacy outcomes. You better turn your clock over here, Madam Chair, because I am about to go on a rave.

Everyone in education circles talks about Finland as the great bastion of the best educational outcomes in the OECD. One of the fundamental reasons they talk about Finland in those terms is that, when judged against every other OECD country, in Finland your level of social advantage or disadvantage is less likely to affect your level of educational outcome than anywhere else in the OECD. So therefore the gap between the haves and have nots when it comes to educational outcomes is smaller than anywhere else in the world.

In Tasmania the fact of the matter is that if you draw a graph between social advantage along the bottom line and educational outcome - whether that is literacy rates in grade 3, post-year 10 qualifications or whatever one you want to do - that graph is quite steep. Australia is 23rd in the

OECD in terms of that graph, and Tasmania is probably the worst State in Australia. Therefore, you can conclude that in Tasmania your level of advantage or otherwise is more likely to determine your level of educational outcome than any other factor; that is, quality of teacher, quality of school, quality of building, quality of curriculum - any of those things. Your level of advantage or disadvantage is more likely to determine your level of outcome than any other factor.

This is really important in the formation of the first set of policies that has come out of the Social Inclusion Unit and out of the Department of Education. In the \$35 million that we have in the Budget for literacy - and we will get to this in the education outputs so I will not go on too long about it - that \$35 million will not be spread across 200 schools, it will go to the 26 least advantaged schools in Tasmania when it comes to measuring literacy outcomes.

**Mr DEAN** - It is wonderful to hear that because I can see Ravenswood getting a lot -

**Mr BARTLETT** - They will. So the schools in Ravenswood will get a significant chunk of that money, whereas the school at East Launceston probably will not.

**Mr DEAN** - Not so good. I accept that.

**Mr WING** - I understand my electorate.

**Mr DEAN** - So if we can relate the social inclusion policy to the current position that we have at Ravenswood of social issues and serious problems, what will this do immediately to impact on that sort of a situation?

**Mr BARTLETT** - Two things. The two broad policy places that are coming out here are around homelessness and around literacy - they are first two cabs off the rank. However, there will be more in the future. But on top of that this Budget also contains - not in this department but in another department - \$25 million for heritage and urban renewal, and part of that urban renewal money is earmarked to make those suburbs more liveable through their built, parks and so on sort of environment. And those suburbs - when I say 'those suburbs' I am referring to broadacre housing estate suburbs throughout Tasmania. So there is in this Budget provision for doing some of that urban renewal work.

**Mr DEAN** - Remembering of course that some of these kids do not even go to school.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Agreed. As you say and you are absolutely right: You cannot solve world hunger with one budget. That is true. Level of advantage or disadvantage is a relative thing. There will be those in the community that are more advantaged than others, no matter what we ever do. But in my view we need to close the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged in Tasmania.

**Mr DEAN** - Thank you for that. This will be a closely scrutinised subject in next year's Estimates, I would think.

**Mr BARTLETT** - It certainly will.

**Output group 2**  
**Government processes and services**

**2.1 Management of executive government processes -**

**Mr DEAN** - Looking at the areas this output is involved in which includes support for emergency issues, pandemics and so on. What sort of support is there? Is that support also for the local government municipal emergency management committees and so on? Is that the way that works? I happen to be the chairman of that committee also.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Significant work has ramped up over recent years around the planning for things like an influenza pandemic. These are national planning processes that State Governments are required to be prepared for and participate in. So significant effort is going into pandemic planning and preparedness on a whole-of-government basis both in Tasmania and nationally. Through the Tasmanian pandemic influenza project, which would be run out of this output, the Tasmanian Government has been proactive in planning and preparing. We have a Tasmanian action plan for the human influenza pandemic, for example. The department is also leading a task force of officials from across Government to complete the State's human influenza pandemic manual. The task force is expected to deliver the manual by the end of July 2008. These are the sorts of things that probably 10 years ago in Government we were not planning for and did not need to provide for - but we do these days.

**Mr DEAN** - Thank you. I was just noticing that this year there is a slight decrease in the budget. It is not huge but obviously it has had staff decreases or something like that?

**Mr BARTLETT** - No, there is a reason for this and we came it across it yesterday. It is based on the changes that I read out at the beginning - I am not sure whether you were in the room when I read them - which was that net additional funding of \$136 000 has been provided to this output 2.1 in 2008-09 and out years to financially support community and cultural activities through grants and other things. There is also a decrease in funding in output 2.1 which reflects the transfer of funding for family assistance to output 1.3, social inclusion. So it is a shift of money from 2.1 to 1.3.

[2.45 p.m.]

**2.2 Principal and subordinate legislation -**

**Mrs JAMIESON** - I note a rather extraordinary jump in the budget Estimates for the next two years. Can you give me an explanation for this?

**Mr BARTLETT** - This is related to the printing contracts. The sale of the Printing Authority of Tasmania to Printlinks was announced by the Government on 15 December 2007. Although the ownership of the Printing Authority has changed, the services it provides to government and parliament have not. The Government through Treasury has negotiated four three-year contracts, which formalise the printing services previously provided by PAT. The printing contracts provide the Government with surety in relation to continued access to responsive, secure and high-quality printing services. From 1 July 2008 the Office of Parliamentary Counsel will be responsible for funding payments to the contractor under those agreements. Previously this funding was provided from Finance-General in the Department of Treasury and Finance, so this is a shift of money from Treasury direct into this output.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - So it is an expensive shift.



**Mr BARTLETT** - It is a completely cost-neutral shift because if you look at the Finance-General line item in the Treasury outputs you will find that it has decreased by the exact equivalent amount. So, overall, the Government is not paying more as such; it is just that we have administratively shifted it.

**CHAIR** - Premier, are you aware that Tasmania is the only State in Australia that does not publish its *Government Gazette* on the Government web site?

**Mr BARTLETT** - Well, I am now because I have read it in the media! But I wasn't before.

**CHAIR** - Will you give a commitment that that will change and that it will be published on the web site?

**Mr FOULSTON** - At the moment we have a contract with the Printing Authority to do what they currently do, so obviously to make a change we would have to renegotiate the contract. However, somebody is starting those discussions since this matter has been raised. We are the only State that does not have the *Gazette* on the web site.

**Mr BARTLETT** - It is under active consideration.

**CHAIR** - We know that the Premier has a huge interest in the IT situation. Premier, could we just go back to 2.1?

**Mr BARTLETT** - Yes.

## **2.1 Management of Executive Government processes -**

**CHAIR** - There is just a quick question there from Mr Dean.

**Mr DEAN** - My question relates to the network communications policy. Is that the Government network policy?

**Mr FOULSTON** - No. That is the communications policy in relation to the way that government communications operate - the way media releases are done and that sort of stuff. It is not telecommunications.

**CHAIR** - I think you will find, Mr Dean, that what you are interested in is further down in output group 3.

## **2.2 Tasmanian Government Courier -**

**Mr WING** - I do not have any questions, but I just wish to make a comment on this item. From my experience over the years, the courier service functions very efficiently, and I believe it is cost-effective. From my observations in Launceston, we have very good helpful staff and I am sure that is the same in Hobart and on the north-west coast.

## **2.4 Corporate Support to Ministerial and Parliamentary Offices and the Office of the Governor -**

**CHAIR** - Premier, have there been any increases in staffing numbers in that area - or any redundancies - from the last year?

**Mr BARTLETT** - No. The Budget would suggest that the situation is stable.

**CHAIR** - That is fine.

## **2.5 Representation in Canberra -**

**Mr FINCH** - I have just noticed that there is a diminution of funding in this area.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Yes, there is.

**Mr FINCH** - The office in Canberra was established when I first came to the Parliament -

**Mr BARTLETT** - It was 1998.

**Mr FINCH** - It was before my time, then. I remember, however, that at my first budget Estimates this was a topic for discussion. I couldn't help but think at the time that it was entirely appropriate and it was a good thing we had an office there. Why wouldn't we now, at a time when we have a Federal Labor government and a State Labor government, have an even stronger representation in Canberra, particularly when we are trying to build up our regional bodies, such as Cradle Coast and NTD, to ensure that we observe those grants and the funds that might be there in Canberra, or to instigate some sort of programs that might benefit us here in Tasmania?

**Mr BARTLETT** - That was essentially the reason the office was set up in the first place. It was set up at a time when there were different flavours of government. I have asked the department to review the operations of this office, given that we have a changed set of circumstances in inter-governmental relations at the moment. I have a view that ministers and members of parliament have responsibility to build good relationships in Canberra, and it is my opinion that having an office there can, in some ways, have perverse outcomes. I am not saying that has been the case, but it could lead to people saying, 'Well, I don't have to deal with my relationships up there because someone else does that for me.' I am not saying that is necessarily the case, but it could be so. The contract of the director of that office runs out in September. We have extended that officer's contract for one year, but I have asked the department to get an independent review done of the operation in the second half of this year and that will determine its future.

**Mr FINCH** - Okay. I would have thought that it was important for us to have an office there. I have never accessed the office -

**Mr BARTLETT** - When we get an independent review and have a look at what it has been doing, what it has achieved and so on, then we will have a clearer picture of what we need to do about it in the future.

**Mr FINCH** - I would have thought it would be an important agency for NTD and Cradle Coast to keep that good -

**Mr BARTLETT** - But my question is whether they are utilising it. Is the Canberra office doing the right thing by bodies such as those? Those are the sorts of things we need to understand.

**CHAIR** - Obviously we understand that 2.6 - Support for the Stolen Generations Assessor - is no longer required, so if members have no further questions we will move on to output group 3.

### **Output group 3**

#### **Electronic Services for Government Agencies and the Community**

##### **3.1 Information and communications technology policy development and implementation -**

**Mrs JAMIESON** - I am interested in the explanatory notes on Table 11.6, which say:

The increase in the ICT Policy Development and Implementation Output in 2008-09 reflects a one-off allocation for the implementation of the IT Transformation Project and a one-off grant towards the operations of the Tasmanian Electronic Commerce Centre.

How many 'one-off' dollars are going into that?

**Mr BARTLETT** - There is \$500 000 into the It transformation project -

**Mrs JAMIESON** - What are we transforming?

**Mr BARTLETT** - We are transforming IT across government. I have long held the view that we can deliver both better services to Tasmanians and better services internally if we get some rigour around standardisation of platforms and a bit of ubiquity in how we roll out networks and so on. That makes it cheaper to roll out new systems - things such as the monetary penalties enforcement system or the new motor registry licensing system. There is \$18.5 million in this year's Health budget to roll out new patient management systems and so on. As any IT person would tell you, if you have a standard platform - I call it a 'town plan' - for your networks, it is cheaper, easier and more efficient to roll out the other new systems that come along from time to time. This \$500 000 is about getting our house in order when it comes to the 'town plan', the infrastructure - standardised e-mail and standardised ways of doing things across government. We can get efficiencies and effectiveness out of doing that that will have an impact on those people who work in government and also on our capacity to deliver electronic services to Tasmanians.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - Is that tied up with this VM-ware deal we have here?

**Mr BARTLETT** - It is not really tied up with that, but it is peripherally related to it. That was really about energy saving because computers use a lot of energy. That system is more about saving energy across government, so it is more related to the climate change output than to this one.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - That makes a lot of sense. The IT Industry Council - who are the current members?

**Mr BARTLETT** - You would have to ask that of the Minister for Economic Development because the industry councils come under her portfolio.

**CHAIR** - You can ask that question tomorrow, Mrs Jamieson.

### **3.2 Management and ongoing development of Service Tasmania -**

**Mr DEAN** - Is there any chance of the Launceston office in Henty House moving from that situation? In asking that question, I am aware that Henty House was recently sold. Are we tied into Henty House for Service Tasmania for the foreseeable future?

**Ms BURTON** - I am well aware of the arrangement with the lease for Henty House, Mr Dean. As you are probably aware, the shops are dealt with by the Department of Primary Industries and Water as the lead agency for shops, so in terms of that lease arrangement, they would be the ones to ask. But in terms of the approach to shops, you would also be aware that the latest shop to be opened was Kingston last year, so there are now 27 Service Tasmania shops. I think Mr Finch highlighted the issue of the Launceston shop. We have put quite a bit of effort into dealing with the problem of queuing in the Launceston shop -

**Mr DEAN** - It is not working that well.

**Mr WING** - No, it is getting worse.

**Mr DEAN** - You are right, it is getting worse.

**Ms BURTON** - At this stage there are no plans to move the Launceston shop -

**Mr DEAN** - Why wouldn't there be, with Centrelink becoming vacant just across the road? It is a much larger and better building and, I would suggest, it has better access than the Service Tasmania shop in Henty House. It is vacant; it is available right at this very moment.

**Ms BURTON** - I have just been informed that we have a 10-year lease with Henty House, negotiated as part of the sale.

**Mr DEAN** - I thought that might be the case. I just want to refer to some answers given last year when one of the witnesses, Mr Godfrey, said:

There is no doubt that the Launceston shop is a dingy shop. It is one of the dingiest shops over the whole network of -

At that stage, before Kingston -

26 shops... I can tell you roughly that the Launceston shop does about 2 per cent more transactions than any other shop.

That was last year. I do not know what the figures are this year, but I suspect that they would not have changed that much. We also know that last year Launceston had fewer staff - and I suspect that it is still the same - than Hobart has with more transactions. I know that you have to look at the length of transactions when you are looking at this. What are we going to do about Launceston? The queues are long -

**Mr WING** - Just in recent weeks they have been noticeably longer, almost daily.

**Mr DEAN** - They are. With that information, what are we going to do with the Launceston office?

**Ms BURTON** - I guess I have to reiterate that there are no plans to move the shop. The problems are monitored and in response to Mr Finch's intervention a number of years ago, the system of queuing in the Launceston shop was altered. I am afraid I cannot respond on the actual figures for the shops. The Department of Primary Industries and Water manages the shops. But to get back to your question, Mr Dean, the difficulty with the Launceston shop has been ongoing, and strategies have been put in place to attempt to reduce the problems. I acknowledge the problems that you are raising. I think we have also had the discussion here in this place about the actual physical structure of the shop. It does not lend itself well -

[3.00 p.m.]

**Mr DEAN** - It is not accessible. People cannot park -

**Mr BARTLETT** - So the only alternative in terms of a 10-year lease would be to find another Government tenant that would take that building and then be able to move elsewhere.

**Mr DEAN** - Minister, it is a success. I suppose Service Tasmania has been too great a success over time. We are having the problem because of its success. My next question relates to the survey that has been done. The survey on Service Tasmania comes up very high - I think it might have been a 96 per cent satisfaction rate with Service Tasmania - and that does not seem right.

**Ms BURTON** - Yes.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Four per cent must be the ones queuing in Launceston.

**Mr DEAN** - Well, Minister, that is my next question. That survey, as I understand it, is not a survey that is done on localities. There is not one done in the south, one in the north and one in the north-west because it is a statewide survey, I take it. Can we expect to have a survey done on the regions, and a specific one to the region? I am reasonably confident that the figures would come up somewhat differently for the areas.

**Ms BURTON** - As I understand it, it is done on a regional basis. But you may well be correct that the questions do not allude to your unhappiness with having to queue in this shop or -

**Mr DEAN** - And the figures are not released that way. The figures released to the public, there is simply a general figure released.

**Ms BURTON** - Yes, because as you can probably imagine some of the more regional shops have slightly less traffic. It is a significant balancing act for Service Tasmania across the 27 shops. What we are also doing to address the problems that members have raised is to shift transactions from the shops because, as you are aware, you do not have to do every transaction over the counter. Channel Shift is what we call the project to get people out of the shops and having to queue. You do not have to go in your lunch hour to pay your registration. If I can just add to that: We have seen a significant increase in the number of financial transactions being paid

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

over the phone or over the Internet. Almost 35 per cent of transactions are paid by electronic means. That is another way we are attempting to get people out of those queues that you have identified and get them as happy customers - but remotely - so that they are doing their business remotely with Service Tasmania.

**Mr DEAN** - Okay. Another reason I ask these questions is that your services this year - I am not sure which year you are talking about, I think it is 2008-09 - are expected to increase to 550 different services. So with the more services you bring online, one could expect more business to arise from that.

**Ms BURTON** - In conjunction with Channel Shift we are hoping that financial transactions can be pushed to the electronic channels, but of course the beauty of Service Tasmania and the advantage of Service Tasmania is that people can come in and seek information about government and government services. We are certainly not trying to remove that facility.

**Mr DEAN** - I have a couple of questions on the board. You have eight members of the board, and I think the summary in this area was \$205 778 actual last year. Was that the 2007-08 or 2005-06 year -

**Ms BURTON** - None of the board receives any remuneration.

**Mr DEAN** - No, my question is: what is that amount of money made available to the board for? That comes out of the annual report. In the annual report there is a reference to this, and it does say wages and salaries.

**Ms BURTON** - Can I briefly explain the structure of Service Tasmania. When Service Tasmania was set up 10 years ago - we have just had our tenth birthday - it was decided there would not be a Service Tasmania agency, so it would not be set up as a separate entity. Instead there are three channels: The shops are dealt with in Primary Industries and Water; Education looks after the Internet channel; and Premier and Cabinet looks after the phone channel. So there are three separate bits at Service Tasmania.

**Mr FINCH** - Nice to spread the workload.

**Ms BURTON** - That spreads the workload, so it is a federated model. We have a business unit, Mr Dean, and I think that might be what you are talking about. The business unit is the cohort - I think the Premier used the term 'conductor' - they are not the conductor but they are the coordinating body. It is a group of people who work with the lead agencies to make sure everything is coordinated. They work to me in Premier and Cabinet. We have a board of senior public servants who oversee the activities of Service Tasmania, and that group works to the board. They look to develop new services; they deal with agencies, service level agreements with agencies and that sort of thing.

**Mr DEAN** - I might need to talk to my adviser because my adviser says that the annual report refers to board wages and salaries, but I have not checked that myself.

**Ms BURTON** - These officers work with agencies to say, 'Which of your services can we deliver through Service Tasmania?' So it is a facilitating function. The board itself is not remunerated. We have the State Librarian on the board, representatives from police and from various agencies. They oversee the actions of these separate groups.

**Mr DEAN** - In regard to my first question, and the minister may comment on it: The Centrelink building on the other side of the street to where they currently are is now available, so there is an opportunity there I would have thought that is worth considering. The other question is: Are any new outlets being considered in the north of the State? That is a perennial question - well, it is asked every year. And the northern suburbs specifically and/or the Prospect area at either end of Launceston.

**Ms BURTON** - I can only speak for the situation as it currently stands. I know the Premier has been saying he has only been in the job four weeks -

**Mr DEAN** - This fits into another area, I know that. It fits into crown lands, doesn't it?

**CHAIR** - It is further on in the output groups but, if we cover it now, we will not touch on it later.

**Mr DEAN** - Is there another outlet being considered for the north?

**Ms BURTON** - There are no further shops at planning stage, Mr Dean, at the moment.

**Mr DEAN** - We have eight in the proximity around Hobart, including Hobart, but in Launceston we have five and that is going out as far as Longford and George Town, so the arm is much longer to get those five in as well. It is an issue that I believe ought to be considered. The member for Rosevears used to raise it and tried to put pressure on you, but it did not work.

**Mr FINCH** - I have handed over the baton.

**Mr WING** - Just in recent weeks there has been a build-up of the queues, and last week or the week before it extended back beyond the main doors in Henty House with I would say about 30 people queuing. So I went in to have a look and see if all the desk stations were occupied. I thought there might have been a lack of staff. They were all occupied and still the queue was forming, and that happens quite regularly at different times of the day not just lunch time or close of day.

**Mr FINCH** - Year after year.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - And my question was going to be don't forget Port Sorell when you are considering new outlets - a statement, not a question.

**CHAIR** - This is a lobbying session here today. I have a question and I would be happy if the Premier could take this on notice. It is regarding the ongoing service delivery of Service Tasmania. With the number of services provided over the counter, 550, what percentage of customers use those 550 services? And the same with the phone, what percentage of customers use those 90 services? And also the 90 services that are provided by the Internet, what percentage of customers? I am happy to take that at a later time.

**Ms BURTON** - Chair, I could give you the percentage of customers who use over the phone and over the Internet for financial transactions, and that is 35 per cent. In the vicinity of 35 per cent of all financial transactions with government are paid over the phone or over the Internet.

**Mr DEAN** - I have one more question: With the fees and charges that the customers need to pay, does Service Tasmania run cost neutral? What is the costing situation?

**Ms BURTON** - Sorry, in terms of cost to government?

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, of the service outlets.

**Ms BURTON** - There is a significant contribution from the Consolidated Fund. The Budget for Service Tasmania as a whole is in the vicinity of \$10 million. It is actually a very expensive, labour intensive operation to run the shops. We have shops on King and Flinders islands and in remote locations - or I should say regional locations. One of the big difficulties for Service Tasmania is staffing. Because there is money involved you have to have two people. As you would be aware, at Triabunna we even run a bank. That will not be replicated anywhere else, but for various reasons that was included when Service Tasmania first started. It is a costly operation. The Government's contribution is significant and seen basically as a community service obligation.

### **3.3 Management of TASINET and Networking Tasmania -**

**Mr FINCH** - Premier, I heard you talk before about TASINET and Networking Tasmania, and you have mentioned Postbox at Telstra and the work that goes on with mobile phones. I notice that the Budget allows an increase in the forward Estimates - and that is probably wise because the more people connect to the mobile phone network, the more they use those phones -

**Mr BARTLETT** - There is also a growth in the number of services by TASINET - more handsets, more connections effectively.

**Mr FINCH** - Is the State Government happy with the service that it gets? It seems that you are always getting concerns from the electorate about their services.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Well, I could launch into my standard anti-Telstra rave -

**Mr WING** - Particularly with mobile signals failure - many times on the Midland Highway.

**Mr BARTLETT** - I have raised it, not only in Parliament but also with very senior people in Telstra just in the last week. Having said that, I think that the people who work in Telstra in Tasmania do a very good job with what they have got. They provide us with excellent service and I have never had any problem with the people we deal with and how they go about their business in this State. They do a terrific job. But the facts are that not enough investment has gone into broadband and mobile broadband services across Australia, and particularly in regional Australia. That stems right back to deregulation of telecommunications. That is why we are investing in and progressing an investment in commercialising the optic fibre assets that we have, because we want to see competition in the telecommunications market in Tasmania where possible. That will drive prices down and services up for both the community and government.

**Mr DEAN** - Last year in Estimates the former Premier said he was hopeful of getting better deals with an outsourced provider - he was talking about phone services and telecommunications. I take it that has not occurred.



**Mr BARTLETT** - I am announcing today that Office has been signed up as a government mobile phone provider for the first time in history. Telecommunications company Optus has been appointed as a new provider of mobile phone services across the Tasmanian Government. In fact the Government's previous exclusive agreement with Telstra had expired and tenders for one or more suppliers to deliver mobile services were called in September last year. A new agreement with Telstra is still under negotiation, but the Government has today signed a three-year contract with Optus with an option to extend for another three years. The contract requires Optus to offer mobile voice and data services to all eligible government agencies and this includes not just calls but also SMS services, Internet connections and e-mail access via mobile phones. The contract does not guarantee Optus a share of the \$4 million spent across government on mobile services, but there are obvious advantages of having more than one provider supplying for government, because people like me and others might choose to change their handset over to a different provider. That will drive competition in price and a range of other added services.

[3.15 p.m.]

Agencies will be able to assess the price and product offered by each competitor in making a choice of provider. Optus prices are considerably cheaper than those currently paid by the Government, so I expect we will see that Telstra will retain a substantial proportion of the total spend because it still has the coverage advantage, but the more revenue we can deliver to Optus the more they are likely to invest in coverage as well. Optus announced plans to expand its coverage in Tasmania to roll out 3G capability and this is likely to make Optus' service attractive to agencies - and to the Premier.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - Congratulations on that announcement.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for that scoop, Premier.

#### **Output group 4 State Service management**

##### **4.1 State Service employment and management -**

**Mr DEAN** - This is an area I think you were challenged on yesterday, Minister. The comments are being made by the TCCI that there are too many public servants and other comments have been made about the public service under scrutiny. We do have the greatest number of people pro rata in our Public Service of any State in the nation. Do you wish to make any comment about that?

**Mr BARTLETT** - Other than to add to what I said yesterday; I went through the numbers yesterday and am happy to do it again but they are on *Hansard*. Fundamentally, the growth in public sector positions by an overwhelming majority over last year and recent years has been in more police, nurses and teachers, and this is a very good thing in my view. I am concerned when the TCCI start talking about a review of the Public Service that people will have in their heads that the Public Service is entirely made up of bureaucrats sitting in offices.

**CHAIR** - 'Shiny-bums'.

*Laughter.*

**Mr BARTLETT** - I wasn't going to use that term again today. Actually, the vast bulk of the public sector in Tasmania is made up of teachers, nurses, other medical professionals, Fire Service, Tasmania Police et cetera. This is what public servants do in the vast bulk of cases. So if that rating is per capita and we have more than anywhere else in Australia then I think, 'You beauty, we're doing very well'. That is why we are doing very well in law and order and why we are investing more per capita than other States in these fundamental services. I believe the core business of the public sector is to serve the public, whether that is in Service Tasmania shops or out in the wards of the Launceston General Hospital.

Having said that, public service is a really complex business and when it comes to intergovernmental relations, on the one hand the State Government deals with 29 councils, which per capita is significantly higher than anywhere else in Australia, and on the other hand we have all the complexity of intergovernmental relations that the NSW Government has with the Federal Government on broad-ranging policy areas, and yet we have a significantly smaller public sector to deal with that complexity.

I accept that these are balancing things. As Minister for Education I have shifted 150 positions out of the central office back into schools to serve school communities because I wanted to get that balance right. I thought the balance was not quite right in Education when I became minister so we shifted those positions and that has meant millions of dollars more in resources going through the school gate. I want to move resources as close to serving the public - in this case children - as I possibly can and have the smallest bureaucracies I possibly can, but I am not flagging there that I think there is any great problem across the Public Service.

**Mr DEAN** - I think the questions asked were more in relation to the administrative areas than nurses, police, fires and so on. We are very pleased that those numbers continue to grow because there is a need for them but we are talking about the administrative areas within the Public Service organisation, not those at the coalface who provide a direct service to the people - and can they be separated?

**Mr BARTLETT** - Yes. The evidence I read into *Hansard* yesterday in terms of any growth in the last year in the public sector was that it was overwhelmingly teachers, nurses and police.

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, but they are separate. We accept the growth in teachers and so on - it is the others.

**Mr BARTLETT** - If you put the question on notice I would be happy to provide you with the numbers in non-public-facing positions.

**Mr DEAN** - That's what I want.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Okay, we will separate that out for you.

**Mr DEAN** - Last year it was said that a major review would be undertaken of the classification standards in the Public Service. Did it happen, was it successful, and what has it demonstrated?

**Mr BARTLETT** - This is totally entwined with the public sector wages agreement we are currently negotiating. The status of that is that we put a revised offer on the table for unions to consider on 12 June - some 12 days ago - and they were going to take that revised and

significantly improved offer to their members and report back to us in the coming days. I invite Frank Ogle, Director of the Public Sector Management Office, to the table for further comment.

**Mr OGLE** - I understand their meetings are occurring on 2-4 July. Just to expand on the Premier's answer, we have had four streams - operational, technical, admin/clerical and professional - and have amalgamated the operational, technical and admin/clerical streams into one structure, so we have taken 28 different levels down to 10. I would say that probably the big winners out of that are people in the operational and technical streams. We have come up with classification standards that make greater distinctions between the levels. So that is part of the whole proposal and in the Public Service we have broad-banded up a number of classifications so for instance, an admin 5 and 6 are in the same band.

**Mr DEAN** - Right. I think that would be supported by most of those who work there if that occurs, so well done. My next question is in relation to the Working Life for a Better Tasmania initiative. In my time you were kicked out at 55 or 58 but it has changed. It is a phased-in retirement program and the monitoring of replacements and young workers. Is it off the hoof and across the whole public sector spectrum? Is it working? Is it progressing in the way you thought it would?

**Mr OGLE** - It is a two-pronged question in that it deals with phased-in retirement and youth employment. The phased-in retirement is heavily tied up with the superannuation which, as you know, is tied to the last three years of your salary, so it does provide some difficulty. In terms of youth employment, in the public sector agreement we have purposely put together a structure that emphasises having trainees, apprentices and cadetships. As you would be aware, the admin/clerical level became the base grade and it was very difficult for young people to compete, so we have come up with a structure that can raise the 12 per cent youth employment to a much higher level. It is important in terms of our ageing work force strategy that we do that.

**Mr DEAN** - And that fits under the umbrella of the Working Life for a Better Tasmania?

**Mr OGLE** - Absolutely.

## **Output group 5 Tasmania Together Progress Board**

### **5.1 Support for Tasmania Together Progress Board -**

**Mr BARTLETT** - I invite Hayden Jones, Project Manager for Tasmania Together, to the table.

**CHAIR** - When we have a look at the Tasmania Together initiative, Premier, I am going to be bold enough to ask whether you really believe that it is achieving what was set out in its initial charter. Given that the awareness of the Tasmania Together process has actually decreased as a percentage, would you give me your considered opinion?

**Mr BARTLETT** - Firstly, I find that figure hard to believe and either the top figure is wrong or there is a statistical error in the two figures, because I cannot see that in a year you can drop awareness. I do not know how this sample was arrived at but I cannot believe that. One of those figures has to be wrong, I would say.

Awareness is one thing and community engagement in meeting benchmarks is another, and I think if you look at the data here - and Hayden will be able to outline more of it - of the number of partnerships, coalitions of interest and activities the board has been progressing, I would have to say there is good, deep community involvement with Tasmania Together. As to whether we are meeting the benchmarks, it is a mixed feast - some we are and some we are not, some we will by 2020 and some we will not.

My view of Tasmania Together - and I will speak frankly - is that it became political in the early period a couple of years after it was instigated because there were politicians saying they either supported it or not, and the problem is that the original concept around Tasmania Together was not about government but about the whole community taking action on meeting benchmarks and forming coalitions of interest of two or more groups to work towards that goal.

The Oregon Shines concept from the US originally informed the establishment of Tasmania Together and I remember very clearly back in 1998 going to a presentation by a woman called Connie Revell, who spoke about Oregon Shines and the one story I remember most distinctly from that was about one the benchmarks that their community set about reducing teenage pregnancies. She said that clearly the community thought it was a good thing but the Catholic Women's Association would have a very different view from the Family Planning Association on how you might go about doing that. But both those organisations, albeit with very disparate views, would be able to say, 'Yes, we can work together on achieving this benchmark', and she spoke of it very much as a community-led process with organisations effectively adopting a benchmark and working towards achieving those. Have we achieved that? I will ask Hayden to outline some of the statistics because I think the Tasmania Together board has done a fantastic job in achieving that.

**CHAIR** - I do not dispute that at all.

**Mr BARTLETT** - But the challenge I think for Tasmania Together has been to be non-political and therefore engage the community, because as soon as it is political people go, 'Oh, that's about government; I don't want to get involved in that'. I think that has been a challenge for us but I will ask Hayden to outline some of the activities around where the community engagement is really happening and working well.

**CHAIR** - We have a process, Hayden - there is a timer here so you might like to try to stick to three minutes, thanks.

*Laughter.*

**Mr JONES** - Okay. Just to clarify the numbers you are looking at, the actual for 2006-07, the 41 per cent, followed the previous high of 53 per cent. That was at the end of the community consultation phase and the five-year review when we had the orange bus going around all the towns in the State, so it was probably the optimal time to get a good result and we therefore consider 53 per cent to be the high-water mark. The 41 per cent in the subsequent year was after the period that the board had been pretty much focused on actually completing the five-year review, taking recommendations to parliament and then preparing the new document to be released. So we had not been out in public with much of a profile during that period, and it goes some way to explaining the variance in those figures.

[3.30 p.m.]

The survey that we conducted in February this year, which is not in the figures at this stage, saw an improvement up to 47 per cent. The activities we have been undertaking in the last few months - which is expenditure in relation to the one-off funding that we had following the review on the benchmark reports and the youth challenge for schools - means that the board is fairly confident that the number will be getting up over 50 per cent again within the next 12 months. We will be surveying to that effect next February.

As far as activities that the board is going to be engaged in in addition to the focus on school-age children through the youth challenge, we are going to be involved in a schools conference later this year around environment issues which they are running for the first time. It is a 'kids teaching kids' sort of process, where schools come and present to their peers about what they have been doing around themed areas. We are pretty excited about some of the potential in that and to have that sustainable in future years whereby we have a competition and then the conference arrangement around various themes within TasTogether to reflect community issues.

We will be rolling out the briefings around our online benchmark reporting system, which is going to allow much better access to the information that is contained in TasTogether. We have been working with local government around that particular issue and also in relation to local level data, which is where we can start providing more information that is at the LGA level both in relation to the benchmarks and more generally about the sorts of issues that are contained in TasTogether.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

**Output group 6  
Community development**

**6.1 Women Tasmania - Policy advice and community services -**

**CHAIR** - We will move to community development, Premier, if that is acceptable.

**Mr BARTLETT** - I invite Marguerite Scott to the table, who is the Director of the Community Development Division, which of course includes Women Tasmania, the Disability Bureau, the Seniors Bureau, the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, Multicultural Tasmania and the Office of Children and Youth Affairs.

**CHAIR** - We welcome Marguerite to the table. Marguerite, there is quite a bit of interest in this particular area of Women Tasmania on this side of the table and on the other side with Rebekah. What programs have been implemented in the last year that have come from policy advice?

**Ms SCOTT** - In terms of the whole of Tasmania? A couple of things that have happened in the last 12 months that Women Tasmania has been responsible for have been on a national scale. We have hosted the women's ministerial council in Hobart in the last 12 months. As part of that just recently we hosted what has probably been the most successful national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's gathering which was in Hobart. We were instrumental in changing the format of that and I think making it a lot more productive. So that has been one of the major national things that we have been involved in.

There are the usual things that Women Tasmania does including the honour roll, which is extremely successful, and the material girl competition, which this year was held for the first time on the north-west coast and attracted entries from female artists from around the State. For the first time this year we got a very large number of entrants from the north and north-west. Part of that exhibition tours and we got a very high ratio of visitors to that exhibition. The honour roll is one of the most important things that we do in the year given that it honours Tasmanian women, some of them still alive and some of them not alive but honoured nonetheless. I think one of the things about that is that it gets a lot of interest around the State. Families are very honoured by the people who receive an entry on to the women's honour roll as well as the recipients themselves. It also gains a lot of positive publicity for women's achievements.

Then there are the other things we do that are less to do with big events, although I must say the International Women's Day is always huge. Thousands of women participate in that. I think over 1 000 women go to the breakfast in Hobart. This year for the first year on the north-west coast we actually ran International Women's Day events scattered in various places around the west and north-west coast, so there were events in - I think I have this right - Rosebery and Waratah and various other places. I have seen coverage of the one that was over at the Rosebery Museum I think somewhere on the west coast. For a lot of those people it was the first International Women's Day celebration that they had attended. Of course there are the other things that Women Tasmania does. It works to get more women on boards by maintaining the women's register. I think I need to have a look at the list.

**CHAIR** - Do you have knowledge of any additional female representation on boards?

**Mr BARTLETT** - I can tell you that in Cabinet - not that I can break Cabinet confidence - there is always a keen eye on when boards are being appointed and the gender balance of boards. There is always a keen eye across the Cabinet and always the Cabinet papers reflect whether Women Tasmania has been consulted or not around appointments and so on.

**Ms SCOTT** - I think one of the things about that is that we are always very aware of trying to increase those numbers but realise it is a very complex issue. So this year for the first time, not only have we been doing the usual things that we have tried to do to increase women's participation but Women Tasmania has also worked in partnership with other organisations to run sessions for young women who may be interested in going on to boards in the future, and they were run around the State. We got someone in from the department with TAFE Tasmania and an organisation called SED Consulting. We had four regional training programs, trying to get a lot of younger women involved. It is actually getting them to put their names forward as well. It is a complex issue. So on 21 May this year we also hosted a national workshop with the Australian Government Office for Women and other States and Territories. We have put this onto the women's minco agenda and have an increased priority to keep working on that.

Probably the other thing I did not mention which I know Women Tasmania would be unhappy if I did not is the Micro-credit Program, which I think is one of the programs that we work in partnership with DED. That has been an extremely successful program. In the last 12 months 19 low-income women have started or grown their own small businesses using that program. Again, we have had very little default on that program. It has been an extremely successful program.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - I was going to make a comment. I would like to thank Women Tasmania for their support for women with eating disorders generally on the north-west coast. Ros has been

very active in assisting us to focus on that issue. I would like to encourage that on a statewide basis.

**Ms SCOTT** - Thank you very much.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Premier. If there are no other questions in that area, we will move to 6.2, Disability Bureau.

**6.2 Disability Bureau - Policy advice and community services -**

**Mrs JAMIESON** - Premier, I am interested in why we have an advisory council as well as a standing committee on disability services in this community development policy area when we have a huge area in disability services as well and all the other non-Government organisations out there. It seems a little bit of overkill having been involved in the area for many, many years.

**Mr BARTLETT** - For some time, there was momentum building behind ensuring that disability issues were central to Government and, again, it is that answer I gave before about bringing the weight of the Premier's office to what is a really important issue to drive change through all agencies. That is harder to do from an outer agency like the Department of Health and Human Services than it is here. I am very pleased to say - and I cannot take any credit at all for it myself because it was two weeks into me becoming Premier - that the bureau won an award from a national disability services group: DPAC's work to promote disability awareness and enhance participation in Tasmania has been recognised in National Disability Services, the national industry association of non-Government disability service providers.

It is the Disability Bureau that has been driving, through all agencies, disability action plans, so I know in the Department of Education it is working through developing an individual Disability Action Plan. These things have stemmed out of the bureau, as opposed to out of the service delivery arm of the Department of Health and Human Services that delivers services to people with a disability.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - Where I am actually coming from though is that if the advisory council meets, say, only twice a year - and I think it only meets twice a year - and then you have a standing committee as well, surely the standing committee would be able to do the role. I am not trying to do anybody out of a job, but I am just asking the question because it gets asked often: what is the point of having the two organisations?

**Mr BARTLETT** - I will ask Marguerite to talk to that a bit.

**Ms SCOTT** - I think the roles of the two groups are quite distinct. I have had no real experience of the ministerial committee except through our liaison with them over a variety of matters around about the times of the Premier's meeting. The group that sit around the table at the Premier's meeting have a much broader remit than Health. For example, one of the things they have put on their forward program for the next 12 months is to look at housing. They have been interested, for example, in having input into the recent KPMG investigation but they see their remit as being much broader.

From my own experience, because I have had quite a lot of time dealing with members around that table, they have felt and they will say publicly and within the meeting that it is really useful for them to have a Premier sitting at the table and we are the only State and Territory to

have that. So they would much prefer it that, if they were only going to have one, they had the Premier's committee, but of course the ministerial committee is quite an important one because it is very specifically related to health issues.

**Mr BARTLETT** - And it drives operational actions and things that change there.

**Ms SCOTT** - But the agenda really for the Premier's is a much broader remit than just Health.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - So what would be the cost of these two particular standing committees, for example?

**Ms SCOTT** - I am sorry, that is in another agency and I cannot answer it.

**Mr BARTLETT** - But you can see the cost of the Disability Bureau, which I think has three staff.

**Ms SCOTT** - Yes, it has the manager, another policy officer and one admin staff.

**Mr BARTLETT** - And they do more than just administer the PDAC.

**Ms SCOTT** - No, the council is supported internal to our normal operations.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - Just for something very constructive to do, I will flag the possibility of having another art show as we had last year *On a Shoestring*, when we had people from around Tasmania with disabilities have their art show downstairs. We would love to have another one in November so we would love your support for that too. Thank you, I do not have any other questions.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. We will move on now, with no disrespect, to the Seniors Bureau and Mr Dean.

### **6.3 Seniors Bureau - Policy advice and community services -**

**Mr DEAN** - I note the number of local governments committing to the positive ageing strategy. There are 29 councils. From the figures, we had 10 in 2005-06, nine in 2006-07, seven in 2007-08 and still only seven in 2008-09. It is a fairly low commitment to that from local government. Are there any strategies in place to improve on this? This is a very, very big area. It is a growing area and it ought to be addressed.

**Ms SCOTT** - We agree and this is something that the Seniors Bureau and I have talked about. The strategy that we have developed for the next 12 to 24 months about this is that obviously with partnership agreements they are partnerships and if the other partner does not want to engage, despite one requesting them to do so, then it is not going to be a partnership agreement. One of the things that the Seniors Bureau is currently preparing is an analysis of the areas around the State where the proportion of people becoming seniors is greatest. Our intention is to go just to those councils first and to go to them with the figures that we will have prepared by them. Rather than going generally, which has been our previous approach, we have decided to have a targeted approach and try that in the next 12 months.



[3.45 p.m.]

**Mr DEAN** - My next question follows on from that. The councils had a strategy in place. From your point of view, are they targeting the right areas? Are they doing the things that need to be done? Are their strategies right? What sort of advice do you give them in that regard? Because they have one, it does not necessarily mean they are targeting that area in the way they should be.

**Ms SCOTT** - I am going to have to report this to you second-hand. I have never been at one of the negotiations but I have great trust in my staff. I know they are very experienced with our own positive ageing strategy. They would be looking through a partnership agreement negotiation to try to find areas where we could do some things together. They would be very prepared to help councils write their own positive ageing strategies but they have to be able to be reflected in something the council is prepared to do. No, I cannot say that I have ever seen an analysis of a council's positive ageing strategy, and I do not think that would be very high on our priorities.

**Mr DEAN** - I am just wondering how we can get those local governments to make a contribution in this regard and basically write the strategies and so on. Unfortunately, most of these things come at a cost to local government and I guess that might well be one of the things that is worrying some of them perhaps. Are there any strategies that you might think of that can be used to get local government on board? It ought to be supported by the Local Government Association of Tasmania and I would have thought there would be some drive from there. From your area, can you do that? I do not know.

**Ms SCOTT** - We are very happy to have your support in that area. I think at the moment what we have decided is that we will concentrate on a certain number of councils and go to them with the figures and also go to them with what we know about the projected figures for the future and put our focus on to those. I am quite happy to take the suggestions for a broader focus.

**Mr DEAN** - Thank you.

#### **6.4 Aboriginal Bureau - Policy advice and community service -**

**Mr FINCH** - When the Treasurer was selling his Budget in the north of the State, we had Aboriginal protests outside the hotel and the Aboriginal community displayed their concern about being neglected. I suppose in view of the Jim Bacon legacy too, I am wondering if you would like to comment on that circumstance and your understanding of their feelings and why they would express them in that away.

**Mr BARTLETT** - I am yet to meet with representatives of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre but of course in my earlier portfolios I was deeply engaged in Aboriginal curriculum, in working with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Education Association and piloting literacy programs for less advantaged groups like Aboriginal children within our schools, so I have personally been very active in working with the Aboriginal community through education. Of course, this Government has the strongest record in Australia, you would have to say, in terms of land handed back and in terms of the only Government having moved to compensate the stolen generations and so on. So we have a proud record - that is how I would describe it.

I understand the protest - and, as I said, I am yet to meet with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre representatives but I know it is upcoming in my diary, or it will be - was related to an issue of moving a child-care centre that currently is located in Moonah out to Aboriginal land in Risdon Cove. I have had some discussions as Education Minister with the community about this over a

period of time and I have asked them to present me with a written case, a business plan or a proposal, and I have not seen that in detail yet. But what I have said and what I will say at my upcoming meeting with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre is that the Federal Government has provided significant dollars for new child-care centres within Tasmania, the first of which will be built at Beaconsfield, which I know you will be pleased about.

**Mr FINCH** - I am on the committee.

**Mr BARTLETT** - There you go.

**CHAIR** - Next at Bicheno?

**Mr BARTLETT** - I am happy to talk about my priority setting. Having met with Maxine McKew and discussed it with Julia Gillard as well, they have asked me or us as a community for our priorities. My priorities were, of course, Beaconsfield because they were furthest down the track. Also the Federal Government had made an election commitment towards early years autism intervention, so they were the two that got funded in the federal budget. I then have provided, via a letter to Maxine McKew, the State's or my department's priorities. Following those two, Bicheno and Campbell Town are the next two. But I have indicated to the Aboriginal community that I would be very happy to rank the move from Moonah to Risdon Cove equal with those two in priorities, but to be able to do so I need more information from them about the benefits of doing it and about how it might work and what the outcomes would be and so on to spend capital to move what is, I understand, an ongoing child-care service from one place to another.

**Mr FINCH** - Just looking at one of the tables here, I notice an interesting table on page 11.18, table 11.13. There is a drop here in the forward estimates. Our budget for this year is 841 000 and then in 2009- 10 there is a drop to 828 000, then it is back up again to 845 000, then up to 862 000. I am just curious as to whether there is something there in the planning that would see that diminution in the funding there. I am also curious about it being so specific -

**Mr BARTLETT** - Well, it is \$13 000.

**Mr FINCH** - to the tune of \$13 000.

**Mr BARTLETT** - We will see if we can find the lost \$13 000; hold on. We will have to take that on notice.

**Mr FINCH** - Because being so specific about those figures, I would trust that there is a reason or else just level it off. Just say, well it is going to be about 845 000 for each of the three years, rather than just this up and down a little bit.

**Mr BARTLETT** - My guess is that it would be a program that has run for some time of the value of about \$13 000 a year and that it has dropped off in that year.

**Mr FINCH** - Finished up and then something else is coming on.

**Mr BARTLETT** - And then indexation so there would be a balance between a program dropping off that may have been a three-year funded program up to '08-09, and then indexation. But we would be able to find out for you what that program is.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr FINCH** - I am probably being pedantic, but if I could just nail that so I have an understanding that that is a legitimate rise and fall and that there is a reason behind it.

**Mr WING** - Then you will be able to sleep tonight.

**Mr FINCH** - Comfortably, yes. Also we talked yesterday about Aboriginal heritage legislation coming up soon. I am just wondering whether there are practical initiatives from your department that you might be planning in the future for when that is introduced or as that gets closer.

**Mr BARTLETT** - The heritage legislation, it would not be under this output. It would be the Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage who is responsible for that legislation.

**Mr FINCH** - We talked about that yesterday. I was just wondering whether it is on your radar when you have landowners out there, some who are not happy and have concerns and the legislation is being formulated. I am wondering whether issues had filtered into your area.

**Mr BARTLETT** - It has not. I have been in the job four weeks, but I have had some initial conversations with the Minister responsible about the legislation, trying to understand what it does and what it is and so on. That is the stage I am at at the moment.

**Mr FINCH** - Okay, thank you.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Mr Finch. We will now move on to 6.5, Multicultural Tasmania. Mr Wing?

### **6.5 Multicultural Tasmania -**

**Mr WING** - I would be interested to know how much of the amount allocated was paid to the remote council in Tasmania.

**Mr BARTLETT** - I reckon we could find that out for you.

**Mr WING** - And generally how -

**Mr BARTLETT** - The breakup of the full 600?

**Mr WING** - I am fully supportive of this. I think a program of a multicultural nature is beneficial.

**Mr BARTLETT** - These are sundry grants under Multicultural Tasmania, the nature of which are all around \$730 adding up to \$58 000 apart from that one. Sorry, the Multicultural Council of Tasmania receives \$40 000. All the others, such as the Good Neighbour Council, the African cultural festival organising committee, the Hobart Playback Theatre, the Burnie/Wynyard Women of the World, the Catholic refugee support group all appear to receive about \$730.

**Mr WING** - What was that figure?

**Mr BARTLETT** - \$730, so it is a small sundry grant amount.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Ms SCOTT** - We do not actually fund the council. Like any other organisation, they can apply for our sundry grants and this year they were successful in getting a grant.

**Mr WING** - The Good Neighbour Council was.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Yes.

**Ms SCOTT** - But out of our area, Mr Wing, we do not fund the Good Neighbour Council.

**Mr WING** - But the amount -

**Mr BARTLETT** - But they received a small grant this year.

**Mr WING** - From that, of 730 -

**Mr BARTLETT** - Dollars.

**Mr WING** - \$730?

**Mr BARTLETT** - Yes. I do not know where their prime source of funding would come from, but it is not from us.

**Mr WING** - They are probably limited in what they can do by inadequate funding.

**Mr BARTLETT** - I do not know much about them so maybe you can inform me over the coming weeks about them.

**Mr WING** - I am a State patriot, so I -

**Mr BARTLETT** - Maybe we can talk about how we might support them better in the future.

**Mr WING** - Perhaps they do not apply for sufficient amounts.

**Mr BARTLETT** - A total of \$85 000 gets allocated through the Multicultural Tasmania grants program. The allocation is divided into 40 000 for MCOT, the Multicultural Council of Tasmania, large festivals get 25 000, including the Estia group festival, the tulip festival at the Botanical Gardens, and small grants of \$20 000. Grants of up to \$900 are given to small projects that foster understanding of or respect for cultural diversity in Tasmania. That is where they would have received their grant from.

**Mr WING** - Yes, and the Ethnic Communities Council?

**Mr BARTLETT** - Multicultural Council of Tasmania, \$40 000.

**Mr WING** - Thank you.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Which is the peak advocacy body, obviously.

**Mr FINCH** - You mentioned those grants. Was there a mention there of Harmony Day or was that just in my mind?

**Mr BARTLETT** - Harmony Day is run by the Multicultural Council of Tasmania; is that right? No. I am getting a 'no'.

**Ms SCOTT** - Harmony Day is actually an Australian Government program - it is a national program. We work in partnership in terms of Harmony Day, but it is actually an Australian Government initiative as is the national action plan. We work collaboratively with the Australian Government on some projects.

**Mr FINCH** - You may not realise, Premier, and probably Ms Scott might like to elaborate on what happened to this year's Harmony Day function. It did not go ahead, I think through a lack of funding.

**Mr WING** - It did not go ahead. Nothing happened.

**Mr FINCH** - No, that is right. But I am just -

**Ms SCOTT** - It did in Devonport.

**Mr FINCH** - In Devonport?

**Mr BARTLETT** - It is an Australian Government funded thing, so if the funding has been cut it is not -

**Ms SCOTT** - That would have been a decision by the Australian Government in terms of its funding, I imagine.

**Mr FINCH** - So I do not know if you have ever seen that in Launceston, but it was quite a spectacular and very, very special day.

**Mr BARTLETT** - It was a great day.

**Mr FINCH** - Four thousand people odd at the Queen Victorian Museum and Art Gallery in Inveresk, and achieving all the aims of a multicultural society and what you are trying to project. That did not go ahead, I believe because of some funding issues, but there might also be issues there with getting the volunteers and the people to actually run it and organise it. Just a suggestion, Premier: that really should come back on the radar, that Harmony Day, because I think it presented an opportunity for our community from the different cultures to express themselves.

**Mr BARTLETT** - I have attended Harmony Day on many occasions. It is a fantastic day.

**Mr FINCH** - In Launceston?

[4.00 p.m.]

**Mr FINCH** - In Launceston?

**Mr BARTLETT** - No, not in Launceston, only in Hobart.

**Mr FINCH** - Launceston's was very special and, as I say, I think there is an issue there with the organisation and it should be back on the radar. If it needs support from the State, I hope that will be the case.

**Mr WING** - Do international student organisations have the right to make application for funding under this?

**Mr BARTLETT** - There were a couple there that I saw. There was an African one.

**Mr WING** - That would be a refugee.

**Mr BARTLETT** - But certainly, an international students body who wanted access to one of the \$900 grants, by the looks of the groups that are actually applying and winning grants here, would be totally in keeping with -

**Mr WING** - Yes. The Malaysian students association -

**Mr BARTLETT** - The Tasmanian University Union Malaysian students society got a \$730 grant towards their Merdeka night - a colourful celebration.

**Mr WING** - Several of the international student associations have dinners and they seek funding from private enterprise.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Yes, that is a place where they can go.

**Mr WING** - Good, thank you.

#### **6.6 Children and youth affairs - policy advice and community service -**

**CHAIR** - The next one I would like to move to is Children and Youth Affairs. I note here from the information, from table 11.14, that the grants structure is being revised. The output suggests that there would be 20 fewer initiatives in the coming year. Why is that happening? I was just wondering if the 40 that happened last year - or if it was 40 indeed - was too onerous.

**Mr BARTLETT** - What I understand is that there is going to be the same amount of money - fewer grants with more money going to that.

**CHAIR** - Is that level an issue?

**Mr BARTLETT** - Again, I do not know whether Marguerite can inform us as to why, but I guess it is a balancing act, is it not? You can have 1 000 grants of \$1 each or one grant of \$1 000 each and you have to make a decision about which ones have the most impact, I suppose.

**Mr EDWARDS** - That is exactly right. You get bigger bang for your buck with bigger projects. So we would rather cap the level of funding you can get. We are encouraging people to put in for larger projects which means, obviously, there will be fewer of them.

**CHAIR** - So were there too many initiatives in the particular area to deal with the last time, or is it they just decided that they would cut back?

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr EDWARDS** - No, I just think that we want to encourage more substantial activities.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Does any other committee member have a question?

**Mrs JAMIESON** - Just one very quick one. Is it the rule of this particular policy of this department to actually be involved in encouraging various Government departments to follow through the Ashley inquiry recommendations, such as early intervention, education and halfway houses?

**Mr BARTLETT** - There are certainly some things that I can talk about in the Department of Education that we are following through.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - I was just wondering with this particular Children and Youth Affairs—

**Mr BARTLETT** - This policy area is not really responsible for affecting policy in other government agencies necessarily in that case, but there was a whole-of-government response to the select committee and most of the recommendations were accepted and are being acted on by Government. In fact, one or two of the recommendations which are in that report, although they were not officially accepted by the Government, I know my department is working on our funding internally.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - I think in the interests of trying to facilitate some of the visitors in the gallery we might move on to output group 1, House of Assembly support services. We will get those next two groups done and then we will have a break.

### **DIVISION 13**

(House of Assembly)

#### **Output group 1**

#### **House of Assembly support**

##### **1.1 House of Assembly support services -**

**CHAIR** - Thank you and welcome to the table. Do we have any questions in this area at all?

**Mr WING** - Madam Chair, we take the view that these are matters for the House of Assembly and by convention I have no questions.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

##### **1.2 Select committee support services -**

**Mr DEAN** - Can I just talk about the renovations that are occurring? I think your sitting arrangements are a little -

**Mr ALCOCK** - Yes, we are going to have the last two weeks of August in Launceston at the Albert Hall.

**Mr DEAN** - Right. The last two weeks?

**Mr ALCOCK** - Yes, then the week around 23, 24 and 25 September - whatever the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday is - will be at the Burnie Civic Centre.

**Mr DEAN** - Right.

**Mr ALCOCK** - And then subsequent to that back in Hobart.

**Mr WING** - So will you be able to manage without the Legislative Council being there, too?

**Mr ALCOCK** - We are only sitting one concurrent week in those three weeks and I will have to have some discussions about what we do about messages and so on. We will miss you, of course.

#### **DIVISION 14**

(Legislative Council)

#### **Output group 1**

#### **Legislative Council Support Services**

**CHAIR** - I welcome to the table the Clerk, David Pearce. Are there any questions around the table about this particular output group? Mr Dean, would you like to take the lead on committee support services?

**Mr DEAN** - I have only one question in relation to support services, and I have raised this question with the Clerk previously, about the lack of facility within the Chamber in relation to the ability to write and record and so on. There is only a certain amount of time that you can write on your knee before you start to get sick and tired of it; hence, I think, the reason some members are out of the Chamber for long periods. Is there any progress likely to be made in the area of providing a desk area that is suitable for our Chamber for use in those circumstances?

**Mr PEARCE** - Mr Dean, that is one our new President is going to have a look at. With our former President, it was raised on a number of occasions in the past. Of course, there are heritage aspects associated with it. There are a few matters to work through. I suspect it will be a matter for members and the new President to pursue in due course and deal with. There are no plans afoot at the moment to change the layout or the facility for members in the House.

**Mr WING** - It is a problem frontbenchers in every parliament in the world - or most parliaments in the world - have. There are no desks for frontbenchers in most parliaments.

**Mr DEAN** - It gets untidy if stuff is thrown all over the floor and kicked around all over the place.

**CHAIR** - I guess the fact that it is a debating Chamber is the reason why in the past there was no need supposedly, and there was ample space, for writing. But I take your point, Mr Dean.

**Mr DEAN** - I think it could be done, in my opinion.



**Mr FINCH** - I have a question to the Premier. There have been suggestions recently about the membership of both Houses of State Parliament: that they should be enlarged to provide better governance. We heard some response to the idea recently, but could you elaborate and tell us if you feel that the present numbers are adequate?

**Mr BARTLETT** - The Tasmanian Greens, I understand, have written to me asking for the three leaders in the lower House and the President of the Legislative Council to have a meeting to discuss this. I indicated to them yesterday that I do not have a problem with having a meeting with those people. They have obviously been calling for a larger lower House. I am not sure that I have heard them specifically call for more upper House numbers but they have certainly been calling for the restoration of a 35-seat House of Assembly. I have said publicly, and I continue to say, that I think it is a very hard sell for a politician to run on a platform of 'Vote Bartlett: I'm bringing you more politicians.' If that were my platform, that would be a pretty tough sell in the Tasmanian community. But I am a democratist as well and, therefore, I think it is a worthwhile debate to have. I would not close myself off to listening to a debate around the right numbers in the lower House Chamber, and I can see both sides of the argument.

My personal view is that we have it about right. That is my personal view. It is not the Government's view, it is not the Cabinet's view; it is my personal view that we have it about right. But I am open to debate and discussion as long as the debate and discussion is a balanced one that fleshes out all the aspects both for and against increasing the size of the lower House Chamber. There is this argument run by the Tasmanian Greens that there has been a proliferation of ministerial advisers because we have a smaller Chamber, and I do not accept that argument. There are ministerial advisers - no doubt about it - but I think that is much more deeply related to the flows of information that we have to deal with these days than we had to deal with 10 to 20 years ago. I have had 850 invitations arrive since becoming Premier; 700 emails a day to my various email boxes. These are flows of information that one person cannot possibly humanly deal with, whereas 10 to 15 years ago ministers were dealing with the red boxes. The red boxes arrived and that was essentially their only flow of communication with their department and in many ways, apart from face to face and on the phone, the outside world.

It is a very different scenario and I do not think you can attribute simply the numbers in the House of Assembly to more ministerial advisers. I do not accept that argument. What I do accept, though, is it is a worthwhile debate but as long as the debate is not just being run by the Tasmanian Greens, who have a vested interest in having a 35-seat Chamber - and they clearly do, and I could not get them to admit that yesterday in the House of Assembly but they clearly do.

**Mr FINCH** - It is just that we see here at budget Estimates time the ministerial responsibilities are, to my understanding, onerous and some of those workloads are enormous. Trying to cover a lot of those areas - these are my observations - I feel that the ministries are quite small in this smaller Parliament that we have.

**Mr BARTLETT** - And that is a useful part of the debate to have. I am all ears to this debate. I would like to hear both sides of the debate, and I would like Tasmanian people to be engaged in the debate, not just political parties for their own purposes.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - The fact is that we have Education, for example, and here we are at a quarter past four we have over a billion-dollar budget and we have not even started on it. The same has been happening with Health over the last few years as well. We have had multiple ministries by the one Minister and you just cannot get through the workload in the allotted time.

[4.15 p.m.]

**Mr BARTLETT** - I think that is a reasonable argument on the 'for' side to a larger Parliament. As I said, I do not accept the argument that you have too many ministerial advisers these days, because I suspect if we had 10 Ministers we would have more ministerial advisers, not fewer.

**Mr FINCH** - It is probably more the cost, though, Mr Premier. Your elected members do not cost anywhere near as much in respect of the remuneration they receive that we hear about some of the ministerial advisers and the payment that they receive.

**Mr BARTLETT** - It is my intention that any ministerial officers that I have - that people do not earn more than ministers, because I do not think that is a good symbol.

**CHAIR** - It sounds like a fair policy. Premier, I just want to bring to your attention - and this will probably follow on to the Clerk - that the Legislative Council, in particular, has been conducting and will conduct quite a number of select committee processes -

**Mr BARTLETT** - I have noticed.

**CHAIR** - And that in itself has become a challenge for the staff of the Legislative Council. I know that there is huge value in those select committee processes, and the reports are very detailed and we obviously read them and have looked at some of the recommendations. I just take the opportunity to ask through you to the Clerk about his opinion on the fact that that workload seems to be increasing and it is taking a toll on staff and resources.

**Mr PEARCE** - The staff do a fantastic job, Madam Chair, as you know, and we do not have too many of them and inquiries have been increasing. It is difficult for the members as well, with fewer members spread across a range of select committee duties. So it is impacting not only on the staff but also on the member's ability to have input into aspects of the report, both to research and to assist with any writing. But we are looking to address that. We have research support in place. As some committees report, we have others that are sitting on the *Notice Paper* that possibly may or may not have support. But it is certainly something that we are going to have to address probably sooner rather than later.

I think to this point our staff have done a fantastic job, but I think there is also pressure on members. Even logistically in just getting members together to meet is not always an easy task. So there are some issues to work through, but I think we can address them in the not-too-distant future.

**Mr FINCH** - The Premier would not realise that one of our members is on I think 11 committees and we have the carpenter building a pedestal for him in the carpenter's shop as we speak.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - The funding has gone to Devonport, sorry.

**Mr WING** - On the question of parliamentary numbers, Mr Premier, with the Ogilvie report, I imagine that is out of print. I do not know whether it might be possible for consideration to be given to -

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr BARTLETT** - The Ogilvie report is?

**Mr WING** - About parliamentary numbers.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Is this the Albert Ogilvie report?

**Mr WING** - It is the Albert Ogilvie report that Sir Geoffrey Foot and Sir George Cartland -

**Mr BARTLETT** - I would be very keen to have a look at that.

**Mr WING** - If it is out of print I wonder if consideration could be given to having copies made for members of Parliament who would like to consider it.

**Mr BARTLETT** - I would be very happy to do that because I would be keen to consider its contents.

**Mr WING** - Thank you. So that may be possible to have that done?

**Mr BARTLETT** - Yes. I will get Mat to make a note of it, otherwise I will forget.

**Mr WING** - Thanks very much.

**CHAIR** - Mr Dean, one last question in this output.

**Mr DEAN** - This question is a statement. With the Joint House Committee, the Parliamentary Accounts Committee and so on, there is a difficulty in getting people to be involved in those committees and writing up reports and doing things like that. It is across-the-board really but it is creating a number of issues. It is being discussed and I think that matter might be addressed by the chairmen of one of those groups later on.

**Mr PEARCE** - It is something, Mr Dean, that I will pursue with the Clerk of the House of Assembly as well as with the Joint Standing Committee of Public Accounts. That is something that we will have a look at and discuss, and get back to members and discuss it with them.

**Mr DEAN** - The only other one I would ask is the one that I thought the member for Mersey might raise, and that is the other room and the renovations and so on. Where are we with that? That is capital investments and -

**CHAIR** - It is further over -

**Mrs JAMIESON** - Committee Room 1?

**Mr DEAN** - Committee Room 1.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - The occupational health and safety hazard of that room; yes, indeed. I would certainly agree.

**CHAIR** - It has not improved in your time. No, we are not there. So thank you.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - No, it has not improved. The improvement is that we have moved here.

**DIVISION 15**

(Legislature-General)

**Output group 1**

**Parliamentary reporting service**

**1.1 Production and printing of parliamentary services -**

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much. We might go straight to division 3, which is the Parliamentary Reporting Service, joint services, division 4.

**Mr FINCH** - In respect of Hansard, really, I hear nothing but praise for the work of Hansard. I sometimes marvel, having dealt with technology myself through my radio career and having seen the technical glitches that can happen, but I have never not seen a *Hansard* printed. So it seems that the work goes on. There must be backup somewhere and it is covered through the system. So I praise the work of the people who work surreptitiously, burrowing away in the corners, producing that reference that we need. I use it extensively through my electorate to distribute the debate and the discussion that goes on in Parliament. But one thing - and this might only be me - is that there is always a requirement to provide the quotes that we make. There are always newspapers to refer to and articles. Is it the most efficient way for us to provide them? Is Hansard able to source them themselves? Let us say we are quoting from the *Financial Review* or the *Australian* newspaper. Is there an easier way for Hansard to access it?

**Mr BENNISON** - I think there is liaison involved there with the Parliamentary Library and they provide a clipping service. So it would be a matter of liaison between those two organisations. But I can say that the Hansard service is a very cost-effective one by comparison with other jurisdictions around this country. They are doing a very effective job with the budget they have.

**Mr FINCH** - Yes, it is probably just me. I have to chase up all of these various things and if I am not coordinating them very well I think, 'Hansard might be able to take that on.' Then I realise I will probably -

**Mr BARTLETT** - As a former two-year member of the Library Committee of Parliament that never met while I was a member of it -

**Mr FINCH** - As soon as you finished up we met straightaway!

**Mr BARTLETT** - They got back together, right. What a shame. The Library Service of Parliament as well, as you say - and this is an opportunity to get this in *Hansard* - is just outstanding. We are very well served. In fact, I have said it publicly in speeches before. People talk about the privileges of being a member of Parliament. They think that it is to do with the drinks cabinet, cheap meals or something. Actually, I think the privilege is being able to access the Parliamentary Library Service. It is incredible.

**Mr FINCH** - Yes. The other thing, too, is that I am just concerned with technology and the way that they do operate their services. Are we up to speed with the best available technology? Is it reviewed and who does that review?

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr BENNISON** - Yes, we recently put in a new digital service. It is about two years old now, I think; is that right?

**Mr MENADUE** - Yes, we just got funding for it.

**Mr BENNISON** - No, this is the existing system.

**Mr MENADUE** - Yes.

**Mr BENNISON** - The present system is about two years old, but with the introduction of the televising of parliament that is going to be running another audio feed. So we are going to have the luxury of a backup system now from Hansard and for all the committees as well as the two Chambers. So it is going to be right up to the minute.

**Mr FINCH** - A video web feed as well?

**Mr BENNISON** - That is right.

**Mr FINCH** - That will not make a change to Hansard's operations?

**Mr BENNISON** - No, it will still be done the same way in Hansard, but it is just that we have got this extra system coming through the \$1.9 million that the Government has made available to Parliament for televising both Houses and committees.

**Mr FINCH** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Mr Wing, if you would like to ask your questions in this whole area, that will speed things up.

**Mr WING** - I have two matters. Firstly, is there any provision in the funding for the forthcoming financial year for recarpeting the Library?

**Mr MENADUE** - Yes.

**Mr WING** - How much is that?

**Mr MENADUE** - \$40 000.

**Mr WING** - That will be adequate to do that?

**Mr MENADUE** - Yes. That does not cover the cost of carpet; that is just the installation.

**Mr WING** - You have the carpet?

**Mr BENNISON** - We already have the carpet.

**Mr WING** - The other question relates to the PABX building and the Government's intentions for a number of buildings, including No. 10 Murray Street. I am concerned - and I know the Joint House Committee is concerned - at the prospect of the PABX building in

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Salamanca Place being sold, because it would restrict the opportunity for future developments forever.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Of the Parliament?

**Mr WING** - Yes.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Right. I do not know whether you asked that question of the Treasurer in the Estimates.

**Mr WING** - Yes, I did.

**Mr BARTLETT** - He would have been a better person to ask that of.

**Mr WING** - I have a notice of motion seeking the Council's support in opposition to that.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Right, okay.

**Mr WING** - The Treasurer said that he had written a letter to the Speaker, but he did not mention what the contents were.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Right. Okay. I am not privy to that.

**CHAIR** - Mrs Jamieson?

**Mrs JAMIESON** - I certainly add my congratulations to the Library, because it is a very, very worth while service and it deserves every cent it gets. How many outside researchers use the Library Service? Do we keep track of people who come in and use the Library's services apart from parliamentarians?

**Mr BENNISON** - The Parliamentary Library does carry those figures and it does offer a range of services to outside users but, of course, the members and their staff and the staff in Parliament have priority, as you would understand.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - Yes, I do.

**Mr BENNISON** - But I am sure we can provide you with some figures if you would like that.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - Yes, thank you,

**CHAIR** - Mr Dean, do you have questioning in any of these areas?

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, I do. I was going to ask the question here that fits into the buildings and operations area and that is the Henty House offices, which I again raise. They are not the best of offices. There is no shopfront there, of course. I believe that it impacts on - I talk for myself at this stage, because it is not even my area, of course, my electorate, and I think it impacts on my ability to provide the service that I should for my electorate. I am just wondering what the possibilities will be for the future in getting into an office that is more suitable. What is the position?

**Mr ALCOCK** - It has recently been leased out, has it not? My understanding is that there is a new lease involved with the building. I am not privy to any suggestions of upgrades or anything but they may well be in the pipeline; it is just that I do not know about it.

**Mr DEAN** - We have had a lift that has been working now for about three weeks that I am aware of, so there has been a big improvement. We can at least get to the offices there.

**CHAIR** - Is there anything more, Mr Dean? We were going to try to get a 10-minute break.

**Mr DEAN** - No, that was all.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Unless there is nothing else we will take a 10-minute break, Premier, and be back ready for the big session. This was just a warm-up.

**The committee suspended from 4.28 p.m. to 4.43 p.m.**

## **DIVISION 2**

(Department of Education)

### **Output group 1**

#### **Pre-compulsory and compulsory**

##### **1.1 In school education -**

**CHAIR** - Premier, could you please introduce the officers whom you have seated alongside you.

**Mr BARTLETT** - I will ask them to introduce themselves, so that they get their position titles right.

**Ms GALE** - Jenny Gale, General Manager of Strategic Policy and Performance.

**Mr SMYTH** - John Smyth, Secretary of the Department of Education.

**Mr GLASS** - Greg Glass, Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services.

**Mr FINCH** - Andrew Finch, Director Finance, Facilities and Business Support.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. We will begin output group 1, but firstly Premier, you would like to do a brief overview?

[4.45 p.m.]

**Mr BARTLETT** - I will be very, very brief. I said at the outset of my time as Minister for Education that there were three areas that I wanted to focus on. We are still focused on those areas. We remain focused on those areas and all of them are integrally linked with each other. The first is an investment in the early years and ensuring that we are investing in those years zero to four, particularly in less advantaged communities where intergenerational poverty exists and so on. The second area is improving the fundamentals of literacy and numeracy, particularly at that

transition point from primary school to high school where disengagement with education really begins in terms of kids not being engaged in their education from grade 7 onwards. Thirdly, to lift the post-year 10 retention and qualification levels of all Tasmanians. It is true to say that in post-year 10 qualification levels, we fall behind every other State in Australia and we need to do better in the first two areas and over time better in that third area to really make a difference in lifting the overall educational outcomes for all Tasmanians.

Underpinning that, I have had a philosophy of ensuring that we have the smallest administrative and bureaucratic overhead possible within the department, shifting positions back into schools and resources directly back into schools. I have a philosophy that the best decisions around education are made close to students, so that principals and school communities and empowerment of school communities is a good thing. I also have a view that, apart from parental engagement in education, the quality of teacher is the next most important thing when it comes to lifting educational standards. Really that has been my philosophy from the beginning and continues to inform everything we do in education. With that I am happy to go to questions.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Minister. If that is your overview, we will move straight on to Output group 1, Precompulsory and compulsory education, 1.1 In school education. Mr Dean, would you like to take the lead?

**Mr DEAN** - My first question is: is my school safe, Minister, the Levendale primary school?

**Mr BARTLETT** - That is your school?

**Mr DEAN** - My first six years of schooling was at Levendale primary.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Is that right?

**Mr DEAN** - Yes.

**Mr BARTLETT** - There you go. I have met with the Levendale community on a couple of occasions, once visiting the school and once with a group of them coming in here. While I talked a lot about demographic change and the need, I believe, we have for fewer schools in Tasmania, largely I am talking about inner urban schools, inner urban primary schools specifically, and Levendale obviously is a not an inner urban primary school. Personally, I would like to see Levendale stay open because I think it is a key part of the social infrastructure within that community. The unfortunate circumstance is that the numbers are dropping significantly at Levendale. Ultimately, I have to take advice from educators as to what is best educationally for those children. I have effectively said to the community that I will work with them as much as I can in getting their numbers up. If they can get their numbers up to a sustainable level, I will give them the time to do that and we will keep the school open. If they cannot, we cannot keep the school open for educational reasons.

**Mr DEAN** - There were 70 or 80-odd going there when I was there.

**Mr BARTLETT** - They are down to about 16 at the moment.

**Mr DEAN** - That is ridiculous. I understand that. That might be -

**Mr BARTLETT** - It is a great little school.



**Mr DEAN** - It is.

**CHAIR** - It is a great little community.

**Mr DEAN** - It might be a good point to start on. I have read what is in the papers from yesterday and I have heard you talking, Minister, about the drop in the number of students in public schools in the State. This year it is quite high, in actual fact. Will we reach a position - and I know you have given an incentive to schools to look at coming together and uniting and so on. It looks like you may well come to a position, Minister, where you may have to say, 'I have to say some schools have to close in some areas', so you will have to take a big stick to it as it were. Have we reached that stage? If we do reach that stage, what is going to be the process? How will we handle this?

**Mr BARTLETT** - We have not reached that stage at this point in time, but I can clearly map out for the committee a strategic approach to this and I will go through it. Firstly, some relevant statistics. We currently provide 3.5 schools for every 1 000 children in Tasmania. Victoria, which is the next closest State, provides only three schools for every 1 000 children. Our State schools are currently only 66 per cent occupied in terms of the benchmark of number of students per square metre. That is spread across the State. That means that they are already underoccupied.

We have recently released from the Demographic Change Advisory Council a discussion paper. That discussion paper outlines a range of things, and one of the statistics that I have been using, although the ABS contradicts me slightly here, but it could be anything up to 10 000 less kids in 10 years' time in our State schools. If you look at the number that I released yesterday, which was 982 less this year, predominantly those losses are in kindergarten. So this is a demographic change, not a shift from government schools to non-government schools. In fact, the rate of change from government schools to non-government schools is slowing in Tasmania and is far lower than every other State in Australia as well. A far greater trend is demographic change than that flow. That flow does have an impact, but that flow does not have an impact such that non-Government schools in Tasmania will not have to face up to demographic change themselves. The fact of the matter is that we have not had enough babies in the last five years, and it does not look like we are going to have enough in the next five or 10 either. I have been doing my bit.

**CHAIR** - Premier, the Treasurer in *Hansard* last week said that we have had a population -

**Mr BARTLETT** - Blip. We have had a population blip. We have had a population rise, yes, but that is not from babies. That is from net migration. In fact, most of those people who are coming are in age groups that are non-productive when it comes to babies.

**CHAIR** - Do we know that for sure?

**Mr BARTLETT** - Yes, we do. The ABS statistics absolutely provide clarity around that. We have had a baby blip, which is essentially due to the baby bonus. That created a small increase in the birth rate in Tasmania in certain geographically located communities but not across-the-board. So, we have this demographic challenge and the statistics bear it out and all show that we are facing it.

I believe that we already have too many schools for the number of kids. Our schools are only 66 per cent occupied. If we have 10 000 fewer students in 10 years time, our schools will be 50 per cent occupied. We have to consider as a community therefore what is the best expenditure of taxpayers' money, the community's money, on education. If we want to lift our educational standards, I believe we need fewer schools to do that. We need to do it better in fewer places than not as well in many places. I always use this as an example: when you stand in this building you can draw a three- or four-kilometre radius around this building on the western shore of Hobart and there are 11 primary schools within that circle. This is too many in my view. Launceston has the same effect. Burnie has the same effect. Glenorchy has the same effect. In fact there are 13 primary schools in a similar radius of Glenorchy. This is something we need to tackle as a community.

My first two approaches of tackling it was to introduce the School Futures Fund, which interestingly enough the Winnaleah and Branxholm communities are going to draw down on to amalgamate their two schools. I believe that will lead to better educational outcomes and services for the north-east region of Tasmania over time.

**CHAIR** - They are enormously proactive, Premier. They get fantastic support from the principal at Winnaleah District High School.

**Mr BARTLETT** - I think Principal Brian Wightman is an outstanding young leader in education in Tasmania and has done a great job. That is essentially what the futures fund was set up to do - to allow local leadership. Again, I acknowledge Mr Dean, as I did at last year's committee, when we talked about the movement of northern suburb schools within Launceston as well and leadership in that local community. I believe the best way to achieve these things is through local leadership in local communities, recognising that they are at the whim of these demographic forces and that they need to lead their own change.

However, it would be true to say that the \$5.8 million School Futures Fund will not achieve over the next decade what it is that we need to achieve. So the discussion paper that I have released publicly, and it is still open for public comment, canvasses three options for change in our school profile in Tasmania. One is investing more in the School Futures Fund, which is continuing to provide incentives. But I believe we need to close about 30 schools over the next 10 years largely in urban areas of Tasmania. I am not confident, I have to say, that the School Futures Fund - the carrot, if you like; only the carrot approach and no stick approach - will get us there.

The second option the discussion paper canvasses is the approach that was taken in the ACT recently when the Minister, Andrew Barr, who became Minister for Education seven days after I did, was then charged by his Chief Minister with closing 35 schools by the end of the year. They have a similar size system to us. Imagine announcing tomorrow that we are going to shut 35 schools, naming them and shutting them at the end of the year. It is pretty radical and not something that I personally am keen to embark on.

The third approach that the discussion paper canvasses is using a model that works well in Scotland where you actually establish in legislation, in statute, a set of criteria for schools, a statutory consultation process and a statutory officer that might be the secretary of the department or might be the schools board of Tasmania or what have you to administer that process and you effectively take all the politics out of it. It is done on a formula basis of geography, school population, location, proximity to another school, transport services. A whole range of factors

would be taken into account, but it would be done as a statutory process so it is no longer politicians making decisions about which schools may or may not close.

I believe going forward - although I am waiting for the consultation received back from this paper - that a mix of a statutory process and incentives through a School Futures Fund that amalgamated schools can draw down on and use to rebuild and reinvest in the schools that remain is probably the way to go ahead. My time line in thinking of this is that we would have this debate during this year - and I have raised it at every available opportunity because I think it is an important thing to raise - and next year we would make some decisions about what mix of things we will put in place to meet the challenge that we have. Then in the following year we would start implementing it. So we are looking at 2010-11 before we would get into any sort of implementation of a broader plan.

**Mr DEAN** - Thank you, Premier. You covered that subject quite well. Another question you partly answered early this morning was the process you embarked on to move teachers out of the administrative areas and back into the schools. You indicated I think that that was quite successful. Did that entail at the end then replacing those positions where the teachers were moved from? What was the result of that? It seems to me that you move from one area on to another. What was the result of that?

**Mr BARTLETT** - Of course, they are not all teachers so that is part of the problem. About 150 positions have been moved from central office out to either in schools or closer to being administered by principals, effectively. They might not be sitting in the school but they are under the control of principals through the school improvement boards. Along with that, we have freed up millions of dollars from the centre that was previously used—and I am not criticising the use of it previously; it is about priorities—and applied it back into schools and into school land. I can give you some examples of the money that we have achieved not through getting new money from Treasury but by freeing it up in the bureaucracy and then applying it in schools.

I announced at estimates two years ago \$1.3 million extra going to the School Resource Package. That has been maintained in 2007-08 and 2008-09, so that will be \$3.9 million overall. We have funded literacy strategies in schools to the tune of \$3 million a year—that is \$9 million overall. We have funded a million dollars a year extra in special needs funding. That is not new Treasury money; that has come from Student at the Centre and freeing up resources and positions centrally, not filling positions centrally and then applying that money in schools. We have an increased \$100 000 in emergency uniform assistance - again, directly from the centre. Yesterday, I announced another \$400 000 per year going to high schools to cope with the extra three weeks that I am imposing upon grade 10 students from this year, and that is funded out of the centre, not out of new money from Treasury.

**CHAIR** - And your announcement for today, Minister?

**Mr BARTLETT** - Which one was that?

**CHAIR** - The new one today.

**Mr BARTLETT** - No, I do not have a new one today. We freed up another 26 positions on top of that. So \$5.3 million each year is going back into School Resource Packages from freeing up 26 positions out of the centre again. This Student at the Centre is largely this strategy that we have badged all of these efforts in, and I want to take the opportunity at what is essentially the end

of it - because we announced Student at the Centre as an 18-month program and we have probably spent about 20 months in these sorts of achievements - to put on the *Hansard* my congratulations to the secretary, the general managers, the deputy secretary and others within the department as a whole who have worked extremely hard to make this happen, because it is not easy to shift multimillions of dollars from the centre, from the bureaucracy, directly into schools. It is not easy at all, and they have achieved it and lived up to every hope and expectation that I had at the beginning of announcing the Student at the Centre strategy. They have done a really good job at it. It means that every day principals have more money in their budget to deal with school issues. It still does not meet every need, but it is a significant improvement in each school over those two years that we have done that—not through Treasury giving us more money, but through us tightening our belts and doing things better.

[5.00 p.m.]

**CHAIR** - We all know that people are in control of their own financial destiny. They are certainly putting in a bigger effort, are they not?

**Mr BARTLETT** - They are.

**CHAIR** - They are more frugal, one could say.

**Mr DEAN** - I have heaps of questions here but if I could just ask another couple, Madam Chair.

**CHAIR** - That will be fine and then we will move around the table.

**Mr DEAN** - Minister, I want to raise an issue that is currently ongoing and that is school uniforms. You did discuss this yesterday. If we read the paper today we see some issues that are quite concerning. I wonder whether or not they are accurate with what has been said in the paper today as well.

**Mr BARTLETT** - I have not actually read the article in the paper.

**Mr DEAN** - The article was saying that the young girl has been stopped from participating in some school programs. It said that she was forced to not take place in an Anzac Day parade because she refused to wear a uniform et cetera. I am surprised that that happened but, anyway, that is what is in the paper today. We are talking about Deloraine High School here. This is the one that has really brought it to where it currently is. You have the school strongly supporting the school uniform position. You have the school council, the parents and friends and the community strongly supporting the school uniform position, and I must admit that I support it as well.

**Mr BARTLETT** - So do I.

**Mr WING** - So do I.

**Mr DEAN** - So, Minister, along with my support, do you give your support - and that is my question - to the wearing of uniforms in this situation and in public school situations?

**Mr BARTLETT** - Two things: I absolutely strongly support the wearing of school uniforms in public schools - absolutely, 100 per cent. I think it is very important for a range of reasons. This case goes to local school empowerment and empowerment of the school association. I want more

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parents engaged in decision making in schools and more of the wider community engaged in decision making in schools. I want them influencing decisions made by the principal and so on. Therefore, where a school association, a P&F and the school council are all saying, 'We have a strong uniform policy at this school,' I am not going to be the one that overrules them, frankly. This is a strong school policy. This is an empowered school association, which is great, in my view, and whether I disagree with their decision or not - in this case I strongly agree with their policy - I am not going to overrule them.

**Mr DEAN** - Excellent, because in my view the school uniform prevents segregation, where people wear designer clothes and others do not. It ensures a level playing field, as it were, and that is important.

**Mr BARTLETT** - On top of that, can I say that there is no reason any child in Tasmania should not have a school uniform. Over the last 10 years we have increased the funding tenfold to the school uniform assistance scheme. The budget allocation for 2007-08 is \$240 000, and this is a significant increase, but it essentially means that for any student, new arrival, refugee and so on who is not able to afford a school uniform of their own we are able to provide them with one.

**CHAIR** - Is it all taken up? Are all those funds expended?

**Mr GLASS** - Yes.

**Mr WING** - I was going to raise the same subject and I am delighted to hear your views, Mr Premier. I am just wondering whether you might be prepared to go one step further and require uniforms to be worn compulsorily. I know teachers would appreciate that because particularly in high schools they are never quite sure whether strangers are lurking in the school grounds, and if all their students do not have uniforms they cannot tell whether there are trespassers or whether certain individuals are their students.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Again, the point about empowerment of school associations is that I can express my personal strong view and I can express my view to school associations that I believe they should be setting strong uniform rules, but as soon as I overrule that by saying, 'You will express strong uniform views,' that detracts from the empowerment that I am trying to give them. There is legal advice from the Solicitor General that says:

'When determining and enforcing a school uniform policy, the process to be undertaken when determining and enforcing a school uniform is that the school association will determine the policy. The school association asks the principal to enforce the policy as a school rule. The policy is incorporated as a school rule. Students in breach of the school rules are subject to punishment pursuant to sections 36 and 37 of the Education Act. Punishment is detention or suspension in accordance with the discipline guidelines published on the web. The principal is responsible for implementing the policy of the school association and does not create the policy him or herself.'

That is the legal instrument in the Education Act under which this would occur, not a power necessarily extending from me.

**Mr WING** - Children are required to attend school by legislation. I would have thought it was worth considering introducing legislation for school uniforms, if necessary, because it is a very important factor.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Agreed. I would have to amend the act, and to me at this stage that seems like a bit of a sledgehammer on a walnut because I do not see a massive problem. When I go to schools, I always ask the principal what is going on if I see kids not in school uniform, so they know my opinion about it. An empowered school association is really important to me. I want parents to be engaged in the local decision making of their school, and uniform is one of those things they can have an active decision making role. I do not know of any school associations who do not want their schools to wear uniforms.

**Mr WING** - No, I was going to ask about that. In the back blocks of Zimbabwe and Kenya I have seen children emerging from the bush without shoes and socks but they have their uniform on, gold top and blue jeans or blue shorts, that gives them a pride in their school. I am very pleased to hear your views.

**Mr DEAN** - Absolutely. I have one further question to go, and I think the minister would be disappointed if I did not raise it. I think it is in this section, the closure of the flexible programs in the Northern Support School of Ravenswood. I raise that because there has been a lot of information brought my way. I am quite convinced that the member for Rosevears and the member for Launceston would have interest in this as well.

Those flexible programs offered by that school have been very successful. They have turned around a number of at-risk youth and have had some return to their schools proper, the schools from whence they came. It has changed their attitude to life and without any doubt at all the information I have from some of the parents is that it has kept their children away from Ashley and they will probably not now end up at Ashley. So it has served a real purpose.

**Mr BARTLETT** - It does.

**Mr DEAN** - One of the reasons for them being there is the fact that many of them cannot assimilate into a school environment for many reasons, but many have returned to those schools, as I have said, as a part of this program. It is an important program. Therefore, after all of that, I ask the question: Why have we closed the program here? I understand what you are going to say about the schools having the opportunity to provide some funding to these flexible programs. I understand all of that. But the fact is on my advice - and I have spoken to a number of teachers who have to remain nameless but who have indicated that the schools do struggle to provide the services to these at-risk youth on a one-on-one basis. They just do not really do it. They might say they do it but they have difficulty in providing that service to them. Minister, would you review this? What is your position as to the real reason why it was closed in the first place?

**Mr BARTLETT** - I have participated in a lengthy debate and put my view on the *Hansard* through the House of Assembly but I am very keen to repeat it briefly here today, and that is, the schools themselves made this decision - 32 out of the 37 or 39 participating schools who funded these programs made this decision. Number one, the funding has not been cut. Funding to these sorts of activities across all schools in Tasmania has improved, and I have just explained that through Student at the Centre. The schools themselves - and I understand it was 32 out of 37 or out of 39, an overwhelming majority - chose not to not fund these programs any more because

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they believed they could get more value for the kids by developing the programs in their own schools.

The teachers who have been involved in delivering these flexible programs will be working with those schools over term 2 to ensure that the programs are right within the schools and within their local areas. It might not be in the school; it might be down at the community garden or whatever it is in their local area. This goes to the heart of what Student at the Centre and school empowerment is all about. When schools make - particularly by an overwhelming majority - a decision on how to use their resources, I am not going to be the one to overrule them so I will not be changing this decision.

But I want to make it clear that this has not been a funding cut. In fact, it has been a funding increase over time. Schools who some three years ago chose to set up these programs have now chosen to dismantle these programs because they believe they can do better with the money elsewhere. That is essentially what has happened here.

There has been a lot of misinformation put about that I am closing the Northern Support School or that I am cutting funding to the Northern Support School, and none of that is true. Schools have chosen to use their money. I go to my opening statement that I believe the best decisions in education overall are made by those who are closest to the students, not by me sitting up here from on high responding to political pressure about a given issue or not. And in this case 32 out of the 39 schools chose to work in other circumstances or chose to use their money better. I understand, and I might have this wrong, that it was \$3 200 per two days that it was costing the school to send a student to these programs -

**Mr DEAN** - It costs \$300 a program, I think -

**Mr BARTLETT** - It costs \$3 200 per two days for one term - so sending the kid for one term for two days a week was costing \$3 200. Therefore, those schools chose to take that \$3 200 and use it in other ways within their own school or in partnership with other schools or with the local community garden. A whole range of programs and innovation will stem out of this change. This will not result in a diminution of services to those kids. It will not result, I believe, over time in not dealing with the services and supporting the kids that are most in need of these sorts of programs; it simply means that they will be delivered in a different way in different places.

**Mr DEAN** - I just wonder whether or not the principals - and obviously the principals of all these schools had to be engaged in this whole process of making the decision that they have made - have an absolute appreciation of the whole situation. I wonder whether they spoke to the parents of the students that are going to and using those flexible programs in the Northern Support School and whether they realise the success of those students in that situation. I wonder whether they will be able to deliver anywhere near the same sort of success on the funding - I am advised that each school was paying \$300 per student per term.

**Mr BARTLETT** - No, that is incorrect. It is \$3 200 per student per term.

**Mr DEAN** - So there is a significant difference in the information I was given in that regard. That is something I will need to check but I accept what you are saying. My question is: Have the teachers involved in making that decision, because we have 32 out of 37 or 39 -

**Mr BARTLETT** - I now have the figures here; it is actually 27 out of 33 schools -

**Mr DEAN** - So obviously there is a consensus of opinion.

**Mr BARTLETT** - were not prepared to fund future Northern Support School flexible programs on a per capita basis.

**Mr WING** - It is probably understandable that they would not want to be providing that money because they wanted to keep it in their own school. But it seems to me that, if you take these students with behavioural problems and integrate them back into a normal class, it is likely to upset the class and adversely affect the rest of the students. It does seem to be mainly a funding issue in that the schools obviously want to save that amount of money. We are asking that the Government be prepared to make extra funds available so that the school can continue. We are not saying you are taking money away but we are really asking if you would put money in because of the excellent results that have been obtained, which have been referred to by Mr Dean, and I know Mr Finch has a letter from somebody involved saying what a beneficial effect it had on their children. If those children go back and are integrated and their behavioural problems are not given the specialist attention that they have been receiving at the Northern Support School, they will probably become vandals and finish up in the courts and then prison, which will cost the State much more money in the long run and affect their lives.

**Mr BARTLETT** - But that is not entirely true either, in that what these schools have made decisions about is that they will not co-fund the flexible programs that are available at the Northern Support School, but there are a plethora of other flexible programs that they will be able to access and implement with their own schools. I will give you a list of them - for example, Stanners, the West Tamar Ed Zone, Community Gardens, Shine, Mates, Peak Program, Shed Program, Automotive School Farm, Mentored Learning, Bike and Building Maintenance, Friends Program, Small Animal Care, Catering and Cookery, to name a few. Schools have been surveyed to determine the types of flexible programs they will be planning, trialling or accessing during terms 2 and 3. Schools have indicated an interest in developing other programs in meeting their students' needs, including Cool Cats Café, Woodwork, Male Mentors, Foundational Literacy, School Gardens, Community Mentors, Rock and Water, Social Skills, Shine, Self-Esteem and the George Town Ed Zone. The expertise of the Northern Support School staff, who have been running these programs, will be used in terms 2 and 3 to assist in schools with the development of these programs. There is no diminution of services; there is no cutting of programs; there is no sense that all of sudden these kids these kids are being abandoned. All these kids would have had an individual education program associated with them and their parents would have been consulted in the development of that program. That is all still intact. Therefore, what we are really talking about here is schools making a decision to get better value for money by accessing other programs and developing their own. On top of that, we have made available more money for alternative education, right throughout the State. Part of the Student at the Centre is making sure that we build capacity in schools as well, so that we get those skills. We have completed a review of the flexible programs in Tasmanian schools and an audit of department-provided and community-based alternative settings. That is a significant spread of alternative education flexible programs across the State.

The Northern Support School was not the only place on the planet providing flexible support programs in any way, shape or form. We are working with a group of principals statewide to look at this review and audit and determine where gaps are and where future investment might be made. It was all right for the inner urban schools in Launceston to access the flexible support programs of the Northern Support School, but schools such as Cressy and others, outside the area,



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were not able to access them for transport and a whole range of other reasons. I do not believe that this will lead to a diminution of services to those children who have those particular needs and have their own individual education plan that dictates they require flexible learning environments. Ultimately, I can only rely on 27 out of 33 of the principals telling me that this will be better for their kids, because that is the criterion on which I believe principals are making their decisions.

**Mr WING** - I wonder why the school was established in the first place.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Well, times change and things, such as resources and access, change. More money is going through the school gate and therefore they do have capacity to develop their own solutions, work in partnership with their local communities and those sorts of things that they might not have had before. I cannot tell you what was in their mind three or four years ago when they set the programs up versus what is in their mind now. But essentially they have run these programs for a while and while their funding has been increased they have chosen not to continue to run them.

**Mr FINCH** - I can only hope, Premier, that you are correct and it turns out that this is a better program, because the evidence we had very strongly from parents of those who use the Northern Support School was only of praise and support -

**Mr BARTLETT** - I don't doubt they were doing a good job.

**Mr FINCH** - It took the pressure off the families and alleviated the parents' concern for the development of their children. The ones who spoke to me - and I had three very lengthy conversations with them - felt that their school life now was not succeeding, that their children's lives had been changed by being taken out of the school and accessing flexible programs. It was the fact that they were not staying in the same school environment.

**Mr BARTLETT** - But I hear the same stories about many of the flexible programs - that many of those listed in the audit, right across the State are having the same sort of achievement.

**Mr FINCH** - What are you saying? That the work back in the schools -

**Mr BARTLETT** - No, these are flexible programs both in schools and in community-based alternative settings.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - I would like to endorse the comments that the other members have made. Certainly with special education in Devonport, for example, it is imperative that we have these students within a like kind, shall we say, of specific education.

**Mr BARTLETT** - I do not disagree with any of that.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - I hear your point. While we are talking about special education and kids at risk, would you care to comment on Ashley? As you are aware, we did the review of Ashley and attendance at compulsory education et cetera.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Yes, I would be happy to talk about Ashley. While there was a whole-of-government response to a number of the select committee's recommendations, the department has been working on what more we can do at Ashley school. We are absolutely committed to

providing quality education, no matter where children are and where they live, and so on. Ashley school is obviously a Department of Education school, one of our 211-odd schools. The Department of Education is continuing to support Ashley school students and staff in a number of ways. Just recently we have provided \$20 000 to Ashley school to support the development and delivery of a professional learning program for all staff. The aim of the professional learning program is to build a shared understanding of the young people there in terms of their backgrounds, relationships, language and culture to enable common attitudes and approaches in working with them. It will also provide an integrated approach to how detainees are supported and rehabilitated at Ashley school.

The department currently provides up to 13 sessions of education per week for compulsory school-age students and up to nine sessions for post-compulsory school-age students. Sessions last from 45 minutes to one hour. Subjects taught are literacy, numeracy, information technology, health and physical education, woodwork, art and cooking. Extra-curricular programs and recreational activities are also organised for young people. In addition, two extra teaching staff will be employed to enable a 48-week year - this is new - and to support better transition out of Ashley so that ongoing support for learning and future pathways is provided -

**Mrs JAMIESON** - Could you enlarge on that? That was certainly one of the problems we came up with in the committee.

**Mr BARTLETT** - I will get Liz to come up and talk about that. Again, this is money the department has found; it was not supplied by Treasury. They have a three-hour Student at the Centre program and they have freed up money to provide for this. This means that two extra teaching staff will be added to the complement of teaching staff at Ashley, extending the school year to 48 weeks. So there will be only four weeks when the school is not operating at Ashley.

**Mr WING** -Five days a week?

**Mr BARTLETT** - Yes, five days a week.

**Mr WING** - That is excellent.

**CHAIR** - I welcome Liz Banks, General Manager of Learning Services North, to the table.

**Ms BANKS** - What we are really trying to do is improve the quality and quantity of education and also work more closely with the Department of Health and Human Services. The high-level committee that now oversees the work of Ashley is guiding the work we do. I am a member of that, but I also work closely with Mick Evans, who is the Director of Education and Training at Ashley. The work we are doing to try to improve the understanding of all the workers at Ashley is in conjunction with him and planning for that professional learning for all staff is starting now. The two extra teachers will provide an improved access to the curriculum in terms of time in the school year so that will give the teachers the capacity to engage with the kids for 48 weeks. Also we recognise that transition out of Ashley is a huge issue for many of these young people. When you look back through the data you find that they start to disengage with their schools at a really young age - sometimes in grade 3 or 4. Therefore, trying to keep them engaged in education will be part of the work of the additional staff members.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - Will you have the extra capacity for early intervention programs within the existing State school to pick up these children?

**Ms BANKS** - Yes, we certainly hope so. One of the other keys of course in supporting them to be more resilient once they are outside Ashley is to make sure that we do more and better in improving their literacy outcomes. In that way I have also provided some support to begin working with them in part of the new literacy initiative - I want to make sure they are included in that.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - Will that include, say, music therapy and art therapy?

**Ms BANKS** - The students there already have a significant amount of art therapy. There are two part-time teachers who provide regular art classes for them. Music therapy is a really interesting one because that is part of the reason we need to change the way we work together because of the difference in the education perspective to music and the DHSS issues around health where the students are not allowed to access some musical instruments outside the school. There is a fair way to go there, but we have started.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Can I just add to that? I know that Liz is extremely personally passionate about this and is doing a fantastic job. On top of that, in order to gain a deeper understanding of how these issues are addressed elsewhere, a departmental officer recently accompanied officers from the Department of Health and Human Services on a study tour of youth detention centres throughout New South Wales, ACT and Victoria. We are committed to addressing those issues raised within the select committee inquiry.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - I notice that only \$200 000 has been provided for musical instruments - that will not go very far in this country -

**Mr BARTLETT** - I can give you a bit of detail about that. That \$200 000 is in addition to the money - and there is a lot of it - spent on musical instruments around the State. This is a one-off \$200 000 hit that we particularly wanted to provide and I hope that it will lead to further funding as well. I know members will be very keen to hear this because we have decided to target this money around the three regional leading bands - in the south, the combined primary schools concert band; in the north, the schools involved in the Esk Band program; in the north-west it is the Emusicians. The money will go to the schools that are partners in those programs to buy new instruments. Musical instruments are very expensive - one alto saxophone is \$1 111; nine clarinets, \$6 831 et cetera. Those three bands are iconic in their local areas, and this is a way of supporting not just the bands but also the schools that constitute them.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - While I am on a musical theme, does the Government generally agree that many education authorities say that music is beneficial, particularly in enhancing memory retention, and numeracy and literacy skills. So if we get in really early - kindergarten or earlier - there could be good outcomes. What are we doing about promoting it?

**Mr BARTLETT** - I think your question in the Legislative Council some time ago about this matter -

**Mrs JAMIESON** - It hasn't been answered yet!

**Mr BARTLETT** - Well, I have got the answer.

*Laughter.*

**Mrs JAMIESON** - That is why I asked it.

**Mr BARTLETT** - I can tell you that it was just awaiting my signature, so I can read it to you now, if you like. Your question in the Legislative Council sparked a conversation between myself and the Treasurer, which led to the \$200 000 being provided for these three bands.

[5.30 p.m.]

**Mrs JAMIESON** - Well, thank you! We have it on *Hansard*.

**Mr WING** - Well done, member for Mersey.

**Mr BARTLETT** - So you can tick the box in having an impact in your questioning. It led to a conversation that the Treasurer and I had around exactly what you asked - and I agree with you - about music's role within schools and how can enhance it. I see this is a start of doing that.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - Well, it's a lifelong thing too, isn't it?

**Mr BARTLETT** - That's right, although not for those of us who are tone deaf.

*Laughter.*

**CHAIR** - Premier, before I go back down to the other end of the table I would be interested to know what the policy is for transferring teachers mid-school year.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Who is best to answer this one?

**CHAIR** - There will be people listening in another place for the answer to this.

**Mr BARTLETT** - I can tell you about our transfer policy in some detail. I am not sure I can answer your specific question about the middle of the year.

**CHAIR** - That is specifically my question.

**Mr GLASS** - There is a whole range of reasons why transfers are required during the school year. People are scheduled to take long-service leave, people get sick unexpectedly, and we normally look to fill teacher vacancies, particularly unscheduled ones, with relief teachers or whatever. Sometimes with the skills mix that is not always possible, so occasionally we do transfers to accommodate that. Wherever possible, we do look to do formal transfers between the end of one school year and the start of the next but there are odd occasions when it is unavoidable to make sure that we have the right skilled teacher in the right school to cover a vacancy.

**Mr DEAN** - I just wanted to go to the new structure that we are going into - the academies, the polytechnics and the training organisation side of things.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Well, there is one academy, one polytechnic and training organisation and they come under output group 2.

**Mr DEAN** - Well, I will leave that then. Just on suspensions, that has always been an issue of mine and I notice in the Auditor-General's report he indicated that suspensions should not be

reported and I take it that the department will take that on board. There are a number of other recommendations by the A-G in his investigation of a number of areas across a number of public organisations including the Education department.

**Mr BARTLETT** - I will go to the first part of your question. The recommendation from the Auditor-General was not that he does not think we should report suspensions but that we should not report them as a key performance indicator. They are not necessarily a target, as it were, to be met.

**Mr DEAN** - My question is about suspensions and this is a perennial question of mine too, I might add. Are we continually on in relation to suspensions from schools, because I believe it is an archaic method that has been there forever and a day and I do not believe it is serving any real purpose insofar as getting the student back into school or retained within the education system. Is there any strategy in place to get rid of that system and do something else as a form of punishment when it is necessary - and I accept that?

**Mr BARTLETT** - Again, I am on the record as saying that I agree that suspension should be the last resort in a school system, because the data shows that once a kid is disengaged for six weeks they are not coming back. I agree with you about that and that is why we are investing in alternative education settings through the audit I talked about earlier. I would like to see our suspensions going down but I also have to empower principals to be able to make the decisions that are right for their school communities and which cause minimal disruption to the other 599 kids on the school or whatever the case may be. While our strategy in terms of reducing suspensions over time is related to the audit and the work we are doing with principals on filling the gaps in alternative education settings, that is the approach we need to take. Ultimately suspension is still there under the Education Act and it gives the school an opportunity to have a breather so that the parents, the student and the school can together to overcome the issues of concern. I know principals these days certainly do not use suspension lightly.

**Mr DEAN** - This is where the flexible programs unit has been of assistance.

**Mr BARTLETT** - But I repeat again that there has been no cut in flexible programs; they are going to continue to be delivered and in fact enhanced. They will just not be delivered by that one particular body.

**Mr DEAN** - Regarding the 'super teacher' structure you have referred to, I guess you are serious in pursuing that and I suppose there are reasons for that, to keep teachers in the profession because they do leave; there are better options outside for some of these go-getting teachers, and good on them. How do you propose to do that fairly when you look at other professions similar to teaching?

**Mr BARTLETT** - The idea of the 'super teacher' caught the headline and was reported on but actually it is just one small part of an overall look at and review of career structures for teachers in Tasmania. As part of the negotiations that led up to the re-signing of the nexus agreement with Tasmanian teachers last year I agreed to a memorandum of understanding with the AEU that had a range of elements to it. One of them was about needs-based funding for literacy - and we have done that in this Budget - and the second was about increased special-needs funding with \$16.8 million and the raising of IQ levels and a range of other things around special needs, and we have done that. The first totally positive, welcoming media statement from the

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AEU arrived on Budget day and I think I will have it framed because we ticked off those things in the MOU that we had negotiated through the wages agreement.

Another element in the MOU that we are going to work on over this year is improving career structures for teachers. At the moment Tasmanian teachers essentially arrive on level 1 as a graduate teacher and in 12 years' time they are on level 12. If they do nothing and perform badly they are still on level 12 at the end of that time. If they are a fantastic teacher and do all the right things they are still on level 12 at the end of 12 years and I do not think that structure provides enough incentive for teachers to invest in their own professional development, undertake extra duties and learn more and do more around the school and so on, so I want to create a structure that does that. This is not about performance-based pay, as Julie Bishop would describe it, but merit-based selection for promotion. I imagine a career structure that would be broad-banded, maybe at five levels or something - I am just putting this up. We have a year's worth of work to do with the AEU through this, but it will be related back to the standards that the Teachers' Registration Board set for beginning teachers, experienced teachers, accomplished teachers, and I cannot remember the fourth one -

**CHAIR** - 'Super teachers'.

**Mr BARTLETT** - 'Super teachers' - that's right - magnificent teachers.

**Mr DEAN** - 'Superduper teachers'.

**Mr BARTLETT** - That's the next one.

*Laughter.*

**Mr BARTLETT** - Under a set of criteria teachers would apply for promotion and be promoted. They would still move in increments within those bands but they would be able to move bands more rapidly if they were more skilled. I also want to see built into that career structure an incentive like they have in Scotland, where a teacher who goes and gets a Masters degree related to education would get a \$5 000 - or £5 000 in Scotland's case - bonus every year, and a teacher who gets a PhD would get a £15 000 bonus every year. I want to see as the pinnacle of this the concept of the 'super teacher'. I am sure I have met some; I could name a few I have met who I think would meet these criteria but of course the criteria would be set independently, administered on a statewide basis and educationally and performance-informed. I would see a number of teachers who really are the very best, excelling in their own profession, investing in their own professional development over time, continuing to innovate in the classroom and put students at the centre of everything they do, who would be eligible to be paid at a higher rate.

The rate I talked about was \$120 000 a year and I was asked why I picked that number. The reason is that that was roughly about the level that some of our general managers are paid at, and they are people who furthered their career outside the classroom - and in fact there are two of them sitting in the room so I know this for a fact - who were great educators in their own right but who chose a route out of the classroom, which has been great for us because they are doing a great job in their roles. But I know of other teachers who should also benefit from doing a great job in their roles in the classroom and be remunerated at that level.

**CHAIR** - Premier, do you see that sort of structure perhaps causing some disharmony amongst the teaching profession? You say you would get an outside independent person to assess that but do you see that it could some issues within the environment of teaching?

**Mr BARTLETT** - No, I don't think so, because broadbanding of career structures is pretty common in pretty much every single profession. We have talked about it here with Frank Ogle. It is common across most other States in the teaching profession although they do not have this concept of a 'super teacher' as such, but that is how modern career structures work in most organisations, but not in education in Tasmania at this point in time.

**CHAIR** - I hope I am around long enough to see that.

**Mr BARTLETT** - In terms of the 'super teacher' thing, I think people in schools know who the very best teachers are.

**Mr FINCH** - And they know where they have gone to - international schools.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Yes, they have left.

**Mr DEAN** - There is probably an opportunity there for contracts to come back into the organisation. Tasmania Police looked at bringing contracts back to inspectors and even to sergeants so they were able to do exactly that and whilst they have a band there they could recognise the commitment of a certain person by putting them on the right contract within that band.

**Mr FINCH** - Premier, we had that with the ABC and were in fact assessed every year. The point was that you could increase in increments but you could also lose increments if you were not performing, and we felt that pressure but it was a good pressure because it drove us to work better, and of course with the increments came the increased salary.

**CHAIR** - And then you came to Parliament.

*Laughter.*

**Mr FINCH** - Yes - I started to go back down.

*Laughter.*

**Mrs JAMIESON** - I was going to refer to page 3.12 where we have reading and numeracy rates against national benchmarks. Why do we have the actuals only for 2005-07 and 2006-07 and the targets only for 2007-08 and 2008-09? Are they not applicable or not available? As we had the figures for grades 3 and 5 I would have thought we would have had grade 7.

[5.45 p.m.]

**Mr BARTLETT** - No, what this relates to is the national testing regime. In May of this year it was the first time that a nationally consistent test - that is the same test - was sat by all the kids in Australia on the same day. I argued for this strongly over my time as minister, because what the problem has been is that the most available recent national data is from 2006. We have done a lot of stuff in literacy, but none of it has been measured yet - none of it at all in the last two years - because the last available dataset was 2006. And that dataset unfortunately is also, I think,

statistically invalid given that it does not come from a consistent test. In fact, different kids on different days sat different tests all across Australia, and then somehow people sit in a room and try to cobble them together and normalise the outcomes. So I have always argued that the datasets leading up to 2006 are deeply flawed.

The other aspect of this new national testing regime is that it will be reported on within six months, so by August/September we will have the results of the May test. The 2006 results only came out at the end of 2007. They did the test in 2006 and we finally got the data at the end of 2007. As a public policy operator you are pulling these levers and you have no clue whether they are having any impact at all. This is the first year that those tests will be genuinely national, genuinely consistent. They will give Tasmania for the first time a genuine view of where we sit in the pile.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - Thank you. Changing the subject altogether, would you care to comment at all on the shift from public to private schooling? Apparently the numbers are changing.

**Mr BARTLETT** - I understand the shift is in decline in Tasmania. I can confirm that over the last 10 years the shift from government to non-government - I always like to say from government schools to government subsidised schools - in Tasmania has been 2.8 per cent over the last 10 years and 3.9 per cent nationally. So 2.8 per cent of our school population has shifted in the last 10 years to government subsidised schools -

**Mrs JAMIESON** - Very subtle.

**Mr BARTLETT** - versus 3.9 per cent nationally shifting in that time. Our market share is that 72.3 per cent of children go to government schools; nationally it is 66.50 per cent. So we are ahead on both benchmarks.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - So in your opinion why is that shift occurring?

**Mr BARTLETT** - I would be very happy to give you my opinion on this. One of the trends is a status-led materialistic society that has economic growth and therefore more disposable income, and parents who are financially richer but time poorer. That is one aspect. But the other aspect that is absolutely clear is that under 11 years of the Howard Government, I believe massive incentives were provided to make that shift happen. I will give you an example. In Tasmania over the five years leading to 2006, the funding to non-government or government subsidised schools in Tasmania by the Federal Government increased by 116 per cent but to State schools only by 19 per cent. I repeat those numbers: 116 per cent to 19 per cent.

**CHAIR** - Will you be lobbying your Federal counterparts to reduce that funding?

**Mr BARTLETT** - No, but what I am very strong on is needs-based funding for schools. At the moment in Australia we have finally, and certainly we do in Tasmania, a coming together of the social lobby - the TasCOSSs, if you like - and the business lobby, the TCCI, with them both recognising that the only way out of poverty is through education, and the only way to increase productivity is through greater participation and greater skills from the business lobby. Therefore, they are both coming to the realisation finally that funding of lower socioeconomic schools on a needs basis is vitally important to Australia's future.



Unfortunately, the reverse has been true over the last 10 or 11 years in Australia. I am lobbying very hard at MCEETYA and talking on a regular basis with Julia Gillard about making sure that we get needs-based funding for Australian schools right. That will have an increased benefit in Tasmania, because we have a large proportion of our schools in lower socioeconomic areas compared with the rest of Australia.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - Going back to technology, which as was mentioned I am not very good at. We seem to have to introduce a code of conduct for the use of mobile phones or for the kids bringing mobile phones to the school. Do have any comment to make about that? Plus the fact that we have actually had cyber bullying, and what are we doing about that?

**Mr BARTLETT** - There are laws in Tasmania against cyber bullying. We introduced them in 2004.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - But how effective have they been?

**Mr BARTLETT** - I do not know whether anyone has been charged under them. You would have to ask the police minister that. Individual schools would have policies around the use or non-use or carrying of mobile phones, and again that is the sort of decision that I want school associations and school communities to be engaged in.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - And the use of computers in schools with the roll-out from the Federal Government, would you care to comment -

**Mr BARTLETT** - This is a really interesting one, because Tasmania is by far and away the lead State in Australia when it comes to the provision of computers and the useful bit of computers, which is the actual cable out the back, the connection to the Internet and the wiring up of schools. We are far ahead of all other States, I believe. We have a computer ratio of 3.3 students per computer. Other States could only dream of that sort of ratio.

The interesting bit of debate for us is that States like New South Wales are screaming about the Federal Government policy. It actually imposes an enormous cost on them because they have not done the investment previously in networks, cable connections and so on, whereas we have. My argument is: Why should we be less advantaged? Why shouldn't we get more of our share? In the first round we only got 634 computers spread over 13 schools, because on a needs basis, which I have been arguing for at Federal levels, Tasmanian schools are much better off in terms of information technology than most other States. Hence we did not get as many computers out of the first tranche rollout as we might have on population share, for example.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - My final question on this section: Has there been any more further thought given to the re-introduction of the school nurse. We have so many problem students in our schools.

**Mr BARTLETT** - The old concept of the school nurse - probably not. But certainly combining health and human services out of school properties and provision of services to children and their families out of school properties on the side as a holistic sort of service, absolutely. The Minister for Health and I have been working on approaches there, including on physical capital to make sure the places can happen. We have also appointed a senior position jointly between the two departments for the first time, and that is Leigh Taylor who now works for both the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services. I can

tell you a bit about what she has been doing, but her role is to facilitate exactly those sorts of approaches.

I can give you some examples. In Mayfield in the northern suburbs of Launceston, a focus of developing the school as a community hub for a range of services to meet the needs of young families and children is happening. I know it is snug. There is pre-planning going on at Bridgewater, and that is certainly going to be a key aspect in the Bridgewater redevelopment.

The senior position that is facilitating this inter-agency collaboration and making the two departments work better together is involved in planning for these things and the establishment of formal structures and informal networks across the departments to ensure those priority issues are met, which are priority issues for both me and the Minister for Health. She is also establishing links in the regions between the Child Health and Parenting Service and the Launching into Learning schools as well as collaboration with the two agencies in establishing links between the positive behaviour support program for staff that we use in schools and providing it for staff in Children and Family Services, Youth Justice and Disability Services.

We now have much better data-sharing going on between the two departments; we have shared professional development between the two departments now. So the people in each department who are working with the same kids are working on the same professional development programs, and so on. There is a lot happening in this area that essentially is about bringing back the school nurse.

**Mrs JAMIESON** - Thank you, Madam Chair.

**Mr DEAN** - I want to raise this report that was in the headlines of yesterday's paper -it was yesterday morning, I think?

**Mr BARTLETT** - Released on Sunday, yes.

**CHAIR** - I think it was called the 'warts and all' report.

**Mr DEAN** - The 'warts and all' report and there were quite a few warts in it, unfortunately. We have been looking at retention rates now for several years. It would seem that you have been unsuccessful in that area. I knew it was steady but obviously it has been happening over a period of time. It would seem that the strategies t currently being used are not working.

**Mr BARTLETT** - I do not accept that - I do accept that we have a significant problem in post-year 10 retention, absolutely. I have said it from day one.

**Mr DEAN** - It is just a bit over half. What is going on?

**Mr BARTLETT** - It is the worst in Australia; it is appalling. I am not happy to say it but I have said it and I will say it vigorously across the Tasmanian community: That is why I am putting into place a whole range of strategies. Over the next decade I want to see us go from the bottom of the barrel in Australia to the top when it comes to post-year 10 qualifications. But it will take a decade of consistent policy approach to achieve that. I can tell you what the policy approaches are largely. They are contained in *Guaranteeing Futures*.

For the first year this year, every Tasmanian student is required to lodge a post-year 10 pathway plan with the Tasmanian Qualifications Authority. We have now also upped the age to 17. You have to be learning or earning up to age 17. And this year will be the first year that I have also mandated the extension of the grade 10 school year all the way through to 21 December, which means kids will use that extra three weeks to get teasers and tasters and work in the colleges, the polytechnic and the academy, and try out apprenticeships and so on. We will use that extra three weeks to push that pathway plan through.

The second element of it is the reconstitution through Tasmania Tomorrow of our post-compulsory offerings; that is, the establishment on 1 January 2009 of the Tasmanian Academy, the Tasmanian Polytechnic and Training Tasmania. So there are two big streams of policy approaches there, the first of which only came on line this year and the second of which will come on line next year.

Similar approaches that were implemented in New Zealand - at least in terms of the provision of Tasmania Tomorrow - resulted in New Zealand significantly lifting their OECD ranking for participation rates post-year 10, particularly in disadvantaged communities like the Maori community. There are those two things.

But underpinning all of this in my view is a century - or probably two centuries - of history and culture that in Tasmania dictates that we do not go past grade 10. I have talked about leavers' dinners long and loud. We are the only place in Australia that lets our kids in grade 10 knock off four weeks early before Christmas. We are the only place in Australia to have these ridiculous overwrought leavers' dinners at the end of grade 10. It is because we come from decades of an agricultural-based economy - Dad did not go past grade 9 and Dad's dad did not go past grade 9, therefore I am not going past grade 9.

**CHAIR** - My Dad didn't go past grade 7 - and he did okay.

**Mr BARTLETT** - I am always a bit nervous about saying those things - and I know your Dad did okay - but the point here is that the world has changed. We are not an agricultural-based society any more; we are a knowledge-based society. In Australia 87 per cent of the jobs available right now require a post-year 10 qualification and only 45 per cent of our kids are getting a post-year 10 qualification. So we have a massive discrepancy here.

That is why I am really disappointed that some of my political opponents are baulking at the reconstitution of our post-year 10 offerings, because all I can see is that that is burying our head in the sand and saying, 'Doing more of the same is going to somehow change decades of history in Tasmania.' It is clearly not. We have to be absolutely resolute in changing culture and history as much as we have to change our public policy approach.

**Mr WING** - The extra funding and emphasis on education have worked wonders in Ireland too.

**Mr BARTLETT** - Absolutely.

**Mr WING** - It was all doom and gloom in the early 1990s when I was there - with unemployment and people with kids going to England, and then suddenly cranes everywhere because the Government had injected a lot of money into education and placed greater emphasis on it. So good luck with it.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr BARTLETT** - This Budget is a down payment on that, but it is just the start.

**Mr DEAN** - Minister, you might be able to answer this quickly: Do your records show where those youth are going to - those who are not going on after year 12, where are they going to and what are they doing?

**Mr BARTLETT** - With the mandatory lodgment of the pathway plans this year we will also have much better data for this year about where they are going. In the past we have been able to track it at a macro level, but essentially they are dropping through the cracks and disappearing out of education. That is all right in a booming economy because they can pick up unskilled labour work. But what really brought this home for me was the woman who was interviewed on *Stateline* as she was walking out of the closing Blundstone's factory here in Hobart with tears streaming down her face. She said, 'I thought I had a job for life. That is why I left school at the end of grade 9.' She was going to work in the Blundstone's factory. Well, the Blundstone's factory does not exist any more. We need to be training kids to be working in modern economy jobs.

**CHAIR** - It does, but unfortunately not in Tasmania.

**Mr BARTLETT** - That is right.

**Mr DEAN** - So We will be looking at the records to determine where they are going, what they are doing and what cracks they are falling into.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Premier and committee members. We will take our dinner break and be back to resume for the last session at 7.15 p.m.

**The committee suspended from 6.02 p.m. to 7.15 p.m.**