

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Wednesday 10 June 2015 - Estimates Committee A (Hidding)

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A

Wednesday 10 June 2015

MEMBERS

Mr Armstrong
Mr Farrell
Ms Forrest
Mr Gaffney
Mr Hall (Chair)
Mrs Hiscutt
Mr Mulder

IN ATTENDANCE

Hon. Rene Hidding MP, Minister for Police and Emergency Management, Minister for Infrastructure

Department of Police and Emergency Management

Darren Hine, Secretary DPEM and Commissioner of Police

Scott Tilyard, Deputy Commissioner of Police

Mike Brown, Chief Officer, TFS

Gavin Freeman, Deputy Chief Officer, TFS

Donna Adams, Assistant Commissioner of Police

Richard Cowling, Assistant Commissioner of Police

Andrew Lea, Director, State Emergency Service

Todd Crawford, Director, Finance and Physical Resources

Scott Wilson-Haffenden, Director, Information Services and Communications Technology

Tasmania Fire Service

Mike Brown, Chief Officer

Gavin Freeman, Deputy Chief Officer

Department of State Growth

Kim Evans, Secretary

Gary Swain, Deputy Secretary Transport Services

Amanda Russell, General Manager Corporate Services
Alex Tay, Acting Deputy Secretary Policy and Strategy
Penny Nicholls, General Manager Road User Services
Shane Gregory, General Manager State Roads
Angela Conway, Director Infrastructure Strategy
Lia Morris, Chief Executive of Marine and Safety Tasmania
Allan Garcia, Chief Executive Officer of Infrastructure Tasmania

Ministerial Office

Vince Taskunas, Chief of Staff
Randolph Wierenga, Senior Adviser

The committee met at 9.00 a.m.

DIVISION 6

(Department of Police and Emergency Management)

CHAIR (Mr Hall) - Good morning, minister. Please introduce the people at the table.

Mr HIDDING - Thank you, Chair. From my right at the bottom end of the table, Assistant Commissioner Richard Cowling, Assistant Commissioner Donna Adams, Todd Crawford is the Director of Finance, Commissioner Darren Hine, Deputy Commissioner Scott Tilyard, and Scott Wilson-Haffenden who is the Director of Information Services and Communications Technology.

CHAIR - We are starting with Police and Emergency Management so I invite you to make an overview and introductory statement.

Mr HIDDING - The Department of Police and Emergency Management throughout the year has continued to provide effective policing and emergency management services to the community. In this year of 2014-15, the corporate services integration project has focused on reducing duplication and increasing efficiency in the provision of corporate services across the department. It is not just about our efficiency but brings the emergency services closer together.

Our Government's commitment to increasing Tasmanian Police numbers by an additional 108 officers to achieve a target of 1 228 within this term of Government, has resulted in an ongoing recruitment program which is not only boosting numbers but has seen a degree of workforce renewal that will continue to positively influence many areas of policing over the next few years. Recruitment has supported a continued emphasis on frontline policing services, with Tasmania Police ensuring that police officers right across the organisation are operationally ready. Tasmania Police has enhanced its capability to combat crime with the establishment of the serious organised crime unit which supports fraud and e-crime investigation services including cold case and a computer forensics unit.

In response to the recommendations of the 2013 Tasmanian bushfire inquiry, the department has focused on ensuring all emergency services, including Ambulance Tasmania, work together as effectively as possible. This will be greatly enabled by the Emergency Services Computer Aided Despatch project, ESCAD, which will over the next two years provide a common application across the emergency services for incident management. It will improve the business

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model. The commitment of \$15 million in 2015-16 will see this project realised. An additional \$700 000 for emergency alert will also support early warnings for emergency situations.

Maintaining the capability and functionality of emergency services will be essential. In 2014-15, TFS purchased 14 heavy duty tankers and in 2015-16 25 light tankers will be constructed for deployment to fire stations across the state.

Replacement of facilities has seen the funding of a fire station replacement program for TFS in 2015-16 and Tasmania Police houses will continue to be upgraded with an extra allocation of \$2 million, primarily for west coast residences.

The acquisition of a large police vessel to enhance the marine enforcement and emergency management resources of Tasmania Police - \$5 million is committed over two years for this purpose.

The department, and in particular Tasmania Police, is facing challenges posed by family violence and ice, as two issues that impact significantly on individuals, families and therefore the whole community. Tasmania Police is taking a strong lead in addressing family violence, championed by the Commission of Police, and will work at an intergovernmental level to enhance the Safe at Home program and to determine complementary strategies to prevent family violence, to better protect victims, and to deal effectively with offenders.

Only in April, two seizures of crystal methamphetamine, ice, demonstrates a clear commitment by Tasmania Police to intercepting this drug and to interrupt organised crime.

The department has continued to operate in an efficient and effective way under the leadership of the Secretary, Darren Hine, and performing well in each of the Tasmania Police output groups - police safety, crime, traffic policing and emergency management, and the operations of TFS including SES. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of this department's police officers, fire fighters and State Service employees and particularly the many TFS and SES volunteers who give freely of their time to support communities across Tasmania.

I would like to place on the record the Government's appreciation to the Chief Fire Officer, Mike Brown, for an exceptional career and I am sure the committee is aware that he has announced his retirement and I am sure we all wish him well.

The Department of Police and Emergency Management continues to conduct business appropriately with the highest level of propriety and I am pleased to be provided with an opportunity to demonstrate how the department has continued to meet its appropriations in a transparent and accountable manner.

CHAIR - We will move straight into policing and ask members of the committee if there are any overview questions they would like to ask.

Mrs HISCUTT - Minister, your opening statement talked about the corporate services. Have you a review going across the police department and the TFS? Have you an update available on what is happening there?

Mr HIDDING - This is an overview issue because it cuts right across DPM and the Tasmanian Fire Service. As operational systems and processes become more aligned, it makes

sense to better integrate support functions in order to reduce duplication, to standardise business processes, to increase collaboration and improved resource deployment and utilisation. This action will restrict the growth in cost, which these days in corporate services and administration is ever spiralling. We want to restrict that growth in cost. That will enable a greater percentage of funding to be dedicated to frontline services where the greatest community benefits exists.

To support the integration in each of the business units within the department, corporate services have collected baseline data which will assist with measuring the efficiencies; consider the role of the corporate services for the agency and how this role will be delivered; consider the roles of business units within corporate services and the services each unit will deliver to the agency; consider the organisational structure and accommodation requirements. This information is assisting with the preparation of a business plan for each unit which will provide a road map for the integration. Some of the efficiencies will be immediate while others may take a longer time to ensue. I want to thank everybody in the department involved in this. There has been a very positive attitude to something that is sensible and timely.

Mrs HISCUTT - Minister, is this to enable your left hand to talk to the right hand sort of thing?

Mr HIDDING - It is not just efficiencies, it brings the department closer together and will enable better communications, better understanding of each others' issues in each of the sectors. It will be a more efficient, better operating department as a result of this corporate services review. We have not finished it yet. There is a strong project underway, and I appreciate the way everybody has gone about it.

Mrs HISCUTT - How long do you think, before you have a result?

Mr HINE - We have formed a project team that have been in operation for a number of months. We are in the planning stage to ascertain when we can start amalgamating people. There is a long and involved process to make sure we talk to people, to the unions, so they know what is going on. There are a few industrial issues we need to work through with the unions.

Mrs HISCUTT - Nothing insurmountable?

Mr HINE - No, nothing is insurmountable. There are a lot of issues we need to work through. Once you amalgamate some people and they begin working together we have some issues to work through there. I would say there will be some lumps and bumps in relation to these things. We hope to get our consultation, as part of a planning process, in the next few months. Then we can start integrating some people in work areas. There is a will, as the minister said, for people to work together. There have already been some really good examples where some of our IT functions and areas, from a TFS and a police point of view, have come together to come up with some really good solutions in relation to a couple of issues. Their communication services are working well together. Everyone understands what we are trying to do. There are always going to be some issues we need to work through with unions and the people.

Mrs HISCUTT - Good.

Mr MULDER - On this issue, you mentioned there was some restraint. The idea was to restrain the growth in costs. I am wondering whether you have done any trajectory about what

those costs might have been had you not done this project and some targets to see whether it realises such a benefit?

Mr HINE - It is not about saving money per se, but there are some economies of scale. I will hand over to Todd in relation to the money side of things. We have some projections of what we believe we will save. Economies of scale, for example, different licences and different IT areas. When communication services go away to service a radio tower when there is a police and fire radio tower, instead of two different people going, one can do the same. It is also about interoperability. From another point of view it provides people with a greater opportunity to work in a larger area as well, so they have greater development opportunities as well. I will hand over to Todd in relation to some of the facts and figures we are projecting. Again, first of all, it is about getting some effective standards and common operating platforms across the organisation, and then we believe some savings will flow from that.

Mr HIDDING - But more natural efficiencies.

Mr CRAWFORD - When the report was commissioned - the Wise, Lord and Ferguson review - we had basically costed out the salaries associated with the running of corporate services in both of the organisations to be possibly \$12 million per annum. We had not, in answer to your question, projected what those costs might grow to, but used it as a baseline to work forward from in terms of where we could see potential reductions. We have realised savings from a number of positions at the moment through the amalgamation process, where those positions have not been filled because there was not a need to fill those moving forward. They are in the vicinity of probably \$500 000 at the moment early on into the project.

Mr MULDER - So you would be using the net present value baseline?

Mr CRAWFORD - Using effectively the baseline of those costs as of the report being reviewed. The corporate services environment within the Department of Police and Emergency Management prior to that had been subject to some reductions, with limited budgets in the past. We had had a number of staffing reductions. We took the baseline point of basically to cap the costs of providing those services -

Mr MULDER - The cost of providing those services today, or the date that the report was done all the cost of buying the services before the reduction?

Mr CRAWFORD - The day the report was done.

Mr MULDER - The day the report was done. So you are looking at further efficiencies?

Mr CRAWFORD - Based from that date, yes.

Mr MULDER - That is the point I am making about the net present value. Are you using a particular day's dollar to compare it? If the wages went up 10 per cent, we would have swallowed our benefit, which would have been a natural cost.

Mrs HISCUTT - On the way here I noticed an unmarked police car had pulled someone up on the side of the road - it was not me - how many of those unmarked police cars are out there, as compared to marked cars?

Mr MULDER - Unless it was you being pulled up, this is not an overview question.

Mrs HISCUTT - I have a question that does not slot in anywhere, but I was hoping to ask that too.

Mr HIDDING - Under traffic management, I think might be better.

Mrs HISCUTT - I am happy to wait if you think so.

Mr MULDER - Minister, it is no surprise we are back onto this independent police commissioner one again. I was doing a bit of research on this issue after I had an answer from you relating to the independence of the Police Commissioner. I do know the views of the former police commissioner, the current Police Commissioner, the former minister and also your view. What my question is -

Mr HIDDING - And the former DPP.

Mr MULDER - And the former DPP. What has changed since, on 3 March 2009 in the House, you said, 'From the appointment commissioner on' - that was that commissioner of course -

... there has been an ongoing litany of disaster about this Police portfolio. The community has lost trust. It suspects that the Minister for Police can in fact instruct the Commissioner of Police to do something because when that was raised by the Director of Public Prosecutions as a structural problem within the legislation there was an immediate boo-hooing from the commissioner at the time. When I pursued this with the minister in Estimates, the minister said, 'It could not happen because I have too much integrity.' The Police Commissioner said, 'I have too much integrity to take the instruction.'

As I pointed out at the time this was Tim Ellis' point exactly. It came down to relying on the integrity of two individuals when it could easily have been within the body of Tasmanian legislation to ensure such a direction could not take place, nor should it, but is not possible, but could not take place. The discussion proved immediately that the Director of Public Prosecution was dead right when he said that the law as it currently stands is that a minister can in fact direct a police commissioner to do things.

Minister, what has changed since that statement to the House of Assembly in March 2009 and the answers to the questions you provided through the Leader of the Government of the Legislative Council earlier this year?

Mr HIDDING - That was the environment back then. I took certain views and still, in fact, hold most of those views. The concerns expressed by the DPP at the time - there were certain historic matters that had occurred that actually gave some wings to the view of the DPP at the time.

There were certain historic matters that occurred which actually gave some wings to the view of the DPP at the time, to say, 'See what happens when.'

I generally took the view that the DPP may well have been right. I am now a minister and have inherited the situation where the current commissioner - was not the commissioner then - in discussion with him about this matter and some further consideration of where we are at this day and age. We have a new solicitor-general, a new DPP. The caravan has moved on a bit, but I still hold the general view that the DPP at the time raised a genuine matter that could create concern for a minister or a commissioner of police. I as minister now with this commissioner hold no such concerns, but that is not to say that in the future, were there to be a change of personnel or a revamp of matters, that you would not reconsider.

Mr MULDER - The point is that should those changes occur, you will not be in a position to reconsider. The point is that you had an opportunity, as you quite rightly pointed out, to bring some legislation before the House to clarify this point absolutely, because, as you said at the time, it came down to rely on the integrity of two individuals when it could have easily have been in the body of the Tasmanian legislation to ensure that such a direction was not given.

To pre-empt a possible future situation, where we go back to the old days and the view - and although, minister, you might say that times have moved on, I can certainly assure you that some of your parliamentary colleagues in the other place still firmly hold to this view - that the commissioner is entitled to give direction. It might be very good of you not to rely on the good graces of people in the future, because you might be in a position now to lock this down properly. My question is: why would you not consider the fact that the stars could realign, and we have an opportunity to get in front of the game and put in the legislation you thought was such a good idea in 2009?

I will say this is not a reflection on the present incumbents because, as you well know, I have the utmost trust in and respect for them.

Mr HIDDING - I know, and we do share that.

I still hold the general view that the point the previous DPP made was an issue. Yes, it could be corrected in terms of priorities and where I am right now, of things we have to do in this portfolio. It has not raised its head yet, but, if you are concerned about it, you might want to consider some legislation yourself.

Mr MULDER - I would certainly go down that path.

A lot of the legislation talks about the direction of information. The previous cases were really about information flowing from the commissioner's office to the Parliament because a question had been asked in the House. That is the real nub - we can always rely on good graces - but I think, as it was accurately put, if at some stage that situation arose that could amount to the Police Commissioner briefing the chief suspect of an investigation under foot. Have you given some thought about how to deal with that? The view being given at the time, although that point was never tested in the Supreme Court, was that the commissioner had a duty to disclose that information because of the supremacy of parliament due to some ancient English laws. I think it was the Act of Separation. Some guidance needs to be given on what operational information is available, particularly in the areas of investigations. I am wonder whether you would like to turn your mind to that, which I think is the real nub of the issue. As you rightly have said, the commissioner could go and say to the minister, 'No, don't investigate my minister. See what dirt you can dig up on the leader of the opposition.'

That is the sort of direction you are aiming at. The nub is that he should not even know about the investigation.

I am wondering whether there is some way in which we can restrain Parliament from the minister standing up and being able to say, as you do with a matter in court, 'Sorry, this is a matter under investigation', and the Government is not privy, nor should it describe that information to the public, that the principal investigator does not choose to disclose to the public at large.

Mr HIDDING - My memory of the events slightly vary from what you say and we will have that discussion some other time. It might have been that you were on the inside in that situation and I was where I was, so we will compare notes on that sometime. If that is the matter as you raise, about simple disclosure information by the Commissioner of Police to a minister, I would have thought that standard practice would have been resolved in the Westminster system around the world somewhere before.

We have a situation where the Commissioner of Police happens to be the agency head as well. The agency head requirement could require him to say certain things. I agree with what you are saying and in terms of where it is on my radar, it is quite distant, but I am happy to keep the conversation going with you to see where we might resolve things in the future.

Mr MULDER - Minister, I will take the opportunity of discussing this with the commissioner or others if you are happy with that. It is about safeguarding the reputation of the commissioner's office; it is about making sure there is appropriate separation between policy and operations.

Ms FORREST - To get back to the budget papers, I am curious as to what gets included in, not only Police, but other areas and departments in consumables. I take you to the cash flow statement on page 159 in paper (2). Police is a tidy department, unlike State Growth which has a lot of different ins and outs, but can you inform the committee as to what is included in supplies and consumables. In 2015-16, it is \$40.291 million and this is what is included in that.

Mr HIDDING - The Director of Finance, is that where we will start?

Mr CRAWFORD - That covers a large amount of our non-salary expenditure which includes IT expenses, costs, supplies and consumables as you would understand it to be - things that are used in the operation of the department. Effectively, it is all of our non-salaries budgets by margin, included in there.

Ms FORREST - So everything not related to salary included in that. We move to salaries then, and move to employees' wages on the same page, the only investing is the funds for housing and the new computer system. The statement of financial position on page 157 shows movement in infrastructure, investing outlays, yet the moving of plant and equipment, which is increasing each year due to revaluation according to the footnote related to that. In the last three years, the value of PP and E goes up by \$22 million each year. I am interested in why PPE goes up in value by \$22 million a year when the depreciation is running at about \$8 million year, which is in your profit and loss on page 153. Might have to invest in some area. It has a good rate of return.

Mr CRAWFORD - There have been significant revaluations against that property portfolio but we would have to take the details of that question on notice to work through.

Ms FORREST - All right. With regard to that, and also your IT person, because it is the next question that relates to that area. I am sure you are well aware of the recent Auditor-General report into security of ICT infrastructure and information. It is a really important aspect for the Department of Police and Emergency Management. I also acknowledge in the Auditor-General's report that Police and Emergency Management made a lot of significant changes prior to the release of that report. It was delayed somewhat to enable some of that to happen.

I am interested in how the ICT infrastructure and information security, the whole ICT area, is funded within DPEM. Is there a line item that picks up these costs or is it from within the whole budget allocation? In your view, is the Budget adequate to address all the recommendations made by the Auditor-General and particularly to address future needs and challenges? The crooks are often only one step behind, if not, getting ahead.

Mr HIDDING - The nature of the whole law enforcement area is becoming very high end in regard to their own operations and ours would need to be first-class and they need to be secure. As members of Parliament, we are all aware of concerns in the community from time to time, particularly around the firearms, 'somebody knew I had these firearms'. While there might have been some validity about some concerns in the past that is no longer a concern because of what you were referring to, the upgrades in that. I have put on the record that there needs to be strong community confidence in the security of our ICT. I am relaxed that there is.

When I first became minister, I spent a lot of time with this commissioner understanding the security of these matters. It is the highest possible level of somebody from outside being able to get into that database. Therefore, if people get hold of anything, it is through other methods, not through their ICT. Generally, in the community, there is material out there that people can join the dots with.

I have placed on the record during the debate on the firearms bill that it is something I will keep a lively eye on and particularly the competition shooters and others who keep putting scores and names and things on the web for people to read of which you can soon work out who has what and where and look their number up on white pages.

Ms FORREST - I am not suggesting you need to control what is happening outside the Police department.

Mr HIDDING - No, but that is where breaches occur and then they blame the police which I am able to say now is not possible and that is not what is taking place.

On the broader matter of ICT and security, I will give it to the Commissioner.

Mr HINE - It is a really important question in today's environment with computers. We understand that information technology is used to commit crimes but it is used to enhance the security of the community as well. One of the corporate service's integration project is acting as one department to make sure IT security is across the entire department.

In relation to the Audit Office report, we have formed a whole-of-department information security committee to address those issues. We have also implemented information security manuals and a vulnerability assessment team to manage ongoing security issues.

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There are two aspects to it. It is the IT security but the people who operate in the environment. Some of the highest security threats is not how robust your systems are, it is who is accessing that information. We have to look at it from two issues. Often it is about the vulnerability of our firearms database. We have no evidence to suggest that has infiltrated at all. You would think it would be something that comes up. It is normally about information gain through other sources external to the department.

Ms FORREST - Do you know who is accessing that information? You track all of that obviously.

Mr HINE - Yes. Especially with the new system we have implemented there is a very strict audit trail as well but we are not finding anyone who is giving us that information or any evidence to say that there are external people accessing it. Scott Wilson-Haffenden is in charge of that area so I will hand over to Scott and get a more detailed response.

Mr WILSON-HAFFENDEN - As the commissioner mentioned, we have done some pre-emptive work in this probably 18 months to two years ago in having our own assessment through the Defence Signals Directorate at the time. We had identified some of those issues which subsequently came up in the Tasmanian Audit Office. The integration with the fire and police IT teams worked really well in terms of being able to throw a body of resources at it to identify where the improvements could be made. There were seven key outcomes which came out of that report from the Tasmanian Audit Office. We have implemented the top four DSD requirements. I think the statistics are that if you implement those, they will take care of 85 per cent of your issues. We have gone beyond that and implemented the top 10.

In terms of specific funding, we have a particular information security unit, something we only implemented about two years ago but that has been helpful in addressing those policies. As the commissioner mentioned, it is quite often not simply the system but the people and the training associated with it and that is probably one of the challenges for the future - people taking greater care with systems.

Ms FORREST - Where was that funded through? Is it in a line item or is it across the agency?

Mr WILSON-HAFFENDEN - I guess in the Treasury budget papers, what you get is a very high level view of the agency breakdown. If you have a look in our annual report, we break those down further. We do have separate line item funding for IT and of course some of that will come across in the salaries as well. The other side to mention is that the actual network infrastructure is managed through the Telecommunications Management Division of the Department of Premier and Cabinet. They actually invest in the infrastructure on behalf of the agencies, and that is where a lot of the detection is of people trying to intrude into our systems from the outside. There is a multifaceted approach to the IT security.

Ms FORREST - Minister, are you confident then that the budget allocation in this area is adequate to do all this? I appreciate it is a whole-of-government approach in many areas too, it is not just your department.

Mr HIDDING - No. The Auditor General's report was of interest, as you say it reflected recent upgrades. It is something I continue to talk to the police commissioner about and he certainly has not raised any concerns with me as to funding. He is also cognisant that with the

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\$15 million for ESCAD and the development of a whole-of-government radio network, the taxpayer will be up for a lot of money to get these things right but they are worth getting right, we have to get them right. ICT security is front of mind.

Ms FORREST - Minister, going back to the cash flow statements, I skipped over this one; I meant to go before we went on to ICT. In the movement in benefits, there is a big jump in 2014-15 to 2015-16 and the footnote states this is part of the rebuilding of the police force and the impact of the 27th pay to 2015-16. There is a medium-sized jump from 2016-17 to 2017-18 and two other, less significant jumps. Why is there that variation? The 27th pay only relates to this coming year, as I understand it. I am interested in why there are the other movements to that degree and how the estimated outcome for employee wages work out in terms of the previous budget estimates. I understand there would be a bit of a change with your additional police numbers, but I am curious why there are ups and downs, if I could have an explanation.

Mr HIDDING - There will be 108 new police officers by the time we get there, that is a very substantial budget change. The establishment going up by 108 to 1 228 is a very substantial change. Also, this agency is the only one that has the pay freeze in it, which then kicks back in at the end of the pay freeze.

Ms FORREST - The footnote did not identify that.

Mr HIDDING - Well, there you go. I will ask Todd to explain that better.

Ms FORREST - In 2017-18 that would account for that jump then.

Mr HIDDING - That is correct, yes.

Ms FORREST - Right.

Mr HINE - The pay freeze finishes in June 2016 and the 2 per cent fits in there and, as you said, the 27th pay accounts for the next financial year as well and then the 108 is the extra, building up to that.

Ms FORREST - The 27th pay is this financial year, isn't it?

Mr HINE - That is in 2015-16, this one is 1 July.

Ms FORREST - That is this one in arrears? Going into, this is the one we are looking at.

Mr HINE - Yes.

Ms FORREST - I hope we don't hear any more but you have managed it pretty well.

Mr MULDER - How do we rate now on population-to-police ratios compared to some other jurisdictions?

Mr HINE - We were towards the bottom but we are about number three at the moment. I think it is in the report on government services. I do not have the numbers here but the expenditure on police services per head of population were about middle of the road; in 2013-14 it was \$399 per person, the national average - Victoria is the lowest at \$394.

Mr MULDER - Expenditure was one part but the other part was the police-to-population ratio.

Mr HINE - Yes, I do not have that table just here but we can probably we get that for you.

Mr MULDER - Could you take that one on notice, and next week would be fine, it is not essential.

CHAIR - Following on from Mr Mulder's question, and you may have already answered it, what extent of the new recruits are you going to have on the increase in numbers compared to replacing the departures from the force? Do you have a handle on what that might mean?

Mr HINE - We have actually forecast out to 2018 about increasing to 1 228. We are running at 1 147 at the moment, our establishment fee - sorry, number.

Mr MULDER - This is not even the Treasury's portfolio.

Mr HINE - No, we spend too much time on numbers. That is how we have rebased our establishment and then, there are about 27 recruits per year. We need to continue to recruit against that number to get to 1 228 by 2018, at the end of the term of the Government, and our attrition rate has dropped quite dramatically to about two a month, at the moment.

Mr MULDER - You got rid of all the bad eggs then.

Mr HINE - We are going through the baby boomer situation with people retiring. We are not seeing the attrition that we did. We were averaging a little over four per month, now it is down to about two per month.

CHAIR - Is that attrition rate spread pretty evenly across rank and structure that you have had in the past, or have you been losing younger police persons?

Mr HINE - Statistically it has come to a cross because the greater number is in the constable level for a start, rather than as you go up in the senior ranks. I can tell you -

Mr HIDDING - Just while the commissioner looks for that, it is a question that I ask regularly because we have an absolute commitment to particularly the Police Association as they agreed to a pay freeze, which meant we could maintain our commitment to 1 228 police, and we will get there. I have to watch fairly closely the recruitment and how many are going, but I have been fascinated to see that the actual number of retirements or people departing the service has come back considerably. Therefore, recruitment is going to get there, but it is something we need to watch on an annual basis.

Mr MULDER - I think the Chair is asking though, is there an age profile of the separations?

Mr HIDDING - The answer is we are not losing many of any. That is two a month, but they would most likely be in the constable level.

Mr HINE - I can tell you the age and profiles. Just bear with me, Chair.

Mr HIDDING - It does suggest that -

Mr TILYARD - The age profile broken down into actual numbers is as follows. We have 58 people aged between 20 and 24 years, with the greatest number of people in the 40 to 49 years age profile. In relation to rank, the average age of constables is 38.73; sergeants, is 45.87; and inspectors, 48.79 for the police side of things.

If you look at the State Service, it is obviously different. Years of service: for 0 to 4 years of service, we have 206 people in that category; for 5 to 9 years, it is 384; and for 10 to 14 years, it is 327.

In relation to separations, Richard might have that.

CHAIR - I am happy with that, yes. Take the separations.

Mr HIDDING - The age profile of separations over the last 12 months or so?

CHAIR - Yes, that would be fine. One other question occurred to me just in terms of recruitment. I presume you advertise all your positions externally. If there is a superintendent position coming up, for example, is that what happens? There is not an in-house. How does that work? Through you, minister.

Mr HINE - In relation to the police positions for recruits, we normally advertise via the internet and Facebook. We have found that quite successful at the moment. We have not had to spend money to put advertising in relation to that. As you go up the ranks, it is an internal process in the Police Gazette where if for a sergeant's position, someone who is qualified, a constable who has the various qualifications, can apply for that. That is not open externally. Normally the only ones we nationally advertise for are the deputy and the commissioner positions. We get some people - there were two people in the current recruit course who were from other police services, but they come in at the rank of constable. If they have any other qualifications, we recognise those qualifications in making them advance quicker through the ranks than other people. It is recognition of their -

CHAIR - You have a pretty transparent process right through?

Mr HINE - Yes. You will have to have qualifications to go through the various ranks. That is set by legislation. We put notices on Facebook about when we are recruiting. We are in the middle of a recruiting process now. The next course is August and the current course graduates in November. We are still confident we will make those numbers without a major advertising campaign.

CHAIR - What is the attrition rate in a recruit course, roughly? What is a normal intake?

Mr HINE - There are 22 in the current course. There are two fast-trackers within that as well. On average we may lose one per recruit course, because it is a long and involved process to get to where we employ someone. There is an exam process; there is an assessment, or suitability to do the job, test as well. There is an interview panel. There is a scenario training-based selection process. There is a medical process as well.

It is long and involved but we have found the return on investment is very good. We have done a study on that. That compared those who did not go through this process - before we had it - to those who did. That study found that for those who go through this process, the attrition rate is greatly reduced; sick leave is greatly reduced; internal investigations are greatly reduced. We have done a fair bit of work on how we recruit people, and it is a good return on investment. Other states have actually picked up and looked at how we recruit and what processes we go through. We want to make sure we get it right, and that we are recruiting the right people because putting them through the process costs a lot of money.

Mr HIDDING - I was asked by somebody who did not quite make the grade on a recruit course why that might be the case. Without looking at individual cases, I then looked at the whole process of the acquisition of recruits - the panel of people applying, down to the 22 who get selected - and I found it is a very rigorous process. I was most impressed with the screening arrangements. It is not about the capacity to jump fences or to be terrific at ICT. Things like compassion and empathy are huge benchmarks for new Tasmanian police officers.

That kind of work pays dividends - that is what the commissioner is talking about now - because at the end of the day the new police officers who come in are in at a very high level. When I look into their eyes when they start the course and I look into their eyes when they finish now - I have been able to do that in my time as minister - I can see they are very proud and confident people who will go into their first posting with no fear at all in how they are going to do the job. They are very well trained when they come out of the course.

Incidentally, I recommend members should go to a police graduation because they are great - particularly when they throw their hats in the air. That is good fun.

Mr CHAIRMAN - What is the rough gender ratio at graduation?

Mr HINE - We are tracking it. About 31 per cent of the entire of police organisation is female. That is the minimum we try to get. We try to get about 50:50 in relation to gender, but the female ratio is generally between 30 per cent and 50 per cent.

To reiterate what the minister was saying, we have had some really good courses come through. In fact, I was actually doing a PT session with the new recruits this morning. A really good bunch of people, diverse bunch of people from all walks of life. We seem to be getting better and better at selecting. Again, you have to have life skills; you have to have common sense. Our recruiting practices and training practices are getting better and better. They are a good bunch of people.

Mr HIDDING - For the record, this would be the only Police Commissioner in Australia who surprises the recruit course from time to time at 5.00 a.m.

Ms FORREST - Must have been early because he was here pretty early.

Mr HIDDING - Yes, 5.00 in the morning. Goes out and goes on the long run with them. Without asking him how he went in the run, I can tell you this: they are very smart people, they always let him win.

Mr MULDER - That is despite the fact that he jumped up over the Mean Range to get here.

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Ms FORREST - How long has this recruitment program been operating now?

Mr HINE - In relation to the current recruitment policy? We had a break of three years where we did not recruit; that was two years ago. We used that time to refine our recruitment program and also our recruit training. In the time we did not recruit, we actually refined it.

Ms FORREST - You are talking about what is a fairly new process?

Mr HINE - The processing has been around a long time, but it was a matter of refining it. How we recruit has not changed greatly, but it is about refining. The actual program - the 28 weeks - has been refined a fair bit because we have that link with the University of Tasmania.

Once recruits graduate, they have 16 units of a 24-unit degree, and they can continue to finish a degree, and they do, because they are nearly there. It is terrific. They do various other courses as well. We will refine that. It was a little academically focused and not practically orientated for a little while. During that three years, we refined that. We are working towards a capability framework as well. I am pretty pleased with the way it is going, and the fact that we are very closely aligned with the university. It is actually working for us and the university and the community because they are getting a high standard of police officer out there as well.

Ms FORREST - Obviously the recruitment process was significantly refined during the three years when you were not recruiting. What is your evaluation process? It is something that should be watched and maybe other states will take even more notice depending on what your evaluation shows in the investigations, lower rate of attrition and all those sorts of things?

Mr HINE - Dr Ken Burns, who runs our suitability assessment, has done various evaluations along the way and some study in relation to it and that has been picked up from another couple of states, and the assessment process as well.

Ms FORREST - Are you saying it is ongoing as opposed to a point in time for the assessment?

Mr HINE - Yes, it is a point in time but also we assess the recruits after they get out. We bring them back and see how they are going. We also do an assessment annually about performance feedback, so we take this very seriously.

Mr HIDDING - Where it will start to show is in a few years time when they start applying for sergeant's positions. I have had a close look and am pleased with the process of moving up a rank. You do not get it because you have been a constable a long time. For those who apply it is very competitive. In a recent round there were at least four or five applicants for each position and it was a very rigorous process. When I looked at all that I was convinced that the ones who got the jobs won it on merit. With these new recruits coming in, and bear in mind the age profile now is close to the 25 age group - there is one out there about 18 or 19 - and they are reasonably experienced employees in other life skills. There is no question, it will pay a big dividend.

On overview, I do not know if you have the policy and parameter statement in budget paper 1. You may have to take this on notice if you do not have it with you. I am interested in the parameter changes in the policy and parameter statement on pages 60 and 65 in budget paper 1. The agency revenue, as a parameter change for Police and Emergency Management, is \$3.7 million this year and for the coming year it is \$1.6 million and then \$1.7 million. When you

look at the expenses, the parameter changes for expenses, you have \$2.9 million this year and then \$3.1 million in 2015-16, and only \$700 000 and \$500 000 for the out years. I am interested in the revenue and which area the expenses are in. This is parameter, not policy changes.

Mr HIDDING - I would like to take that on notice.

Mr GAFFNEY - While we are in that same area, on page 62 - and I know it is under Justice - but it makes comment about 'implement reforms to improve the effectiveness of response to family violence'. Is that in response to the review from your Safe at Home program? Is it is responsibility of the magistrates to try to implement a program or does that come under your bailiwick? I know there are number of recommendations and I am wondering do you have any input into that?

Mr HINE - In relation to the Justice side of things?

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes. It says Justice there and it says 'implement reforms to improve the effectiveness of the response to family violence', so I am wondering if that is Justice's response to those recommendations?

Mr HINE - They are the lead agency of the Safe at Home and we have separate funding for our family violence units. So that is Justice.

Mr HIDDING - It is only Justice's contribution to that. It would be pre Safe at Home review because that is not finalised yet.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. The funding of Police and Emergency Management, is there in that policy funded, is that on that same page, emergency alert? I seek to see what that is targeted for.

Mr HIDDING - The emergency alert is an extraordinary cost, I suppose. COAG decided all states should have an emergency alert system. For instance, if there is a major fire in an area, all mobile phones in the area receive an alert. No sooner had COAG made that decision than the price of this has skyrocketed. There is only one provider for this and we cannot do much about it. You might tell us what the increased cost was.

Mr TILYARD - Basically, it is a service that provides text messages to mobile phones and a recorded voice message to mainline telephones for any sort of emergency. Initially, the costs to Tasmania were around \$200 000 per annum. Police and Tas Fire Service share that cost.

Mr MULDER - That is whether you use it or not?

Mr TILYARD - That is right. When you use it you pay for the text messages but the usage is not the big factor. It is having the capability available that you are paying for. The costing for it nationally is on a pro rata basis per jurisdiction. It has been around \$200 000 but they have been working with Telstra and the other major telecommunications service providers and the costs have - there is a business case we have been working on - significantly increased. There is a refresh of the technology due over the next 12 or so months. There was a bit of additional expenditure, then it does settle down a little in the out years. It will be about twice what we are paying at the moment in Tasmania. It is not the only means we use to communicate with people in an emergency but it is an important one and it is one the public have come to rely on to some

extent. It is difficult to withdraw from having this sort of functionality available out in the community. We do not intend to withdraw from it.

Mr GAFFNEY - That is fine. The criteria for that, is that on a national basis or is it on a state basis?

Mr TILYARD - In relation to the funding?

Mr GAFFNEY - The funding but also who determines whether it is a community, statewide or regional alert. As a policy, what is the criteria?

Mr TILYARD - We have protocols that certain people within the emergency services can authorise the use of it. There are national protocols with the service providers that rely on the fact it would only be used in a potentially life threatening situation. It cannot be used for general messaging.

Mr HINE - It has been used 22 times. Twice by Tas Fire, and once by Health. Police have not used it yet but it is a tool to alert people during times of crisis or emergency.

Mr GAFFNEY - There is only one provider. Is that a discussion point at COAG? It seems that the cost is quite high, although not having it would be worse sometimes. Are any questions being asked about it?

Mr HINE - It is one of the things, and Scott can answer it a bit more in depth, is drawing a polygon around an area to say, okay, if it is around Parliament, for example, you can draw a circle around it to make sure you capture those phones in that circle.

Mr MULDER - Connected to those towers?

Mr HINE - Yes, connected to this area. That is the further development. We know there are other operators. It is not quite one provider, it is capturing other mobile phones.

Mr TILYARD - I have to be careful of what I say because it is commercial in confidence, the negotiations that are happening. All of the states and territories have been working with the Commonwealth. Victoria has taken the lead on negotiation with the telcos and looking at strategies where we can, from a Government perspective, have a better control over any increasing costs in the future or maintaining the capability.

Mr GAFFNEY - Around Parliament, Commissioner, would be very important.

Mr MULDER - Is the issue not really the coverage of the other service providers? We have one dominant service provider that provides coverage, particularly for the fire service, in remote and rural areas. It is absolutely pointless negotiating it with someone who does not have any towers out in the bush.

Mr HINE - But it is Telstra, Vodafone and Optus.

Mr MULDER - They are co-providers?

Mr HINE - Yes.

Mr MULDER - They are sharing their towers and their infrastructure?

Mr HINE - Yes. As you said, it is no use if someone says, 'You have an Optus and I have a Telstra.' It is a matter of those three -

Mr MULDER - Instead of someone with a controlling monopoly, we are now talking about three people basically conspiring to fix a price.

Mr HIDDING - As we have heard, it has been done nationally and we pay a share. Tasmania generally comes out pretty well on that basis. The Chief Fire Officer is at the table who can explain how we share, for instance, aerial assets. It would likely cost us much more for the four or five helicopters we have on standby over summer if we had to do it on our own. But on this national basis it works very well. But without question, this time it has been somewhat of a shock to the budget. However, it has never been a question on my lips as to how can we do without it? It is a very strong tool for Tasmania Fire, particularly. And it is there for police should they need it.

1.1 - Support for the community

CHAIR - We have finished overview members' questions. We will now go to 1.1, which is support for the community. Mr Mulder has the lead on that. While Mr Mulder is getting it together, I have a quick question here. We have a backup while Mr Mulder is getting sorted.

Mrs HISCUTT - There is \$16 million annually to work with the other department. Is this what you call the inter-agency support team? It says, 'the Government requires estimates expenditure of \$16 million across the Department of Health and Human Services, Police and Emergency, Justice and Education.' Is that there to support at-risk children in family violence across the different departments?

Mr HINE - That is the Safe at Home -

Mrs HISCUTT - The Inter-Agency Support Team (IAST) program. Is that still going? Can you tell me the difference between the two?

Mr HIDDING - The IAST program, interrelationship, collaborative mechanisms, that assist in supporting better outcomes for children and young people with complex and multiple needs. In order to provide coordinated support to these vulnerable individuals, it is essential that key participation agencies continue to commit to and support the IAST program. In 2012 an internal review recommended rationalisation and a change in focus towards an early intervention approach. An intergovernmental IAST review steering committee was established in 2013, with the objective of providing strategic direction and advice to identify ways of enhancing the operation of the program and to implement its recommendations. The plan was developed to improve efficiency and to make the program more effective. I will ask the Commissioner to speak a little more broadly on it.

Mr HINE - That \$16 million was the Safe at Home across those agencies. Inter-agencies is two separate things. We have currently 202 children and young people in that current IAST program. The northern district has 28 children. The southern district has 132 children. The

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western district has 42 children. But there is a review in relation to how the IAST is running and Mr Tilyard sits on that steering committee. Do you want to hear a bit more about the review?

Mrs HISCUTT - I would be interested in how it is going.

Mr TILYARD - The interagency support teams are not separately funded because basically they are collaborative groups of people from across the agencies, and to some extent, the local government. They have periodic meetings. We fund early intervention and youth action units within our police command. There is a small number of people who work directly with young people.

The IAST program has been running for some years, and we have been refining it over time and improving and trialling different models. As a result of a recent trial we ran in conjunction with Health and Human Services and the Education department we have modified our eligibility criteria for young people coming on to the teams. We are particularly looking for young people who are not specifically being case managed by child protection or by youth justice. These are the cohort that may be there is not enough coordination happening for.

Mrs HISCUTT - Are the ones who slip through the crack or the ones who are not deemed to be in greater need?

Mr TILYARD The whole idea with IAST is to pick up those children and young people who are already the clients of more than one agency. If you have a child who is a truant from school that is an Education issue but they might also be committing a bit of crime which is a Police issue and they could be at personal risk of harm which, of course, is Children and Youth Services within DSS. So it is about how we can work more collaboratively to support children and their families.

One of the proposals, as a result of the recent review, the IAST in Launceston is currently considering involving the families coming along to the meetings, to have the family there as part of the discussions, which has not been a feature of the IASTs to date.

Mrs HISCUTT - You have the children and young people come to a meeting place with the department or do you go to them?

Mr TILYARD - The children do not normally come to the IASTs. The children may not even come along to the trials involving the families but it is about engaging with the parents and guardians at that level. There are other support services directly relating to children.

Mrs HISCUTT - So Safe at Home is a totally different thing?

Mr TILYARD - Safe at Home is separate but often with these children and young people family violence is an issue in their lives and we work very closely and with support -

Mr HIDDING - They could the same clients.

Mr TILYARD Yes.

Mr HINE - The funding is separate, that \$16 million does not relate to IASTs but each agency is funding that bit themselves. It is seeing whether it is drug offending, IASTs, or family

violence. There is an interconnectness through out those, alcohol and all those things, and we have to make sure that we do not deal with them in isolation. That is why we work across all government sectors to make sure we can make that difference.

Ms FORREST - Family violence is an area that has had its profile lifted enormously through Rosie Batty being Australian of the Year, and all power to her, what an amazing woman. I really appreciated the opinion piece you wrote recently in the *Mercury* too, commissioner, it was well placed. How is the police force in Tasmania engaging broadly with this issue? We do not seem to be making that much difference. You are probably aware of a Facebook page Destroy the Joint which has a running tally at the moment. It is up to 43 women this year who have been killed at the hands of partners, predominantly. It is probably worth the police following that because it lists all these women and the recent one we had here in Tasmania which we do not need to talk about specifically. I am interested in what Tasmania Police intend to do in this area because it is really hot at the moment. After we have another Australian of the Year, we will have another focus perhaps and it may wane a bit so now is the time to catch it at its momentum.

Mr HIDDING - This is being driven by the Government, by the Premier himself. He has a standing group of ministers who will be working with him on that and I am one of those as we are a lead agency in this area and there is nothing not on the table. We were discussing recently the scope of the problem. It is about offender management. The first time somebody is identified as being a perpetrator and it is pointed out that it is not necessarily offenders because to be an offender you need to have been proven to be such a thing, but a perpetrator, somebody who has done it whether they are charged or not. What do we do with that person? Do we just say 'If you do it again, you are going to be charged', or does somebody need to make a formal complaint? What do we do as a community with somebody who has once perpetrated an act of family violence? It is seriously important to make sure it does not escalate and go on. We nip it early in the bud.

A lot of very good work is going on in that space. The Premier has taken a personal lead in this, which has also been important to us. I know that Commissioner Hine - he is in our department - is an absolute leader in this space as well across government. .

Mr GAFFNEY - Just a supplementary question. It comes up with judicial service, but it has now been raised about family violence. You said the Premier was taking a personal lead. Where is that reflected in the Budget? The line item in judicial services, where I think it is funded, has only a \$70 000 increase. While the Premier obviously wants to put more resources in, is this intent to make inroads into this issue reflected somewhere else in the Budget? Should I discuss this later?

Mr HIDDING - While I might know some of that answer, it is not my portfolio. I am not going to attempt to speak as to where Justice is.

Mr GAFFNEY - Is 1.2.4, support to judicial services, under your portfolio as Minister for Police and Emergency Management?

Mr HIDDING - It is. I am sorry, yes. I can speak on my portfolio; sorry, I thought you meant what the total government sum was for family violence.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes, sorry, in your portfolio it is an increase of \$70 000. Is that the only place where family violence is funded? What are the extra funds available for it?

Mr HINE - As the minister said, a Cabinet committee is chaired by the Premier, and there is a plan that will be developed by August. Within that plan, obviously, there will be a funding aspect to it then. That is why it is not reflected in the budget papers.

Mr HIDDING - Until we see the shape of what is required in a plan. That will be considered by Cabinet and if extra funds are required, and I suspect they will be, that is when we -

Mr GAFFNEY - As long as we know that is not in this Budget, so there will be after August.

Mr HIDDING - There is no limit to our thinking on that. This is a big issue. Let me say, we must not forget with an ever-escalating number of police officers available, the scope to be able to deal and respond to these matters gets stronger by every graduation. It is a transforming policy to have 108 new police officers on top of 1 120 to 1 228.

Ms FORREST - You have identified a couple of issues. An offender is somebody has done something and has been proven to have done something - but a perpetrator is different. I was reading *The Age* the other day. It had some little emojis that have been created; the paper said these are likely to be used by people to express they were a victim as opposed to telling somebody. I think it is really great that Tasmanian Police has a presence on Facebook and places like that because that is where you will see these emojis being used, and that may be the only way someone identifies that.

Tasmania Police's involvement on Facebook is really great, but I think perhaps you need to get onto Twitter. Twitter is restricted to 140 characters, but one picture is only a character, so it would make it much easier to get a point out there. Is Tasmania Police looking at those sorts of things to try to find other ways of identifying victims because often it is really hard for them to speak up?

Mr HINE - In relation to family violence, you are right. I do take a strong stance in relation to it, with White Ribbon. I know Mr Gaffney is a White Ribbon ambassador as is the minister. It is a tragedy happening every day across Australia. We know that. We know that in Tasmania we have had over 1 900 incidents where police were called until the end of March; and we know it is over 3 000, if you include the arguments. We know over 1 000 children have been involved in those matters. We know that 1 100 orders were issued through the courts from police and 900 breaches. They are just the sheer statistics. I have also seen a figure suggesting under-reporting of about 60 per cent.

Ms FORREST - It is what you know about and also what you do not know about.

Mr HINE - Yes, and that is quite concerning. That was always a concern with the Safe at Home review. That was an internally driven review between Justice, Police and Health and Human Resources, and a lot of recommendations came out of that which we are implementing. There is also the Cabinet committee the Premier is leading. I am on the national advisory committee to the Council of Australian Governments; we had our first meeting last Friday. Rosie Batty is also on that committee.

We are also working at a state level. We recently held a meeting of a corporate management group to ask how we, as a department, are dealing with family violence. We think we are doing okay, but we can always do better - and that is the Safe at Home review. We looked at the many

different portfolios the Safe at Home review sat in. We found a number of our senior executives were dealing with certain sections. I amalgamated those, and the review now sits under Mr Cowling's portfolio, which means we now have a greater coordinated policing approach to Safe at Home and that all national and state recommendations will be coordinated under the review and will match all the reviews we are doing. We have also allocated a dedicated resource to this working group, to support the Cabinet committee.

Ms FORREST - So that is within your current budgetary requirements?

Mr HINE - Yes. We are treating this very seriously. We had that murder a couple of weeks ago, and that is the saddest reminder we needed to deal with this. When you look at a national level around the country, unfortunately I could name one where someone else lost their life. We just cannot accept that.

We have an opportunity to make a difference and we have to make sure we use this opportunity to make a difference. We are getting better. I expect those figures - the number reporting to police - will go up because that is what we are encouraging people to do. People need to feel more comfortable, and women need to feel more comfortable. If you look at our Facebook site, the other message is around violence against men - that is mentioned a lot. Any family violence, whoever is involved, is unacceptable. The sad fact is that in the majority of family violence, women are being killed by male partners. We do not accept any violence in our community, let alone the family situation. We use Twitter, which is connected to our Facebook site as well.

Mr MULDER - Minister, on the same issue. An interstate commentator - someone involved in this area - indicated that as many as 15 per cent of domestic violence assaults were female on male assaults. I am not asking you to confirm that, but I wanted to put it on the record. If it is running at around about that level, it starts to skew the debate a bit. The other issue I have been concerned about for a long time - it goes back to the days of Dr Scutt when she was here - is that grouped under the umbrella of domestic violence is not only physical violence, which quite clearly is domestic violence - but also emotional, psychological and financial domestic violence.

I wonder whether that is still the case - that we have such a broad definition of domestic violence that the seriousness of it is being watered down. All we talk about are the murders and the bashings, but then we are suggesting those murders and bashings are extremely widespread because we are also talking about those other forms of 'domestic violence'. I am wondering whether there is a need in the policy area to start - there are things you do about financial and emotion violence which are at another end of the spectrum of intervention compared to physical violence.

Mr HIDDING - The legislation that currently exists allows someone to make a complaint about a former partner or a partner who committed the offence of economic deprivation. You basically make no money available to a family to try to get your way. It can be argued that is just as bad as physical violence. That is why I think every member of parliament who has participated in that legislation going through at the time that was championed by Judy Jackson and accepted by both Houses of Parliament without opposition, recognised that those forms of abuse are really on the same level.

I am not aware of any separating out, although I would have thought that in policing terms, those things are available. I got a bit of this information and feedback during the House of

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Assembly debate on firearms where there was a proposal that there be spousal checks before anybody was able to get a firearm's licence or renew it. I had a close look at the statistics then and it did not support that proposition, but the statistics for Tasmania were very sobering.

Mr MULDER - Is there a breakdown in reported crime in relation to that, as to breaking the physical away from the other forms of domestic violence?

Mr HINE - Yes, there is breakdown in relation to that. Those who have experienced financial abuse, it is very serious and has a huge impact on the victim, which I know you understand. It is in that one group about family violence.

The one that I am concerned about which keeps getting dropped off the argument, is sexual violence and sexual assault. It tends to get dropped off because it is not only family, domestic, it is also sexual abuse, inequality and all those issues that fit within this group that we need to address as a community to make sure we can move forward in a positive way. Whatever form of violence they are experiencing, we recognise it as a form of violence and abuse, to be able to deal with it and bring it out into the open.

Mr MULDER - Can we ask you, on notice, to break those kinds of violence down, if possible?

CHAIR - Mr Gaffney made a very pertinent suggestion that we have drifted into 2.4, Support to judicial services. That being the case, we ought to continue on and we will do 2.4 then.

Mr FARRELL - On the domestic violence issue, the commissioner mentioned 1 900 cases. What was the time frame?

Mr HINE - That was up until the end of March in this financial year.

Mr FARRELL - Is there any way of recording, with these incidents - I do not know what the police procedure is - any particular causes of domestic violence? Is it drug or alcohol related or are there categories that offenders are worse in?

Mr HINE - There are various categories and the Government just joined up to Our Watch, which has done a lot of the national research which answers a lot of Mr Mulder's questions about financial abuse. Whilst we might not break down that directly, Our Watch has done some national work in relation to that.

To answer your question, Mr Farrell, alcohol and drugs are involved where the offender is affected by alcohol and drugs. From a statewide perspective, up until the end of March, 203 occasions out of those matters we attended were to do with drugs; for alcohol it was 516 occasions. Juveniles have been present in over 1 140 of those occasions. Weapons have been present on 127 occasions.

Ms FORREST - What do we classify as a weapon in that?

Mr HINE - Anything that can be used, whether it is a firearm, knife, club - anything that you can use as a weapon.

Ms FORREST - What about your fists, they are not classified?

Mr HINE - No. That is not what we class as a weapon per se. Those are the figures.

Mr HIDDING - These are in the corporate performance report that is upgraded monthly. It is very interesting to follow; it is not only upgraded monthly but the year-to-date figures are in there as well. It is worth looking at.

Mr FARRELL - I am thinking, minister, that having that information on hand is probably a fairly good tool to try to work a way through it before it becomes the police's issue.

Mr HINE - That is one of the things the national committee is looking at, about giving advice to the Prime Minister and first ministers, what sort of baseline data we need to gather to make sure we have an evidence-based approach to the family, domestic and sexual violence. There are some national research bodies that are currently looking at that and they sit on this committee as well. We have to bring a lot of these things out into the light before we can move forward as a community to address it.

Mr MULDER - On the corporate performance report, is that now available on the website? For a long time it was not.

Mr HIDDING - It is now, yes.

Mr MULDER - We have had previous Estimates with the previous minister where we have had trouble trying to work out what the state of play was at a given time, despite our knowledge of the corporate performance report.

Mr HIDDING - Could I make a final statement on the Safe at Home matter. During that debate I alluded to earlier I had a police officer in attendance in the House who told me that of all the complaints to police of family violence, only a very small percentage end up with the various NGOs. Sometimes the NGOs say they have had so many and we think that is a lot. It is the tip of the iceberg. Many of them do not go to NGOs. That tells us that it is the Tasmania Police Service, the officers, who are dealing with this on their own, essentially, with their colleagues. With that many complaints to work through, we should spare a thought for the police officers in very nasty situations. They are not dealing with bank robbers here. They are dealing with almost a daily matter - yet another family violence issue. They have deep respect from me and I am sure you agree, the Tasmanian Police Service have to go into very tricky situations.

CHAIR - As you say, something specific or some of these line items to merge a little. We will now finish off 2.4 and Mr Gaffney will have a lot of well-prepared questions for you.

Output Group 2 Crime

2.4 Support to Judicial Services -

Mr GAFFNEY - I am wondering, with the numbers, Mr Hine, that you mentioned, 1 900 to the end of March, is there any district that has a greater number of family violence issues or incidents?

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Mr HINE - In relation to the districts, of family violence incidents, down south, again to the end of March, there were 1 040. In the north there were 570; in the western district there were 508. If you add the two together, it is probably 50 per cent up north and 50 per cent down south.

Mr HIDDING - So it is pretty well standard across the board?

Mr GAFFNEY - Population-based. That is fine. Do you still have the Victim Safety Response Teams in each of the districts?

Mr HINE - Yes. We still have 12 Victim Safety Response units across the state. We have six specialised prosecutors working in this area as well. We have a centralised coordinator in our executive support area to coordinate it. Again, we have Mr Cowling, who is the overall state coordinator for it. Those who are working 24 hours a day in the various uniformed sections are our first responders to family violence. In reality, we have 1 147 first responders. We have the specialised team who case-manage those cases once the first responders have been to it.

Mr GAFFNEY - What are the numbers on your case management team? Have they fluctuated over the last three years?

Mr HINE - We did have 22 a number of years ago. We looked at our response model because they were responding themselves. We found it better to train all police officers who work in the various stations to be responders. That is why we have reduced our numbers in the VSRTs to case-manage, but our number of prosecutors has remained the same. While we reduced the numbers, we have actually changed our response model. Instead of having 22 we have actually have 1 1047 who are trained up to be able to provide that initial response, and then the cases are managed by the VSRTs in the various districts.

Mr GAFFNEY - So you have 12 now, and you had 22. When did that change occur?

Mr HINE - That changed about five years ago, once we did the review in relation to it. We did two major reviews to make sure we are providing the best response. We found the best response to make sure we train up our frontline police officers to be able to respond.

Mr GAFFNEY - I know we have the recommendations from the Safe at Home Program. They are all related to Police. With the first three recommendations, I am wondering if you could comment on those, what you have been able to do or what you intend to do, because some of those will need a budget, so budgetary concerns, and whether you have that money in this year's budget, because the report has been released. Number one says it invites external specialists in family violence dynamics and family violence legal proceedings to deliver specialist training.

Mr HINE - Which we have commenced.

Mr GAFFNEY - Then, 'Tasmania Police consider the practice of issuing 12 month police family violence orders and developing a more tailored approach' - how has that been -

Mr HINE - We are doing the review on that now.

Mr GAFFNEY - When you do a review, and changes have to occur, do you have the funding, to be able to reflect those, what is needed to be done. The next one is to do with court

orders and that sort of thing, so I am wondering how that relationship is between you and the courts.

Mr HINE - That is a good question, Mr Gaffney. Out of this Cabinet committee that is dealing with family and domestic violence, that has all been wrapped up in the strategy that will be delivered to Cabinet in August, to say okay we have this Safe at Home review, which is one slice of how we are dealing with family violence. That will go into the review and the strategy that goes to Cabinet in August. That funding issue will be addressed in relation to the overall plan but those three recommendations directly relate to our department, and we are moving forward with those recommendations. We have already commenced that.

Mr GAFFNEY - And the police officers you mentioned before, would they be attached to your response?

Mr HINE - Those 12 that are?

Mr GAFFNEY - You mentioned extra funding in conversation before, there is going to be some extra funding for -

Mr HINE - In relation to the strategies delivered in August, there is no funding, it is a matter of developing the plan first to go Cabinet and then Cabinet can make -

Mr HIDDING - Agencies need to make bids for what they need to do as part of this review. Government would be requiring agencies to produce as much as they can without too many financial requests. With the ever escalating number of police officers available, more resources are available in human terms to start addressing this.

Mr GAFFNEY - If there was an increase it is difficult, say with the White Ribbon Ambassadors Program and the Safe at Home program, to get more information into the community and people more aware that what is occurring at home or occurring on the streets is a violent act. It is hard to know, statistically, whether it is increasing violence or increasing of reporting. Something like the White Ribbon Campaign, or this one, is there any way of measuring because you said last year about 60 per cent of violence is not reported. Is there any way of measuring the impact of those programs on the community, so you can say that is really good, we should keep that money there and keep pushing that one, because we have some good results.

Ms FORREST - Greater reporting.

Mr GAFFNEY - Greater reporting of the incidents.

Mr HINE - You are reflecting some of the conversations we had last week in Sydney about the national program and also the conversation we are having at a state level about how do we evaluate to make sure, what we are doing is making a difference in a positive light. As it was announced publicly the Commonwealth have put \$30 million into raising awareness and having a national advertising campaign. That is some of the conversations that are going on, so how we are making sure there is a difference, what is a baseline, how we are going to evaluate it from a state level and from a federal level because we want to make sure the resources we put into this are making a difference. I could not agree with you more but we need to make sure we have a

really good and robust evaluation process across a state level, and I know we are discussing it at a national level as well.

Mr GAFFNEY - Minister, I think you are right. When that committee meets and comes back with recommendations, I do not think there will be one parliamentarian who says make a budget change for that.

Mr HIDDING - The plan we call the Comprehensive Family Violence Action plan will be released in August as a result of the processes now underway, using all the resources of this agency, myself, the Treasurer, the Minister for Women. And minister Rockliff, as Education minister, because it is important at that level, with so many children being able to report and to express concerns. And the Minister for Health and the Minister for Police. A comprehensive plan will be out there in August and we will address the funding requirements at the same time.

Mr GAFFNEY - It is good to put on record that Police have already started to go down to recommendations from the review when it comes through, and that is important.

Ms FORREST - In that whole framework and the planned strategy we are looking at, is economic violence being considered in that process? There are hidden ones. Bruises leave a mark and it can be evident for some days, but economic violence and other forms of exclusion from family, and things like that, there is a psychological scar.

Mr HIDDING - Very much a part of it. We all make judgments as to what the offence is, but whilst stats might break them up, as a Government we see all that as family violence.

Ms FORREST - Are you talking about all those forms of violence?

Mr HIDDING - Yes.

Mr HINE - Depriving a partner of money has a huge hold over people and it is a form of violence.

Ms FORREST - I am talking about the key reasons why people do not leave.

Mr HINE - Right. That is some of the discussions and what Mr Mulder was alluding to as well, so there are all forms of violence. Whilst it might not be a true definition of violence, it is partner abuse and not a respectful relationship. Those that are in these situations are greatly affected.

Mr MULDER - Bruises is a good example because you can tell there has been physical violence because there are marks on them but with economic violence, is there a threshold measure - because a lot can be in the eye of the beholder. It might be that they think they are not getting a fair share of the family income and you have that difficulty.

Before we start saying we must believe the victims, I do not know if anyone saw that horrific story the other night where a teacher was reported by a couple of former male students for sexual assault. The whole world is this way: the most important thing is that you believe the victim and you end up with this woman going to gaol and getting out when later on it turns out the whole thing was concocted. It is a difficult balancing act but sometimes you have to be careful that

when you throw the broad definitions, when you do not have any threshold of evidence, that you do not go down believing the victim line because it can create the victim.

Mr HINE - Yes, I know what you are saying, Mr Mulder.

Mr MULDER - I understand the difficulty but that is why we need, with economic violence, some threshold measure. Is it in the eye of the beholder or is it -

Mr HIDDING - In the field, our police officers have to apply discretion and they do it every day of the week and are very good at it. Under the current law, there are benchmarks the courts would be looking for, but the presumption is clearly in favour of the person making the complaint and that could go wrong but I think in Tasmania it probably has not gone wrong.

Mr MULDER - I do not have any difficulty with that but there has to be some guidance about where and when we start down this path.

Mr HINE - I think we are talking two different things. Our basic premise is, victims we believe you. Then if there is a court process, there is a court process, but it should always be that we believe the victims, and that makes it comfortable for them to come forward and then we can deal with the issues that are before us.

Mr MULDER - I strongly suggest, Commissioner, the second question is 'Yes, we believe you, but is there any evidence to support you?'.

Mr HINE - Two different things. I understand what you are saying, but we have to have the basic premise, 'We believe you, victims', then we can make them feel comfortable to come forward and then we can deal with the situation that we have. I know what you are saying from a legalistic point of view, yes, there is a thing called evidence, but again, no matter who the victim is male, female, whatever, we always have to have that basic premise.

Mr MULDER - The thing with it in the past has been that there is a belief in the victim's version of events without corroborating evidence and away we go. That is where you get the injustice. I am more than happy with believing the victim, but before you go down the prosecutorial line you must need some evidence other than the word of the victim.

CHAIR - How are we going with 2.4, any further questions? If not, we will move back to 1.1, which is Support to the community.

Output Group 1 Public Safety

1.1 Support to the Community

Mr MULDER - Just a couple of things on the performance information total on page 147 of the budget papers, in terms of overview of this particular service, there were a number of performance measures here, which is the usual satisfaction with the police services and crime reports and assaults, satisfaction with public order, cost of policing per capita, which I think actually answers that question, but we might ask you to do that comparatively across the country. Perceptions of safety in public places, et cetera. With some of these ones, let us just focus on satisfaction with policing service, for 2012-13 the actual was 78 per cent, for 2013-14 the actual

was 77 per cent and then the targets are above or at the national average. With the actual figures for 2012-13 and 2013-14, wouldn't it be helpful if there was some indication there of what the national target was so that we would know whether we hit the target or not?

Mr HINE - It is a good question because it is not over the entire financial year, but I can inform the committee that up until December, between April and December, the figure for 2014-15 was 76 per cent where the national average was 77 per cent, but these are not finalised until the end of the financial year, so that is why they are not in there. I can tell you from 2012-13, you are right, it was 78 per cent; for 2013-14, 77 per cent; 2014-15 up until December it was 76 per cent and the national average was 77 per cent, so we are one percentage point below the national average. I do have figures for the committee if you would like those, Mr Mulder.

Mr MULDER - I do not actually. I was just trying to point out the fact that you report this information and you have no idea where we were in relation to the national average, and yet you have set that as the target, but then basically you do not report it.

Mr HIDDING - All you would be able to put in there is last year's national average because every year the national average changes.

Mr MULDER - I guess what I am saying is, perhaps if you had 77 per cent and in brackets behind it what the national average was so that we knew how you performed against the national average.

Mr HINE - It is trying to get that 12 months which does not come out until after. We had that reported back in December, which is on our CPR on the internet anyway.

Ms FORREST - It is a calendar year, is it?

Mr HINE - No, it is on a financial year.

Mr MULDER - It is okay with the satisfaction ratings, but then we get into some of the - as we do for assaults in public places, 825, 807 above or below the three-year average, and I have no idea what the three-year average is. All it can show is a trend in your actual numbers, but I am not sure how you are going compared to the nation.

Mr HINE - We do it month by month and it is in our corporate performance report that is on the internet. I can tell you the assaults in public places as up until April this year, for this financial year, was 825, as you said for 2012-13, 807 for 2013-14; 2014-15 it was 733, where the average was 736 so we are actually below our three-year average in relation to that one.

Mr HIDDING - We are talking presentation.

Mr MULDER - It is a presentation issue and that is what it is about. You are setting your target against the national average and then you are reporting your actual performance.

Mr HINE - We are always going to be 12 months behind because you do not finish it until your financial year, so it is that difficulty and I understand it, from a presentation point of view.

Mr MULDER - With things like assaults in public places, we have had it before in other areas where the figure actually turning up under actual - which occurred yesterday - for the year

2014, they wrote a figure in there which was a pro rata figure, which made it look like an annual figure but it was actually a pro rata figure and that was even more misleading. Once again, it is a presentation. If you say what the actual number of assaults was, we can talk about the trends of your numbers but we cannot really talk about how you are performing nationally, and that is always is your benchmark. Sorry, how you are performing over the three-year average.

Mr HINE - Which we report on monthly in the corporate performance report and, as Ms Forrest pointed out, in our annual report as well. It is the budget paper trying to get them all aligned as well. I take your point.

Mr MULDER - Going on the figures then, in 2012-13 it was 825, talking in trend terms; it was 807 in the previous financial year and the current financial year indicated at 733 pro rata.

Mr HINE - It was 733 to the end of March.

Mr MULDER - The end of March, so we have another quarter to go. I am probably on totally unsafe territory here by suggesting that we lift another third to that figure to get what the projections would be. Do you have concerns, is it rising or is it continuing to fall on those numbers? It would seem to be falling away again.

Mr HINE - Yes, it tends to be falling as in the three-year averages, 736 for the same time, so it is only three below where we are actually sitting into April. In trend terms it is below the three-year average but as we all know, we need to keep a careful eye on this.

Mr MULDER - How to you find the courts are dealing with assaults in public places? Prior to domestic violence, the big go was a 'one punch can kill' type program. How do you find the courts are dealing with offenders? Are we getting an appropriate sentencing regime; is that working, minister?

Mr HIDDING - Traditionally Tasmania Police puts them up there and you have to live with whatever the outcome is. The question you are asking the Commissioner is probably a personal one.

Mr MULDER - I was asking you, minister.

Mr HIDDING - Well, okay. It is a policy issue, and I have recently made some comments about sentencing and tried to get the Parliament to agree to a mandatory sentencing regime for the possession of stolen firearms because of a certain concern we have in the community, but that was not agreed to by the Parliament.

Clearly, I would only put something like that up if I felt that the courts would benefit by some more guidance by the Parliament and I have had a concern there. Generally, my view on the courts is that they are serving Tasmania well and I appreciate the way they interact with the community on sentencing principles from time to time.

They have recently invited people to come in and participate in 'What would you do if it were your decision?' and generally find that they are more lenient than the judges themselves and the actual outcomes.

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Ms FORREST - Except if they are for sexual crimes and crimes against women. They are a bit tougher there.

Mr HIDDING - Yes. While from time to time I might raise an eyebrow at a certain outcome, I do sometimes when that is the case. I am pleased that it is available to all Tasmanians to be able to get hold of the sentencing comments, which I find to be very instructive as to why a certain outcome is the case.

Generally, also reading anything written by our current Governor on the matter of sentencing is also very instructive.

Mr MULDER - I ask the question because I have not heard too much booing and jeering about sentencing of assaults and stuff like that in the courts in recent times. I note that the Police Offences Act has 20 penalty units plus some imprisonment there for an assault under the Police Offences Act, so that is the sort of thing. Quite clearly, that level of penalty seems reasonably appropriate.

I also raise, as I did in the House the other day, that some of the legislation that your Government's coming in with has some pretty high penalty unit marks for comparatively different things. The way you raised the firearms one, we went through an exercise there where we basically halved the penalty units to bring them more in line with national jurisdictions.

This came up the other day - 100 penalty units for cruelty to animals when there are 20 penalty units for cruelty to a human being seems to me to be a little out of whack. That is why I asked the question if 20 penalty units is working for a hot topic like assaults on people -

Mr HIDDING - There are policy issues there. My first point that generally a benchmark is set and then variations of an offence are linked via a formula. We were required to unpick that when the legislation came back from your House, to actually try to understand why it was that you would leap into the relativities issue and all that.

Mr MULDER - It was not the relativities issue. The relativities issue is across the state; the formula is fine - all formulas are fine. It depends what you put into the front of them as to what you get out of the back of them. That was the issue I raised about setting a maximum penalty way up there somewhere, then, for minor cases, you want to issue an infringement notice for it. In the case of cruelty to animals, for example, if you used that ratio and you wanted to issue an infringement, if an RSPCA inspector issued an infringement, using 1/10th model, it would be a \$1 500 fine infringement notice.

Mr HIDDING - Well, you corrected it.

Mr MULDER - We did - not the RSPCA one, we did not.

Mr HIDDING - We accepted your wisdom.

Mr MULDER - That is roughly the figure. We take it that they are still trending okay. Could we flesh out public order incidents? What are they - assaults or disturbances of the peace?

Mr HINE - It relates to certain criteria on our command and control, that people get rid of tasks.

Mr MULDER - That is the radio despatch system that records police attendance, I presume.

Mr HINE- -Thank you for that. As you know, our figure for 2013-14 was 24 800; up to April this financial year, the figure was 21 000. The three-year average is 22 000. Within that category there is public disturbance, vandalism, public noise, vehicle complaints and offensive behaviour. I can give you a breakdown on that; it is on our internet site, which has our corporate performance report as well.

Mr MULDER - I was trying to see how broad it was. To anyone who is not aware of what these things are, the figure of 25 000 public order incidents is quite alarming, particularly when some of these incidents are no more than squealing tyres and other minor sorts of issues.

Mr HINE - Yes, exactly.

Mr MULDER - The perceptions of public safety in public places, once again, we have this issue about what is the national average, even though we are actually targeting them, so -

Mr HINES - I can give you the updated figures, if you would like, Mr Mulder.

Mr HINES - Perception of public safety in public places during the day for 2012-13 was 93 per cent; 2013-14 was 94 per cent; and up until December, our latest figure was 92.4 per cent while the national average was 91.4 per cent, so we are above the national average.

During the night it was 55 per cent in 2012-13; in 2013-14, it was 59 per cent; and up until December, it was 57.7 per cent for Tasmania, while the national average was 51.77 per cent, so again we were above the national average.

During the night it was 90 per cent in 2012-13; 2013-14 was 93 per cent; and up until December last year, it was 91.7 per cent. The national average was 89.3 per cent, so we were above the national average again.

Mr MULDER - Just picking the second last one - perceptions of public safety in public places during the night, 55 per cent, 59 per cent and 57 per cent - I take it these surveys are done monthly, by the way, or quarterly?

Mr HINES - I think the national surveys are done quarterly.

Mr MULDER - It is quite safe to report the target as a percentage, because as a percentage the national average on those is unlikely to vary. Has there any attempt to get any information about the demographic of people surveyed about their perceptions of public safety in public places after dark? Quite often people who are afraid of the dark are people who do not go out in the dark. Is there any attempt to get some perceptions of safety about the demographic that does go out.

Mr HIDDING - It is apples with apples though, isn't it? It shifts when you are looking for something. I guess you are always going to have that.

Mr MULDER - Is it a randomised survey, which I suspect it is? Or is it in some way targeted at a specific audience?

Mr HINE - It is a randomised survey.

Mr MULDER - Done by? Is it done by landline telephone?

Mr HINE - Yes, by telephone. We use a national contractor. As you know, we could sit here for days discussing surveys and how to get the best -

Mr MULDER - Oh yes, and they are just trending guidelines. They are not all that - I guess like all telephone surveyors, you are struggling the diminishing number of landlines, the time people answer them and all those sorts of problems.

Mr HINE - They are doing mobiles as well, which increases the cost.

Mr HIDDING - Are they?

Mr HINE - Yes.

Mr HIDDING - There is also the question of factoring in some of those statistical aberrations.

Mr HINE - There is the plus or minus 2 per cent or 3 per cent variance as well compared to actual perception compared to actual reports as well. There is a formula about the variations between what is actually recorded as an offence compared to what is actually a victim or a survey. There are measures to make sure they are reasonably accurate.

Mr MULDER - My last point on the support to the community is the whole question of crime prevention and sometimes getting ahead of the game. We are pretty quick and great at responding and doing those sorts of things, but an awful lot of work needs to be done in the prevention space ahead of time. With the restoration - in fact, increasing - of policing numbers, has there been an increase in the prevention program? What advances are being made in the prevention space and the crime prevention space? How is the department managing that? After all that would be a strategic priority with crime as it is today - the crime you stop today is not one you have to respond to tomorrow.

Mr HIDDING - If you are looking for a cultural change, you need to start with youth, obviously. The department supports a number of early intervention and youth diversionary programs to positively influence outcomes for at-risk children and young people, and disengage youth and youth offenders. As an election pledge, we committed funding of \$250 000 per annum for four years to the police citizen youth clubs of Tasmania that support young people at risk and divert them from antisocial and criminal behaviours while building positive relationships with police. The PCYCs can play a really good role in this and I have been working fairly close with them. Their first rollout of programs are occurring about now and I think that will develop into a really good set of programs for the PCYC.

We also have a range of initiatives, such as the community respect order program, community conferences - obviously we heard about the ISC - and school-based programs. Anything else in terms of crime prevention?

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Mr HINE - I will hand over to Assistant Commissioner Adams in a minute. Obviously there is the proactive versus reactive approach. It is a matter of trying to shift - being proactive compared to being reactive. We are certainly very conscious of that. Neighbourhood Watch plays a part, Crimestoppers plays a part and all our youth intervention programs also play a part as well. We also have to have strong strategies to be able to react and also assist to prevent.

I will hand over to Assistant Commissioner Adams to comment.

CHAIR - Minister, I think Mr Mulder is about finished. We have investigation of crime coming up, and it is 11 p.m. and chaps might need to partake of a brew.

Mr HIDDING - We are in your hands. Will we take this answer and do that?

CHAIR - It depends how long Donna is going to be.

Ms ADAMS - We should not forget the value of Facebook. It has been a really valuable tool for us in disseminating crime prevention material and engaging directly with the communities that may be affected by a crime-spike. We have that real day-to-day contact to be able to engage and provide the messaging and advice we may need them to be aware of.

Mr MULDER - I was going to go into that. I believe we can do a lot better in the embedding of police in schools, with capacity of police, rather than just a school visitation program, to work at our schools, to be part of their lives. In that way kids may grow up with the idea of a positive male role model.

Ms ADAMS - At the moment we have police officers in four colleges - Elizabeth, Rosny, Launceston and Don College. We have some negotiations to extend that with a couple of other schools in the north of the state. That has been proven to do quite well.

Mr HINE - The Adopt a Cop Program was very popular. There are a lot of volunteers. We are going into schools and various other interactions with kids. That is quite a large program.

Mr HIDDING - Mr Chair, before we break, can I read into the record an answer to a question earlier. The average age for separations for the last 12 months of sworn police officers is 52.5 years.

The committee adjourned from 11.00 a.m. to 11.15 a.m.

DIVISION 6

(Department of Police and Emergency Management)

Output Group 2

Crime

2.1 Investigation of crime

CHAIR - We will now resume and as we are getting a bit behind, everybody will become more succinct on both sides of the table.

Mr MULDER - I will go to organised crime matters now and we have heard before that there is a proceeds of crime law. I think the DPP has made some comment in recent years about how nice it is to have but, without the investigative resources and the other resources, it is a meaningless piece of paper and consequently not recovering much of the proceeds of the crime. Just a snapshot of how that is going, and are we getting any of the evil loot into Treasury?

Mr HIDDING - The Government sees this as a very important part of police response or the law and justice response to organised crime. We have provided \$350 000 in recurrent funding in this Budget for the formation of an unexplained wealth unit within the police office of the DPP. We believe that it was a failing of the previous government to not provide the funds to activate what is some of the strongest legislation in Australia on unexplained wealth.

The unit will consist of a level three legal practitioner, a forensic accountant and a part time admin assistant. These roles are highly specialised. It will operate under amendments made to the Crime Confiscation of Profits Act 1993, which removes the need for a conviction before the state could seek for forfeiture or recovery of property used, acquired, or connected with the commission of crime.

The amendments allow the state to take actions against persons identified as living well beyond their apparent means and require them to prove the legitimacy of their financial circumstances. The work of this unit has resulted in confiscation of an amount of cash, as was reported in today's paper, and there are proceedings being taken against three properties and there has also been a reference from the Australian Federal Police. There has been somewhat of a push-on for the Federal Government to be granted access to our legislation to be able to do their own work in Tasmania. However, we believe our legislation is better than the federal legislation. In this case, a matter has been referred to us. From there on, it is basically operational. There was an announcement made yesterday that perhaps the commissioner can expand on.

Mr HINE - In relation to unexplained wealth, \$60 000 has been seized under that legislation. The DPP has given extra funding to employ another three people in relation to that. We have two dedicated detectives working on unexplained wealth. It is about following the money. It is about disrupting and dismantling organised crime. So that those organised gangs and criminals do not have the opportunity to reinvest in their illegal enterprises. There was a previous operation in which the Commonwealth was involved. That has now been transferred back to us. That could involve over \$2 million worth of assets. That is currently before the courts. There are up to 20 targets we have at the moment where we consider legislation could be used. There is some time to work those cases up with the DPP to get it before the courts. It is about disrupting and dismantling organised crime and following the money. I am not sure if the assistant commissioner would like to add anything?

Ms ADAMS - You have covered it all, commissioner. Very well done.

Mr HIDDING - It is a very strong message to those out there who are involved in this organised crime. There might be big profits in it but you will have great trouble spending it in Australia. There is a federal body. Here in the state, anybody that thinks they can invest illegal profits into a property, motor vehicles, assets; unless you can explain the basis of where that money comes from, you will lose it. It is another strong reason not to get involved in organised crime.

Mr MULDER - I am not asking for operational information but there is a lot of community concern and alarm, in relation to outlaw motorcycle gangs. I note in the last few years we have moved from having groups of motorcyclists, some of whom are criminals, to criminal motorcycle gangs. In my electorate, we have entire communities that are basically too afraid to report crime, too afraid to report particular incidents. I go back a few years to an event at Dunalley where people with links to motorcycle gangs ram raided through someone's front gate and were busy belting down the front door with a lump of 4x2 while mother, father and three little kiddies were inside watching this go on. Fortunately, they did not get into the house. The result of that was no charges were ever laid. There were clear connections at that stage back to the organisation. In a general law and order sphere, what are the police doing in relation to these groups who are living, as their name implies, outside the law?

Mr HIDDING - That is operational, so I will leave it to the commissioner.

Mr HINE - I will hand over to Assistant Commissioner Ms Adams in a minute. May I say we have a strong law and order stance in relation to outlaw motorcycle gangs. We know they are involved in criminal activity. Hence, we will continue to target them. We know there are six distinct outlaw motorcycle gangs in Tasmania with about 300 members and about 50 other people associated with them. We know they are involved in distributing of drugs. We charged some recently involving up to \$10 million worth of drugs being imported into the state. We will continue to target outlaw motorcycle gangs.

We are not under the misapprehension, and no-one associating with those groups should be under the misapprehension, that we will not continue to target them. We know they are into illegal activity and we want to disrupt it as best we can. Whether it is the issuing of liquor licences to those premises, we will stand in their way as best we possibly can and will continue to do it. We know they cause harm to the community and anyone who thinks otherwise is not facing up to the reality of what an outlaw motor cycle gang does. We are involved nationally, and also with our partners in the state.

With those opening remarks, I hand over to Assistant Commissioner Adams.

Ms ADAMS - The first thing to recognise is that outlaw motor cycle gangs cause issues for all states across Australia and Tasmania is not immune to the presence of OMCGs. Tasmania Police is a participant in a national taskforce called Operation Morpheus which is a focus on outlaw motor cycle gangs and their criminality across the country.

This taskforce, because it is under the banner of the Australian Crime Commission, provides us with additional non-traditional law enforcement opportunities that we can target these clubs and for example, it allows us to access a lot of the taxation legislation that traditional policing may not have had access to.

We have also had some success in working with the Liquor Licensing area in liquor permits. There is only one club that still has a liquor permit. That is being examined at the moment by the Commissioner for Liquor Licensing. To have those permits removed is a significant benefit to policing and it is an avenue that stops young people from going into these clubs and being vulnerable to recruitment and to some of the criminal activities that they are up to.

We have made no secret about the fact that we will continue to target the OMCGs. There is an operation that is being planned at the moment which I will not go into, but you will see more

efforts from Tasmania Police with our other law enforcement partners, to continue to focus on outlaw motor cycle gangs and their criminal activities.

Mr MULDER - At a broad policy level, all these particular measures are supported but there are places in Australia - Queensland has been there and I do not know whether they are coming back from it in relation to outlaw motor cycle gangs - but the idea of being able to declare an organisation to be a criminal or corrupt organisation, along the lines of the United States for example. Their racketeer influence and corrupt organisations, RICO statutes, which I note recently were used to start to bust apart the corruption at the high levels of FIFA.

That is the sort of power you can have once an organisation or an individual is deemed corrupt. Has any thought been given to being able to declare organisations corrupt, to allow a whole new suite of law enforcements? The word outlaw always surprises me. It normally means people living outside the law. It meant living outside the protections of the law. You put yourself in a position where the law no longer protects you, and a lot of the liberties that people had once you are in there are gone.

At a policy level, are we giving any real thought to moving down the line of tackling these things at the organisational level with presumptions of guilt built around that?

Mr HIDDING - In a policy sense, in terms of us as a Government getting our head around contemporary challenges, I spoke of the issue with the proliferation of ice in the community. We are at a whole new level and the Federal Government has recognised this, and you see the advertisements on television, where there is a whole new level of violence and violent reaction to arrest. Everything has to change when you are dealing with this ice issue. Consideration as to who is moving this product around the community leads you inevitably to discussion about outlaw motor cycle gangs. There are on-going discussions about that. I have been having some discussions with other states as to what they are doing, not just Queensland.

In South Australia they have had law for some time that goes something like this, that any patched motorcyclist, clearly identified as belonging to a gang, is not allowed into a licensed premise. One would have thought that that would have had a higher profile than some of the Queensland changes that were made.

We do not have the issues that some other states have, but in Tasmania, up in Launceston, there is a premises for sale that was very obviously headquarters of a gang. It is for sale, club closed down because most of its members have had a forced change of address down south, so the policing side of that is working and we will continue to keep an open mind on potential -

CHAIR - Having a large rural electorate, and I am not pointing the figure at outlaw motorcycle gangs, but I have had quite a bit of conversation with some of your force recently in rural districts where ice has become a real issue. It is causing a lot of disruption within small communities; people are being virtually terrorised. I make that point that it is occurring and might ask, through you minister, a comment from the commissioner on that. I notice you did make some comments the other day in regards to ice in the community.

Mr HINE - Ice right around the country - and I will hand over to Assistant Commissioner Adams in a minute - is causing an issue, and obviously the Federal Government has a response about calling the committee being chaired by Mr Lay. We know it is an issue in Tasmania; it is a growing issue. Whilst the language around it, we may have used different language, whether it is

an epidemic or a concern or whatever it is, it is there, it is increasing, and we have a concern about it.

The number of users and drugs in the community has not changed a lot; it is just about what they are now using. Ice seems to be growing in use and we have to get away from these terms about party drugs and all of those. Those drugs are called death.

CHAIR - I understand what you say. The cost has come down at street level which is making it more readily available for more people.

Mr HINE - Alcohol is still the number one drug; cannabis is still up there above ice, but ice has that horrible effect on people. We need to educate people.

Mr MULDER - It is really the psychotic effect - the anger issues.

Mr HINE - Yes, and that feeling of invincibility. We understand it causes some issues. Smithton had that fire in relation to ice - whereas a community response to what ice is doing - and we see that it is increasing in popularity. Overall, the same number of drugs are probably being used in the community. About 33 per cent of people charged are using ice or an ice related offence. We cannot rest our way out of this problem. We have to have a community response to it because our kids have to understand and see what it does to them and what it does to families. It will kill you, it will change you, it will destroy your life and they are not too harsh words. They are reality of what ice can do.

In rural communities where you have a lot of farm workers, labourers, or whatever occupation, it is a small community and those small numbers of people using affect the whole community, so we have to make sure we have a total response to it. We are developing something in consultation with the Government about our response to ice, so I might hand over to Assistant Commissioner Adams.

Ms ADAMS - We have had some success in targeting the high end dealers who are trafficking these illicit substances. We will continue to have a focus on that disruption; it is around disrupting their supply. Being an island state, we have some advantages and we need to ensure we have some robust practices in place. That will mean working in collaboration with some of our other law enforcement partners to work together to effect some success in that area.

The commissioner is right about the level of methamphetamine use in Tasmania. With the illicit substances, the user groups tell us there has not been an increase in illicit substances in Tasmania. There has been a transfer of people moving to meth and that has been because it is highly addictive. It is causing a greater level of concern to the families and those who are affected by it.

From a policing perspective, we play one important role in trying to disrupt the supply, but we also need to work with our other government partners and with the broader community in being able to tackle this problem.

CHAIR - In response from the Deputy Commissioner, it crosses over into another portfolio of Health to some degree and it has been put that it may be a bit of strategy, rather than having people go to rehabilitation at a later time, to target the problem first up, more quickly, to try to get those people out of that. Do you agree with that?

Mr HIDDING - I do and so does the Minister for Education and so does the Minister for Health. All of us are working on this issue.

CHAIR - The Minister for Health was rather ambivalent about that yesterday, I have to say.

Mr HIDDING - Why?

CHAIR - About the proposition. I was surprised but we are not going to give it up.

Mr MULDER - The idea was about early intervention and behaviour. People who are involved in aggressive behaviour, the idea is that you cannot force people to rehabilitate but you can create a space for them to reassess themselves and that is not created by bailing them out the next morning. The idea was we will do it and there was some debate yesterday. I am not going to put you on the spot, it is a health problem, and you cannot force people to rehabilitate. I note this morning the Attorney-General is in the press saying we are going to force sex offenders through rehabilitation -

Mr HIDDING - It is very much an ongoing discussion with Government.

Mr MULDER - We would like you to consider, for example, mandatory rehabilitation rather than detention for people who are in that particular situation even if it is for a month, even if there is a guarantee of job security.

Mr HIDDING - It is a very fertile area of public discussion but there are civil rights as well. We have a Mental Health Act where you have compulsory incarceration essentially.

Ms FORREST - Treatment under the Mental Health Act.

Mr HIDDING - Treatment that you cannot get away from.

Mr MULDER - We get the education thing time and time again and we also get all this demonising and there are some high functioning net users around if the former ambulance officers took the lead. There is a question about intervention in those cases where it is spilling into unacceptable behaviour and education but, as we have discovered with every other illicit substance we have dealt with, we are doomed to failure unless we start to do some really rapid early intervention.

CHAIR - It does seem it is there and it will be a Cabinet discussion and you will be one.

Mrs HISCUTT - This is related to organised crime and armed robbery. Your performance information on page 149 says total firearm-related incidents has gone up a little but by about eight and that has included all sorts of things like discharging firearms, and firearms used as a weapon, so has there been more or less armed robberies? Do Forensic Science Services Tasmania play a part in trying to grab the people who steal weapons?

Mr HIDDING - Forensic Science is a very busy field of endeavour. I was pleased to be hosted to a visit there some time ago and they are very busy indeed. For the period 1 July 2014 through to 30 April 2015 Tasmania Police recorded 33 armed robberies including seven attempted armed robberies and two aggravated car jacking offences. At 30 April 2015 Tasmania Police had

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resolved 82 per cent of the armed robberies recorded in the reporting period with offenders charge for 25 incidents.

For that period, knives were used in 14 armed robberies as the most commonly used weapon, firearms have been used in 5, 15 per cent of armed robberies. Private dwellings are the most used location for armed robberies. For the period 1 July 2014 to 30 April 2015 there were 13 offences recorded and the best deterrent to people who attempted armed robberies is the high likelihood of being detected and charged. Tasmania Police is committed to achieving these high clearance rates.

Mrs HISCUTT - Minister, are you saying that firearm offences in the private dwelling setting is the highest rate? A home invasion using a firearm, is that what you are saying?

Mr HIDDING - Private dwellings were the most used locations for armed robberies.

Mr HINES - If we look at some of the figures where a firearm is used as a weapon in an incident, in 2010-11 there were 42 matters; in 2011-12, 45 matters; in 2012-13, 54 matters; in 2013-14, 48 matters; but up until the end of March this year it is 23.

Mrs HISCUTT - It has dropped dramatically this year.

Mr HINES - It is going down. We have a couple of months to go but it is dropping down and I have actually looked at unlawful discharge, where a firearm has been discharged, and in 2010-11 it was 5; in 2011-12, 11; in 2012-13, 8; 2013-14, 22; and for up until the end of March it is 12.

Mr HIDDING - Would you put a lot of that down as accidental or deliberate?

Ms FORREST - Do you mean for discharge of firearm?

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes. Is it someone in their backyard cleaning their weapon and it has gone off, or is it deliberate and ill-intentioned?

Mr HINES - It is a deliberate incident and that is why it is reported to us. A lot of the time someone will hear a motor vehicle backfire and they think it is a firearm. This is where an offence is being created.

Mrs HISCUTT - If it is going down, what do you put that down to? The current laws?

Mr HIDDING - A change of government.

Laughter.

Mrs HISCUTT - The Forensic Science Services help out an awful lot.

Mr HINES - The Forensic Science Service Tasmania does a fantastic job under the leadership of Laszlo Szabo; they get stronger and stronger in relation to what they do. There has been a couple of matters where the DNA has not only solved a firearms crime but also murders and various things.

Mrs HISCUTT - It is advancements in science.

Mr HINES - It is advancements; where it was a case previously where DNA could not be detected, science has actually gone on further where it was used recently in a double murder case where they can retest to find the DNA and match it to the offender. For a relatively small forensic science service, they are leaders across the country in many fields and they help solve all sorts of crimes. I cannot sing their praises enough because they are a dedicated professional bunch of scientists.

Mr HIDDING - It is a small facility but the stuff they do is amazing.

Ms FORREST - Yes, just to pick up on the point Leonie made and I was going to ask a similar question around the firearms offences, when you look at last year's budget papers, the total number of firearm-related incidents were 140 in 2011-12 and 155 in 2012-13 but here it is only 60 - the numbers do not line up at all. There actual in 2012-13 was 155, the actual in this year's budget paper for the same period is 60. There are footnotes but none that explain it; there is no different measure according to this. I am interested in why there is the difference. If you started counting, as the member for Montgomery was referring to, incidents involving firearms discharge, you would think it would actually go up. Can you explain what is going on here with this?

Mr HINES - A couple of years ago firearms, whether it is a theft or the use of firearms during a crime, there was certainly an issue and we developed a firearms action plan in relation to how we dealt with firearms matters. We have taken a strong stance to every time a firearm has been used, whether it is a storage offence or whether someone was caught with a firearm. We have increased our number of inspections in relation to firearms theft and use as well.

There is a grey market out there, we know that, but we have had a number amnesties right across the state and we have had a lot of firearms handed in. I think it is over 500 firearms that have been handed in to police which would have been out there before. Sometimes storage is an issue, we have seen it cropping up there where burglaries occur and firearms storage has been an issue where they have been stolen. Assistant Commissioner Adams is actually putting into place a strategy in relation to firearms crimes so I am not sure if you want to hear about some of those issues.

Ms FORREST - Not so much, I am more interested to know if this is an error in this year's budget papers or are we using a different measurement entirely which makes it impossible to compare, if that is the case.

In 2012-13, in the budget papers this year it says 60 incidents, and the actual for 2012-13 - exactly the same year - is 155. I can show you last year's budget papers and check on what I am talking about there.

Mr HINE - We will have to have a bit of a look at it. I noticed the footnote probably does not cover that issue but I can certainly give you the number of firearms incidents over the number of years. I am not sure if it is an issue of reporting or it is a different report, but I am happy to take that on notice and get back to you on that.

Ms FORREST - Okay, yes.

Mr HIDDING - Do you want us to take that on notice?

Ms FORREST - Yes, I would. Clearly something has changed to the way it has been counted before; it looks like there has been a massive drop-off in the number of firearm-related incidents.

Mr HINE - We will certainly explore it.

Ms FORREST - With the increase in police numbers, you mentioned in your opening comments, minister, about the Cold Case Unit, which has been a bit active again of late, from media reports at least. Has the increase in police numbers actually allowed that to be ramped up a bit, and what is the activity going on in that area?

Mr HIDDING - The cold cases capacity is in the Serious Organised Crime Unit and I will ask the commissioner to answer that.

Mr HINE - The Serious Organised Crime Unit has been formed as a result of the increase in numbers. There are certain personnel in there, with a target of getting 14 personnel in there by the end of the term of this Government.

Mr HIDDING - There is a senior inspector as well.

Mr HINE - A very experienced inspector in Glenn Lathey, who is one of our most experienced in this area. We have also put fraud and e-crime within that area as well, to make sure they are looking at these things. There is a total of 13 in that area at the moment. One of their responsibilities is looking at cold cases as such but they are actually not reviewing any at the moment. Assistant Commissioner Adams chairs a cold case review committee, which all cold cases go to and various actions are taken in relation to them. Every cold case is active, we do not close it until it has actually been solved. That is then dealt with by the committee which Assistant Commissioner Adams chairs. Some may be reviewed by the Serious Organised Crime Unit. We had one just recently reviewed by another state's police unit to get a fresh set of eyes and we are following up some of those issues.

Ms FORREST - How many cases are actually open?

Mr HINE - Assistant Commissioner Adams should be able to give that answer, without too much pressure.

Ms ADAMS - There are 30 that we have at the moment, in terms of review, they are in various stages. Some we are preparing to go towards the coroner, for the matter to be considered by a coroner. Some are actually for review in the districts. As the commissioner has mentioned, we had one previously go to Victoria and had some experts review our investigation on that particular matter. We are always consistently looking at these cold cases; with the passage of time, forensic science techniques change, as we have already heard. Also, witnesses and their alliances that they previously had also sometimes change. We are always looking for those vulnerabilities which will allow us to instigate another review.

Ms FORREST - I guess memory over a time is a bit of challenge in that area though. If someone who a witness was not willing to speak out against dies, they are able to then perhaps do so, but their memory would then be potentially -

Mr HIDDING - Swings and roundabouts, I guess. If they have been sitting on a secret and they are prepared to talk about it now, that could just be it.

Ms FORREST - Yes.

Mr HINE - The recent Standage double murder trial was probably a good example, where he was charged a number of years after the two murders. There was a successful prosecution and conviction of that person as well. The main message out of this is, there is no cold case that is closed, sometimes they have a different aspect to what is active in the investigation but we keep them open until we either put them before the coroner or we can solve them.

Ms FORREST - I just want to go to fraud and e-crime. You do not appear to have a performance indicator around that unless it captured in one of the others. Can you just tell us the extent of this as an issue for Tasmania, and what are the real challenges in this area, without giving away any state secrets?

Mr HINE - Fraud and e-Crime was established some time ago. We know that internet fraud and e-crime is growing right across the world. We have seen some serious issues relating to how the internet is used to commit crime. Between 1 July and 31 March, they investigated 51 matters. Of these 51 matters, 28 resulted in court proceedings, 14 resulted in international referrals and nine were from other states. Obviously, it takes specialised services rather than a general CIB investigation. It is a very specialised area and it needs to work closely with our other law enforcement departments, whether it is the Australian Federal Police, Customs or the Taxation Department, or whatever it needs to work with as well. Our Computer Forensic Unit support these units. At the moment, we are seeing that increase - seizure by police has seen a 52 per cent increase in the use of computer forensic units. Whether it is a smartphone, a tablet - whatever - that is increasing the number of crimes committed in these areas.

Ms FORREST - The internet, by its nature, is the world-wide web. Does our law or our capacity in this area suffer from limitation, from being constrained by the legislation that you have to operate under, across jurisdictions, onto the mainland and internationally?

Mr HINE - Yes. There, as you quite rightly pointed out, the world-wide web is used to commit these crimes. Whether it is from European or Asian countries, including China - whatever it is - people sit back and commit these crimes, whether it is by hacking or using a darknet. A darknet is an internet within an internet. I noticed a conviction relating to Silk Road, which could be classed as a darknet. The challenges exist for every law enforcement agency across the world to be able to track these offenders down and successfully prosecute them.

The Australian and New Zealand communities are becoming at making sure we have a centralised approach to deal with these issues. We know the internet is used for things such as child pornography and drug-dealing. The internet is used for a lot of great things, but it is also used for a lot of evil crimes as well. We need to become more sophisticated at using it as well.

Ms FORREST - Do you have much to do with scams and things like that? People being told they have just won the lottery who overlook the fact they did not buy a ticket?

Mr HINE - A lot of those are reported. Obviously we report it to our law enforcement partners as well. There is the SCAMwatch webpage, and all those things. People can get information from things like that - 'If it sounds too good to be true, it is going to be too good to be

true'. Unfortunately, whether it is a cold-call - you know, someone asking you to log onto your computer and give all sorts of passwords over to them - whether it is your credit card or identity theft, all those things, people need to become more sophisticated in how they protect their identity, their internet signatures, and the various information they share about themselves. Our kids also need to be educated in this. Too many 10-, 11- and 12-year olds who are on the internet as well. We have to be extremely careful. At the moment we have the physical-beat police, but we also need to have cyber-beat police.

Ms FORREST - What is the role of the police in education as well as the practicalities of trying to make people aware and to deal with the challenges the internet presents?

Mr HINE - Law enforcement has a big role in that. We work closely with the Australian Crime Commission; I sit on the board of that as well. The commission is doing various things to protect people. Various scams go on - whether it is through superannuation, various other fraud - and every day billions and billions of dollars pass across the internet. Only a small percentage of that needs to be intercepted by crime gangs - and we know they are there - and it a lot of people can be affected. We have an education role, a law enforcement role, and we have a role in working with our other partners. Assistant Commissioner Adams seats on various committees that deal with some of these issues. It is growing problem. We have to keep educating. Through our Facebook site we have put up lots of different hints.

Ms FORREST - I guess the other where this is growing is cyberbullying. It is hard to prevent cyberbullying except through education, but what other measures can be taken? Do the police have a role in that?

Mr HINE - Cyberbullying is real; it is out there. It is an issue for police, but it is a greater issue for the community and parents and the individuals themselves. We do not have the resources every time someone says something on Facebook to go and actually investigate it.

We will certainly give advice. We will certainly have a look at it to see whether there has been a breach of the law as well. It is a growing area. We have looked at it and we have developed various policies around it. However, at the end of the day, what may constitute bullying in someone's mind may not be against the law. Again, we can give advice. It is about good parenting skills and good education skills. People say things on Facebook and various other social media that they -

Ms FORREST - Wouldn't say to their face?

Mr HINE - Would not say to their face. We are in that space; we understand that space, but we also have to take a realistic approach to it because we will never have the resources to investigate everyone.

Ms ADAMS - We have joined with the Australian Federal Police on an education program called ThinkUKnow, which teaches teenagers about cyberbullying and cybercrime.

We will work with the Australian Federal Police and the Neighbourhood Watch groups to deliver that program into schools that wish to receive that program. Obviously we are also relying on other forms of education to create an awareness around this issue and correct behaviours when people are engaging with others through the internet.

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Ms FORREST - Constituents have come to me about this matter, and I have had good cooperation from the police. I am not really sure how this fits.

Mr HINE - We are happy to give advice. If people think they are being threatened or bullied, we are happy to give advice.

I forgot to mention about the Australian Cybercrime Online Reporting Network - ACORN - which was launched recently. People can actually report matters online; these matters then go to CrimTrac, where they are triaged. If offences have been committed, they will be sent to the appropriate jurisdictions. That is online at the moment. There has been lots of advertising -

Ms FORREST - Someone actually monitors that all the time?

Mr HINE - It is what we call triaged. So if something involves Tasmania, it will go to Tasmania for -

Ms FORREST - So how does the general public know about that?

Mr HINE - There has been a bit of advertising on it. I know I have seen various posters on it; it has also been advertised online. I think ACORN is going to go on our Facebook page as well.

Mr MULDER - Social media advertising sounds like a good idea.

Mr HINE - That is where it is actually being targeted, on our Facebook page. Again, it is one of these things that takes a little while to get -

Ms FORREST - You need a few sharers, that end up sharing your page.

Mr HINE - Yes, that is right.

CHAIR - Minister, we are conscious of time. How are we going now?

Mr FARRELL - Yes, thank you. Minister, there has been some concern in regional areas, particularly around the Central Highlands area, about the law and order and policing issues. I know it is a hard thing to juggle when you have an area with a small population that swells substantially over public holidays, long weekends and that type of thing. Because of all the vacant properties, there is an increase in theft.

Some people feel that the rostering of police in the area is an issue. Sometimes on police officer will be on leave and then one will go off sick, and it leaves the area residents vulnerable. I am trying to ascertain what is contained in this Budget to try to help address that. I know it is something that you are aware of. It is a bit of a concern. Not only police services, but for other emergency services in these remote areas.

Mr HIDDING - You would agree - because we share that area as members of parliament - that the withdrawal of the last volunteer ambulance in that area destabilised people's thinking. They did not feel as safe once that had gone. That has led to discussions about other services. I have engaged with the commissioner on a number of occasions on this question and I have had various briefs on that matter. We will continue to talk to people who are concerned but inevitably

there are rostering things with police officers. Three police officers on the fringes of this area. Essentially in the middle of it, the other one is Bothwell and Bushy Park. What is the right number? I do not know. Ideally, to have three on all the time would be the go but in human resource terms it is not possible all the time. Perhaps the commissioner might like to expand on that.

Mr HINE - Yes, it is one of those things right around the state. What is your rostering model compared to a community that grows. We are also looking at that. Mr Cowan is looking at a project to say, where we are going to put these extra 108 people. Which community expands, which community contracts, and therefore you do not need the same resources. It is trying to get that resourcing model right for the right times. With policing or any emergency services, you cannot always roster for an unexpected event.

Mr FARRELL - The area itself is a complex issue, because people go there to holiday. They are aware that maybe the police presence is not that strong at times and there is some fairly heavy partying and it is an area for hunting and shooting. There are a number of factors coming into play that increase the risks. There is also the concern about the crashes on the roads with the tourist traffic. That is a fairly major concern for a lot of people, the response time.

Mr HINE - I can only encourage the community to keep reporting those. If it is not reported to us we cannot react. We would much rather those concerns are reported to us when an incident occurs. It is part of our overall planning as to where we are going to put these resources. As the communities expand and contract, crime rates, calls for assistance rates, all those things we need to take into account. It is a fair point you make.

Mr FARRELL - On another related issue raised last year, and it has come into play since then. The impact of removing the federal police from the Hobart airport. What impact that has had, if any, on the Tasmanian police force?

Mr HINE - It is was something we were not happy with but it was a Federal Budget measure last time. It was pointed out to us we are not an international airport. I find it interesting because it would suggest if we were to be, one day after an extension of the runway, what sort of case would we have? I would serve notice on them that we do. For Tasmania Police there has been a transition period. They have managed that period well. I will ask the commissioner to furnish us with advice on that.

Mr HINE - We have taken over the full policing of the airport. We have had a couple of major events in relation in which the AFP did assist, in the Chinese President's visit and also during the International World Cup Cricket. Between 21 October 2014 and 31 March 2015, there were a couple of issues of stealing and family arguments. Overall, nine instances where police had to attend. A low number but we still do regular patrols. We have had a number training programs to make sure police officers who need to attend are familiar with the airport environment. They are dealing with a totally different environment. There are different laws they need to be aware of. I echo the minister, no-one liked this. I wrote to the AFP Commissioner to reconsider this. I know the minister did.

There is no direct threat to the airport. It is important to make that distinction and if there was any change to a threat environment, we would be talking to our policing partners, including the AFP. There is no threat in this current environment at all, so it is still a safe airport and we

want to make sure people enjoy the airport environment and feel safe but we are monitoring it very closely.

Mr FARRELL - That has not had a major effect on either your budget or your resources? You have managed with existing?

Mr HINE - Yes, but it was not ideal. I will not hide from that, to have the 28 AFP police officers down there was great, and they did a fantastic job. I wish I had them still down there to do that policing role. I am not going to hide away from that fact. It gives us extra duties so if I had my choice I would much rather have them. I have said that publicly and I will continue to say that.

Mr MULDER - I have a couple of questions going back to e-crime. We all get scams and I went to a SCAMwatch website and I thought, this is great, I can simply flick this scam without opening anything else, across to the SCAMwatch website. It is just an e-mail address and there is no response to it, and I am wondering whether at the national level with your scamming thing, how easy it would be for people to flick scams to something like SCAMwatch so you could send them through. Has any thought been given to that, or am I missing a link somewhere that we could be using?

Mr HINE - I guess it comes down to those who flick them through and how big is the database and all those things so it is mainly about information getting to an agency that can update SCAMwatch. Our people tell us, if you get an email and you do not know where it has come from, delete it. Do not open it, do not transfer it, because you could be transferring a virus across. I hear what you are saying about how you inform SCAMwatch. I am not aware of it but I am not involved in that.

Mr MULDER - My other issue is credit card fraud. I was in Montevideo. I paid my hotel bill with my credit card and my pin number in a secure hotel. No-one saw me enter the pin number. Within 20 minutes there were three separate hits in keys on a city in the Philippines on that credit card, which hit my daily maximum, which was three of the hits. The Visa one was with the maximum allowed in Philippine local currency. I went back to the bank who wrote me a nice little letter saying they would make an exception this time, but you have to be more careful with your credit card. Then they sent me one in the mail that is a swipe and go. But my point is, is there any obligation nationally or internationally for the banks to report those sorts of transactions and if not, I would have thought from the law enforcement perspective, you would like a handle on those sorts of transactions, so you could do a police investigation.

There are so many of them, that no-one could individually investigate them despite what the bank says. It is one of those things where if there is a week where someone is doing this on everyone who books out of that hotel in Montevideo, and they are all turning up there, it would seem to be a pattern there, we might be able to go to the local police and say, 'excuse me, this is what is happening there'. It does not surprise you to discover that as you are clearing out of your hotel room, you trip over a few Filipina housemaids. If this isn't reported, perhaps we should be making some moves to get banks to oblige reporting when they suspect this sort of thing. If you do not know it is happening, you can never establish a pattern of conduct and if you cannot establish a pattern of conduct, how do you disrupt it?

Mr HINE - It has been on the agenda as well dealing with those issues. I know Assistant Commissioner Adams has some issues. I understand what you are saying but there is a well-coordinated response to some of these things.

Ms ADAMS - It is on the agenda for the crime assistant commissioners across Australia and there has been some discussion with the banks. It is going to take some negotiation and it may even take some legislation to get them to be supportive of the reporting. Obviously AUSTRAC will play a fairly important role in trying to put some of that compliance framework around them in terms of reporting because they do not want the level of credit card misuse and crime to be reported in the community. The community then starts to have concerns about the reliability and vulnerability of their own money. It is something we are certainly working with them on but it is going to take a little while.

Mr MULDER - If you put your detective hat on it would not take long, I would have thought, to have a look at the video footage from some of the ATMs, et cetera, and the local police would be on to it, but how would anyone know if no-one ever reports it.

CHAIR - Minister, we have now investigated crime pretty well. We will move on to 2.2.

Mr HIDDING - Do you mind if I place on the record an answer to a question on a previous theme?

CHAIR - Yes, you may.

Mr HIDDING - Thank you. The question was what are the numbers of police per 100 000 population. Tasmania is currently at 282 police per 100 000. The national average is 298, we are mid-range but after all our 108 are back in, we will be at 300, which will be right on the national average.

2.2 Poppy security -

Mrs HISCUTT - Minister, I note that the forward Estimates to the end of 2019 is a CPI increase, so the money is steady as it goes. Is that enough money for the police to provide support to the poppy industry? On average, about 3 000 capsules per year are stolen; last year 1 600 of them were recovered. Can you give me an update of how we went this year? How many were stolen, how many were recovered, were there any incidents, convictions or any medical emergencies?

Mr HIDDING - Year to date to 31 March this year, we were at 331 capsules stolen. It is going to be a Herculean effort to get up to last year's number, which was nearly 4 000, so this is a very good story.

Ms FORREST - They are not actually on the crops in the paddocks at the moment, so they should be all right.

Mr HIDDING - So this is a very good story. Again, I cannot think of anything that would have changed the numbers so dramatically other than a change of government but I am sure -

CHAIR - A reduction in hectares as well that has happened.

Mr HIDDING - Indeed.

Mr MULDER - And a reduction in consumer confidence perhaps.

Mr HIDDING - I will point out to the commissioner he has not recovered one of those capsules of the 331 at this stage but I can assure you he is hot on the trail. Without any levity about it that is a good result. I am not sure what is behind it, but a whole bunch of things I would have thought. As to whether the amount of money provided is enough to do the job, I will hand that over to the commissioner.

Mr HINE - Poppy security is very important to us. It is quite true what you have said, the number of hectares licensed has dropped from 28 000 in 2013-14 down to 27 000 hectares; hectares sown has dropped from 25 000 hectares in 2013-14 to 21 000 hectares this financial year; and harvested was 21 000 hectares last financial year as compared to 20 000 hectares this year. We are quite pleased with the fact we will continue to integrate that with our normal drug investigation services and make sure we have an integrated approach to poppy security as well as our various uniformed stations around that to have active patrols.

Unfortunately, we know there have been deaths in relation to this. There was a very sad occurrence in 2014 when a 26-year-old Danish tourist was found dead, and in 2012 there was another sad death. It is also about signage, security and intelligence. We certainly take this very seriously and we will continue to make sure that resources are allocated to police this as we need to.

Mrs HISCUTT - You have had no convictions on the 331 capsules because it is probably very hard to track them down.

Mr HIDDING - This year to date there is not. There were seven occasions of interference with a crop as opposed to 21 last year.

Mrs HISCUTT - It was a quiet year. Minister, have you thought about public education as opposed to putting more regulations and things onto farmers?

Mr HIDDING - Yes, but sadly it does not require much more education than in February a 26-year-old Danish tourist died as a result of this.

Mr MULDER - The death penalty is a pretty severe message, I reckon.

Mr HIDDING - It is a pretty sobering message in its own right and it followed not long after the 17-year-old died at Lewisham. Two deaths in a couple of years of people who mucked around with poppy crops is a pretty strong message.

Ms FORREST - There would be a period where that would have an effect.

Mrs HISCUTT - During the season, have you considered reminding the public of this?

Mr HINES - There is the poppy advisory board as well that has those responsibilities but it is about getting a message out there and also highlighting that they are out there. It has to get that balance as well. We have all seen the signs on the fences and all those things but occasionally

police get called to tourists wanting to take a picture in the middle of the crop when obviously it is illegal.

Mrs HISCUTT - You can do it in England though.

Mr HINE - Yes, but we need to police that as well. As you said it, was a relatively quiet year. Sometimes those messages highlight that they are out there when you are also trying to give a message. Unfortunately, the deaths are a very sad reminder to the community as well.

CHAIR - Okay. We are done on 2.2.

Mr GAFFNEY - I know there have not been any deaths this year, if the police were alerted to an area where there could be more thefts, all from one area, how do you help the poppy advisory board or how do you help monitor that? Do you then investigate if there is a certain farm or area that is being targeted? I imagine that would happen from time to time.

Mr HINE - We actually have someone who sits on the board as well. A senior officer sits on the control board.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay, if they request assistance, is that part of the relationship?

Mr HINE - It is a really good working relationship and every interference, whether it is one or 10 or 100, we will investigate to see if there is a pattern and then we have various investigative techniques to see if there is an offender in the area or what is going on in relation to it. There only has to be one interference and if we can detect it - one is pretty hard but again, it is the number of capsules stolen.

Mr GAFFNEY - It would be the advisory board or that group's responsibility to ensure that there is correct signage and whatever on the farm? The police would not have to say there is not correct signage because that should be done by the industry itself?

Mr HIDDING - That is correct.

Mr GAFFNEY - Thank you.

2.3 Fisheries Security -

Mr MULDER - I am well aware of the major exercises and the operations that occur with the commercial fishing but as a recreational fisher myself, I know full well what the take and possession limits are - the fact that you can only take so much per day and that you are only allowed to be in possession of two days' take at any given point in time. What enforcement activity occurs around the recreational areas in trying to manage possession limits? I know there are plenty of searches of commercial factories and commercial vessels. I am wondering whether there has been any attempt at the personal level to perhaps have a look in a recreational fisher's freezers, given the fact that there are a fair few with a reputation of having perhaps three years' possession supply on board.

Given the fact that the recreational fishing industry is quite a large area and it has a huge take, are there any issues? For example, I do not think there is any requirement, except for some

species, to report catches. You have no real idea of what is coming out of your fishery and also what enforcement there is about catch limits.

Mr HIDDING - As you are aware, with rock lobster there is the daily catch limit, possession limit, per number of people.

Mr MULDER - If only I could meet them.

Mr HIDDING - Yes, that is right, the chance of you finding anything. There is not a tagging system for recreational fishers but that is a matter for the minister responsible for fisheries. The Tasmanian marine police are certainly active on the water. Possibly a year or two ago I was actually boarded while underway; it was excellent, a terrific exercise. He nosed into the rear of the vessel and just stepped aboard, which was a lot of fun. He did the normal Marine and Safety Tasmania - MAST- checks. We had not been fishing but I do take that Fisheries infringement notices are absolutely able to be issues by Marine Police and would regularly be, I would have thought.

Mr MULDER - The question specifically relates to what enforcement activities are occurring about catch limits.

Mr HINE - It is about the inspections at sea, inspections on land, and various investigations as well. One case in the court just recently related to abalone, where someone was convicted of that. The work has various aspects. We did 25 000 at-sea inspections, marine offenders detectives did over a 1 000, up until the 31 March. We have the district marine people, the various stations around the sea and also the centralised marine rescue services that undertake active investigations of people who regularly exceed catch limits. We have a multi-pronged approach in relation to -

Mr MULDER - How much detection has there been, for example, of recreational fishers who exceed their possession limits?

Mr HINE - We would have to take that on notice, but we actually have figures relating to commercial -

Mr MULDER - I would be interested to know how many searches you did of recreational fishing, not vessels but homes or freezers to identify any surplus.

Mr HINE - We treat those issues a little bit like stolen property, drugs and all those things. If we have enough information, we take out a warrant. Obviously we need to search those premises as well.

Mr HIDDING - The Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment has its own compliance officer, who can, and often does, his own investigative work.

Mr MULDER - Being well embedded in the recreational fishing industry, I have yet to hear of anyone who has had their house searched, even though few of them are probably a bit suss in terms of possession. I will submit an IR next week.

Ms FORREST - Minister, the funding as line item, or the expenses, how much are you going to spend with fisheries security? I assume this covers staff and wage costs? I refer to page 146.

Mr HIDDING - Yes, it does.

Ms FORREST - Yes. There is a bit of a drop-away in the allocation of this line item for this coming year, and I assume it includes the 27th pay, but I am not sure how you are going to continue to maintain the same level of activity with less money. Maybe you have the answer for that, though.

Mr HIDDING - That is a minor reduction, but as you point out, the 27th pay is in there, but so is the pay freeze, of course. That is likely to be an internal reallocation. Can we get you that advice?

Ms FORREST - Yes.

Mr HINE - We actually took Marine Services out of a leased building and put it into a building at Glenorchy, which we had money from the Government to build. So those leasing costs have now been taken off that.

Ms FORREST - That is included in that?

Mr HINE - Yes, that is included in there. It was quite a substantial saving for us because we have a dedicated building at the Glenorchy Police Station.

Mr HIDDING - It is a very good unit out there at Glenorchy, as well.

Ms FORREST - By terms of staff levels, you are not cutting those? You are still able to maintain the same level of service?

Mr HIDDING - The same.

3.1 Traffic Policing

Ms FORREST - In terms of public policing, the member from Montgomery had a question about the number of unmarked police cars, how many and what they look like and everything.

Mr MULDER - And where they will be tonight.

Ms FORREST - And on Friday night, if you do not mind! What key challenges do you see in this area for the traffic police at the moment? Often they focus on inattentiveness, speeding or drink driving. What is the key focus at the moment?

Mr HIDDING - The question of marked and unmarked cars. From opposition, I ran a strong and successful campaign for higher visibility police. The previous minister and the commissioner at the time launched new branding for police vehicles, and invited me along as the shadow minister, which was very kind of them. Our total number of vehicles is 358, marked, unmarked and high-visibility operational vehicles, including motorcycles. It is a question for the table as to whether you would like us to put out there how many unmarked vehicles there are, for instance, operationally on the road.

Ms FORREST - I would not fussed about that -

Mr HIDDING - For instance, if there were two and you saw two in the morning, the rest of the state would know no unmarked ones would be about.

Ms FORREST - If they were unmarked, they should not be seen.

Mr MULDER - How would you know you had seen them?

Mr HIDDING - Precisely how the members saw it this morning. It pulled up with the blue lights going in the grill. That is the only way you see them, or if you recognise the copper driving it. In terms of unmarked vehicles with covert lights, radio and siren, it is fair to say there are probably half as many as marked vehicles. It is an important part of policing, particularly in CIB, as you would imagine.

Ms FORREST - So those vehicles are not just used in traffic? They are used for CIB and other police activities? The unmarked ones?

Mr HINE - In CIB, we all have unmarked vehicles, but we have sirens and lights fitted to our vehicles as well. Every vehicle that is not marked has lights, sirens and some form of communication. There are traffic cars specifically for traffic, but if they need additional unmarked cars to do a covert job or to increase the number of unmarked cars, they will go to CIB and use those cars. They are interchangeable as well. Obviously the high-visibility vehicles, of which we have 17 of, some of those are in traffic, some at stations on major highways such as Deloraine or Campbell Town. They are not traffic. There will always be that combination of high-visibility, normal-visibility and unmarked cars. We want people guessing, 'That car behind me, three behind me, could be unmarked.'

Ms FORREST - You have won the battle, I guess, when people make a decision not to speed or not to drink and drive because they know it impacts their capacity as a driver as opposed to the fact they might get caught that there might be an unmarked car behind them. Is that not learning to focus our attention in many ways? I am talking about attitudinal change.

Mr HIDDING - That is true. It is a mix of policing. Some people complain about fixed-speed cameras, and yet on the Tasman Bridge, when everybody knows there are fixed-speed cameras, it is still the number one -

Mr MULDER - Revenue raiser in the state -

Mr HIDDING - The number one speed-modifier in Tasmania.

Mr MULDER - No, it is not a speed modifier, minister. That is the point. It does not.

Mr HIDDING - Go figure. If so many people speed through it knowing it is there, imagine how many people would speed if we did not have the thing.

Ms FORREST - On the off-chance that it may be there.

Mr HIDDING - It is a mix of covert, overt, advertised locations and highway work. I think the highway patrols are good. However, many of our road crash statistics are on rural and regional roads. Reasonably, police operations particularly emphasise rural and regional roads. In

policing, we have to hunt where the ducks are. If there are crashes on these roads, they are usually related to speed, inattention - all the standard things. That requires policing. We have a very nimble police service and a commissioner who reacts very strongly to these matters.

Ms FORREST - Going back to my question about what the focus is. Is there a focus or is it just a broad-brush sort of approach?

Mr HINE - We know the main areas that kill people or seriously injure people are speeding, inattention, seatbelts, and drink driving. They are the main killers on our roads. We focus on those that cause serious injury on our roads. You mentioned attitudinal change. You try to jump in the car with school-age kids without putting your seatbelt on - they are the first ones to say 'Why aren't you putting your seatbelt on?'

With modern cars, especially the front seat, there are beepers and things. They are not in back seats of some cars yet, but if you want your five star ANCAP rating, they have to have them in the back as well.

Tasmania had the oldest fleet in Australia in but as those cars go further on, they will exceed some of those ANCAP ratings. As we get more modern cars into our area, and from a government point of view, they have to meet the five-star rating before they come into the government services. When they go back into the community that is another standard. It is about attitudinal change. It is about focusing on the things that we know kill and seriously injure people and it is about high visibility policing on our roads.

Ms FORREST - With drug testing on the road, you have some figures for the number that you are doing. Is there an intention to significantly increase those tests? It seems to be a growing problem and you have identified that with comments around ice and other drugs. Can you test for ice, particularly in that same test, or do you require a separate test?

Mr HINE - Donna can add to this, but we have increased the oral fluid testing we are doing on the road. We are seeing an increase in ice being detected because if there is a serious and fatal accident, we have to take a blood test and that goes to FSST to test. If there is a drug test done on the side of the road, it needs to go to FSST to test, as we are seeing an increase in that. I can give you some figures on some of the things that FSST are starting to see in speed and ice in drivers involved -

Ms FORREST - Speed being the drug, as opposed to the velocity.

Mr HINE - Yes. Between 1 July 2014 and 31 March, of drivers involved in serious traffic crashes, 16 per cent with methamphetamine which includes speed and ice. If we have a look at what went through FSST between that same period with positive oral fluid testing, about 45 per cent showed up methamphetamine, which included the drug speed and ice. Donna can give you some figures about how many people we are testing.

Ms ADAMS - For the year to date at 31 March, we have done 2 414 OFTs, drug driving tests, and of those, 1 356 were positive and required further testing by Forensic Science Tasmania. So 56 per cent of those that we drug tested returned a positive test.

Ms FORREST - Are you particularly targeting those you think may be, rather than doing -

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Ms ADAMS - During the last 18 months we changed our approach. We found that the large scale random breath testing sites were only getting around 15 per cent of the drivers going through those sites who were affected by drugs or alcohol.

Over 50 per cent of those we pulled over through mobile targeted patrols, were under the influence of drugs or alcohol. We have completely changed our strategy to be more targeted and to look at the locations that we think people will be tempted to drive whilst under the influence. Some of those results would indicate that the strategy is working.

Ms FORREST - Much better value for money.

Mr HIDDING - The operation in Launceston the other evening, middle of the night. Very well targeted.

Ms FORREST - You rely on your intelligence to target those opportunities.

Mr HINE - It is amazing how, whether from the random test sites where it is a traditional stop, everyone is pulled over, compared with the mobile random target. That is yielding greater number of drivers who are either drug driving or alcohol driving. That is where the evidence based strategies come in - 'okay, let us change our strategies', as Donna said.

Ms FORREST - The 1300 number, or whatever number it is, it is in my phone.

Mr HINE - Yes, 1300 444.

Ms FORREST - Where you can dob in someone who is doing particularly unsafe things on the road which we do see a lot of and I am sure the members for Montgomery and Mersey do, and the same down the Midlands too. Is that a process that is working to catch those people and are they others vehicles or are they just being bloody idiots?

Mr HINE - Yes, 1300 444 is the number to contact the Police for any reason or report. The non-urgent number. Dangerous or negligent driving, we have specific policy in place on how we deal with that. We are not going to get everyone because there might not be a police vehicle about, but we will follow it up, we will investigate it further. As an example: in 2009, the horror year, on 9 July, when we had nine people killed. The month before that we had about 400 calls a month reporting various issues to Police, including driving. The month after that, we had over 900, so people were starting to report those matters to us. We encourage people to use that number, with a hands-free or pull over, to ring the police and report the registration number, where they are and which direction they are going in, so we can intercept them.

Ms FORREST - If you are driving, you cannot often get the registration number, so it is always the red car but I cannot tell what the make is.

Mr HINE - Any information is better than no information.

Mr MULDER - On that point, dash cams are becoming really popular. Is there any capacity for people to upload a dash cam somewhere?

Mr HINE - Dealing with dash cams and uploading information, you have to have a pretty robust storage and at the moment we have not. We would much rather, if they have an issue they

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want to report to the Police - and Facebook has been used - people come in and hand it over or let us download -

Mr MULDER - Hand over on a memory stick, or something.

Mr HINE - Yes, in a controlled environment so we would encourage people, if they have an issue they want to report to police and they have it on their dash cams, we will investigate it. There were a couple of matters that were recently reported to us, and the person was fined.

Ms FORREST - Year to date, serious and fatal crashes?

Mr HINE - End of April, fatal and serious crashes was 228 last year, and 225 this year but that is where we are at the end of April.

Ms FORREST - And fatalities in that?

Mr HINE - Fatal crashes, 33 last year; 30 this year, but that is not to the end of April.

Ms FORREST - One day can change everything.

Mr HINE - That one day in July 2009 was horrible

Mrs HISCUTT - Back to these unmarked cars. Does that include pursuit cars?

Mr HINE - We do not have pursuit cars. We do not use that terminology. We have the high visibility cars which is that extra marking. We have 17 of those and we have the ones with normal marking and then the unmarked vehicles, but we do not classify them as pursuit cars. They are either a patrol car or high visibility.

Mrs HISCUTT - A couple of years ago, when police pulled up a car, and he was shot. What protection equipment do you have to help yourself in the field?

Mr HINE - We have almost completed the roll-out of our multipurpose vests which have, not only a ballistic capability to defeat all hand guns and some long arms, but also a stab resistant capability. We are well down the track of issuing every operational police officer one of those, which will be worn at all times.

Mrs HISCUTT - So the traffic police operation fleet, they will have that?

Mr HINE - Yes. Most of them would have them now. They are a load-bearing unit as well. We will have one for everyone who is in the field, by the end of this financial year, about \$1 500 each. Again, that gives the police officer protection from sharp objects, most firearms and how they carry their equipment. We believe it is a great safety initiative to keep our police officers safe.

Mrs HISCUTT - Chair, I have one really curly one for minister. How long can an abandoned car stay on the side of the road? There are three or four on the side of the road going down the coast. Who is responsible for removing these abandoned vehicles?

Mr HIDDING - It is reasonably complex. You can park your car for a fairly long time before people need to move it. You are right, on some occasions it is astonishing how long they can stay there. Sadly, the problem comes about because it costs more to take it to a junk dealer than what you get for it. It is cheaper to leave the thing on the side of the road.

Ms FORREST - And hope someone will strip it for you?

Mr HIDDING - Pretend it was never yours.

Mr GAFFNEY - Minister, is it correct sometimes that vehicle may be the result of an investigation too? If it has been a stolen vehicle, for example, and they cannot find the owner of it. That has caused a delay in its removal because they do not know who to contact.

Mr HIDDING - It is a reasonably complex area. State Growth has more to say about that.

Mr HINE - Clamping is an issue. We clamp it, and it stays on the side of the road or it is stolen. If it stays there for a time, we report it to State Growth or the local government, which are then responsible for removing that vehicle.

Mrs HISCUTT - There are two or three down the Midland Highway.

Mr GAFFNEY - That is the interesting thing. If it is on the Midland Highway, which is not a council road, it is State Growth?

Mr HIDDING - It is State Growth. The road manager. It is a national highway, but we are the road managers. Eventually, State Growth is required to act but certainly not overnight.

CHAIR - Are we done on traffic policing?

Mr MULDER - The targeting work on random breath tests seems to be working quite well. You can still maintain a target detection rate, which we do not have yet, but we have had a 25 per cent drop, which is obviously a move from random breath testing to moving violations.

In relation to speeding offences, particularly the ones for which infringements are issued, whether by camera or hand-held speed detectors, can we get some data - if you do not have it, I am happy to take it on notice - broken down into the various speed ranges for which infringements are issued? If possible, also by road type so we can see where these offences are being committed.

Mr HIDDING - We will take those on notice.

CHAIR - We now move to 4.2 which is State Security and Rescue Operations.

Output Group 4 Emergency Management

4.2 State Security and Rescue Operations

Mr HIDDING - We have Mr Mike Brown, Chief Fire Officer, and Mr Andrew Lea, Director of the State Emergency Services.

Mrs HISCUTT - In the 2015-16 Estimates, the money allocated jumps by about \$4 million. The footnote says that this was to increase the support to the community, investigation of crime and traffic policy, et cetera. Can you tell me what sort of support to the community? Where did most of that \$4 million go?

Mr HIDDING - I will ask Todd to speak to that. He has some details on the helicopter costings.

Mr CRAWFORD - The increase of \$4 million against Output 4.2 is a reflection of the transfer of the costs associated with the police rescue helicopter. It used to be recorded against Output 1.1, support to the community, and we have moved it against Output 4 to keep a closer eye on where it sits, in terms of responsibility.

Mrs HISCUTT - So what other sorts of supports to the community? Is that not really involved in that?

Mr CRAWFORD - No, not really.

Mrs HISCUTT - As far as your search and rescue activities go - and I do admire you people - have there been any big incidences or anything you want to report for this year? How you are getting on?

Mr HIDDING - It is not a question, it is an extraordinary capability - the very good people from RotorLift, and the organisation - it is not an SES matter, is it?

Mr HINE - No, the helicopter is not SES as such. The helicopter is actually administered through the department as a whole. A number of flying hours are allocated to the helicopter. For example, for financial year until 31 March 2014, there were 365 flying hours; in the same period for this year, it is 297 flying hours.

It is a very professional service; it is used a lot. Search-and-rescue situations, up until 31 March last year, were 145 hours; this year, they are 151 hours. Police operations have 27 hours compared to 23, and training is down, from 86 to 39. Ambulance Tasmania, which is now contributing to the use of the helicopter, has gone from 65 hours up to 69 hours. AMSTAR, which is when the Australian Federal Police use is activated - for searching for an aircraft or boat - has gone from 42 hours to 14 hours.

Mr HIDDING - In Ambulance Tasmania, the recognition is now that the helicopter is very much part of the ambulance effort. For instance, the member for Derwent asked about the central highlands, where the last volunteer ambulance has been withdrawn. One area of comfort is that the helicopter is even more available to that whole area if there is a road crash or an accident. They are more likely to be tasks for the helicopter now the volunteer service is no longer there. So the system can respond to changing circumstances.

I am aware, and I have spoken to operators of the helicopter and policing services in other states, that our guys are pretty extraordinary because they have to work in amazing conditions, often icy conditions, where they have to go up high over mountains. A lot of their work is done in times of really awkward weather, when people are lost in the bush.

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Mr MULDER - We have some of the worst terrain in the country.

Mr HIDDING - Yes, some of the worst terrain in the world, which they have to fly over and hover down into, to put personnel on the ground. I am aware that RotorLift itself was running Incident Flight Rules - IFR - training, which is basically doing it in the dark, with your eyes closed, except for instruments. Learning how to do that in Tasmania, means we are the best at it because we have had to be. It is not like it is in Queensland, where you follow the coast down; in Tasmania during the evening, we have to be very specialist and we are.

Mr MULDER - That is why the Defence Force does its navigation -

Mr HIDDING - Do they?

Mr MULDER - They do.

Mrs HISCUTT - This state security item also relates to counterterrorism and terrorist threats. Here in Parliament House, we cannot use the same doors we used to. Minister, are you able to talk about of the some of the things you have put into place in this state to deal with that sort of threat?

Mr HIDDING - Deputy Commissioner Tilyard is here; he is responsible for counterterrorism.

The Parliament House matter was in response to a matter in the Parliament in Ottawa, and sadly every time there is such an event somewhere in the world, the rest of the world has to react. Officers of this Parliament have done the right thing, in my view.

Mrs HISCUTT - I may be a bit ignorant but I would have thought Tasmania was reasonably - not safe and secure but a low target. What do you have in place under this state security?

Mr TILYARD - Particularly when the national threat level for terrorism was increased to high in September last year, we commenced working with other government agencies and critical infrastructure to review all of our security arrangements, particularly for public buildings. Parliament was one of the locations where we did security assessments and made certain recommendations as to how the security arrangements could be enhanced.

It was as the minister has said, partially in response to incidents overseas, particularly in Canada and the United Kingdom, and also partially because of the situation in Australia as well where there was not intelligence on a specific threat as such but the general threat of terrorism was increasing because of what was happening particularly overseas in the Middle East, in Syria and Iraq.

Mrs HISCUTT - Did you apply those sorts of things to police homes and stations around the state?

Mr TILYARD - We developed some additional protocols to enhance the safety of people both at work and at home.

Mrs HISCUTT - That would include ambulance people as well, does it?

Mr TILYARD - We did circulate information -

Mr HIDDING - Anyone in uniform.

Mr HINE - The specific threat in relation to police went from medium to high. The threat level for other emergency services is still low.

Mrs HISCUTT - It is graded?

Mr HINE - Yes, it is graded so we have circulated that information. I know the chief officer has circulated some safety messages to his people. While it is important to note there is no specific threat to Tasmania, the police are at high and other emergency services workers are still at low.

Mrs HISCUTT - I have noticed he talks about sea and air search and rescue operations. Is this the time to mention the boat or do we leave that to capital investments?

Mr HIDDING - That is a capital investment, yes.

Mrs HISCUTT - Speaking of water safety, does Tasmania Police have any arrangements with other bodies like surf life saving clubs and things like that?

Mr HIDDING - Surf Life Saving Tasmania is the key volunteer organisation which is now the only one left in Tasmania because the Australian Coast Guard is leaving Tasmania. They still had a bit of a presence. There is only one body now which is much cleaner for everybody and one set of standards to adhere to, one set of insurance. I had the pleasure on Saturday of opening an extension at the Dodges Ferry VMR - Volunteer Marine Rescue - unit. It is probably the benchmark for the seven around the state, very good operation that works closely with Tasmania Police and regularly take training with the police on the water. There is \$100 000 this Government makes available to Surf Life Saving Tasmania to be distributed around the VMRs for their activities. Particularly however, we are asking those organisations to raise their training and due diligence in terms of their capability on the water. We still ask the community of Tasmania to be very involved with their local VMRs in fundraising and all that is required to do but we are providing, for the first time, a substantial amount of money to seven active VMRs.

Mrs HISCUTT - Minister, I would have thought when it came to sea rescue there would have been a large input from fishing boats and people like that. When anyone is out on a boat and goes over, it is always the fishermen who are the first there. Do you have any arrangement with them?

Mr HIDDING - Tasmania Police has a standing relationship with people of the commercial fishing fleet.

Mr HINE - Our teams play the coordinating role in relation to coordinating sea rescues. They coordinate with any fishing vessels or any other close vessels which are in the area and redirect them to go and look at the situation. We have the primary responsibility closer to the shore, but beyond a certain threshold AMSA has the responsibility to coordinate the search and will assist in that search.

Mr HIDDING - It is a well-practised national approach to sea search and rescue by AMSA.

CHAIR - I have a question regarding the coordination of emergency response units and this issue was topical not so long ago. I noticed the Budget includes \$6.64 million, and there is a total cost of \$15.27 million, towards a new coordinated dispatch system. There is a description of that. How far has the project progressed and when is the new system expected to be operational?

Mr HIDDING - I will ask the Deputy Commissioner, who knows all about ESCAD to speak to that. It is fair to say that many people are very pleased with this major budget allocation because it is an operational risk with a very tired old system there now.

Mr TILYARD - The dispatch system that Tasmania Police is using at the moment we developed about 28 years ago, so it gives you some indication of the need that we had to contemporise our system.

It was also a great opportunity for us to join up so far as all of the emergency services are concerned to have an integrated combined computer-aided dispatch system, and for the first time to give the State Emergency Service a dispatch system as well because they have not had one to speak of to date.

The project developed to this point where we put a business case to the Government recently and it was announced a couple of weeks ago that we have been successful in securing the funding for that project, which is about \$15 million over two years. Now that we know the funding is available, we will be moving on with the project and it is due to be completed in two years from now.

The system will be phased in. The police will probably receive the system online first because we have the greatest need and then the other emergency services will be brought on line within about six months after that.

Mr MULDER - We are on capital expenditure.

CHAIR- No, we are still on 4.2.

Mr MULDER - The emergency service computer-aided dispatch system is the first item under capital expenditure.

CHAIR - There you go. I got ahead of them, didn't I?

Ms FORREST - With regard to the search and rescue operations that you conduct, not in training but real events, do you ever recoup any of the costs associated with that, and if so, how much?

Mr HINE - If there is a travel insurance of a nature where the helicopter is used or some other expenditure is used, we will recoup the cost. Our basic premise is that we do not want people sitting out in the wilderness or somewhere not letting an EPIRB out thinking 'is this going to cost me money?'. Our basis premise is, if people need search and rescue services, I do not want them to start thinking about whether it is going to cost them money. They should activate when they think they need activation. If there is an insurance, they have insurance money, then obviously we will look at recouping some of that money. Scott, is there anything you want to add to that?

Mr WILSON-HAFFENDEN - No. The commissioner has pretty well explained that the natural premise is if someone needs to be rescued, they will be. Obviously, there are different arrangements in different states for costing, but ours is generally if there is an insurance component, that can be recovered, and we will recover the cost of the flying hours associated with that.

Ms FORREST - You check with the person who has been rescued as to whether they do have relevant insurance?

Mr HINE - Yes, we do all those checks. I cannot reiterate enough some rescued think why are we here, but again I would much rather people err on the side of caution and get rescued rather than face someone who has died through not making some sort of activation.

Ms FORREST - In health, if you sent Tasmanians to the mainland to have surgery or whatever, or they fall ill or have an accident or something while they are on the mainland, we get billed for their health care.

Mr HIDDING - There is an exchange arrangement, isn't there.

Ms FORREST - That does not apply in search and rescue at all?

Mr HIDDING - No. We are a state that wants to attract bushwalkers and people who love to get out there and do these things.

Ms FORREST - We don't get billed by the other states if one of us needs rescuing over there?

Mr HIDDING - No, as a policy position we can tell you that our provision of Search and Rescue with the helicopter is part of what we understand to be a civilised state. First rescue, talk about other things afterwards.

Mr MULDER - We do not have too many Tony Bullimore's in the southern ocean.

Mr HIDDING - Even if there was a Tony Bullimore a second time around, tipped upside down, you would first go and get him.

Mr WILSON-HAFFENDEN - That is outside our capabilities. We coordinate that and we get those costs back.

Mr MULDER - My question related to the helicopter, the usage hours, and we had similar figures yesterday from the Department of Health. When someone, for example, is picked up on a search and rescue exercise, almost invariably they are flown back to the domain and they are checked out by medical staff before being released or retained for medical treatment. In each case is that written off as a Tasmanian Ambulance medivac or is it written off as a police operational flying hour?

Mr HINE - There is a committee that looks at that and this happens every time the helicopter is used and where the cost centre is going to be. It has not always come back to the domain and sometimes there are cars parks.

Mr MULDER - Where they meet an ambulance or something.

Mr HINE - Yes, there is a committee that looks at that.

Mr WILSON-HAFFENDEN - The definition of what is constrained as a medivac and an ambulance post cost is not necessarily the nature of the treatment provided at each, it is more based around the accessibility to that person. If an ambulance could reach them by road that would be an ambulance cost associated with it. If it is not within the limits of an ambulance being able to reach individuals, then police will bear those costs.

CHAIR - Thank you, and we will move to CIP.

Capital Investment Program

Mr MULDER - We have already launched into the radio system and I have a couple of questions on that. Is the system we are moving towards a proprietary dispatch management system? Perhaps being tailor made to Tasmania or is this a build up from the ground for Tasmania?

Mr HINE - There are two aspects. We have our current radio system which we need to keep going and then we have the whole of government radio system which is due for implementation in 2020. Mr Tilyard chairs the whole of government radio network so I will hand him over to you.

Mr MULDER - It was the computer dispatch system operator.

Mr HINES - Sorry, ESCAB.

Mr MULDER - I probably did say EVACs. Is the dispatch system replacing the commander control system you have at the moment? Is it a proprietary product which has been purchased from a software manufacturer and being tailored to Tasmania or is it a build up from the ground like the old CAB system was?

Mr TILYARD - We are looking to get CABs on the market and see what systems are available that would best suit our needs and then customise it with our requirements.

Mr MULDER - It is interoperability with interstate exercises and operations which is going more and more, so there needs to be some of that.

Mr HINE - It is going to be used by fire, ambulance and police to get that sort of interoperability.

Mr TILYARD - The core will be harder. The screens that the respective operators look at might be slightly different but the data is integrated. For example, if police attend a location say last night, and if ambulance gets dispatched there today, we will be able to see if the police were there last night and what the issue was, so safety for our respondent.

Mr MULDER - One of my issues is that when we looked at CAB some time ago, there was an opportunity at that stage to link into the Australian Federal Police's system which was Commonwealth funded, and to basically buy a fairly cheap licence from it which, as it turned out,

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when counter-terrorism came on, resulted in a completely free, massive upgrade of the system. Sometimes those national approaches are lost. I am hoping we do not once again miss an opportunity like that. We will not talk about the attitude of the commissioner at the time.

Mr HINE - We have to go out to the market to see what comes back. All those issues come into play.

Mr MULDER - We are not a special case all the time. Only in the Budget.

CHAIR - Another question on CIP with the Large Vessel Replacement plan. It has been provided in the Budget. Given the problems with the previous vessel, are the specifications and the operational requirements with the new vessel fully developed? Second, as funding is all in this 2015-16 Budget, does the Government expect an off-the-shelf vessel may be available? If the vessel is to be purpose built, presumably it will take more than a year to build, without equipment tests?

Mr HIDDING - Any project such as this has to consider there might be a vessel out there. New or barely used, there could be one which fits the bill. Is it likely? I would be surprised if there were one. However, you have to undertake that due diligence. There could be one in New Zealand, for instance, we could acquire. We do that process. If it is then found we need to go to build, then we need to go to build as soon as we can. Those processes are all underway. In regard to the profile of the funding, these things often need to slide out over the next year. That can be taken care of. Assistant Commissioner Cowling will explain to you the timing of this. We are on a strict timeline and we are hitting all the marks.

Mr COWLING - We should be able to roll out an RFT or request for tender, hopefully by the end of July or August this year. That will allow us to do exactly that scoping exercise, to see whether there is an opportunity out there to either buy or build. That is a decision to be made. Once that is completed, that will allow us to then move into the build phase. That will take the next 12 months and there will be a carry forward of the costings over that period of time.

Mr MULDER - Minister, is there some guarantee, and I am almost embarrassed to ask, that once those specifications come back from some naval architect there will be no attempt to trim costs by fiddling with the design? That would be a nice assurance on the record for future inquiries.

Mr HIDDING - As to a play book on how not to build a new police vessel, we have very strong guidance there.

Laughter.

Mr MULDER - Crossed batons on the epaulettes do not make you a naval architect, apparently.

Mr HIDDING - I can assure the Parliament that every appropriate step will be undertaken. Nobody will be involved in this who does not demonstrably have the qualifications to participate.

CHAIR - So you are confident the budgeted amount will be sufficient?

Mr HIDDING - Some people say that is too much money. This is not the case. We want there to be enough money for a terrific vessel. I make the point that in Tasmania with some of the wildest water in the world we need to go out in - the Van Diemen participated, 12 months ago, in appalling circumstances off Maatsuyker Island. They did some wonderful things, lifesaving stuff. That is what our people do and we need a vessel of that calibre and quality. The police service, the officers on these things, have to have absolute confidence in it. They have complete confidence in the Van Diemen. It has to be that kind of vessel we are looking for.

CHAIR - Any more?

Mr MULDER - Last point on vessels. As the *Vigilant* as the iconic ship of the fleet, is its future guaranteed?

Mr HINE - We did a large vessel review some time ago and that was included in the review. I am not going to sit here and say I can guarantee any vessel or vehicle in Tasmania but it is part of our vessel program at the moment. As it gets older and then we get a replacement program, that is always under consideration, but it is part of our fleet at the moment and will continue to be in the short to medium term.

State Fire Commission -

Mr FARRELL - With the State Fire Commission, and this links in too with the merger of the SES, is it likely there will be an increase in the fire levy to cover the funding of the SES through the management arrangement with the TFS?

Mr HIDDING - No, because we have asked the State Fire Commission's chief fire officer to find the savings for now. However, there is a project underway that the State Fire Commission is very involved in itself to resolve this in the medium to long term so that there is a sustainable funding model for SES. There is hard work going on in resolving those matters. They are working with local government as to their engagement with SES. It is very patchy around the state and it is not sustainable on that basis so there is a fair bit of work to do. In the meantime, the State Fire Commission has found the savings so it is covered.

Mr FARRELL - That is covered in note number 1 which says the financial statements of both the department and the State Fire Commission may be subject to future amendments.

Mr HIDDING - Yes.

Mr MULDER - About the burn-off program, how are things going? How effective is it, and how are we going to make sure - one thing is for sure, we are not going to prevent a future wildfire, but what are we doing to mitigate the risk and what is the strategy?

Mr HIDDING - There is \$28.5 million from the new Government over the forward Estimates for the state fire management task. We learnt from Dunalley that without question there was too much fuel on the ground and that a wildfire is a very scary thing, and that we will lose property let alone life. For that reason we funded an historic amount of money to start a burn-off program. The good news it is based on science and I would encourage all members of parliament to get hold of the report, the document, that this council is working to. It is a risk-based model. For instance, it could be argued that in the state of Victoria where they selected a figure they wanted to reduce their fuel growth by, they simply went out in the mallee and burnt

huge areas to say that is what they have done. There was no property or life at risk in that area, it seems.

We are now well down the road in this first burning season we have undertaken. We have a new Chair of the State Fire Management Council who is out there in the community talking to people and letting them understand that fire is an inevitable part of living in the Tasmanian landscape. There is no such thing as having no fire but you can choose to have controlled burns during the shoulder periods, the spring and autumn periods, at which there will be some smoke, or you can not do that and then have wildfires. It is by far the safest option, in a scientific risk-based model, to do what we are doing.

The chief fire officer would have the latest report on the burn-offs, which is incidentally is on the website of the State Fire Management Council, it is a good story. As of 11 May this year, 110 burns have been completed as part of the program, with a total of 28 295 hectares. With more planned for implementation in addition, 98 other burns with a land management focus have also been completed, another 8 000 hectares. We are at about 37 000 to 38 000 hectares, compared to last year, 17 000 hectares.

We are into it. I was aware there was a period about six weeks ago when it was an ideal burning-off period. I was driven home late at night through the Midland Highway and wherever I looked in the landscape I could see orange. I then went to the website to see what they were and sure enough, they were all burn-offs. We are well and truly engaged with this issue. We are actually being watched around the nation and around the world with this. I am not sure if anybody saw it but there was a *Catalyst* program with our chief fire officer's people, Sandy Whight and others, who featured on that program.

Mr MULDER - That was the one regarding Hobart as being one of the most fireprone, dangerous cities in the world.

Mr HIDDING - Yes. That tells us that before long, we are going to be in doing those kinds of burn-offs, close to people's residences in Hobart. That is going to be challenging. We really need the Parliament's support out there to say this is expensive and difficult but it has to happen. Otherwise we are going to lose lives and a lot of property should there be a wildfire.

Ms FORREST - When there is a wildfire.

Mr HIDDING - When there is - there is going to be one. It is absolutely an issue for people to understand that living in the Tasmanian landscape does mean fire. It is part of how we live. If you have asthma, close your windows. We have to do it. We cannot not have a burn around a very dangerous suburb.

Ms FORREST - You just sounded like Joe Hockey then. I would consider you to rethink that comment, minister. With all due respect, if someone has asthma, you do not tell them to close their windows. They need to be notified so they can move away from the area.

Mr HIDDING - Well, of course.

Ms FORREST - Asthma kills people.

Mr HIDDING - As a chronic asthmatic myself, I know exactly of what you speak. We are saying to people, if it is so that you have respiratory issues, and incidentally there is a very strong campaign out there once we move into an area. We have not done one of these close-in burns yet but that is coming this summer, they would be the first ones. There will be a very strong education campaign. Of course, if you are at the higher end of that, if you are able to be somewhere else that day, it would be a good thing to do. We do say to people, particularly those who are more concerned generally about smoke in the atmosphere, you need to protect yourself as best you can. We cannot not burn, that is the point. I will hand over to the chief fire officer, who is very invested in this program, and has terrific people working on it.

Mr BROWN - I think the minister responded to it very well. We have to understand we had some good opportunities this year so we have got up to 28 000 hectares burnt. That was on the back of about half that amount in the previous year. The average over the last 10 years has been more like 6 000 to 7 000 hectares. It has been a big lift in it but the emphasis has to come on some of that harder burning which would be in closer to communities in the near future. That is going to be harder from the perspective of community consultation and community planning.

We do need to give people adequate notice and we have to put in the adequate preparation and have people engaged in what the operation is all about. Of all the parameters that influence fire behaviour on a bad day, we cannot control the weather. I am firmly convinced the weather is getting worse, we are getting more of those high fire danger events, but we do know we can have some control around the fuel quantities.

Part of living in the environment we all enjoy living in is that from time to time we have somewhat of a choice about smoke. Do we want that smoke on a bad day in January or is it best we plan for it and have it on a spring or autumn day? It will not be the silver bullet to fire protection. We are still going to get those out-of-the-box, very extreme days. We are still going to get bad fires and fires that impact on communities on those very extreme days. After all, we cannot go and fuel reduce or manage the fuels in every square kilometre of the state, so it is going to have to be done in a mosaic pattern, otherwise it would be ecologically fairly irresponsible to do in any other way. I commend the work of the State Fire Management Council and the document they have produced which is on the State Fire Management Council website that provides the sites and the documents called Bushfires in Tasmania, a new approach to reducing our state-wide relative risk. It shows the signs that inform us about where we are going to get best impact out of fuel reduction program in terms of where we put it and prescriptive conditions that we do the burning under.

Mr HIDDING - I was amazed to that in most areas around the world, we have controlled fuel reduction, it was on government land. You try telling a fire, do not go over there because it is privately owned. We are one of the first jurisdiction ever to have a tenure blind approach, which is difficult. You need to engage with land owners to get them all involved in, but it is working very well. I can congratulate all land owners, particularly in rural areas, who tender themselves being volunteer fire fighters, they know what they are doing. So when we engage them in this process, it works very well.

Mr MULDER - There was a risk assessment at one stage done of the Mount Wellington National Park and the impacts that would occur should a wild fire escape there. We are going back a fair few years now. I am wondering whether that risk assessment has been done, in particular, given that 1967 was the last time any real serious fuel reduction occurred there. I am wondering what the approach is around the suburbs of Mount Wellington, because given Fern

Tree and Mount Nelson. Also what impact will this have on the requirements of so-called fire prone areas, in terms of building costs and all those other sorts of issues.

Mr BROWN - Fuel reduction is an appropriate response to reducing the risk on treatable land. Of Tasmania's landscape, there is probably only half of it that is in fact treatable. There are alpine species, and where there are wet rain forest type species, you cannot put fuel reduction burning into that, it works best in dry secure forest. Around Mount Wellington we stuck to more the lower areas. I am talking about the areas behind Glenorchy, through to and including areas around Taroona and Sandy Bay and Mount Nelson.

The Hobart City Council, with Fire Service assistance has been doing fuel reduction burning on a fairly small scale but a fairly regular scale in the shoulder periods in those areas. The Fire Management Area Committee responsible for that area, has a plan and that plan is prioritising areas that can be treated for fuel management. There are some areas, particularly when we get those higher elevations like from Fern Tree up, there is nothing much we can do about the fuel there. So the strategies needs to be more on ensuring that the community can be warned in plenty of time or we have access and egress routes, which is fairly challenging for a place like Fern Tree. We have to be able to provide that warning early and have well, thought through evacuation planning which we have done and we have exercised with the police already.

Mr HINE - We just did some modelling and exercises at the Premier administer level at various scenario and I know Assistant Commissioner Adams and the Southern District Commander, and the Fire Service have done some planning around it, because it is a scenario that is quite frightening but we have to plan for it, to make sure if it does happen, we can deal with it the best we can. The Minister and the Premier were involved in the exercise.

Mr MULDER - There is a second question.

Mr BROWN - The other issue was about the impact of new building controls that are progressively coming in across the state. I think about half the state now does have its fire-prone area mapping worked through, and our financial people have been working with local government about getting that sorted. Essentially, if you are outside the fire-prone area, there is little impact on the fire point of view on the construction of your home, apart from home fire detection smoke alarms, et cetera. If you are in the fire-prone area there are requirements on the developer, in terms of subdivisions, widths of roads and turning circles and the rest of it.

In terms of the individual building or property in regard to other requirement for setbacks to vegetation so that houses are at lesser risk, or if someone does want to have the vegetation closer for some reason, there are Australian Standards around control techniques to be put into the construction when building. It might be cladding, springs and that kind of thing. You might have heard of the bell rating and people now selling building materials that are up to a certain bell rating.

It is a relatively complex area, and again it is an area we have devoted some of our website to. We provide some promotions for that, and we have been heavily involved in the training up now for about 50 credit persons to do that assessment work for people that are developing.

CHAIR - It would seem that often those assessments would have to be made, and they are quite expensive to get down, \$1 200 whatever. Some of those areas seem to be anecdotally not within a fire-prone area, they are in the middle of a subdivision in the middle of a town with

virtually no vegetation around and a lot of people saying, 'I have a DA in here to put a deck on my house yet I have to spend \$1 200 to get a plan done', which would seem so outrageous.

Mr BROWN - If I can respond to that. Up until when the fire-prone area maps were done, there was another stipulation. It was within 100 metres of free-standing vegetation of a hectare or more, and that was the requirement. Interpretations on that were sometimes missed by developers and in some cases by councils as well. The fact is, it does add some costs to developing a property, if you are developing in a fire-prone area, just as new energy requirements add costs to building a building and environmental considerations. So it is one of those things. Certainly it comes out of the back of the recommendation that came out of the inquiry into the tragic Black Saturday fire experience they had in Victoria. It is one of those costs, I think, of living in the environment again that you like to live in.

Mr MULDER - This covers, with all its issues about things, but is there any method of retrofitting at least some measures like fuel loading around areas like Fern Tree which are really begging to be burnt out again because houses were reconstructed. The fact they are already there should there be some attempt at least to retrofit these things to try to say, at least with the fuel loadings, that gum tree that looks so pretty parked underneath your eaves is not a good idea.

Mr BROWN - It is hard to deal with the existing stock that is there. You cannot make someone with an older house go back and put double glazing in it unless it is their choice. It is hard dealing with existing stock. Part of the problem can be dealt with through the hazard abatement system. That is harder in a place like Fern Tree that has so much heavy vegetation. What I can say – and the State Fire Commission was at Fern Tree only last week - is that the Fern Tree Brigade has been very active with their community protection planning programs and working with the community to understand their risk and how they need to attune themselves into getting early warnings, and where they need to go to, and by what access points.

Mr MULDER - In my experience in local government, we had places where there was some standard about the amount of fuel loading and the distance from a house. Do those still exist and they being applied?

Mr BROWN - Yes, they do but it is very much about new developments going ahead, and new subdivisions. It gets harder to get them to go back to the old stock.

Mr MULDER - Those fuel loadings, which is where I am getting at with existing houses, no you cannot ask people to retrofit double glazing unless you really want to create a furore out there in the electorate. You do have these pre-existing standards about things like fuel loadings which are manageable on an almost annual basis. I am wondering what move there is to make people aware of fuel loadings within the distances as required. I think it is something like 20 per cent. Is there any program out there to say fuel loading around existing residences, in fire-prone areas, we need to apply those standards?

Mr BROWN - We can do that in some areas where we can control it with fuel reduction burning, but as I said before, the vegetation time in Fern Tree, it is an area that will burn on a very extreme day, but it won't burn on any other day so it cannot be subject to fuel reduction burning.

Mr MULDER - It is a question about the fuel on the floor versus a crowning fire.

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Mr BROWN - It would only be manual clearing that would solve that problem. Whether the community wants to pay that cost in terms of the scale and the like -

Mr MULDER - The point really was, the trees that are still there where you get eucalyptus trees that are actually underneath the eaves of a weatherboard house for heaven's sake. There is some obligation by the local brigade to tackle the shire and say sorry, not on. Or at least report it to the insurance

CHAIR - From my point of view, it is a matter that needs a fair bit more discussion and we do not have time today because there are a lot of concerns in my community about some of the points we talked about with Mr Brown.

Mrs HISCUTT - Minister, is there any reason why the Tas Fire Service cannot say a report is not required to some of these incidents that we are talking about. I have seen people on a five acre block in the middle of a rural area with ploughed paddocks all around having to do a fire report - and irrigation. They have to spend \$1 200 for this report. Is the Fire Service in a position to say report not required? Something as simple as that.

Mr BROWN - It should be addressed by the new arrangements which will see fire-prone mapping areas formally mapped.

Mrs HISCUTT - That will do. Volunteers, fire fighters, our insurance, government's insurance, is through Alliance - is that correct? Or whoever it is. Are you as the minister in a position to change that if you find that you are not happy with that particular company?

Mr HIDDING - The State Fire Commission makes its own arrangements, with volunteers insurance, yes it does. It makes its own arrangements, but of course it can also negotiate with the government with the risk fund as well.

Mrs HISCUTT - So it is possible to change as well. One last question. We had an accident down the road. Little girl went through the fence. Fire Department turned up. Is that normal? Someone reported 000 on a rainy day.

Mr HIDDING - First responder will do. To a motor vehicle accident then?

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, went through a fence. Two fire brigades turned up. She was okay. The biggest damage was to the wire on the fence. But that is procedure?

Mr HIDDING - Tas Fire is responsible for road crash traumas. They have all the gear to get people out of cars.

Mrs HISCUTT - And to cut the fence wire.

Ms FORREST - And repair it while they are there for you.

Mr BROWN - SES are responsible for road crash rescue in rural areas.

Mrs HISCUTT - Thank you.

Mr GAFFNEY - This is a quick one. You mentioned the asthmatic and the respiratory issues about selective burning and getting closer to indoor communities. I am concerned on the impact of children in schools, whose lungs are not developed, and it has been brought up to us in a preventative health committee that they are always suspect to wood smoke, or any type of smoke.

In the schedule, closer into schools and communities, will that be one of the items that the taskforce have a look at so that the children do not have to be at school that day? It is holidays or something they can get out of there because it is really important. I know it is difficult with the weather, but it is being conducted during school holidays or weekends, then at least the family have the choice to move their child and not impact on their education.

I suggest if it is not there, that is one of the elements they take into consideration because it has been raised with us as a preventative health measure.

Mr BROWN - Thanks for that, Mr Gaffney. It is most certainly one of the considerations in the planning regime that goes on before fuel reduction burning. Certainly to our schools, our aged care homes and health facilities, that would be major at risk places. Plus we have better computerised modelling now on smoke management as well. We would work around as best we can, ensuring that the smoke is going away from the populated area.

Mr GAFFNEY - Thank you.

Ms FORREST - The mobile radio network goes across all these areas. It is mentioned in the budget papers under Finance General. There is \$2 million provided in 2015-16 for the funding of the whole-of-government mobile radio network. You also note the delay, it has been a long-drawn out saga. We have also noted the estimated expenditure will decrease by \$18 million in 2015-16 and \$10 million in 2016-17. Why the big reduction? Are we going to get there in the end?

Mr HIDDING - We will get there. The new minister made a very strong point to all the players when he came in to say he intended seeing this thing developed. It is crazy we have all these different systems and different towers on mountains. There are reasons you would do that but they are not compelling enough. We will get there indeed. The profiling for the funding is on the ESCAD. We have a particular operational area, you have heard that earlier.

Ms FORREST - So is that where some of this funding has gone, the \$18 million?

Mr HIDDING - Yes. Scott, who is chairing the interagency group, will explain.

Mr TILYARD - As the minister said, there is a whole-of-government steering committee looking at the whole-of-government radio project. I chair that. The chief officer of the TFS is on there, so are the heads of ambulance and SES, forestry, Treasury and Finance and DPAC are on it as well. The funding for the whole-of-government radio project and the emergency services CAD has been more or less incorporated into a broader communications package. The two are interlinked. We need the radio network but we need the system to support that in terms of recording the information. The timing for the whole-of-government radio project which is due to deliver a new network in 2020, the next 12 to 18 months, the timing of the expenditure as part of that project, has been reduced. That allows us to implement the ESCAD project. That fits in quite nicely. The ESCAD project is a two-year project. Over the next two years we will be

continuing to do our work on the whole-of-government radio project. Thereafter, it will become more significant costs in terms of implementing the new radio network.

Ms FORREST - There will be money to complete it in spite of this shifting?

Mr TILYARD - Yes, there will be.

Mr HIDDING - It is the Government's intention to have that project funded through to its completion by 2020.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister.

Mr HIDDING - May I just, before we go, place on the record as it is the last time the Chief Fire Officer will before a Legislative Council committee. The thanks of the Government and I am sure of the wider Parliament for the terrific career of the Chief Fire Officer. He is looking very much forward to stepping out of the place. I know he will miss us all terribly.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister, and to all of your personnel today. We appreciate that. We will now adjourn until 2.30 and will hopefully be finished by 4 o'clock.

The Committee suspended from 1.28 p.m. until 2.30 p.m.

DIVISION 9

(Department of Infrastructure)

Output Group 2 Infrastructure

[2.28 p.m.]

CHAIR - Welcome, minister, in your role as Minister for Infrastructure. Would you like to introduce your person at the table?

Mr HIDDING - This is Gary Swain, the Deputy Secretary of Transport Service, Department of State Growth. Other officers will appear later, but for now we will start with Mr Swain.

The Government recognises the importance of the infrastructure portfolio in the Department of State Growth and the Tasmanian economy. I am very pleased to have infrastructure as one of my portfolio responsibilities. I am also very pleased to work with all my ministerial colleagues responsible for state growth to bring all the economic levers under one roof in the Department of State Growth. I want to highlight the importance of this to growing, planning and investing for infrastructure in Tasmania.

On 1 July 2014, the new Department of State Growth came into being with a mandate to aggressively and actively pursue jobs, growth and opportunity for all Tasmanians. Working with the Office of the Coordinator General and the newly formed Infrastructure Tasmania, the department actively pursues and promotes investment, facilitates major projects, supports business and industry to grow, and ensures strategic investment in infrastructure. The department also works closely with business to address barriers to growth, to reduce red tape, to provide a

skilled workforce, to develop our creative and cultural industries and to ensure efficient and cost-effective transport and logistic services.

There is much I could talk about with achievements and projects that are underway, but I suspect they are all going to come up in scrutiny soon.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister. We might go into some overview there first. I have a question about the two main northern ports and the calls by some people to have a clear pathway for orders on how they operate. I want to extend my question by going across the water, to the issue we have with Melbourne Port. I know it is not Tasmanian infrastructure, but it is critically important to everything we are doing at this stage. I noticed an article in one of the rural Victorian weekly newspapers which reported that a lot of Victorian land-based producers face very significant problems with this same issue. Minister, would you mind commenting on this issue?

Mr HIDDING - I will address your first comment on Tasmanian ports. TasPorts has produced a draft 30-year plan. I suspect that by the time we get around to December and the government business enterprise Estimates that report will by then be public. High-level consultation on the plan has just begun with the key customers of the port, but I can indicate that the plan makes a case that we need all the ports we have. There is not a case to close one port and therefore spend more on another. Each port plays a very important part. Each port is there for a reason and it uses a natural asset. Any notion that you could build a new ocean port anywhere along the top of Tasmania - one single big ocean port - puts it into a \$10-billion-kind of realm because there is not any deep water.

Mr MULDER - Across the top of the state or north of the state, minister?

Mr HIDDING - Across the north of the state. We are talking megadollars. This report will address issues of the future of those ports. It has been canvassed in the past that we should rationalise our ports. This report will show that each port has a strong reason for being, and can and should continue. It is not to say that a port - for instance, Burnie - should not be seen as a pressed container port. It is, and it is serviced by strong TasPorts and TasRail infrastructure.

I look forward to discussing the plan with you when it comes out, probably by the time the GBE Estimates happen. The Port of Melbourne is to be privatised. It will be sold in a series, I think, of five tranches. They are selling a 50-year lease. Throughput from Tasmania is 25 per cent of the total of the Port of Melbourne's business, so we are a massive player in the Port of Melbourne. What does that buy us? It buys us respect and precious little else, because particularly, in a privatisation process, the government that wants to sell it clearly wants as much as it can possibly get for it.

The issue with that is that if somebody pays too much for the parcel containing Webb Dock, which services the Tasmanian operators, the only way they can recoup 50 years-worth of lease payments is to actively raise the take. There would be no comeback on that. We would be forced to pay it. That would be a huge hit on the Tasmanian economy. Whatever hit the two commercial shipping companies face will be passed straight on to the Tasmanian economy.

Incidentally, I should take the TT-Line out of this - the good news is that Station Pier is not involved in the sale.

The Federal Government has just made an historic announcement about extending the Freight Equalisation Scheme by up to \$50 million a year. To see half of that disappear into the new owners' pockets would be an absolute tragedy. So we have declared that not one red cent of that can be transferred across through this process.

We have interacted very strongly with all levels of the Victorian Government, the Treasury because it is handling the sale and regulatory matters - our Treasurer and their Treasurer have been talking, I talk to the Victorian Ports minister regularly, and the premiers have had a chat as well. The Victorians are very aware of our significant alarm about this. A strong marker has been laid down because DP World Ports is owned by Dubai Ports, and it has been whacked with an 800 per cent increase. If that is going to be the benchmark for discussions on lease costs, we are in deep trouble. We have sought assurances; we have received assurances, and that resulted in significant positions taken in new Victorian legislation to protect future tariffs. We applaud that and it is necessary.

CHAIR - That has been drafted?

Mr HIDDING - It is in the House. The bill has had its second reading, and it will be debated in about three weeks from now. We would not need to be Einstein to work out that it would work with the Opposition over there as well, as this bill goes through the House there.

That bill includes significant protection for Tasmania in terms of tariffs. Limits on tariffs, in fact international tariffs, are going to be deliberately reduced over the next 10 years, or a number of years in four separate tranches, but general tariffs will also be capped at the CPI. That is unequivocally good news. The Victorian Government has responded to us in a positive way indeed.

We are still exposed because the leases of our two shipping companies will expire in 2017. They have not yet been able to conclude - in fact they have had trouble commencing - genuinely commercial negotiations for the next period of that lease. What they require - and it is perfectly understandable that they require this and we, the Government, back them in their needs - is a 20-year deal, because both of those companies are re-tonnaging. They are buying two new ships each, which will cost hundreds of millions of dollars. They deserve a decent length of lease. Because of the huge size of these new vessels, they will need more portside space and they will need landside space, which should also be available, and, naturally, the price ought to be within normal commercial terms.

While it is not my business to involve myself within commercial negotiations, I am particularly interested to know whether genuinely commercial negotiations are in fact taking place or whether they are being restrained by the government -

CHAIR - By the Victorian Government?

Mr HIDDING - By the Victorian Government - in order to somehow pump-prime the value just before the product goes to market. We are still calling on them for that to take place. We have some concerns which have not yet been allayed. However, the Victorian Government knows we are watching things very closely indeed.

CHAIR - So it is a moveable feast at this stage? Are you happy with the legislation in the Victorian Parliament at the moment?

Mr HIDDING - We have had some wins, but the main one now is that the two shipping companies do not get worked over to the extent that our freight costs have to go up substantially.

Mr CHAIRMAN - You just mentioned TT-Lines and Station Pier being isolated from this. Does that only apply to the cars and other vehicles? What about all the perishable freight that has go off and on? Would that incur stevedoring charges?

Mr HIDDING - Station Pier is not in the sale process.

Mr CHAIRMAN - Okay.

Mr HIDDING - So perishable freight would come off Station Pier and go straight to Sydney or Melbourne, or where it goes.

Mr CHAIRMAN - Some of it goes into other holding places.

Mr HIDDING - Not in the Port of Melbourne.

Mr CHAIRMAN - Yes, it does.

Mr HIDDING - Perishable freight?

Mr CHAIRMAN - Yes, my word it does. They land it there; and they leave it. When they consolidate it, they might take it somewhere else.

Mr HIDDING - So if the company has a cool-store in the port, well, then that could be where it takes it. All freight is under threat from this sale.

Mrs HISCUTT - Just on the back of that. Minister, is Victoria going to get a lot of the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme. How can we guarantee that it will to benefit our farmers as opposed to going straight into that fee that may happen?

Mr HIDDING - First, the \$700 per TEU - the 20-foot equivalent unit - available now to freight, could not be claimed before the change. If the freight was going internationally from Tasmania via the Port of Melbourne - if it was just going to sit on the wharf in Melbourne before being loaded onto an international vessel - that \$700 per TEU could not be claimed. Now it can be claimed and you are \$700 per TEU better off.

There is the threat, because of the lease charges and square-metre rates that if DP World - as one of the stevedores, it handles a lot of our international containers - has to pay an \$800 increase in its costs, that \$700 value could be significantly eroded. Half it could be gone; all of it could be gone. There are massive increases a foot, when you are talking that kind of increase.

CHAIR - Thank you for that.

Mr SWAIN - Further to the member's initial comment, the fact that there are no Tasmania-specific prices and that the prices affect regional Victorian suppliers from is somewhat of a protection as well. If the price is too high for regional Victoria, they will have serious problems getting that legislation through their own parliament. To a degree, it is a protection for us.

Mr HIDDING - It is a political protection that we have, which is why we are talking strongly to the state opposition over there. It was their idea, after all, to sell the port. So they are not principally opposed to it, but they see us as a major customer and want to work with us, but they made the same point about -.

Mr MULDER - How do you see the political process working to get back to the point? We have cap the sale of the price, so that the private operator does not have to recover 50 years of port charges. I am just wondering how we sort that out? All it would do is sell it; it would not be specifying the price, would it?

Mr HIDDING - No. However, if certain matters were undone - such as the next 20 years' lease for our two shipping companies - if they were not yet resolved, and the port went on the market, company A could look at it and go, 'Well, I would normally pay \$1 billion dollars for the rights for 50 years, but in order to win it, I will go \$1.4 billion, and I will recoup it out of the Tasmanians.'

Mr MULDER - Interesting piece of legislation, I would have thought.

Mr SWAIN - At the moment, there is some economic regulation. They are looking at the economic regulation which currently applies, and looking to tighten that up a bit. You might expect that is subject to some considerable discussion in their parliament.

Mr HIDDING - There is a lot more to go, but we are absolutely engaged with that issue. The Victorian Government is most aware of it.

Mr CHAIRMAN - We will have a yarn about that, of course, a bit later on. Anything further overview questions?

Mr MULDER - I am sure you are pleased they have an upper House, minister.

Mr HIDDING - I am pleased.

Ms FORREST - I would just like to explore a couple of areas with you regarding the overview of the infrastructure budget. It is difficult to drag some of this information out, because it sits in State Growth - the figures relate to all of State Growth.

Can you outline how savings have been achieved under the Budget savings strategies in last year's budget, other than staff cuts? I will get to that in my next question. What other things have been done in the infrastructure area to reduce your expenditure?

Mr HIDDING - I acknowledge the presence of Amanda Russell, General Manager of Business Services.

Ms RUSSELL - The Department of State Growth has actually gone through a significant restructure and the saving strategies in the last state Budget were apportioned across all areas of State Growth in addition to minister Hiddings's portfolio. We had the \$5 million amalgamation savings that was attributed across all areas of State Growth, and that is largely been driven from corporate savings, particularly in staffing and in the rationalisation of systems that we have been progressing over the last 12 months, since the formation of the department. We had savings that

were attributed to the additional pay pause requirements that did not proceed in October 2014 of approximately \$4.1 million. In addition, the savings we attributed as part of the \$11 million savings in the initial budget of 2014-15.

We have set about, as part of the restructure, actually looking at areas where those savings can be made. That really has spoken to the amalgamation task at the department, and the formation of the department in exploring some of the integration activities we have been able to achieve by bringing together, for example, the skills and client and business service areas of the department; looking at workforce development differently; and also proceeding with some of the efficiencies and servicing improvements that we addressed prior to the formation of State Growth in the transport services area.

I will hand over to Mr Gary Swain to talk about a couple of those specifically, but it is worth pointing out that we actually have not finally completed our restructure of State Growth. We do have a little way to go to achieve our staffing targets. Part of that is looking at, once we have brought the organisational groups together, the efficiencies that will be made.

Mr SWAIN – In transport services there are two infrastructure divisions – Road Use Services under Penny Nicholls, and State Roads under Shane Gregory. In both of those areas there were some existing efficiency plans going back a couple of years to 2012-13. A lot of the budget challenges we faced have resulted in accelerations of those existing plans. So there are not whole areas of activity that are no longer performed, but there are many areas that are looking at doing things differently and resourcing those things differently.

In the road construction area, it is more about looking at every aspect of process from when the project was first conceived in the network planning area, through to how they are contracted and how they are managed. It would be fair to say that the challenging bit to go forward is going to be some of the forward planning activity, because we are now pretty much right sized to deliver the program of works which is why it is very good to see some forward planning money in the budget initiatives that will assist with that.

In Penny Nicholls' area, Road User Services, there are again some accelerations of changes that were discussed and on the drawing boards anyway. An example of that would be moving from the Community Roads Partnership arrangements that was quite mature to a grants program-type process, which is seeking to further road safety objectives under the existing Road Safety Strategy and the one that is going to be developed, but it is doing it in a different way.

Ms FORREST - I want to move on to the staffing cuts and a question about supplies and consumables. Compared to last year's budget there have been savings to employee costs due to downsizing and you have made that clear. As for the latest employment update placed on Treasury website, page 12, staff numbers have gone down by 118 statewide. I know that is the whole of State Growth, but can you tell me how many of those staff reductions relate to the infrastructure area?

Mr HIDDING - The numbers - was it 31 March - bear in mind the next quarter will be reported, 30 June, and we are almost there. The heavy lifting has been done with a little bit more to go across the agency. We are as good as there, really.

Mrs HISCUTT - Excuse me, Chair, just on what Ms Forrest is saying, is there any chance that any of these 118 belong to committees and boards and things like that, or is it just all staff?

Mr HIDDING - No, they are not employees; that is different.

Ms FORREST - On the Treasury website there was 85 to December 2014, then 118 from June 2014 to January 2015. So there is more since. What is the total number from infrastructure that have been put off basically?

Ms RUSSELL - We have had a combination, and I actually do not have the specific detail by portfolio of the number of Transport reductions with me, Ms Forrest. But in that same report it does outline the number of workplace renewals that have been progressed as part of the overall restructure, together with a number of voluntary redundancies and separations that have gone across the whole portfolio area of State Growth.

Mr HIDDING - Be reminded that the department now is one department from two previously. There were a lot of people, for instance, you could say were in infrastructure but now are in corporate services over there, or business services now. It is an entirely newly developed department that has been right sized for what it needs to do. As I say a lot of the heavy lifting has been done and we are close.

Ms RUSSELL - A comparison is quite difficult between the former organisations because, as the minister said, we have spread out our corporate and business services area, also strategy and policy area of the department in addition to transferring a number of staff into industry and business development division, which is headed up by Bob Rutherford. A comparison in that regard has not been made in the general employment figures.

Ms FORREST - It is really difficult to understand what has gone on because of the nature of the new organisation. You will just need to bear with me while we are trying to figure some of this out.

According to the Treasury information, staff numbers in State Growth were 730 in January this year, and I know there will be new figures out soon. Employee costs for this year's Budget on page 262 is about \$58.5 million, which if you average that across is roughly \$80 000 per head. With staff numbers fallen, as you said by 118 employees, and costs fell by \$8.7 million, which really equates to about \$70 000 per head, but supplies and consumables have gone up compared to last year. Why is that?

Ms RUSSELL - The supplies and consumables were a direct result of the changes and in large part the adjustments are because the supplies and consumables area would not have included Skills Tasmania as a part of last year's figures because they were, at that point, part of the Department of Education. Skills Tasmania joined the department but the budget figures were included in 2014-15 Budget as part of the Department of Education in the transition. You will see some of those adjustments are difficult to map through because of the amalgamation.

Ms FORREST - Constant restructures make it more difficult to scrutinise.

Ms RUSSELL - It does make an adjustment comparison difficult.

Ms FORREST - It is very difficult.

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Mr HIDDING - We did say when we came into Government that we were going to make one new agency.

Ms FORREST - I do not disagree with the intention of that. It just makes it a bit difficult to track what is happening with money. Consultants are included in supplies and consumables.

Ms RUSSELL - That is correct.

Ms FORREST - What are we now paying for consultants, and can you provide a detailed list of consultants used in the restructure and in what areas, and what the cost for the last year and this year are? If you have projected costs for consultants that would be good, over the forward Estimates.

Mr HIDDING - The department has awarded 138 significant contracts - that is consultants and contractors over \$50 000 - out of 43 procurement processes managed during the period from 1 July 2014 up to 27 April. Of these 138 contracts there were 55 that were awarded to non-Tasmanian businesses. The department awarded 83 contracts for Tasmanian business with a total of \$89 million. The department advises that in all instance, Treasury's instructions have been adhered to and the assessment has been consistent with the tender procurement requirements and our buy local policy. We are, as a government, completely committed to getting behind and backing local Tasmanian business and in particular small businesses, to create jobs and grow the economy.

Our Buy Local policy that we have implemented includes a local small to medium enterprise benefits test, mandatory disaggregation of large and statewide contracts, and the use of industry participation plans. These have been very successful and allowed Tasmanian companies even the confidence in getting involved with the Government to win more of these contracts.

We have delivered our first series of a program called Winning Government Work aimed at Tasmanian businesses looking to learn more about the Tasmanian Government tendering opportunities and how to submit successful tenders. The program delivered interactive workshops in Hobart, Burnie and Launceston and 150 businesses attended – Hobart, 92; Burnie, 28; and Launceston, 30.

Our Think Local First campaign also encourages Tasmanians outside the public sector to think locally and support Tasmanian business and industry before buying over the internet or seeking sources interstate.

In the eight months since the local benefits test was introduced, there have been over 203 contracts awarded to Tasmanian businesses compared to 131 in the eight month prior. Over this period Tasmanian business won four in every five procurements where there was at least one Tasmanian bid.

The policy is starting to work, there is no question about that. We are pleased with it and Tasmanian business is pleased with the opportunity to engage with the Government in this way and to be winning work the way they are.

Ms FORREST - That is positive news, minister. Are you able to table a list of the consultants you have used in your area?

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Mr SWAIN - That would primarily be skills and the state roads areas. We have not changed the model in terms of the external contractor use through this process at all. We could provide additional information about the state roads side of that but there has not been any change in business model so that we are now outsourcing functions that we otherwise were not.

Ms FORREST - I am interesting in the consultants you have used in your portfolio area, minister.

Mr HIDDING - Can we take that on notice?

Ms FORREST - Yes. Acknowledging there has been significant down-sizing in employees with State Growth, under your report, minister, have any consultants that have previously been employed by State Growth, been hired back as consultants, either directly or by a third party hiring arrangements or as employees at consultancy firms.

Mr HIDDING - The answer to that question is no. There is not. No-one that has been separated from us has been re-hired as a consultant.

Ms RUSSELL - If I could add to the minister's comments, Ms Forrest. There is an exclusion period under any Deed of Separation which provides for an exclusion period from the State Service based on a sliding scale of a maximum of five years, depending on general years of service.

That is obviously in concert -

Ms FORREST - That is why the answer is no at this stage.

Mr HIDDING - Well, you have asked me the question.

Ms FORREST - Yes, that would contribute to that though. If you cannot be rehired back, even as a consultant for an external hiring firm, is that what you are saying, that there is a lock-out period for that time?

Ms RUSSELL - It goes to direct employment primarily, but there are also arrangements in place that we look at with consultancies in terms of the direct hire arrangements. The answer is no

Mr HIDDING - We are aware that, if it were possible to leave that and come back as a consultant the next day, it could well be a serious problem. Therefore it is something we avoid and there are structures in place to make sure that people are not leaving in order to pick up some golden consultancy.

Ms FORREST - That is the question here, minister. Particularly in your infrastructure area, you have a degree of expertise in engineering and a range of other really important skills. I know there have been positions that have been cut in that area. You obviously need engineering advice in road construction and a range of other areas. Is it possible for someone who has separated from that department this year to be employed by Pitt and Sherry or someone like that, which does provide consulting services to government? You cannot avoid that happening, can you?

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Mr HIDDING - I don't think you could separately contract to prohibit them from getting a job with a company that provides service to government. That is a little different from hiring that person as a consultant.

Ms FORREST - Yes.

Mr HIDDING - I do not think that would be sound. I do not think we would seek to do that all. That would be very unfair. We would keep a weather eye on that in any event.

Mr SWAIN - The other safeguard is, we do have the e-targets through this whole change. We also have a budget. The managers in the department are not going to be proposing to remove a job and then hire it back in a more expensive way through a consultant.

Ms FORREST - We are hoping not, that is the thing.

Mr SWAIN - We can't. We do not have the spare capacity to do that.

Ms FORREST - With the staff separations that you had to make, what were the total costs of that? I know Health had to borrow \$5 million to fund their staff separations. It seems that the net savings to the budget were \$5 million to \$8 million per annum. What did you have to pay out for accrued leave and other separation entitlements to the people who have left?

Ms RUSSELL - You will also see through the Government's revised estimates report that the Department of State Growth was provided a facility for a \$10.4 million loan to meet the costs of staff separation for approximately 174 staff. Whilst we are not at our target FTE reduction yet, the total costs to March were also reported for targeted negotiated voluntary redundancies at a cost of \$3 million to date. Also, the flip side of that, for workforce renewals, at a total cost of \$329 000 approximately for 11 workforce renewal incentives.

We have not fully expended the provisions of the line we were provided under the Revised Estimates Report. We would anticipate that will be committed as discussions with staff and as the restructure nears completion.

Ms FORREST - So is that internal borrowing? Is it through TasCorp? Who are you borrowing it through?

Ms RUSSELL - Treasury has made a provision for this financial year for the costs of staff separation with State Growth, given the FTE target that we had.

Ms FORREST - So you will need to pay that back over a period?

Ms RUSSELL - Yes, that is correct.

Ms FORREST - How long is that period?

Mr HIDDING - We are negotiating favourable terms.

Ms FORREST - And that interest rate that is favourable as well?

Mr HIDDING - Absolutely.

Ms FORREST - So it is internal.

Mr HIDDING – Yes, it is. Clearly there has to be a rate of return. We want it to be reasonable and we are still discussing that. The point is it is covered in a financial sense so we can deal with each one of these cases on a genuine basis, not under constraint. The heavy lifting has been done. The job is nearly done.

Ms FORREST - I think the honourable member was heading toward this but I had a few to ask about the boards and committees under the infrastructure of State Growth. Have you cut any of those boards or committees completely, combined or reduced them in any way? Which ones, if you have, have you done that with?

Mr HIDDING - The MAST had eight board members; it has five now. Metro had six and has five. MAIB had eight and has six. TasPorts had six and now has five. TT-Line had eight and now has seven. TasRail had five and still has five; there were a couple of vacancies on its board. Road Safety Advisory Council had 10 and it has 10 but it was a reduction of a marketing position. It came off that.

Ms FORREST - A cost, a dollar saving?

Mr HIDDING - A net saving. Do you mean for the rate saving for each one?

Ms FORREST - No, for the whole lot.

Mr HIDDING - No, I do not have that available. Each one of them would have different rates. Of the boards under my portfolio, there were 51 board members and we now have 43. The boards are still absolutely workable. Not only reductions but also that they manage their salaries and their costs better. All boards are well engaged with the Government to understand what it is we require of them. They are all going very well.

Ms FORREST - And the committees? Advisory committees?

Mr HIDDING - No, I have none.

Ms FORREST - Thanks, Mr Chairman.

CHAIR - Any more on overview? If not we will go to 2.1 Infrastructure Tasmania.

2.1 Infrastructure Tasmania.

Mr HIDDING - Mr Chairman, I am very pleased to welcome Mr Allan Garcia on board as the CEO of Infrastructure Tasmania. He commenced on 4 May. He brings a very valuable skill set and experience set in leadership, intergovernmental relations, negotiation and policy implementation to the role, as well as a strong understanding of state infrastructure needs with his role with LGAS.

This appointment delivers on a key election commitment that will enable more efficient infrastructure development and drive productivity, economic growth and community amenity.

A priority task of I-Tas is the development and completion of an integrated freight strategy, which as we have already talked about is a key matter for Tasmania, particularly with the situation with the Port of Melbourne at the moment. Over the next eight years we expect, not just a growth in freight, but the three shipping companies will all likely re-tonnage. We could see six new vessels across Bass Strait by the time the TT-Line has as well, by 2023, but the other two are much closer than that. There is a big body of work to be done from day one Mr Garcia has been engaged in that matter. We will have more to say in the near future about his general plan of work going forward.

Infrastructure Tasmania's overarching objectivity will be to support improvement in the long-term productivity and performance of the Tasmanian economy by ensuring that the right infrastructure is built at the right time in the right place and as efficiently as possible.

Mrs HISCUTT - Minister, how is the new entity settling in and do you have the right people in place. You have a new CEO. Maybe you could give us an update on are things settling in?

Mr HIDDING - Mr Garcia is funded for two more senior staff around him. That was the commitment we made and is something he would be bending his mind to as he engages with his staff. We do not need to rush into that. He has the facility available of the infrastructure strategic policy unit and they are very good people as well. It is going very well indeed. The second part of your question?

Mrs HISCUTT - You have a new CEO?

Mr HIDDING - Yes, we do and he is here.

Mrs HISCUTT - I just note that probably a lot of the \$315 million spend in infrastructure is going to go to the north-west. You must be very busy in your department now, organising where that is going to be spent and how that is going to be spent? You probably have a plan on what, but maybe how?

Mr HIDDING - The entire infrastructure spend for the next four years is a very low spend. It is deliberately aimed at the north of the state because we are in danger of having somewhat of a two-speed economy. The southern economy through, for instance, the building of the new Royal Hobart and a lot of hotel activity around the place, there was an issue of a bit of a two-speed economy. We have deliberately addressed some key infrastructure matters up north, such as the cities project in Devonport. Burnie is looking at a plan. We met recently with the Burnie City Council and we will be looking at funding requests from them.

Mrs HISCUTT - You are waiting for that to come in?

Mr HIDDING - Yes, there is a pool of money we made available for the northern cities and we are happy for the three major cities to compete for that. We think we can fund a lot of each of them, but just where it goes remains to be seen. The university relocation into the City of Launceston from a tired facility at Newnham is an exciting opportunity for the north. There is lots to do.

The next big roads project is the Perth to Breadalbane duplication. That will be a four-lane highway continuing from the Southern Outlet and will be a major project and when you add to

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that the Illawarra Road link through to the Perth bridge, straight through, and then a connector between those two projects, there is going to be a lot of activity in that area.

Ms FORREST - Are you going to dig up Illawarra Road again?

Mr HIDDING - No, there is a new piece.

Mrs HISCUTT - I notice in the forward Estimates there is not increase, not even up to the end of 2019, not even CPI. Is that enough money to keep a running a big organisation - \$800 000?

Mr HIDDING - It will be enough money, I promise you because -

Ms FORREST - That is what minister Groom said last year about the Coordinator-General. Anyway it is good to go on record.

Mr HIDDING - I have discussed that with Mr Garcia and he is confident that he can very much get the task done with that. It reflects the fact that there are going to be three senior appointments in that division, but of course he has the Infrastructure Strategy Unit also available to him.

Mrs HISCUTT - So Infrastructure Tasmania is going to deliver the planning and delivery of all major infrastructure? Does this include your Integrated Freight Strategy? Would you like to comment on that?

Mr HIDDING - This freight strategy is something that, for instance if there was an organisation looking at investing \$10 million in Tasmania to grow a new product and market it around the world or around Australia, one of the first questions they are going to ask themselves is, 'We can grow it there, but can we get it off the island? Can we get it off the island at price and when we need to get it off the island?' This Integrated Freight Strategy was a document that will inform those investments.

It is absolutely necessary for an organisation, before they invest in anything significant, to have some understanding of what our plans are and something to measure the outcomes of those plans to the benchmark, to where we want them to be. It is not something Tasmania has had in the past. It is reasonably unique. A good deal of work has already taken place on it.

What Mr Garcia is working on is absolutely understanding the commitment of the two private companies to re-tonnaging. Both of them are going to have new ships. Precisely when, how big are they, what will they carry, what growth will they support, and at what times. If you had a situation where, with Bass Strait Freight Trade for instance, the ships were 60 per cent or 70 per cent full, that would be wonderful. You can handle any people trough, but frankly they would never earn enough money to buy to new ships. So you have to be up there, but you have to be not that full that you actually dampen growth. Somebody might say, I am going to invest \$15 million or \$20 million in something new, and so with the two private companies and TT-Line all is that looking at change. It is all quite an historic time - Tasmania really needs to understand its freight task. We have Infrastructure Tasmania managing that process right now.

Mrs HISCUTT - So this is going to include road, rail, sea, mining, aquaculture and manufacturing and anything deals that might come along. You will watch, the whole lot.

Mr HIDDING - That is right. We will need to understand, what we know now, where growth projections might be, and where we might be able to encourage investment in the right way. You do not want Co-ordinator-General out there encouraging investment in something we cannot deliver, in terms of infrastructure, until a certain point. There needs to be a cards-up approach.

CHAIR - I have a question on this line item before I pass to others. It talks about the management of Tasmania's interface with Infrastructure Australia. In the past of course, there has been quite a bit of criticism - in fact you were possibly one of the main antagonists when you were in opposition - and then also from a lot of private contractors, the fact that Tasmania, or the government, or the department, did not have sufficient information to Infrastructure Australia and therefore the cash was not flowing across to us. Would you like to comment on that and what you might be doing about that.

Mr HIDDING - What we need to do is to speak the same language as Infrastructure Australia. At the end of the day any substantial infrastructure project for Tasmania is funded by the Federal Government or placed before the Federal Government for funding. Notionally it has to be over \$100 million but they have told us even if it is \$60 million or \$70 million or \$50 million they would still be interested in that. So it has scale for us. We want Infrastructure Tasmania to speak the same language and the systems to be same as are our users so that when we investigate a project and Infrastructure Tasmania sends it off to Infrastructure Australia for consideration then the language is the same, the BCR modelling is the same down to cost ratios. They can look at it and plug it into their model and yes, it talks to each other. It is the first time this will occur. We will have a permanent employee. Before, the head of the infrastructure body was a person who flew in for meetings. It was what it was but, certainly, we can move into a whole different model.

CHAIR - Is there anything in the wind at the moment in terms of a project you are working with Infrastructure Australia?

Mr HIDDING - Yes, the rail funding has to be submitted to Infrastructure Australia. They are looking at it and we are very confident about that.

CHAIR - You are confident about that?

Mr HIDDING - Yes, it is a very good story what is going on with rail. The business is growing well and we have a good agreement with the Federal Government but that needs signing off by Infrastructure Australia it is normal process. So Infrastructure Tasmania will interacting with them. That was a pre-existing condition when Allan arrived, that was already underway.

It is fair to say that the Federal Government and its Infrastructure Australia are far more connected to the states now in terms of, 'We are not just going to give you money; you are going to have to demonstrate not only why you need it you have to demonstrate how you use it'. Gold-plated road building solutions for political reasons will no longer be possible. The Federal Government wants to get the best bang for its bucks, and we want that to happen as well. So to have Infrastructure Tasmania speaking to Infrastructure Australia and working together for the possibilities for the best outcome.

Mr GARCIA - The issue for Tasmania, and it is very much the same for the Northern Territory, is that there is an acknowledgement that a \$100 million project is a big project and we may not come with too many of those. So a notion of corridors with a fairly broad ambit is to say if there are projects that can be brought together to get an economic outcome then certainly there is consideration Infrastructure Australia will look at as against a multi-million dollar or \$100 million project in New South Wales or Victoria. There is certainly an acknowledgment that the smaller states should not miss out on the process. We have to be smart about how we bundle those up to take them to Infrastructure Australia.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr FARRELL - With Infrastructure Tasmania, you mentioned the rail in particular, and it is the job of Infrastructure Tasmania to look at new opportunities and that type of thing. I wonder how that will work in with TasRail for example, that has obviously made a decision that the north-east rail line is no longer viable. If Infrastructure Tasmania assesses that and says we have dams being built, we have this happening and there may be timber coming out of the north-east, would it be Infrastructure Tasmania's role to override TasRail's decision? Is that how you see it working?

Mr HIDDING - I absolutely see Infrastructure Tasmania chief executive officer engaging strongly with all state-owned companies and GBEs to understand that the decisions they make, that particular board makes, might well have a long-term strategic issue that is beyond their scope of seeing. That is a perfect role for Infrastructure Tasmania to ensure those decisions do not limit our future opportunities. In fact you have hit on an area which is close to your mind and a few other areas, but it is a good issue and it is one where we need to keep as many options open as possible. For that reason, dual use of currently discontinued lines would be better than ripping them up and having to start from scratch.

Mr FARRELL - Do you think that ITas will take some sort of audit of disused infrastructure of all -

Mr HIDDING - Without committing to an audit, because that would be too early a date to say it is at that level, but certainly in TasRail as a state-owned company, ITas needs to understand their business, what the future looks like and whether it is sitting on infrastructure it does not need, or whether it could be divesting itself of infrastructure we might need. This is where a close relationship with these GBEs and SOCs is needed so that they can say before we make this decision, before we even start thinking about that, let us refer it to ITas for review. That would be part of the normal pattern of negotiation and consultation within the Government.

Mr FARRELL - That would be across different kinds of infrastructure? The reason I ask this at the moment is, it is something close to home and we all look at examples close to home, travelling out on the northern outlet behind Austins Ferry, where the road has broken up. One of the reasons for not continuing the rail link into Hobart was the cost of maintaining the road crossings and other reasons like that. I do not think the balance was looked at, whether it is more expensive to maintain the road or the railway crossings. I might not be aware of it but there did not seem to be a lot of science behind that decision. I acknowledge it happened before your time but I am hoping Infrastructure Tasmania takes these sorts of things on board.

Mr HIDDING - I guess this time next year, you will be able to ask that question of Infrastructure Tasmania. You would be able to engage, having bent his mind to a lot of those

issues, but pre-existing things such as the Brighton hub having been built by your government is a game changer. It means that this is where the rail finishes essentially, so we need to work with that situation.

Mr FARRELL - I just noticed that it says 'assessment and prioritisation of all major publicly funded infrastructure'. Is it envisaged that this would look at local government infrastructure like water and sewerage, for example, on a whole-state basis?

Mr HIDDING - Absolutely. I see no reason why the infrastructure aspirations of the Dorset Council or the Huon Council should not be known to government, assessed by government and even bundled up together with state infrastructure projects for consideration. I see Mr Garcia shares this, that if there are gaps in private infrastructure, we should know about that too. We should be encouraging people to invest in certain forms of business or corporate infrastructure as well. There should not be too many barriers to where the area of interest is; however, I will say that for now, because the scope is that big, so we keep it manageable for the foreseeable future, will be focussed on road, rail and that kind of thing, not energy because that is a whole separate market and could be a substantial distraction. We are going on with freight, road, rail, shipping, and those sorts of matters.

Ms FORREST - Minister, I assume the reason we do not have any indication of what performance indicators are in place is because they have not been developed yet. What sort of performance indicators will you be requiring to demonstrate outcomes?

Mr HIDDING - Skyscraper-size, very high.

Ms FORREST - Are you going to set your own tall ones? Are they going to be outcomes-based?

Mr GARCIA - Last year we knew something numeric about how many things we would get to Infrastructure Australia. We might have got one, we might have got two; is that an adequate measure of performance for a year? Possibly not. We will actually have some outputs that could be performance indicators but we really have not set our mind to that at this point in time.

Mr HIDDING - The way I see this going is somewhat of an analogy of, say, the Auditor-General where he gets a work plan. For the record, the CEO of ITas, Mr Garcia, reports directly to two ministers, myself and the Treasurer. He reports directly in that way and he is not bound by a lot of the other -

Ms FORREST - That is why it is an important question to you, minister. What are your expectations, what do you expect to see, in terms of performance outcomes and indicators that will demonstrate this \$800 000 a year is being spent wisely?

Mr HIDDING - Could we for now just agree that we will shortly be publishing a forward work plan for ITas. Then, this time next year I would have thought we could develop some KPIs around an annual work plan. It is still a work in progress for now.

Ms FORREST - Your expectation is that you would develop a work plan in the near future?

Mr HIDDING - That is what we are working on.

Ms FORREST - And that you would review that, how often?

Mr HIDDING - The assessment against that would be annual but how he is going against that, we would have regular monthly meetings, if not more than that, because there would always be something in this work plan that is red-hot, just as freight is right now because there is a lot of movement in that whole freight area. We need to understand that, we need to nail that.

Ms FORREST - When you said earlier that initially, and it says in the budget papers, the role is focused on transport infrastructure but it is expected to expand out into other sectors such as energy, water or ICT, what sort of time frame are you looking for that?

Mr HIDDING - I think we can agree that in a couple of years of this constrained transport, once we have a freight strategy launched that industry can work with, there would be the opportunity then to start looking at other areas. From what I know of the scope of the job of work to be done in transport, there are things that we are committed to, for instance a state roads audit, that he would be driving. Things like that are at least a minimum of two years' work.

Ms FORREST - The reason I am a little concerned is that we are just focusing on transport, for example. If you are looking at planning a new road and maybe it is a bypass or it could be a new road into a new development of some sort, invariably with a road you need energy, you need ICT, water and sewerage and everything else. Surely this role should include some of the integration around that.

Mr HIDDING - Where it intersects, in no way is he barred from having an interest in that; it is simply a focus for the first couple of years to get back up and going. We are not going to say to Mr Garcia, do not involve yourself in electricity businesses. He is absolutely welcome to start understanding those but not taking on projects in that space while we have got this big task to do.

Ms FORREST - If you are digging a hole in the road, so to speak, or digging a hole beside the road, then it is best to put everything in there at once.

Mr GARCIA - We are going to have a single planning scheme shortly, there is a population strategy and there are things like a settlement strategy we need to resolve. If we are going to have many people in a particular place that are going to need water and sewerage and need roads and the like, we need to understand where that settlement is going to be, what the infrastructure needs are and how those organisations are working together. Currently you might argue that many organisations work in their particular space doing their particular thing, so the understanding is getting that overview. Do we always direct? Are we going to direct local government and TasWater where to put their water? No, we are not.

Ms FORREST - But you are going to make sure that it is done as part of the plan?

Mr GARCIA - Part of the coordination of bringing it together. Do they understand everything that is happening? Do we understand everything that is happening? When we go forward we have an amalgam of understanding so that with the funding that has been provided and the works to be undertaken we are getting the best bang for the buck.

Ms FORREST - Mr Garcia will have a role in that even though he has a focus on -

Mr HIDDING - He is not at all constrained from getting involved in that space.

Ms FORREST - The way it read, it looked at bit siloed to me. I wanted to be sure that was not happening. It would be a waste of your resources.

Mr HIDDING - For now it is a focus issue.

Mr SWAIN - It is also a recognition of maturity. Infrastructure Australia has just released a 2015 mini-audit that essentially says that roads and transport are probably 10 to 15 years behind the other classes of infrastructure in terms of maturity arrangements that are in place.

Mr GARCIA - And the regulatory requirements that are associated with some of the things, like energy, water and the like.

Mr MULDER - I am not sure whether it was within this portfolio or that of the Minister for State Growth or the Minister for Infrastructure, but you mentioned in your overview the Devonport Living City, the Launceston University of Tasmania campus relocation and something to increase the presence and impact of the University of Tasmania on the north-west coast.

There is about \$20 million per year going forward into some of those projects. No money this year, of course, because we have to do some planning and development. These are tagged under infrastructure projects. I always understood infrastructure to be transport communications and things like that. Although you might say the Devonport Living City project, post-construction, what is the business case for investing this money in improving streetscapes? Apart from the short-term injection into employment creation?

Unless you can come up with some improved transport, communications or something else, I wonder what the problem is here. By the Treasurer's own admission, if some of this stuff starts to work, we could be facing a real shortage of people in high-vis vests to do this sort of work. That might drive up the price, which might end up bringing a heap of contractors in. I am wondering what the business case was for these particular projects, post-construction.

Mr HIDDING - This northern cities' thing basically belongs to another division, Matt Groom's division, but -

Mr MULDER - I am happy to put the questions to the minister. It's just that you raised it.

Mr HIDDING - I did. I was talking about the \$315 million jobs-building initiative raised by Mrs Hiscutt.

Mr MULDER - I will take it up with him tomorrow.

Mr HIDDING - One of the revelations I had the first time I was a shadow minister for infrastructure was that every year they would bundle together rebuilding of high schools in with infrastructure because, after all, it is all infrastructure spend. When you separate roads out, that becomes specifically my responsibility.

Mr MULDER - It is a personal thing. I see two models of infrastructure. One is upon which user pays, like the fuel excise on our roads, the freight costs of our railway lines, the charges on our electricity and water and communications. To me, that was economic infrastructure, which

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actually pays for itself in the long term because of, hopefully, recovery of costs. I will put this question to Mr Groom because I have concerns about -

Mr HIDDING - I could speak at length about all three of those northern city things because I know about them.

Mr MULDER - They smack awfully of regional employment development schemes for those who remember the Whitlam years.

Mr HIDDING - I do remember those, and they are certainly not those.

Mr MULDER - Okay, we will leave that one. There was something else.

Mr GAFFNEY - Minister, \$800 000 for infrastructure sounds like a lot of money but realistically it is not. It really is not when you listen to the plethora of projects, some being quite significant in funding and some being minor scale, but wanting to attract businesses and whatever.

It must be a nightmare to try to staff that agency or staff that line item because of the different ranges of abilities and cross-agency work you are going to have. It will take some time, I would suggest, to bed down that staffing. How is that going to be handled?

Mr HIDDING - Let me put your mind at rest. The \$800 000 is for three new staff.

Ms FORREST - Including Mr Garcia?

Mr HIDDING - That is the brand-new intake. We have, of course, the policy unit of Infrastructure, where a lot of this work - particularly the grunt work - would be taking place. It is harnessed to an outcome driven by Infrastructure Tasmania. It is a task. No, there will be very strong connection with that policy unit, which has around a dozen people. You are dead right - three people could not do the stuff I am talking about.

Mr GAFFNEY - While you want to ensure it heads in the right direction, you want to get some projects up and running solidly.

CHAIR - Thank you. Any more on 2.1?

Mr MULDER - With infrastructure and strategy, you talked about costs and the return on investments, and things like that. We have had this discussion in another environment. Massive investment has gone into rail - into rolling stock, below-rail and all of those sorts of things. Given that, is there any future prospect of having a profitable rail line if it can never pay for its infrastructure? Where we will get to the point where it is cheaper to put things on trains than it is on trucks?

Mr HIDDING - TasRail will be before us in about six months' time. I can tell you, it is a developing story and a pretty good unit. TasRail's business model is getting stronger, it is getting good support. Now money is being spent below-rail, people will start being confident that it is a safe way to deliver freight. I am quietly confident that in the future we will all start to understand that better, particularly when we get to the end of public expenditure or input required to rebuild this business.

It was a decision made by the previous government. It had our support, qualified support because there was no business case as to whether the Federal Government should be sticking in hundreds of millions, backed up then by the fifties of millions the state put in as well. That is history. It has occurred. We can now see the end point of that. We know what is needed to be spent.

Mr MULDER - The question goes, not to inputs, but to the financial sustainability of rail into the future. I really give you a heads-up because, as you are probably aware, the Legislative Council has established a committee to look at that very thing.

Mr HIDDING - Yes. It is great.

Mr MULDER - I take that on board.

Mr HIDDING - As far as the Government is concerned, rail should be contestable with road. As a policy position, it ought to be contested. We need to know what the different costs are.

Mr MULDER - Which lines and what kinds of freight are profitable and which are not.

CHAIR - So to 2.2

Output Group 2 Infrastructure

2.2 Infrastructure Strategy

Mr HIDDING - This is Alex Tay, Acting Deputy Secretary, Strategy and Policy.

CHAIR - Thank you. I looked at the statements made under 2.2. The Tasmanian Division of Engineers Australia recently called for strategic direction and solutions beyond election cycles. Maybe that is a little bit of wishful thinking. The division members reckon we should have a 'multi-party, multi-house approach' to settle an infrastructure plan for at least the next 20 years to avoid the boom and bust of investment cycles. That is a reasonable proposition. What is your response to that?

Mr HIDDING - If Dr Gardiner from Engineers Australia were here, she would agree that the appointment of Allan Garcia and the subsequent appointment of two specialist support staff is a big step toward what they are talking about there. If you know what your plan is going forward and where you might need to be in 15 or 20 years, that takes a lot of the issues away from election-cycle funding.

We must not become too excited about this, however. Election-cycle funding sometimes is a very good thing. Particularly where it relates to the Federal Government. We have landed a solution to freight which was first discussed during a federal election. It took time to deliver and that is what took place. All the expenditure, all the work you currently see on the Midland Highway, eight projects, and there will be another eight next year -

[3.45 p.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT - Oh, my!

Mr HIDDING - You had better get used to it. We are going to make that highway safe. It is going to align with AusRAP standards but all that would not have been possible without being able to convince the Federal Government at the last election that it should put up \$400 million for the Midland Highway. We accept what Engineering Australia is saying but they would admit that the appointment of Infrastructure Tasmania, the way we are doing it, will go a long way to meet them.

CHAIR - In regard to your projects, how do you assess and prioritise the list you have? What is the mechanism you use?

Mr HIDDING - You mean for roads?

CHAIR - Infrastructure per se.

Mr HIDDING - Under my purview, it is essentially transport infrastructure. Let us talk about the Midland Highway. We have developed a priority there based on a measurable process that is called AusRAP. It is part of an International Roads Assessment Program called IRAP. It is an accepted form of assessing the danger on roads. Every metre of a road is examined, every turn-off, every intersection, all the features are examined and the Midland Highway, embarrassingly, scored an average of two stars out of five, and it is our intention to bring that up to an AusRAP 3 rating which, using the safer systems methodology we will deliver. It has a lot of people talking out there at the moment when they see what is happening on that highway.

CHAIR - They are not all in a positive sense.

Mr HIDDING - You mean because of the hold-ups?

CHAIR - Not me. I know what you mean.

Mr HIDDING - We receive overwhelmingly strong support for all that because they know it ends up a safer highway. There is a 10-year infrastructure investment plan we are developing and we have a state road assets management policy so there is a lot of work going on in this area. When fully implemented, the asset management will ensure that a road transport infrastructure expenditure delivers assets at defined levels of service for the key customer service outcomes of condition, capacity, function and safety.

It is a fresh look at expenditure on maintenance and safe systems expenditure. For instance, the road, Chair, you would drive on, the Esk Main Road - the widening of a lot of that roadway has transformed it in regard to run off road crashes. For other road users, such as cyclists, it has made such a difference to that road.

Mr SWAIN - To give you a practical example. The policy and strategy area might provide some advice to the minister about the strategic policy objectives that we should be progressing in our road investments. The area Shane Gregory heads up, of state roads, would develop a 10-year plan in light of that strategic policy objective and that would be reviewed annually to make sure it was best meeting needs. Infrastructure Tasmania might have an oversight view of that to say does the plan deliver on the policy agenda. We are actively thinking about how to bring long-term infrastructure planning into our day-to-day activities and involving Infrastructure Tasmania in a oversight strategic capacity in that process.

Ms FORREST - Minister, how does the \$2 million allocation to the Structured Infrastructure Investment Review Process, or SIIRP, fit with the Infrastructure Tasmania appointment? I touched on this when we were talking about the need for an integrated approach to development. Whose responsibility is the expenditure of the funds, the \$2 million, for SIIRP?

Mr HIDDING - SIIRP is a process outside of our department. It is Structured Infrastructure Investment Review Process. For instance, the big boat that was going to be built for Police went through that process. It took a substantial period of time to get through but once it is through, you are on the radar for funding and away you go. It is a structured process managed by a budget.

CHAIR - What is the \$2 million you are talking about?

Ms FORREST - That would be in Finance General. My question is, is there a connection to Infrastructure Tasmania in a strategy sense? Those projects go through that process, they are heading toward that integrated system.

Mr HIDDING - That is a good point. As I would see this occurring, Infrastructure Tasmania, on a certain matter, would make a report to its two ministers. After which, the two ministers might consider that for funding. It still goes through a SIIRP process after that. Treasury would still apply a SIIRP process. It may be a shortened process because a lot of work has already been done by Infrastructure Tasmania.

Ms FORREST - What I do not want to see is duplication.

Mr HIDDING - No, it is a different process. As I understand it, SIIRP is strong testing of the BCR proposals, those kind of things. It is a final sanity test before the expenditure is approved. I have not had a SIIRP process to go through this last couple of weeks.

Ms FORREST - The reason I was asking, minister, is that I have had this discussion across the table with Treasury in the past. It seems there are a lot of synergies there. I would hate to think we were spending another \$800 000 on a position that is going to duplicate what goes through another process that has been described very similarly to what you were describing.

Mr HIDDING - Perhaps I could take that on notice and get more briefing on SIIRP.

Ms FORREST - I could ask the Treasurer tomorrow. I would be interested to know. I want to see no duplication of effort.

Mr HIDDING - You would not want to do that. That is precisely what we are seeking to avoid.

Mrs HISCUTT - Minister, spending on rail. Where I live, quite often the train would come off the track and they would spend a lot of money - we had beer wafting over Sulphur Creek, the smell of that for ages, and that sort of thing. It has not come off for quite a while. The TasFreight Rail Revitalising Program, is that part of looking at that sort of thing and the points that are weak?

Mr HIDDING - The funding recently announced by the Federal Government, which we matched in our Budget, \$119.6 million, is for rail upgrades. That is the first tranche. There is a second tranche that will occur in the four years after that, committed by both state and federal. As our forward Estimates only go out four years that is all I can say about that. The last time there

was a derailment up your way, and it was close to you, that section of rail, I was advised, is a candidate for replacement.

The one thing that will affect confidence in that business is derailments. They are expensive, they are messy, and they are dangerous. That is why it was crucial we get this \$119.6 million from federal and state budgets, in this Budget, so we can start rolling that work out.

Mrs HISCUTT - And you will be looking at the West Coast line, for the mine, and that part of it?

Mr HIDDING - West Coast is probably a principal thing. It is the productivity area of the state. We need to have it right.

Mr MULDER - Several times, minister, since the new Government formed, we have been told that you are consulting widely on the future road network, where we need new bits, where we need to reverse old things. How is that consultation program working? When will we see the first drafts of future programs?

Mr HIDDING - I acknowledge the presence of Shane Gregory, General Manager, State Roads.

Mr GREGORY - The draft tenure infrastructure investment plan is due to be launched in the first quarter of next calendar year. In December, the Government launched the State Roads infrastructure policy and the asset management policy, which lay out the framework of how we are going to think about that investment process. We are currently developing an asset management model, which is a contemporary model that we can use to test and run through different scenarios. There are some building blocks we are putting in place.

We are also involved in a number of projects working with key stakeholders. For example, I am on the steering committee of a South East Regional Development Authority - SERDA - project looking at an infrastructure development plan for the south-eastern corner of Tasmania. That project has just kicked off and it will provide some guidance about broader infrastructure which will feed into the road infrastructure. We are looking at that. We are in communication with Launceston, Hobart and Kingborough councils, so we have some regular discussions. But we are looking at those key areas. We are looking to put in place something that has not existed for over a decade, which is a clear policy and framework to work in, and then an infrastructure investment plan.

Mr MULDER - In terms of consultation, particularly with the south-east, because we will get onto that in relation to specific problems shortly. Who do you consult with when you are trying to identify potential projects and potential transport corridors?

Mr HIDDING - The obvious answer is that our key community stakeholder is the Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania, RACT. It has strong views on priorities. Local government also has strong views and strong expertise in their areas. Tasman Council, for instance, consistently speaks about the state highway and roads down there. They would be far away the two biggest sets of inputs?

Mr GREGORY - The SERDA project will also take into account developments at having an airport; with an aquaculture, agriculture - so we are talking to peak bodies and what is happening

in those spaces. When you go to other parts of the state, obviously you have mining as a key stakeholder, and we talk to those; when we go to the west coast, aquaculture and the salmon industry has been a key stakeholder.

Mr MULDER - Minister, my concern is that councils change. It used to be every two years but now every four years - thankfully - so councils' ideas of what is important, and what is not important change. Once you give us a draft idea of where the corridors are going to be and where the particular projects are going to be, will that draft then go out to the community consultation for further consideration?

Mr HIDDING - We have a new process underway, with the new Government, so -

Mr MULDER - I heard that a draft plan will be coming out. Is it intended to take that draft plan to wider community consultation so that people like engineers can have some input into it before we lock it in? Four years ago, had you suggested to the Sorell Council that we bypass Sorell and build the other roadwork, you would have been - I think you nearly were - hanged, drawn and quartered. However, four years later, if you talk to them now, they will think it is a brilliant idea and want to get on with it. I think you will find the community at large is very supportive of that project all along. Some sectional interests, like the businesses, were a bit concerned, and that is the reason for the change. It is just a word of warning about the broader consultations that are necessary for the people who actually travel on those roads.

Mr GREGORY - A key point of developing the plan is not going and asking people what they want in the plan.

The projects you identify feed out of an overall policy and levels of service. The key consultation is actually about the levels of service and what are the important aspects of the level of services - is it the travel time, the liability, the freight capacity? They are the key issues and out of that they become engineering exercises in terms of what is the right project to deliver the level of service.

Mr MULDER - No doubt you have already factored in, particularly with the south-east areas and the Tasman Highway, the traffic data in some of your reports and the potential growth in that. You might also factor in a letter that the Department of Infrastructure and Transport wrote the year before last - Mr O'Byrne decided he better get on the front foot because of it - to the Sorell Council, advising it that the department was in no position to support any further residential development in the towns of Sorell and the whole southern-eastern corridor. That was because of certain bottlenecks, and the department had no intention of doing any work on the Tasman Highway. Quite clearly -

Ms FORREST - Is that a question, Tony?

Mr MULDER - It is not, I am just saying -

Ms FORREST - We need to ask questions.

Mr MULDER - Are you factoring in all these other bits and pieces into this strategy, which relates to the east? Some of these things get missed out. I am sure this minister never wants to get into a position of writing to Sorell Council, saying 'Please do not develop anymore.'

Mr HIDDING - I have called together the mayors from that region, to start talking about this very problem, to say 'Sorry, you cannot develop, you are out of the game of the next 20 years.' As a result of those discussions, South East Regional Development Authority - SERDA - has been reformed. At its latest meeting recently in Sorell, I was a guest; I spoke to that group. I look forward to having much stronger discussions with that group about that as a region. Your point is well made, and we will watch that carefully and make sure that the consultation is genuine and timely, and does not blindly follow local government.

Mr MULDER - The question we have dancing around is really: when that draft report comes out, will there still be time for further community input and for you to assess that?

Mr SWAIN - If I could answer that, minister. We are talking about a 10-year plan which is reviewed annually against publicly available standards. The design criteria are publicly reviewed every year. If it is wrong, the minister will receive feedback from the community and the department will receive feedback from minister, no doubt.

Mr MULDER - So this 10-year plan contains a smoothing-out of the boom-bust investment cycles the Engineers Association was talking about?

Mr HIDDING - That is another one that addresses Engineers Australia's -

Mr MULDER - So that 10-year plan will probably have a forward-funding requirement attached to it?

Mr GREGORY - We also need to take into account that transport solutions are not always about hard infrastructure, particularly in Tasmania where we have very short, very sharp peak-traffic volumes that are generally double the inter-peak traffic volumes, but are typically less than an hour. Outside those times, the traffic drops off completely. The answer to emerging issues is not necessarily about building more roads; it about using what we have more effectively. So we will not have a great list of hard-infrastructure, high-dollar plans.

Mr MULDER - I did say new roads as well as modifications.

Mr HIDDING - Public transport, for example, could be a transforming discussion to have, rather than -

Ms FORREST - A new road.

Mr HIDDING - Exactly. We should not just build stuff.

Ms FORREST - On that point, is the head of Infrastructure Tasmania involved in public transport at all?

Mr HIDDING - Will be. In fact one of his early references will be - I do not know whether he is aware of it -

Ms FORREST - He is going to find out one way or another.

Mr HIDDING - The light rail proposal, where there has been a report after report.

Ms FORREST - We will probably get to that in a slightly later line item, if you like.

Mr HIDDING - I felt it was not for me to accept completely the fact that it appears that we would be far better investing in buses as a solution. I actually think that Infrastructure Tasmania should, pull that right down and provide a definitive report to me on that. You will certainly be in light rail territory here. You have to get into the bus space.

Ms FORREST - On 2.2, I have one final question for that output group. I noticed there is a significant reduction over the forward Estimates, particularly into 2018-19, with no real explanation as to why that relates to this. When you read the footnote, it talks about the redistribution of corporate costs by the establishment of the Department of State Growth. I would have thought that would have accounted for this year's changes, not that far out. Why the big drop-away, particularly toward the end of the forward Estimates?

Mr TAY - Contained within that sub-output group 2.2 is a one-off funding for various election commitment projects. The underlying funding as you get to the 2018-19 year, where you see that significant drop-off, is more the underlying funding that sits behind the policy and strategy branch together with some supplementation from another line item in the CIP program.

This is basically one-off project funding and many of those projects or election commitments were fairly small level community construction projects that did not have a natural home under any other output.

Ms FORREST - So they sit under that.

Mr TAYLOR - They were being placed there because they did not have a natural home elsewhere at the time.

Ms FORREST - Have you looked at, in your annual report, giving a much more detailed breakdown of what this is about? I mean this year's annual report, when you have written it.

Output Group 2 Infrastructure

2.3 Land transport safety -

Mr FARRELL - Minister, do you have a figure in the item regarding the road safety education and awareness programs, what dollar value is attributed to that?

Mr HIDDING - Yes. That would be in the Road Safety Advisory Council's document. It is road safety levy funding. There is a range of programs. Penny, can you complete that?

Ms NICHOLLS - There is also funding that we received from the MAIB. It goes to the Road Safety Advisory Council's public education and marketing campaigns. We get an allocation that is shared, not quite 50:50, with Tasmania Police. The total amount we get is over \$3 million. Some of that comes to State Growth and some goes to Tasmania Police for law enforcement.

Mr FARRELL - And that covers programs like the television advertising programs, that type of thing?

Ms NICHOLLS - Yes, that is correct.

Mr FARRELL - How are the effectiveness of these campaigns measured? Do you have a program of assessing how successful they have been?

Ms NICHOLLS - Yes we do. We periodically do market research around our campaigns..

Ms FORREST - How is that reported? We are talking about \$21 million here in the Budget overall. I am wondering how you measure the benefit for the money that is spent; how is it reported?

Ms NICHOLLS - The \$21 million that is against table 10.2 covers a full range of activities in the land transport safety area. That is all our registration and licensing activities, our road safety policy activities, our transport inspectors, our authorised inspection stations, our driver assessors - that full range of activities, covering in total, with a head count of 200 staff. A small component of this goes to road safety, marketing and education.

Mr FARRELL - Recently there has been the driver learner assessment program. Is that under your area?

Ms NICHOLLS - The Learner Driver Mentor Program? Yes.

Mr HIDDING - Assessment or mentor?

Mr FARRELL - The assessment for the L1 and L2, the testing officers. I wonder how effective that is and what effect that has had on the Budget.

Mr HIDDING - We are getting very good feedback from customers out there that they are able to, for instance, sign up for a driver test with a private provider and then, at the end of that, be privately certified for L1 to L2. That is the only one you can do that way in the field.

Ms FORREST -An excellent initiative, minister, I commend you on that one.

Mr HIDDING - There were too many families that were basically frozen at that point and there were long rebooking periods and it was very frustrating. That is not to say that there still are not in the process somewhere delays from time to time, you might get one or two off crook and it causes hassles, but we are getting it a lot better.

Mr FARRELL - That is monitored by your department, they are assessed?

Ms NICHOLLS - Yes, we have at the moment about 39 driver instructors, we have gone through an authorisation process to do the L2 assessment, and they are providing data to us on a monthly basis.

Mr HIDDING - I can tell you that 43 per cent of all L1 to L2 progressions were undertaken by authorised driving assessors - that is 1 022 are now done privately. There is no question that is the sort of take-up I was looking for, and it has allowed a better service delivery all the way through. With the environment the novice drivers are in, we require more training of them now because we have adjusted the speed limits to make them the same as in most of Australia.

I will point out that the first time I saw that was in an inquiry by the Legislative Council. It was a recommendation by the Legislative Council and so we have delivered it, but it requires more training and more assessment, I would have thought. The capability of being able to drive at those speeds has to be assessed as well. We are moving the bar in a few places but we believe we will deliver with this at least less frustrated young novice drivers.

Ms FORREST - And less frustrated non-novice drivers sitting behind them.

Mr HIDDING - I took my grandson through his entire process and by the time he got his licence, with one thing or the other he was 19-and-a-bit. It was not all the system's fault, to a degree it was his as well. He was well frustrated by the time he got his licence, and he did not see the Government as any particular friend of his in this process. I would really like to change that as a culture, with that speed limit changed, being able to get tested with no long waits. There is more work to be done but we have done some good stuff.

Mr SWAIN - It gives us operational flexibility, and that is a key thing for the department.

Mr HIDDING - I can say for the members that if you are aware of somebody, a young person in particular, who is about to get employment or could get employment, it is not unheard of that the department will respond to a request to bring a test forward so that the licence could be [obtained sooner] - there is good thinking in that space. Having a licence is about not only social inclusion but about employment opportunities. If there is an issue there, the department is usually very good with that.

Ms FORREST - On that point then, the Learner Driver Mentor Program, I declare an interest as I am the Chair of the steering committee in the Burnie one. Your ongoing commitment is secure?

[4.15 p.m.]

Mr HIDDING - Absolutely, they were very concerned before we came to Government, they were unfunded. We had a close look at it, and we could see that it could do with some improvement somewhere. I personally saw it as the one weakness in the novice driver program. For many families the novice driver would be tempted to cheat on his or her hours because it is that hard to get 50 hours up when mum does not have a car -

Ms FORREST - Or you are the mother and you have children.

Mr HIDDING - To get 50 structured hours up is a huge task. It has to be done properly too, not just a quick run for 20 minutes that you put down as an hour. These mentor driver groups are just terrific volunteers around Tasmania who give up their time. We are seeing some terrific outcomes. I am so delighted about that because I do not believe - if it happened before, there is always probably some optimistic view of their 50 hours but the chance of it happening anyone going this program is zero. They will sign up and do the 50 hours, and we need them to do that.

Ms NICHOLLS - We now have 18 driver mentor programs throughout the state and the funding the Government has provided is \$1.5 million from the road safety levy over three years. Earlier this year we gave the first lot of that money as a result of an application process and we are in the final stages of processing applications for the next 12 months around funding.

Mr HIDDING - In some of the country areas, in St Helens for instance, it is impossible for some of these kids to get their 50 hours up. Suddenly you have a small group volunteers and they go right in these hours - it is terrific.

Mrs HISCUTT - Minister, we are talking about land transport safety. You may be aware that I have passed my [inaudible] employment for 700 foreign workers. I would like to put them into the tourist department when it comes to driving, they do not know the rules. The road down to the west coast I often complaints truck drivers there is a tourist pulled up in the middle of the road taking pictures. Are you doing anything to deal with that, to help with that or educate them?

Mr HIDDING - There is a lot anecdotal discussion about tourists on roads and the safety of all drivers on our roads is of highest importance to us. Between 2010 and 2014 there were a total of 1 249 serious casualty crashes. Of those 1 249 115 were from interstate and 16 were international tourists. This means that interstate and international tourists accounted for 131 or 10 per cent of all serious casualty crashes in Tasmania.

Ms FORREST - When you consider they are only here for a short time it is pretty scary.

Mr HIDDING - Yes, but at any given time you have different people but around the same number of visitors on the island.

Motorcycle riders make up 54 per cent of interstate serious casualty tourist crashes. So motorcycle riders are sadly well represented.

Tourism bring around \$3.1 billion into the Tasmanian economy every year. Over the past 12 months tourism numbers have increased by 8 per cent including strong growth in visitors from overseas. The road safety of interstate and international tourists is an important issue not just their health and safety, but in reputation damage to Tasmania as an inordinate number of serious and casualty crashes would be a bad thing.

At its last meeting on 19 May, the Road Safety Advisory Council considered a detailed investigation into the crash risk of interstate and international tourists on Tasmanian roads. I think it is terrific work that they did that. I have read this investigation and it included an in-depth analysis of available crash data and the Tasmania visitor survey which provides a profile of the characteristics, travel behaviour and expenditure of international and domestic visitors.

The Road Safety Advisory Council advised that although not a major road safety concern particularly in comparison to the proportion of serious casualty crashes contributing to alcohol, speeding or drugs amongst local residents, a proactive approach should be taken to ensure that interstate and international drivers involved in crashes does not escalate with increased tourism numbers. The advisory council has now recommended the development of a strategy aimed at improving road safety for all visitors to Tasmania. That will take place now. In the interim, I am pleased to advise the department has recently secured a prominent billboard at the gateway to the Launceston airport which will be used to target tourists and promote safe driving in Tasmania. Over 1.1 million travellers use the Launceston airport every year. In addition to the billboard, the department has secured editorial space in a popular Chinese tourism magazine to promote safe driving in Tasmania. That is terrific. I have seen the editorial in that. I read it assiduously; did not understand any of it because it was in Mandarin.

Ms FORREST - Do you understand Mandarin?

Mr HIDDING - No.

Laughter.

Mr HIDDING - It was a serious editorial in this very popular tourism magazine to promote safe driving in Tasmania. It is expected that 10 000 copies will be distributed in Tasmania through hotels, food and wine tour operators, airports and regional centres. Additional copies will also be provided to Chinese travel agents in Melbourne and Sydney. A digital version will also be available. That is interim stuff and very valuable. A formal strategy will now be developed for interstate and international visitors. I think it is only appropriate we do so.

Ms FORREST - Particularly in the case of motorcycles.

Mr HIDDING - Indeed. That needs to be addressed. We invite them to our place. It is our duty to try to make them as safe as possible.

Ms FORREST - One of the things is to understand the travel times between places. They often come thinking it is only 200 kilometres, thinking that is going to take the same time as driving 200 kilometres straight down the Nullabor.

Mrs HISCUTT - Is there any way you can get that sort of information into places like the Costa Berry Patch that employ hoards of people that do not know the road rules? You have gone onto tourism spots but I think -

Mr HIDDING - You are right. If that is a gathering place for employment, then it is.

Mrs HISCUTT - I have watched them go down the road and it is scary. One more question, minister, before I leave. I see the signs around the place about the pushbikes, 'a metre and a half matters'. I thought it was 'a metre matters'. Okay, I will give you half a metre. It needs to be brought to attention. What other strategies do you have in mind?

Mr HIDDING - These are advisory signs? They are yellow and black, which are all advisory around Tasmania?

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes.

Mr HIDDING - On all the popular cyclist routes, we have rolled out this new signage which was developed with cyclists and the road safety community. The rule we adopted as advisory is the same as happens in New South Wales. This is a metre in urban areas, under 60 kilometres per hour. A metre and a half at higher speeds. If it is out on a highway, going past someone at 110 kilometres per hour at a metre is still too close.

We have a terrific package happening with cycling and cycling safety around Tasmania. The other day we announced some work on Bonnet Hill, an area that attracts a huge amount of cyclists. It is a lovely cycling area but it is dangerous. We will be spending some \$5 million over the forward Estimates on road widening projects like that, for areas where the cyclists go, to try to widen where we can and give extra cycle space. There is also a whole range of matters with A Road Cycling Safety Package. \$500 000 from the Road Safety Levy to develop a safety package.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

The Cycling Safety Steering Committee was established as a sub committee of the Road Safety Advisory Council.

We are very engaged with the cycling community and what we are delighted about after all the expenditure. You might remember the Muppets? Love them or hate them, it got cut through. Do not forget we changed the road rules - you can cross a solid white line now when safe to do so. We encourage people only when safe to do so. Cyclists are reporting now exaggerated passing moves. What is very important to me the whole way through is that people are changing their behaviour without losing their sense of humour. That was what that marketing was aimed at, because in other states there is war on the roads between cyclists and car users. We do not want that here.

CHAIR - We already have it, I can tell you.

Mr HIDDING - You are a cyclist. There is the possibility for that to blow up into very unhelpful behaviour on the roads. We have seen change. There is more to go. We will keep it under any way.

Mr FARRELL – Minister, I am not sure if anyone has given any thought but I had to do a licence upgrade and had to do a re-test on my road knowledge. The department has a self-test section on the website which I was unaware of but found really useful. Everyone should probably go on it occasionally and test your road knowledge. I do not know if you have given any thought to utilising that, or building on that, to maybe use for visiting motorists. It is a really easy to use, simple procedure that is already structured. It is really worth having a look at. I was unaware that it was there.

Mr HIDDING - Now that you have raised it, we should make it more known to Tasmanian drivers as well as for international drivers. I suspect that, as experienced as I am, I would be challenged by some of that stuff as well. That is an idea.

Mr FARRELL - It is already there and could be built on quite well.

Mr HIDDING - If I could drop back on the cycling for one minute. It was great to hear that the Road Safety Advisory Council recently endorsed \$100 000 funding for a project with the focus on safe routes to school, and bikes skills training. It is called Ride to School. It is going to be a great way to foster an active and health community so there is more for people on bikes but particularly to equip kids at a young age with the skills they need to ride safely and interact with motor cars. That is another initiative that has not been out there to date. I am very happy that the Road Safety Advisory Council has taken that step.

Output Group 2

2.4. Passenger Transport

Ms FORREST - Minister, is this the area for the west coast bus trial? Can you advise the committee of the breakdown in costing for that, and how you intend to measure the value or otherwise of the trial?

Mr HIDDING - We briefed you on that recently. I will ask Penny to -

Ms NICHOLLS - Yes, maybe I can bring Martin Grace.

Mr GRACE - The trial was funded for \$100 000 through the election commitment, subject to a tender process. So it would depend on what people submit to us through that tender process. We will be measuring the outcomes based on the level of demand compared to the existing services in the region to see if it that service has shown that level of demand that we hope for a new service in the region.

Ms FORREST - Do you have an expectation of the level of demand that would be required to see it continue?

Mr HIDDING - Do we build that into the project? Do we set a benchmark for it?

Mr GRACE.- We haven't at this stage, but typically for school bus services, particularly rural school bus services, we would expect about at least 10 passengers per service to justify continuation of the service.

Mr HIDDING - There would have to be a number there somewhere. What is sensible? It is somewhat speculative. We believe that it ought to be tested. Its competition comes from things such as home and community care vehicles, community cars, all those kind of things which make it difficult for bus services to compete. It disaggregates it all. We thought the one way to find out was that we had to put a bus on.

Ms FORREST - I will be watching to see what happens with that too. Sometimes communities ask for these things and do not use them when they are there. The onus is on the community, to a degree, if they really believe it is necessary to use it.

With regard to the funding for this line item and the public transport bus services procurement, that was reviewed recently, I understand? There is a drop in funding over the forward Estimates. Is that related to the end of that review process and the costs associated with that? Are there other reasons for the fall?

Mr HIDDING - Yes. Can I address something that now is a working project? The title is called Project 2018. It is the recontracting of the state's bus contracts. Most of these contracts expire in 2018-19. We made a commitment to the industry that we would be prepared to recontract them to the people who own them now subject to two very important tests. One is whether the service is still necessary and in the right place. Also, the dollar amount. Obviously you could not give a blanket agreement to that. That is going to be a major project. We really need to understand in 2016 the route services required in Tasmania. In about 2017 we need to nail the rest of it so that the industry has at least 12 to 18 months knowledge of what the changes are going to be.

Obviously their business models need to adapt to all this. There has been a degree of nervousness. After all, they have had the contracts for 10 years. They were very pleased with our commitment to recontract to the same owners, subject to those two matters. It is going to be a major body of work. We have some very good people on it. There will be external assistance from specialists required. We have some funding in the system for most of it upfront. In the last two years, 2017-18, reducing to a smaller amount because the hard work will have been done.

Ms FORREST - I know it does say 'bus transport' in that. Was rail considered, particularly northern rail, or is that completely -

Mr HIDDING - Transport? No, the rail transport you mean, sorry?

Ms FORREST - Yes, there is public bus transport service procurement. There is no consideration there of rail.

Mr HIDDING - No. Our rail network is still sub-standard for freight. We are not there yet for freight.

Ms FORREST - Also the northern light rail, as it is sometimes called. We talked about it earlier when you had Mr Garcia here.

Mr HIDDING - The northern suburbs light rail, yes.

Ms FORREST - That has not been part of that sort of process at all? It is separate?

Mr HIDDING - No.

Mr SWAIN - On the specifics for funding, yes, that is essentially the drop off across the outer years. The 450, 451, 510. In the initial year, from last year to this year, it is the cessation of the Transport Innovation Fund and the Park and Ride funding that was there under the former government.

Ms FORREST - That has ceased as well, has it?

Mr SWAIN - Yes, so they are the big changes to that output. Inside the department I chair a committee that will run this project. One of the things we have been advising the minister on going to light rail is it is a very big project. We need to keep the scope fairly tight to be successful. There are 495 contracts in 95 places, bus providers.

Ms FORREST - Thank you. That is all I had, Chair.

Mrs HISCUTT - One quick question, minister. In the Budget last year there was \$200 000 set aside for the North-West Commuter Bus Pilot Trial. Did anything come out of that?

Mr HIDDING - This is the Latrobe to Burnie conundrum. Where the trip by road, by vehicle, is about 40 minutes. It is over two hours by bus. Unacceptable. We have said so. We have named it up and we are going to fix it. However, under the current contracting arrangement I cannot wave a wand and I cannot direct people to do certain things because they have contracts. So under the bus recontracting program, one of the first areas I have asked to be looked at, is that area to understand how Government policy can be implemented that would assist to bring about a service that is about an hour.

Ms FORREST - Particularly with integrational health care.

Mr HIDDING - Absolutely. Integrational health care and all the discussions on that whole north-west coast ribbon development. There is nothing you can do about it. They have chosen to live along the coast. If you were doing it again in this day and age you might not do it quite in that way but that is what we have ended up with and I would have thought the publicly funded bus transport could mimic the time of what it takes in a car, not to be three times as long.

Mrs HISCUTT - Minister, it costs about \$80 to \$100 in fuel for a week's worth of work to and from Burnie and Devonport.

Mr HIDDING - Yes, I can understand that would be the case. It is worth fixing. The amount of money, \$200 000, would not be enough to buy out contracts and that sort of business and it would be a very blunt instrument so we have a sophisticated system coming up to address these matters and we are going to combine that into it.

Ms FORREST - What is the time frame for that?

Mr HIDDING - I would be hoping for an understanding of what the solution is going to be by the end of 2016, which is when are going to have the whole state done but it might even be earlier, mid 2016. We know where we are going, at which point you can negotiate with the operators to say it is now a question of how we get there.

Mr GAFFNEY - The former shadow minister for Health, Jeremy, was having some discussions regarding the possibility of transport from the Mersey Hospital to the Burnie Hospital. It was highlighted to me that elderly people who go to Burnie Hospital for a short period of time, three or four days, that people who want to visit them cannot. All they need is a twice a week service from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. so they can get to either hospital and they can visit. I thought that was a legitimate request. I know Jeremy did work on it so I am not sure whether it falls with you or the Minister for Health now?

Mr HIDDING - The solution falls with me. We wrote this commitment, very aware of that issue. We have \$24 million for patient transport in Tasmania. However, for somebody from Latrobe to have to go to Burnie and then nobody visits that person - because it is too far to come or there is no public transport - that is very awkward for a family. They feel horrible about that and for that reason they do not want to think about being in the Burnie Hospital. They are demanding all the services in Latrobe which is impossible. It is very key to this and I am aware of how important this policy is. We will deliver it. It is a question of when we can do it sensibly without breaking contracts. So, 2016, I would hoping for a resolution.

Mr GAFFNEY - With the impending changes and what will happen to health service delivery on the north-west coast, to have something in place for an interim period of time until that, would be really important for those people to say, 'we understand these are the services now that may be there, this is what the Government is also trying to help you with'.

Mr HIDDING - If there are any changes to any of that, we will respond. We would have to. This is part of the commitment we made, why we made the commitment. We have a little bit of time because the white paper is out there now but we are watching that very closely.

Output group 2 Infrastructure

2.5 Traffic management and engineering services -

Mr MULDER - This output question is relating to cost effective safety improvements and things like that and it is always a place where we like to sneak in the latest whiz bang piece of engineering or road technology. The first one was last year, the big announcement about the cats'

eyes on the Huon Highway. How is that project going; what is the change in accident rates, and how is it working? Is it delivering anything?

Mr GREGORY - We installed the PATeye about four weeks ago. They are a product that has been used in New Zealand and has been on trial by the New Zealand transport agency for some time. We have had feedback from motorists and from a *Mercury* journalists that they are operating on cold, frosty mornings. We are going to monitor the feedback. We will also be working with the RACT about polling their members as to how effective they have been, and it will be a matter of getting some direct feedback from motorists as to what they understand them to do and is it changing their behaviour.

Mr MULDER - What is the baseline data against which we are going to measure improvement? I mentioned one accident, but surely there are others that are based on data that we have against which to measure the trial, other than some journalist thinks it is okay.

Mr HIDDING - The problem with black ice is that you cannot see it. When black ice could be there, or a strong likelihood of it being there, rather than having a rotating orange sign that says 'caution black ice', for locals. It is new technology but the locals have to be educated and brought along, and there is a process for that in place to understand that when you see those blue lights you back right off because there is likely to be black ice there.

Mr MULDER - So the baseline data is about black ice. Do you have data about that or do you have baseline data about the number of crashes in that part of the road on black ice? Or are we going along with the assumption that -

Mr HIDDING - That is all available.

Mr GREGORY - We have baseline data on crashes. The use of crash data needs to be done judiciously in Tasmania. We have very low traffic volumes and we have very dispersed crash rates and, quite often, when we have a cluster of crashes, they are completely unrelated causes. We need to use that data with caution.

There was a commitment following a fatal accident on Vines Saddle, as a recommendation of the coroner, to put in improved warning facilities. The original idea was to put in a \$600 000 weather station or warning system. That was a coroner's recommendation; it was a commitment by the department to do that. This is an alternative that provides the same warning in a much more cost effective way.

Mr MULDER - The other one that has been operating for a few years, and I am sure it had some intention to stop crashes, was the variable street signs leading from the Mornington Interchange into the Tasman Highway. If you want some anecdotal evidence, I find it particularly frustrating to have the signs reading either the normal speed limit, then it says 90 kph, usually at a time when it is crawling along at 25 kph. I am wondering what impact that has had on rear end crashes in that area because I understood that was the reason it was originally introduced.

Mr GREGORY - I would not comment on crash reduction after 12 months. You need to look at a longer time span.

Mr MULDER - That has been in place longer than 12 months.

Mr GREGORY - It is about 18 months. You need to look at four to five years and compare two four to five year periods. People like to get crash rates immediately after something has been implemented. You need to do that with a great deal of caution because you might get a reduction in crash rates, but just the standard variation. We would look at that over two consecutive five year periods. We have been monitoring travel time reliability, the consistency of the travel times through the areas, using blue tooth technology, and you could take on notice that there is not that information.

Mr MULDER - Another area that often crops up, when there was a push for speed over distance type measuring, in order to get the road safety issues. Speed cameras can only operate in certain areas, and you soon get to know the usual spots. Speed over distance, which I think technology trials have been successful in other places. I am wondering whether we are moving down that particular path.

Mr GREGORY - We would still consider those as a good way of measuring speed; you are correct. If people get to know where the speed cameras are, they tend to slow down in that location and then speed up to make up time. So point to point speed enforcement is a valid mechanism of checking speed. You need to find locations where you do not have many people coming in and out and you get strange readings. It is still on our agenda and something we could do in the appropriate locations. It is quite an expensive mechanism to install; you are looking probably a couple of million dollars per site.

Mr MULDER - That is all about clever engineering at this point.

CHAIR - There is one question I might have there and that is something which has been raised before and it is probably an eternal matter of frustration to drivers.

Ms FORREST - I bet I know what it is, because I am thinking the same thing.

CHAIR - And that is the speed signs are left out on road works - we have talked about this before in this committee ad nauseam - and some of those are left there over periods of days, when obviously there is no work going on, kilometres of 60 kph and 80 kph and that frustrates -

Ms FORREST - It is 40 kph at times on the Midland Highway when there was nothing happening.

CHAIR - Really it creates a safety issue because people get so frustrated with it and see nothing going on kilometre after kilometre, and away they go and people take off.

Mr HIDDING - We cannot have various people predicting whether there is actually anybody there or not, and making the decision to flout the rules. They are there for reason. If a road is not signed off, you could have a whole bunch of vehicles there one hour, and in the next hour they are gone, but they are coming back later. I share the frustration too, I think, 'What is this about?' but I am also aware that as a result of questions I asked when I first became minister, there has been a substantial project underway that Shane has set up in his field which I ask him to talk about now, and then address the ongoing frustration of why, for instance, on Spring Hill there is a long section at the moment, it is 60 kph or 80 kph - is it 60 kph? - and there does not appear to be anybody working on it. The fact is, it is not a finished project yet, but Shane can address that.

Mr GREGORY - First, with the program that we have underway, we are actually are coming to end of the first construction season. In the previous construction season we started safety audits on all of our projects; in this construction season we have just finished, we have engaged with the CCF, which is a registered training organisation for traffic management. They have been traffic management audits on all of our projects. We have found some inconsistencies and some poor pieces of traffic management. On the whole, it is done pretty well. We have flagged with some contractors where they have covered signs over, and they are covered over beautifully during the day with shade cloth but at night when you drive past the light bounces straight through the shade cloth and back out, so you see signs you are not meant to see. When those issues come up, we flag those.

Ms FORREST - Is it a defence?

Mr GREGORY - You would be asked to travel slower than you really should be. I picked up a couple of those and we went straight to the contractor and said, 'You need to correct this, this is no good.' It has improved quite significantly, and that is the feedback we have also had from the auditor, that they are seeing a vast improvement. There are examples where it is out for a reason, such as between Constitution Hill and Kempton, where we do not have the width that we require because we were not able to get the job fully sealed before winter. If you look at the left-hand edge, the edge line is within about 600 mm of the wire rope barrier. That should be two metres when we get full width going. So we have kept the speed down, because if we do not, people will be misjudging and will be hitting the barrier. That is kept down for a very specific reason at that site. I acknowledge there have been cases when signs have been left out inappropriately and we have tried to get onto the contractors very quickly with that.

Ms FORREST - Are you saying that bit on Spring Hill or Constitution Hill?

Mr GREGORY - From the top of Constitution Hill down to Kempton.

Ms FORREST - I was saying about 40 kilometres. I do not mind going 40 kph when there are workmen around, but when I went for several kilometres at 40 kph when there was no-one to be seen, there was no obvious work even started, I thought that was just nonsense. I do not know if the sign had been placed there by somebody else, not one on the contractors, but it just made no sense at all, there was nothing going on.

Mr GREGORY - It is very difficult to comment on something at a site, some time ago. If we know that someone has ventured onto it and it does not look right today -

Ms FORREST - Next time when I drive back, if my husband is with me, I will film it, not as I am driving but when he is driving.

Mr GREGORY - Even if you just give us a call and say you have just seen this, there may be a perfectly valid reason for it. Or it may be that someone has left a sign out.

Mr HIDDING - It could still be human error, the process we have set up puts a lot of pressure onto contractors for their traffic subcontractors to get this right.

Ms FORREST - Each time I drive through somewhere and I have 60 kph on this side and 80 kph on that side of the road, facing the same direction, I will take a photo of that too for you.

Mr GREGORY - I do not need a photo, I am just happy if you give us a call and we will get onto it.

Ms FORREST - That has happened quite a few times.

Mr GREGORY - I have never seen that, I have to say.

Ms FORREST - Haven't you? On the Midland Highway I have seen it probably three or four times in the last six months or something.

CHAIR - We have to focus as individuals because we have to drive.

Mr GREGORY - It is something that I look out for when I drive on the road and I drive quite a bit.

Ms FORREST - Well, I take the higher one if it suits me.

Mr GREGORY - I have, in instances, pulled up and put the light on and gone to talk to a crew and said, 'This is not good enough, you need to stop what you are doing and sort this out.' We have done that.

Mrs HISCUTT - This Road Safety Levy that we pay, and it irritates me that we pay it, does it go to that sort of thing, or what does it go to?

Mr HIDDING - The Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy is a 10-year strategy and we are now working on developing the next 10 years. It happens to be on my watch, which I am excited about because it means I get to make input. I really would encourage everybody in both Houses of Parliament, and I will be writing to you all individually, to start engaging with this next 10 years so that we can share ideas and think through what is important to you. You are going to be key stakeholders in this 10-year review.

A number of best-practice infrastructure projects have been funded by the Road Safety Levy in the 2014-15 year. As an example, the levy is contributing \$20 million to the national highway safety improvements for those programs funded under national partnerships. It is a good use of the money because the leverage is 4:1 funding - you turn \$20 million into \$100 million. Three-quarters of the levy has always been dedicated to best-practice infrastructure initiatives and the amount allocated to the Midland Highway is within this allocation.

Stage 2 of the shoulder-widening, sealing, audible edge and central lines on the Esk Main Road from the Midland Highway to Avoca was completed just prior to Easter. I was very impressed with those works. It is planned that the remaining four kilometres of Esk Main Road, Esk to Avoca, will be completed as stage 3 in the 2015-16 construction period.

The new slip lane at the East Derwent Highway and Goodwood Main Road junction has just been constructed, that is the Bowen Bridge end, after TasNetworks installs[-ed?] the lighting in May 2015, the new slipway will be opened. A contractor finished installing audible edge and centre lines on the East Tamar Highway from Launceston to George Town and on divided sections of the Bass Highway from Launceston to Burnie by Easter 2015.

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The department is working with the Tasmanian Motorcycle Council to identify infrastructure safety improvements along popular motorcycle routes across the state. New warning signage has been installed and rub rails have been added below steel W-beam crash barriers. Rub rails underneath that obviously improve safety for riders who crash. Collapsible chevron alignment markers will be installed later this year. The Vulnerable Road User Program is proving very successful with 25 projects being funded in the year 2014-15.

New weather warning signs have been installed at Tunnel Hill on the Tasman Highway as part of the variable speed limit initiative, as we discussed. That is where the road safety levy is going. We would argue it is good expenditure.

Mr MULDER - We could hypothecate some of your traffic fines of course.

CHAIR - If there is no more on that output, I will move to shipping and ferry subsidies. As I look at that line item there, for Burnie, the Furneaux Group and King Island it looks like about a CPI increase. We have already discussed - I think it is old news now - what happened with the other cash which was not appropriated. That has now gone to rail; that is basically the bottom line so, really, I do not know if you have anything else to add apart from something about Bruny Island - there has always been a bit of contention about having another. Was there something else?

Mr HIDDING - The operator has put a new barge on for the busy period. Under the contract with the previous government it came off at the end of the summer holidays. There was concern on the island that it was hosing off a lot of visitation. It was put back on. We are currently evaluating how that went. We think it was a success. In ministerial work, shipping is probably the highest level of politics, and angst, and concern. There is so much going on about Bass Strait, six new ships coming on, megabucks in investment. The Bruny Island ferry, Flinders Island freight and King Island freight are the hottest subjects. When you live on an island, shipping is what you talk about. Any Tasmanian has a view on the TT Line. They have strong views about their shipping line. Bruny Island has massive views about that ferry.

Ms FORREST - Could we have an update on where the King Island shipping is at, minister?

Mr HIDDING - After 24 years of service, the SeaRoad service will be coming to an end. Its main business is shipping live animals, which is a challenge because it is not clean freight like containers, so it is not compatible. There are two major abattoirs to service. One at Smithton and one at Longford, so at two ends of the island. It is a complicated freight task.

It is my intention to broker, bring about, encourage, a commercial answer to that. There is a lot of money involved. There ought to be a commercial answer. It will probably require the freight customers to aggregate their freight, to aggregate their thinking. If they think they can have a couple of different shipping operators, neither of them will be any good. If you could aggregate and have a solution and if you ask the locals, they have a standard in mind. The notion that a small council like that could have a balance sheet that would sustain the building and operation of a vessel, does not make sense. It is a recipe for massive budget risk. Not just to them but to the state budget as well. By far the best outcome will be a commercial solution. I am confident there will be one.

Ms FORREST - It is very complicated when you look at the charges TasPorts charge King Island. Getting fertiliser from mainland Australia to a farmer on King Island is significantly more than getting it to a farmer in Devonport.

Mr HIDDING - Port costs on King Island are no more expensive than port costs in Devonport.

Ms FORREST - Are you sure about that?

Mr HIDDING - It could be a little bit increased but it is the cost of the transport service into King Island, as I understand it. I will test that. The solution for shipping on King Island does not necessarily exclude changes to TasPorts arrangement.

Ms FORREST - I am really pleased to hear that.

Mr HIDDING - It is a whole package. I have served notice on all players, including ports, that we need a Tas Inc approach to this. We are all in this, we need to come up with something.

Ms FORREST - Because it is a unionised workforce on the port, and the boat only goes in on Sundays, you have all the inherent additional costs by the time it goes to Melbourne, and you have all the security arrangements.

Mr HIDDING - The current service is what it is. A big vessel gets in there once a week and does what it does.

Ms FORREST - Mostly, it does. Mostly, it gets in.

6.2 - Metropolitan general access services

CHAIR - We will move to 6.2. Mr Farrell, metropolitan general access services.

Mr FARRELL - This is the Metro allocation which is much the same as last year, a little more. It is getting up towards the 40.

Legislative Councillors received a fairly comprehensive briefing from Lynn Mason and Stuart Wiggins, a couple of months ago which was very informative, so a lot of the questions that I had were answered then.

Output Group 6 Subsidies and Concessions

Mr HIDDING - The fixed rate payments are made to three bus operators. The greater majority is Metro which provides a contract bus service for the general public, including students, within the metropolitan areas of Hobart, Launceston, Devonport and Burnie.

All metropolitan service providers are remunerated on the same basis for a standard form contract as performance based. Three companies were contracted to provide metropolitan general access bus services. Metro Tasmania, Hobart, Launceston and Burnie. Mersey Bus and Coach, Devonport; and Manions Coaches of Legana. The operators of these services are paid a set

amount for the number of services, kilometres, and peak buses required to deliver the contracted timetables.

One of the issues is the challenges brought about by the requirements of the Disability and Discrimination Act and it is a serious challenge. For instance, when there is a bus stop next to a road that has an unformed footpath, basically a grass strip, it has to have all the DDA stuff for sight impaired people. That is what DDA does. It takes it to a new level. It is a serious challenge. But Mr Wiggins, the new CEO, and his very good board, is working very strongly on those challenges.

Mr FARRELL - I am not sure if you have the figures, but I am happy to put it on notice, the DDA compliant numbers in the fleet, we know that it was growing.

Mr HIDDING - I do not have the figures with me but that is something we will do in December when we meet with them.

Mr SWAIN - It would be timely to do it in December because at the Infrastructure Council meeting in November there may be a paper looking at the take-up of compliance rates. That is being discussed at the national level because many jurisdictions are having this problem.

Mr HIDDING - There could be some agreement to what a reasonable compliance is, and a recognition of the real world challenges that this brings about. It is one thing to legislate for it and another thing to demand it be fixed over night. We are talking the cost of buses. They are huge. We are absolutely committed to it but it was a challenge for the former government and still a challenge for us, but we are into it.

Mr CHAIRMAN - It mentions purchase of new low-emission, accessible buses. Are we doing some C&G stuff there or are they Euro 5 diesels?

Mr HIDDING - Essentially, Euro 5 standard diesels. However, C&G is not out of the question for future bus fleets. There is on-going work being done to evaluate that as a possible fuel source.

Mr CHAIRMAN - That is something the joint house committee did quite some years ago. We looked at what other jurisdictions, particularly large jurisdictions, sometimes cap ex cost of buying those.

Mr HIDDING - We learned from other people's experience. There were a number of fires on buses around the world with this new technology.

Mr MULDER - Not to mention the sky rocketing costs of what used to be as cheap as chips fuel sources now becoming

Mr HIDDING - All these things will remain under advisement and we will keep working on it.

CHAIR - Any more questions on metropolitan and general access services? If not we will move to Mr Farrell, once again, 6.3, moving right along.

Mr FARRELL - This is ongoing, with the special needs school buses. I imagine not a lot has changed since last year as far as the demand for these buses go. I notice the spending has risen in line with the consumer price index, I suppose. Once again, I think the same questions were raised last year. Is there anything new in this space?

Mr HIDDING - All bus services are going to be reviewed in Project 2018. I would be astonished to find, after 10 years, that there have not been changes around the place. We may well have a situation where we have three school bus operators in an area that could be done by two, and with a substantial saving. How are we going to do that? What we would do is design the two best routes and have the three operators competing for the two routes. There will be two winners and a loser. We have the agreement from the bus industry to go about it in that way.

Mrs HISCUTT - With regard to rural bus services, is there a critical mass where they will not run any more? It talks about the school buses and things like that. Will it get down to the point where there is a critical mass of people not on the bus and the service will stop?

Mr HIDDING - Yes, there is generally, as we heard earlier. Ten students - we would see that as a critical mass. However, certain school buses below mass that were reviewed recently. It is an ongoing process of review. You cannot have a bus running around with no-one on it. You can have services withdrawn. Recently there was a case where it was the last remaining service. While it was not 10 students, there were no other opportunities. That was taken off the table immediately. You have to have another opportunity.

Mrs HISCUTT - So you do not put a smaller bus on?

Mr HIDDING - You could do. Generally they tend to be a small bus, anyway.

Mrs HISCUTT - The special needs part: would it not be cheaper to get a taxi for those people that need them rather than putting in all the infrastructure for buses and things like that?

Mr HIDDING - It could be, but the policy is that they get reviewed from time to time. Recently, four services were removed with the agreement of schools and the parents. They knew they were down to a number where we could say, 'Well, rather than getting on that bus - we are going to remove that service - but you can get on this.' That is fine, no problem. People generally deal with that.

Mr SWAIN - If I may, minister. If we fall under the number of students travelling, particularly three times a week, to justify service, the Resource Conveyancing Allowance is paid to carers who do not have a service.

Mr GRACE - The Department of Education coordinates the transport needs of special needs students within its system. Where there are individual needs that can be met, it will organise that through its own network which will involve taxi services. Where there are enough students going from roughly the same place to roughly the same place - the 10 example mentioned earlier - then we would put on a special needs school bus. There is enough patronage to justify the bus service in that case. Where there is not enough patronage to justify the bus service, the department would then provide alternative options, which may involve a taxi or the parents transferring the children to school. If it does involve parents, that may involve conveyance allowance.

Mrs HISCUTT - Thank you.

CHAIR - For *Hansard*, Mr Martin Grace.

Ms FORREST - Minister, can you comment on the current average age of the rural school bus fleet?

Mr HIDDING - The system is notionally structured to promote newer buses. The success of that will be assessed by Project 2018, to see whether that is working.

Mr GRACE - For all school buses, the average age is 16.6.

Ms FORREST - That is across the state?

Mr GRACE - That is across the state.

Ms FORREST - Do you have breakdown by region, or not?

Mr GRACE - Not by region, no.

Ms FORREST - Do you know how many rural school buses are now fitted with seat belts?

Mr GRACE - There are not a lot. The only ones that tend to be fitted with seat belts are the small school buses, where it is compulsory under our contracts, but it is not compulsory for the medium-, large- or extra-large buses, so that is up to the operator's discretion. For the small buses, it is mandatory in the contracts.

Ms FORREST - For those buses, the bigger buses, that do not have seat belts, how many routes do we have now where we have children sitting three to a seat?

Mr GRACE - I do not have that information here today. There are quite a number of services because it is allowable under the Passenger Transport Services Act and regulations to have three-for-two seating for primary school-aged children. There is also an allowance, in some cases, depending on the number of hand-holds, to have standing capacity as well. That is allowed under the regulations as well.

Ms FORREST - Are you confident, minister, that all students travelling on buses have an adequate number of hand-holds and/or three to a seat designed for two?

Mr HIDDING - I continue to ask questions about this. I now have grandchildren travelling on buses, so it is something that concerns me. Clearly it is not just about me - people raise this as a matter of concern. I am as confident as I can be as minister, but I will keep it under advisement.

Ms FORREST - This sitting three-to-a seat, with our rising rate of childhood obesity, it can become physically impossible to fit three young primary school kids on a seat. Unfortunately that is a reality. Even though technically and under regulation you can do it, one kid is probably going to have half their body hanging off the seat.

Mr GRACE - I acknowledge that. In many cases we are not talking about buses being exactly at capacity. It is making use of the existing capacity. In those cases, it would be worked out by the driver on the spot as to accommodate those sorts of things. Then they would talk to us

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if they were over-capacity about whether they needed to put on an extra bus. I know that in a number of contracts, it is actually actively required that they put on extra buses once they hit their capacity.

Mr GAFFNEY - Schoolchildren three-to-a-seat? Are they primary schoolchildren?

Mr GRACE - Yes.

Mr GAFFNEY - It would be very rare to find three primary schoolkids who would not fit on a bus seat. I would be questioning that one.

Mr HIDDING - In the meantime, we can rely on the Joint House inquiry on preventative health to work harder on the obesity matter.

Ms FORREST - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thanks, we will move to grants and subsidies.

Mr MULDER - Before you go there, Chair, I did ask about 6.5 of the budget papers.

Ms FORREST - There is no appropriation for that.

Mr MULDER - That is what my question is about.

Mr HIDDING - Okay, what is your question?

Mr MULDER - 6.5, construction of streets in town without the contribution to the construction, et cetera. My understanding is that in previous years this has been a reserved-by-law item. If it is reserved by law, how come it has disappeared from the allocations? Have we changed the law?

Mr HIDDING - Section 77 of the Local Government Highways Act 1982 provides that a council may apply for a contribution by the state of one-third of the cost of constructing a carriageway of unmade street. This allocation is an administered item. The total amount of all undertakings given by the state in each financial year shall not exceed \$52 000. These funds were not used in 2014-15.

Mr MULDER - So you are saying that -

Mr HIDDING - It is an historical item.

Mr MULDER - I appreciate that, but perhaps you need to go back to the law unless it just quietly -

Mr HIDDING - It would want to be a really good story.

Mr MULDER - Disappears and section 77 disappears.

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Mr HIDDING - In any review of the act, section 77 could be removed. There would be a case for that because the figure is set at \$52 000 and the one-third of the cost of construction of a carriageway of an unmade street would have made sense years ago.

Mr MULDER - Can I suggest, minister, until such law is removed, the budget papers would be correct if they had 6.5, the statement and then zero allocation? Then the explanation can be given as you have done rather than it just disappearing off the budget papers altogether.

CHAIR - On grants and subsidies, I am bit confused. One of those tables, you talk about \$81 million on page 270, table 10.13.

Mr HIDDING - The grants and subsidies in infrastructure are around \$54 million.

Ms FORREST - It includes the TasRail one.

CHAIR - Yes, I am aware of that, so around about \$54 million.

Mr HIDDING - Yes.

CHAIR - You could provide, in infrastructure, a list of those. You could cherry pick those somewhere. If you could take that.

Mr SWAIN - Is this 10.13?

Ms FORREST - Yes.

Mr SWAIN - It is conveyancing allowance, National Transport Commission, Pensioner Air Travel Subsidy, Army Passenger Services, Tasmania Railway for the minister, Transport Access Scheme and West Coast Railway.

Mr CHAIRMAN - That adds up to 54. We have cherry picked those out. That is fine.

Ms FORREST - I noticed you are still seeking an operator for the West Coast Wilderness Railway, and you made no allocation in the forward Estimates in 2018-19. Is that because you are very confident you are going to have an operator by then?

Mr HIDDING - We will be engaging with the Tourism Industry around Australia to see if there is an operator who could. Long term, I do not see the Government operating the above rail service. It is not necessarily our area.

Ms FORREST - But you will maintain the below rail?

Mr HIDDING - While we have not yet taken a policy position on that, not only as the ministerial cooperation that owns the thing, but as Minister for Infrastructure, I think there is a strong case, to say that.

Ms FORREST - That was one of the barriers to the previous operator.

Mr HIDDING - Strong case to say that the state of Tasmania should share risk in the below rail. Not necessarily take it all on, but share risk.

Ms FORREST - I am seeking some assurance, even if there was not an operator identified by 2018-19, the Government would not walk away from this.

Mr HIDDING - I am confident that the ABT railway will be operating, and needs to operate for the future of tourism on the west coast. It needs a strong anchor.

Ms FORREST - But the heritage aspects of it too.

Mrs HISCUTT - Grants and subsidies, Transport Access Scheme, the scheme provides for payments to operators of taxis and wheelchair accessible taxis to support fare concessions. Are all taxi operators aware of that scheme? I ask you that, in light of the recent taxi driver episodes in Hobart, where they refused to take someone with their guide dog. Are all taxis aware that there is funds or concessions available for them to not do that sort of thing?

Mr HIDDING - I would be astonished if there was a taxi owner who was not aware of it because it is very much part of their business case. And they do not make that much, that they would not know about subsidy schemes like that. By and large, the Tasmanian taxi industry, is a very good industry and the service is appropriate to task, and they are in good shape to withstand competition from disruptive industry, such as Uber. We might end up with a bit of that in the state. This Government is not frightened of sharing economy.

Mrs HISCUTT - I was thinking more along the lines of trying to encourage taxi drivers not to do that sort of thing.

Mr HIDDING - There is more than encouragement in place for that. It was pretty unusual words that I, as minister, issued; strong words to the taxi industry about that. There was an issue with one driver.

Capital Investment Program

CHAIR - Minister, I am very pleased to see the Highlands Lake Road and our electorate mentioned even though it has been pushed out a year or so. That is from Miena to Liawenee, and that amount of almost \$4 million I would presume would seal that.

Mr HIDDING - It does not complete the whole link.

CHAIR - If it gets from Miena to Liawenee, then there are only little bits left after that.

Mr GREGORY - It will make a very large dent in the unsealed section; it will complete quite a length. Bear in mind we are not realigning, we are simply putting a base quartz and a seal on it.

CHAIR - A lot of those other small bits were sealed in between in the northern end. One day we will end up with a sealed road, right through the centre of Tasmania.

Mr MULDER - You are talking about a thin spray seal over the top of the road that gets an awful lot of snow and ice.

Mr HIDDING - The road base, then a normal trip seal, which takes place elsewhere.

Mr MULDER - I am concerned about cold climate sealing, and we have issues around Tasmania.

Mr HIDDING - We do not seal in cold weather. That is why we did not quite get Spring Hill done.

Mr MULDER - The section across the plain is quite good. But I am worrying about the freezing of the seal once it is in. How thick is the seal you are talking about?

Mr GREGORY - We would put on two coat seals, about 15 mm to 20 mm total seal, so that is taking the stone and the bitumen that is soaked into the surface. It is better in the environments we have. The bitumen we use in Tasmania is a grade of bitumen that is more suited to cold climates.

Mr MULDER - I do not want the member here taking up entire future Estimates Committees moaning that you sealed the road and it is all broken off and in the lake.

Mr HIDDING - I also would not look forward to it. We will take care of that.

Ms FORREST - The work in progress on the Murchison Highway upgrade, that freezes too, but I am interested in what the extra additional funding in the forward Estimates is, and which areas it is going to be upgrading. I am really appreciative of it, it is fantastic, but an update.

Mr GREGORY - The first stage was to deal with some specific sites where we had issues such as some poor curves and some specific overtaking lanes. This money will now start to fill the gaps between those. Work from Cradle Mountain Road, a consistent cross section all the way through, as you come from Cradle Mountain South. We have been through there already and done some specific sites, specific sections, where we identified a priority problem. This continues and fills in the gaps.

Ms FORREST - So it will end up with it pretty much all the way being updated?

Mr GREGORY - Ultimately, yes. This allocation will not get it all upgraded. We will get through; obviously, when you start to go through Mt Black, we have done some work there. Any major roads there are very significant.

Ms FORREST - So it is still only patchwork at Mt Black? There is nothing to challenge on Mt Black, as yet in this Budget?

Mr GREGORY - No, the project at Mt Black was to formalise some slow vehicle turnouts. That was the point of that. They were gravel and people were pulling over. We formalised those.

Mr MULDER - In terms of federal funding and federal contributions toward our road Capital Infrastructure Program. Can you give me some idea about how that works? Is there a standard formula or is it a case-by-case basis?

Mr HIDDING - If is under the National Partnership Agreement, it is 80:20.

Mr MULDER - So, do a lot of these roads fall under that?

Mr HIDDING - Yes. There are particular projects that have genesis and other things, such as the Rosny connection, which is fully funded by the feds.

Mr MULDER - They might be evaluating new changes, yes?

Mr HIDDING - That happens to be fully funded. Generally 80:20 is the ratio.

Mr MULDER - So it is 80 federal, 20 state. This is getting some of that fuel excise money back, I presume? Some particular ones, the Domain Highway planning. Can you give us an overview of what has been planned there?

Mr GREGORY - The Australian Government has made an allocation of \$4 million for us to look at the Domain interchange and actually look at what the needs are going into the future.

Mr MULDER - What we know as a cloverleaf?

Mr GREGORY - Yes. In terms of what we are planning, we are assessing what the key issues are at the moment. After we were allocated these funds, as a separate project, we improved the slip lane as you are heading into the city and around the Domain Highway to address the crash issue.

Mr MULDER - Yes, I have seen some of the works there.

Mr GREGORY - Out of that we have seen that the traffic flows much better. It has not just addressed the rear-end crash and the merging problems; it has made the traffic flow much smoother, city-bound.

As part of our planning, we will not just look at what major works need to be done, but also what simple things can be done. For example, if you are coming off the Domain Highway heading to the northern suburbs, one of the problems at the moment while you are waiting, is a lot of cars come along, and you wait and wait, and suddenly they peel off and go around the Domain Highway. You find you have sat there for a while when you did not need to.

Mr MULDER - It is also a problem with the length of that merging lane. It is a real danger problem.

Mr GREGORY - We can look at whether we can take the slip-lane onto the Domain Highway, further away. When you are sitting waiting to come out, you know you are not dealing with cars that might turn left at the last minute. We could gain some efficiency. We will look at the overall operation and how it works. We are looking at that now. We have been collecting traffic count data. We have had to do that with video technology because the normal methods do not work in slow-moving traffic. We will analyse that and work out what the solution is. There may be a series of phased solutions, some short-term measures and then some longer-term measures.

Mr MULDER - In terms of traffic flow, it is a major choke-point for traffic that is basically coming from the eastern shore and the south-eastern areas trying to get to the northern suburbs, rather than trying to get across the Bowen Bridge, which is where we should be trying to divert them. Thank you for that.

Mr GAFFNEY - Following on from the percentage thing I was interested in. That is a \$5 million project, \$4 million in the first year. That \$4 million would come from the feds, would it not? You guys would then put in the \$1 million the year after? Do you have to sign off on that? Does the Australian Government have to make certain you have? How do you get out of that?

Mr HIDDING - They dock us on the next project.

Mr GAFFNEY - They would not do two cheques - they would just send you the \$4 million and you would have to agree to pay the \$1 million after. How does that work?

Mr HIDDING - No. It is a very complicated acquittal process that means we pay 20 per cent.

Mr GREGORY - Through you, minister. The National Partnership Agreement is supported by notes in administration which are much thicker than the agreement itself. There are a whole series of rules, including milestone payments. With every payment, we have to provide evidence that a milestone has been achieved. That might be the signing of a contract document; it might be a certificate on completion. There is no handing over a wad of money. It's paid on the basis of achieving certain milestones.

Mr GAFFNEY - Thank you.

Mr MULDER - At South Arm Highway, Rokeby main roads 2, the infamous Howrah Garden Centre. First of all, congratulations, minister. I did not think the residents actually did have a justifiable case. We have had this discussion before. Eventually they got their way. My concern, I must say -

Mr HIDDING - Sorry, they got their way with what?

Mr MULDER - With the access to the Howrah Gardens Shopping Centre.

Mr HIDDING - Well, they got the left-in and the left-out, but they have lost right-in.

Mr MULDER - Lost right-in.

Ms FORREST - Left right out, have they?

Mr HIDDING - Left-in, left-out on travelling into the city.

Mr MULDER - That is my point. You have plenty of other things to get to in a minute. We just discussed where there is a too-narrow merging lane for side traffic trying to intersperse into volume traffic.

If we were going to do that, I am somewhat surprised that we did not put a merging lane in rather than a T-junction, which is what was in the plan I saw. I ask this question because it was only 12 to 18 months ago that something was circulated out of the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources - DIER - at one stage which had -

Mr HIDDING - Traffic lights. That was the -

Mr MULDER - I am not talking about the Pass Road and Tollard Drive junction.

Mr HIDDING - No. It was proposed that a new full intersection be put in a couple of hundred metres up from Pass Road Tollard Drive. That is the project that was pointed out to me was basically a political design, and we did not do it.

Mr MULDER - About three or four months ago, I got something in the mail - I am trying to think from where it came - that showed some graphics of the new exchange. The graphics actually had traffic emerging from the Howrah Garden Shopping Centre onto a T-junction to turn left to head down the highway, to head towards town. It must be only 12 to 18 months ago a fatal accident occurred at that very point when someone who worked at Howrah Gardens came out of the centre - their car stalled and they were cleaned up by a truck.

I am wondering why we went to the same T-junction because that particular section is actually over a rise. You either find a break in the traffic, accelerate and hope your car doesn't stall, whereas we could have had a merging lane. I am asking that particular safety question.

Mr GREGORY - The fatality was on the existing configuration, which has been identified as being a problem for a long time. The access point to Howrah Gardens Shopping Centre was right at a very odd place. You could not get good line-of-sight. It was one of the department's comments when a development application for the bottle shop on the site was made - that this was a major issue and it needed to be addressed.

My understanding that fatality involving the elderly lady occurred when she was, in fact, turning right out of the site. She was not turning left and accelerating; she was actually turning right and misjudged or did not see the truck, or whatever the circumstances might have been. She pulled out to turn right in front of the truck. It is not the same circumstance.

The other issue is the new alignment gets rid of that sight-distance problem. The preferred access out of Buckingham Drive in the Howrah Gardens is still via the connection to Tollard Drive. People will tend to use that even though they have said they would like a direct access. When it is busy, they will tend to go down to Tollard Drive because it is the signalised intersection and it will be more convenient to get out.

Mr MULDER - Okay. I still go back to the question though: would not a merging lane or an acceleration lane be a safer option than requiring people to actually physically stop and restart their cars? They cannot turn right, but even if they are turning left, that is an area that could recur if the car stalled, whether it was turning left or right or indifferent. A merging lane would have decreased that danger. Your own reports talk about the need for merging lanes as a safety measure.

Mr GREGORY - The scenario would not recur because that is not the scenario relating to the accident. It is not what happened. We did not have someone pull out turning left and stall; we had someone pull out right in front of a truck. People will stop -

Mr HIDDING - These matters that you are raising are matter of details. Why don't we arrange a briefing to come in and talk these things through with Shane and his people so that we can work through the detail?

Mr MULDER - I am happy to do that.

My next series of questions relates to the eastern end of the Tasman Bridge. I noticed that it is a two stage project, and I have actually taken the trouble of circulating some material to you. I have the report here from.

Mr GAFFNEY - Point of order, Chair. This material, what has that got to do with the Budget item? Is that the department's information? I want to know, are you talking about the photos that were sent around?

Mr MULDER - The capital investment program, the very last thing says Tasman ramps no.3, and these pictures I have circulated relate to that particular project.

Mr GAFFNEY - So are you questioning the Budget item there, or are you questioning the design? My issue is, are you questioning the Budget? I do not want to get involved in a long discussion if it is an idea you have about design when that should be taken up with the group out of this discussion.

Mr MULDER - Until I ask the question you will not know. I was into the question and the question is that it is a two staged program. Stage 2 of the program indicates that - and the first question is, is that actually funded in this thing? Stage 2 of the program, I do not understand what the project is from the department's particular item? If you want to rule that out of order -

CHAIR - It is better that you arrange a briefing.

Mr HIDDING - These are very technical matters and there are a lot of good questions in here. I would enjoy sitting down with Mr Mulder and the department to work these things through. I am not sure that we can do justice to it at this time of the scrutiny because you are raising some very good points.

CHAIR - Thank you. Any further questions?

Ms FORREST - I have a question about the funding for rail. It does not really fit anywhere so are you happy to take that under capital investment? The funding to the rail infrastructure and the 2014 Australian Government Budget and that's allocation of funding of \$119.6 million over a five year period for Tasmanian rail freight equalisation. I understand that discussions are continuing around the state and the Australian Government in relation to the matching requirement time when we receive the funding, that was last year.

As part of the 2014-15 Budget the state contributed \$97 million over a five year period. In addition, the 2014-15 Budget included a rail funding provision of \$11 million in 2016-17, and \$11.6 million in 2017-18. In this year - and this is in the infrastructure section of budget paper no.1 - as part of the 2015-16 Budget the state will contribute an additional \$37.2 million over the Budget and forward Estimates for rail infrastructure projects via grants to TasRail. This included the reprioritisation of the forward Estimates set aside in 2014-15 Budget for international shipping which was mentioned earlier. The funding is in addition to the existing 2014-15 Budget provision of \$22.6 million, bringing the total rail funding to \$59.8 million over the Budget and forward Estimates period. The Australian Government will also provide funding of \$59.8 million to match the state contribution.

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Can I get an understanding of who is paying for what and when? It seems to me that the feds appear to have cut back their funding from \$119.6 million to \$59.6 million.

Mr HIDDING - That is now coming in two tranches. They have committed to it but when we came to Government there was a commitment from the Federal Government for \$119.6 million and a commitment for absolutely zero. Labor had a big fat zero and not one dollar in order to draw down one dollar of the federal funds. By using the international shipping money and extra money, we have now captured - and in fact the project for \$119.6 million, that is the project that off at Infrastructure Australia at the moment.

That is a sensible roll-out of projects over the next four years and the other priority projects and we were pleased to be able to fund that in this Budget with two tranches of \$30 million or \$29. something million. It is upfront funding rather than it being spread over four years which allows TasRail to get straight into these projects at the end of which by the time we have delivered them the next tranche would be available. We have to find another \$60 million but we will in order to be able to capture the Federal Government's money. We are in a situation where there was not a cent in the Budget for rail and now we have landed two tranches of \$120 million.

Ms FORREST - Looking at the policy planning statement page 59 which shows an increase in the national partnership's grant to infrastructure \$19.2 million to 2015-16 before a reduction in the next two years and shows capex outlays for rail of \$29.9 million for two years, so this is what you are referring to?

Mr HIDDING - Yes.

Ms FORREST - When do you expect the next lot of federal money to come after that? In two years' time?

Mr HIDDING - This is a four-year program now. This Federal Government and this State Government have committed to tranche 2 which is the same funding arrangement. So we get the second lot done and that fits TasRail's needs very nicely and that will allow them to get cracking on the west coast fairly soon.

Mr MULDER - I have the original question which was in relation to the CIP program in relation to the Tasman Bridge, is stage 2 of that particular project funded within the line items which expire in 2015-16?

Mr HIDDING - No.

Mr MULDER - As a consequence of that I was going to ask what is funded, but what is the plan for that? I note there is no potential allocation for 2016-17, 2018, or 2019?

Mr HIDDING - For stage 2 you mean?

Mr MULDER - For stage 2. So when is it planned to work on stage 2?

Mr GREGORY - When we did the planning, the money was allocated and we looked at the whole interchange. The priority issue was the merge of traffic coming out of the East Derwent Highway heading to the airport crossing the traffic coming off the Bridge into Rosny. That is what we dealt with.

Stage 2 was simply that down the track at some stage we would deal with some other issues. We needed to make sure we could deal with those having built a solution to the first problem. It is quite common that we look at our big picture and then come back and revise the project. So that is what stage 2 refers to; it is not an urgent problem but it is for the future.

Mr MULDER - You are saying that next year or the year after we could see some money appear in the future for stage 2?

Mr HIDDING - As we are working through the 10 year program our priority projects it will be in there. It will be in the mix for funding. It may be at the end of that or it may be in the 11th year but it certainly will be a project in the mix.

Mr MULDER - For some of the other detail, minister, I will take you up on your offer of a briefing. I think it is time to put money into it.

CHAIR - Any more CIP? If not, minister, thank you very much we are all done and thank you very much for your staff today.

DIVISION 9

(Department of State Growth)

Marine and Safety Tasmania -

Mr HIDDING - I introduce Ms Lia Morris, CEO of Marine and Safety Tasmania.

CHAIR - There are two questions from Mr Armstrong. The first question is the St Helens Barway Stabilisation stage 1. What does stage 1 of this project involve?

Mr HIDDING - It is about half of the \$4 million project. It first deals with Pelican Point which is inside the barway and then it starts dealing with some of the issues of the barway. Stage 2 will be mostly barway as I recall.

Ms MORRIS - There are two issues. At the moment there is a training wall that extends out into the sea and there is sand spilling around the edge of that. We need to extend the training wall to prevent sand from spilling around the corner, which is creating shoals in Georges Bay which makes access for vessels very difficult. We have had this repeated issue at Pelican Point where it shallows and vessels cannot get through, so we need a longer term solution. The extension of the training wall and some groynes to make the water rush through quickly and keep the depth at Pelican Point will hopefully solve that issue.

Mr HIDDING - Harnessing tidal energy.

CHAIR - So to follow on, once Stage 2 has been completed, that will be the finalisation of the project.

Mr HIDDING - Should be. There could well be from time to time some tidying up. There will still be some sand catcher around behind that wall. It is something that requires ongoing work but it will break the back of the substantive issue there and should return St Helens back to

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the busy port it ought to be. We spent millions on a wharf and larger vessels cannot even get to the wharf.

CHAIR - Then the honourable member asks, is there documentation available regarding the scope of this project.

Mr HIDDING - Well, indeed. We will make some available. Make some available to him.

CHAIR - Then we will move south, minister. We will come to the Prosser River. That is what his other question is. The entrance stabilisation Stage 1. There is mention of planning of Stage 1 of this project of \$500 000 for 2015-16, however, there are no forward estimates for another stage. The question is, does this mean the project has only one stage?

Mr HIDDING - It does. That is precisely what it means. What is happening there is the Prosser River wants to follow its natural course and wants to keep going straight ahead. If we let it do so, it would take out the Tasman Highway, the golf club opposite, and the entire Raspins Beach.

Ms FORREST - And the problem with that is?

Mr HIDDING - Nesting seabirds. Again we are training the tidal energy with a tried and true method that has been used extensively in the Noosa River - I recently inspected that. Also here in Tasmania at Swanee in the Swan River, there has been some work there which has been very successful. It keeps open a barway there. Almost every year, all those people who own those jetties in the Prosser River cannot get their boats over the thing and they have to get permission and all the approvals. It is a horror show. This will fix that once and for all. So, it is safety and environmental issues.

What is great about this is that in both cases, the local councils feel that strongly about it that they have money in their own budgets to contribute to it. MAST is making a contribution, the government has made an infrastructure contribution, and the local governments are contributing in the order of \$200 000 to \$300 000 each.

CHAIR - As I understand at the mouth of the Prosser, at the moment, there is a bit of a sandbar anyway -

Mr HIDDING - Yes, there is. You cannot get over it. They have only dug it up recently.

CHAIR - There is a pretty limited outflow most of the time, isn't there?

Mr HIDDING - Yes, but if you trained it in one spot, it will keep a permanent opening.

CHAIR - That is it.

Ms FORREST - I notice that the employee benefits drop off significantly over the forward estimates. Was it staffing cuts -

Ms MORRIS - No, there have been no staffing cuts. We work, and have done since last inception, on an equivalent of 20 FTEs, and that would be annual leave and all of that, the flow-on

of that. Managing that and long service leave. That is all that would be. There has been no staffing cuts even though recreational boating has doubled.

Ms FORREST - So you are keeping up with all of that demand?

Ms MORRIS - Yes, just.

Mr HIDDING - A huge demands on at the moment with the implementation of the new national deal. In fact, tomorrow we have got AMSA in town and the new chair of MAST is strongly engaged in the task. Are you aware of the new chair of MAST?

Ms FORREST - Yes, we are aware of the new chair. She has won a bit of an award the other day as well.

Mr HIDDING - She has new post nominals, too.

Ms FORREST - Yes she has. You are going to have to update all your paperwork now.

CHAIR - Mike, you have a final question.

Mr GAFFNEY - Under the national maritime reform implementation, the note there says, significant internal results have been diverted to the implementation of this reform. Okay, that is over the forward Estimates. Does that mean that that amount of money will be there to cover that from the day?

Ms MORRIS - At the moment, the money we are covering that, there is significant internal resources being diverted to that, because of the reform process and we have had significant change over a couple of years now. AMSA is continuing to move the goal posts, so the reform is continuing. We thought we would be back to business as usual by now, but the reform is continuing. That probably is the best explanation.

Mr HIDDING - It is very complex but it is not acceptable to the Government that this goes on for a long time. So for that reason I have had very high level discussions not just with AMSA but with the Deputy Prime Minister as well and the Transport Infrastructure Council. While the state signed up to this, we are by far the most competent and cost recovery state in this space in Australia by a long shot. And so we should be, we are an island state. We support three major aquaculture companies, huge numbers of boats and vessels on the water. We are quite exposed as a result of these changes, however, we have made some high level representations recently and as soon as tomorrow, we have the next iteration at, I am expecting to see some big strides forward.

Mr GAFFNEY - There was always going to be a cost factor but it should not be at that level.

Mr HIDDING - It has been very messy. That is because AMSA has not quite known how to deal with a state that does it better than they do. That is what it comes down to. MAST is a very good operator and is the envy of all other states. We have full cost recovery. No other states do. They are quite happy to give something over to MAST. We do not want to be penalised. We want to be part of their solution not have problems foisted on us. But that is going well.

CHAIR - Once again thanks, minister. That is it. QED.

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The committee adjourned at 5.52 p.m.