

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Wednesday 10 June 2015 - Estimates Committee B (Petrusma)

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Wednesday 10 June 2015

MEMBERS

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

IN ATTENDANCE

Hon Jacquie Petrusma, Minister for Human Services, Minister for Women

Ministerial Office

Pene Snashall, Adviser (Children)
Suzie Jacobson, Chief of Staff
Simon Duffy, Housing Adviser
Jocelyn King, Disability Adviser
Laura Eaton, Women's Adviser

Department of Health and Human Services

Michael Pervan, Acting Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services
David Nicholson, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Control, Workforce and Regulation
Michael Reynolds, Chief Financial Officer
Ross Smith, General Manager, Shared Services
Tony Kemp, Deputy Secretary, Children and Youth Services
Peter White, Executive Director, Housing and Disability Reform
Rod Fazackerley, Manager Finance, Disability, Housing and Community Services
Ingrid Ganley, Director, Disability and Community Services
Heather Cuthbertson, Manager Joined Up Human Services Project
Lisa Howes, Acting Manager, Executive, Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (supporting role)

Department of Sport and Recreation

Rebecca Moles, Manager Policy

The committee resumed at 2.05 p.m.

DIVISION 3

(Department of Health and Human Services)

Output group 4

Human Services system management

4.1 Human service system management -

CHAIR (Mrs Taylor) - Minister, if you would like to give an overview of your department and introduce the people at the table with you, please.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Sitting at the table with me I have Mr Michael Pervan the Acting Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, Mr David Nicholson, Deputy Secretary Strategic Control Workforce and Regulation, Mr Peter White, Executive Director of Housing and Disability Reform, and Mr Tony Kemp who is the Deputy Secretary of Children and Youth Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here this afternoon. I noticed a few of you have the fact sheets that we put out a few days ago, so I am happy to address further concerns on those. The Government is working hard to rebuild essential services and to develop a robust community sector that can help lift our state out of disadvantage, which is why we have continued to deliver on our commitment to the community sector by providing a record amount of funding of \$255.28 million which goes direct to the sector. That goes to 230 community sector organisations who deliver around 440 different services.

The state is also funding \$16.28 million to the equal remuneration order which over seven years will equal about \$114.3 million. We are maintaining indexation at 2.25 per cent and on top of this we are providing an additional \$2 000 000 per annum which goes to the community sector organisations. That works out around 0.84 per cent so in total the sector is getting extra indexation of about 3.09 per cent which is quite good considering that CPI in Hobart is only 1.7 per cent.

We inherited a lot of challenges in the Human Services portfolio. Human Services was quite fragmented and it was very difficult for Tasmanians to navigate their way through the system to access the services they needed. Integral to our commitment to address this fragmented service system was what we are now calling, the One Door project. In the past you might have heard it named as joining up human services. We are extremely proud of the One Door project and today we have the project team leader, Heather Cuthbertson, sitting over there, who is doing a lot of work in regard to this initiative. This initiative now has been funded \$1.2 billion to progress to the next phase.

Phase one involved a range of stakeholders to get it to where it is now and now we have the funding to take it to the second stage. Other initiatives in the portfolio include \$1.1 million to

Elder Abuse funding over four years, \$250 000 to TasCOSS to increase outcome measurement in regards to One Door. An additional \$1.7 million over two years to Neighbourhood Houses on top of their \$4.8 million in recurrent funding, as well as \$100 000 to start up food co-ops across the state, and \$1.7 million for a new Rocherlea Neighbourhood House.

In Children and Youth Services, there was a wide range of historical challenges to be addressed but we have a great team in place who passionately want to tackle those challenges and turn them into opportunities. Over the last year and a bit we have been working to strategically change the culture in Children and Youth Services to be largely focussed on engaging and supporting families earlier, to be less adversarial, while providing the appropriate support to staff to do their important job.

As part of this change, in December last year, DHHS commissioned an independent review of the governance and leadership structures for Children and Youth Services to ensure optimal arrangements, supporting the delivery of quality services to children and families across CYS.

For a number of years CYS has been delivered through a regional service structure and so one of the critical considerations of this review was how best to oversight service delivery in the future. This review has recommended that CYS move into a statewide leadership structure based on outcome streams which brings it more into line with a wide range of other service arrangements by the DHHS. The three streams will be children and families, which comprises child protection, out-of-home care, and family care, as well as a dedicated youth stream which is particularly exciting as Tasmania will finally have both a Youth Justice response at a community and detention level and a dedicated response to youth at risk who require a targeted age appropriate service which best meets their presenting needs. Also, there will be a dedicated child health and parenting service stream.

Other initiatives and activities across the CYS portfolio include consolidating the three-and-under review panel, and Sign for Safety. A new model of staff supervision called PAS which is being done in partnership with UTAS, to implement one model of professional supervision across CYS. A new short-term respite care and support service. A new statewide replacement processing of children and young people moving into out-of-home care. Development of an independent process to review child death and serious injuries. Increased funding for family support services. Development of a vulnerable babies and infants strategy. Strengthening the role of the Commissioner for Children. Developing a more transparent and robust process for complaints and care investigations. Supporting the review of all policies and practice guidelines which will result in implementation from July of an online practice manager in CPS, and implementing major reform of out-of-home care.

We are also doing a lot of work with the Foster Carers' Association of Tasmania to provide greater support to hostel and community carers, including a recruitment campaign which will start later this year. We are also investing into statewide network of Youth Justice programs.

In disability, the NDIS has been a great success in Tasmania and by 2019-20 we will have around 10 600 Tasmanians coming to the scheme and at full scheme the Government will be investing around \$232 million. To cater for these extra people, we estimate that the disability sector and workforce will need to grow its capacity, including about an extra 1 500 support workers to deliver services. We are providing \$250 000 to National Disability Services to support them in implementing their workforce development and skills plan. We also acknowledge there are those who are outside of the NDIS who will be waiting for services so we are providing an

extra \$2 million over four years to meet demand, as well as \$1 million to provide a long-term strategy for increased care for people with autism.

In housing, the major initiative is the development of Tasmanian Affordable Housing strategy. This has been developed through extensive consultation and TasCOSS has labelled it as the Rolls Royce of all consultations they have been involved with. It cost \$250 000 and it has involved having HACCU and a four year prior to leading that consultation. It has involved stakeholders from both the private sector, the community sector as well as government employees. The aim of the strategy is to set the direction for the next 10 years.

[2.15 p.m.]

We have also announced funding for a new \$7.5 million north-west youth accommodation and training facility. Also, Better Housing Futures has led to a lot more maintenance of heat pumps for vulnerable Tasmanians in that area. This year we expect to deliver about 630 new affordable houses across the state. So while the Human Services portfolio has its challenges, I believe the staff who are here with me today, as well as the rest across the department, and I have the commitment and the vision to face those challenges because we believe the reforms we are putting in place now will make a big difference in the lives of vulnerable Tasmanians.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister. Before we start on the item, I have to say you have done very well out of the Budget, haven't you, really? You have managed to get a heap of new programs and new initiatives and greater funding for others. So what have you lost in return? Or what has somebody else lost in return? The Budget situation is not much better than it was last year.

Mrs PETRUSMA - In Human Services as well as across DHHS, of course we had a savings target to reach, which was I think \$19.5 million.

CHAIR - You are spending that now, are you?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I wish I was. But no, the savings starts at \$19.5 million, but that was actually mainly achieved internally. We are forever telling the community sector that it needs to become more efficient, so we believe that it was time for government to do the same thing. So led by Mr Bevan and the team, there has been a big review right across DHHS about how internally we can actually make ourselves more efficient. A lot of work has been done in that regard.

CHAIR - I am sure people will ask you individually how many FTEs you have lost at a particular department, but do you have an overall figure?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It was 221 at 31 March across DHHS.

CHAIR - Two hundred and twenty-one? Do you have more to come?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The target for this year was 224. So we managed to achieve that earlier.

CHAIR - And the cost of that? Will you cover that cost this year or next year in terms of redundancies and -

Mrs PETRUSMA - We will meet our \$19.5 million target this year.

Mr VALENTINE - When talking about joined-up services and Human Services operations, can you just explain how this output is delivered? How it works within the department? I was in Health for 20 years. This is not total Health. I realise that, but it is always difficult to get everybody on the same page, doing things together. Here you are trying to bring in significant programs to work seamlessly a joined-up service. How do you manage to corral everybody and make this work? I am just really interested in that side of it.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is a very good question. On coming into Government with regards to Human Services, as I said before, we had 230 community sector organisations delivering around 440 services. I had individual families that had up to 22 different case managers because different organisations were providing different programs and everything else. For a family, it was all too hard so they disengaged.

Mr VALENTINE - I understand the problem.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes. So we knew that we had to join up. That is part of the DHHS review, actually to join ourselves up internally as well. Mr Pervan and the team has been - we have a finance area here, there and everywhere - are just trying to join up all the resources. It has been to join ourselves up internally as well as to non-government organisations - NGOs - externally.

Mr VALENTINE - Do you have a performance and evaluation unit that actually does all the homework and the research? Does it find all of the detail that the program managers need to be able to put their programs into effect? Is that what happens? When you are engaging with NGOs that have to deliver those services, is it this performance unit that actually puts the strategies together and all the program managers follow them? Or do the program managers listen to the advice given and then put their own strategies together?

Mr PERVAN - At the end of the process, and we are in the middle of implementing it now, we will end up with one part of the department bringing together the purchasing and performance reporting for everything that the DHHS purchases.

Community sector purchasing will be right next to acute hospital purchasing and so on. Two benefits will come out of that. One is that it is a brokerage - it is a one-stop shop - that goes out to the content areas, the people at the frontline, and gets what is needed, what are the gaps, what is the best strategy to fill those. It will then collate all that information and consolidate it.

The other benefit is that consolidating this information - putting people together in the one spot - gives people the opportunity to spot where one service can be connected to another, where a conversation can be held to bring two things together and make them bigger than their constituent parts. Going back to your time in the department, correct me if I am wrong, there would have been a thing called BEN, the Board of Exceptional Needs.

Mr VALENTINE - I cannot remember that detail.

Mr PERVAN - That was how we used to address the needs of the most complex clients. We have had one recently, a very eloquent woman who has been in the Royal Hobart Hospital for weeks', if not months', too long. The Royal was doing its very best to try to connect her with what is basically disabled service needs, but without a clue of how to make those connections. Once it came to our attention, it was a matter of a conversation and an email. My colleague two down,

Peter White, contacted the Royal, put the woman in touch with the right people, with the right housing and accommodation need. She is now on-track. When the National Disability Insurance Scheme goes live, she will be the ideal candidate for that. At the moment, the social workers, the staff at the Royal did not know who to connect her with and they were trying the community sector.

We are now in a position where we can put those connections together. All the traditional functions of the department - all the corporate functions; performance reporting, purchasing, finance, human resources - have all been consolidated, shifted out of where they were, in various pockets throughout the department. At the other end, the service end, we are connecting - we do not use the word 'integrating' anymore because a lot of this is by collaboration; it is not by forcing connections between communities -

Mr VALENTINE - You are not trying to force program managers into a certain -

Mr PERVAN - No, because you need that specialist knowledge. A child protection worker has very specialised skills, but they may need to talk to people in housing and so on. The community sector is such a diverse area of service provision. While people in it naturally collaborate a lot, a lot can be said for us putting in, if you like, a shopfront such that we can start making those connections around the needs of particular groups of the community. It might not be the most complex, because that is probably always going to default to someone like me, but there are people and places who have complex needs. By giving these joined-up initiatives out there, we are better able to meet them, to deliver to their needs faster and with a lot less confusion and conflict.

Mr VALENTINE - How does this operate in terms of putting a strategic framework together for the whole department? How does that work in pointing forward in the big picture? Is that what it is designed to do?

Mr PERVAN - It absolutely is. A lot of it is about turning the old triangle upside down. Instead of the department being an administration - a public service department focused on compliance with legislation and all those other things departments do, and growing like a coral reef like big departments like ours do - it is entirely client-driven. We are there as a system manager to make sure that the Health and Human Services systems are delivering for Tasmanians. That drives the administration and the administration is kept compliant. Instead of saying 'The Financial Management Act says we ought to do x, y and z, so that is where we start', we will start with the service needs and work from there.

Mr VALENTINE - Do you have any special support services to make this happen? Do you have any information systems specially designed to help you in this process? It is not insignificant so do you have something like an executive support system?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I can indicate that under joined up human services, one of the initiatives is to look at information systems and privacy information because at the moment our information systems do not connect up. Housing Connect is probably the most advanced in Human Services for having an integrated system. We are looking at how we can integrate more of those models. It is something that requires more work.

Mr VALENTINE - That sound encouraging. Thank you for that.

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Mr DEAN - Does the system connect up with Centacare Evolve Housing, Community Housing Ltd and Housing Connect and those other three areas? Are they all connected into this? Are those names right?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes. Housing Connect has five service providers.

Mr DEAN - Centacare Evolve Housing, is that still right?

Mr PETRUSMA - That is one of community housing organisations that had a stock transfer under Better Housing Futures.

Mr DEAN - That is still the right name?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes.

Mr DEAN - Does this system connect those three components into it?

Mr PERVAN - It will do and it will have the capacity to connect up with any system within Human Services. What we are looking at is something that can bring all that together. To start with we have to make sure all the source data is reliable and Mr Valentine mentioned one of his favourite things he has raised with me a few times, about an executive reporting system. What we have been doing over the past two years is making sure the reports that will feed into that are accurate and reliable, a solid HR report, a solid finance report. In this case it would be making sure the data in those individual Human Services systems is in a format and structure that can be linked and integrated.

Mr DEAN - Who will have access to it?

Mr PERVAN - That is a very good question. At the moment it will be the department but, subject to compliance to the PIP Act and things like that, anyone delivering a service. We are commencing the roll-out of specific initiatives in joined up services or One Door. Once we have evaluated those with the view of continuing or expanding their access, if a particular One Door program is going to be driven by the community sector organisation, then part of that will include their access to the information system. It will not be a public access system but people who are at the front end, delivering joined up services, will have access to it.

Mrs PETRUSMA - The five providers under Housing Connect have access to the Housing Connect information system because it is only for clients accessing housing services. For example, in Children and Youth Services, we had the KIDS Data Warehouse which incorporates a lot of other data. We acknowledge there are disparate system, in that we need to get information joined up. It is a vast body of work. Under joined up, it is one of our project missions.

Mr DEAN - Housing Connect, or Centacare Evolve Housing, are a part of this site?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Centacare is a part of Housing Connect. The Centacare Evolve is a different organisation that is to look after tenants under Better Housing Futures which is a separate program. Better Housing Futures is where we transferred 3 900 houses to four different organisations which are Mission Australia, Centacare Evolve at Bridgewater, Community Housing Ltd in Launceston, as well as Housing Choices on the north-west coast.

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Under Housing Connect there are five providers that provide services which is our one-stop shop. If you are homeless, you go to these organisations that run Housing Connect.

Mr DEAN - Perfectly clear.

Mr FINCH - Minister, you were talking about 221 people have gone, with the commitment you had to make. Did you say you have to find 222 less next year?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, not at all. Our target for this year was 224 staff up to 30 June.

CHAIR - Is there a target for next year?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That now becomes part of the structural savings, so our residual savings can be made across all of DHHS next year. For 2015-16 it is only \$7.5 million. Our entire budget is \$1.046 billion, so that is a very small percentage. This does not include the Tasmanian Health Service, this is just the Department of Health and Human Services, which excludes the THOs, which becomes the THS in the future. It is a very small percentage of a big budget.

CHAIR - Do you see that as leading to further redundancies or a reduction of FTEs?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It may be FTEs, but under the DHHS review process that Mr Pervan outlined, there will be further savings to come from that, so most of those are already in train.

Mr VALENTINE - With regard to Ashley, where does that sit in this? Does it sit in the Human Services?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, it comes under Output group 7 Children Services.

Mr VALENTINE - Okay, thanks.

Output group 5 Human Services

5.1 Community services -

Mr FINCH - In respect of the numbers, there is an upward trend in spending over the forward Estimates. A bit of a blip in 2016-17. You go from \$18 358 to \$18 254. Is that a program ending? Sometimes when we ask these questions we receive the answer there is a program that is finishing up, so I am wondering whether that is the case here, because with the forward Estimates the numbers can be a bit rubbery.

Mrs PETRUSMA - You are talking about 2016-17?

Mr FINCH - In 2016-17, there is that diminution.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It would be because there would be a couple of election commitments which would start. The food co-ops are a one-off this year, so that is \$100 000 less, and the Neighbourhood Houses come under that. That is a decrease because the Neighbourhood Houses were a commitment of \$1.7 million over two years.

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Mr FINCH - Thank you, I wanted to make sure you have your finger on the pulse.

The election commitment on Neighbourhood Houses, a one-off injection, \$50 000 for each house. I imagine they would nearly have fallen over with delight at that proposition. What are they expected to achieve for the \$50 000?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It was \$25 000 over two years, which made the \$50 000 in total, so there was a set of parameters around what the Neighbourhood Houses could do with it based on what was the greatest need in their area, or based on how they could improve their services in their particular Neighbourhood Houses. Neighbourhood Houses have used it for a wide variety of needs. For example, some have put in solar panels to cut down the cost of electricity because they believed that that would give them extra savings in future years to provide more services. Others have invested in food co-ops. Others have put on programs to help vulnerable Tasmanians to find jobs. Others have used it to do further renovations to their facilities. It had to be used for a purpose that could show to us it was going to be of direct benefit to the house, but more importantly, to vulnerable Tasmanians.

Mr FINCH - Are they just going to report to you as to where they have spent the money or do they need to get approval from the department to say 'this is what we want to do'?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right, they had to say what it was. As part of their agreements we had to know, within the parameters that were set, what it was going to be spent on. It could not be used on a holiday, it has to be acquitted.

Mr FINCH - Minister, I am assuming you got good feedback from the Neighbourhood Houses?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I got excellent feedback. It has been one of the most rewarding aspects of the job, to go around the state and visit the 33 Neighbourhood Houses and see what they have been using these dollars on, and to talk to the people who have benefited the most from these programs. I was at Burnie Neighbourhood House a couple of weeks ago and they have used part of their funding to set up a cafe which is allowing young people who are unemployed to do their 15 hours of volunteer work to get upskilled and helping them to train up in hospitality. Many of these kids were one step away from going to Ashley and this is changing their lives. It is making a huge difference and it is fantastic to see.

Mr FINCH - Neighbourhood Houses have been in struggle street for quite some time.

Mrs ARMITAGE - I have a question regarding elder abuse from last year and the fact it was something the Government picked up. What sort of response have you had to the helpline? How many calls have you had?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Between July and December 2014 the helpline had responded to 97 cases of alleged elder abuse, with 54 per cent of callers indicating they found out about the helpline from television commercials. Of these calls, 77 have been referred to additional services.

Mrs ARMITAGE - And were the 77 found to have a need, was it elder abuse?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That was just based on July to December. The year before, for the whole year, there were only 62 calls, so we can tell that people are using the elder abuse hotline

more. The percentages of different types of abuse in regard to the calls were: financial or material, 65 per cent; psychological or emotional, 84 per cent; physical, 29 per cent; social, 16 per cent; neglect, 10 per cent; and sexual abuse, 1 per cent.

Mrs ARMITAGE - What was the percentage of those that turned out to have a reason, they were not vexatious?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It goes to Advocacy Tasmania, which then look at the calls - 33 per cent were then referred internally into Advocacy Tasmania for further support; 42 per cent of all calls were referred to community social workers. Of protective information passed on to clients, 58 per cent were referred to Legal Services, 38 per cent were referred to police, and 31 per cent were referred to the Guardianship and Administration Board. I can indicate that 63 per cent of all calls are in relation to older women.

CHAIR - It is not as many as I have would have expected.

Mrs PETRUSMA - We are maintaining our advertising and awareness campaign. We find when we advertise the helpline that is when we get an increase in calls.

CHAIR - I am surprised at the percentage of women and men. I would have thought the percentage of women might be higher.

Mrs PETRUSMA - In previous years it has been 73 per cent. In 2012-13 it was 73 per cent and in 2013-14 it was 73 per cent, so this year there has been a decline. In previous years the percentage of calls in relation to persons above 80 has been higher, it was 48 per cent last year whereas this year it is only 43 per cent. These are only based on six-month figures for this year. We get the final figures at the end of June.

Mr FINCH - I am wondering about that autism continuum of care. Do you put that into Disability Services? Where do you have that as a focus?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is run out of Disability Services, but the \$1 million is a separate pool of money to put in place a continuum of care for autism. We appreciate the fact that the NGOs [inaudible] yet autism is one of our highest rates of disability in this state. Parents, for a long time, have been asking for more services, especially for their children. We know that the earlier a child is diagnosed with autism, the better the long-term outcomes are. It was really important to us that we put in a continuum of care program, especially for children with autism.

Mr FINCH - How do you envisage that \$1 million will be used?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It was allocated as \$250 000 per year. The major program that we are going to be implementing under it is called Rethink Autism, which is a program on applied behavioural analysis. This is a web-based educational program that can follow the child from an early learning child care setting, through school, even through colleges, because it adapts at every stage of the child.

Also, the \$250 000 is being used to do a service gap mapping exercise to better determine where the gaps are in service delivery in Tasmania. We are also mapping the prevalence of autism spectrum disorder in Tasmania. We had no clear data as to what the statistics were.

We are also looking at a research partnership with the Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism Spectrum Disorders, which is now the leading research institute on autism in Australia.

We are looking at professional development for health and education workers, and we are also looking at the viability of clinics to do testing for and to treat the comorbidities of autism spectrum disorder.

CHAIR - That is a lot to do out of \$250 000. How many families are you actually going to work with in Rethink Autism program, or is that not on the schedule for this year?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Rethink Autism program is \$120 000 over two years. It is a licence that you buy. That is \$60 000 per annum, which leaves us with extra dollars to put into the others. We are working with the University of Tasmania to help us with this work, and with the cooperative research centre as well. There are many initiatives that you can do. It might sound a lot, but it can be done within the resources allocated. It is a lot more than has ever been done before in Tasmania.

CHAIR - Is this mostly research, or is it anybody working with children and families with autism?

Mrs PETRUSMA - We have an autism advisory panel in place that is led by Cassie le Fevre, better known as John X's wife, I suppose. Cassie has had 17 years experience in working with children with autism, and the other members of the advisory panel are all people who have wide experience in regard to looking after children and people with autism.

CHAIR - Are they advising you, or are they advising parents of children? I want to know if you are at the grassroots. Are there any children with autism, or families, being touched directly?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes, through the Rethink Autism program they will be, but also we have set up an autism satellite school at Lindisfarne North Primary School. That is the first one in this state.

CHAIR - Okay. Is that being funded by this, or Education?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, Education is doing that. This is to work alongside Education as well. Also, keeping in mind that 15- to 24-year-olds come under the National Disability Insurance Scheme. This is not to fund supports for every single child. The Federal Government also provides funding for families with autism, but there is no prevalence data, there is no mapping exercise. Nobody knew what the services were. This is to provide a continuum of care which has not been put in place before.

CHAIR - So that somebody who suspects a child may have autism will have a place to go to be diagnosed?

Mrs PETRUSMA - When all this work is completed.

CHAIR - Is this the four years?

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Mrs PETRUSMA - Hopefully we will know before then. It was to be a four-year plan because nobody had a clue what the services were. It was to do the mapping exercise to determine what is out there. It actually helped us in regards to the National Disability Insurance Scheme - the full rollout - as well.

CHAIR - I am not suggesting it is not good work. Do you see the point I am getting at? When will a child with autism be recognised through this and be put on to the continuum of services?

Mrs PETRUSMA - This year, under the Rethink Autism but also through the satellite school at Lindisfarne North, the first children will be able to benefit -

CHAIR - How many children? Are they there now?

Mrs PETRUSMA - In the satellite school?

CHAIR - Is it operating already?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I know it was due to start in second term.

CHAIR - Okay. We will ask the Minister for Education on Friday.

Mr VALENTINE - With regard to autism, is there an NGO working in that space? If so, are they incorporated into this joined-up arrangement you have been talking about?

Mrs PETRUSMA - In regards to Rethink Autism?

Mr VALENTINE - Yes.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Rethink Autism commences soon, but a Rethink coach will coach the parents because a lot of it is driven by the parents.

Mr VALENTINE - So that is work the department is doing?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right.

Mr VALENTINE - But is there an NGO -

Mr FINCH - What is the body?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Rethink Autism has been licensed by the Crown. The Crown owns the licence, which will be run by us.

CHAIR - We understand that. Is there not already a community group - an NGO - that deals with autism?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Autism Tasmania is on our advisory panel.

CHAIR - Okay. So we are talking about Autism Tasmania. Rob is asking whether it will be involved in this continuum.

Mr VALENTINE - They are on the advisory panel?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right. I do not have the names of the members on the panel with me, but quite a number of people are on the Autism Advisory Panel.

CHAIR - I think your question was: are the community organisations already working in this space involved?

Mr VALENTINE - Yes. Are they fully up with it and kept informed?

Mr FINCH - They have been working in the community for a long time to elicit that support from the Government, particularly. I am sure it is pleasing for them to have an embellishment of what they are trying to achieve for their children and for the parents. It is a good initiative that will assist people who, I would imagine, for a long time have felt left out of the loop to a certain extent, and have not had as much notice taken of them as they would have liked, for the sake of their kids.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I can give you the list of members of the Autism Advisory Panel. Dr Larry Cashion, who is a psychologist; a consumer representative, Miss Lisa Risby, a parent who has experience in applied behaviour analysis; Ms Bec Wycliffe, a parent; Kirsten Desmond, who represents the Tasmania Disability Education Reform Lobby; Mr Terry Burke from Autism Tasmania; Mr Ian Wright from St Giles; Ms Sue Ham from the National Disability Insurance Agency; Mr Tim Chugg from Giant Steps; Ms Rosalie Martin, who is from Speech Pathology Tasmania, Dr Nadia Ollington from UTas; Kathryn Fordyce from The Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centre, north-west Tasmania; Rowena Wilkinson, who is the Early Childhood Intervention Service representative; Lynne McDougall from the Department of Education; Claire Bugg, who is another consumer representative as well as a representative from the Department of Health and Human Services.

Mr FINCH - Thanks, minister.

Mrs ARMITAGE - For Rethink Autism, the Budget was?

Mrs PETRUSMA - \$120 000 over two years.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Do we know how many participants are going to be in the program?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Initially we want to conduct a trial with 60 participants. It is going to be conducted with the university. It is an American program so we want to do a trial to see that it delivers what we want it to deliver but we have the option of extending the licence as well.

Mrs ARMITAGE - After the two years' allocation, will you be looking to make further allocations for the ongoing assessment of the Rethink Autism program? You will not be looking to stop it?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, because we can extend it for another year. We can also extend it under the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which will be coming in 2019. Parents will also be able to acquire it if they want it as part of their package.

Mrs ARMITAGE - How will the success of the program be measured?

Mrs PETRUSMA - By the University of Tasmania - they will do research on it.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Tasmanian Autism Diagnostic Service - does that come under you?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That's TasADS.

Mrs ARMITAGE - How many children have been assessed in the last 12 months under TasADS? How long is the current waiting list?

Mrs PETRUSMA - We will have to take that as a question on notice.

Mrs ARMITAGE - How many children are waiting? How long have they been waiting? Those are my questions.

CHAIR - What is the service called?

Mrs ARMITAGE - Tasmanian Autism Diagnostic Service.

There is probably one other question that I could ask now rather than in disabilities. It was to do with respite places for children who have a disability, but not an intellectual disability. Children, for example, with autism. How much money has been allocated for respite places for these children?

Mrs PETRUSMA - We will have to take that as a question on notice as well.

Mr DEAN - My question comes under the CIP and it relates to the NSCC, the Northern Suburbs Community Centre. Thank you very much for the funding for centre because I have been trying to get funding for it for the last 12 years. It has fallen on deaf ears. Maybe I should hold the question until then, because it is how it is going to be built, where it is going to be built.

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, it comes under this section.

Mr DEAN - Will it be built on the greenfields site next to where it is or on the site where it currently is? What is the program for building it?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It definitely is not going to be built where it currently is. It going to be shifted to a better location. I cannot divulge the location just yet, but it is going to be more centrally located on a direct bus route. At the moment is a bit far out and it is going to be in a more-high traffic area, in a similar location but -

CHAIR - Why can you not divulge it?

Mrs PETRUSMA - We are still finalising.

CHAIR - We are going to make a big announcement, are we?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Not quite, but we have still got to go through processes in regard to it.

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Mr DEAN - It is still in the general location?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right.

Mr DEAN - It can only be along the road on the right-hand side. That is about the only spot it can be and/or back where the old school was, the Rocherlea School was.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is further down the hill.

Mr DEAN - Or it can be back on the site there on the George Town Road, virtually off the end of Lilydale Road. When will that be known?

CHAIR - There must be an announcement coming.

Mr WHITE - I would anticipate very shortly. We are having some negotiations with a property owner. I do not believe it is probably in the site you have indicated.

Mr DEAN - I can understand why you cannot divulge because of what is happening there. I take it that the centre is very much involved in your discussions?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Very much so. The centre will be involved in the planning of it. That is why this year it has only been allocated \$83 000. That is just to do the initial planning because we want Neighbourhood House to be very much involved in the planning of it. They know what programs work best. There is \$1.7 million available to the whole project so we want to do it definitely in conjunction with them. They have the opportunity to determine the layout, and how they would like it set up.

Mr DEAN - Minister, when do you anticipate this development might start and end? What is the program for it?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It will be completed in 2017-18.

Mr DEAN - 2017.,

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes. If there was ever a Neighbourhood House that needed to be rebuilt, it is that one. I saw where water and sewage were actually seeping up through the floor. We are providing them with a short-term terrapin to use, to give them a better facility while the new one is being built.

Mr DEAN - The current one is a couple of terrapins together. It has been added to and taken away.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Now we are going to give them a bit better terrapin as well.

Mr DEAN - That is very much appreciated.

The other one is the Neighbourhood House in Ravenswood, which is also appreciated. There is money there for some further development to that site. How far developed are we with the community centre at Ravenswood? I think there is a dental component going into the facility?

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Mrs PETRUSMA - I will ask to the table Ingrid Ganley, the director of Disability and Community Services.

Ms GANLEY - The Ravenswood Community Centre is a council-owned property. We are in renegotiations at the moment with the council around securing a long-term lease agreement, but also what changes to the amenity we can make we make with the capital improvement funds that we have. We are right in the middle of negotiations at the moment.

Mr DEAN - With the dental component that is going to come into it - and as I understand minister, that is what this funding is about, I think I am right in that -

Ms GANLEY - Not the dental component.

Mr DEAN - Where is the dental component coming in this?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Is it under the Minister for Health?

Ms GANLEY - It is a multi-use site but we are looking at the neighbourhood house.

Mr DEAN - I see. That would be under Health, the other part of it. Thank you for that.

Mr VALENTINE - Can I ask a question about the George [inaudible] child and family centre?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is not in my portfolio either. That is the Minister for Education.

Mr VALENTINE - That is an Education one - child and family services?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Ask that one on Friday as well.

CHAIR - You know that I would probably be asking about the community service levy as I did last year. I am sure you are expecting questions from me on that, minister. My question is, it appears to me this year you are doing the same thing as you did last year and has done the year before when you were not responsible, that a percentage of the gambling levy money is going to neighbourhood houses for base funding. You have decided to continue that this year.

It doesn't sit well with me when you talked about what the community service levy money is for. You said last year what that money was for. You gave an explanation that 50 per cent of the gambling money was to go to gambling support programs, and out of that a percentage of that is now going into neighbourhood base funding as well as a part of that other 25 percent.

I asked questions about this last year. Ms Bresnehan is not here with you any more?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No.

CHAIR - One of the things that offended me, I have to say, is that she said that this money used to go to two community grant programs, small grants and a large place-based grant program. The large place-based programs were not very successful. They often did not have the community capacity and infrastructure to support people, and it was falling back onto neighbourhood houses.

This is a similar kind of funding but not from the same source, but similar funding to the Tas Community Fund for instance. They do not appear to have any problems with being able to give both large and small grants to community groups. I have never heard them say that they don't have the community capacity and the infrastructure to support people.

I found that a quite offensive statement to say that community groups could not manage this well. We give how many millions a year to the Tas Community Fund to give out to exactly those sort of programs. If that is the reason why you give it to neighbourhood houses then it is the wrong reason that you are not trusting the community groups or organisations to be able to manage this.

[3.00 P.M.]

In particular, as you are aware, because I have spoken to you about this in recent months, there are other programs which are community organisation driven which are particularly anti-gambling, at gambling education, particularly gambling for young women, which is apparently on the increase, and young people. I am talking in particular about the Know your Odds Program which you and I have had some dealings with and which is given to the Chargers and the Lady Chargers in the south, and the Tornados in the north and the north-west. The Lady Chargers got it for two years. This is now the second year the Tornados have had it but the Chargers did not receive it this year and the north-west group has it this year as well. We have been told that will not happen in future because the revenue from the Gambling Support Levy money is coming down. A lot of money is going to online gambling so there is a smaller amount.

I understand neighbourhood houses do a fantastic job and I would not for one minute want one dollar not to go to them. If you agree they do such a great job that ought to come out of appropriations and not out of the Community Support Levy.

I would quite like you to explain why this is not the case. The money deliberately is to go to gambling support programs. Neighbourhood houses do all kinds of programs. They do have families with gambling problems who go there, but you could not for one minute say that all the families who go there, or that the programs are particularly targeted at anti-gambling. They have families with all sorts of problems who go there. You do not take money from other organisations to go neighbourhood houses because of a particular problem. This still worries me.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I acknowledge your concerns. Treasury estimates that the 2015-16 CSL returns will be similar to the 2014-15 levels. So the 2015-16 program will be a continuation of the current one. There will not be decreased funding and will be about \$2.89 billion that will again be going into the community services sector support levy again.

In regard to neighbourhood houses, it is intended that funding arrangements for neighbourhood houses will continue. The funding agreement we are now finalising with the neighbourhood houses for the next three years will outline the roles of neighbourhood houses in their local communities. One of these roles will be to support individuals and families impacted by problem gambling as well as having information on the services available around gambling. The houses also offer a range of activities that individuals and families can access including referral to financial counselling, budgeting courses, alternative activities such as walking and cooking programs, gardening, as well as being a place for people to connect to and provide peer support.

As you also know, neighbourhood houses are located in our most disadvantaged suburbs and communities. They are impacted by location stigma. They are impacted by gambling losses, economic downturn as well as social isolation. The vulnerable members of these communities do face barriers to social as well as economic participation. Like the point we made last year, we believe these houses do provide what is known as a third place in the community which, in literature, is critical in supporting people who may be affected by issues such as problem gambling and social isolation.

CHAIR - Absolutely I agree with you with all those things. As you have said yourself, there are a lot of social factors why people need neighbourhood houses. Gambling is only one of those. The CSL money in legislation says it is to be targeted to anti-gambling programs. If there were programs, a neighbourhood house, that has a percentage of its program or a particular project that is aimed at helping families suffering because of gambling, I would be very happy to support that happening.

You are not talking about project or program funding out of the CSL for anti-gambling. You are talking about base funding - which is not anti-gambling. Yes, they support families who might suffer from a gambling problem but they also support families for all sorts of reasons.

Mr VALENTINE - It is not overtly gambling.

CHAIR - Yes, it is not overtly gambling. I say this in particular, I suppose, because of the situation that arose with that particular community group I was speaking to you about. But when I asked why they had they been defunded, and why will the Tornadoes not get it next year, why was it only a two year, the answer was, because there is such competition for these community grants, for the money from the CSL directly aimed at anti-gambling. If there is such competition, then this statement does not make sense that there is not community capacity and infrastructure to handle this money properly.

It seems to me the money which is directly aimed at anti-gambling ought to be going to those programs which are applying for this funding, and you are having to say no to those programs because you are base funding community houses. I do not mean you should fund community houses less; I think they should come out of general consolidated revenue not out of the gambling money. The act is in fact very loose. The act is very broad. The statement is very broad.

Mrs PETRUSMA - The allocation of funds from the 25 per cent component of the CSL does satisfy the act as neighbourhood houses are charitable organisations. So they do come under that part of the act. Also, the allocation of funds from the 50 per cent component of the CSL satisfies the act as neighbourhood houses are located in lower socioeconomic areas with high gambling rates and for capital losses and provides safe inclusive venues for community most at risk of experiencing gambling issues. So they do meet the requirements of the act.

CHAIR - I understand you can get away with it under the act. It seems to me though that it is absolutely not in the spirit of the CSL money.

Mr FINCH - If I might, Chair, too. I think there is another 25 per cent component there, that is used for sport?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes, that is right and that is administered by community sport and recreation.

Mr FINCH - So that goes to sport and recreation?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right. The 25 per cent goes to the Department of Premier and Cabinet to be administered under community sport and recreation, and then the other 75 per cent of the community support levy comes to us.

CHAIR – So I am not going to win this one with you?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I am sorry.

CHAIR - No, I do not want you to be sorry. I want it fixed. I will keep pursuing it in other ways.

Mrs PETRUSMA - We will have the conversation again next year.

CHAIR - No, what I will try to do is get some legislative changes made. The act is so loose you can use it for almost any purpose you want to use it for as long as it is a charitable purpose.

Mr FINCH - That is the danger, isn't it?

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr FINCH - As far as any government is concerned would see it as a pot of money that we can channel it here and there without it coming from the correct -

CHAIR - It was exactly the argument that was used a couple of years ago and by your Government when you were in opposition, when the then government wanted to combine the Tasmanian Community Fund together with CSL. We fought that because we said the government would then be able to use it for other purposes than for that it was intended. It seems to me having said that about that particular program your government is doing the same thing with this one. But that is my personal opinion.

Mr VALENTINE - The irony there is it is money that is coming from people who are gamblers.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr FINCH - Would you take that as a comment, minister?

Mr VALENTINE - To do base funding for other things other than gambling, it works against reducing the gambling problem.

Mrs PETRUSMA - This has been in place for many years.

CHAIR - No, no it has not. I asked you that last year and you said two.

Ms GANLEY - It has been in place certainly when we presented to the committee since 2004-05 over a number of years in different levels of funding. There was a short gap in some years and then it has been in place for at least the last three or four years.

CHAIR - This is now the third because last year you said two years.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I think it is the fourth year.

CHAIR - All right, you were wrong last year then?

Mr FINCH - It was linked up with the Federal Hotels legislation.

CHAIR - I understand it was there before the gap.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It commenced in 2003-04 and it went through to 2007-08. Then it restarted again in 2011.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr DEAN - On the gambling, I am not sure whether we followed that one up following on from last year about whether gambling and certainly the frequency it will be very interesting to see what your government does about problem gambling. Certainly the previous government did not decide is the gambling problem rising in the state? That will be shown in the 2014 new study that is being done.

CHAIR - Absolutely.

Mrs PETRUSMA - In regards to that -

CHAIR - Gambling impact study.

Mrs PETRUSMA - There was a social and economic impact study. Treasury released that - I do not have the date - but this provides updated data and identifies trends around gambling prevalence rates. When it was released it indicated that while the rates of problem and moderate risk gambling remains 2.3 per cent of Tasmanian adults, those gamblers account for -

Mr DEAN - Who gave those figures?

Mrs PETRUSMA - This is what the report said. It was released a couple of months ago.

CHAIR - I was going to say I have not seen it.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I think it was April; it was a couple of months ago.

CHAIR - Was it tabled in Parliament?

Mr DEAN - Can you give those figures again, sorry, minister?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The report indicated that while the rates of problem and moderate risk gambling remain steady at 2.3 per cent of Tasmanian adults, those gamblers account for over 20 per cent of Tasmanian gambling losses. The report also found that moderate risk problem gamblers accounted for 36 per cent of all EGM losses. It also found that 7 per cent of all Tasmanian adults and 11.5 per cent of all past year gamblers have participated in on-line

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gambling activity in 2013. Moderate risk problem gamblers were more than four times more likely to have gambled on line at 30.5 per cent and Tasmanian adults as a whole at 7 per cent.

In addition, contemporary research indicates that sports betting appears to be the fastest growing form of gambling.

Mr DEAN - You are not aware of where those figures came from? It is from that study.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is a Treasury report.

Mr DEAN - I have not read the report; you have obviously read the report.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is a report done by Treasury, so it is under the Treasurer not me. I just have a summary of it here.

Mr WHITE - It was released 27 March, by the look of it.

Mr DEAN - I would have thought that the report would have said where the figures came from.

Mr NICHOLSON - It is a commissioned study using ACIL Allen Consulting, the economist group.

CHAIR - Would you mind sending that to us?

Mr NICHOLSON - They would have done the research to support the findings of the report.

Mr DEAN - The police do not keep statistics. I have been trying to get the statistics from them forever but they do not keep any.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is a public report.

CHAIR - My question about it is were there recommendations, because there are usually recommendations on that study?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It has indicated, for example, that sports betting appears to be the fastest growing form of gambling. That is why we actually changed how we are doing our advertising. For example, under Know Your Odds there has been a sports betting community education awareness campaign because we know, for example, that it is young men who have quite a decent income seem to be the area that sports betting and the on-line betting especially is increasing. With on-line gambling, for example, we cannot access those statistics. We cannot see the amounts that are being lost because it is not recorded anywhere in Tasmania. It involves a lot of overseas organisations. We do not know the true statistics in regard to that area.

Mr DEAN - That is the reason why I query the figures.

Mrs PETRUSMA - We can only determine what is done through clubs, pubs, and casinos or through the sports betting organisations, but on-line we cannot determine.

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CHAIR - I will look forward to having a look at those recommendations and seeing what your response to those is.

Mr VALENTINE - I want to know whether the equal remuneration order costs will be dealt with here, or is it under children services as well?

Mrs PETRUSMA - We can talk about equal remuneration order here.

Mr VALENTINE - I am looking at this and seeing that additional funding of \$7.6 million is provided in 2018-19 bringing the total supplementation in 2018-19 to \$31.8 million and I am just wondering whether, the second paragraph:

The funding supplementation included in this Budget is in addition to the \$82.5 million reported in the 2014-15 budget.

Trying to work out exactly how much Tasmanian Government money is going into this as opposed to federal. You make a statement here:

In total the Tasmanian Government has committed \$114.3 million to funding the first seven years of the ERO.

Is that all Tasmanian Government money or is that from some federal vote as well?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, the federal is on top of that. That is just our component of the Equal Remuneration Order. The Federal Government puts in the remainder.

Mr VALENTINE - The \$23.8 million that is mentioned there is not part of the \$114.3 million? Funding represents the total cost of the ERO in Tasmania, less than the anticipated contribution by the Australian Government of \$23.8 million, for the same period.

Mrs PETRUSMA - By the end of 2018-19 I have that the state will fund \$11.27 million, and the Federal Government will fund \$14.1 million, making a total of \$125 million. But apparently there was \$3 million missing, so it would have been \$114.27 million. Keep that in mind.

Mr VALENTINE - It is close to \$114.3 million?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes.

Mr VALENTINE - That is all Tasmanian Government money?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes.

Mr VALENTINE - Do we have any problem or issue with that?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No. The community sector and their employees embrace it with open arms.

Mr VALENTINE - Happy?

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Mrs PETRUSMA - Very happy. It is a lot of money. It is about 9 100 workers benefiting from that money.

Mr VALENTINE - It says here that it is split across payments made to the state and paid directly to the National Disability Insurance Agency. What is the split?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Different services are translating into the National Disability Insurance scheme. So at the moment it is based on the split for the 15 to 24-year old services that we are providing but over future years the percentage will change.

Mr VALENTINE - It is going to change.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is it. It changes over time. Because we are still negotiating with the Federal Government the final stages of the NDIS, that final split will be determined as part of that process.

Mr VALENTINE - You do not have an exact figure?

Mrs PETRUSMA - We still have to fund \$114.27 million. That does not change.

Mr VALENTINE - It is how the Australian Government commitment was going to be paid. That is all. You do not have that.

Mrs PETRUSMA - In the future their share of the disability will be funded straight to the NDIA.

Mr VALENTINE - Thank you.

Mr DEAN - The Gambler's Help Line calls last year were increasing. Last year it was 885 total calls, and last year the total calls went up to 1 039. Is that increase continuing? What have we seen this year?

Mrs PETRUSMA - In regard to calls to the Gambler's Help Line, clinical calls, so far to 31 March it is 164, that versus the 246 that called in 2013-14.

Mr DEAN - Sorry?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It was 246 in 2013-14. Gambler's Help online clinical contacts was 22 versus 21 this year. It looks like people are translating more to using the online service if we are already at 21 in nine months.

Mr DEAN - Yes, because calls to the Gambler's Help Line are increasing last year. The year 11-12 I think it was 885 total calls made. In 13-14 it was 1 039 calls. You are only saying 200 now.

Mrs PETRUSMA - There are a few different services. There is in-person new support clients, which is run by Anglicare Tasmania, which had 216. The in-person individual support sessions is 879, which might be part of it. The calls to the Gambler's Help Line in 2011-12 was only 359, versus 246 in 2013-14.

Mr DEAN - I am only quoting you, minister, and what you said to us last year.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Sorry, I can only go by what is in here so -

Mr DEAN - It was not absolutely accurate. You need to get that right. Last year you were telling us that electronic gaming machine revenue was declining. Is that still declining?

Mrs PETRUSMA - In regards to EGMs, 2013-14 is \$190 million. To 31 March., it is \$148 million. It is tracking.

5.2 Disability services -

Mrs ARMITAGE - Budget document notes on page 80: 'Disability Services continues to operate in an environment where demand for services outstrips the supply'. You also say 'in terms of services delivered there was a decrease in the number of clients receiving accommodation support and community access, reflecting the age cohort transition to NDIS in 2014-15'.

Where would the greatest demands be coming from with Disability Services right now and what measures has the Government taken to address this in the 2015-16 Budget?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Outside the NDIS, we provided an extra \$500 000 per annum. The NDIS funding is going to be \$232 million by the time of the full roll out

Mrs ARMITAGE - The ERO funding as well?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The ERO funding, plus we provide the community sector with 3.09 per cent indexation. That all combined equates to a substantial amount of funding. There will probably still be individual support packages of the areas that has the greatest requirements and demand which is what \$500 000 went towards.

Mrs ARMITAGE - In your press release you have said, \$92.8 million over the next four years to assist with the roll-out of the NDIS and a further \$1.5 million over the next three years to help those who are not part of the first stage of the NDIS. Another \$250 000 to help get the workforce ready for the roll-out. How many disabled Tasmanians are not involved in the first stage of the NDIS roll-out? I note there is 1 000 between 15 and 24. Do we know how many were not able to be part of it?

Mrs PETRUSMA - In regard to the full roll-out of the scheme, we expect about 11 600 Tasmanians to become involved. In regard to current clients -

Mrs ARMITAGE - What meaningful support do you think the \$1.5 million will provide for those who are not part of it over the three-year period?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It provides an extra 11 700 hours of support which is a substantial amount of money.

Mrs ARMITAGE - That is over the three years or is that annually?

Mrs PETRUSMA - We have our current clients of Disability Services which is about 6 700. We have our current clients going into the NDIS which is about 1 000, plus we also have the

4 500 clients. That is about 5 500 of that total amount of clients going into the NDIS. It is already supported by the state Government.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Can you give a feedback on that trial at the moment, of how it is going?

Mrs PETRUSMA - We have one of the highest satisfaction rates in Australia at the moment. It is going exceptionally well.

CHAIR - This is the 15 to 24 year olds?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right. Of the thousand-odd clients we are to transition into the NDIS, we are just about hitting that target. We will probably transition in more during the trial than was expected.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Can you give a breakdown of the overall Disability Service's budget for Tasmania and how much is external, federal funding with NDIS and ERO? How much is Tasmanian Government funding?

Mrs PETRUSMA - At the moment the Tasmanian Government funding is the amount in the budget paper which is the \$214 million. That is what is being funded.

Mrs ARMITAGE - If you want to take it on notice and provide a breakdown of the overall Disability Services budget, it would be interesting to see the components.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is about \$30 million from the Federal Government. Even that full scheme of the NDIS, we still fund about 60 per cent. The Federal Government only 40 per cent but that is not until 2019-20. At the moment we are funding the majority of services.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Is the plan to substantially increase your Disability Services funding?

Mrs PETRUSMA - \$232 million will be going into the NDIS in 1920. If you have specific questions we can take those.

Mrs ARMITAGE - I will leave the NDIS for the moment. I will go onto the Tas Gateway Services. I understand that Tas Gateway Services is the single entry point to all Family Disability Services in each area of the state. Is that right, south-east, south-west, north and north-west?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right. There are four services across the state.

Mrs ARMITAGE - How many clients did not meet the Gateway entry requirements and were not considered for the support services? My understanding is that if a child is not on a severe disability register then they do not qualify to get through the gate for services. Is that right?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, that is not correct. In Education there is a severe disability register for Gateway. So if people register for Gateway, they are assessed as what services they need and the requirements that they need. The current Gateway service clients as at the 31 March is people with disability 207, but there is 676 which are in active monitoring which means they are being followed up and having regular phone calls to assist their needs.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Would you have a list of the people that have applied that did not make the cap?

Ms GANLEY - The only criteria's you need to meet the definition of disability under the Disability Services Act but even then the Gateway would provide information if you did not meet that. So they do not turn anyone away. They are an information referral service.

Mrs ARMITAGE - How much planning has occurred in relation to support services to be provided to people with disability who fall outside of the NDIS?

Mrs PETRUSMA - At the moment it is only the 15- to 24-year olds that are actually under the NDIS. As further age groups transitioning into NDIS they will be able to provide devices. A major component of the National Disability Insurance Scheme is to have what is called TID, two supports or information linkages and capacity that are sort of like Gateway but provide information. So even if people do not meet the requirements to be classed as having a disability under the NDIA Act that they will still be able to get some assistance and help in other services.

Mrs ARMITAGE - This is my last question in disability. Housing Tasmania identifies that 4 700 people with disabilities in Tasmania will need affordable and appropriate housing in Tasmania. Have capital funds been allocated to increasing housing options for this group? Is the state negotiating with the NDIS about capital dollars to ensure affordable and appropriate housing is available for this group?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Housing Tasmania has minimal standards for social housing including location, design, size and ability to achieve basic universal design, and features to support a level of accessibility in all new properties going forward. Along with all other states and territories we are negotiating with the Australian Government on the necessary provisional capital funds to address this issue.

At the Disability Reform Council, which is with the Assistant Minister for Social Services Mitch Fifield, I, and all the other state and territory ministers, are raising the importance of provision of housing and innovative development in this area. The Federal Government has announced that they will be looking at innovative trial models which we have suggestions for as to how Tasmania can take part in it. It is part of the full role and to the NDIS there is going to be capital costs available for specialist accommodation. It is the final arrangements that is part of their bilateral negotiations being conducted at the moment.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Thank you.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Just to add that, our Trinity Hill Youth Accommodation, which is being built in North Hobart at the moment, will have 16 units available for disability accommodation. We are also building six house of adaptable this coming financial year as well. We are providing it in our north-west youth accommodation facility also has five units available. So we are gradually improving our stock and building more as well outside the NDIS but in preparation for it.

Mr FINCH - In respect of this NDIS scheme, it is quite fantastic that it is being progressed by the Federal Government and continuing apace, I suppose, to make sure that those people disadvantaged by disabilities are being cared for in our community and the State Government is stumping up good money as well.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right. It is a lot of money but at the end of the day we know it is worth it because finally people with disabilities will be able to get the support that they do need. If you speak to the parents of the 15- to 24-year olds who are receiving services now, the number of times I have had parents throw their arms around me and start crying because they are finally receiving support - it really shows you why this scheme is very necessary and it is being very well received.

Unfortunately we do not have the capacity to do the roll-out any quicker because, as I said during my overview, we do need to increase the capacity of this sector as well because there is going to be an extra 6 000 people coming on board. We need to build up the capacity of this sector and that is why we are doing a lot of work with National Disability Services about workforce development as well as sector developments so they have the capacity to take on these clients. Under the National Disability Insurance Scheme the client has choice and control over the supports that they want to purchase so they can take their doors with them and go elsewhere.

CHAIR - Which is fantastic.

Mr FINCH - It is.

Mr VALENTINE - Can I ask a clarification on page 69 of the budget papers, you talk about funding of \$39.6 million is provided in 2018-19 - it is the second paragraph under the National Disability Insurance Scheme. A funding of \$39.6 million is provided in 2018-19 to meet additional costs associated with the transition to the full NDIS and then in the next sentence:

'Over the next four years \$92.8 million of funding will be provided to assist with the introduction of the NDIS in Tasmania ...'.

Presumably it is understood what the additional cost will be that far out but it is extra money, \$39.6 million, over and above the \$92.8 million?

Mrs PETRUSMA - \$36 million is provided in 2018-19, so that is included in the \$92.8 million.

Mr VALENTINE - So it is part of the \$92.8 million?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right. It is part of the \$92.8 million because we are saying over the next four years that extra money will be fine.

Mr VALENTINE - That is right. Why would you separate it out? So it is included, it is not extra.

Mrs PETRUSMA - If you go to page 62, 4.1, you will see that amount of money across the forward Estimates. It is reflected there.

Mr VALENTINE - It is included in the \$92.8 million -

CHAIR - Do you want to continue with that question, Rob, there was another little part to it?

Mr VALENTINE - No, that is it.

CHAIR - I should have said to you at the beginning the member for Apsley had to be at Mayor Barry Jarvis' funeral today so she is missing. We have some questions from her as well so we are sharing those out between us. One of her questions was that one, and also what staff growth has there been and what staff growth will there be over the next four years to implement the full scheme.

Mrs PETRUSMA - We know we need about 1 500 extra support workers in this State. With our high unemployment rate it is fantastic that we will be able to provide 1 500 Tasmanians with a job.

CHAIR - Are we putting training schemes in place for those?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The \$250 000 for National Disability Services, that is what it was always for. It was to do the workforce at Skills Development and they are doing it in conjunction with Skills Tasmania, so it was to build up the sector's ability to take it on but also Workforce Development. Skills Tasmania has put together a whole lot of work too because we do see this as a major growth area for this State's employment.

CHAIR - It needs to be done right now.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right. The next stage of the roll-out commences from July 2016 when the next phase of participants come in. We need to have more people ready to go by then.

Mr VALENTINE - What was the FTE on this?

Mrs PETRUSMA - 1 500 altogether.

Mr DEAN - Does Home Care Services come into this area, or are they in Health?

Mrs PETRUSMA - They are under Health.

5.3 Housing services -

CHAIR - You have already said something in your original statement about housing, and you touched on it also during the first few line items. The targets for Housing Tasmania for 2015 are the same as the targets for 2014-15, which in turn are not as good as the actuals for 2013-14. Are you not expecting that the targets of housing will be met?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Are you talking about table 4.6?

CHAIR - Yes.

Mrs PETRUSMA - We know that wait lists are increasing. It says on page 81, 'When the new Housing Connect model came into operation, a broader wait listing commenced.' People can now put their name down for both public housing as well as housing with the community housing organisations. This expanded the wait list for people who are seeking affordable housing options.

Under our affordable housing strategy we have done a lot of research. As Anglicare have put out in a report recently, there are not many affordable rentals. We found that it is hard to find

affordable rental property for about 39 per cent of vulnerable Tasmanians. Our affordable housing strategy is looking at submissions or recommendations as to how to address this going forward. The biggest gap out there is affordable rentals.

CHAIR - The rental assistance scheme does not make enough difference?

Mrs PETRUSMA - There is about \$4 million in the private rental assistance scheme which we do give out, but we know that there needs to be more done. What the research has shown is that people who could probably afford to rent a property, they might be on a really good income but they are choosing to live in accommodation which does not cost them very much to rent, so they have more disposable income.

CHAIR - Is that right?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right. That takes away that property being available to people at a lower income. Because the rental market is so tight, property agents can be tighter with who they rent properties to. If you have a client who is on \$100 000 or more income and wants to rent the property versus somebody who is on \$20 000 or \$30 000, they are renting it out to the person with the higher income.

CHAIR - Does that mean that the rental market in the higher price bracket is not so tight?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I am not sure about that. What it means is that the rentals at the lower end of the scale are not available because people are choosing to go overseas or whatever. They are choosing to rent lower properties.

CHAIR - How do you know this?

Mrs PETRUSMA - There has been a whole lot of research under the affordable housing strategy to [inaudible] which is a national organisation that does a lot of research has looked at this Australia-wide as well. It is not just an issue in Tasmania, it is an issue in other states.

CHAIR - I don't think you are comparing apples with apples if you are talking about the rental market in Sydney as compared to the rental market in Hobart.

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, it is 39 per cent in Tasmania.

CHAIR - One little issue, last year you said that you had written to the Commonwealth Minister for Housing regarding the longstanding debt with the Commonwealth, and that you were meeting him in October and that you would raise the issue again with him then. I don't suppose we have any fantastic outcome, but I thought I had better ask.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I can indicate that I spoke to him again on Friday just gone. There has not been a change in the outcome, but they still have not said no. It is still out there. Of course there is the Federation -

CHAIR - That is better than me constantly asking you about the CSL, because at least you are saying no.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mrs PETRUSMA - Under the Federation white paper process, housing is one of the issues that is being considered. He said to me that further negotiations under him in regard to this area will occur as part of that process. The door is not shut yet. There is only one state -

CHAIR - That would make a huge difference to our public housing.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right. There is only one State and that is Victoria that does not have a debt. Every other State does. There is quite a number of us States that are lined up together in regards to this issue.

CHAIR - They actually negotiated that a number of years ago.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Under the Kennett Government a long, long time ago. Many years have passed.

Mr FINCH - I am wondering what the total is. Did we cover that? The total and what the other States, if they have got this debt as well. Do we know the total, minister?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I have South Australia. You want the total of our debt, or the other debts?

Mr FINCH - Ours and the others if you have them.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Our debt is currently is \$195.7 million. This will reduce to \$188.4 million in a couple of week's time when the June payment is made. The June repayment is for a total of \$16 million which comprises \$7.3 million in principal and \$8.7 million in interest.

Mr DEAN - More interest than debt.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes. It is not till 2042 that we do pay off the debt. Next year when we make a payment of \$15.8 million it will reduce us to \$180.9 million.

Mr VALENTINE - What is the interest rate, out of interest?

Mr WHITE - It is approximately 4 per cent. It is a range of debts so when you bring them all together the average is around 4 per cent.

Mr VALENTINE - Okay, and the Reserve Bank is down at what? It's a rip off.

CHAIR - Even if we renegotiated this debt down to 2 per cent we would be doing better.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is only Victoria, as I said, that has paid its debt off.

Mr VALENTINE - Is there an opportunity to renegotiate?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That was part of what we were trying to talk to minister Morrison about. It is still out there for discussion.

Mr FINCH - Minister, when you repay that money to the feds do they have that earmarked for special projects, or does it just go into their consolidated revenue. What do they use it for?

Mrs PETRUSMA - At the moment they give us, under the National Affordability Housing Agreement, \$28.4 million for housing services. We then repay it back to them. \$15.8 million out of that which is about 56 per cent of that amount. We only get 44 per cent really of the money.

Mr FINCH - It would be a great opportunity if we were able to be relieved of that impost.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is exactly right. That would free us up.

Mr FINCH - The other States, do they have bigger amounts or similar amounts?

Mrs PETRUSMA - South Australia, the only State I have, is still at \$270 million but they were \$590 million. They negotiated a payment of that, I believe, through Gonski funding to get rid of \$320 million. Of course we wanted Gonski for education.

Mr FINCH - Of course the conundrum is if you do it for Tasmania then of course you have to make sure there is some equality or equanimity around the other States.

CHAIR - Except they did do it for Victoria some years ago.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That was a Kennett decision to pay that off very quickly.

CHAIR - They paid it off?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes, they paid it off. There was no debt reduction or anything.

Mr VALENTINE - The percentage of Housing Tas stock that remains in departmental control as opposed to being out there with non-government organisations.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Three thousand nine hundred houses went out to the community sector, which was about a third of all housing stock. At the moment under Housing Tasmania we have 7 258 houses. Under Aboriginal Housing there is 220; under community housing, 5 682; of which 793 are community tenancies, 3 903 are Better Housing Futures, and 986 are other community housing. On a separate line, other, is 135.

CHAIR - What are the percentages?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The percentage of public housing is 54.6 per cent. Aboriginal housing is 1.7 per cent. Community housing, incorporating Better Housing Futures, community tenancies and other community housing, comes to 42.7 per cent. Other housing is 1 per cent.

Mr VALENTINE - Do you have a list of the operators that are looking after those houses?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Under the Better Housing Futures? It is Centacare Evolve, which is in the Bridgewater area; Mission Australia, which is in Clarendon Vale; Community Housing Limited is in the Launceston area; and on the north-west coast it is Housing Choices.

Mrs ARMITAGE - The housing services fact sheet identifies \$1.8 million to support capital projects under the Affordable Housing Strategy. Can you detail what this will involve, what the \$1.8 million will be spent for in capital projects?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Affordable Housing Strategy is due to be delivered to me at the end of June. It will be released in July. We wanted to set some money aside for the final recommendations. That is in the final stages of the recommendations being developed. We are waiting for those final recommendations but we wanted to have initial money set aside to kickstart the Affordable Housing Strategy.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Are there any likely things it might be for? You must have an idea if it is almost ready.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It will be used to drive more affordable housing. It is for capital projects.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Capital, so it will be building?

Mrs PETRUSMA - We will announce it when we release the strategy. It is set aside to help kick-start the Affordable Housing Strategy.

Mrs ARMITAGE - It will be capital projects as opposed to being absorbed into the strategy?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Initiatives that will increase the supply of affordable housing stock in the state.

Mrs ARMITAGE - I look forward to the report.

Mrs PETRUSMA - So do I.

Mr DEAN - I think almost all houses in Ravenswood, Rocherlea and Mayfield, all of my area, which is the majority of HT housing in the state, are now all under the control of Community Housing Limited. I take it that they are required to keep you updated with all the issues and matters arising under their control? I want to ask some specific questions about housing. Is that all passed onto you?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It would be only in regard to arson or serious issues. If it is basic tenancy issues they would be managed by the organisations themselves.

Mr WHITE - Some tenancy-related matters may be raised up to our level. For example, a tenant might be having an issue with the maintenance services they provide, or it could be about their allocation or why they are waiting. We do not see many but typically CHL would deal with those matters, but no different to anyone else. Someone might write to the minister, for example, and complain about certain aspects. In those cases we can seek information from any of those community housing providers. They typically have 48 hours to turn around information to us.

Mr DEAN - Where is the funding that is provided to Community Housing to run their area in the northern suburbs? Where is that in the Budget? They are provided a certain amount of funding from HT to provide a service. Where is that funding?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The management of those houses was transferred to those organisations. They get the rents, plus they get Commonwealth rental assistance on top.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr DEAN - So the rent they get plus Commonwealth rental assistance all comes in to them, and with that they are required to provide all services necessary, in other words, housing and maintenance. What about development of new houses?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Part of that funding is for that as well.

Mr DEAN - How much of the funding they get from rentals is to go back into new housing?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Over 10 years of the program, 341 houses throughout the state will be developed under Better Housing Futures. The advantage of Better Housing Futures is while we only had access to the rental income, they have access to the rental income plus Commonwealth rental assistance we were never entitled to. The estimate is between \$50 million and \$80 million that they could access but we could never access ourselves. It is a lot of extra dollars that they have to run that stock. It is why they are doing a lot of extra maintenance in the area. They are able to demolish a building to rebuild new buildings on it. There is a lot of work they are doing, as well as community engagement that we could never do because we did not have access to Commonwealth rental assistance.

Mr DEAN - Where are the categories - 1, 2 and 3 - in the northern suburbs at the present time?

Mrs PETRUSMA - We do not have figures for the northern suburbs specifically.

Mr WHITE - We only have them for the northern region. We do not have data here.

Mr DEAN - The northern region is nearly all mine anyway. Most of them are in George Town.

CHAIR - You have to say the northern suburbs of Launceston.

Mr DEAN - The northern suburbs of Launceston and George Town. My question coming from this is, what is the imposition on Community Housing - CHL - to decrease those lists?

Mrs PETRUSMA - As at 31 March the wait list for category 1 in the north was 216 people.

Mr DEAN - I cannot remember what it was last year; I will have to check that against last year - do you have that figure there?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I do not have last year's for the north.

Mr VALENTINE - What is it in the south, out of interest?

Mrs PETRUSMA - For the south it is 144.

Mr DEAN - That is 216 in the north and you are getting last year's figures there, so I will have to check them out.

CHAIR - That is category 1, you say?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Category 1.

CHAIR - Total?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The total of the categories in the north is 2 759 but that includes suspended and incomplete applications of 155.

Mr DEAN - It is 155? So we can say about 2 604 if my maths are right. That is what we have on category 1, category 2 and category 3?

Mrs PETRUSMA - And category 4, but category 4 is 462 of that number.

CHAIR - Category 4 is never going to get a house?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Category 1 is 407 in total across the state.

Mr DEAN - You do not have any of last year's figures here? I just want to know if it is increasing.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I can give you last year's category 1 total, which is 274.

Mr DEAN - So it has decreased.

CHAIR - Is that the total of last year's or the total of the north last year?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The total was 2 465 in all categories last year.

Mr DEAN - For the north of the state?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, I do not have the north. It is for the whole. We can get it for you if you put it on notice.

Mr DEAN - If I can, because my question following on from that is: what onus is on Community Housing to decrease that waiting list? Is there a figure they are required to meet? In other words, can the waiting list remain that forever and a day?

Mrs PETRUSMA - We definitely do not want to see it remain at that forever and a day. In the north it is not just Community Housing organisations that provide housing. We have a number of our own Housing Tasmania stock up there. The Community Housing organisations have access to our waiting lists.

Mr DEAN - I don't think you have any stock as I was told, but I could be wrong. I was told that Community Housing now had all of the stock in Mayfield, Rocherlea, Ravenswood and Waverley - is that wrong? The only stock Housing Tasmania had, I thought, was Aboriginal housing.

Mrs PETRUSMA - They must house people off our waiting list, the community housing list, so they have access through our waiting list.

CHAIR - They must be category 1?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Category 1, category 2.

Mr WHITE - Under the agreements they have a minimum target of at least 30 per cent of their allocations must be from category 1.

Mr DEAN - If the category 1 list is hovering around 216, is there any requirement of Community Housing to reduce those numbers, or is it always going to be accepted it can be 300, 400, or continue to go up? What does the agreement say about that organisation providing housing for those on category 1?

Mrs PETRUSMA - As to housing throughout the state, we are at 98.5 per cent occupancy rate, so there are not many houses coming up at any time.

Mr DEAN - What requirement is on them to continually build new houses to facilitate and provide accommodation for those in that listing?

Mrs PETRUSMA - There is a requirement that 321 houses will be built across the state.

Mr DEAN - Of those new houses to be built, how many will Community Housing - CHL in the north of the state - have to build from the funding they receive, from the rent they receive, and from the Commonwealth subsidies they receive?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Community Housing Limited is to build 23 houses. They are required that 30 per cent of their stock go to category 1 clients.

Mr DEAN - Where a couple, or a person, living in a Housing Tasmania home reaches a certain salary, and they are going to be asked to move on or purchase the home. Is that a decision made by Community Housing or does it come back to Housing Tasmania?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That was under changes made to the Residential Tenancy Act. The income limits were to come into force on the Residential Tenancy Act but they do not come into force until 1 October this year. I think there is delay in the regulations, is that right?

Mr WHITE - Yes, the regulations are still being drafted. We anticipate them to be completed by the time it comes into being, which I think is 1 October this year. It comes under Consumer Affairs and we are working with them and we do not anticipate any hold-up. The impact of this was always 12 months after the legislation was enacted. People had 12 months, for example, with their incomes, to give them opportunities to find alternative accommodation or buy the home they are in.

Mr DEAN - My other question comes from the one that was asked by Robert Armstrong last week. Where you have a single person occupying a three bedroom home, or a couple occupying a three or four bedroom home, what is happening in that regard? Who will be making the decisions to have these people consider going into a two bedroom house or a single bedroom unit?

Mrs PETRUSMA - We have acknowledged that has been an issue but it has been an issue for a long time. It is mainly because a tenant moved in 30 years ago, the family has grown up and they are elderly and they are still in the home. We cannot really say to a senior person, 'we want you to leave right now,' but we can offer them a brand new unit, for example, that we have built. This is their home that we are talking about, so we do not want to unfairly dismiss them. We will

work with tenants to try to move them on. If they are somebody who has exceeded the income threshold in the future, when the Residential Tenancy Act comes into play, we will be able to use that to encourage tenants to move on if they need to.

In some areas of the state, for example on the islands, there might be only a three-bedroom property available and there is only one person on the waiting list that might require that house. We are not going to have a three-bedroom home sitting empty waiting for a family to shift in. We acknowledge that it is an issue and it is part of our strategic asset management plan to redevelop houses over the coming years to address that issue.

Mr DEAN - When that is in place, the decision will come back to HT? If the properties in my area, for instance, under Community Housing Limited, are in consultation with HT. Would that be the way that will operate and with Consumer Affairs? Is that the way it is envisaged it will work?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Community Housing organisations have their own management plans that are looking at how they manage the stock in their area, if they see an opportunity where they can rebuild. For example, they might have a large block like at Bridgewater where they could put two units instead of having one house with a huge backyard. They are looking at innovative ways to do rebuilds. If arson is committed in an area as well -

Mr DEAN - That was going to be my next question, the number of arsons on HT properties?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is a lot less this year.

Mr DEAN - Where houses are razed in an area under CHL's control are they required to rebuild the property? Or is there some insurance that HT carries, or do they cover that?

Mr WHITE - We manage that under the Tasmanian Risk Management Fund. Under the Better Housing Future's arrangements the providers pay a contribution to us, which would be analogous to a premium for your insurance, and they wear the losses up to \$20 000. In cases where there was a loss they can, for example, take the site off us and then rebuild or whatever.

Mr DEAN - The number of arsons?

Mrs PETRUSMA - In total, as at 31 March, there have been 24 incidents of arson at a loss of \$1.1 million. Last year, for the whole year, there were 49 incidents at a loss of \$2.23 million, so we are tracking a lot less this year.

Mr DEAN - That is good. Still a little way to go, but not long.

Mrs PETRUSMA - We have put a lot of initiatives in place, including that people can get \$10 000 reward if they leak information that leads to a conviction. We are fitting smoke detectors in Housing Tasmania properties, but also security devices for monitoring vacant properties if they are undergoing maintenance. We are also reducing the length of time a house might be vacant between one tenant shifting out and another tenant shifting in. We are also using fire retardant paint in some Housing Tasmania properties, and working with the police and other community organisations to reduce incidence of arson. So a lot of work is going into reduce it.

Mr DEAN - Are you working on the prisoner release program?

Mrs PETRUSMA - REO? Reintegration of Ex-Offenders?

Mr DEAN - With Housing Tasmania, how is that working with the prisoners being released having access to a home?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Through Housing Connect, from 1 July ex-offenders leaving prison will be able to access the full range of Housing Connect services, whether that is crisis accommodation, private rental assistance to access a home, to access a wide range of support services. They will have a lot more options.

Mr DEAN - They will not be able to access a home, will they, over and above those already on category 1, who have been there for a long time?

Mrs PETRUSMA - They will be assessed as being a priority applicant. We are going to be looking at how we prioritise people in the future.

Mr DEAN - But aren't all persons on category 1 priorities?

Mrs PETRUSMA - At the moment, if you are homeless you might not be classed as category 1. We are looking at how we will re-prioritised the system. For example, if you are a woman escaping domestic violence, you might be rated up only as category 4 because under the existing system there are quite a lot of points people had to acquire to be classed as category 1. So we want to re-look at how we do prioritise people in need.

Mr DEAN - I have a question on what you are doing in relation to domestic violence. How does Tasmania help and support women in particular? They are the main victims of domestic violence. Are they found a home very quickly or relocated if that is the necessary? What is Housing Tasmania's position on that?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is why we want to relook at how we do prioritise applicants. At the moment you might be escaping domestic violence, but under the existing system you might only come up as a category 4 because you might only get 10 points. We believe that is not good enough so we want to re-prioritise people leaving institutions; people who are escaping family violence; people whose health conditions might have changed - who, for example, might have had a leg amputation and their house is no longer accessible and they cannot use it.

Mr DEAN - We had one like that at Rokeby.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right. At the moment that might be your only category because you are classed as having a house and that does not get you to category 1.

Mr DEAN - That is all being worked on now? When do you hope to have your strategy in place?

Mrs PETRUSMA - On 15 June, actually.

Mr DEAN - Oh, I see, next week. Will there be a public announcement about that?

Mrs PETRUSMA - So you are hearing it early. Hot off the press.

Mr DEAN - Excellent.

Mr VALENTINE - A question with regard to service agreements with these housing organisations that Mr Dean has been talking about. Are they forced to take problem tenants?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Of the people they are required to take off the housing waiting list, 30 per cent is required to be category 1.

Mr VALENTINE - That is category 1, but problem tenants are not category 1 are they? I do not know how you rate them.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It depends what the tenants are a problem for. If they have not paid rent for years, and they have, for example, breached a lease in the past, they would not be on our waiting list at all. Or if they have committed arson or something because they are not entitled to another public house. So it depends upon the problem we are talking about.

Mr VALENTINE - This has come from Tania. It has been said non-government is more selective than government, and thus many worse cases fall back into government areas. I think she is wanting to explore whether that is true.

CHAIR - The Better Housing -

Mr VALENTINE - Are the Better Housing people more selective in the way they choose their tenants?

Mrs PETRUSMA - A big percentage is required to from the waiting list.

Mr WHITE - All tenants they allocate to must come from the shared waiting list. That is all those people who now come through Housing Connect and are eligible for social housing. At least 30 per cent of their allocations need to be category 1. While that is in the contract. I do not have the figures here, but I know they tend to exceed those figures. Part of that rationale, too, was in the nature of what we included in the Better Housing Futures portfolio areas of high social housing density and on the outskirts of the major urban areas in the broad. To try to drive an 80 per cent or 90 per cent allocation would not have been beneficial if it was around categories 1 and 2 in particular. Housing Tasmania across its portfolio still averages around 87 per cent of its allocations coming out of category 1 or category 2 clients.

Mr VALENTINE - What is being done with trying to reduce the need to build houses further out? Obviously that disadvantages people. They are least able to afford travel by public transport, not by car. If they do not have a car, they rely entirely on public transport. That is not always available, so it makes them even more disadvantaged. What is being done in that space to try to reduce that issue? Is infill housing something still looked at?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Very much so. Under our strategic asset management plan, we look at areas where there is a low requirement for houses which we may still have. We look at, 'Well, there's been nobody requiring a house in that area for a long time, but there is a requirement, for example, in inner Hobart', so we look at how we can infill in different areas. Over recent times we have revamped Cornelian Bay and Brisbane Street. We are looking at using the old Brent Street Primary School in Glenorchy as well.

CHAIR - I am not game to ask about that because it has been on the books for how long?

Mr WHITE - About 18 months.

CHAIR - No, no, how long since the school closed - seven years?

Mr WHITE - We were not responsible for the school, of course.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is Centacare, Wilson Homes. Centacare is the lead on that, and it will start developing soon.

Mr WHITE - I understand by the end of August. They have just got the development approval at Brent Street.

CHAIR - They are also doing something out at Claremont, at Austin's Ferry.

Mr WHITE - The former Abbotsfield Primary site. They have approval now at Brent Street. Under arrangements with us, they must put on their 25 affordable rental properties, 15 of which will be held for 30 years or more, and another 10 for at least 10 years, to house people from the social housing waiting list.

Mr VALENTINE - I was talking about not building houses further out because of the expense of travel and the like. But right out in the country towns, there may be housing needs. Are any of those addressed by the department in one-offs here and there, so people have an opportunity to rent?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Are you saying, so they can stay living in their own location?

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, so they can live in their area. If they are working, say, at Dunalley. Someone might be a deckhand - we might have two or three in that position.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I know we have houses on Flinders Island, King Island, and the west coast.

Mr WHITE - That is new supply since 2009, minister, by the local government area.

CHAIR - Sorrell?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes, Sorrell. Since 2009, 1 016 houses have been developed in areas such as Brighton, Central Highlands, Clarence, Glamorgan, Spring Bay, Glenorchy, Hobart, Huon Valley, New Norfolk, Kingborough, Sorell, Southern Midlands and the Tasman area.

The committee suspended from 4.15 p.m. to 4.32 p.m.

CHAIR - Are there any further questions?

Mr DEAN - These question are on Shelter Tasmania. The first question is on NPAs on homelessness. The Federal Government has announced its commitment of \$2.8 million each year for the next two years. Can the minister please detail where the matching state funding commitment is in the budget papers?

Mrs PETRUSMA - This Government has already given its commitment to meeting its share of the NPA. All housing services are under the one line item, so we do not provide a breakdown of all housing services. It is included under that because under NPA we offer what is called in-kind support for our supported accommodation facilities, then provide a small top-up. It is \$2.8 million worth of in-kind, as in services we already provide, with maybe a bit of a cash component. It is in there, but it is never recorded as a separate line item, and it has never been.

Mr DEAN - Budget paper 1, page 103, dot point 3, has \$220 million for unallocated infrastructure deferred until 2017-18 and 2018-19 forward Estimates. Given the serious shortfall in affordable housing and increasing demand, why not allocate a couple of million dollars for affordable homes now? Why is it better to save up that money and not allocate it?

Mrs PETRUSMA - There has historically always been an unallocated infrastructure fund, it has always been there, and in the last four years of the previous government as well. It is there to be allocated as needed. This year we will be delivering 630 affordable houses across the state. The unallocated infrastructure fund is a standard part of any budget paper.

Mr DEAN - Budget paper 1, page 117 refers to \$1.7 million for the redevelopment of the Somerset Primary School. What is the redevelopment plan and how will it contribute to more affordable housing for those on low incomes?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That development has the potential to deliver around 25 lots, predominantly as people purchasing house and land packages under our home share scheme. A couple of the lots will be suitable for small multi unit developments. Given Somerset's proximity to services we believe they will be ideal for older people and people living with disabilities. The lots may also be suitable for transfer to not-for-profit community housing organisations.

CHAIR - Time scale?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Is Somerset before the council for approval now?

Mr WHITE - The subdivision is planned to be completed this coming financial year. Some of the development will be most of that, but the land subdivision itself should be completed.

CHAIR - And will you build the houses?

Mr WHITE - Some.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Some, but otherwise not-for-profits or other organisations.

Mr DEAN - The next item was the \$6 million in major capital infrastructure allocated to the development of a youth supported accommodation facility in the north-west which is welcome. How have the ongoing costs, such as staffing, been calculated for future years and what amounts have been allocated in the forward Estimates?

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mrs PETRUSMA - This is a \$7.5 million facility. We already had \$1.5 million that we rolled over from this current financial year to the 2015-16 year and \$6 million extra has been given to us by the Treasurer to complete this facility. The management of this will be provided from within Housing Tasmania's allocation, but the first occupancy will not be until early 2017. At the moment we are still finalising the purchase of the land and approval processes. Also there will be five units that will be NDIS packages and the NDIS will be funding the cost of that five. Again, it is not a separate line item under Housing Services.

Mr DEAN - Question 5 has virtually been asked and answered in a previous answer.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right, so \$1.5 million is being spent this year. It was the extra \$6 million to complete the project that is shown across the forward Estimates.

Mr DEAN - What will be the process for tendering to build and operate the north-west youth supported accommodation facility? When will details about the tendering process for the north-west youth accommodation facility be made available?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Before the facility can be put out for tender, site acquisition must be completed and planning and building approvals obtained. Details on the tender process will be provided once those milestones are achieved and any tenders will be done in accordance with the Treasurer's instructions. We are in the process of securing a site at the moment. At that point we can appoint a design team and call for tenders. It is a bit early in the process to call for them.

CHAIR - It is not going to be built in the 2015-16 year?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, it never was planned. The \$1.5 million that we already have is allocated to purchase the land and do the initial development processes and then it can start to be built in the future. However, the Treasurer has indicated that if things progress well we will be able to bring some of those funds forward.

Mr DEAN - The Budget fact sheet on Housing Services has \$24.3 million for specialist homelessness services. Where is this listed in the budget papers? What is the breakdown in expenditure on the SHS?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is incorporated within the Housing Services output. The \$24.3 million includes \$10.7 million for crisis accommodation, which supports the 16 shelters statewide as well as \$13.6 million for Housing Connect.

CHAIR - I am looking at the minister's papers and it is obvious that, having given her the questions, she now has written answers for that. Could we have these written answers and we will send them to Shelter Tasmania and say here are the minister's answers.

Mrs PETRUSMA - If you table them as a question on notice we will provide answers. That might be preferred. I cannot table the whole lot of this, but we can provide -

Mr DEAN - It would save time, Chair.

Mrs PETRUSMA - If you provide them as questions on notice we will provide written answers.

CHAIR - Do you have it already?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I have some indication, but I am not sure so we will take a copy.

CHAIR - We can send it to you.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Send us a question on notice and we will provide a response.

Mr FINCH - Chair, before you close off on this. It might have been last year, but your predecessor, Cassy O'Connor and I believe, you, as well, gave the okay for Legislative Councillors to approach officers of Housing Tasmania in our communities. I want to check that still holds?

Mrs PETRUSMA – Yes, and we can provide those contact details to your office if you want us to. We believe it provides a lot quicker service because by the time you write to me and it goes through the system it takes a while. We prefer you deal directly with your local housing managers. We have a letter that Simon will organise to be sent to your email address.

Mrs ARMITAGE - They will not come back to us and say you need to go through the minister as happens in some departments?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No. It is a lot better service. It allows you to speak directly to the person who has been assigned in your closest location for you to work with directly.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Some departments do that, not necessarily Housing.

Mr DEAN - If that had not been the case, all you would have done is answered my questions for the last six months. I get them every other day.

Mr FINCH - Sometimes it is about emergency situations. We need quick answers on the situation.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right. Housing inquiries, like you rightly indicate, is one of the highest areas of constituent work and we acknowledge that. That is why we put in place this system to make it a lot quicker for members of parliament to get the answers they need.

Mr FINCH - We appreciate that cooperation.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Would all of you like us to send to your electorate office your local contact?

CHAIR - That would be good, thank you.

The performance information table 4.6, budget paper 2, volume 1, page 80 and this is from Ms Rattray, says, 2 465 applicants on the waiting list in 2012-13 with an average rate of 35 weeks. The department has a target of 41.5 weeks average wait and still working on improving this result. What has the transfer of Housing Tasmania structure, the NGO sector, had on waiting list?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The transfer of stock with the community housing organisations is they still have to take people off the Housing Tasmania wait list. Thirty per cent has to come from category 1 but their other 70 per cent still has to come from the Housing Tasmania wait list.

CHAIR - What is the current wait list?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The current wait list is the 2 759 at 31 March.

CHAIR - How long are people waiting on average to get into a house, number of weeks?

Mr WHITE - Category 1 applicants, the figures were 22 weeks; and for general applicants it is 41.3.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Output group 6 Children services system management

6.1 Children services system management -

Mr VALENTINE - Is children services system management the same as the Human Services system management arrangement, where everybody is coming together and trying to achieve these joined up services?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right. Children services incorporates child health and parenting services, child protection, Youth Justice, adoptions and permanency planning, as well as family violence counselling services. This is to have an overall management of all those areas.

Mr VALENTINE - Have you had it going for a year, or is it going to be the first year?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Children's services, as a management - this is its third year.

Mr VALENTINE - Okay, fair enough. The number of FTEs that you have in that little section, or large section, depending on the answer.

Mrs PETRUSMA - At the front, in regard to child protection, for example, I will indicate that child protection was quarantined from any FTE cuts; there have been no cuts to child protection services. In fact, under agreement with the unions we will be increasing by about two staff at child protection. At 28 March it was 484.6 workers in children and youth services. I must say that at that date there were 20 FTEs who were recruiting for.

Mr VALENTINE - The number who work in this children's services system management as such, or is that the total?

Mr KEMP - Can I get a clarification of the question, please, sorry.

Mr VALENTINE - Children's services systems management, the number of people working in that business unit that brings all the information together to disseminate. Is there a defined number of people there?

Mr KEMP - What we have is a program support unit which is headed up by a director. There are just under 40 FTEs at the commencement of this financial year, some of those being consolidated within corporate consolidation. That will be redesigned under the new children and youth services leadership structure, which will be then replaced by something called a program support unit, which will have a far more defined project leadership role into the future to deliver operational projects, whereas some of our previous composition included human resources for example, finance. They have been supported into the central body. They have been relocated as opposed to lost from ourselves.

Mr VALENTINE - I am interested in this performance information dashboard. Can you give me an understanding how they operate? Is this via a computer system of some sort? How does it operate?

Mr KEMP - Dashboard is very straightforward, a bit like a car dashboard, and it provides a very visual instrumentation of some of our core indicators, like children in care, number and notifications received. It migrates information from our data system and produces a one-page - I am going to use clumsy language here - idiot's guide that allows anyone at any time to look at real live data in terms of -

Mr VALENTINE - It is an executive information system.

Mr KEMP - It can be utilised all the way down through the process. People can access it through our portals that allow team leaders and child protection managers and other managers across the system to access where they are tracking in regard to where they said they would be versus where they actually are.

It uses a red, amber, green structure. So when you are in the green you are progressing well; when you are amber, you need to be paying a bit of attention; and when you are in the red, something needs to be paid attention to.

Mr VALENTINE - Is this part of the knowledge base system that exists, like a confluence system, or is this a separate bit of software?

Mr KEMP - That exceeds my understanding and knowledge of exactly what the platform is. It was built in-house in order to provide us with a purposeful instrumentation for our services.

Mr PERVAN - It is built on the back of software called FYI or click pin. It is also used for the same purpose on the health side of things. It generates a range of dashboards and is also being deployed across the THOs and gives you live access to that health data warehouse.

Mr VALENTINE - I think I may have heard of something in this order being built before I left. It might have been Brent Fi ??.... Can we now talk about Ashley?

CHAIR - Sorry, that will be output group 7. We are talking about system management. I have a question on this, minister. I applaud the fact the Government in all sorts of areas is trying to amalgamate back-of-hour services. It makes sense to do it, so many things are across government departments. It presents a difficulty in us looking at the Budget. When you have a program that goes across a number of departments, it is difficult for us to find. We had this discussion this morning with the Minister for Resources. His budget for forestry is \$1 million, but in actual fact there are millions of dollars here, there and everywhere in various departments -

State Growth and other departments. We asked him and he agreed that next year he will try to provide a document to us detailing all the tentacles in various departments in the budgets so we do not have to be trying to find things in almost every budget allocation. I would ask the same of you, minister, because I think the same thing is going to be happening with you, if that possible. Could you look at your total budget for the service, which might partly be in your own portfolio but also other bits elsewhere? Can you take that on board?

Output group 7 Children services

7.1 Children services -

Mrs ARMITAGE - On page 85, it says there were 112 children on the waiting list for support service for the Children and Young Persons Program. How long on average are these children waiting?

Mrs PETRUSMA - In 2013-14 there were 112 and the wait list as at 18 May is now 86. Even though a child might be on the wait list, it is not a static queue but rather each child is referred and triaged. If they are a priority case, they might jump up higher than other cases. As part of that, even if they are on the waiting list, they still receive a weekly phone call. There is also counselling and other support options offered, whether it is to the school or if we channel them through the Australian Childhood Foundation, for example, or through Child Care Services. There are a range of other services and there are also packages they can get under Medicare.

Mrs ARMITAGE - How long are they waiting until they see someone? What is the average - two weeks, six months, a year?

Mrs PETRUSMA - We will have to take that on notice.

Mrs ARMITAGE - I would like to know how long before they get into the system and start seeing someone as opposed to getting a phone call asking if they are okay and they say, 'Yes' and they are not.

CHAIR - I have to ask Mr Dean next because he has to ask his question on Ashley

Mr DEAN - It was Mr Valentine.

Mr VALENTINE - The number of children that are currently at Ashley? Do you have that at the moment?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The daily average for May is 8.4

Mr VALENTINE - What is the capacity?

Mrs PETRUSMA - 32 beds.

Mr VALENTINE - In respect to that one, what is the current attitude of the Government with regard to Ashley going forward?

Mrs PETRUSMA - In regards to Ashley, we committed back in May last year to conduct a review because at times in the past we have had 90 staff looking after as few as eight and also there has been a dramatic decrease. Back in 2009/10 there was 247 admissions, however there were only 56 young people in detention in 2013/14. Back in 2009, the average FTE was 92.3, but in 2013/14 it was 83.5, so we have had a decrease of 58 per cent in admissions but only 9.5 per cent decrease in staff. We have looked at that, and in conjunction with consultation with the union, we have been reducing staff. We need basically in staff ratio, one staff member to three children.

CHAIR - Are you going to reduce it to three staff?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No. One staff member to three so the complement still has to go down to 68 FTE which maintains the ratio.

CHAIR - It does not maintain the ratio of three to one if you only have nine young people there. Nine threes are 27.

Mr KEMP - There is an arrangement with the union where the staffing ratio was determined. It goes back over a good number of years now - at least 10 years - where it was three residents to one staff member. That has been maintained and we have not renegotiated that as a benchmark. What we have done is identified the fact that with the average number of young people in residence, we were over populated with our staffing population. This time last year it was 88. The target was to get it down to 65, with three in the kitchen, up for review as well. Whilst there is a notional 1-3 ratio ... at the moment what we have are eight staff on shift on each of those shifts in the morning and the afternoon, and four plus one at night time. That allows us to scale up to a maximum of 24 young people at the moment. The intention is that, as a result of the review, we will continue to ensure that, that ratio is maintained until such time as we can renegotiate it. We have not yet got to the position of breaking that nexus between the 1-3. I think the general consensus is that we can certainly move towards a more national agreement around the numbers of young people, per staff, that we have at the moment.

CHAIR - Minister, is there not a thought or an opportunity to think more broadly on this issue? This is a facility, with 32 beds. It could probably be put to better use.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Myself and the Attorney General, the Minister for Corrections, have done a walk through the facility. We believe in regards to Youth Justice we need to look at the whole continuing care in youth. Mr Kemp has done a wide body of work in regards to this and under the changes that are going to be made under Children and Youth Services, we are now going to have a youth stream which will not only focus on young people in Ashley, but also focus on young people in the community and youth at risk to stop children from going to Ashley in the first place. We are looking at youth justice as a whole. We also invested \$5.3 million in regard to different programs, such as youth justice prevention programs, as well aimed at youth at risk.

CHAIR - Minister, we have had those in the past and we still have some, I think. They appear to have been really good and evaluations said they are good, but we know that U-Turn has just closed. Although all along people have been saying how good the program was in deterring young people from further crime, the Attorney-General tells us that those stats were probably not correct and so U-Turn has closed. We seem to keep on reinventing the wheel. We know that we have to do something to try to prevent young people - if they are touched by the youth justice system, they are not re-offending or not progressing along that path. First of all, \$1 million a

person in Ashley annually is a lot of money that one would think might be better spent in other programs for the same young people. Secondly, there never seems to be an ongoing long-term, 'let's tackle this and keep on rolling it out', rather than 'let us do a pilot program' or we have a federally funded grants program which runs out and then the state does not pick up. You must be as tired of them as we are, and people in Youth Services must be as tired of it as we are, in constantly having to apply for grants and justify their existence. Are you prepared to tackle this on an ongoing, bigger basis? Is that what you are talking about?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is exactly right because the \$5.3 million, for example, that we have invested into the statewide network of youth justice services has been working. We have had the biggest decline of all the states over the last five years, of 46 per cent in the rate of young people aged 10 to 17 who are under Youth Justice supervision, so the programs have been working because we have had a major decline.

CHAIR - Either that or we are not capturing them.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Incorporated in that we have also had the youth magistrates come on board as well and we have the Save the Children Program, which is providing bail options, but also targeting these young people before they exit Ashley to give them other options.

CHAIR - Youth diversion.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes, diversion. There have been a whole range of activities that are leading to having a very low rate of detainees in Ashley. With the new youth stream that we will be bringing on board into Children and Youth Services that will start on 1 July, there is going to be even more work in that area as well.

CHAIR - You are looking at doing something about Ashley?

Mrs PETRUSMA - There will always be a need for a youth detention facility, but we will be relooking at the provision of those services in the future, definitely.

Mr VALENTINE - We ought to be very happy that there is a low number of people in Ashley. It is a great outcome. It is just the cost of that facility. Do we have a 10-year profile of what the population has been in Ashley?

Mr KEMP - We have it from 2010-11 and we can go back as many years as we like. We can provide that on notice. We have seen the average number from 2010-11.

Mrs PETRUSMA - In 2010-11, the daily average number of young people in youth justice detention was 25.8. For the 2014-15 year to date it is 10.3.

Mr VALENTINE - Significant - it is getting close to only 80 per cent or something full.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is a big reduction.

Mr VALENTINE - It is a big reduction so someone is doing something right or people simply are not committing crime.

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Mrs PETRUSMA - That is the daily average number of young people in Youth Justice, but for the distinct number of young people who are going to Youth Justice, it was 106 young people in 2010-11 versus only 46 young people year to March this year. It is more than half the number of young people going in to Ashley. Because we have had 46 young people still going to Ashley, it shows that we still need to have a youth detention facility of some sort.

CHAIR - We need something, yes.

Mr VALENTINE - It is just the number of FTEs it takes to keep it ticking over while there is no population - that is really what it comes down to, isn't it?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Unfortunately you cannot reduce the staff more than we put forward because there are safety issues and you have to have a base number of staff there because it is such a big facility, to have clear lines of sight and everything else. We are reducing it as far as we can, but based on the fact that we still have young people coming in, the staff numbers cannot reduce any more.

Mr VALENTINE - What about recidivism, repeat offenders? I know that it is not always easy out there for some kids and the family situations they are in and they may end up in there. What is the recidivism like for those who are in Ashley?

Mrs PETRUSMA - We will have to take that on notice.

Mr KEMP - I do not have the data with me, but I can say anecdotally that recidivism in terms of a return to Ashley, as opposed to recidivism in terms of Youth Justice generally, the recidivism rate for Ashley is significantly lower. Clearly we have some repeat offenders who are regular clients of ours. We know them through their return visits to Ashley on an annual basis. There will always be a certain population of young people who will continually push the system and regrettably end up in the adult system as well. As to the success rate for juvenile justice at a community level, we are making significant inroads into ensuring that young people are diverted out of crime and risk-taking behaviour. We have a very small but targeted team of community youth justice support workers who offer an extended level of supervision to these young people. Certainly our data would indicate that we are doing extremely well in that area.

Mr VALENTINE - Is that group you are talking about relatively new?

Mr KEMP - No, we have always had two divisions in Youth Justice. One is the detention arrangements and the other one is a community facility. Our community services and youth justice stream are a small cohort of people across the state, but they offer the supervision and home care arrangements in regard to young people who are not being detained or on remand.

Mr VALENTINE - Anything to keep them out of prison because once that happens they get into different networks.

CHAIR - I suppose that is my point, minister, I would prefer to be spending a larger amount of that Ashley money on those sorts of services.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right. That is why we initially made the election commitment of an extra \$5.3 million into diversion programs because we need to be able to lower the number. It is like a chicken and egg thing, but we wanted to invest more money upfront into diversion to stop

young people going into Ashley so that we can then relook at what we can do with youth detention in the facility in the future. We will always need a facility.

Mr DEAN - There was a committee inquiry into Ashley six or seven years ago, it would have been -

CHAIR - I think it might have been upper House, was it?

Mr DEAN - It was, Greg Hall was the Chair of it and I was on the committee and I cannot remember who else was on the committee. A number of recommendations came out of that. Most of those recommendations have been picked up and put into place, but it took a number of years for that to happen. One of the recommendations that was never picked up was the need for a halfway home. The committee found the only persons who should probably have been at Ashley at that time - and I am trying to think when it was now - were a young fellow who committed a rape on a lady at Cornelian Bay at knifepoint on the walking track and a young fellow in the Lindisfarne area who I think attempted murder on another young fellow. Those were probably the only two who really needed to be in there at that time, but there needed to be a halfway house. It would be another place for these youth to go into before going to Ashley, because Ashley, whether we like it or not, as such it is a kind of prison. Have you directed your attention to that in any way at all? Another facility?

Mrs PETRUSMA - What we are providing at the moment is funding to Save the Children to provide support to young people on bail because to build one house in one location at this time when young people come from all across the state - if they are on bail, to have an organisation that works with that young person to keep from re-offending and gets them into education, employment, and training opportunities, then that is a better outcome for the young person, no matter where they live. Supporting young people on bail has had great success because, of the 106 young people who have gone through the Save the Children program, 70 per cent have not committed a new offence nor returned to court while participating in this program over four years. In this cohort it is a good result.

Mr DEAN - The Attorney-General is currently looking at it and there is a review underway in relation to sentencing options, bail options, how they should be treated. Will youth be involved in that study as to whether there are other sentencing options available to them, maybe electronic devices?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes, we are looking at other options, including GPS tracking.

Mr KEMP - You are absolutely right. The notion of detention is to move away from it being a physical facility. We have always had a long legacy of it being a building. There are many ways in which people can be detained or retained within a certain environment. Every opportunity that is available to us, and the technology is moving fairly swiftly in that area. The minister referred earlier to the continuum of care. That created a significant body of research that was available to us as a department to work out the best way forward. We partnered with the University of Tasmania with that and had it proofed. We are well aware of the options and opportunities. What we want to do is create under the youth stream a far more targeted approach in how we go about doing that. There are no risk-free options. There are opportunities that allow us to divert children away from a facility but still have the same level of retaining capability as we do with our adult population.

Mr DEAN - The reason we do not have as many there now as we used to is because of the police diversionary programs, and those other diversionary programs, which are working. That can go much further. Of the youth that are currently at Ashley now, what time frames are they there for? What is their remand period? That was another concern of magistrates. At one stage, when they were being assessed, they had to be held at Ashley. There was no other place they could put them for their assessments to be done.

Mrs PETRUSMA - We might take this question on notice. There has been 46 young people there but 8.4 shows that they are not spending a vast amount of time there.

Mr DEAN - Also, the number of sentenced youth at Ashley this year? I suspect currently none because the two offenders, I think were an adjunct of Risdon?

Mr KEMP - We can provide that information.

Mr FINCH - Mr Dean mentioned Save the Children bail program and the Post Detention Transition program. I notice in the notes that additional funding for these initiatives was supported by \$360 000 from the Solicitors' Guarantee Fund. Is it usual for that fund to be called on?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That was provided by the previous Labour Government under Minister Wightman when he was Attorney-General. That had already been allocated to them so that is why we provided top-up funding. When we came into Government we acknowledged that some of that funding had gone to Unions Tasmania so she was going to put more robust processes around how that money was allocated. You will have to direct that question to her to see where that process is at.

Mr FINCH - You will not be able to draw on that fund for Neighbourhood Houses.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I do not think it will be able to be used for that process.

Mr VALENTINE - That fund is totally provided by government, not by solicitors?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is a question for the Attorney-General because it is not in my portfolio. I am not aware of how that fund is used. All I know is that Save the Children receive that allocation from the previous government.

Mr VALENTINE - I would have thought it was solicitors but it is interesting the minister has the capacity to be able to provide it.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I do not know what their rules are in regard to it now. I know there was a previous announcement of the previous government.

Mr VALENTINE - I do not know how we deal with that one, leave it open.

Mr FINCH - In some research we had done for the committee, there was on page 84, the performance information in respect of target performance measures. The response was, that in looking at that chart, it is very challenging to the service to meet those targets. Do you have a comment on that, minister?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Children and Youth Services is very challenging. We inherited a lot of challenges in the portfolio. Under Mr Kemp the staff are working toward totally changing what happens in Children and Youth Services. There has been an extensive review done, which has indicated we need to go to three core streams, including children and families, the youth stream, as well as the child health stream. There are a lot of challenges in the area but there are a number of other initiatives we are doing in regard to children, to change those outcomes.

Mr FINCH - Foster care households with five or more foster children. The numbers are there. What is the circumstance in respect of recruiting foster parents? A short time ago it was a dire situation. People were not offering themselves up to support the government or Tasmania in this way. How are we travelling?

Mrs PETRUSMA - In Child Protection, in out-of-home care, we are doing what is called the Out-Of-Home Care Reform. Phase one has already been completed and phase two is to work with foster carers and kinship carers. We acknowledge they are crucial to our child protection system. One of our election commitments was that we would work with the Foster Carer's Association of Tasmania more closely, to have them part of decision making. Part of the phase two reform is in regard to making sure we look after our foster and kinship carers a lot better. Another recruitment campaign is scheduled for about August this year to bring on board more foster carers. With the phase two reforms the intention is also to have on board a non-government provider to provide better support for these foster carers.

Mr FINCH - Would you try not to have foster parents with five children in the home? I am wondering whether that is good for the kids or not good for the kids.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Some of these might be sibling groups. We have parents who might have had six, seven, eight children. If it is a sibling group, ideally we prefer to keep those groups together. That can have an impact on those numbers. We would hate to give two to one and three to another foster carer, for example. That does impact on those statistics.

Mr FINCH - Thank you.

CHAIR - Grandparents raising grandchildren are in that group too?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Grandparents raising grandchildren, if they are a kinship carer with us. Some grandparents raising grandchildren are not classed as kinship carers. If they are classed as a kinship carer they will be included as part of that out-of-home care report.

Mr FINCH - Did you have something more for me, minister?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, the recruitment campaign but we talked about that.

Mrs ARMITAGE - I have something I wanted to ask regarding the people in Ashley. Over the last 12 months what would be the youngest age you had in Ashley? Also, what would be the average age?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I do not have that information here.

Mr KEMP - No, I do not have the actual age of the youngest person. We will take it on notice and give you the last 12 months, the age -

CHAIR - The youngest age and the average age.

Mrs ARMITAGE - You probably can answer this. Is 10 the youngest you take or is it nine?

Mr KEMP - Ten.

Mrs ARMITAGE - If you had a 10-year old and you had 15-year olds, would they be together or would they be segregated?

Mrs PETRUSMA - There are separate wings up there. There are different wings up there that are available to provide core separation, as well as boys from the girls. But I can indicate that when I was at Ashley a couple of months ago, they said to me then that the average age was between 14 to 18 years, that they have had for the past year. I do not think at the time that they had seen a 10-year old for quite a while. They said to me that the average age is 14 to 18.

Mrs ARMITAGE - If you did have younger people, regardless of the amount of staff that would be required to segregate them, they still would be segregated?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right. That is why we cannot go below that number we said before, because there is five different wings. So because there is five different wings sometimes we might need to put younger girls in one and younger boys in one, to mix it up. That is why we cannot give away that staffing requirement.

Mr FINCH - I am hoping this fits into this area. Last year in child protection services, the Government invested \$300 000 in short-term preventative care to support parents who experience unexpected emergencies. Was this initiative fully expended?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is \$100 000 per year for three years; \$50,000 of it goes to each of the different gateway services. So \$50 000 of it goes to Mission Australia; \$50 000 of it goes to Bapcare. They provide the short-term respite services, which works out to be about 400 beds a night. We acknowledge that some parents just reach a crisis point. Instead taking their children from them and putting them into Child Protection, we would rather give the parents emergency respite. Regardless of the crisis they are facing, they are then given a chance to get their lives back together instead of having their children put into the statutory system.

Mr FINCH - It is fully expended. Is it enough?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Well, it is more than they had in the past. It is a new initiative. We just wanted to see how it went. This is the first year, to be quite honest. It started in January, so we are just waiting to see where the results are going. From all accounts, it is very well received. It is a new initiative, which is something we wanted to see. We wanted to trial different and innovative ways of preventing children coming into care. Some children were coming into the care because of homelessness. So one of the initiatives we are doing through Housing Connect is to provide housing options so that we do not have to remove a child because the family is homeless. We are trying to look at different ways to keep families together.

Mr VALENTINE - Page 68, minister, talks about a number of initiatives under Children, Young People and Families Investment 365-day plan. How long have some of those been in place? I am looking at dot points 3 and 4, establishing an independent process to review child

death and serious injury, as well as vulnerable infants and baby strategy, and establishing a state-wide reviewable events unit, and an out-of-home care operations and carer support unit. How long have they been in the strategic view?

Mrs PETRUSMA - They were ones that I noticed in opposition were not available and were not in place. As a registered nurse myself who worked in a paediatric ward, I was very determined that we had to set in place an independent process to review child death and serious injury. At the moment we have a number of different bodies looking at it, but none of them actually has a memorandum of understanding to actually talk to each other. We wanted to try to join that process up.

The vulnerable infants and babies strategy, again we had babies who might fall between the gaps. For example, the Child Health and Parenting Service - CHaPS - might not be talking to the women's and children's service, which was not talking to the antenatal, perinatal et cetera. A whole big body of work has been done around the vulnerable infants and babies strategy, because we want to be able to identify potential risk factors earlier and then have the services wrapped around those children.

The reviewable events unit is totally new. I believe that will be kicking off in July.

Mr KEMP - We have had two reviewable events committees. The first supporting architecture for that unit is the reviewable events committee which is a multi-disciplinary committee from across the Department of Health and Human Services, with the sole responsibility for supporting the agency to learn from child death and serious injuries.

We will be putting in place a two-person team that will undertake the reviews. That will be done within existing resources and under the new configured leadership structure where the quality and improvement and workforce development team is moving under our program support team. We will take two people from that resource to provide dedicated reviewing capability for our agency, so that we can have a far greater line-of-sight of what we need to learn when things do not go as well as they should. Also, to celebrate the good stuff as well because we are doing some good stuff in this space, too.

CHAIR - Do you have many cases a year?

Mr KEMP Of?

CHAIR - Child death.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Well, non-accidental child death.

Mr KEMP - Eight to 10. In terms of child death as a result non-accidentally, no. Very few indeed.

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Coroner might have looked at it, a coroner might have looked at it but there was never anyone looking at it to see if there were trends and everything else, or what could have been done to prevent it. We wanted to look at this a lot earlier and look at what we could do to improve those statistics.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr VALENTINE - Sounds like a good initiative. Further down we are talking about family violence. I guess it is almost a whole-of-government approach to family violence?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Very much so.

Mr VALENTINE - That can also lead to fragmentation in some ways. Can you explain how all this comes together in a cohesive, strategic direction? Does your department have a major role in coordinating this or is it DPAC that takes the role?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Of the \$16 million they have identified in direct expenditure, about \$12.4 million comes from Human Services. That is Family Violence Counselling Support Services, providing shelters et cetera as well for women escaping domestic violence. Of course, you then have police and emergency management, victim safety response teams, justice response and education. It does need to be across government, but it is also joined together under Safe at Home, which is under the Attorney-General. Believe it or not, when it was set up, we were Australia's leading family violence response. The Premier has announced he wants to take the lead in once again making sure that Tasmania is the leading jurisdiction in how we handle family violence across government.

Mr VALENTINE - He has it in his purview, right in his sights?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Very much so.

Mr VALENTINE - The next premier coming along might not have it. I am thinking of your joined-up services in Human Services and your children's services. This has the capacity to fragment if it is not under a really strong framework.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Under Safe at Home, weekly meetings occur where all the different agencies come together to discuss cases and determine what are the best options. I think it might even be twice a week under Safe at Home. It is where, for example, the Family Violence Counselling Service and the police get together as well people from Justice and so to discuss a case and how it is tracking. It has joined up quite well, to be quite honest.

Mr VALENTINE - It is comforting to hear that each case has a lead person who pays attention to that.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right. I have been to one of those meetings; it was really good to see officers from the Family Violence Counselling Support Service, police, child protection, Justice and court liaison discussing cases. Each case is given a number; they discuss what is happening with that case - if it has progressed, whether it can be closed or whether it needs to stay open for further services and support. What I saw was one of the best examples of cross-government agencies working collaboratively together.

Mr VALENTINE - Actually working together?

Mrs PETRUSMA - They are and it is good.

Mr VALENTINE - It is good to hear and I hope it continues and I hope it does not fragment. It is a pretty important area.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mrs PETRUSMA - We want to make it even better still with the work that is going on there.

Mr DEAN - Fragmentation is right. There are so many different groups and so many areas considering this. There were heaps of meetings and a lot of talk fests and really nothing comes off too many meetings. Every now and again you get something out of a meeting, that is about all.

What measures, what strategies, are being developed to help in this regard with family violence and children involved in family violence? What are we doing? I become frustrated at times. If you look at family violence there has been an increase in this last year. I have some concerns with the way that is going. Is there going to be more education, is there going to be more work, what is going to happen?

Mrs PETRUSMA - As the Premier announced as part of the Budget, we are going to put in place a family violence action plan. It is a whole of government initiative but it also has a Cabinet subcommittee so it involves myself, as the Minister for Human Services, as well as being the Minister for Women, the Minister for Health, the Minister for Education, the Minister for Justice and the Premier. There are six ministers on this Cabinet subcommittee because the Premier is very serious about taking the lead to tackle this issue. As part of that, the Attorney-General last week released the review into the Safe at Home, which had 17 recommendations about how we can further improve family violence with the Safe at Home response, especially in Tasmania. That is now a part of a whole body of work and the Premier has said in August he will announce the results of the family violence action plan.

On 19 June, bringing together a whole range of stakeholders, especially from the community sector organisations, as to where they see the gaps are so that we can address the gaps in family violence. We acknowledge a whole range of work has to be done. We know education is crucial because it is our 12 to 24-year olds who in some cases are more accepting of family violence than other age groups because of sexualisation of young girls and pornography and a whole range of factors. Our Watch, which is an organisation that does a lot of research in this area, interviewed 3 000 young people and it showed their attitude to family violence was more accepting than older age groups. We know we have to start with young people to address community attitudes because it requires changing community attitudes.

Mr DEAN - The Commissioner of Police was saying the police are dealing with about 50 calls a day in relation to family violence.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right.

Mr DEAN - If you look at the figures, it identifies that about eight or nine people are charged or involved in a family argument and reported, or a family violence incidence.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Believe it or not, it comes under our next portfolio, Women. I have that information for the next one so I can give you the statistics.

CHAIR - We will wait.

Mr VALENTINE - Children's Services budget on page 73, \$108 million. Tania is wanting to have a breakdown of these areas.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Of what the spending was? It is the output, so it delivers all the services under Children - family violence, counselling services, adoptions and -

Mr VALENTINE - I think she wanted a breakdown rather than the one line item. So is that possible to provide at some point?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes.

Mr KEMP - In programs, is that what you are referring to?

Mr VALENTINE - I would say that would be sufficient. She is not here to ask so it is a bit hard.

Mr NICHOLSON - In a technical sense, the output would be 7.1 and that would be the amount. It would simply be Tony recognising the range of programs he delivers within his operating budget.

Mr VALENTINE - Can he do that?

Mr NICHOLSON - We can look at it, absolutely.

Mr VALENTINE - Thank you. The last thing is the George Town Child and Family Centre, which 'had a rocky start in the community', she says.

CHAIR - The child and family centre is not part of this portfolio.

Output group 8

Independent children's review service

8.1 Office of the Commissioner for Children

Mr FINCH - I went to the website and it looked good. It said there is a new website coming in April. Is it not there yet?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Commissioner for Children is an independent statutory body and that is why he does not have to appear before the committee. I know he is doing extensive work on developing a new website but when that is to be finalised, I will have to take that as a question on notice.

Mr FINCH - I was curious that the April date was given. The website looked pretty good anyway but for somebody like him wanting to project that good image for that independent body, it is very important these days that a website be as attractive and informative as it can be.

Mrs PETRUSMA - He is very committed to developing a website that allows easier access for young people, as well as adults, to access information. As part of one of the recommendations for the Advocacy for Children in Tasmania Committee that reported back in 2013, one of their recommendations was for the Commissioner for Children to develop a website that provided links to other services, as well as to undertake a mapping exercise, and that is part of that redevelopment.

Mr FINCH - Minister, I would like to give you the opportunity to tell us about the work of the Commissioner of Children as it is unfolding with the new Commissioner. There is a steady increase over the Estimates. Does this allow for inflation or is the Commissioner broadening the role?

Mrs PETRUSMA - As part of the Advocacy for Children in Tasmania, the committee's report was to do exactly that, to provide greater advocacy services for all Tasmanian children, own motion investigation, to broaden the powers of the Commissioner for Children and have greater independence in reporting arrangements. Also to undertake closer work with the Ombudsman in regard to individual complaints, and assist advocacy for children.

There is new legislation, a whole new act, being developed for the Commissioner for Children. It is a stand-alone act instead of the Commissioner being part of Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act, to recognise that we want to give the Commissioner for Children his own act, and a broader range of powers.

I know that he has been very busy going around the state. When I spoke to him last he had done over 20 different forums throughout the state with a range of children. He has also done a lot of work on child safe organisations. He had a forum for a couple of days recently to bring together Tasmanian organisations to make sure they have policies and procedures in place to be child safe, because a Working with Children's check is not going to be sufficient to make an organisation child safe. We want better policies and procedures in place in regard to that.

He has established advisory committees, including specific children and young people groups. He is also going to do some work on family violence

CHAIR - Number of FTEs?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Six.

Mr FINCH - Will there be an increase to represent this new work on new paths he is going down? Will there be an increase in the number of FTEs that he might have?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Commissioner for Children believes that for what he has to do in his work - a lot of it is doing forums across the state where he needs to be at himself and he organises the forums through schools, and he has a good committee now as well with representatives from a wide range of areas - there is not a requirement of extra staff. His budget allows him to get in outside resources, for example to develop the website. Plus he is doing advocacy at Ashley, so he goes out there usually one day a month as well.

CHAIR - Where is the commission housed?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is in Macquarie Street next to the NDIA, number 118.

CHAIR - I am just thinking this is not a huge budget, for six FTEs plus himself, plus accommodation and all kinds of stuff or does that not come out of that money?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I am very happy to see if he would like to come in and give a briefing to the Legislative Council, if you would like.

CHAIR - That would be really nice.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Would you prefer that? As I said, because he is not required to appear before the committee, it is hard for us to answer the questions, but I am very happy -

CHAIR - We often ask commissioners to come.

Mr FINCH - It sounds like interesting work and some good new interesting initiatives that he is doing.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Mr Morrissey is a very impressive Commissioner for Children. I have to say he has done a lot of work and he is fantastic with the children. When you see him in action he is brilliant, so I think you will be suitably impressed. I can organise that briefing for you.

CHAIR - Before we get off children altogether, I am really interested in the work that you are doing with the Youth Stream and so forth, so will you keep us up to date with that? It does not require changes to legislation, I presume?

Mrs PETRUSMA - There will be youth justice amendments going through later this year.

Mr KEMP - In regard to the youth at risk stream, no. That will be about is expanding our portfolio to get a greater reach children in trouble to try to break that nexus.

CHAIR - You are obviously trying to pull that together. When that happens it will be good if we could get that information.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It has been a gap that we have identified, and the community organisations have also identified it as a gap, so we are very excited about the new Youth Stream.

CHAIR - Thank you all very much.

DIVISION 7

(Department of Premier and Cabinet - Minister for Women)

Output group 6

Community, sport and recreation

6.5 Women's policy -

CHAIR - Minister, for the sake of *Hansard* will you please introduce this new Minister for Women item and introduce your support team.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I introduce Ms Rebecca Moles, the Manager of Community Sport and Recreation Tasmania Policy Branch, under DPAC.

CHAIR - Did you want to make a statement, before we ask you questions?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Women's portfolio over the past year has had significant outcomes, especially addressing the problem of family violence and improving gender equality. We know

that the extensive family violence right across Australia continues to be a challenge for both governments at national and state levels. To assist with addressing family violence in Tasmania, in May I launched Moving Ahead, Tasmania's second implementation plan in support of a second action plan of a national plan to reduce violence against women and their children.

The major priority for the Tasmanian plan is continuing to implement taking action, which is Tasmania's primary prevention strategy. The Tasmanian plan will see the implementation of initiatives aimed at improving perpetrator interventions, understanding the diverse experiences of violence and continuing to build the evidence base. This work complements the Tasmanian Government's commitment to the COAG family violence agenda priority areas which include a national domestic violence order scheme and a national domestic violence order information sharing system; national outcome standards for perpetrator interventions; technology misuse and online safety; and a national campaign on reducing violence against women and their children.

Tasmania also took part in the launch of the Daisy app, an initiative under the national plan which was jointly developed by all the state and territory governments. Daisy is an app which can be downloaded. It is a free app that lists specialist sexual assault and family violence services. It also connects women to specialist services in their state and local areas, so they can understand their rights and options. The Tasmanian Government is also -

CHAIR - Multilingual?

Ms MOLES - Not yet, it is not available in other languages.

Mrs PETRUSMA - There is going to be an upgrade, version 2, coming out in June, I believe.

Ms MOLES - It is in June, but it is not concentrating on other languages at this point in time.

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Tasmanian Government is continuing its three-year contribution to the Australian National Research Organisation for Women's Safety to improve the evidence base for policy development, services and support for women, and education about family violence. We provided funding of \$22 000 in the 2015-16 Budget to join Our Watch, which is a foundation to drive nationwide change in the culture, behaviours and attitudes that lead to violence against women.

We are also continuing to support and collaborate with White Ribbon, which is Australia's male-led national campaign to reduce violence against women. It is part of 16 days of activism to stop violence against women, which follows White Ribbon Day on 25 November. There were a number of events held to raise the issue of violence against women, and last year there was also the tripartisan motion in the House of Assembly to condemn all forms of violence against women and their children. So in regard to equality for women, we are committed to gender equality in Tasmania because we know if we do not have gender equality in this state, it is harder to tackle family violence.

A large body of work has been done to address gender equality, including a number of strategies under Tasmanian Women's Plan, which is a five-year plan to be responsive to the needs of women and girls. We released a progress report on the Tasmanian Women's Plan in November, and we also released the Women and Girls in Tasmania report in September last year.

This is a biennial publication that maps Tasmania's progress against the six priority areas, because it is the only way we are to be able to see if we are improving gender equality in this state.

Another action from the Tasmanian Women's Plan, which is coming out soon, is the development of a quality opportunity access and participation, which will be the Tasmanian Government's agenda mainstreaming policy and associated toolkit to assist Tasmanian government agencies in the development of policies and programmes precisely to the needs of women, men, and gender diverse people. This will be put forward for Cabinet approval within the next few weeks, and the new Women on Boards strategy will be released. It is in the final stages of being developed.

We also have the Tasmanian Honour Roll. We saw 26 new inductees. As well as these initiatives, we have the Tasmanian Women's Council, which is to provide input into issues of importance to women in Tasmania; especially to address inequality and increase women's participation in the civic, social and economic life within the community. As part of this work we are inviting people to take part in a family violence action plan process, which I spoke about earlier.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Minister, you seem to be doing a lot of work for the \$500 000 that you have been allocated so what would your FTEs be?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes, 4.2.

Mrs ARMITAGE -I notice that is part of the Women's Policy, and also incorporates the Tasmanian Women's Council which provides advice to Government; and implementation of the Tasmanian Women's Plan, and also administers the Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women. What would the costing be? How much of the \$500 000 would go towards administering the Tasmanian Women's Council and Plan and the Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Tasmanian Women's Council is women who volunteer to go on the Board. The breakdown of the subsidies is about \$1 200 is allocated for reimbursement of travel costs, catering, and occasional room hire. In regard to the Honour Roll of Women, the cost of the event held in March was \$14 176. We also sponsor events like International Women's Day with both the Hobart and Launceston event, which was \$7 400, as well as the North-West event.

We also run an International Women's Day art competition that requires sponsorship, which is \$1 000.

Mrs ARMITAGE - The Tasmanian Women's Plan, it was 2013 to 2018, and I see the objective was equality for all women and girls and their full participation in the economic, social, political and community life of Tasmania, and it had six outcomes. How is that tracking, seeing as it is half way through?

Mrs PETRUSMA - A key achievement of that plan is the biennial Women and Girls in Tasmania report, so that is our main way of providing the evidence base for how that plan is tracking in regard to policy and services. The other key actions under the Tasmanian Women's Plan is the Women on Boards strategy and the Gender Mainstreaming Policy which is going to be released soon.

Mrs ARMITAGE - There were six, Economic Security and Financial Independence, Education and Training, Health and Wellbeing, Housing and Homelessness, Leadership and Community Participation, and Safety and Justice.

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Women and Girls in Tasmanian Report, we can provide a copy of that. Some members of the Legislative Council came to a launch last year in September and we can provide a copy of the report. It has a lot of information which shows how women are tracking in a wide range of areas. Some of that snapshot is that Tasmanian women accounted for only 1.5 per cent of single parents, were more likely to be living alone once over the age of 55, and were likely to live longer than men.

While female workers in Tasmania earned \$116.80 less than males each week, Tasmania has the lowest gender pay equity gap in the nation. Females were 55.6 per cent of public housing tenants and outnumbered males in all age groups over 20 years, and girls had higher retention rates than boys for years 10 through to 12. Women also had a higher rate of post-graduate completion than males.

In 2014 women comprised 22.2 per cent of the Tasmanian Cabinet and 29.8 per cent of local government councillors. Now with the election of the new member for Bass we will have 40 per cent of women in the Lower House to match the 40 per cent in the Legislative Council.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Can you also give us a breakdown of how much of the \$500 000 or so is allocated per year, between now and 2018-19, has been spent on the policy regarding family violence.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Family violence is across Government.

Mrs ARMITAGE - The Women's policy that you have \$500 000 for, how much of that \$500 000 is going to family violence?

Mrs PETRUSMA - In regard to staffing-related expenses it is \$437 000. It goes to staffing for the 4.2 FTEs but there is a wide range of programs we run under Women, for example -

Mrs ARMITAGE - That is just staffing, \$437 000? What band would they be on? The 4.2 staff for \$437 000?

Mr VALENTINE - With on-costs as well.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Yes, I know, but I am still interested to know.

Ms MOLES - There is a mixture of bands; band 6, policy analyst; band 7, physical liaison officer; and a band 8, and a manager.

Mrs ARMITAGE - That is interesting to know, thank you. Is the development of the state Government's family violence action plan being funded with that money? Is that just for the staff, there is nothing else coming out of that?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, that is right. Safe at Home comes under the Attorney-General so that review of the Safe at Home reports, and the 17 recommendations of that is largely driving the family violence action plan.

The Attorney-General is responsible for the criminal justice response to family violence. My focus is more on primary prevention, initiatives that could change community attitudes. For example, that is why we have joined our watch to putting out Tasmania's response to the second action plan.

Mrs ARMITAGE - What were the 4.2 staff? You said there were quite a few initiatives. What type of initiatives would they be doing?

Mr DEAN - You were going to provide those statistics I asked before. I think they fit in with this one?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The family violence statistics? The rate?

Mr DEAN - I think it works in with what Rosemary is asking.

CHAIR - It was your opening statement.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Do you want me to answer that question? Which question?

CHAIR - Mrs Armitage was first.

Mrs ARMITAGE - You said there were a lot of initiatives in your opening statement but I think it is relevant to have the answers with the question so that if people are looking, they can see the question and not have to trawl back to see something else.

Mrs PETRUSMA - The principal liaison officer convenes the Tasmanian Women's Council because they do the Tasmanian Women's Plans. She meets regularly with key stakeholder organisations. The position maintains a dedicated women's email distribution list and a dedicated phone number and email address for members of the public and the women's services sector have a key point in Community Sport and Recreation Tasmania. They also run the program such as the Tasmania Honour Roll of Women, the Women's Register which is a register for women to put their names and experience against if they want to look at getting Board positions in Government.

Also the International Women's Day events, the Women on Boards strategy, so there are quite a vast range of policies.

Mrs ARMITAGE - A lot of this is to do with family violence.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Not all of it, only the primary prevention.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Nothing you have said yet is to do with it.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is not just all on family violence.

Mrs ARMITAGE - There is very little but I was thinking that under 4.2 there would be more initiatives to do with family violence.

Mrs PETRUSMA - On the primary prevention, they have done a lot of work on the response to the national action plan.

Mrs ARMITAGE - That was what I was wondering - what initiatives? The ones you have just mentioned were not really to do with family violence.

Ms MOLES - Family violence in part of the 4.2 FTEs. We also worked with the national plan to reduce violence against women and their children. We worked on the COAG national plan but also with the Family Violence Action Plan. A task force has been developed which has staff from across all agencies and the Department of Justice, Department of Education and Department of Health, and policy division staff within DPAC, and also staff from the CSIT division.

CHAIR - One of you would attend that?

Ms MOLES - Yes, I am a member of that. There are also other members of the team who would be involved in doing that work. That is led by the policy division and DPAC. The task force would be people coming into the department for a couple of days a week to do the work.

Mrs ARMITAGE - Thank you.

Mr DEAN - The statistics that you put off because I asked them in the wrong area?

Mrs PETRUSMA - At 9 June, there were 2 118 family violence incidents and 1 509 arguments, making a total of 3 627. In 2013-14, the total for the whole year was 4 071 - incidents were 2 380 and arguments were 1 691. At the end of March, we were tracking at 3 300.

Mr DEAN - I will ask my question again. With family violence, if you look across the years, it is increasing again, and it increased last year. What do you propose to do differently, or more of, to try to get the message through that this is not acceptable behaviour? I have mentioned one or two things already. I have mentioned the violent offenders register. I have mentioned that we ought to be making family violence a crime. We have to be lifting the image of family violence as assault in that area to get the message through very strongly that this is not an acceptable position and we are not going to tolerate it any longer. What are we actually doing? I know we are talking a lot and I know we are having a lot of meetings, minister.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Last week in Parliament, the Premier announced the family violence action plan which he said was to be a subcommittee of Cabinet. Six ministers will be involved on that subcommittee. That is to make sure it is across-government because we acknowledged that one department alone cannot tackle this issue. The police cannot tackle it in isolation because we need to Education needs to be involved and Health, et cetera. That is why, between now and August, we are going to come up with a family violence action plan involving wide consultation with a whole range of stakeholders. The first consultation with stakeholders from a wide range of NGOs will take place on 19 June; they will provide the Government with advice as to how to tackle family violence.

We know the major change needs to come from cultural and community change. It is to change attitudes, because it is the attitudes that need changing.

Mr DEAN - I wonder how far your group - this committee or the structure you have set up - is going to go because New South Wales has already addressed the situation. They are doing

almost the identical thing, only they have just about finished. I think they are about to produce their report.

Mrs PETRUSMA - New South Wales, did you say?

Mr DEAN - In relation to family violence. They picked up on the fact that family violence should become a crime. They have released some of their findings, one of which is that they needed a violence offender's register and they were considering bringing that in as well. Those are two of the recommendations they are going to address. They have moved down that path, so I think the committee you are talking about would quite obviously look at that. I am surprised you do not know a lot about it. It has been on radio; it has been on the ABC.

Mrs PETRUSMA - A lot of work has been done in Victoria. They have a royal commission going, and they are doing a whole body of work, because Queensland -

Mr DEAN - I am confident it is New South Wales.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Queensland has just finished their task force and Victoria has a royal commission. I have heard a lot about that from communication with ministerial colleagues in those two states. I was not aware of the New South Wales action.

Mr DEAN - I am confident it was New South Wales.

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Attorney-General through her colleagues Australia-wide is doing a vast body of work on the criminal justice response. As well, the Prime Minister is driving the whole COAG agenda too; he has three priority areas under COAG - the national domestic violence order scheme, the national outcomes stance for perpetrator interventions and technology misuse and online safety. Commissioner Hine represents Tasmania on that panel. The Prime Minister has announced a \$30 million campaign to reduce family violence as well, and all states will be involved in that.

Mr DEAN - The Honour Roll of Women is a great thing. I was a part of that and I nominated a person, and I was very proud that person was entered onto the Honour Roll of Women earlier this year. I was grateful for that. At that function it was raised with me that we could in fact be downgrading its significance in some way, because of the large numbers that you are having each year. It was -

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is only a biannual event.

Mr DEAN - It is every two years. Even so, what will we do if we have too many coming in? I think it takes away from some of those people who are going. I am not saying they are not entitled to be there - they are - but what I am saying is that if you have too many -

CHAIR - It is not quite as special.

Mr DEAN - Yes, it is not as special. That is a good way of putting it. That was said to me; was raised by a number of women sitting at my table. It is not quite as special if, every two years, large numbers of names are put onto the Honour Roll of Women.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I have had other feedback that all these people have nominated who they saw as worthy recipients and there were not enough. I appreciate that we are never going to keep people happy.

The whole purpose of the Honour Roll for Women is to acknowledge our unsung heroes and champions. If we are going to get true gender equality in this state, it is not about having the most exceptional women; it is about women who have been champions in different areas. For example, one woman, who could not come to the event, is a herpetologist. I found out she has done all this work in regard to frogs, but most people have never ever heard of it. The roll is a way of telling these women's unsung, untold stories - they have usually been the lifeblood of their community. They might not be able to get an OAM or an AM, but this is a way to acknowledge their great work which has never been acknowledged publicly before. There are a lot of exceptional women out there but we never publicly hear their stories. The publication of the book goes a long way to telling these stories. I had never heard of a lot of these women - they have done amazing things, but they have kept their lights under a bushel. We have a lot more applications and the panel found it hard to select 26.

Mr DEAN - I do not want to see a downgrading of the value of it.

Mr FINCH - I would imagine, as the years go by, that those who are obvious choices are brought in to the Honour Roll of Women, then it will become a little bit more that you will not have quite so many who need to go on the roll.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is exactly right. Many of them are posthumous as well. They are people who did amazing things back in World War II or earlier, and we are acknowledging their stories for the first time. We are catching up with those women who have not been acknowledged in the past as well.

Ms RATTRAY - My apologies for not being here to hear all of it. I will have a lot of reading to do, minister. Your Government has reduced the number of board appointments since you came to Government. I am interested to know how many of those board appointments are women who have lost out on having a place on boards? Have you done any numbers on that?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Our Women on Boards Strategy, when it comes out, is aimed at increasing the number of women on boards.

Ms RATTRAY - I know, but we have had a significant reduction in board numbers through the last 18 months.

Mrs PETRUSMA - As to the actual numbers that have reduced since we have been in Government, we do not have the data. It has been sitting at 35 per cent for quite a few years. In 2013-14 it dropped down to 34 per cent so our target is to get it back up to 35 per cent and keep it going.

Ms RATTRAY - Of the number of people who have lost board positions over the last 12 months, how many have been women?

Mrs PETRUSMA - We will have to take that as a question on notice. Our aim is to get equality of women on boards. It is a Treasury question.

Ms RATTRAY - Wouldn't this part of the Women's portfolio be looking at that?

CHAIR - They obviously haven't thought of it yet. You have brought it to their attention. It is a good thing.

Mrs PETRUSMA - The whole aim of the Women on Boards Strategy is to build it up.

Ms RATTRAY - I know it is to build it up but because we have had the reduction in the number of people who serve on boards, as a policy of your Government, to try to make some cost savings, I was interested to know how many women had lost their position through that.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I will have to take that as a question on notice.

Ms RATTRAY - No, here comes the answer. Usually they fly.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It does not state the reduction. It shows that the total number of board members is 960, of whom 324 are women and 636 are men. That is of current boards but it does not show the reduction since we have been in Government. We would have to get the data as at 31 March last year.

Ms RATTRAY - I would be interested to know, given that we have this policy to increase the numbers, how many of the women have lost their positions.

Mrs PETRUSMA - We will have to get that information.

Ms RATTRAY - Thank you, minister.

Mr VALENTINE - One question with regard to NGOs that focus on women - the Women's Legal Service, the Women's Health Service, Hobart Women's Shelter and a couple of others. Do you have much interaction with those services and do you advocate for them in terms of getting government funding to help support them? Could you give us a bit of an idea?

Mrs PETRUSMA - In regards to the Hobart Women's Legal Service, because they are an organisation that comes under the Attorney-General, she has been advocating for their funding. In regards to the Hobart Women's Legal Service, I know that the Attorney-General, along with her ministerial colleagues all around Australia in the other states and territories, lobbied the federal Attorney-General to get increased funding for the Hobart Women's Legal Service. If the organisation comes under a specific minister, the minister himself or herself responds to the issues under that portfolio.

Mr VALENTINE - I understand that. I am throwing the idea out there that is might not be a bad idea for the Minister for Women to have some interaction.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I have been and visited a lot of women's organisations, whether it has been Soroptimist International, the Hobart Women's Legal Service, SHE, Hobart Women's Shelter, Karinya up north - I have been to many different organisations. The Tasmanian Women's Council also represents a number of different organisations, including the women from CALD communities - for example those involved in the Multicultural Council and disabilities. We have been doing a wide range of consultation with a wide group of areas but if they have direct concerns, I refer that to the relevant portfolio minister.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

CHAIR - Any further questions? I think we are done, minister.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Thank you very much. I really appreciated the opportunity to be here this afternoon. Thank you for your questions.

CHAIR - Thank you, and we thank your staff for their patience and cooperation.

Ms RATTRAY - And the early information. Well done.

CHAIR - Thank you, Hansard.

The committee adjourned at 6.16 p.m.