



First Session of the Fifty-Second Parliament

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES B

Estimates of the

HON GUY BARNETT MP

**Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Corrections and
Rehabilitation**

Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs

Members of Committee:

Hon Rosemary Armitage MLC (Chair)

Hon Luke Edmunds MLC

Hon Mike Gaffney MLC

Hon Casey Hiscutt MLC

Hon Meg Webb MLC

Table of Contents

Reports

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation

<i>Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2026, Division 6, Department of Justice</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2026, Division 2, Integrity Commission.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2026, Division 7, Office of the Ombudsman.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2026, Division 5, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.....</i>	<i>8</i>

Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs

<i>Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2026, Division 6, Department of Justice</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2026, Division 11, Department of State Growth.....</i>	<i>10</i>

Appendices

Appendix A

<i>Order of the Council establishing the Committee.....</i>	<i>11</i>
---	-----------

Appendix B

<i>Minutes.....</i>	<i>13</i>
---------------------	-----------

Appendix C

Additional Information

<i>Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation.....</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>Integrity Commission</i>	<i>108</i>
<i>The Office of the Ombudsman</i>	<i>110</i>
<i>Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs</i>	<i>112</i>

Appendix D

<i>Transcript.....</i>	<i>114</i>
------------------------	------------



REPORT

ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE, CORRECTIONS AND REHABILITATION

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2026 DIVISION 6 DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Legislative Council Estimates Committee B examined the Estimates of the Department of Justice, the Hon Guy Barnett MP on Monday, 1 June 2026.

The Committee examined the Estimates contained in the following Output Groups and makes the following recommendations:

Output Group 1 – Administration of Justice	
1.1 Supreme Court Services	FURTHER DEBATE 1. Please provide the implementation plan for the Justice Connect project, including what has been spent in each year to date since commencement of the project, and what is budgeted to be spent in each year going forward, through to completion. Please also provide detail on what has caused delays to the project to date. (MW)
1.2 Magisterial Court Services	RECOMMENDED
1.3 Births, Deaths and Marriages	RECOMMENDED
1.4 Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal	RECOMMENDED

1.5 Tasmania Legal Aid	RECOMMENDED
1.6 Legal Assistance	RECOMMENDED
1.7 Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner	RECOMMENDED
1.8 Elections and Referendums	RECOMMENDED
1.9 Tasmanian Industrial Commission	RECOMMENDED
1.10 Office of the Independent Regulator	RECOMMENDED
1.11 Office of the Implementation Monitor	RECOMMENDED
1.15 Commission for Children and Young People	RECOMMENDED
Output Group 2 – Legal Services	
2.1 Crown Law	RECOMMENDED
2.2 Legislation Development and Review	RECOMMENDED
Output Group 3 – Corrections, Rehabilitation and Enforcement	
3.1 Prison Services	RECOMMENDED

3.2 Community Services	Corrective	RECOMMENDED
3.3 Enforcement of Penalties	Monetary	RECOMMENDED
Output Group 5 – Justice Support Services		
5.1 Victims Support		RECOMMENDED
5.2 Victims of Crime Assistance and Redress		RECOMMENDED
5.3 Office of the Public Guardian		RECOMMENDED
5.4 Safe at Home		RECOMMENDED
Capital Investment Program		RECOMMENDED

The Committee further recommends the report, together with the minutes of proceedings, additional information and transcript be tabled.



HON ROSEMARY ARMITAGE MLC
Chair



REPORT

ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE, CORRECTIONS AND REHABILITATION

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2026 DIVISION 2 INTEGRITY COMMISSION

Legislative Council Estimates Committee B examined the Estimates of the Integrity Commission, the Hon Guy Barnett MP on Monday, 1 June 2026.

The Committee examined the Estimates contained in the following Output Group and makes the following recommendation:

Output Group 1 – Integrity Commission	
1.1 Integrity Commission	FURTHER DEBATE 1. Please provide the number of audits the Integrity Commission has conducted of Tas Police investigations into complaints, for each of the years 2023-24, 2024-25, 2025-26 to date. (MW)

The Committee further recommends the report, together with the minutes of proceedings, additional information and transcript be tabled.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Rosemary Armitage'.

HON ROSEMARY ARMITAGE MLC
Chair



REPORT

ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE, CORRECTIONS AND REHABILITATION

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2026 DIVISION 7 THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

Legislative Council Estimates Committee B examined the Estimates of the Office of the Ombudsman, the Hon Guy Barnett MP on Monday, 1 June 2026.

The Committee examined the Estimates contained in the following Output Group and makes the following recommendation:

Output Group 1 – The Office of the Ombudsman	
1.1 Decisions on Complaints Referred to the Ombudsman and Health Complaints Commissioner and Right to Information	RECOMMENDED

The Committee further recommends the report, together with the minutes of proceedings, additional information and transcript be tabled.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Rosemary Armitage".

HON ROSEMARY ARMITAGE MLC
Chair



REPORT

ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE, CORRECTIONS AND REHABILITATION

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2026 DIVISION 5 THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS

Legislative Council Estimates Committee B examined the Estimates of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Hon Guy Barnett MP on Monday, 1 June 2026.

The Committee examined the Estimates contained in the following Output Group and makes the following recommendation:

Output Group 1 – The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions	
1.1 The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions	RECOMMENDED

The Committee further recommends the report, together with the minutes of proceedings, additional information and transcript be tabled.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Rosemary Armitage".

HON ROSEMARY ARMITAGE MLC
Chair



REPORT

MINISTER FOR SMALL BUSINESS, TRADE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2026

DIVISION 6

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Legislative Council Estimates Committee B examined the Estimates of the Department of Justice, the Hon Guy Barnett MP on Monday, 1 June 2026.

The Committee examined the Estimates contained in the following Output Group and makes the following recommendations:

Output Group 4 – Regulatory and Other Services	
4.1 WorkSafe Tasmania	FURTHER DEBATE 1. Provide total number of inspections of workplaces by region – north, northwest and south – in the last financial year. (CH)
4.3 Consumer, Building and Occupational Services	RECOMMENDED

The Committee further recommends the report, together with the minutes of proceedings, additional information and transcript be tabled.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Rosemary Armitage".

HON ROSEMARY ARMITAGE MLC
Chair



REPORT

MINISTER FOR SMALL BUSINESS, TRADE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

**APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2026
DIVISION 11
DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH**

Legislative Council Estimates Committee B examined the Estimates of the Department of State Growth, the Hon Guy Barnett MP on Monday, 1 June 2026.

The Committee examined the Estimates contained in the following Output Group and makes the following recommendation:

Output Group 1 – Industry and Business Growth	
1.3 Trade	RECOMMENDED

The Committee further recommends the report, together with the minutes of proceedings and transcript be tabled.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Rosemary Armitage'.

HON ROSEMARY ARMITAGE MLC
Chair



OFFICE OF THE CLERK

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19 May 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR:

The Clerk-Assistant & Usher of the Black Rod
Legislative Council

The Legislative Council today resolved: —

That the Legislative Council establish two Estimates Committees each consisting of five members.

And that —

Ms Forrest,
Ms Glade-Wright,
Ms Lovell,
Ms O'Connor, and
Ms Thomas
be of Committee A

and

Ms Armitage,
Mr Edmunds,
Mr Gaffney,
Mr Hiscutt, and
Ms Webb
be of Committee B

That the Estimates Committees report upon the proposed expenditures contained in the Appropriation Bills (No. 1 and No. 2) 2026 and budget papers by no later than Friday, 19 June 2026.

And that the schedule emailed to Members on Monday, 18 May 2026 be adopted as the Estimates Committees timetable.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Vickers'.

C.L. VICKERS
Clerk of the Legislative Council

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL – ESTIMATES COMMITTEES SCHEDULE 2026

Monday 1 June 2026			
Commencing at 9.00 am	Committee A (Chamber)	Hon Eric Abetz MP Hon Madeleine Ogilvie MP	Treasurer Minister for Macquarie Point Urban Renewal Minister for Community and Multicultural Affairs
Commencing at 9.00 am	Committee B (Committee Room No. 2)	Hon Guy Barnett MP Hon Gavin Pearce MP	Attorney-General Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister for Primary Industries and Water Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Tuesday 2 June 2026			
Commencing at 9.00 am	Committee A (Chamber)	Hon Nick Duigan MLC Hon Madeleine Ogilvie MP	Minister for Energy and Renewables Minister for Sport Minister for Parks Minster for Arts and Heritage Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy Minister for Environment
Commencing at 9.00 am	Committee B (Committee Room No. 2)	Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP Hon Jane Howlett MP	Premier Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence Minister for Racing
Wednesday 3 June 2026			
Commencing at 9.00 am	Committee A (Chamber)	Hon Bridget Archer MP	Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing Minister for Ageing Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Commencing at 9.00 am	Committee B (Committee Room No. 2)	Hon Felix Ellis MP	Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management Minister for Skills and Jobs Minister for Business, Industry and Resources
Thursday 4 June 2026			
Commencing at 9.00 am	Committee A (Chamber)	Hon Kerry Vincent MLC	Minister for Infrastructure and Transport Minister for Housing and Planning Minister for Local Government
Commencing at 9.00 am	Committee B (Committee Room No. 2)	Hon Jo Palmer MLC	Minister for Education Minister for Children and Youth Minister for Disability Services

ESTIMATES B

MINUTES

TUESDAY 26 MAY 2026

The Committee met at 9:30 am in Committee Room 2, Parliament House, Hobart.

Present

Ms Armitage (Chair)

Mr Gaffney

Mr Hiscutt

Ms Webb

Apologies

Mr Edmunds

In Attendance

Ms Julie Thompson (Co-Secretary)

Mr James Reynolds (Co-Secretary)

Order of the Council

The Order of the Council establishing the Committee dated 19 May 2026 was noted.

Election of Deputy Chair

The *Chair* called for nominations for Deputy Chair. Ms Webb nominated Mr Gaffney. Mr Gaffney being the only nominee, the *Chair* declared Mr Gaffney to be duly elected Deputy Chair.

Portfolio Order and Meeting Times

The Committee **AGREED** that the order of business and approximate times for each portfolio, be as follows:

Monday 1 June 2026

Hon Guy Barnett MP	
9:00 am – 11:00 am	Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation
11:00 am – 11:15 am	Break
11:15 am – 1:15 pm	Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation (cont)
1:15 pm – 2:00 pm	Lunch
2:00 pm – 2:30 pm	Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Correction Rehabilitation (cont)
2:30 pm – 3:00 pm	<i>Integrity Commission</i>
3:00 pm – 3:30 pm	<i>Office of the Ombudsman</i>
3:30 pm – 4:00 pm	<i>Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions</i>
4:00 pm – 4:15 pm	Break
4:15 pm – 5:15 pm	Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs
5:15 pm – 6:15 pm	Dinner

Monday 1 June 2026 continued.

Hon Gavin Pearce MP	
6:15 pm – 7:45 pm	Minister for Primary Industries and Water
7:45 pm – 8:15 pm	<i>Inland Fisheries</i>
8:15 pm – 8:45 pm	Minister for Veterans' Affairs

Tuesday 2 June 2026

Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP	
9:00 am – 10:30 am	Premier
10:30 am – 10:45 am	Break
10:45 am – 1:15 pm	Premier (cont) including Brand Tasmania
1:15 pm – 2:15 pm	Lunch
Hon Jane Howlett MP	
2:15 pm – 3:15 pm	Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events including Tourism Tasmania
3:15 pm – 4:15 pm	Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence
4:15 pm – 4:30 pm	Break
4:30 pm – 6:00 pm	Minister for Racing

Wednesday 3 June 2026

Hon Felix Ellis MP	
9:00 am – 11:00 am	Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management
11:00 am – 11:15 am	Break
11:15 am – 12:15 pm	Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management (cont)
12:15 pm – 1:00 pm	<i>State Fire Commission</i>
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	Lunch
2:00 pm – 3:30 pm	<i>TasTAFE</i>
3:30 pm – 4:30 pm	Minister for Skills and Job
4:30 pm – 4:45 pm	Break
4:45 pm – 5:45 pm	Minister for Business, Industry and Resources

Thursday 4 June 2026

Hon Jo Palmer MLC	
9:00 am – 11:00 am	Minister for Education
11:00 am – 11:15 am	Break
11:15 am – 12:15 pm	Minister for Education (cont)
12:15 pm – 1:15 pm	Minister for Children and Youth
1:15 pm – 2:15 pm	Lunch
2:15 pm – 4:15 pm	Minister for Children and Youth (cont)
4:15 pm – 4:30 pm	Break
4:30 pm – 5:30 pm	Minister for Children and Youth (cont)
5:30 pm – 6:30 pm	Minister for Disability Services

Allocation of Outputs

The Committee allocated areas of responsibility to commence questioning on outputs in each portfolio.

Other Business

Report Deliberations

The Committee **AGREED** to meet on 17 June 2026 at 10:00 am for final report deliberations.

Next Meeting

Monday, 1 June 2026 at 8:45 am in Committee Room 3, Parliament House, Hobart.

Adjournment

The Committee adjourned at 9:50 am.

DATE 01/06/2026

CONFIRMED

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Rosmary Armitage".

CHAIR

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ESTIMATES 'B'

MINUTES OF MEETING MONDAY, 1 JUNE 2026 TO THURSDAY, 4 JUNE 2026 MONDAY, 1 JUNE 2026

The Committee met at 8:45 am in Committee Room 3, Parliament House, Hobart.

Members present

Ms Armitage (Chair)
Mr Gaffney (Deputy Chair) (from 8:47 am)
Mr Hiscutt; and
Ms Webb

Apologies

Mr Edmunds

In attendance

Mr James Reynolds (Committee Secretary)
Ms Julie Thompson (Committee Secretary)

Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 26 May 2026 were confirmed as a true and accurate record.

Correspondence

Outgoing

1. Copies of letters from President dated 26 May 2026 requesting Ministers attendance at Estimates at the dates and times agreed to by the Committee.
2. Letters dated 27 May 2026 to: Inland Fisheries, State Fire Commission, TasTAFE, Integrity Commission, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, and Office of the Ombudsman advising of approximate time for their appearance before the Committee.
3. Letter to President dated 26 May 2026 in relation to the days the Committee intends to sit beyond 7:00 p.m.

The Committee **ENDORSED** the outgoing correspondence.

General Discussion

A discussion regarding time allocations and outputs ensued.

The Committee suspended at 8:50 am.

The Committee resumed at 9:00 am in Committee Room 2, Parliament House, Hobart.

Examination of Estimates

According to the Order the Minister attended the Committee.

Hon Guy Barnett MP

Attorney-General; Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation; and Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs

Bill 1 Division 6 – Department of Justice

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation

\$486 749 000

Witnesses:

Kristy Bourne *Secretary (9:01 am to 5.17 pm)*

Pauline van Adrichem *Deputy Secretary, Justice and Reform (9:01 am to 12:35 pm)*

The Attorney-General provided an overview.

Questions on Notice

1. How many Acts that fall under the Department of Justice purview that have received royal assent but are yet to be proclaimed or fully proclaimed. Please provide a list of these acts. (RA)
2. Please provide a comprehensive, table formatted breakdown of all consultancies for the 2025–2026 period, specifying for each:
 - a. The amount paid to each consultancy
 - b. The purpose of the consultancy
 - c. Whether the consultancy is Tasmanian based or operating from another location. (MW)
3. Is the Department of Justice currently responsible for any digital or ICT upgrade programs which are either in development or implementation across areas such as HR management, data, service delivery, and program management? In addition, please identify any such programs that were completed in 2025 or are ongoing from the 2025–2026 period. (MW)
4. Please provide the implementation plan for the Justice Connect project, including what has been spent in each year to date since commencement of the project, and what is budgeted to be spent in each year going forward, through to completion. Please also provide detail on what has caused delays to the project to date. (MW)

Output Group 1 – Administration of Justice

1.1 Supreme Court Services – considered

Question on Notice

1. Why is the northwest disproportionately effected in relation to population in the total numbers by case load. (CH)

1.2 Magisterial Court Services – considered

1.3 Births, Deaths and Marriages – considered

1.4 Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal – considered

Witness:

Gavin Wailes

Director Finance (10:23 am to 10:26 am)

Question on Notice

1. Can you provide an update on TASCAT's operations since the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (Additional Jurisdictions) Act 2025 came into effect on 1 July 2025. What impact has the reform had on the organisation, and can you provide a comprehensive table, including the number of matters have been considered since the legislation came into effect (MG)

1.5 Tasmania Legal Aid – considered

1.6 Legal Assistance – considered

1.7 Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner – considered

The Committee suspended at 10:59 am.

The Committee resumed at 11:15 am.

1.8 Elections and Referendums – considered

Witness:

Andrew Hawkey

*Tasmanian Electoral Commissioner, Tasmanian Electoral Commission
(11:15 am to 11:38 am)*

1.9 Tasmanian Industrial Commission – considered

1.10 Office of the Independent Regulator – considered

1.11 Office of the Implementation Monitor – considered

1.15 Commission for Children and Young People – considered

Output Group 2 – Legal Services

2.1 Crown Law – considered

Questions on Notice

1. Provide number of FTEs across Office of the Solicitor-General, Office of the Crown Solicitor and the State Litigation Office from 2023 to 2026. It would be appreciated if the dates are consistent across the years for each agency. (MG)
2. Please provide data for 2024-25 and 2025-26 to date on complaints regarding non-compliance with the Model Litigant Guidelines? (MW)

2.2 Legislation Development and Review – considered

Output Group 3 – Corrections, Rehabilitation and Enforcement

3.1 Prison Services- considered

Witnesses:

Colin Shepherd

Deputy Secretary, Corrective Services (12:35pm to 12:59 pm)

Narelle Pamplin

Director of Prisons (12:35 pm to 12:59 pm)

Gavin Wailes

Director Finance (12:37 pm to 12:39 pm)

Question on Notice

1. Please provide an update on the current funding status and the data on enrolments and completions for all Family Violence Intervention Programs offered. (MW)

3.2 Community Corrective Services - considered

Witness:

Christopher Carney *Director, Community Corrections (1:00 pm to 1:10 pm)*

3.3 Enforcement of Monetary Penalties – considered

Witness:

Gavin Wailes *Director Finance (1:14 pm to 1:17 pm)*

The Committee suspended at 1:17 pm.

The Committee resumed at 2:02 pm.

Output Group 5 – Justice Support Services

5.1 Victims Support – considered

Witnesses:

Robyn Pearce *Acting Deputy Secretary, Regulation and Service Delivery
(2:02 pm to 2:34 pm)*

Angela McCrossen *Executive Director, Justice Support Services (2:08 pm to 2:34 pm)*

5.2 Victims of Crime Assistance and Redress – considered

Witness:

Gavin Wailes *Director Finance (2:16 pm to 2:18 pm)*

5.3 Office of the Public Guardian – considered

Question on Notice

1. Provide information about complaints that might have been received about the Office of Public Guardian in the past year in relation to:
 - a. How many complaints were received?
 - b. What generally were complaints in relation to?
 - c. How many were resolved and concluded?
 - d. How many remain outstanding? (RA)

5.4 Safe at Home – considered

5.5 Working with Vulnerable People - considered

Witness:

Gavin Wailes *Director Finance (2:32 pm to 2:34 pm)*

Capital Investment Program – considered

The witnesses withdrew at 2:34 pm.

The Committee suspended at 2:34 pm.

The Committee resumed at 2:36 pm.

Bill 2 Division 2 – Integrity Commission

Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation

\$4 328 000

Witnesses:

Kristy Bourne	<i>Secretary, Department of Justice</i>
Ellen McKenzie	<i>CEO, Integrity Commission</i>
Karen Kingswell	<i>Director Corporate Services, Integrity Commission</i>

The witnesses took their places at 2:36 pm.

Output Group 1 – Integrity Commission

1.1 Integrity Commission - considered

Questions on Notice

1. For 2023-24, 2024-25 and current 2025-26 year to date, please detail what the Integrity Commission has spent on legal fees, and please itemise this expenditure by type of legal service/fee. (MW)
2. Please provide the number of audits the Integrity Commission has conducted of Tas Police investigations into complaints, for each of the years 2023-24, 2024-25, 2025-26 to date. (MW)

The witnesses withdrew at 3:00 pm.

Bill 2 Division 7 – Office of the Ombudsman

Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation

\$5 638 000

Witnesses:

Dr Grant Davies	<i>Ombudsman</i>
Kristy Bourne	<i>Secretary</i>
Natasha Freeman	<i>Deputy Ombudsman</i>

The witnesses took their places at 3:01 pm.

Output Group 1 – The Office of the Ombudsman

1.1 Decisions on Complaints referred to the Ombudsman and Health Complaints Commissioner and Right to Information – considered

Question on Notice

1. How many of the 12 recommendations from the TNPM Implementation Reports of 2023 and 2024 have been implemented – please provide a breakdown of the implementation status of each recommendation. (MW)

The witnesses withdrew at 3:31 pm.

Bill 2 Division 5 – The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions

Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation

\$14 791 000

Witnesses:

Daryl Coates *Director, Public Prosecutions*
Kristy Bourne *Secretary*

The witnesses took their places at 3:32 pm.

Output Group 1 – The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions

1.1 The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions - considered

The witnesses withdrew at 3:51 pm.

The Committee suspended at 3:51 pm.

The Committee resumed at 4:15 pm.

Bill 1 Division 6 – Department of Justice

Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs

\$18 154 000

Witnesses:

Kristy Bourne *Secretary*
Robyn Pearce *Acting Deputy Secretary, Regulation and Service Delivery*
Liz Radcliffe *Executive Director, WorkSafe Tasmania (4:19 pm to 4:38 pm)*
Gavin Wailes *Director Finance (4:31 pm to 4:32 pm)*

The witnesses took their places at 4:15 pm.

The Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs provided an overview.

Output Group 4- Regulatory and Other Services

4.1 WorkSafe Tasmania – considered

Questions on Notice

1. Provide number for psychosocial injury claims for current financial year. (CH)
2. Provide total number of inspections of workplaces by region – north, northwest and south – in the last financial year. (CH)

4.3 Consumer, Building and Occupational Services - considered

The witnesses withdrew at 4:57 pm.

Bill 1 Division 11 – Department of State Growth

Minister for Small Business Trade and Consumer Affairs

\$14 134 000

Witnesses:

Shane Gregory *Acting Secretary*
Michael Mogridge *Deputy Secretary, Economic Development*
Cameron Shield *Senior Director, Trade*

The witnesses took their places at 4:58 pm.

The Minister provided an overview.

Output Group 1 – Industry and Business Growth

1.3 Trade – considered

The witnesses withdrew at 5.17 pm.

The Committee suspended at 5:17 pm.

The Committee resumed at 6:15 pm.

Examination of Estimates

According to the Order the Minister attended the Committee.

Hon Gavin Pearce MP

Minister for Primary Industries and Water and Minister for Veterans' Affairs

Bill 1 Division 8 – Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania

Minister for Primary Industries and Water

\$86 585 000

Witnesses:

Jason Jacobi

Secretary

Mandy Clarke

Acting Deputy Secretary

The witnesses took their places at 6:15 pm.

The Minister for Primary Industries and Water provided an overview.

Question on Notice

1. Please provide details of any IT or Digitisation projects in progress or in development within your portfolio areas in NRE, including details on whether the project is being delivered on time and on budget. (MW)

Witness:

Dr Susanna Driessen *Chief Plant Protection Officer (6:40 pm to 6:43 pm)*

Output Group 2 – Primary Industries and Water

2.1 Primary Industries - considered

2.2 Supervision of Poppy and Hemp Crops - considered

Question on Notice

1. Late last year the report from the three-year Epping Forest Industrial Hemp Variety Trials came out - with 80 per cent of Australia's hemp seed coming from Tasmania. What is the scope to expand on this into international markets? (MG)

2.3 Water Resources Management – considered

Questions on Notice

1. The NRE Tas Annual Report 2024-25 details programs to support producers to help manage, prepare for and navigate drought and climate change, which have included delivering resilience funding, emergency grants, water infrastructure rebates and mentoring support.

Please provide a breakdown of the amount of funding provided for the 2024-25 year as well as that expected to be provided for the 2025-26 year for each of those areas:

- a) Resilience funding distributed
- b) Emergency grants
- c) Water infrastructure rebates, and
- d) Mentoring support. (MW)

2. Please provide detail on all scientific assessments, reviews, studies that will be undertaken to inform the decision-making on the GSEIS proposed project to extract nearly 40,000ML/yr of water from the River Derwent System at Meadowbank Dam, including who will be responsible for conducting and funding each assessment/review/study, and the timeline within which they will be conducted and completed. (MW)

Witnesses:

Matthew Healey Deputy Secretary, Strategy and Delivery (7:18 pm to 7:30 pm)

David Midson General Manager, Water Resources (7:24 pm to 7:30 pm)

2.4 Marine Resources – considered

Witnesses:

Rae Burrows General Manager (Biosecurity Tasmania)

Chris Lyall Chief Inspector of Primary Produce Safety (Biosecurity Tasmania)

Output Group 3 – Biosecurity

3.1 Biosecurity and Product Integrity – considered

Witness:

Jo Crisp General Manager, Environment (8:01 pm to 8:03 pm)

Output Group 7 – Environment

7.3 Natural Values Management – considered

Witness:

Dr Ryan Wilkinson Director, Inland Fisheries

Inland Fisheries – considered

The witnesses withdrew at 8:27 pm.

The Committee suspended at 8:27 pm.

The Committee resumed at 8:30 pm.

Bill 1 Division 10 – Department of Premier and Cabinet

Minister for Veterans' Affairs

\$983 000

Witness:

Melissa Gray Deputy Secretary, Policy and Reform

Jodi Willcox Executive Director, Policy and Intergovernmental

The witnesses took their places at 8:30 pm.

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs provided an overview.

Output Group 1 – Policy Reform and Government Priorities

1.5 Veterans' Affairs - considered

The witness withdrew at 8:45 pm.

Draft questions on notice

The Committee considered the draft correspondence in relation to questions taken on notice.

RESOLVED, that the questions on notice, as amended, be adopted.

Correspondence

Outgoing

1. Letter dated 1 June 2026 to the Hon Guy Barnett MP, Attorney General and Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation providing questions taken on notice.
2. Letter dated 1 June 2026 to the Hon Guy Barnett MP, Attorney General and Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation providing questions taken on notice in relation to the Integrity Commission.
3. Letter dated 1 June 2026 to the Hon Guy Barnett MP, Attorney General and Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation providing question taken on notice in relation to the Office of the Ombudsman.
4. Letter dated 1 June 2026 to the Hon Guy Barnett MP, Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs providing questions taken on notice.
5. Letter dated 1 June 2026 to the Hon Gavin Pearce MP, Minister for Primary Industries and Water providing questions taken on notice.

The Committee **ENDORSED** the outgoing correspondence.

Other Business

Nil.

The Committee suspended at 8:51 pm until 8:45 am on Tuesday, 2 June 2026.

TUESDAY 2 JUNE 2026

The Committee resumed at 8:45 am in Committee Room 3, Parliament House, Hobart.

Members present

Ms Armitage (Chair)
Mr Edmunds (from 2:15 pm)
Mr Gaffney (Deputy Chair)
Mr Hiscutt; and
Ms Webb

Apologies

In attendance

Mr James Reynolds (Committee Secretary)
Ms Julie Thompson (Committee Secretary)

The Committee had a general discussion.

The Committee suspended at 8:49 am.

The Committee resumed at 9:00 am in Committee Room 2, Parliament House, Hobart.

Examination of Estimates

According to the Order the Premier attended the Committee.

Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP

Premier

Bill 1 Division 10 – Department of Premier and Cabinet

Premier

\$77 746 000

Witnesses:

Kathrine Morgan-Wicks

Secretary

Lisa Howes

Chief Governance and Risk Officer

Mathew Healey

Deputy Secretary, Strategy and Delivery

Ned Whitehouse

Chief of Staff

The witnesses took their places at 9:00 am.

The Premier provided an overview.

Witnesses:

Noelene Kelly

Acting Chief Operations Officer (9:23 am to 9:26 am)

Melissa Gray

Deputy Secretary, Policy and Reform (10:04 am to 10:05 am)

Amanda Russell

*Deputy Secretary, State Service Management Office
(10:06 am to 10:09 am)*

Questions on Notice:

1. Please provide a list of all ministerial requests for legal assistance made in compliance with the Policy and Guidelines for the Grant of Indemnities and Legal Assistance to Public Officers of the State of Tasmania in 2024-25 and 2025-26 to date, including the names, dates and amounts requested. (MW)
2. Please advise the new timeline for the provision of the new Northern Health Complex to be built at the Launceston General Hospital given the announcement in 2025 noted it would commence construction by 2028. (RA)
3. The guidelines set out that in granting legal assistance a limit can be placed on how much taxpayer support can be provided to a public officer – has any limit been placed on expenditure on Ms Ogilvie's legal costs? (MW)
4. In the 2024-25 financial year, how many invoices for Madeline Ogilvie's legal costs were approved by Cabinet? (MW)
5. What functions do you expect the Independent Complaints Commissioner to perform? Do you know how much was initially requested to fill that position? What is the expected timeline of the outcome to be achieved with these funds? (CH)

Output Group 1 – Policy Reform and Government Priorities

1.1 Strategic Policy and Government Priorities– considered

Questions on Notice

1. With reference to a media release from the Treasurer on 11 March 2025, entitled “Taking Tasmanian regulation and barriers to task”:
 - The claim is that Tasmania has “the highest number of legislative restrictions per capita in Australia” at 74 per 1,000 people.
 - What is the exact methodology behind this figure?
 - Which independent source produced it, and how does it account for the quality or impact of regulations rather than just raw count?
 - How will success be measured? Will there be a public dashboard tracking the number of repeals, the estimated compliance cost savings, and actual improvements in business investment, employment, or productivity over time?
 - Has the government conducted a regulatory burden audit with independent cost-benefit analysis? If so, what were the key findings on the economic drag of the targeted 40+ Acts and regulations?
 - Can the government publish the full preliminary list of the 40+ Acts and regulations targeted for repeal or amendment, along with the specific reasons for each?
 - a. How will the government handle regulations that appear obsolete but still serve niche protective functions (e.g., old environmental or heritage rules)? (RA)
2. What whole-of-government work is being undertaken to identify and monitor hate groups in Tasmania? Are there any groups or individuals currently on a watch-list? (Not seeking personal identification details of individuals) (MW) Are there any guidelines established to ensure government agencies or representatives are not unwittingly liaising or entering into government contracts with potential hate groups, individuals or those associated closely with them? (MW)

The Committee suspended at 11:00 am.

The Committee resumed at 11:16 am.

Witness:

Noelene Kelly

Acting Chief Operations Officer (11:28 am to 11:35 am)

1.2 Child and Youth Wellbeing – considered

Witness:

Courtney Hurworth

Chief Reform Officer, Keeping Children Safe (11:44 am to 11:57 am)

1.3 Security and Emergency Management – considered

Output Group 2 – Government System Support

2.1 Support Services for Government, Ministerial Parliamentary Offices and Office of the Governor – considered

Witness:

Justin Thurley

Chief Information Officer (12:18 pm to 12:22 pm)

2.2 Principal and Subordinate Legislation – considered

Question on Notice:

1. Budget Paper No. 4, pg 77 notes the following performance indicator.: Proportion of key clients that are satisfied that the legislation drafted for the client meets the relevant, and implementable, policy intentions in a legally effective manner. This is trending well. Please provide detail as to how this is measured. (CH)

2.3 State Service Employment and Management – considered

Output Group 3 – Community and Government Service Delivery

3.2 Management and Ongoing Development of Service Tasmania– considered

Tabled Documents

1. myServiceTas information (1 April 25 to 31 March 26)
2. Key highlights (1 April 25 to 31 March 26)

Capital Investment Program –considered

Bill 1 Division 7 – Ministerial and Parliamentary Support

Premier **\$37 919 000**

Witnesses:

<i>Kathrine Morgan-Wicks</i>	<i>Secretary</i>
<i>Shane Gregory</i>	<i>Associate Secretary</i>
<i>Ned Whitehouse</i>	<i>Chief of Staff</i>

Output Group 1 – Support for Members of Parliament

1.1 Support for Ministers and certain Parliamentary Office Holders – considered

Question on Notice

1. In relation to 1.1 Support for Ministers and certain Parliamentary Office Holders - please provide a detailed breakdown to account for the difference in 2025-26 Budget and 2025-26 Estimated Outcome, including a breakdown by position for any employment separations as part of that increase. (MW)

1.2 Support for Members of the House of Assembly – considered

Questions on Notice

1. What is the total number of staff allocated to all members of parliament in each area of parliament ie. Minor parties and micro parties, independents, including members of the legislative council and hat is the total number of staff they are entitled to? (CH)
2. Regarding Budget paper no. 3, page 5 - Travelling allowance and committee fees do not escalate over the forward estimates, can you please explain why. (CH)

Bill 2 Division 6 – Office of the Governor

Premier \$11 787 000

1.1 Support for the Governor – considered

Witness:

David Hughes CSC *Official Secretary, Office of the Governor (12:59 pm – 1:02 pm)*

Capital Investment Program - considered

Bill 1 Division 1 – Brand Tasmania

Premier \$2 106 000

Witnesses:

<i>Kathrine Morgan-Wicks</i>	<i>Secretary</i>
<i>Lisa Howes</i>	<i>Chief Governance and Risk Officer</i>
<i>Ned Whitehouse</i>	<i>Chief of Staff</i>
<i>Jessica Radford</i>	<i>Acting CEO, Brand Tasmania (1:03 pm to 1:15 pm)</i>

The Premier provided an overview

Output Group 1 – Brand Tasmania

1.1 Brand Tasmania – considered

Tabled Document

1. About Brand Tasmania 2025-2026

The witnesses withdrew at 1:15 pm.

The Committee suspended at 1:15 pm.

The Committee resumed at 2:15 pm.

Mr *Edmunds* took his place at 2:15 pm.

Examination of Estimates

According to the Order the Minister attended the Committee.

Hon Jane Howlett MP

Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events; Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence and Minister for Racing

Bill 1 Division 12 – Tourism Tasmania

Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events \$38 325 000

Witnesses:

<i>Brett Stewart</i>	<i>Deputy Secretary, Creative Industries, Sport and Visitor Economy, Department of State Growth</i>
<i>Sarah Kingston Clark</i>	<i>Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Tasmania</i>
<i>Luke Gaetani</i>	<i>Chief of Staff</i>

The witnesses took their places at 2:15 pm

The Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events provided an overview.

Tabled Document

1. Statement from the Premier – 2 June 2026

Output Group 1 – Tourism

1.1 Tourism – considered

Question on Notice

1. Provide a breakdown of the Tasmanian marketing budget of \$82 million over the forward estimates. (MG)

Bill 1 Division 11 – Department of State Growth

Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events

\$57 913 000

Witnesses:

Brett Stewart *Deputy Secretary, Creative Industries, Sport and Visitor Economy*
Sarah Clark *Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Tasmania*

Output Group 5 – Cultural and Tourism Development

5.4 Events – considered

Question on Notice

1. Output Group Parks, p. 66 - If we are spending an additional \$63m in Events Tasmania (Budget Paper No. 2, p. 237) over the forward estimates – the return on this investment seems very poor in the state with a target of visitors to our parks shown in Budget Paper No. 4, p. 66 showing a lessening in numbers in the 2026-27 year compared to the 2023-24 target. Will these events not have people exploring our regions? (CH)

5.5 Visitor Economy Support – considered

The witnesses withdrew at 3:06 pm.

The Committee suspended at 3:06 pm.

The Committee resumed at 3:15 pm.

Bill 1 Division 10 – Department of Premier and Cabinet

Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence

\$18 687 000

Witnesses:

Courtney Hurworth *Chief Reform Lead, Keeping Children Safe Reform Group*
Tegan Dwyer *Assistant Director – Prevention of Family and Sexual Violence*

Output Group 1 – Policy Reform and Government Priorities

1.4 Women and the Prevention of Family Violence – considered

Questions on Notice

1. In relation to the Federal Government funding streams that are included in Budget Paper No.2, p.222, Table 10.3, line item 1.4 Women and the Prevention of Family Violence, please provide a breakdown of the programs, initiatives, or service streams that are funded and amounts each received from this line item in 2025-26 and planned for 2026-27, and also details of the most recent reporting to the Federal Government in relation to those. (MW)
2. Budget Paper No.2, p.224, explains the decrease in Estimated Outcome for the Women and Prevention of Family Violence Output as reflecting the transfer of appropriation to a number of other Departments to implement activities associated with Tasmania's Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan. Please provide details of the amounts transferred to each Department, the programs funded in each, and amounts of funding transferred for each program. (MW)
3. Please provide the term of reference or scoping document in relation to the evaluation to be undertaken of sexual and family violence services in Tasmania. (MW)

Mr *Edmunds* left the table at 3:54 pm.
Mr *Edmunds* took his place at 4:05 pm.

The witnesses withdrew at 4:14 pm.

The Committee suspended at 4:14 pm.

The Committee resumed at 4:30 pm.

Bill 1 Division 8 – Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania

Minister for Racing

\$45 129 000

Witnesses:

<i>Deidre Wilson</i>	<i>Deputy Secretary Primary Industries and Water, NRE Tas</i>
<i>Sean Carroll</i>	<i>Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner</i>
<i>Anita Yan</i>	<i>Deputy Chief Operations Officer</i>

The witnesses took their places at 4:15 pm.

The Minister for Racing provided an overview.

Output Group 5 – Racing Regulation and Policy

1.1 Racing Regulation and Policy – considered

The witnesses withdrew at 6:00 pm.

The Committee suspended at 6:00 pm.

The Committee resumed at 6:05 pm.

Draft Questions on Notice

The Committee considered the draft correspondence in relation to questions taken on notice.

The Committee **AGREED** that the questions on notice be sent without amendment.

Correspondence

Outgoing

1. Letter dated 2 June 2026 to the Premier, the Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP providing questions taken on notice.
2. Letter dated 2 June 2026 to the Minister for Tourism, Hospitality Events providing questions taken on notice.

The Committee **ENDORSED** the outgoing correspondence.

Other Business

Nil.

The Committee suspended at 6:09 pm until 8:45 am on Wednesday, 3 June 2026

WEDNESDAY, 3 JUNE 2026

The Committee met at 8:45 am in Committee Room 3, Parliament House, Hobart.

Members present

Ms *Armitage* (Chair)
Mr Edmunds (from 9:26 am)
Mr *Gaffney* (Deputy Chair)
Mr *Hiscutt*; and
Ms *Webb*

In attendance

Mr *James Reynolds* (Committee Secretary)
Ms *Julie Thompson* (Committee Secretary)

Draft Questions on Notice

The Committee considered the draft correspondence in relation to questions taken on notice for the Hon Jane Howlett MP, Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence.

The Committee **AGREED** that the questions on notice be sent without amendment.

Correspondence

Outgoing

1. Letter dated 2 June 2026 to the Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence, the Hon Jane Howlett MP providing questions taken on notice.

The Committee **ENDORSED** the outgoing correspondence.

The Committee suspended at 8:49 am.

The Committee resumed at 9:00 am in Committee Room 2, Parliament House, Hobart.

Examination of Estimates

According to the Order the Minister attended the Committee.

Hon Felix Ellis MP

Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Minister for Skills and Jobs and Minister for Business, Industry and Resources

Division 9 – Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management

Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management

\$462 227 000

Witnesses:

Adam Foster	<i>Chief of Staff</i>
Donna Adams	<i>Commissioner of Police/Secretary, DPFEM/State Controller</i>
Jonathan Higgins	<i>Deputy Commissioner of Police</i>
Adrian Bodnar	<i>Assistant Commissioner Operations</i>
Robert Blackwood	<i>Assistant Commissioner Specialist Support</i>
Doug Oosterloo	<i>Assistant Commissioner Capability</i>
Ross Hinkley	<i>A/Deputy Secretary</i>
Scott Wilson-Haffenden	<i>A/Executive Director, People & Business Services</i>

The witnesses took their places at 9:00 am.

The Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management provided an overview.

Mr *Edmunds* took his place at 9:26 am.

Questions on Notice

1. What is the total number of external consultancies for the 2025-2026 year, in a table form with details of the consultants and funding amounts. (MW)
2. Please provide details of all expenditure on internal reviews conducted by external consultants in each of 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26, including how much was spent on each of those contracts. (MW)
3. With regard to the engagement of KPMG for Project Unify and subsequent cancellation of that contract, could you please provide the following information:
 1. Details of all expenditure on KPMG contracts for the project up to the date of cancellation.
 2. Details of deliverables completed under the KPMG contracts.
 3. An explanation of the cancellation of the KPMG contract, for example, was the termination of the contract for cause or convenience, and were any termination payments made to KPMG? (MW)
4. With respect to Project Unify, can you please provide an update on the project's funding and delivery status. Specifically:
 1. In 2020, \$46 million was allocated to Project Unify.
 - Please provide a breakdown of this allocation for specific areas.
 - Please provide details for each area on how much of the allocation has been expended to date?
 - Please provide details on any additional funds which have been allocated in these project areas since the initial 2020 allocation?
 2. Can you provide a timeline showing:
 - What has been delivered in each funded project area
 - The expenditure of funding in each area over time
 - Details on what remains to be delivered
 - The estimated additional funding required to complete the project's objectives. (MW)
5. Please provide the raw data on uptake of the MyPulse wellbeing support service for the past three years, and a breakdown of utilisation by employees and volunteers. (LE)

Output Group 1 – Public Safety

1.1 Support to the Community – considered

The Committee suspended at 10:58 am.

The Committee resumed at 11:15 am.

Output Group 2 – Crime

2.1 Investigation of Crime – considered

Tabled Document

1. Tasmania Police Fatigue Management Framework (January 2026 Version 5.0)

Questions on Notice

1. For each of the years from 2023 to date, how many times has the Special Operations Group been deployed?
2. Of those deployments, how many incidents involved the use or presence of firearms?
3. For the incidents that involved firearms, how many involved:
 - firearms that were registered, and
 - firearms that were unregistered? (MW)

2.2 Fisheries Security - considered

2.3 Support to Judicial Services - considered

Output Group 3 – Traffic Policing

3.1 Traffic Policing - considered

Output Group 4 – Emergency Management

4.2 State Security and Rescue Operations - considered

Tabled Document

1. Family Violence Incidents Involving Firearms as a Weapon, Source: Family Violence Management System, 1 June 2026.

Capital Investment Program – considered

The witnesses withdrew at 12:15 pm.

The Committee suspended at 12:15 pm.

The Committee resumed at 12:17 pm.

4.1 Fire and Emergency Services - considered

State Fire Commission - considered

Witnesses:

Adam Foster

Chief of Staff

Jeremy Smith

Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner

Simon Pilkington

A/Deputy Chief Officer - Operations

Mick Lowe

Executive Director, SES and Volunteers

Ross Hinkley

A/Deputy Secretary

Scott Wilson-Haffenden

A/Executive Director, People and Business Services

The witnesses took their places at 12:17 pm.

Questions on Notice

1. The Terms of Reference for Fire Management Area Committees state reviews of the ToR should occur every 3 years, however it appears they have not been reviewed since 2018 – when will they next be reviewed? (MW)
2. Could you please advise the total number of volunteers and career firefighters within the Tasmanian Fire Service, along with a gender breakdown for each of the past three years, by region across Tasmania? (RA)

The witnesses withdrew at 12:56 pm.

The Committee suspended at 12:56 pm.

The Committee resumed at 2:01 pm.

TasTAFE

Witnesses:

Tim Gardner	<i>Chair, TasTAFE</i>
Dr Norman Baker	<i>CEO, TasTAFE</i>
Alex Paterson	<i>General Manager, Skills and Workforce, Department of State Growth</i>
Adam Foster	<i>Chief of Staff</i>

The witnesses took their places at 2:00 pm.

The Minister provided an overview.

Tabled Document

1. MyPulse activities since program inception

TasTAFE – considered

Mr Gaffney took his place at 2:08 pm.

Questions on Notice

1. As the new health hub at TasTAFE Alanvale opened in late 2025 for training in mental health, youth work and alcohol and other drugs can you please advise the courses available in this health hub and the number of students for each course. (RA)
2. Minister, what resources were released as a result of your cutting 12 courses' last year, and where specifically were those resources reallocated to, (as I understand was agreed to between TasTafe and Skills Tasmania at the time). Were resources reallocated to increasing deed-funded activity in priority training areas, as required by Skills Tasmania, and can you provide evidence of this? (LE)
3. Please provide a detailed breakdown of the total number of external consultancies used in 2025-26, including any still underway, and the costs for each. (MW)
4. How many unfilled TasTAFE teacher vacancies currently exist, and in which course areas? (MW)
5. How many TasTAFE teachers left employment in 2024-25 and in 2025-26 to date? Please provide a gender breakdown of those figures. (MW)
6. Please provide detail of all course fees from 2024-25 and 2025-26. (MW)

7. Please provide the number of TasTAFE teachers at March 2021 and at March 2026 (FTE and head count). (MW)

The witnesses withdrew at 3:14 pm.

The Committee suspended at 3:14 pm.

The Committee resumed at 3:15 pm.

Bill 1 Division 11 – Department of State Growth

Minister for Skills and Jobs

\$120 561 000

Witnesses:

Alex Paterson	<i>General Manager, Skills and Workforce</i>
Stuart Hollingsworth	<i>Executive Director, Economy and Jobs Strategy</i>
Adam Foster	<i>Chief of Staff</i>

The witnesses took their places at 3:15 pm.

The Minister for Skills and Jobs provided an overview.

Output Group 3 – Skills, Training and Workforce Growth

3.1 Skills and Workforce Growth - considered

Question on Notice:

1. In relation to the Closing the Gap initiative which provides a 20% loading of support/subsidy for Aboriginal students, how is the implementation of this by private providers as either fee reduction or additional support monitored? (MW)

Tabled Document:

1. Tasmanian Rescue Helicopter Search and Rescue missions and hours

The witnesses withdrew at 4:01 pm

The Committee suspended at 4:01 pm

The Committee resumed at 4:45pm

Bill 1 Division 11 – Department of State Growth

Minister for Business, Industry and Resources

\$55 070 000

Witnesses:

Shane Gregory	<i>Acting Secretary</i>
Dennis Hendriks	<i>Acting Co-ordinator General (to 5:12 pm)</i>
Vanessa Pinto	<i>Deputy Secretary, ReCFIT and Resources</i>
Michael Mogridge	<i>Deputy Secretary, Economic Development</i>
Adam Foster	<i>Chief of Staff</i>
Andrew Crane	<i>Project Director, Office of the Co-ordinator General (5:04 pm to 5:12 pm)</i>

The witnesses took their places at 4:45 pm.

The Minister for Business, Industry and Resources provided an overview.

Question on Notice

1. Please provide details of external consultants used in 2025/26 including any still underway and the costs associated. (MW)

Output Group 1 – Industry and Business Growth

1.1 Office of the Coordinator General – considered

Questions on Notice

1. How much has the office spent on overseas travel? (LE)
2. Can you provide a list of the hotels/motels that have been booked on overseas and interstate travel for the last financial year, including the length of stay, number of guests, and reason for the trip? (LE)

1.2 Industry and Business Development – considered

The Committee suspended at 5:21 pm.

The Committee resumed at 5:22 pm.

Witnesses:

Dr Sarah Russell Director Policy (5:22 pm to 5:47 pm)

Anne Chuter Chief Forest Practices Officer, Forest Practices Authority
(5:23 pm to 5:47 pm)

Output Group 4 – Resources Policy and Regulatory Services

1.1 Forest Policy – considered

Tabled Document

1. TasTAFE Questions on Notice - 03 June 2026

Witness:

Alastair Morton Director, Mineral Resources Tasmania (5:47 pm to 5:53 pm)

1.2 Mineral Resources – considered

The witnesses withdrew at 5:53 pm.

The Committee suspended at 5:53 pm.

The Committee resumed at 5:58 pm.

Draft Questions on Notice

The Committee considered the draft correspondence in relation to questions taken on notice.

The Committee **AGREED** that the questions on notice be sent as amended.

Correspondence

Outgoing

1. Letter dated 3 June 2026 to the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, the Hon Felix Ellis MP providing questions taken on notice.
2. Letter dated 3 June 2026 to the Minister for Skills and Jobs, the Hon Felix Ellis MP providing questions taken on notice.
3. Letter dated 3 June 2026 to the Minister for Business, Industry and Resources, the Hon Felix Ellis MP providing questions taken on notice.

The Committee **ENDORSED** the outgoing correspondence.

Other Business

Nil.

The Committee suspended at 6:05 pm until 8:45 am on Thursday, 4 June 2026.

THURSDAY, 4 JUNE 2026

The Committee met at 8:45 am in Committee Room 3, Parliament House, Hobart.

Members present

Ms Armitage (Chair)

Mr Edmunds (from 9:00 am)

Mr *Gaffney* (Deputy Chair)

Mr *Hiscutt*; and

Ms *Webb*

In attendance

Mr James Reynolds (Committee Secretary)

Ms Julie Thompson (Committee Secretary)

The Committee had a general discussion.

The Committee suspended at 8:49 am

The Committee resumed at 9:00 am in Committee Room 2, Parliament House, Hobart.

Mr *Edmunds* took his seat at 9:00 am.

Examination of Estimates

According to the Order the Minister attended the Committee.

Hon Jo Palmer MLC

Minister for Education, Minister for Children and Youth and Minister for Disability Services

Bill 1 Division 2 – Department of Education, Children and Young People

Minister for Education

\$2 140 026 000

Witnesses:

Ginna Webster

Secretary

Kane Salter

Deputy Secretary Business Operations and Support

The witnesses took their places at the table at 9:00 am.

The Minister for Education provided an overview.

Witness:

Jodee Wilson

Deputy Secretary Development and Support (9:28 am to 9:33 am)

Output Group 1 – Education

1.1 In School Education – considered

Witnesses:

Trudy Pearce	<i>Deputy Secretary Schools and Early Years (9:46 am to 9:50 am, 10:04 am to 10:20 am, and 10:38 am to 10:42 am, 10:47 to 11.33 am)</i>
Jodee Wilson	<i>Deputy Secretary Development and Support (10:52 am to 11:50 am)</i>
Jenny Burgess	<i>Deputy Secretary Strategy and Performance (10:52 am to 12:00 pm)</i>

The Committee suspended at 10:58 am.

The Committee resumed at 11:15 am.

Tabled Documents

1. Year 11 and 12 annual attendance rates (excluding Colleges)
2. Extension School enrolments – headcount: Year 11 and 12 students at Census 1, 2026

1.2 Early Learning – considered

Output Group 2 – Libraries Tasmania

2.1 Libraries Tasmania – considered

Witness:

Patrick Gregory	<i>Executive Director Libraries Tasmania (11:34 am to 11.50 am)</i>
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Output Group 3 – Education Regulation

3.1 Education Regulation – considered

Witness:

David Tilley	<i>Director Education Regulation (11:50 am to 12:05 pm)</i>
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Grants and Subsidies – considered

Capital Investment Program – considered

The witnesses withdrew at 12:13 pm.

The Committee suspended at 12:13 pm.

The Committee resumed at 12:23 pm.

Bill 1 Division 2 – Department of Education, Children and Young People

Minister for Children and Youth

\$298 041 000

Witnesses:

Ginna Webster	<i>Secretary</i>
Peter Whitcombe	<i>Deputy Secretary Child Safety and Youth Justice Operations</i>
Tiffany Black	<i>Executive Director Children, Young People and Families</i>

The witnesses took their places at 12:23 pm.

The Minister for Children and Youth provided an overview.

Output Group 4 – Children Services

4.1 Services for Children and Families – considered

The witnesses withdrew.

The Committee suspended at 1:13 pm.

The Committee resumed at 2:16 pm.

4.1 Services for Children and Families – further considered

Mr *Edmunds* left the table at 2:31 pm.

Mr *Edmunds* took his place at 2:40 pm.

4.2 Services for Youth Justice – considered

The Committee suspended at 4:15 pm.

The Committee resumed at 4:32 pm.

4.2 Services for Youth Justice – further considered

Witness:

Kane Salter Deputy Secretary Business Operations and Support (4:38 pm to 5:20 pm)

Tabled Document

1. AYDC Incident Review Committee Dates

Output Group 5 – Independent Children’s and Young Persons’ Review Service

3.1 Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People – considered

The Committee suspended at 5:20 pm.

The Committee resumed at 5:26 pm.

Bill 1 Division 10 – Department of Premier and Cabinet

Minister for Disability Services

\$305 386 000

Witnesses:

Mellisa (Mel) Gray Deputy Secretary, Policy and Reform

Ingrid Ganley Executive Director, Disability and Reform

The witnesses took their places at 5:26 pm.

The Minister for Disability Services provided an overview.

Output Group 1 – Policy Reform and Government Priorities

1.7 Disability Services – considered

1.8 National Disability Insurance Scheme – considered

1.10 Office of the Disability Commissioner – considered

The witnesses withdrew at 6:28 pm.

The Committee suspended at 6:28 pm.

The Committee resumed at 6:35 pm.

Questions taken on Notice

There were none.

Other Business

Nil.

Next Meeting

Wednesday 17 June 2026 at 10:00 am in CR2 (Teams available).

Adjournment

The Committee adjourned at 6:40 pm.

DATE 17 June 2026

CONFIRMED

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rosmary Amato', is written in a cursive style.

CHAIR

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES B

MINUTES

17 JUNE 2026

At 9:59 am in Committee Room 2, Parliament House, Hobart and via Teams.

Members Present

Ms Armitage (*Chair*) (*via Teams*)

Mr Gaffney (*via Teams*)

Mr Hiscutt (*via Teams*)

Mr Edmunds (CR2)

Ms Webb (CR2)

Apologies

Nil

In Attendance

Julie Thompson (Committee Secretary)

Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 1 June to Thursday, 4 June 2026 were confirmed as a true and accurate record.

Correspondence

Incoming

1. Letter dated and received 9 June 2026 from the Hon Jane Howlett MP, providing responses to questions taken on notice in relation to portfolio of Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence, including the following attachments:
 - Attachment 1
 - *Table 1 – Tasmanian projects in 2025-26 funded by the Commonwealth under the 2023-25 component of the FFA FDSV*
 - *Table 2 – Tasmanian projects funded by the Commonwealth in 2025-26 under the 2025-30 FFA FDSV*
 - Attachment 2
 - *Table 1 – Agency transfers: Tasmania's Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan*
 - *Table 2 – totals for each Agency*
 - Attachment 3
 - *Evaluation of Tasmania's Family and Sexual Violence Action Plans (2015–2025)*
2. Letter dated and received 9 June 2026 from the Hon Jane Howlett MP, providing responses to questions taken on notice in relation to portfolio of Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events.

3. Letter [no date] received 9 June 2026 from the Hon Gavin Pearce MP providing response to questions taken on notice in relation to portfolio Minister for Primary Industries and Water.
4. Letter dated and received 9 June 2026 from the Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP, providing responses to questions taken on notice in relation to portfolio of Premier.
5. Letter dated and received 10 June 2026 from the Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP, providing a further response to a question taken on notice in relation to portfolio of Premier.
6. Letter dated and received 10 June 2026 from the Hon Guy Barnett MP providing responses to questions taken on notice in relation to portfolio Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation, including the following attachments:
 - Attachment 1
 - *Response to Question 2 Overview – Breakdown of Consultancies*
 - Attachment 2
 - *Response to Question 3 Overview – Justice ICT Projects and Programs*
 - Attachment 3
 - *Response to Question 4 Overview – Astria Implementation Plan*
 - Attachment 4
 - *Response to Question 4 Overview – Justice Connect Finances*
7. Letter dated and received 10 June 2026 from the Hon Guy Barnett MP providing responses to questions taken on notice in relation to portfolio Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation (Integrity Commission).
8. Letter dated and received 10 June 2026 from the Hon Guy Barnett MP providing responses to questions taken on notice in relation to portfolio Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation (Office of the Ombudsman).
9. Letter dated and received 10 June 2026 from the Hon Guy Barnett MP providing response to question taken on notice in relation to portfolio Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs.
10. Letter dated 10 June 2026 and received 11 June 2026 from the Hon Felix Ellis MP, providing responses to questions taken on notice in relation to portfolio of Minister for Skills and Jobs (TasTAFE) including the following attachment:
 - Calendar Year [2024] TasTAFE Prices.
11. Document dated and received 12 June 2026 from the Hon Felix Ellis MP, providing responses to question taken on notice in relation to portfolio of Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management.
12. Letter dated and received 12 June 2026 from the Hon Felix Ellis MP, providing responses to questions taken on notice in relation to portfolio of Business, Industry and Resources.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the incoming correspondence.

Outgoing
Nil

Consideration of Draft Reports

1. Hon Guy Barnett MP

Attorney General and Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation – Department of Justice

Integrity Commission

The Office of the Ombudsman

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions

Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs

RESOLVED—

Pages 1 and 2, stand part of the Report.

Page 3 to 8, with amendments, stand part of the Report.

Page 9, stand part of the Report.

Page 10, with amendment, stand part of the Report.

Page 11, stand part of the Report.

To adopt the Draft Report, as amended, as the Final Report of the Committee.

2. Hon Gavin Pearce MP

Minister for Primary Industries and Water – Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania

Minister for Veterans' Affairs – Department of Premier and Cabinet

RESOLVED—

Pages 1 and 2, stand part of the Report.

Pages 3 and 4, with amendments, stand part of the Report.

Pages 5 and 6, stand part of the Report.

To adopt the Draft Report, as amended, as the Final Report of the Committee.

3. Hon Jane Howlett MP

Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events – Tourism Tasmania

Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events – Department of State Growth

Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence – Department of Premier and Cabinet

Minister for Racing – Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania

RESOLVED—

Pages 1 and 2, stand part of the Report.

Pages 3 to 6, with amendments, stand part of the Report.

Page 7, stand part of the Report.

To adopt the Draft Report, as amended, as the Final Report of the Committee.

4. Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP

Premier – Department of Premier and Cabinet
Premier – Ministerial and Parliamentary Support
Premier – *The Office of the Governor*
Premier – Brand Tasmania

RESOLVED—

Pages 1 and 2, stand part of the Report.

Pages, 3 to 7, with amendments, stand part of the Report.

Pages 8 and 9, stand part of the Report.

To adopt the Draft Report, as amended, as the Final Report of the Committee.

5. Hon Felix Ellis MP

Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management – Department of Police, Fire and
Emergency Management
Minister for Skills and Training – Department of State Growth
Minister for Business, Industry and Resources – Department of State Growth

RESOLVED—

Pages 1 and 2, stand part of the Report.

Pages 3 to 8, with amendments, stand part of the Report.

Page 9, stand part of the Report.

To adopt the Draft Report, as amended, as the Final Report of the Committee.

6. Hon Jo Palmer MLC

Minister for Education – Department of Education, Children and Youth
Minister for Children and Youth – Department of Education, Children and Youth
Minister for Disability Services – Department of Premier and Cabinet

RESOLVED—

Pages 1 to 6, stand part of the Report.

To adopt the Draft Report, as amended, as the Final Report of the Committee.

Other Business

1. Statements – Minister Howlett and Minister Ogilvie legal proceedings

Ms *Webb* raised statements made to this Committee from the Premier in relation to Minister Howlett and Minister Ogilvie's legal proceedings and the subsequent information released by the Premier following Estimates.

RESOLVED, write to the Premier raising the Committee's concerns in relation to statements made and provide Premier with opportunity to address this matter.

2. Presentation for Tabling Final Reports

RESOLVED, the final reports of the Committee be presented for tabling by Ms Webb in the Legislative Council on Friday, 19 June 2026.

3. Minutes from Today's Meeting

RESOLVED, the Chair sign off on today's minutes on behalf of the Committee.

Adjournment

At 11:06 am the Committee adjourned *sine die*.

DATE 17 June 2026

CONFIRMED

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Rosmary Arncliffe".

CHAIR

Deputy Premier
Attorney-General
Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation
Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs
Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Level 10, 15 Murray Street, HOBART TAS 7000

GPO Box 123 HOBART TAS 7001

Phone 03 6165 7678

Email Barnett.correspondence@dpac.tas.gov.au



10 JUN 2026

Julie Thompson
Committee Secretary - Estimates Committee B
Legislative Council Select Committee
By email: julie.thompson@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Ms Thompson

In response to the Chair's request of 1 June 2026 for further information resulting from the examination of the Estimates relating to the Attorney-General and Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation portfolios, I provide the following information.

DIVISION 6 – DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Overview

- 1. How many Acts that fall under the Department of Justice purview that have received royal assent but are yet to be proclaimed or fully proclaimed. Please provide a list of these acts. (RA)**

Introduction

This response relates to Acts that can commence on proclamation, if they are yet to be proclaimed or are not fully commenced. As noted below, this includes reasons such as implementation is under way, or further amendments are required.

The response does not include some legacy provisions that are not possible to commence, such as because they were to amend provisions that no longer exist or were otherwise subsequently amended.

Acts not yet proclaimed

Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation

Commission for Children and Young People Act 2025

- To be proclaimed later this year when the appointment process for the new Commissioner for Children and Young People has concluded and the new appointee is able to start in the role.

Magistrates Court (Criminal and General Division) (Consequential Amendments) Act 2019, Magistrates Court (Criminal and General Division) Act 2019, Restraint Orders Act 2019

- Commencement of these Acts is related to the finalisation of development of Justice Connect, a whole-of-justice reform program designed to replace legacy systems with a

modern, digital platform, called Astria. This will enable the Criminal and General Division legislative framework to commence, bringing substantive legislative and operational reform. The Restraint Orders Act is included in this reform as the restraint order provisions are currently in the *Justices Act 1959*, which will be repealed when the other Acts commence.

Consumer Affairs

Residential Building (Home Warranty Insurance Amendments) Act 2023

- Commencement of the Act can only occur once an insurer is engaged. A tender process was undertaken in 2024, with no insurer appointed. The Government is considering its options to ensure appropriate consumer protection mechanisms are available for residential home builders in Tasmania and the Building Financial Assistance package continues, with cover consistent with the proposed parameters of the Home Warranty Insurance scheme.

Electricity Safety Act 2022

- After a significant regulations-making project, the regulations and Act are expected to commence 31 August 2026.

Second-hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Amendment Act 2003 (and related Part 12 of the Justice and Related Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2006)

- The *Second-hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Amendment Act 2003* included amendments to refine some existing provisions, and new provisions such as a new duty to verify proof of identity in addition to the existing obligation for documentary proof of identity to be provided, notifying prescribed transactions to police, and an offence to alter or remove serial numbers. Part 12 of the *Justice and Related Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2006* included related amendments. However, neither proceeded to commencement under the then Government.
- Earlier this year, the Department began a project to review any necessary changes to the *Second-hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Act 1994* in relation to improving operation of the Act and has held consultations on targeted issues. This work may supersede these unproclaimed provisions.

Parts of Acts not yet proclaimed

Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation

Justice and Related Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2024

- The Act has commenced other than Part 2 which amends the Coroners Act in relation to matters relating to inquests, including family violence matters.
- As discussed by the Leader of Government in the Legislative Council at the time of passage of the Bill, the provision to commence by proclamation was to ensure there was opportunity to consider the implementation of the amendments, including court processes and any resourcing impacts.
- In 2025, the Tasmania Law Reform Institute (TLRI) accepted a referral from the Tasmanian Government to undertake a comprehensive review of the *Coroners Act 1995*. The TLRI has released an Issues Paper to support public consultation, with responses due by 27 July 2026.

Sentencing Amendment (Phasing Out of Suspended Sentences) Act 2017

- The Act has commenced other than sections 8, 10 and 19 relating to phasing out of suspended sentences. The commencement provisions in the Act provide for a report from the Sentencing Advisory Council to be laid before the Houses, which the Council provided in November 2021. The tabling of this report means the Minister may at a later time lay before the Houses a notice of intention to commence sections 8, 10 and 19.

Legal Profession Act 2007

- Section 661(2) is unproclaimed and would rescind the *Rules of Practice 1994*. Subsequent to passage of the Act, amendments were made to the Rules of Practice 1994, rather than rescinding them to remake Rules. This provision will be proclaimed in future if there is a need to rescind the Rules.

Family Violence Act 2004

- Section 38 remains unproclaimed. Section 38 relates to prescribed persons informing a police officer of suspected family violence occurring. It was found during implementation of the Act and subsequent reviews that the volume of reports from the large group of people captured by s38 – including duplicative reports – would cause various challenges for the family violence system. This included concern that mandatory reporting could create a disincentive for victims to present for needed care and treatment. The section has therefore not been proclaimed to date.
- The Department of Justice *Strengthening Our Responses to Family Violence in Tasmania: Family Violence Act 2004 and Related Legislation Discussion Paper (November 2025)* noted this unproclaimed section. The Department of Justice is developing the first tranche of reforms following the community consultation period and continuing to consider consultation feedback on the paper.

Consumer Affairs

Retail Leases Act 2022

- Sections 2 and 88 have commenced, which continues the relevant Code of Practice for Retail Tenancies. Given issues with the Act identified as the Bill passed through the Parliament, significant further stakeholder engagement and policy work has been undertaken on this Act.

2. **Please provide a comprehensive, table formatted breakdown of all consultancies for the 2025–2026 period, specifying for each:**
 - a. **The amount paid to each consultancy**
 - b. **The purpose of the consultancy**
 - c. **Whether the consultancy is Tasmanian based or operating from another location (MW)**

Please refer to Attachment 1.

3. **Is the Department of Justice currently responsible for any digital or ICT upgrade programs which are either in development or implementation across areas such as HR management, data, service delivery, and program management? In addition, please identify any such programs that were completed in 2025 or are ongoing from the 2025–2026 period. (MW)**

Please refer to Attachment 2.

4. **Please provide the implementation plan for the Justice Connect project, including what has been spent in each year to date since commencement of the project, and what is budgeted to be spent in each year going forward, through to completion. Please also provide detail on what has caused delays to the project to date. (MW)**

Please refer to Attachments 3 and 4.

Output Group 1 - Administration of Justice
Output Group 1.1 - Supreme Court Services

1. Why is the northwest disproportionately effected in relation to population in the total numbers by case load. (CH)

At 25 May 2026:

- The split of Supreme Court criminal non-appeal **lodgements** by region was:

Location	No.	% of Total
Burnie	143	27%
Hobart	255	47%
Launceston	139	26%
TOTAL	537	

- The split of Supreme Court criminal non-appeal **pending matters** by region was:

Location	No.	% of Total
Burnie	207	24%
Hobart	443	51%
Launceston	220	25%
TOTAL	870	

- The split of Supreme Court criminal non-appeal **finalisations** by region was:

Location	No.	% of Total
Burnie	167	27%
Hobart	277	44%
Launceston	183	29%
TOTAL	627	

Output Group 1 - Administration of Justice

Output Group 1.4 - Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

1. Can you provide an update on TASCAT's operations since the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (Additional Jurisdictions) Act 2025 came into effect on 1 July 2025. What impact has the reform had on the organisation, and can you provide a comprehensive table, including the number of matters have been considered since the legislation came into effect (MG) [proposed Tabled Document]

Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (Additional Jurisdictions) Act 2025

This Act was proclaimed on 1 July 2025. It conferred a range of jurisdictions upon the Tribunal including: the transfer of 64 review rights from the Magistrates Court under the jurisdiction of the *Magistrates Court (Administrative Appeals Division) Act 2001*, the amalgamation of the Property Agents Tribunal, the transfer of review rights of decisions of the Police Review Board under the *Police Services Act 2003* from the Supreme Court; and created two new review rights under the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1998* and the *Disability Rights, Inclusion and Safeguarding Act 2024*.

The Act restructured the Tribunal's Streams to create three new Streams (Administrative Stream, Occupational and Disciplinary Stream, Community Children and Families Stream). The Act also merged two existing Streams into other Streams of the Tribunal (Forestry Stream was moved into Resource and Planning Stream, Health Practitioners Stream was moved into Occupational and Disciplinary Stream).

The Act made a range of amendments to the *Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2020* (the TASCAT Act) which replicated provisions of the *Magistrates Court (Administrative Appeals Division) Act 2001* to enable policy continuity on the hearing and determination of proceedings.

Section 86A has been added to the TASCAT Act in relation to the Tribunal giving reasons. This section is part of transferring matters from the Administrative Appeals Division to TASCAT as well as providing a general provision in the TASCAT Act about giving reasons and how it may do that. It includes requirements for the contents of reasons and power for the Tribunal to provide reasons through the provision of transcripts or recordings of hearings.

Schedule 2, Part 8, Clause 9 of the TASCAT Act has been amended. Clauses 9(1), (2) and (3) have been removed from Part 8. This has removed the provisions related to the 90-day timeframe for matters in the Resource and Planning Stream. Detailed information about this amendment and how the Tribunal will manage proceedings in the Resource and Planning Scheme is provided in the information sheets of that Stream. The case management of matters in the General Division will be standardised as far as possible.

Lodgements

Under the savings and transitional provisions of the Act, the Tribunal was transferred 35 matters from the Magistrates Court and Property Agents Tribunal on 1 July 2025. As of 30 April 2026, 21 of those matters have been finalised by the Tribunal.

From 1 July 2025 until 30 April 2026, the Tribunal has received the following number of lodgements under the new jurisdictions conferred on the Tribunal.

Stream	Number of Lodgements	Number of Live Files at 30 April 2026
Administrative Stream	26	7
Community, Children and Families Stream	8	7
Occupational and Disciplinary Stream	44 (55)*	31 (for all proceeding types)

* The figure in brackets includes disciplinary proceedings under the Health Practitioners Tribunal Act/National Laws that existing with the Tribunal prior to 1 July 2025.

The following table shows the full breakdown of proceedings based on legislation.

<i>Health Practitioners Tribunal Act/National Law</i>	11	20%
<i>Local Government Act 1993 (Code of Conduct)</i>	13	23.5%
<i>Property Agents and Land Transactions Act 2016</i>	13	23.5%
<i>Occupational Licensing Act 2005</i>	9	16%
<i>Security and Investigations Agents Act 2002</i>	2	4%
<i>Teachers Registration Act 2000</i>	5	9%
<i>Conveyancing Act 2004</i>	1	2%
<i>Police Service Act 2003</i>	1	2%
TOTAL:	55	100%

Impact on Organisation

The number of lodgements of proceedings under the new jurisdictions conferred on 1 July 2025 is currently 75 as of 30 April 2026.

By way of comparative analysis, in the financial year 2024-25 the Magistrates Court received 14 matters under the Administrative Appeals Division. The Tribunal has received 65 matters under those same Acts as of 30 April 2026. The Tribunal anticipates, given the current trends, that these new jurisdictions may reach around 100 lodgements for the financial year. This is a number of lodgements comparable to the Resource and Planning Stream.

The additional powers conferred on the Tribunal by virtue of Section 86A have increased the efficiency of the Tribunal. The new provision empowers the Tribunal to issue a statement of reasons by means of transcription of oral reasons given in a hearing (Section 86A(7)) as long as those reasons comply with Section 86A(6) of the Act. The Tribunal has implemented new transcription software which allows for the transcription of oral reasons and has permitted the Tribunal to more efficiently issue its determinations under the new powers.

Output Group 2 - Legal Services
Output Group 2.1 - Crown Law

1. Provide number of FTEs across Office of the Solicitor-General, Office of the Crown Solicitor and the State Litigation Office from 2023 to 2026. It would be appreciated if the dates are consistent across the years for each agency. (MG)

Office Title	31-Mar-23		31-Mar-24		31-Mar-25		31-Mar-26	
	Head count	FTE	Head count	FTE	Head count	FTE	Head count	FTE
Crown Law Administration	3	3	5	5	6	5.1	8	5.85
Office of Crown Solicitor	33	33.34	36	33.59	37	33	39	35.14
Office of Solicitor General	29	28	7	7	5	5	7	7.00
Office of the State Litigator	0	0	23	21.69	22	21.54	27	26.40
TOTALS	65	61.34	71	67.28	70	64.64	81	74.39

*Please note that due to a typographical error the 31 March 2026 figure for the State Litigator was incorrectly stated as 25.4 during the Estimates Committee hearing on 1 June 2026. The correct figure of 26.4 is included in this table.

2. Please provide data for 2024-25 and 2025-26 to date on complaints regarding non-compliance with the Model Litigant Guidelines? (MW)

No complaints relating to the Model Litigant Guidelines were made for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 periods using the Department of Justice's Complaints Framework.

The State Litigator has received correspondence in which it is asserted that aspects of the conduct of matters were not consistent with the Model Litigant Guidelines. Often these concerns have, upon assessment, been misconceived or based on a misunderstanding of the operation of the Guidelines.

The Office ran a specific in-house continued legal education session on Model Litigant training in April this year. This is part of its continued legal education program and similar sessions will run on a regular basis, including with guest speakers. Former Justice Robert Benjamin and Michelle Benjamin ran a continued legal education session in November 2025 regarding trauma informed legal practice. It was tailored for the office, focussing on the civil litigation environment.

Output Group 3 - Corrections, Rehabilitation and Enforcement

Output Group 3.1 - Prison Services

1. Please provide an update on the current funding status and the data on enrolments and completions for all Family Violence Intervention Programs offered. (MW)

The Tasmania Prison Service (TPS) is funded to deliver family violence programs through two sources.

There is funding provided through the State Government to employ rehabilitation and reintegration staff members who deliver programs. There are currently 30 staff in six facility-based teams, who provide case management and programs to prisoners. These teams utilise the Risk-Need-Responsivity model to underpin the criminogenic practices delivered by the TPS.

As all the TPS programs facilitators deliver a broad range of programs and other interventions it is not possible to accurately say how much funding is dedicated to family violence intervention from this funding source. All TPS programs facilitators are skilled and trained to provide clinically evidence-based interventions for family violence offenders and this remains a focus area for the TPS.

Funding has also been received from the Commonwealth Government, with an initial grant of \$1.5 million from the Australian Government Department of Social Services under Innovative Perpetrator Responses, and a further boost of funding of \$1.86 million until 30 June 2028. This funding will allow for the employment of 6 FTE staff members to deliver the Innovative Perpetrator Response Program - *Respectful Men*.

The TPS's *Respectful Men* program is available to remandees held in custody for family violence offences and provides a targeted intervention to lay the foundation for addressing the underlying cause of offending.

Between 1 July 2025 - 31 March 2026 there have been the following enrolments and completions for family violence related programs:

- Respectful Men: Education for Safe Families
 - Enrolments: 17
 - Completed 13
- Violence Prevention Program
 - Enrolled: 8
 - Program still ongoing at the end of the reporting period.

A Family Violence Offender Intervention Program (FVOIP) is also about to commence in the minimum-security Ron Barwick Prison.

Output Group 5 - Justice Support Services
Output Group 5.3 - Office of the Public Guardian

1. **Provide information about complaints that might have been received about the Office of Public Guardian in the past year in relation to:**
 - a. **How many complaints were received?**
 - b. **What generally were complaints in relation to?**
 - c. **How many were resolved and concluded?**
 - d. **How many remain outstanding? (RA)**

The Public Guardian is an independent statutory officer established under the *Guardianship and Administration Act 1995* (the Act). The Act requires the Public Guardian to:

establish procedures for the handling of complaints that are applicable in circumstances where the Public Guardian is appointed as a guardian for a represented person (s.70(a))

For the period 1 July 2025 – 1 June 2026:

- a. 32 complaints were received. These related to 10 complainants. Only 2 complainants were represented persons under the Act, with the remaining 8 consisting of family members and/or external interested parties.
- b. Consistent with Section 70(1)(a) of the Act, the complaints were generally related to areas of decision making (support services, access/contact arrangements, and access to information about a represented person).
- c. As at 1 June 2026, all of these complaints are considered resolved.
- d. As at 1 June 2026, no complaints remain outstanding.

Yours sincerely,



Hon Guy Barnett MP
Deputy Premier
Attorney-General
Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation
Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs
Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Attachments:

1. Response to Question 2 – Overview – Breakdown of Consultancies
2. Response to Question 3 – Overview – Justice ICT Projects and Programs
3. Response to Question 4 – Overview – Astria Implementation Plan
4. Response to Question 4 – Overview – Justice Connect Finances.

Estimates Committee B – Legislative Council Select Committee 2026 – Questions on Notice

DIVISION 6 – Department of Justice - Overview

2. Please provide a comprehensive, table formatted breakdown of all consultancies for the 2025-26 period, specifying for each:
- the amount paid to each consultancy
 - the purpose of the consultancy
 - whether the consultancy is Tasmanian based or operating from another location (MW)

Table 1. Building and construction related consultant costs paid by the Department between 1 July 2025 and 31 March 2026

Output	Project	Consultancy	\$	Tasmanian
Corporate Services	State Litigation Office Relocation	BPSM	59,343	Yes
	Community Corrections Launceston	Cumulus Studio	10,290	Yes
	Swale Drain / Carpark	JMG	32,736	Yes
	RPC HVAC	JMG	10,700	Yes
	Cambridge Park Relocation	Philp Lighton Architects	267,970	Yes
	Interim Maintenance	Security Consulting Group	18,916	No
	Community Corrections Burnie	Xsquared Architects	67,896	Yes
Corporate Services (Major Projects)	Correa Unit	JBS&G	40,691	No
	Burnie Court	Matrix Management	104,006	Yes
	New Risdon Kitchen	Matrix Management	21,600	Yes
	Burnie Court	Pitt and Sherry	33,930	Yes
	New Risdon Kitchen	Pitt and Sherry	10,120	Yes
	Electronic Security Upgrade	Security Consulting Group	279,717	No
	New Risdon Kitchen	Security Consulting Group	13,547	No
	LRP ESS Upgrade	Security Consulting Group	15,200	No
	Burnie Court	Xsquared Architects	1,715,426	Yes
	New Risdon Kitchen	Xsquared Architects	133,615	Yes
	Correa Unit	Xsquared Architects	240,806	Yes
	Electronic Security Upgrade	Xsquared Architects	19,405	Yes
			3,095,913	

Table 2. Goods and services related consultant costs paid by the Department between 1 July 2025 and 31 March 2026, excluding those paid by independent offices

Output	Project	Consultancy	\$	Tasmanian
Consumer, Building and Occupational Services	CBOS Organisational Development	Cathkin Co	21,580	Yes
	CBOS Organisational Development	Resolve Solutions	25,855	Yes
	Financial Assistance Package Building Inspections	Sedgwick Australia Finance	16,695	No
Commission for Children and Youth People	Business Analysis	2PM Services	70,272	Yes
Community Corrections	Facilitation Services	Positive Interaction	12,501	Yes
Corporate Support	Business Analysis	2PM Services	83,387	Yes
	PlanBuild – Project Manager	2PM Services	23,800	Yes
	PlanBuild – Systems Transition Manager	2PM Services	125,627	Yes
	Investigation Services	Edge Legal; Finding Facts and Solutions; KordaMentha Paula Sutherland and Associates	58,592 19,850 179,660 26,680	Yes Yes No Yes
	Ergonomic Assessments (multiple projects)	Elevate OT Services and Tasmanian Ergonomic Collaborative	23,988	Yes
	ED16 (Tatarka) Review	Foley's List	56,395	No
	Actuarial Review of Redress and Civil Claims Liability	GM Actuaries	51,035	Yes
	ICT Cloud Infrastructure	Intuit Technologies	26,093	Yes
	Third Party Review of Backlogs in the Tasmanian Court System 2026	Lloyd Babb SC	47,015	No
	Interagency Collaboration Regarding High-Risk Violent Extremists Project	Praxis Advisory	22,250	No
	Halo System Implementation	Process Panda	77,581	No
	Burnie Court – Business Analysis	The Project Lab	103,952	Yes

ATTACHMENT 1

Output	Project	Consultancy	\$	Tasmanian
	Review of Workplace Behaviour Policies	The Project Lab	34,843	Yes
Crown Law	Project Management – Visualfiles	2PM Services	44,850	Yes
Justice Connect	Business analysis services	GMC Advisors	40,480	Yes
	Enterprise Architect	Ignite Project Services	191,238	Yes
	Project oversight and quality assurance services	Quill Australia	44,776	Yes
Justice Support Services	Business Analysis Services – RWVP	2PM Services	38,173	Yes
Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner	Recruitment of Anti-Discrimination Commissioner	Orchard Talent Group	26,667	Yes
Supreme Court	Review of Site Security	Alexander James Consulting	13,300	Yes
	ICT Review	Laconic Partners	38,900	Yes
Tasmanian Electoral Commission	Funding and Disclosure development	Kiryn Taylor	83,869	No
	TEC Strategic Planning	You Who Group	15,600	No
Tasmanian Planning Commission	North West Transmission Line Assessment	Barker Ecosystem Services	30,780	No
	Wind Farm Assessment	Entura Marshall Day Acoustics	26,611 13,031	Yes No
Tasmania Prison Service	TPS Strategic Planning	Amovita Consulting	23,000	No
	Review of Innovative Perpetrator Program	ARTD Consultants	27,001	No
	Clinical and Reintegration Support	Catherine Garrington	14,867	No
	Current State Intelligence Review	Intelability	25,000	No
	Review Inmate Intake and Reintegration Services	Melanie Thomas	29,468	No
WorkSafe Tasmania	Drill and Blast Assessment	Blast management International	11,800	No
			1,847,062	

Table 3. Consultants engaged for the Office of the Implementation Monitor (OIM), between 1 July 2025 and 31 March 2026

Organisation	Project	Consultancy	\$	Tasmanian
Office of the Implementation Monitor	Methodology and Evaluation Framework	First Person Consulting	69,465	No
	Legal Advice	Corrs Chambers Westgarth	11,315	No
			80,780	

Table 4. Consultants engaged for the Office of the Independent Regulator (OIR), either by the Department as part of the setup of the Office, or the Office itself, between 1 July 2025 and 31 March 2026

Organisation	Project	Consultancy	\$	Tasmanian
Office of the Independent Regulator	Legal Advice	Corrs Chambers Westgarth	28,753	No
			28,753	

Table 5. Consultants engaged on behalf of the Sentencing Advisory Council between 1 July 2025 and 31 March 2026

Organisation	Project	Consultancy	\$	Tasmanian
Sentencing Advisory Council	Third Edition of Sentencing in Tasmania	University of Tasmania	20,000	Yes
			20,000	

Table 6. Legal services and independent medical and other related advice costs incurred by the Department between 1 July 2025 and 31 March 2026, excluding those incurred by independent offices

Output	Project	Provider	\$	Tasmanian
CBOS	EGCOL IT solution	Clayton Utz	28,560	No
Corporate Services	Justice Connect	Minter Ellison	54,487	No
	ReadyCase IT solution Upgrade	HWL Ebsworth Lawyers	32,765	Yes
Crown Law	AIC related legal matters	Catherine Scott	74,000	Yes
	AIC related legal matters	CN Dockray SC	38,044	Yes
	AIC related legal matters	Dobson Mitchell & Allport	117,021	Yes
	AIC related medical matters	Dr James Jewell	16,150	No

ATTACHMENT 1

Output	Project	Provider	\$	Tasmanian
	AIC related medical matters	Dr Victor Lau	18,350	No
	AIC related legal matters	HWL Ebsworth Lawyers	844,914	Yes
	AIC related matters	Naomi Bryant	11,125	Yes
	AIC related legal matters	Ogilvie Jennings	58,635	Yes
	AIC related legal matters	Page Seager	354,024	Yes
	AIC related medical matters	Red Health Independent Medical Assessments	13,556	No
	AIC related medical matters	Ross Blandford Vocational Consulting	10,278	No
	AIC related matters	Technical Assessing Holdings	14,461	No
	Salmon Farming	Ashurst Australia	35,725	No
	Development of construction documentation	Phillip Greenham Lawyer	21,082	Yes
Justice Support Services	RWVP IT solution	Clayton Utz	84,935	No
Tasmanian Electoral Commission	TEC legal matter	Paul Turner	23,525	Yes
Tasmanian Planning Commission	Stadium Due Diligence	Andrew B Walker	40,400	Yes
	Stadium Due Diligence	Michael O'Farrell SC	11,700	Yes
			1,903,737	

Estimates Committee B – Legislative Council Select Committee 2026 - Questions on Notice

Division 6 – Department of Justice - Overview

3. Is the Department of Justice currently responsible for any digital or ICT upgrade programs which are either in development or implementation across areas such as HR management, data, service delivery, and program management? In addition, please identify any such programs that were completed in 2025 or are ongoing from the 2025–2026 period. (MW)

Project/Initiative Name	Category	Status	Phase	Comments
WorkSafe Tasmania Accreditation and Licensing systems replacement	Service delivery	Active	Planning	
Victims Support Case Management System	Service delivery	Active	Planning	
Digital Communications Transformation Project	Service delivery	Active	Planning	
PolyClarity (Polycom) replacement/upgrade	Service delivery	Active	Planning	
TASCAT Guardianship case management system upgrade	Service delivery	Active	Implementation	Significant Program
Case Management system upgrade program	Service delivery	Active	Planning	
Coroners Court case management system project	Service delivery	Active	Planning	Significant Program
Electrical and Gas Online Certificate system	Service delivery	Active	Planning	
In-Cell Digital Technology (TPS)	Service delivery	Active	Planning	Significant Program
Crown Law Practice Management system replacement	Service delivery	Active	Implementation	
Supreme Court Transcription systems replacement	Service delivery	Active	Implementation	
Justices of the Peace Management system	Service delivery	Active	Planning	
Registration to Work with Vulnerable People system replacement (RWWVP-E)	Service delivery	Active	Implementation	Significant Program
PlanBuild system	Service delivery	Active	Implementation	Significant Program
Compliance and Dispute Resolution system	Service delivery	Active	Implementation	

ATTACHMENT 2

Information Security Strategic program	Program management	Active	Planning	Significant Program
Courts AV Equipment upgrade	Service delivery	Completed	Closed	
Births, Deaths and Marriages Digitisation	Service delivery	Completed	Closed	
Magistrates Court court recording upgrade	Service delivery	Completed	Closed	
Crown Law Practice Management system upgrade	Service delivery	Completed	Closed	Significant Program
New Burnie Court Complex ICT Infrastructure	Service delivery	Active	Planning	
Web services platform upgrade	Service delivery	Completed	Closed	
Operations Infrastructure program of work	Program management	Active	Ongoing	
TRx Pilot – Supreme Court	Service delivery	Complete	Closed	
Justice Connect – Release 3 (Astria)	Service delivery	Active	Implementation	Significant Program

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Division 6 – Department of Justice - Overview

- 4. Please provide the implementation plan for the Justice Connect project, including what has been spent in each year to date since commencement of the project, and what is budgeted to be spent in each year going forward, through to completion. Please also provide detail on what has caused delays to the project to date. (MW)**

Justice Connect Draft Implementation Plan Summary

Introduction

Purpose of the Program Plan

This Revised Program Management Plan (PMP) establishes the general framework of how the remaining implementation activities will be governed and executed. The PMP identifies the planned costs, key milestones, program methodology, and governance for execution of the recommencement of the Justice Connect Program Implementation Phase.

This document is primarily to govern the recommencement of Release 3 of the Program, following completion of the ECMS Scoping Phase and execution of a contract deed of variation. While Releases 2.1 and 2.2 are included for resource planning and budget, these Releases will continue to be managed and executed using the original program plan (DOC/19/64888).

The PMP will be used by the Project Manager and the Justice Connect Steering Committee to ensure the delivery of Program outputs and the realisation of Program outcomes, as well as a baseline to monitor progress and costs for the Program.

This will be a living document, reviewed and amended to meet changing conditions or objectives during the Program's life cycle.

Executive Summary

The Justice Connect Program ("the Program") is a major digital transformation project being undertaken by the Tasmanian Department of Justice (DOJ) to modernise criminal justice systems, processes, and transference of information. The Program delivers the Astria System, a contemporary, integrated matter management solution that replaces outdated legacy systems and establishes a digital, optimised environment that is modern, unified, integrated, accessible, and secure.

The Program has already made significant progress in delivering key Releases for the State. Earlier Releases include live solutions for Tasmanian Prison Service (2025), Community Corrections (2025), and the Supreme Court's Jury system (2022). The remaining scope will include key deliverables for Tasmania's Magistrates Court, Police Prosecution, Office of the Director of Public Prosecution (ODPP), Parole Board, and the Eligible Persons Register.

The Magistrates Court will adopt the "ECMS solution" provided by the vendor. Scope for this includes addressing any discrepancies to meet Tasmanian legislative requirements. Functionality introduced after scope agreement or that is not driven by legislation is out of scope and tracked as potential future enhancements.

Implementation of this plan will be executed through a structured four-stage approach over the course of 24 months. Each stage will include independent key deliverables and cost. Each stage will include key decision points regarding acceptance of completed work, approval to proceed with remaining work, as well as strategies for funding, resourcing, and risk reduction. Program budget and provisions extend to 2028–29 to accommodate post-Go-Live support, risks, dependencies scope additions (including Supreme Court re-entry).

The overall vendor delivery costs for the remaining identified implementation work associated with Release 3 is capped at \$8.0M under revised contract agreements. There are contingency funds planned for change requests and contractors, if necessary. Total Program funding is provided in Appendix A and includes cost considerations for vendor, internal staff, contingencies, and projections in the event of Supreme Court re-entry. Ongoing operational support following program completion is funded separately through a support agreement managed by DOJ Enterprise Systems Support (ESS).

The Supreme Court is considered within the broader scope of the Program, however, it is not included in the current delivery scope. Any inclusion of Supreme Court functionality will be subject to a future decision, and will require dedicated scoping, funding, and resource approval. Re-entry would require a rigorous scoping phase to establish fully developed scope, schedule, budget, and resource planning. This Program Plan includes provisional planning assumptions to support future decision-making regarding budgeting and resources should the Supreme Court elect to re-enter the Program.

Delivery of the remaining work is a shared responsibility across all stakeholders. It is subject to key risks and dependencies, including funding & staffing approvals, active participation of business outputs, alignment with legislation, inter-agency coordination, & factors pertaining to external partners, such as CAPIM. These risks will be monitored and managed in DevOps using procedures outlined in this plan.

Initiation

In 2016 the Government commissioned two external reviews to examine issues with the delivery of key justice services. Program planning commenced during 2017/18 with the development of a SIIRP, which was approved by Treasury in February 2018. The program was mobilised from March 2018 to undertake current state analysis and develop the procurement strategy and timeline. From these reviews and recommendations, the Astria concept (a contemporary end-to-end Justice System) was conceived, and the Justice Connect Program was established.

The Justice Connect Program will address shortcomings with existing systems, processes and data supporting the criminal and correctional jurisdictions managed

by the Department of Justice. It will replace outdated technologies with a contemporary architecture that is modern, integrated, secure, and efficient.

The Astria solution will enact the new *Magistrates Court (Criminal and General Division) Act 2019*, which contains a number of changes from the Act it replaces (the *Justices Act 1959*). This includes significant changes to processes, procedures and regulations.

Background

Procurement

The program undertook due diligence with other jurisdictions to understand the current state of jurisdictional solutions and any change plans in place to replace or modernise their current systems.

A Request for Tender (RFT) was released on 14 September 2019 to seek a solution made up of one end-to-end solution or multiple integrated partial solutions.

Following a comprehensive evaluation process, a Vendor-led consortium was announced as the Department's preferred vendor in June 2020.

Implementation

The Implementation Phase commenced in April 2021 with the initial focus on the delivery of a new criminal justice system.

The Jury Management system went live in November 2022 and members of the public have been interacting with that system since March 2023.

The Corrections component of Astria (Release 2) successfully went live in April 2025 to support the Tasmania Prison Service and Community Corrections.

The Courts and Prosecutions components of Astria (Release 3) experienced delays due to multiple factors. In late 2023, the Courts and Prosecutions stream (Release 3) implementation was put on hold.

To address the time delays, the Program Steering Committee at the time approved the adoption and modification of the Courts Administration Authority of South Australia (CAA) system called ECMS (Electronic Courts Management System) in February 2024. At this time the Supreme Court withdrew from the program.

In April 2024, a Scoping Phase was initiated for the ECMS system. The Scoping Phase concluded in October 2025, resulting in a revised Implementation Plan, Sprint Plan, and cost to complete the Program.

- As of March 2026, the current delivery schedule does not include Supreme Court implementation activities. However, for the purposes of this Program plan, provisional scope, schedule resourcing, and cost estimates, the

Supreme Court has been included in order to inform budget and planning decisions. Re-entry to the Program is pending a formal decision.

- The Parole Board module is planned to go live in 2026.
- The Victim Support Services module is planned to go live in 2027.

Objectives, Outcomes and Outputs

Program Vision

The Program vision statement was formulated by the Program Team in conjunction with the Justice Connect team's Agency Executive:

Justice Connect will implement the “Astria” system, which will transform operation of the justice system for all Tasmanians. Slow, outdated and inaccurate systems and processes will be things of the past. Astria will be efficient, reliable and accurate to support a fair, just, and safe Tasmania.

Objectives

The overall objective of the remaining Implementation Phase is to deliver a production-ready Astria solution for the Parole Board, Eligible Persons Register, Magistrates Court, ODPP and Police Prosecutions to support Tasmanian criminal justice.

The following high-level objectives are a guide for how the scope for the Program is to be delivered:

- **A modern and contemporary court and prosecution capability that is future-ready**
 - Manual and duplicated effort is minimised through new processes that span across functional silos, improving efficiency and service quality.
 - Digital transformation of current paper-based practices will improve efficiency, accuracy and availability of information.
 - Court orders and prisoner sentencing information is clear, correct, consistent and trusted between all users of this information.
 - Bail information is correct and consistent between all parties that use this information.
 - The Astria system will become the one trusted source of truth.
- **Streamlined end-to-end throughcare of defendants, offenders and victims**
 - Throughcare of offenders and victims is streamlined and optimised through enabling digitisation of processes, information, and intelligent automation.

- 360-degree integrated view of offenders and their journey through the justice system.
- Prisoners are released at the right time.
- Information to assist in the care of prisoners and their re-integration to society is automatically distributed to relevant parties in a timely manner.
- Information supporting victims of crime is timely and correct.
- Key person dependencies and human error are reduced.
- **Improved access to justice through timely and accurate information available for all stakeholders.**
 - All users of the Tasmanian Justice System have access to secure, timely, trustworthy and helpful information.
 - Access is simple, online, user-centric and intuitive.
- **Public and user-centric digital experience**
 - Systems are designed for useability and with the 'user experience' in mind.
 - Access to and display of information is relevant and tailored to the profile of the user to facilitate a meaningful engagement experience.
 - Public will have improved ability to engage within the justice system through in-person and online channels.
 - Systems have accessibility features to include support for a diverse range of cultural and demographic needs.
- **Reusable platform approach**
 - The platform can be leveraged and scaled for future inclusion of the wider justice community, supporting the court's civil justice function, the tribunal initiative and other future case management, reporting, analytics and integration requirements.
 - Business continuity risks are reduced through a well architected system and operating environment.

Outcomes

Outcomes indicate whether the Program has met its objectives and are, therefore, a measure of the success of a project. The Program outcomes have been defined as:

Label	Outcome
Customer experience	Timely access to justice services for participants improves victim and offender support
Easy to use	All system participants can easily access, update and exchange information
Information access	Participants can easily access information when and where it is needed

Makes work better	The solution will strengthen cooperation, teamwork, time to think, meaningful work, and staff motivation.
Process improvement	Simpler, more efficient workflows deliver improved accuracy and the flexibility to adapt to change.
Quality data	Enforced standards of quality and trust for management of information.
Source of truth	A central, shared and secure data store that is a trusted source of truth.

Outputs

Outputs are the tangible deliverables created during the life of the Program and handed over to the Program Business Owners. The primary output of the Program is the Astria system, which will replace complex, outdated, manual, inward-looking, and non-integrated legacy systems, as well as paper-based business processes, with modern, integrated, fit-for-purpose modular systems utilising the Elite and eSeries platforms.

The table below illustrates the remaining deliverables and the systems they are replacing.

Release	Module	Functional Area	Current System	New System	Purpose
2.1	Elite Offender Management system	Parole Board	Manual	Elite	Support the Parole Board Secretary and team in management of parole application process, scheduling Parole Board meetings, and recording outcomes.
2.2	Victims Register	Justice Support Services	JOIST	Elite	Support the Eligible Persons Register team within Justice Support Services (Victims Support Services).
3	ECMS	Magistrates Court	CRIMES	eCourt	Supports the Courts and Prosecutions functions, as well as integration with the Elite Offender Management component of Astria. Elite will require configuration and development updates to accommodate the integration. A structured
	eProsecutor	ODPP	Visual Files	eProsecutor	
	eProsecutor	Police Prosecution (DPFEM)	PROS	eProsecutor	
	Astria Integration	Magistrates Court, ODPP, Police Prosecution, Community Corrections, TPS			

Release	Module	Functional Area	Current System	New System	Purpose
	External Interfaces	Astria to external systems			Sprint Plan will execute the implementation of the revised scope.

Constraints

Project constraints define a project's limitations. The Program faces the constraints listed below. The impact of each constraint on the Program, mitigations already in place, and existing risks being managed in relation to these constraints, are also shown.

Category	Description	Impact	Mitigations
Resources	Court & Prosecutions operations must continue without disruption during Program delivery. This limits the availability of Magistrates, clerks, administrators, and other operational staff to support project activities - such as providing requirements, resolving issues, validating and accepting new functionality, and making decisions.	High	• Program utilises Program resources and Court knowledge, where possible, to reduce dependence on operational staff. • Magistrate's Court resource has been funded by Program to mitigate Output resource limitations • Project activities are scheduled to minimise disruption to Court operations Related Risks Risk 46757
Resources	Program must be delivered within government funding allocations approved through appropriate budget processes.	High	• Program to employ staff and reduce utilisation of contractors to reduce cost. • Program will be implemented through a staged approach that is designed to optimise internal resourcing and manage expenditure. Related Risks: Risk 46756
Resources	Program must be delivered within approved staffing allocation.	High	• Program plan defines the resources required to deliver the Program as planned • The Department will support appropriate approvals to support recruitment of staff and contractors, as required for delivery

Category	Description	Impact	Mitigations
Resources	Vendor resource capacity is allocated based on delivery timeframes defined in the contract.	Medium	• Program schedule and effort will be well developed through collaboration with the vendor in the Scoping Phase and monitored throughout the project • This will be measured against terms once a signed contract is executed Related risks & issues: Risk 46786 Issue 43222
Schedule	Delivery of interfaces and data migration between Courts, Prosecution, and DPFEM (CAPIM) requires closely aligned Go-Live dates within limited windows due to training requirements, interdependent access to data, and temporary manual processes to support transition.	High	• DPFEM has employed a vendor to develop CAPIM data model. • Program schedule developed with acceptance of CAPIM dependency. Related risks: Risk 10261 Risk 11939 Risk 30738 Risk 30329
Schedule	Delivery of interfaces with third-party systems is limited by access to external partner environments (auxiliary & live), access windows, required updates to live systems, product releases, and deployment scheduling.	High	• Early engagement and coordinated planning with partner agencies • Auxiliary environment planning to reduce reliance on live external systems • Escalation through Program governance
Schedule	Delivery of integrations depends on ongoing operational use of Elite, including production support, release management, and implementation of new data and functionality.	High	• Coordinate with ESS on management of production environments • Structured implementation plan for upgrades to support integration
Scope	Following the February 2024 strategic decision to adopt ECMS, the Supreme Court withdrew from the Program. Court scoping and validation activities will be limited to the Magistrates Court and Prosecutions scoping and validation activities will be limited without Supreme Court integration.	High	• Planning was on the basis that Supreme Court is not currently participating in the Program. • Any future re-entry would require separate consideration of scope, schedule, funding, and contractual impacts. • Any future change will be managed through the change control process

Category	Description	Impact	Mitigations
Scope	Any future legislative changes are explicitly excluded from the current Program scope.	Medium	Any new legislative requirements will be managed through the change control process. Related Risks Risk 46755
Scope	The <i>Magistrates Court (Criminal and General Division) Rules 2025</i> are currently in draft and not expected to be finalised until mid-2027. The Program will therefore proceed with implementation while the Rules are still being finalised.	Low	- Legislation & Regulation Sub-Committee actively maintain a register of refined rules and required legislation changes or refinements. - Changes in implementation required to address downstream Rule changes will be managed through the change control process. Related risk: Risk 39040
Scope	The scope, schedule, and costing are based on work items produced during the Scoping Phase, such as User Stories and Discrepancies.	Medium	Changes from original scope will be managed through the change control process.
Scope	Maintaining the principle of judicial independence limits the extent to which Judges and Magistrates can be required to adopt systems and processes beyond legislative requirements.	Medium	- Early and ongoing engagement with Courts to align system design with business processes - Engagement with key Court stakeholders authorised to represent the Courts throughout the design, implementation, and testing of the system
Governance	Decisions on adoption of new processes, policies, and support is dependent on coordination and agreement from multiple agencies (Justice and DPFEM).	Low	Formal Program governance forums provide inter-agency decision-making

Dependencies

Dependencies are conditions that exist outside of the Program's direct control that are required for delivery. Dependencies are monitored and managed throughout the Program through governance, inter-agency coordination, and defined Program risk management.

Category	Description	Impact	Mitigations
Resources	System design, validation, testing, and acceptance activities depend on participation from key Court, Prosecution, and Corrections stakeholders - such as SMEs, PMs, Product Owners, and users - with appropriate authority and knowledge of business processes.	High	Engagement with Courts and Prosecution stakeholders is planned throughout the Program.
Resources	Successful Go-Live and system adoption depend on Courts, Prosecutions, and Corrections active participation in preparation, training, documentation, stakeholder engagement, and other planning activities.	High	Engagement with Courts and Prosecutions stakeholders is planned throughout the Program to support readiness and adoption activities.
Schedule	Delivery of Astria depends on the CAPIM system being implemented by DPFEM in time to support data integration and common person identifier development to reconcile across Police Prosecution in eProsecutor and Police data in the Atlas system.	High	Program schedule developed in coordination with DPFEM. Inter-agency governance forums, such as steering committees, provide oversight of integration planning and delivery.
Schedule	Astria and CAPIM implementation depends on closely aligned Go-Live dates due to inter-agency data models, training requirements, access to exchanged data, temporary manual processes during system transition, and operational readiness of each agency.	High	Integrations are coordinated across agencies to align architecture, deployment, training schedules, and Go-Live readiness.
Schedule	Delivery of integration between eCourt and Tasmania Police systems is dependent on the on-time transition of the existing FVMS system to the Atlas system.	Medium	- Ongoing engagement with Project Unify to align timelines and define requirements for integration of FMVS information - Establish interim processes with Project Unify in the event of delivery delays
Schedule	Astria integration delivery depends on timely completion of data commonisation initiative, including standardisation of offence codes across systems.	High	- Ongoing engagement with IAS to support initiative and align timelines - Iterative validation of offence codes

Category	Description	Impact	Mitigations
Schedule	Data migration and integration depend on receiving vendor confirmed alignment with the process described in the Data Migration Plan and the approach and level of engagement from stakeholders noted under Assumptions in this plan.	High	• Early engagement with vendor regarding data migration process • Early visibility of target system staging tables and integration requirements & rules • Project management to ensure stakeholder engagement
Schedule	Data migration and integration depend on timely definition, agreement, system integrity, and validation of business and technical requirements to ensure alignment of exchanged data between systems.	High	• Early engagement with data exchange partners • Define data owners for each system • Commonised data mapping and structuring activities
Schedule	Data migration and integration depend on establishing a complete data structure in eProsecutor and eCourt to support specification and development.	High	• Execution of the Sprint Plans within the scheduled timeframes • Early visibility of staging tables • Early development of requirements user stories and specifications
Schedule	Implementation of the new system depends on the <i>Magistrates Court (Criminal and General Division) Act 2019</i> and the <i>Magistrates Court (Criminal and General Division) Rules 2025</i> being finalised on schedule as at mid-2027 and ready for proclamation at the time of Go-Live.	High	• Changes in implementation required to address downstream Rule changes will be managed through the change control process. • Changes and refinements in Rules required to address downstream implementation changes will be maintained and managed through the Justice Connect Legislation & Regulation Sub-Committee action register & governance.
Scope	Implementation of Astria depends on vendor delivery of required environments, configuration, integrations, and other supporting implementation activities that are contractually agreed.	High	• Vendor role is well defined in contract. • Vendor delivery is monitored through ongoing engagement and Program governance

Relevant Government Policy, Legislation & Rules

Relevant laws that are current – These laws will be replaced once the *C&G Act* is proclaimed:

- *Justices Act 1959*
- *Justices Rules 2003*
- *Justices (Restraint Order) Rules 2023*

- *Justices (Review) Rules 2004*
- *Justices Regulations 2023*
- *Justices Order 2004*

Relevant laws that are new – either not made yet or not “commenced” that will accompany the C&G Act:

- *Magistrates Court (Criminal and General Division) Act 2019*
- *Magistrates Court (Criminal and General Division) Rules*
- *Restraint Orders Act 2019*
- *Restraint Order Rules*
- *Supreme Court (Review) Rules*
- *Magistrates Court (Fees) Regulations*
- *Magistrates Court (Restraint Order Fees) Regulations*
- *Director of Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading (Limitation Periods) Order*
- *Magistrates Court (Criminal and General Division)(Related Amendments) Act*
- *Magistrates Court (Criminal and General Division)(Consequential Amendments Act (No 1) 2019*
- *Magistrates Court (Criminal and General Division)(Consequential Amendments Act (No 2)*

Relevant laws that are there now and will still apply once the C&G Act comes in:

- *Jury Act 1899 – this one is repealed (it’s not law any more)*
- *Court Security Act 2017*
- *Magistrates Court Act 1987*
- *Bail Act 1994*
- *Bail Regulations 2024*
- *Magistrates Court (Children's Division) Act 1998*
- *Magistrates Court (Children's Division) Rules 2012*
- *Corrections Act 1997*
- *Sentencing Act 1997*
- *Youth Justice Act 1997*
- *Criminal Code Act 1924*
- *Family Violence Act 2004*
- *Evidence Act 2001*
- *Evidence (Children and Special Witnesses) Act 2001*
- *Evidence (Audio and Audio Visual Links) Act 1999*
- *Domestic Violence Orders (National Recognition) Act 2016*
- *Police Offences Act 1935*
- *Records of Offences (Access) Act 1981*
- *Electronic Transactions Act 2000*
- *Community Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2005*
- *Vehicle and Traffic Act 1999*

- *Road Safety (Alcohol and Drugs) Act 1970*
- *Dog Control Act 2000*
- *Firearms Act 1996*
- *Monetary Penalties Enforcement Act 2005*
- *Interstate Transfer (Community-based Sentences) Act 2009*
- *Victims of Crime Compensation Act 1994*
- *Forensic Procedures Act 2000*
- *Listening Devices Act 1991*

Related Projects & Programs (CAPIM)

The CAPIM project is being delivered by the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management (DPFEM) and will replace existing data exchange processes currently managed through the CRIMES system. It will provide the integration layer and data model required to exchange information between Tasmania Police (Atlas) and the Astria system.

Delivery of CAPIM is planned in two phases. The first phase will establish the CAPIM platform and integrate it with Tasmania Police (Atlas). The second phase will implement the interface to exchange information bi-directionally with Astria.

The delivery of CAPIM interfaces is a critical dependency for the Justice Connect Program, as the exchange of incident reporting information between police and justice systems must be operational prior to Go-Live of the eCourt and eProsecutor modules.

The Justice Connect Program will work closely with DPFEM to coordinate architecture, interface specifications, data models, testing, and Go-Live sequencing to ensure both programs remain aligned.

Program Delivery Methodology

The Justice Connect Program uses a hybrid agile approach, blending a waterfall planning phase with agile execution methodologies. This approach provides the Department with a constant review and feedback loop as the Program progresses, plus the delivery of testable Astria releases that represent larger development cycles.

Agile is a project management philosophy, used especially for software development, which focuses on continuous incremental improvement through small and frequent releases. The Program utilises the Agile Scrum framework,

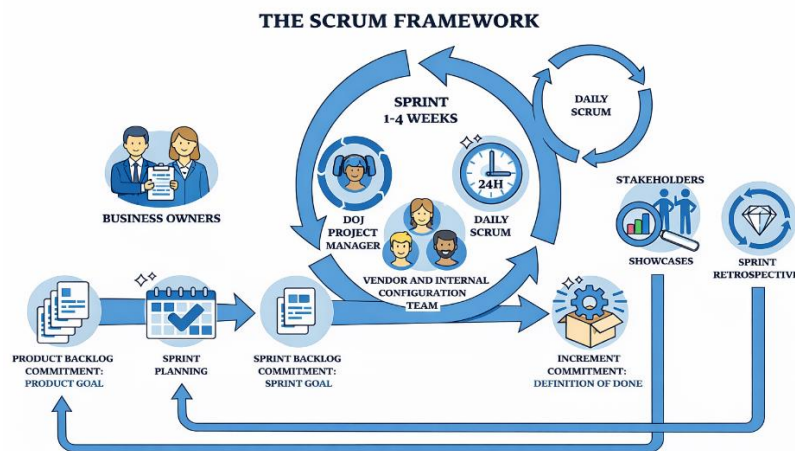
characterized by the division of tasks into short, fixed length pieces of work, and frequent reassessment and adaptation of plans.

In Scrum a project is split into “Sprints” consisting of a set of functionality (“Agile Work Items”) that can be developed within an allocated fixed time frame. Sprint sequencing and effort allocation are based on estimated effort days per Agile Work Item and collectively form the basis for vendor effort, cost, and delivery schedule. Proposed Sprint lengths for the Implementation Phase of the Program are one month.

An Agile Work Item is a specific, actionable unit of work used to plan, track, and manage projects, the smallest of which are User Stories, concise, user-focused descriptions of desired goals.

Configuration and development of the User Story work items will occur within each Sprint, with functional demonstrations and formal verification testing performed by Output staff in the subsequent Sprint. Full User Acceptance Testing and sociability/integration testing will be performed at the end of each release.

The diagram following demonstrates the Agile Scrum framework being used.



Success Criteria

The Program success criteria are the standards that define how the Program will be measured to determine whether it has been successfully executed in accordance with Program measurables, such as approved scope, schedule, budget, quality, as well as stakeholder acceptance and system readiness for adoption.

Program Management Success Criteria

Program Management Success Criteria focus on the effectiveness of management & governance over approved scope, schedule, cost, time, and successful delivery of the Program.

Program management is achieved when the following conditions are adhered and met:

- Governance
 - An approved governance structure is established with clear expectations
 - Governance forums, such as meetings, are attended according to their schedule and structure to ensure project status updates are provided
 - Governance membership is multi-disciplined and inter-agency with participation from all internal and external stakeholders
 - Product Owners are updated at least once per week
 - Program quality assurance activities are well-planned, executed, and reported
 - Disputes and conflicts are managed through escalation pathways defined within Program governance and contractual agreements
 - Key decisions will be recorded, tracked, and managed in a central [Decision Log](#) to ensure transparency, traceability, and accountability
- Schedule
 - Schedule is benchmarked, tracked, well-maintained, and updated regularly
 - Practical and achievable milestones are defined with clear entry and exit criteria to ensure they are appropriately implemented, approved, and monitored
 - Schedule-related risks, issues, and contingencies are reported and managed
- Scope
 - Product and Program scope is clearly defined and approved
 - Scope change is assessed, approved, recorded, addressed, and reported
- Budget
 - Budget and expenditures are tracked and reported
 - Cash-flow and carry-forward is estimated and reported
 - Program is managed within budget envelope
- Risks
 - Risk register is maintained and reported
 - Risk mitigation actions are evaluated, implemented, managed, and reported
- Issues

- Issues are tracked, managed, and reported.
- High-impact issues are prioritised and escalated if necessary
- Change Management
 - Changes impacting the business are communicated and managed
 - Changes are tracked, approved through executable change requests, monitored, and controlled
 - Change management activities are aligned and integrated effectively with Program stages and milestones
- Resources
 - Staff are provided with clear direction, priorities, guidance, and practical task assignments
 - Escalation points are provided for staff when necessary
 - Staff capacity and skills/experience are balanced with work requirements

Program Product Success Criteria

Program Product Success Criteria define how the remaining Justice Connect deliverables will be validated, accepted, and adopted in a live production capacity.

Affected Cohorts

Several cohorts will be involved with providing objective measurement and subjective feedback relating to the success criteria. The main ones are:

- System Users
 - Department of Justice
 - Tasmania Prison Service (TPS)
 - Magistrates Courts
 - Supreme Court (*subject to re-entry approval*)
 - Office of the Director of Public Prosecution (ODPP)
 - Community Corrections
 - Justice Support Services (Victims Support Services)
 - Parole Board
 - Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management (DPFEM)
 - Project Pantheon
 - Police Prosecution
 - Strategy and Support
- Governance bodies will provide feedback for some criteria
 - Program Decision Group
 - Justice Connect Steering Committee
 - SIMTC
 - Program governance sub-committees
- Non-Government Users
 - Legal Aid

- Private defense legal firms
- Members of the public

The business success criteria for configuration, data migration, and integrations requires relevant stakeholder groups to assess delivered functionality against the specific needs of their business unit.

To list all affected cohorts would be extensive but includes many users of the criminal justice system of Tasmania. The key representatives of these groups will be identified and engaged throughout the duration of the Program to provide ongoing feedback.

Timing

The success criteria will be measured progressively as each stage/function is completed.

- The first measurement will occur following Stage 1 using the Definition of Done.
- Feedback activities will be timed to avoid peak Program activities and operational periods and managed with intent to avoid feedback fatigue.

The planned success criteria are assessed against achievement of these milestones:

User Acceptance Tests (UAT) will be developed based on requirements and used to confirm functionality of the system. They will be conducted for each stage of the Program schedule.

Post implementation review will focus on the realisation of expected outcomes of the system.

Criteria and Methodology

Success will be measured using Agile methodologies as part of the Program delivery methods being used. Product acceptance occurs progressively through:

- Agile Work Item (User Story) acceptance
- Test Release acceptance
- Milestone acceptance
- Production Release acceptance

Success is measured using the “Definition of Done” and utilises structured tools and activities, such as User Acceptance Testing (UAT).

Definition of Done

The Definition of Done (DoD) is a set of criteria that an Agile Work Item must meet to be considered complete and releasable. It ensures consistent quality, reduces

technical debt, and provides a clear, transparent, and agreed-upon understanding of completion for the Program team.

Success will be measured against the **Definition of Done** for each Agile Work Item to confirm that the functionality meets the acceptance criteria.

The Definition of Done for the Program ensures the following criteria is achieved before exiting each stage:

- For Software Deliverables:
 - Configuration is complete as per ticket (Agile Work Item)
 - Unit tests are passed (by individual and by peer) and desired end state is implemented
 - Verification and Sanity testing are complete
 - Integration is complete and tested (where appropriate)
- For All Deliverables:
 - User or technical documentation has been reviewed and accepted by the Product Owner
 - Agile Work Item has gone through User Acceptance Testing against the acceptance criteria
 - Agile Work Item has been showcased to the Product Owner and is capable of Acceptance
 - The Product Owner has approved the story and will mark it as Complete

Agile Work Item Acceptance

Agile Work Item Acceptance confirms that the Definition of Done has been met and that the Deliverable has been reviewed and approved by the Product Owner in accordance with the approved Test Plan and meets UAT Test Plan closure requirements.

- Documented deliverables approved per the official approval process
- Satisfies the **Definition of Done**, which includes:
 - Configuration complete as per ticket requirements
 - Integration complete and tested (where applicable)
 - Data migrated from legacy systems is complete and accurate to an acceptable level in accordance with the Data Migration Plan and Test Plan
 - Unit tests passed
 - Documentation reviewed and accepted
 - Showcased to Product Owner and approved

Showcase is defined as a curated, scenario-driven demonstration of a product, platform, implementation, or technical capability designed to illustrate its features, performance, architecture, and business benefits to a target audience.

Test Release Acceptance

A Test Release is deemed to be accepted when:

- All Agile Work Items meet the criteria for the Definition of Done
- All required unit testing is completed and passed
- UAT is completed and all critical and major defects are resolved or accepted

User Acceptance Testing

User Acceptance Testing (UAT) is a formal and structured process undertaken by end users to confirm that Program deliverables:

- meet approved business, operational, and legislative requirements,
- are fit for purpose, and
- are suitable to be accepted and used in a live capacity.

UAT provides final business assurance prior to production deployment.

UAT will be conducted across three structured rounds, with each round increasing in realism, data fidelity, and acceptance rigor. Role-based test plans will be produced from the acceptance criteria and adhered to by users.

UAT will validate:

- End-to-end business processes
- Role-based functionality
- Process workflows, validations, approvals
- Forms, orders, applications, and all other document template generation
- Operational, statistical, and other reporting procedures
- User experience, procedural clarity, navigation, searchability, and functional efficiency
- User-visible data integrity and outcomes

System-level testing not readily used by end-users is excluded from UAT, such as:

- System and integration testing
- Data integration validation
- Performance and load testing (unless explicitly approved)
- Security and penetration testing
- Vendor internal QA activities
- Mock Go-Live activities

Milestone Acceptance

A milestone is accepted and has been met when:

- All related Work Items are completed and closed in DevOps
- Formal acceptance of the milestone is provided by signature
- All related invoices are processed upon acceptance

Production Release Acceptance

A minor or major release is deemed to be accepted when:

- UAT is passed when the Release is approved as meeting all acceptance criteria
- Release is deployed into the production environment
- Formal acceptance is provided by signature
- Hypercare completed and adoption achieved

Scope

In Scope

The scope for the overall Justice Connect Program is defined in the Statement of Work contained within the vendor implementation contract. The scope includes delivery of:

- Enhanced user experience through automated workflows, electronic forms, advanced system queries, document template generation, and secure data management
- eSuite public portal for external submissions and electronic disclosure delivery
- Integration with justice partner systems including Tasmania Police (Atlas), Corrections (Elite), and other external systems via the Department's Enterprise Service Bus ("JHub")
- Migration of legacy data from CRIMES, Visual Files (ODPP), and PROS (DPFEM)
- Enterprise reporting of Astria data from the Department Data Lake ("JMart")

The Program will implement the Astria system to replace existing Magistrates Court and prosecution case management systems with a modern electronic case management solution. Releases covered by this document include those listed below.

Release	Module	Functional Area	Current System	New System	Purpose
2.1	Elite Offender Management system	Parole Board	Manual	Elite	Support the Parole Board Secretary and team in management of parole application process, scheduling Parole Board meetings, and recording outcomes.

Release	Module	Functional Area	Current System	New System	Purpose
2.2	Victims Register	Justice Support Services	JOIST	Elite	Support the Eligible Persons Register team within Justice Support Services (Victims Support Services).
3	ECMS	Magistrate's Court	CRIME S	eCourt	Supports the Courts and Prosecutions functions, as well as integration with the Elite Offender Management component of Astria. A structured Sprint Plan will execute the implementation of the revised scope.
	eProsecutor	Public Prosecution (ODPP)	Visual Files	eProsecutor	
	eProsecutor	Police Prosecution (DPFEM)	PROS	eProsecutor	
	Elite Offender Management System	Corrections upgrades	Syscon	Elite	
	Astria Integration	Magistrates Court, ODPP, Police Prosecution, Community Corrections, TPS			
	External Interfaces	Astria to external systems			

Following completion of the Release 3 Scoping Phase, the vendor produced a Sprint Plan that defines which User Stories are to be delivered within each sprint (typically one month in duration). Sprint sequencing and effort allocation are based on estimated effort days per User Story and collectively form the basis for vendor effort, cost, and delivery schedule.

At the time of drafting, 564 User Stories have been prepared and included in the Sprint Plan. These represent the current backlog of requirements and their respective solution designs. Each User Story includes business process descriptions, acceptance criteria, complexity, estimated efforts, effort allocation, solution designs, and supporting documentation. Planned refinement activities will continue with the vendor and Product Owners throughout implementation to progress each User Story to full fidelity prior to build.

The User Story backlog is expected to evolve as requirements are refined and better understood. Minor changes will be managed as part of normal sprint planning and

refinement activities. Changes that impact approved scope, schedule, or cost will be managed through the change management process.

Out of Scope (Current Delivery Schedule)

The scope of Release 3 focuses on implementation for Magistrates Court and Prosecutions. The following items are currently included in the overall Program but inclusion in the delivery schedule will be managed through formal change and funding approval processes.

- Supreme Court case management functionality, including replacement of CCMS
- Civil court systems and related processes
- Functionality or activities not funded, not contractually included, or delivered under separate initiatives
- Document scanning and drive conversion
- Legislative changes introduced after approval of this Program Plan are excluded from the current scope and will be managed through formal change and funding approval processes.

Sprint Plan

The detailed Release 3 Sprint Plan for the eSuite delivery can be found in Appendix B and contains tables outlining User Story complexity, sprint sequencing, work allocation, and estimated effort. This will be maintained throughout implementation and referenced for governance, reporting, and prevention of scope creep. Complexity is determined by the highest level of development required to complete each respective user story.

eSuite User Story Config Level Complexity

Config Level	Purpose
OOTB	Base functionality with minor updates
Level 1	Config - Forms, Folder Views, Searches, Headers
Level 2	Config - Workflows, Security, Portal
Level 3	Config - Business Rules, Scripting, etc
Level 4	Config and Code - Data Development

eProsecutor Configuration Key Deliverables

The eProsecutor Sprint Plan delivers configured functionality within the following areas:

- Platform environment configuration and upgrades
- Security roles and permissions
- Matter initiation and lodgement
- Pre court matter management
- In-Court Processing – Hearing and Listings
- Secondary Lodgements
- Disclosure
- Post court processing
- Document Templates
- Reports

eProsecutor User Stories by Complexity

Complexity	OOTB	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Total	Document Templates
Total Build User Stories	16	184	124	56	2	381	225
Total Build Effort (estimate in Days)	11	318	286	233	20	868	113

eProsecutor User Stories by Planned Sprint

Sprint	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Total Build User Stories	36	54	34	69	68	34	11	16	41	18	0	0	381
Total Build Effort (estimate in days)	112	125	97	106	108	88	65	33	94	40	0	0	868

eCourt Configuration Key Deliverables

The eCourt Sprint Plan delivers configured functionality within the following areas:

- Platform environment configuration and upgrades
- Security roles and permissions
- Matter Initiation and lodgement
- Pre-court matter management
- Hearings and listings - In-court processing
- Secondary Lodgements
- Orders
- Post-court processing
- Financials
- Document Templates
- Reports

eCourt User Stories by Complexity

Complexity	OOTB	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Total	Document Templates
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Total Build User Stories	26	2	181	0	0	183	116
Total Build Effort (estimate in Days)	13	6	805	0	0	811	58

eCourt User Stories by Planned Sprint

Sprint	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Total Build User Stories	0	0	6	6	21	21	36	43	22	19	7	2	183
Total Build Effort (estimate in days)	0	0	9	30	65	86	106	226	174	82	23	10	811

Integrations & Interfaces

Astria will exchange information with multiple systems, both internal and external. Data exchanged between Astria components, such as eCourt, eProsecutor, and Elite, is considered an “integration” within the Astria environment, while data exchange with systems outside Astria is considered an “interface.” Both are integral parts of delivering a contemporary, unified justice system.

The Program will work closely with Data Owners and Stewards across all systems to ensure data used for integrations/interfaces, migration, and testing is accurate, consistent, and aligned. Data Stewards will act as the primary points of contact for data-related questions, validations, and issue resolution, with escalation paths to Data Owners where key decisions or approvals are required.

Interface / Integration System-to-System	Items (# of)	Exchanges (# of)
eCourt <> eProsecutor	2	11
eProsecutor to Elite	1	1
Elite to eProsecutor	1	1
eProsecutor to Third Party	4	7
eCourt to Elite	8	6
eCourt to Third Party	10	8
Elite to eCourt	3	7
Total	28	42

Data Migration

The Program will migrate data from three source legacy systems currently used within court and prosecution operations, as well as existing data in Elite. Common data will then be migrated back into Elite to support matching and alignment of offender records, orders, and other related data that will be shared across the Astria systems.

Data migration will initially be undertaken in an auxiliary environment to allow users to validate the data migrated into Astria for completeness, accuracy, and alignment across systems. Justice Connect will be responsible for the delivery with the vendor's support. A final migration will occur into the production environment as part of the go-live activities.

Delivery timelines are based on current assumptions regarding data volumes, data quality, system complexity, and stakeholder participation. Variations to these assumptions may impact the sequencing, effort, and overall schedule for migration activities.

Source System	Owner	Source Database	Destination
CRIMES	Magistrates Court	Lotus/Domino	eCMS
Visual Files – ODP	Director of Public Prosecutions	Visual files in SQL	eProsecutor
PROS – DPFEM	DPFEM	UniVerse - File System	eProsecutor
Elite	Department of Justice	Astria Data Lake	eCMS / eProsecutor / Elite

Environmental Planning

Justice Connect will operate across multiple environments. Management and responsibility of environment infrastructure, security, new release upgrades, data extract loading, and integration between Astria systems is governed in accordance with the Astria Technical Configuration and Release Management Strategy (v0.14). Effective coordination across all environments and all agencies will be required to support integration, data migration, configuration, testing, and deployment to production.

Environment	Systems	Host	Purpose
Astria	eProsecutor, eCourt, Jury+, Elite, Portals	Vendor	Core application configuration, development, testing, and production deployment

JSuite	JHub, JMart, JView	Justice Connect (DoJ)	Integration engine, data lake, and reporting environments supporting cross-system data flows
CAPIM	Integration Hub, PolMart/Universe, SSRS	DPFEM / CAPIM	External integration layer and data exchange with Police systems
DPFEM	Atlas, FVMS, Evidence.com	DPFEM / Unify	Police operational systems interfacing with eCourt/eProsecutor
DoJ	ClickSend, MS365, FinanceOne, Unity, FIND, Squiz, Empower, iBase, SIMS	Department of Justice (DoJ)	Supporting business systems for communications, finance, and operations
External	Motor Registry, SACStats, Electoral Commission, Addressify, Westpac Payment Gateway	External Agencies	External agency integrations for data exchange and reporting

Scope Management Methodology

Scope management processes deal with changes to the Program scope. This may be due to removing functionality that has been agreed to no longer be required, adding needs that were missed in the original requirements, or changing details from the original requirements which are now out of date with what is actually needed.

Triggers for a Review of Existing Scope

Review of existing Program scope may be triggered by:

- Change request to revise an existing requirement
- Ambiguous requirement with uncertainty
- Unavoidable change (e.g., legislative)
- Change request for a new requirement with significant benefit
- New or enhanced functionality included in vendor product release(s)

Scope Change Considerations

A scope change relates to changes in Program deliverables, such as functionality, requirements, sequencing. Some scope changes may also constitute contractual changes where they include variations to cost, schedule, deliverables, or responsibilities. Contractual changes apply to changes in the method in which the Program is contractually delivered and require formal amendment to the vendor agreement. These may include variations to cost, schedule, commercial terms, responsibilities, work allocation, and risk ownership.

When assessing a scope change, the following will be considered:

- Is the change within Program Team's control?
- Is it best implemented now or deferred?
- What are the budget or change request implications?
- What are the impacts to schedules and resource planning?

Scope Variation Registration Process

Once a potential scope variation has been identified, it is managed through the Scope Change Process defined in Confluence. This ensures the following process adheres to:

1. A change is proposed or identified through an appropriate channel (Program team member, governance group, business owner, Program sponsor, working group member, etc.)
2. The Project Manager, with the relevant assistance from subject matter experts, reviews the impact of the proposed change.
3. Required details pertaining to the scope change request are tracked (such as justification, potential impact, proposed benefits, scope extent) in the Change Request template.
4. Change Requests with no material impact on the project may be approved by the System Owner.
5. Scope changes deemed to have the potential to impact the project in a material way (cost, schedule, quality, variation to approved requirements) will be escalated to the Sponsor for review, which may then be referred to the Program Decision Group or Secretary for approval.

Supreme Court Scoping (considering re-entry)

Re-entry of the Supreme Court into the Program is not currently within the approved delivery schedule of the Program and remains subject to formal approval. Any reference to Supreme Court re-entry within this schedule is therefore for projection and forecasting purposes, should approval be granted.

If approval for Supreme Court re-entry is obtained, inclusion will impact scope, sequencing, resourcing, funding, and contractual arrangements and will require revisions to this plan and the planned stages.

Re-entry of the Supreme Court into the Justice Connect Program will further enhance the objective for a unified, end-to-end justice system across Tasmania. The current staged schedule has been designed to progress Magistrates Court and Prosecutions delivery independently, without reliance on Supreme Court participation. This ensures delivery momentum is maintained while preserving flexibility to incorporate Supreme Court requirements at a future point without disrupting in-flight and delivered functionality.

Supreme Court Scoping Phase

Supreme Court re-entry will follow a structured Scoping Phase, consistent with the approach previously undertaken for Magistrates Court and Prosecutions. This work will ensure Supreme Court requirements are fully defined, validated, and sequenced before configuration commences. The Department will also need to engage the

vendor to assess and agree necessary adjustments to the program. Agreed changes will be subject to formal approval through the Justice Connect Steering Committee and a contractual deed of variation to revise scope, cost, schedule, and risk allocation.

The Scoping Phase will include:

- Development of Supreme Court scenarios, outlining end-to-end processes and integrations with other agencies
- Validation of scenarios through workshops involving business and technical representatives
- Identification of functional or legislative discrepancies between existing processes and the ECMS solution
- Creation and validation of user stories to capture required configuration, including both gap and out-of-the-box functionality
- Formal endorsement of requirements by the Supreme Court Product Owner

Vendor agreement adjustments will include:

- Changes to approved scope and sequencing of work
- Impacts to the delivery schedule and stage structure
- Incorporation of Supreme Court work into existing Sprint Plan
- Reassessment of vendor and Department resourcing requirements
- Cost implications and funding requirements
- Updates to acceptance criteria, milestones, and payment structures

Project Teams

The Program is delivered through collaboration between multiple project teams across the Department of Justice, partner agencies, and contracted vendors.

- Justice Connect Program (Department of Justice)
 - **Jury** – Delivery of the Jury+ system (Release 1)
 - **Astria Prisons and Corrections (APAC)** – Delivery of Elite (Releases 2 & 3)
 - **Astria Victims, Court, and Prosecutions (AVCAP)** – Delivery of eCourt & eProsecutor (Release 3)
 - **Data, Architecture & Reporting Team (DART)** – Delivery of Astria data migration & statistical reports
- Partner Agency Projects
 - **Project Pantheon (DPFEM)** – Partner delivering eProsecutor & integrations
 - **CAPIM (DPFEM)** – Partner delivering the CAPIM Crimes replacement
- Vendors
 - **Vendor** – Primary vendor responsible for overall solution delivery and support
 - **Journal Technologies (JTI)** – Subcontractor delivering eCourt & eProsecutor
 - **Syscon** – Subcontractor delivering the Elite offender management system
 - **Jury Systems Incorporated** – Subcontractor delivering the Jury+ system

Release 3 Implementation Schedule

The schedule is structured into a 4-Stage approach. While implementation is planned over 24 months, the overall Program schedule considers dependencies, risks, scope additions, and post-Go-Live support activities beyond implementation.

The schedule outlines:

- What is delivered in each stage
- Progressive realisation of benefits
- Staging of effort and vendor costs through milestone-based payments
- Acceptance-based milestones aligned to deliverables

Each stage delivers demonstrable, production-ready outcomes with defined exit criteria, enabling schedule agility, pause points as needed, financial control of staged funding, and informed decision-making.

- Four stages of six months each, with clearly defined objectives and exit criteria
- Early delivery of ODPP module completed and as a go-live candidate in Stage 1

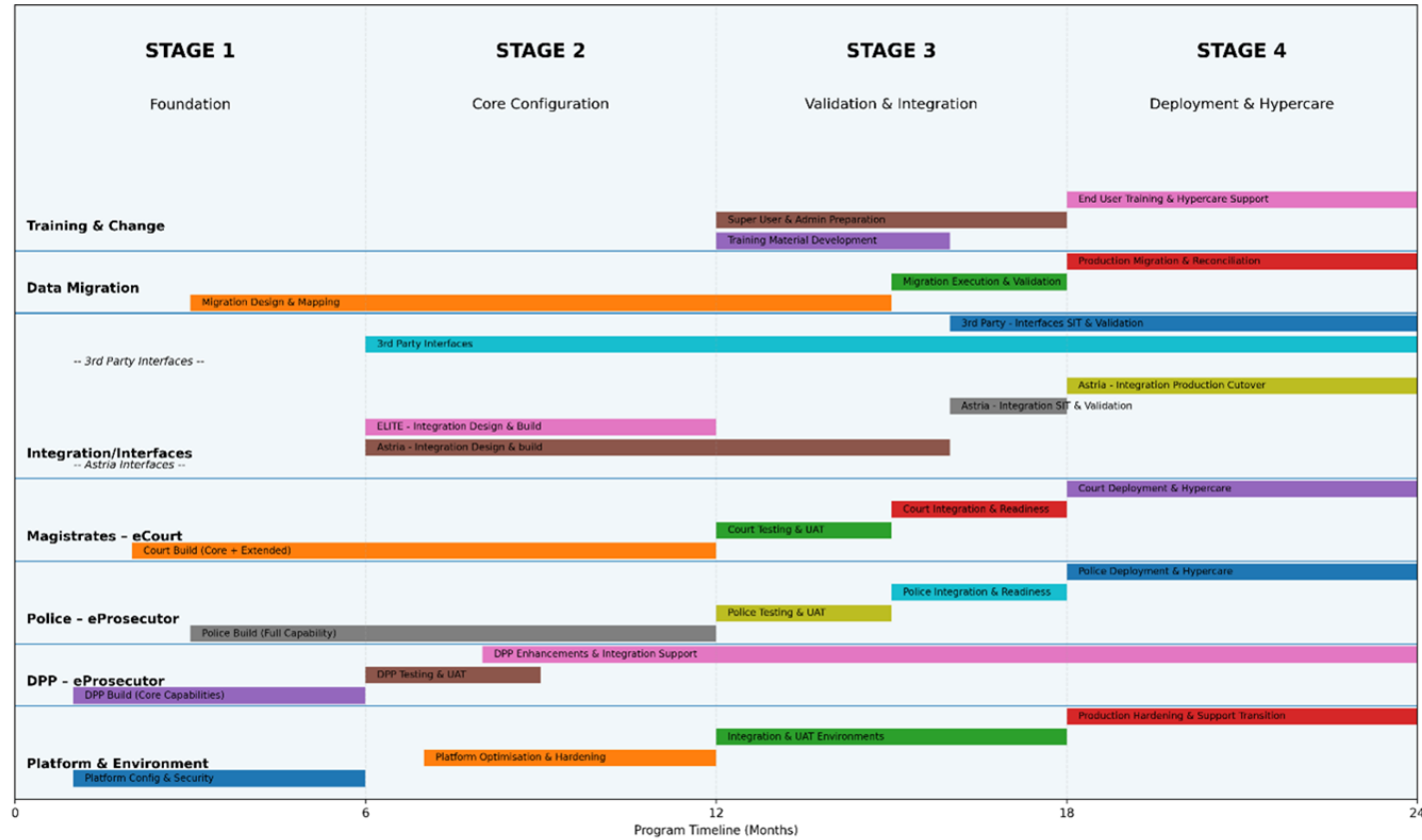
- Completion of all core system configuration within the first 12 months
- Validation of configuration, Astria integration, and legacy data migration is completed prior to production cutover
- Training provided and materials available for users prior to production cutover
- Final data migration executed at go-live, then smooth transition into hypercare
- Vendor costs for Release 3 capped at \$8.0M (ex GST) and governed through acceptance-based payment milestones
- Delivery stages & milestones will be time-boxed according to the approved schedule
- The schedule will be reevaluated during project planning and throughout the duration of the project inline with agile continuous improvement principles, which may include adjustments from the baseline as needed.

Project Delivery Stages & Timeline (24 Months)

Stage	Duration	Key Deliverables
Stage 1	Months 1–6	ODPP core configuration completion Police Prosecution Security, Matter Initiation, Pre-Court Magistrates Court Matter Initiation & Security
Stage 2	Months 7–12	Police core configuration completion Courts core configuration completion
Stage 3	Months 13–18	Courts & Police configuration validation and acceptance Legacy Data Migration completion into auxiliary environment Astria Integration completion
Stage 4	Months 19–24	Third-Party Interface Completion Justice Connect Reports Completion Final Data Migration to Production environment System Acceptance User Training Mock Go-Live Rehearsal Go-Live Hypercare

ATTACHMENT 3

Release 3 Roadmap



Configuration Effort Distribution (per Sprint Plan)

Stage	ODPP (days)	Police Prosecution (days)	Magistrates Court (days)	Total Effort (days)
Stage 1	189	246	405	836
Stage 2	0	433	406	835
Stage 3	0	0	0	0
Stage 4	0	0	0	0

- Per the Sprint Plan, the core configuration defined on the User Stories is scheduled to be built and ready for end-to-end testing by the end of Stage 2. Stages 3 & 4 will concentrate on data migration, data integrations, configuration updates to accommodate migration and integration, user training, and full validation of the built configuration.
- This represents the estimates for configuration of the software effort tracked on the Sprint Plan User Stories only and not the activities required to support, such as requirements gathering, training, or validation.
- Elite configuration updates will be planned and incorporated into the Sprint Plan once integration requirements, data mapping, and interface design are sufficiently defined and agreed. The scope, sequencing, and effort for these updates will be confirmed as part of planning and may be adjusted based on dependencies with across systems.
- Data migration activities within the schedule are indicative and based on current planning assumptions. Actual delivery timelines may vary depending on data complexity, validation outcomes, and stakeholder availability.

Project Stages / Releases

Stage 1 – ODPP Completion & Matter Initiation

Objective

Deliver the **Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP)** functionality end-to-end and available as a completed production candidate within the first six months, while commencing parallel Police and Courts configuration.

Delivered Capability

Program Role	Tasks and Effort Required
Director of Public Prosecutions – eProsecutor (Production Ready)	- Platform environment configuration & upgrades - Security roles and permissions - Matter initiation and lodgement - Pre-court matter management - In-Court Processing – Hearing and Listings - Secondary Lodgements - Disclosure - Post-court processing - Document Templates - Reports
Police Prosecutions – eProsecutor	- Platform environment configuration & upgrades - Security roles and permissions - Matter Initiation and lodgement - Pre-court matter management (25%) - Document Templates (25%)
Magistrates Courts - eCourt	- Platform environment configuration & upgrades - Security roles and permissions - Matter Initiation and lodgement - Pre-court matter management (25%) - Hearings and listings - In-court processing (25%)

Demonstrable Outcome

- ODPP eProsecutor module completed with the option to go live in production within six months and available for end-to-end validation
- Functional user security management
- Ability to initiate a matter in eCourt that has been lodged with the Magistrates Courts

Exit Criteria

- Viability of Production deployment of ODPP system evaluated
- All delivered functionality within Stage 1 User Stories have been delivered, demonstrated as being fit-for-purpose, and meet acceptance criteria

- All gaps & enhancement requests have been identified and assigned to future Sprints
- Bugs / defects are managed in accordance with the Test Plan and UAT Plan
- All deliverables have been showcased to product owner(s) and feedback has been provided and incorporated as needed
- All ODPP functionality defined in Stage 1 User Stories has been delivered and ready for end-to-end testing
- Security and Matter Initiation functionality for Court and Police Prosecution has been delivered and validated
- Stage Gate approval to proceed to Stage 2
- Signed acceptance certificate for stage milestones

Stage 2 – Core Configuration

Objective

Deliver the core configuration for Magistrates Court and Police Prosecution workflows.

Delivered Capability

Program Role	Tasks and Effort Required
Director of Public Prosecutions – eProsecutor	• UAT Completed • User Training Documentation
Police Prosecutions – eProsecutor	• Pre-court matter management • In-Court Processing – Hearing and Listings • Secondary Lodgements • Disclosure • Portal • Post-court processing • Document Templates • Reports
Magistrates Courts - eCourt	• Pre-court matter management • In-Court Processing – Hearing and Listings • Secondary Lodgements • Orders • Portal • Post-court processing • Financials • Document Templates • Reports

Demonstrable Outcome

- Courts and Police modules completed and ready for end-to-end validation

Exit Criteria

- All delivered functionality within Stage 2 User Stories have been delivered, demonstrated as being fit-for-purpose, and meet acceptance criteria

- All gaps & enhancement requests have been identified and assigned to future Sprints
- Bugs / defects are managed in accordance with the Test Plan and UAT Plan
- All deliverables have been showcased to product owner(s) and feedback has been provided and incorporated as needed
- Stage Gate approval to proceed to Stage 3
- Signed acceptance certificate for stage milestones
- Payment of milestones

Stage 3 – Validation, Migration & Integrations

Objective

Users to perform end-to-end system testing and begin preparing user training documentation. Complete migration of legacy data to new system and handover to users for validation. Complete integration of Astria systems.

Delivered Capability

Program Role	Tasks and Effort Required
Police Prosecutions – eProsecutor	• UAT Completed • User Training Documentation (25%)
Magistrates Courts - eCourt	• UAT Completed • User Training Documentation (25%)
Data Migration into Auxiliary System	• Visual Files - ODPP • Crimes – Magistrates Court • Pros – DPFEM
Astria System Integrations	• eProsecutor to eCourt • eProsecutor to Elite • eCourt to eProsecutor • eCourt to Elite • Elite to eProsecutor • Elite to eCourt

Demonstrable Outcome

- Legacy Data Migration completed and delivered to product owners for validation
- Astria Integrations completed and delivered to product owners for validation

Exit Criteria

- All delivered functionality within Stage 3 User Stories have been delivered, demonstrated as being fit-for-purpose, and meet acceptance criteria
- All gaps & enhancement requests have been identified and assigned to future Sprints
- Bugs / defects are managed in accordance with the Test Plan and UAT Plan
- All deliverables have been showcased to product owner(s) and feedback has been provided and incorporated as needed

- Accepted verification of Astria Integration functionality
- Stage Gate approval to proceed to Stage 4
- Signed acceptance certificate for stage milestones
- Payment of milestones

Stage 4 – User Training, Third-Party Interfaces, Production Readiness, Go-Live & Hypercare

Objective

Full system completion and Go-Live. Justice Connect will conduct the final migration of legacy data to the production system with support from the vendor and complete all third-party interfaces. Training documentation will be prepared and provided within a structured Program to users. Post Go-Live hypercare will commence and be supported by the vendor.

Delivered Capability

Program Role	Tasks and Effort Required
Police Prosecutions – eProsecutor	• User Training • Astria Integrated Testing • JSuite Statistical Reports • System Administration Training • Production Readiness Activities • Go-Live and Hypercare
Director of Public Prosecutions – eProsecutor	• User Training • Astria Integrated System Testing • JSuite Statistical Reports • System Administration Training • Production Readiness Activities • Go-Live and Hypercare
Magistrates Courts - eCourt	• User Training • Astria Integrated System Testing • JSuite Statistical Reports • System Administration • Production Readiness Activities • Go-Live and Hypercare
Data Migration into Production System	• Visual Files - ODPP • Crimes – Magistrates Court • Pros – DPFEM
Integrations / Interfaces	• All third-party interfaces to Astria completed • All Astria integrations Go-Live and Hypercare • All third-party interfaces Go-Live and Hypercare

Demonstrable Outcome

- Full system completion and acceptance
- Production system used in a live capacity
- Training documentation provided to users and available as operation manuals

- System Support team trained and managing incoming support tickets

Exit Criteria

- All delivered capabilities within Stage 3 User Stories have been delivered and migrated into the production system
- Bugs are managed in accordance with the Test Plan and UAT Plan
- Accepted verification of Astria Integration functionality
- All deliverables have been showcased to product owner(s) & feedback has been provided
- Business Outputs have confirmed operational readiness, including training, policies, business processes, and internal support
- Stage Gate approval to proceed to Go-Live
- Signed acceptance certificate for stage milestones
- All invoices paid

Sprint Plan Delivery & Engagement

Delivery of each Sprint is structured into 3 key cycles: requirements planning, configuration, & validation. Each sprint requires coordinated participation from the vendor, Program team, and Business Outputs, with the Outputs playing a critical role in all 3 cycles to ensure timely delivery and quality outcomes.

All User Stories will be managed in accordance with the established User Story Promotion Process documented in Confluence. This process defines the controls, acceptance, and promotion of User Story States from initial creation through to production release.

Sprints are currently planned on a four-week cadence in alignment with the approved Sprint Plan. Sprint duration may be adjusted to a two-week cadence where appropriate to optimise delivery in accordance with agile principles and Program governance. Consistent with iterative agile principles, additional work required to address defects, gaps, and enhancement requests will be assessed and assigned to future build sprints.

Sprint Planning (~12-16 Weeks Prior)

Sprint planning cycles will ensure that all user stories are fully defined, agreed, and ready for build in advance of their assigned Sprints. They will be loaded into a backlog 12-16 weeks prior to each Sprint to reduce the risk of rework, ambiguity, or delays during configuration. User Stories will proceed to development when the solution designs have been accepted and promoted to “Solution Accepted” by the Business Owner.

Activities

- Define and accept User Story requirements, acceptance criteria, and solution designs
- Define processes, policies, and other requirements at Outputs to adopt functionality
- Establish backlog of User Stories well in advance of configuration activities

Business Output Role (~3-5 hours per User Story)

- Provide clear, complete, and prioritised requirements aligned to operational needs
- Nominate the delegated decision-making authority for each functional area
- Participate in workshops and design sessions, as scheduled
- Validate and confirm proposed solution designs will be fit-for-purpose
- Socialise new functionality and processes within the agency

Configuration & Development Sprint (4 Weeks)

Each User Story will be broken down into work tasks and assigned to appropriate resources. The work will configure and develop system functionality based on User Story definitions. Program Team and Outputs will maintain early visibility and iterative feedback.

Activities

- Configuration of system functionality by vendor and Program team
- Development of integrations and program architecture
- Cross-functional working sessions
- Internal validations and quality assurance (QA)
- Regular visibility, demonstrations, and gathering of feedback of in-progress work
- Preparation of test plans
- Ongoing clarification of requirements and resolution of issues

Business Output Role (~3-5 hours per User Story)

- Provide timely clarification and decisions on configuration design issues
- Participate in scheduled working sessions and other activities
- Review in-progress work and provide timely feedback within 1-2 weeks of request
- Identify and raise issues early to support resolution within the sprint
- Maintain availability of SMEs to support rapid engagement
- Manage alignment of configured functionality to business needs

Post-Sprint Validation (4 Weeks)

Each Sprint will conclude with demonstrations of delivered functionality and meeting all exit criteria. Closure of User Stories will be subject to formal validation to confirm they meet the acceptance criteria and business needs.

Activities

- Formal showcases of completed functionality
- Validation of deliverables against defined acceptance criteria
- Execution of UAT activities as required for each Stage Gate
- Identification of defects and work that does not meet acceptance criteria
- Definition and assignment of additional work required on future Sprints
- Preparation of training and other documentation
- Closure of User Stories and all tasks

Business Output Role (~3-5 hours per User Story)

- Participate in formal showcases as the primary acceptance forum
- Validate functionality against approved requirements and acceptance criteria
- Provide clear decisions on acceptance or identified defects during showcases
- Participate in scheduled end-to-end UAT testing activities
- Complete internal review and approval processes within 4 weeks of showcases
- Prepare training and other documentation in preparation for Go-Live

Change Requests and Contingencies

The Sprint Plans include additional Sprints to address scope that was not included in the original planning. This could be from bugs/defects, minor gaps in delivered functionality, and/or new functional enhancement requests. These items will be identified, assessed, and managed to mitigate disruption of planned work.

Data Migration and Integration/Interface Cycles

Data Migration Cycles

The migration of legacy data will be delivered using an iterative Sprint Plan that runs in parallel with configuration and integration activities. Consistent with the Data Migration Plan, migration activities will progress through structured cycles of analysis, development, loading, and validation. Sprint planning will be aligned to the Program's two-week sprint cadence, with data load and validation cycles occurring weekly to ensure progressive refinement of data quality until complete.

Activities

- Data profiling, analysis, and source-to-target mapping
- Definition and validation of data transformation rules and business logic

- Development of data extraction, transformation, and load (ETL) processes
- Execution of data loads into staging and test environments
- Data reconciliation, verification testing, and issue identification
- Iterative refinement of data quality, mappings, and transformation logic
- Management of data migration defects, discrepancies, and rework through backlog
- Preparation for final production migration and Go-Live activities

Business Output Role (~3-5 hours per cycle)

- Validate source data fields map to correct data fields in destination systems
- Participate in data reconciliation and verification activities
- Provide timely decisions on issues, discrepancies, and acceptable thresholds
- Support identification of data cleansing requirements and business rules
- Confirm data is fit-for-purpose to support operational and legislative requirements

Data Integration & Interface Cycles

Integrations within the Astria system and interfaces with external systems will be delivered using an iterative Sprint Plan that runs in parallel with configuration and data migration activities. Consistent with the Integration Implementation Plan, activities will progress through iterative cycles of analysis, design, development, and validation. Sprint planning will be aligned to the Program's two-week sprint cadence, dependent on data structure readiness ("structure complete") and external partner engagement.

Activities

- Establish and maintain backlog of integrations and interfaces required to support Justice Connect systems
- Define business requirements and acceptance criteria through User Stories
- Define technical specifications (e.g. data mapping, schemas, triggers, and message formats)
- Coordinate with vendors and external partners to define responsibilities and ensure data continuity
- Development and configuration of integrations and interfaces
- Configuration updates required to support integration functionality
- Testing, including iterative system integration testing (SIT), and end-to-end validation
- Iterative resolution of defects, data alignment issues, and gaps
- Go-Live preparation, including UAT, user training, and operational readiness activities

Business Output Role (~3-5 hours per cycle)

- Validate business requirements of data exchanges between systems
- Confirm integration specifications meet operational and legislative requirements
- Participate in iterative testing and validation throughout development
- Participate in end-to-end testing and validation of integrated processes
- Provide timely decisions on issues, defects, and data discrepancies
- Prepare training materials and socialise processes throughout output agency
- Support coordination with external partners, as required

Stage Gate Reviews

Each stage will conclude with a formal Stage Gate Review to confirm delivery of agreed scope, validate readiness to proceed, and authorise release of associated vendor payments.

Stage Gate Reviews will:

- Confirm that all acceptance criteria and exit criteria for the stage have been met
- Demonstrate delivered capability against approved user stories and agreed scope
- Review risks, issues, dependencies, and residual impacts on downstream stages
- Assess financial position, including milestone acceptance, invoice approval, and forecast for downstream stages
- Provide informed decisions on how to proceed with the remaining work

Stage Gate Review approval authority will reside with the Steering Committee, following endorsement from relevant Product Owners and key operational stakeholders.

Legislative Delivery

Delivery of the Justice Connect Program is dependent on alignment with the proclamation of the *Magistrates Court (Criminal and General Division) Act 2019*. The Program is undertaking a structured legislative proclamation process in parallel with the software system delivery to ensure that all legislation, regulations, and court rules are finalised in time to support the implementation of Astria.

Significant progress has been made in developing the legislation. Drafts have been developed and circulated across key stakeholders, such as the Courts, Prosecutions, and the Justice Connect team. A consolidated round of feedback was received in February 2026 that will be reviewed and incorporated into an updated draft.

The timeframes outlined for the remaining work represent target estimate durations and are dependent on a number of internal and external factors, including stakeholder availability, government approvals, consultation periods, and Court decision-making processes.

Remaining Legislative Phases

- **Internal Consultation (~2-4 months)** – Drafts of eight legislative instruments are developed and refined with internal stakeholders across the Department of Justice and key stakeholders.
- **Legal Fraternity Consultation (~2-3 months)** – Draft instruments are released to the legal community, including the law society and bar association, for review and feedback
- **External Consultation (~2-4 months)** – Formal public consultation is undertaken for Government legislative instruments and rules are approved for broader consultation.
- **Consolidation and Finalisation (~2-3 months)** – All feedback is reviewed, incorporated, and consolidated into final draft instruments.
- **Approval and Submission** – Final legislative instruments are submitted to their respective approval bodies: Cabinet, Parliament, Executive Council, Courts

Supreme Court Schedule (considering re-entry)

Supreme Court Schedule (upon re-entry)

The current schedule assumes Supreme Court re-entry remains pending. If re-entry occurs, the following impacts apply:

- A dedicated requirements gathering and Scoping Phase of approximately six months will be required to align Supreme Court needs with the existing project schedule.
- Supreme Court scoping can be undertaken in parallel with early configuration stages for Magistrates Court and Prosecutions where funding and resourcing allow.
- Supreme Court core configuration is expected to take 6-12 months, which would span 1-2 stages. Determining which existing stages is subject to timing, funding, resourcing, and other factors.
- Configuration effort and validation activities may extend the overall timeline beyond the current 24-month schedule, depending on the timing of re-entry and funding approval. As a result, Supreme Court go-live may occur

concurrently with the other agencies or as a standalone deployment if the schedule is extended.

- A late-stage re-entry may result in increased operational, vendor, and legal costs, depending on the timing of the decision and availability of resources.
- Stage sequencing will be adjusted through Stage Gate Reviews to ensure in-flight activities are not delayed.

Estimates Committee B – Legislative Council Select Committee 2026 - Questions on Notice

Division 6 – Department of Justice – Overview

4. Please provide the implementation plan for the Justice Connect project, including what has been spent in each year to date since commencement of the project, and what is budgeted to be spent in each year going forward, through to completion. Please also provide detail on what has caused delays to the project to date. (MW)

Justice Connect Finances Correct as at 3 June 2026

Total Astria Funding to date (Not including CAPIM*)

- **\$35,169,725** in total funding
- Including Departmental contributions of \$2.95 million
- Total Government contribution - **\$32,219,724**

Cost Breakdown - Year on Year

Financial year	Project expenditure
2017-18	\$233,235.00
2018-19	\$1,661,169.00
2019-20	\$2,304,986.00
2020-21	\$5,305,552.00
2021-22	\$6,782,715.00
2022-23	\$5,068,717.00
2023-24	\$6,160,798.00
2024-25	\$6,160,818.00
2025-26	\$2,329,926.00
Total	\$36,008,158.00

* CAPIM is the Crimes and Prosecution Information Management system that DOJ is funding for DPFEM to prepare that agency's downstream systems for the commencement of the eCourt and eProsecutor modules of Astria.

- My Department has been allocated \$35.2 million over the life of the program. This includes \$3.2 million for the DPFEM CRIMES Replica Interface Replacement project to enable Astria to integrate with various DPFEM information systems as part of the Justice Connect Program.
- Additional funding of \$3.2 million has been secured from alternative sources, including the department's retained revenue, bringing the total program budget to \$38.4 million.
- Work is currently underway to finalise the estimated costs, and additional funding requirements will be considered by the Department through normal budget process.

Deputy Premier
Attorney-General
Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation
Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs
Minister for Environment and Climate Change

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10 JUN 2026

The Hon Rosemary Armitage MLC
Chair, Legislative Council Estimates Committee B
Parliament of Tasmania

By email: julie.thompson@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Chair,

Questions on Notice- Legislative Council Estimates Committee B - Division 2 – Integrity Commission

I refer to the letter dated 1 June 2026 requesting additional information following the appearance on 1 June 2026 before the Legislative Council Estimates Committee B.

The Integrity Commission has responded as follows to the questions you have raised:

Question 1: For 2023-24, 2024-25 and current 2025-26 year to date, please detail what the Integrity Commission has spent on legal fees, and please itemise this expenditure by type of legal service/fee.

Answer: The Integrity Commission's (Commission) expenditure on legal fees for the specified periods is as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| • 2023–24 (actual): | \$143,218 |
| • 2024–25 (actual): | \$ 85,310 |
| • 2025–26 (year to date): | \$ 87,948 |

The figures are different to those of which Ms McKenzie, the Commission's Chief Executive Officer, informed the Committee. This is due to an error in the calculations which the Commission identified in the course of preparing this response.

The Commission is precluded for reasons of confidentiality from itemising the type of legal service or fee.

Question 2: Please provide the number of audits the Integrity Commission has conducted of Tas Police investigations into complaints, for each of the years 2023-24, 2024-25, 2025-26 to date.

Answer: The number of audits conducted by the Commission of Tasmania Police investigations into complaints is as follows:

- 2023–24: 4 audits
- 2024–25: 2 audits
- 2025–26 (to date): 0 audits

Yours sincerely



Hon Guy Barnett MP

Deputy Premier

Attorney-General

Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation

Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs

Minister for Environment and Climate Change

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10 JUN 2026

The Hon Rosemary Armitage MLC
Chair
Legislative Council Select Committee
Estimates B

Email: julie.thompson@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Chair

Thank you for your letter of 1 June 2026 requesting a response to a Question on Notice.
Please see response below.

Q. How many of the 12 recommendations from the TNPM Implementation Reports of 2023 and 2024 have been implemented – please provide a breakdown of the implementation status of each recommendation. (MW)

Response:

The Tasmanian National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) has released two implementation reports setting out 12 recommendations. These reports were produced by the previous Tasmanian Ombudsman and NPM, Mr Richard Connock.

On 14 April 2026, the Legislative Council agreed to Motion 9, which called on the Tasmanian Government to provide a formal response to the NPM Implementation reports.

The Department of Justice consulted Dr Grant Davies, current Tasmanian Ombudsman and NPM, on the recommendations earlier this year.

The Government will be responding to all recommendations. Some relevant matters to note are:

- Recommendations 3 and 8 will be matters for discussion by Dr Davies with the incoming Commissioner for Children and Young People. There is agreement between the current offices on roles and responsibilities.
- Recommendations 4, 10 and 11 are matters for Government's budget processes.

- Recommendation 6 was that “That the Tasmanian NPM establish a formal and permanent Civil Society Advisory Council, which is integrated into its governance structure. Dr Davies advises that this Council exists and meets periodically.
- Recommendation 7: Dr Davies advises that current corporate services arrangements provide adequate support.
- Recommendation 12 was that the *Integrity Commission Act 2009* be amended to a) include the Tasmanian NPM as a defined integrity entity, and b) extend the functions of the Joint Standing Committee on Integrity to include scrutiny and approval of integrity entity budgets. Part (a) is addressed in the Integrity Commission Amendment Bill 2026 that recently underwent public consultation.

It is anticipated that the Government’s response to all recommendations will be tabled in Parliament in the second half of 2026.

Yours sincerely _____



Hon Guy Barnett MP

Deputy Premier

Attorney-General

Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation

Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs

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10 JUN 2026

The Hon Rosemary Armitage MLC
 Chair
 Legislative Council Select Committee
 Estimates B
 By email: julie.thompson@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Chair

Thank you for your letter of 1 June 2026 requesting responses to Questions on Notice. I provide the following information.

DIVISION 6 – DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Output Group 4 - Regulatory and Other Services

Output Group 4.1 - WorkSafe Tasmania

1. Provide number for psychosocial injury claims for current financial year. (CH)

Between 1 July 2025 and 30 April 2026, there were 1,051 psychosocial injury claims reported as at 3 June 2026.

2. Provide total number of inspections of workplaces by region – north, northwest and south – in the last financial year. (CH)

Total Workplace Inspections	2024-25	2025-26
Northern Region	532	641
North-West Region	196	219
Southern Region	746	801
Mines	155	166
Accreditation	0	32
Chemical Safety	23	35
Grand Total	1,652	1,894

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Guy Barnett'.

Hon Guy Barnett MP

Deputy Premier

Attorney-General

Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation

Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs

Minister for Environment and Climate Change



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

TRANSCRIPT

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Hon. Guy Barnett MP

Monday 1 June 2026

MEMBERS

Hon Rosemary Armitage MLC (Chair)

Hon Luke Edmunds MLC

Hon Mike Gaffney MLC

Hon Casey Hiscutt MLC

Hon Meg Webb MLC

OTHER PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

IN ATTENDANCE

HON. GUY BARNETT MP

Deputy Premier, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation,
Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs.

Ministerial Staff

Jim Dunham

Chief of Staff

Amanda Thompson

Senior Adviser

Katherine Huigsloot

Senior Adviser

Kristers Niklavs Bosveld

Adviser

Department of Justice

Kristy Bourne

Secretary

Pauline van Adrichem

Deputy Secretary, Justice and Reform

Jennifer Lee

A/Deputy Secretary, Strategy, Governance and Major Projects

Robyn Pearce

A/Deputy Secretary, Regulation and Service Delivery

Colin Shepherd

Deputy Secretary, Corrective Services

Gavin Wailes

Director, Finance

Bruce Paterson

Director, Strategic Legislation and Policy

Penelope Ikedife

Registrar, Supreme Court

Jane Cook

Administrator of Courts

Andrew Smith
Chief Information Officer

Ann Owen
Registrar, Births Deaths and Marriages

Jarrod Bryan
A/Principal Registrar, TASCAT

Kristen Wylie
Director, Tasmania Legal Aid

Pia Saturno
A/Anti-Discrimination Commissioner

Andrew Hawkey
Tasmanian Electoral Commissioner

Louise Coe
Independent Regulator

Robert Benjamin
Implementation Monitor

Chelsea Trubody-Jager
Director, Crown Law

Angela Mc Crossen
Executive Director, Justice Support Services

Jeremy Harbottle
Public Guardian

Statutory Authorities

Daryl Coates
Director of Public Prosecutions

Ellen McKenzie
CEO, Integrity Commission

Grant Davies
Ombudsman

Department of Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation

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Chief of staff

Peter Kempa
Adviser

Kristy Bourne
Secretary

Colin Shepherd
Deputy Secretary, Corrective Services

Narelle Pamplin
Director of Prisons

Christopher Carney
Director, Community Corrections

Wayne Johnson
Director, Monetary Penalties Enforcement Service

Gavin Wailes
Director, Finance

Bruce Paterson
Director, Strategic Legislation and Policy

Andrew Smith
Chief Information Officer

Amber Smith
Director Strategic Infrastructure Projects

Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs

Department of State Growth

Shane Gregory
A/Secretary, Department of State Growth

Michael Mogridge
Deputy Secretary, Economic Development

Department of Justice

Kristy Bourne
Secretary

Robyn Pearce
A/Deputy Secretary, Regulation and Service Delivery

Ministerial Staff

Jim Dunham
Chief of Staff

Lara Hendricks
Principal Adviser

Ed Boutchard
Senior Adviser

Dean Young
Senior Adviser

(in the room)
Department of State Growth

Andrew Johnson
Director, Office of the Secretary

Sarah Thomson
Executive Director, Business, Industry and Investment

Amanda Aitken
Director, Small Business

Cameron Shield
Senior Director, Trade

Tara Martin
Director, Antarctic, Science and Technology

Danielle Harris
A/Deputy Secretary, Business Services

Department of Justice

Brad Wagg
A/Executive Director, Consumer, Building and Occupational Services

Liz Radcliff
Executive Director, WorkSafe Tasmania

Gavin Wailes
Director Finance

Bruce Paterson

Director, Strategic Legislation and Policy

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The Committee met at 9.00 am.

CHAIR - It'll be our first day of Estimates for 2026. An exciting day.

Mr BARNETT - It's good to be here, Chair.

CHAIR - If I could just introduce the team at the table here. I have on my right the honourable member for Montgomery, Casey Hiscutt; on my left, the honourable member for Mersey, Mike Gaffney; the honourable member for Nelson, Meg Webb. We have Julian James, our secretary, and we have Gaye on Hansard. Be appreciative if you could just introduce the team that you have on your table.

Mr BARNETT - Sure. Thanks very much. I've got Kristy Bourne on my right, the Secretary of the Department, and Pauline van Adrichem, the Deputy Secretary of Justice and Reform.

CHAIR - Thank you. And thank you, deputy. And, obviously, if you're unable to answer any questions, preferably the same date you'd need to take them on notice. If it's not achievable, we'll consolidate the outstanding responses to question taken on notice and we'll provide them to you for a written response.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you.

CHAIR - As you're aware, the proceedings are being recorded. The Hansard will be published along with the video broadcast when it becomes available, and all evidence taken is protected by parliamentary privilege. So I do ask you, if you'd like to make an opening statement and then we'll proceed to questions.

Mr BARNETT - Thanks very much, Chair. Much appreciated, and pleased to attend budget Estimates and speak to the committee today on the 2026-27 state Budget. And the Budget, as the treasurer said, it's a tough Budget, but a disciplined Budget and delivering disciplined decisions needed to be made. So the Budget invests significantly in justices and corrections and those core services which those systems provide for and on behalf of Tasmanians. So the Budget strengthens the rule of law by investing in the justice system, focusing on delivery of the core services of the justice and corrections system, and particularly those that face increased demand.

This year's Budget contains additional funding to meet demand for the Tasmanian prison service, the Magistrates' Court, the Community Corrections, Crown law, the Office of the Public Guardian and TASCAT. I'm also very pleased that the Budget included \$4 million to establish the historical forced adoptions redress scheme, one of the very important ways that the government, supported by the Department of Justice, is working to support Tasmanians who have faced injustice. We're continuing to deliver a wide range of legislative reforms to improve our laws and better improve and protect Tasmanians, to strengthen support for victims of crime, to crack down on family violence offenders and ensure a safe community.

I want to acknowledge the work of everyone involved in the justice system as well as those involved in corrections and rehabilitation. Our state is served by dedicated judges, magistrates, legal professionals, correctional officers and many others who support the administration of justice, often in challenging circumstances. So it's my honour as an Attorney-

PUBLIC

General and Minister for Justice Corrections and Rehabilitation to work for these individuals, and I thank them for their service. So I look forward to discussing these matters and the Budget in detail with you all today.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR - And, Ms Webb.

MS WEBB - Thank you. I have a few things I'd like to run through at the beginning if I might, Chair. First one relates to operational efficiency, which it won't surprise you, I'm sure, that we'll have questions around that. This is in an overarching sense. We've got Budget paper number 1 referring to the broad budget improvement agenda, including the previous year's rolling efficiency dividends, and now looking ahead from this Budget, imposing operational efficiencies across the financial year and the forward Estimates. Those are totalling across the whole of government, \$3,356,897,000 billion and, potentially, 1700 state service workers' positions.

So, my questions around that, in a broad sense, are these: what's the status of your department's anticipated 2025-26 efficiencies dividends? Was the projected savings for that financial year met or going to be met? And then looking ahead, what are your plans for delivering your department's allocation of the additional operational efficiencies looking forward? Which programs will be affected, and I'm interested if you can provide a breakdown of total FTE numbers that are expected to be cut in bands.

So, for entry level and trainee bands, for admin and clerical bands, to supervisory and management bands, and for senior operational management and corporate support bands across 2026-27 and the forward Estimates.

Mr BARNETT - Well, thank you very much for that. And as I said at the opening remarks, it'll be a tough budget. It is a tough budget and operational efficiencies are required. And just note for the committee the premier's announcement today in terms of targeted and negotiated voluntary redundancies, and there will be an expressions of interest program across the state service and we will be reducing the state service by an estimated 1700 positions by 2019-30 and 1800 positions by 2031-32. And this is a targeted and voluntary redundancy program across all agencies, and the program will open in June for a period of four weeks to be completed in the period 1 July 2026 to 31 December 2026. And it's a one-off opportunity for approximately 500 targeted and negotiated voluntary redundancies for the 2026 calendar year only.

MS WEBB - Is this in your department? Sorry, the marking about your department. Thank you. Yes. If I could.

Mr BARNETT - This is across government.

MS WEBB - Across. Yes.

Mr BARNETT - And then it'll apply to all agencies including my department.

PUBLIC

MS WEBB - So my questions are around - so relating to your department.

Mr BARNETT - Okay.

MS WEBB - So can we focus in on your department?

Mr BARNETT - Sure. I thought I'd share with the committee something that's just hot off the press -

MS WEBB - All right. Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - Which is across all government and including our department, and it'll assist our agencies realign and continue to deliver the essential services upfront. So having said that, I will pass to the Secretary to outline and respond to your question and add to the answer I've already provided. Thank you.

MS BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. Through you, if I start with the department's progress against the BEDs first. We are on track to achieve our BEDs overall in 2025-26.

Ms WEBB - That's the efficiency dividends for 25-26.

Ms BOURNE - Yes. That's right. Some of -

Ms WEBB - Which was what, sorry?

Ms BOURNE - So for the 2024-25 year it was 2.9 million. For 25-26 it was 5.7 million and for 26-27 and ongoing, 8.6 million. So, we initially focused the allocation of those BEDs across the agency with a focus on reducing costs while maintaining service delivery, focusing on things such as reduction in agency marketing, communications office and leasing costs, and general costs reductions across the agency. Some of those have changed as we have worked through how we have tracked against those, and, of course, in light of the operational efficiencies in this Budget. Some of that work has - I guess you could describe it as, are blended into one body of work to make sure that we adequately apply those across the agency.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. So just to drill down, because there is a bit of detail I was interested to get from you. You just mentioned there, through you, Deputy, that there is 8.6 million in an ongoing sense around efficiency dividends. Is that in addition to what's laid out in the Budget papers for the operational efficiencies, which would be, for the Department of Justice, 7.4 or so million this financial year and then up to 17.5, 21 et cetera, across - about years? So we're looking at 8.6 plus what's there in the operational efficiencies table.

Mr BARNETT - Yes. I'll just pass to the secretary to respond to that specific question. But in terms of the Budget for this year, the Department of Justice, it'll have an additional operating services funding of 143.1 million in 2026 and the forward Estimates. And that'll be responding to increased demand. I could comment on that, but I will pass to the Secretary to be more specific to your question.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, Deputy. That's right. So the BEDs allocation is on top of - or I put it the other way around, probably the operational efficiencies number is on top of the BEDs previously announced.

Ms WEBB - Right.

Ms BOURNE - As an example, BEDs that continue in the 2026-27 year include things such as IT licensing changes, ongoing implementation of our MS team's phone implementation and the savings that we've applied across outputs, generally, on top of what we need to find moving forward as part of the broader operational efficiencies.

Ms WEBB - Well, that's a pretty significant cut to find, then, if you add those two things together. I've been thinking operational efficiencies would replace the efficiency dividends. But, no, they're in addition to what was planned. So can you give that breakdown I asked for? In terms of your plan for delivering on this, have you made plans firmly to how you'll go about delivering on this beyond voluntary redundancies and have you got a breakdown of how the STE losses in your department might look across those bands I mentioned in my question earlier?

Mr BARNETT - Thanks very much for the question. I will pass to the secretary to add to the answer, but the targeted and negotiated voluntary redundancy of some 500 is a significant number in this coming financial year, and there'll be a lot of work across all the agencies. There will be significant savings in that space, but I will pass to the secretary.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy, through you. The department has been working for a little while now in anticipation of what we expected this budget to look like on looking at how we can do things differently, and now that the budget has been handed down, there's more clarity about the extent of that task. We do intend to achieve it through a number of initiatives across all areas of the agency, things such as restructuring and combining related functions, investing in digital and AI solutions, and reviewing and reprioritising our activities.

We obviously need to do that by prioritising service delivery, taking into account a range of factors including, as you would appreciate, a range of legislative and statutory functions that the department must provide, and we will be redesigning our output and departmental organisational structures, as well as, as the deputy has referred to, establishing a voluntary redundancy and workplace renewal incentive program for staff who are interested in leaving the department. The management of our vacant positions is already very tight, but I anticipate that will get much tighter, but also we need to prioritise looking at staff skills and experience to ensure that we can transition staff into those priority service delivery areas.

As part of the government's commitment to right-sizing estate service, we will inevitably have to reduce our staffing numbers. We are considering how this can be achieved in a planned and managed way as we progress our broader operational efficiency work. We have an expenditure review team that we've stood up within the agency. That already commenced work not only to identify efficiencies in collaboration with outputs but how we implement those, and as is evidenced in the budget chapter, things like removing a deputy secretary position, undertaking a review of fees, general staffing efficiencies, and increased vacancy control are some of the ones that we have already identified, and now we'll work with outputs around implementing broader reforms so that we can ensure that we achieve our savings targets.

Ms WEBB - Thank you for that information. Just on the 500 voluntary or targeted redundancies that you're talking about, have you got the DOJ breakdown for how many you're expecting or planning to see?

PUBLIC

Mr BARNETT - It's an EOI process which will start as the premier's outlined in coming weeks and then will be relevant to 1 July through to 31 December, so it will take time to progress. This is in addition, I must say, to the 250 in terms of the Department of State Growth machinery government changes that we're all aware of, and there's been an immediate -

Ms WEBB - Yes. No detail on the Department of Justice numbers for that, then. Have we got a target or a proportion or -

Mr BARNETT - I can pass to the secretary, but as I say, it'll take time to progress through the system, but I'm more than happy to pass to the secretary to add to that answer.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. There's no number. What the premier's announced is a program that is targeting 500 employees. We, to date, have not undertaken a broad-scale expression of interest, but that's something we are working on doing. Because of the need to make sure that we don't target areas of the workforce where we might not want to see a reduction, albeit it comes down to intervals -

Ms WEBB - You might need to quarantine areas.

Ms BOURNE - Absolutely.

Ms WEBB - Yes.

Ms BOURNE - We're still working through that level of detail with a view to making sure that it doesn't skew the prioritisation of services that we're looking for.

Ms BOURNE - Thank you. I appreciate that, and I appreciate that that's a sensitive and difficult task for every department to be undertaking, and all of our thoughts are with you as you undertake that role. Quick question also in overview: can I have an outline -

CHAIR - Sorry, before you go into that, actually, Mr Hiscutt has a supplementary -

Mr HISCUTT - Just a follow-up, and it was sort of touched on by Meg, because the key deliverable operational efficiencies in other departments mention some percentages or numbers, whereas this key objective here does actually only mention the one deputy secretary position. Is that the position inclusive for all of the operational savings when it comes to staff member cuts, or, sort of further to Meg's question, do you expect there to be many more within that department?

Mr BARNETT - Maybe if I just kick it off in answer to that, this is a decision that's been made. It's in our budget in terms of the deputy secretary role that's been cut, as you've noted and I think the secretary just made mention of, but in addition to that, there's a range of other measures in terms of the AI improvements, in terms of the review of the fees and charges. We've got to make change and make savings, and in terms of the staffing efficiencies, as I've mentioned, the premier's made that announcement. As the secretary's outlined, that'll take time.

It's going to open in coming weeks and then right through to get those expressions of interest and then, as I think the secretary correctly noted in response to the Honourable Meg Webb, this is a decision for the secretary and the department to ensure that we continue with

PUBLIC

our priority projects. We continue with those front-line services that we think are important, but we do have to take into account the tough budget and responding to those efficiencies where we can. I might ask the secretary to add to that answer.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. So the deputy secretary position will not be the only position that I expect the department will need to no longer fill. That work has started. It will continue, and as the deputy has said, it's a process that we have put resources around to make sure we do that right. The loss of a deputy secretary position is obviously not one that I, as secretary, take lightly. It's a fundamental position, but the executive was very considered in terms of needing to demonstrate the scale of the reform that we need to undertake to meet our targets. It means that every part of the agency needs to - something needs to give across the board, and so I think we've considered what that means and are comfortable that we can manage it but really wanted to set that message straight from the top that this will require a great deal of effort to make sure that we consider how we do things differently, but it applies across the board.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you.

CHAIR - Ms Webb, you had another question.

Ms WEBB - Yes. Thank you. This one relates to external consultancy. That's why I'm asking it just in overview as a broad question. Can you provide a breakdown of the total number of external consultancies used in 2025-26 financial year, including any that are still underway, and the quantum of costs for those consultancies, and then alongside that, I'm interested in really any consultancies that are planned for 2026-27 financial year and onwards be subjected to operational efficiencies or consideration within that, and were there any plans -

CHAIR - Probably one question at a time, maybe.

Ms WEBB - Okay.

CHAIR - Give the deputy time to answer.

Ms WEBB - Sure. I just thought while they're looking for the first one-

Mr BARNETT - Yes. No, thanks very much. Through you, Chair. Appreciate that. It's important we do get through the department, and I'll ask the secretary to add to this answer in a moment, but it's very important that we do get third-party specialist advice and services from time to time as and when required that's required outside of the purview of staff within the agency, and a good example of that is building and construction work, and another is in terms of goods and services required and related.

Certainly, in building and construction, as the deputy secretary at the table knows full well, includes architects and mechanical engineers, electrical engineers, strategic asset managers, contracts for building/construction-related projects. This is core work for the department, but you do require third-party support consultant specialists in those various areas, including for ongoing maintenance and upgrades. Having said that, I will pass to the secretary to add to that answer.

PUBLIC

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. The department paid a total of \$5.032 million for professional services from 1 July 2025 to 31 March 2026. The breakdown in terms of Tasmanian versus non-Tasmanian services providers: 77.9 per cent of those services were from Tasmanian service providers or 3,920,891; non-Tasmanian service providers, 1,111,549 or 22.1 per cent. The split between building and construction-related services and goods and services was 61.5 per cent for building and construction and 38.5 per cent for goods and services. Outsourced legal and associated independent medical and other services. Costs for those services totalled \$1,943,802 for the period between 1 July 2025 and 31 March 2026. And just over 80 per cent of those costs are due to child sexual abuse in state-care-related matters.

CHAIR - And you had another part of that question?

Ms WEBB - Yes, so it's just following on, looking ahead, consultancies planned for the 2026-27 financial year and onwards, have any of those been needing to be taken into consideration for operational efficiencies? And are any now anticipated to not proceed, for example, under those operational efficiencies?

Mr BARNETT - Look, that's a good question. Obviously we're at 1 June, not quite into the 1st of July, and I'm sure the secretary and the department will be considering all that very carefully. We've outlined the importance of third-party support in terms of consultancies, particularly with building construction work. Obviously we still have building construction work to be undertaken, including in our corrections facilities. Very important amount of investment that we have there, like multimillion dollar projects over a long period of time. So we're very pleased about that and we are making allowance for increased demand as well in our corrections services. But in terms of going forward, I will pass to the secretary.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy, through you. Not explicitly in terms of discussions today, but as you would appreciate, I anticipate that all parts of how the agency undertakes its business will be looked at in a light of wanting to ensure that we do that using best value for money principles. And I think consultants are a critical part to our work, particularly with our infrastructure projects. But no explicit decision at this point.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. And so will you be providing us with a detailed breakdown? Like the secretary gave an overview of the quantum and what proportion was Tasmanian versus non-Tasmanian. Are we able to get a table or something like that breaking down the consultancies for 2025-26?

Ms BOURNE - For 2025-26 I'll have to check with the secretary.

Ms WEBB - Rather than read through it, for example, it might be more efficient to table it if it can be provided in - - -

Ms BOURNE - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - Yes, we have got a summary of it. I'd be more than happy to table it with the committee.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - It's up to the committee.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

CHAIR - No, that'd be great.

Mr BARNETT - More than happy to do so. Yeah.

CHAIR - Thank you. You're right for the moment?

Ms WEBB - Do you mind if I ask one more?

CHAIR - Okay. One more.

Ms WEBB - Great. It's one that follows up questions I asked in overview last year of each department and that's around Closing the Gap priorities and responsibilities for each department. So, minister, our Closing the Gap plan for 2025-28 says that Closing the Gap requires commitment and action across all government organisations and ministerial portfolios, and all members have endorsed this plan and are working to embed the closing the gap priority reforms across their portfolios. So with that in mind, I'm asking: can you please detail any Closing the Gap reforms and outcomes either identified as improving or worsening across your portfolios in 2025-26?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much for the question. This is particularly relevant to the corrections portfolio, and I'd be more than happy to respond fully to that question when we get to the corrections portfolio if you're happy. Otherwise we'll need to take that on notice.

Ms WEBB - Okay. We can come to it later in the day during corrections. I will note it for then.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. Look, I have a question for you and I'm not sure whether really it goes into 2.2 legislation, development and review. So I'll ask it now and you'll tell me because you might need time to find me the answer.

Mr BARNETT - No problem.

CHAIR - So I thought that might be an idea. So we in Parliament assume that when a bill goes through the Parliament and receives royal assent, that it's operational. I've discovered quite by accident actually that at least one justice bill, retail leases, and I'm sure there are many others, while they receive royal assent, they haven't been proclaimed or fully proclaimed. And I think in the case of the retail leases, obviously that became relevant to me because of a bill that's coming up. So I think part 1 and part 88 are the only two parts that have been proclaimed. So can you advise me: (a), why a bill that passed in late 2022 is still not proclaimed? And also, how many bills would be under justice not proclaimed? And can you provide us with a list of those? Because I'm sure there are many more than the two that I came across.

PUBLIC

Mr BARNETT - Yes, thanks very much for the question and also the heads up. With respect to the retail leases, that's really a matter in the building - - -

CHAIR - It's CBOS. It is.

Mr BARNETT - It's a CBOS matter for which I'd be more than happy to respond when the CBOS officials are here, if at all.

CHAIR - Well, that is just one, but overall, my question really is: how many bills or how many acts remain unproclaimed? Can you provide a list of those so that we actually know because, as Members of Parliament, when something goes through Parliament, you automatically assume, as I said, when something's received royal assent, that it becomes law. But obviously, if they're not proclaimed, they're not.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much. That's best, because it's a very specific and detailed question in an overview area.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - I'm more than happy to respond to the honourable member, but I'd prefer to do that on notice, rather than just responding from the hip, as it were, right now.

CHAIR - No, no, that's fine. I wasn't sure if it comes under 2.2 or not.

Mr BARNETT - But I'd be more than happy to respond to the honourable member on notice. I'd like to take that question on notice.

CHAIR - No, that's certainly, certainly fine.

Mr BARNETT - No problem at all.

CHAIR - Thanks. Thank you, deputy.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you.

CHAIR - Mr Gaffney, did you have a question on overview? No. Ms Webb, any further questions in overview before we go onto Supreme Court?

Ms WEBB - Well, I could. I'm happy to, if you let me, because it probably doesn't fit anywhere else, particularly.

CHAIR - No.

Ms WEBB - I'm just interested. We've heard some reports, and particularly the Auditor-General's report, of some recent projects that are digital infrastructure, I guess, or ICT infrastructure related in recent times, and there's generally some concerns around the progression of those sorts of projects within departments of different sorts. So I'm interested in terms of your department, in the Department of Justice.

Has your department, or is it currently in, or is it responsible for any ICT or digital upgrade programs at this current time, either in development or implementation? Perhaps that might be HR management or data or services or program management related or whatever, but anything that's of that nature, any that are either completed or in 2025 or underway in 2025-26.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much. In terms of IT more generally, I might pass to the secretary, but certainly in terms of Justice Connect, it's known as Astria. It's a major reform initiative and it's focused on modernising and strengthening the systems, processes and data that underpin the Department of Justice's criminal jurisdiction. And Astria will impact multiple government agencies and functional areas across the Department of Justice, from courts to the prisons to community services. And of course, it's something that I raise regularly with my secretary, who's sitting on my right.

And it's no secret, quite frankly, that I'm very disappointed with the delays and have asked my department to do a deep dive on where the project is at and the reasons behind those delays. There's substantial detail available in the implementation plan which outlines the challenges, but what needs to be done from here and the significant work that is going into completing the project from key people right across the justice system.

So on notice, I would be happy to provide a summary of that implementation plan because I think it gives an important insight into how much background work is required to implement the project for courts, prosecutions and police. There's a lot of detail in the plan which will give an insight, and no doubt members will need some time to digest that report, and we can have follow up discussions in future weeks with respect to that implementation plan.

Ms WEBB - Thank you, deputy. I appreciate that offer and I think it would be helpful to receive that on notice.

Mr BARNETT - Good.

Ms WEBB - Could I ask that included in that be a detail about what has been spent to date since the outset of that project across each financial year and what is planned to be spent across this Budget and the forward years from this Budget?

Mr BARNETT - Yes. Be more than happy to do that.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - I might pass to the secretary. Excuse me, I was about to sneeze. Sorry about that. To add to that answer, perhaps on IT more generally and any other answers that the secretary deems appropriate for the committee.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. Although as the deputy has alluded to, we can provide more detail on notice in terms of the range of IT and similar projects that the agency undertakes, but there are a number and they can vary in terms of size and complexity from day-to-day upgrades of existing operating systems and platforms and our digital environments through to our biggest projects such as Astria. PlanBuild is one. Online systems such as short stay database, Crimcheck database, electrical gas safety compliance work, and all of that is overseen by an executive committee of the department and managed predominantly by our project

PUBLIC

management office and the office of the chief information officer so that there's a co-ordinated approach to those projects in terms of budget, project sponsor, government structures and the like so that we can try and balance and prioritise a range of those projects, both to take into account new initiatives but also to ensure that existing projects are maintained to the standard that we need to undertake our services.

Ms WEBB - We certainly need to figure that out, because we've seen some reports recently from the Auditor-General on another department's project management which has been absolutely terrible, quite frankly.

CHAIR - Anyway, thank you for the response.

Ms WEBB - Yes. The thing I just wanted to ask in -

CHAIR - Just very quickly, because we're still in overview.

Ms WEBB - Sure. Okay. That's okay.

CHAIR - Are you good?

Ms WEBB - It's just the deputy mentioned disappointment in delays, and I just wondered if you wanted to mention what was causing the delay.

Mr BARNETT - Certainly in my response to the committee on notice that'll be very clearly outlined in terms of the implementation plan.

Ms WEBB - Okay. Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - But it's fair to say I am disappointed. I'm not happy, and there's a lot more work that needs to be done and, of course, I can outline, of course, you know, the progress we've made to date. So there's been some considerable progress in a whole range of areas, but it's not to the standard that I would expect of the department and those third parties involved in such a project.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you, Ms Webb.

Output Group 1.1 Supreme Court Services

CHAIR - If we could go now to 1.1, Supreme Court Services. And my first question - you right?

Mr HISCUTT - Yes.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr HISCUTT - It's all right.

CHAIR - In March 2026 it was reported that Tasmania's court system delivered the longest waits for justice in the nation. As at June 2025 there were 916 pending Supreme Court cases with 424 over 12 months and 159 over two years. Can you provide the current number of pending Supreme Court matters and outline what specific performance targets the government has set to reduce the cases older than 12 months and two years?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much. Very good question, much appreciated. In terms of court backlog, this is a priority for the government. It's fair to say it's a big challenge and having access to efficient and effective criminal and civil justice system is really important. I was pleased to announce in January the appointment of Lloyd Babb SC, who has been appointed to help ensure that all Tasmanians have access to an efficient and effective criminal and civil justice system, with court proceedings finalised in a timely manner.

So before I pass to the secretary to be specific with your question on the backlogs right now in terms of those numbers, I just wanted to say that I'm really pleased with the appointment of Lloyd Babb. I've met with him a number of times. Mr Babb has met with all the key stakeholders, including the Chief Justice, Chief Magistrate and the like. And in terms of applying a systems approach to managing existing court backlogs, identifying strategies and mechanisms to support case flow and developing a framework to measure the effectiveness of those strategies, we've got a lot of work to do. I'm looking forward to that report. It's due by 30 June.

CHAIR - You've just answered one of my questions about Lloyd Babb, so there you go. That's crossed one out.

Mr BARNETT - Yes, 3 June this year. No, no, he's a very experienced barrister. Former DPP, as you know, in New South Wales and also the Northern Territory, and frankly I'm looking forward to that report and recommendations, and I know the department is as well. Having said that, in terms of the specifics, let's pass to the secretary.

CHAIR - Yes. Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy, through you. As of 25 May 2026, the total pending criminal number in the Supreme Court is 870, so that's a 4.6 per cent decrease from the previous reporting figure of 30 June 2025, where it was 912. 461 of those matters have been pending for less than 12 months, 221 of those matters are aged between 12 and 24 months and 188 of those matters are greater than 24 months old.

CHAIR - Thank you. I notice in the forward Estimates on page 127 of budget book 2, 'Supreme Court Services funding declines from 11 million in 2025-26 to around 9.4 million in 2029-30'. What impact does that actually have in the reduction of the courts' capacity, or does it have any impact to reduce backlog and delays?

Mr BARNETT - We'll just check, if we can check the details there for you, Chair. Obviously this is something we take very seriously. Is this to do with acting judges?

PUBLIC

CHAIR - Acting judges.

Mr BARNETT - I should note, 16 May, we advertised for a magistrate in Devonport. That follows the announcement of the retirement of magistrate Chris Webster, for which I thank him, after more than 50 years of service, so just -

CHAIR - I think we almost have Robert Pearce retiring as well, I believe.

Mr BARNETT - Yes, yes, in May next year, and he's written accordingly, and I've shaken his hand already to say thank you for your service to Robert Pearce, who's a highly regarded judge of the Supreme Court based out of Launceston, our northern capital.

CHAIR - A great loss, yes. Absolutely.

Mr BARNETT - I will pass to the secretary to add to that answer.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. I think the reduction over the forward Estimates that you're referring to reflects the cessation of additional funding provided for acting judges initiative. \$600,000 was provided, or is continued, I should say, in the 2026-27 Budget, which includes \$170,000 for the court in addition to some reserve by law funding. Also, you will see an attempt to try and allocate expected operational efficiency reductions across all outputs of the agency over the forward estimates as well.

CHAIR - Will that affect the backlog more, though, if we don't have the acting judges now? If we're cutting less, obviously the backlog is going to increase.

Mr BARNETT - That's something that, of course, we'd monitor over time, because I think you've talked about in the outyears. We've advertised recently for an acting judge, so I'll let the secretary speak to that. And that's going through a process now.

CHAIR - It's just if we've cut the money, that's all.

Mr BARNETT - Yes, but going forward, that's the sort of thing that we'd need to look at very carefully. And noting we've appointed an associate judge in recent years, and that's of course taken off some of the pressure and doing a very good job in terms of improving the efficiencies and getting the job done. But I'll just check with the secretary.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. I think allocation of funding for judicial resources is but one lever, I think, that the government - that the court has in terms of addressing backlog, and when you put that against an increasing number or a growing number of lodgements that the court is seeing. There have also been a number of other initiatives that the court has undertaken of late, including the expansion of associate judges' powers to - or to include the criminal jurisdiction, which means that they can undertake case management of some of those criminal matters much sooner and hopefully bring them to an earlier resolution.

Lloyd Babb's review, as well, I think in recognition of the significant efforts that both courts have undertaken to try and address backlog and certainly look at the causes of backlog will assist in looking at the reasons from a whole-of-system point of view so that the department

PUBLIC

and government have further advice about how resourcing in the future is best directed to address what is an issue that continues to persist, despite the best efforts of the courts and additional funding from government to try and remediate those issues.

CHAIR - Just one final question with regard to Lloyd Babb. Obviously, he's directed to examine. Any idea when the final report will be delivered? But also, has the government allocated funding in the forward Estimates to implement any recommendations he puts forward?

Mr BARNETT - The answer to your first question is 30 June this year is when we are expected to receive his report and recommendations. I'm looking forward to that.

CHAIR - Yes. Yes.

Mr BARNETT - And, of course, had recent meetings, including last week, with Mr Babb.

CHAIR - Do we have any money for his recommendations to implement them?

Mr BARNETT - Well, thank you.

CHAIR - Something maybe put aside?

Mr BARNETT - I don't think there's, you know, sort of excess money floating around.

CHAIR - No.

Mr BARNETT - But in terms of taking his report and recommendations seriously, I can give a commitment to this committee and to the Parliament that we will - that I am already, and that we will. It's not all just in money. It's in systems improvements and it's in policy.

CHAIR - Are they all cost, unfortunately.

Mr BARNETT - Some of them actually might be savings.

CHAIR - Okay.

Mr BARNETT - So we might just look at the report and recommendations first.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - Assess the merit or otherwise, and I'm already aware that there will be some of great merit where there may not be cost involved or savings. So we'll be looking at them very carefully, but I'd be more than happy for the Secretary to add to the answer.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. Not much to add, I think. As you've said, we'll be waiting to see what Lloyd recommends, and the information he puts to government in terms of his views about how the system are looking at, which will obviously inform future work and, potentially, future discussions with government about what potentially additional funding some of those might require. But I anticipate that a number of them will look at existing systems,

PUBLIC

potentially legislative change, and how we can use the resources that we have better or differently. But we'll be dependent on his report.

CHAIR - Thank you. Mr Hiscutt, had a question?

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you. That's right. I was just wondering, of an outstanding or long-term caseload do you have a regional distribution, north-west, north and south of where they are coming from?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the question.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - A good question from a north-west coast-based member of the legislative council in Montgomery. I'll just check with the department if we've got that information to hand.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - Of course, the court's a representative through the Department of Justice today, but not sure if that is available.

CHAIR - Do you want to take that no notice?

Mr BARNETT - It might be best if we take that on notice through you, Chair.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - And get back to the committee as to whether that information is available, but it's something we can check with the courts.

CHAIR - Lovely. Ms Webb had a question.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. Deputy, I've got a question that I'm going to ask you, and I don't require a lecture about separation of powers. I'm going to ask you careful questions on this matter that relates to the Supreme Court. So, on the matter of the Supreme Court proceedings initiated by former Minister Ogilvie, it's been confirmed that the court via the court registry that the orders pertaining to those proceedings have not been made public.

So while it's not unusual for the court to issue suppression and non-publication orders, the fact that such an order exists is usually disclosed along with basic details such as dates and the presiding judge, et cetera, on the court portal as a matter of routine consistent with principles of open and transparent justice that we would all understand.

So, the questions I have around it, the careful questions I have around it, Attorney: can you rule out that the State applied for the existence of any suppression order or non-publication order relating to these specific proceedings to be not disclosed by the court?

Mr BARNETT - I'm sure that all questions that you ask through you, Chair, are carefully asked, the honourable Ms Webb. So, thank you for the question. You've asked questions,

clearly, about a matter that's current, and I just want to, through the Chair, outline very clearly the government's and my position.

We have guidelines for legal assistance for ministers and members of Parliament. They've been in place some 20 years, including under the former Labor government. A policy and guidelines governing the granting of indemnities and legal assistance are publicly available. The policy and guidelines clearly state that indemnity and legal assistance can be considered against the legal processes brought under several circumstances.

And, for example, the circumstances can include civil proceedings, criminal proceedings, inquiries, investigations, including integrity bodies, coronial inquiries, anti-discrimination matters, any other body with inquisitorial powers. You've asked about a very specific question.

Ms WEBB - Do you want me to repeat it?

Mr BARNETT - The question -

Ms WEBB - Can you rule out that the State applied to the court to not disclose the existence of the suppression order or non-publication order?

Mr BARNETT - I'm not ruling anything in or out. These are very complex matters, particularly given confidentiality requirements, and I won't comment further in that regard.

Ms WEBB - This is a question about the actions of the State, the government, decisions of the government. It's not about matters - the specific matters before the court. It's about actions taken by the State. So, you should, I think, be able to confirm: did the State request that the existence of that suppression order not even be put on the court portal as would typically be done by something that was under suppression, but particular basic facts put on the portal?

Mr BARNETT - Through you, Chair, we're having questions here with respect to a matter that is before -

CHAIR - Yes. I'm just thinking that it's not really - - -

Ms WEBB - Okay.

Mr BARNETT - That is before the court.

Ms WEBB - Okay. You're the Attorney-General. I'm asking about - it's to do with the Supreme Court. It's something that you as the Attorney-General, if in fact the government had requested that it not be put on the court portal, which is what I'm essentially asking about, that probably would have been a decision you were involved in as Attorney-General.

Mr BARNETT - This matter is currently, as I'm advised, in the Supreme Court. It's a complex matter. There are matters regarding confidentiality and I draw that to the committee's attention and I make that point and I don't expect to be making further comment on that matter.

CHAIR - No. I believe the deputy has answered it. It's a difficult one when you look at it because we are at the Supreme Court's services. I accept that it's actually a matter for the

PUBLIC

government. It is relevant to the Supreme Court, but is it relevant to this item number? I'm not sure about that.

Ms WEBB - I could have asked it in overview, I guess, but - there you go. Given that it's related to the Supreme Court, it's about government interaction with the Supreme Court.

CHAIR - No. Thank you.

Ms WEBB - All right.

CHAIR - Do you have another question of the Supreme Court services?

Ms WEBB - Yes. I've got other ones on the Supreme Court services, but you can come to me, if you like.

CHAIR - All right. Yes.

Mr BARNETT - Through you, Chair, I'm advised that we do have some information for the honourable Mr Hiscutt in terms of backlog by region, if you'd like that answer.

CHAIR - Lovely. Thank you. Yes.

Mr BARNETT - Can I pass to the secretary and/or the deputy secretary.

CHAIR - Yes. Thank you. That would be good.

Ms van ADRICHEM - Through you minister for Burnie, the current pending caseloads less than 12 months is 125 matters, matters between 12 and 24 months are 51, and greater than 24 months is 46 matters. For Hobart, less than 12 months is 246 matters, between 12 and 24 months is 111 matters, and greater than 24 months is 94 matters and for Launceston, less than 12 months is 109 matters, between 12 and 24 months is 64 matters, and greater than 24 months is 54 matters.

Mr HISCUTT - Can I follow up on that if we're going.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr HISCUTT - I'm just noticing that, proportionally, north-west is quite highly represented there in many more of a backload in that region compared to the population. Is there any comment you'd make on that? Why that area is, I guess, as a proportion of the population its numbers - are there more cases in total there to deal with? Or is it just not being dealt with as quickly?

Ms van ADRICHEM - Through you, minister, it would depend on the lodgements for the north-west, so we'd need to look at the lodgement data to see if there are a higher number of lodgements in the north-west which would then be managed in the north-west to make it more convenient for witnesses and other parties to participate in the process.

PUBLIC

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. It'd just be interesting if it's due to total numbers or whether it's because they're not being looked after as speedily as other areas, I guess, would be the question I'm asking. Thank you.

Ms van ADRICHEM - No. Thank you.

Mr HISCUTT - Happy to take that on. Yes.

CHAIR - Just with regard to the digital transformation of the courts, Justice Connect, which I notice is still not fully operational, and I believe it was 2018 that it started. Any idea when it will be fully operational? And if we could have, maybe, the total cost. And I'm happy to take it on notice if - as we do seem to have quite a few questions in the Supreme Court area.

Mr BARNETT - Let me just sit - because I think I gave a little bit of a summary and you're, sort of, following up to that answer delivered earlier.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - So thank you very much for the question. In terms of the progress so far, the first release in terms of progress, the jury management system went live in November 2022, and members of the public have been interacting with that system since March 23. The Corrections and Rehabilitation components of Astria went live in April last year, 2025, enabling both Community Corrections and the Tasmania prison system and service to work in the same system using the same data, which significantly helps eliminate the potential for human error or unnecessary doubling up on data. The challenge is the amount of detailed design work from all of the key parts of the system. You've got the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, police, the Magistrates' Court, the Supreme Court, and in some cases, the related systems that need to be implemented before Astria can go live, and the secretary can certainly explain in more detail all of that work.

I do want to emphasise that that progress, while slower than I would like, is being made, and I and the secretary, as I indicated earlier, are continuing to reiterate to all the stakeholders how important it is and also how big the benefits will be from participating in this work and delivering the project, and I think that's the sentiment behind your question.

CHAIR - Yes, it is.

Mr BARNETT - The current systems, frankly, are old. They are failing and largely paper-based systems. Astria's a once-in-a-generation reform that will digitise progress and make it more user-friendly.

CHAIR - No, it was just the follow up, because you did mention earlier to the Honourable Member Meg's questions, but -

Mr BARNETT - Yes, and I have taken on notice. I would like to give you a summary of that implementation plan, and that'll outline how important the future work is, but I will see if the secretary would like to add to that answer.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. Only to add, as the deputy has summarised, the majority of the remaining work relates to the courts and prosecution stream, which is the most complex

part of the program, and given the deputy's undertaken to table the project management plan, I think what is very clear is that complexity of aligning software legislation, court procedure, prosecution practice and inter-agency processes; however, it is the part of the program that is most closely linked to reducing delay, and improving the flow of criminal matters through the courts.

Very briefly, if I may, deputy, the department certainly acknowledges that the program has experienced delays and cost escalations due to a range of factors, and if I can just give the member a summary of those. As you've noted, the submission under the structured infrastructure investment review process back in 2018 were based on an understanding of project scope at that stage, as well as market pricing at that time. We thought that 24.5 million would be sufficient to deliver the project then, but clearly that's not been the case.

Implementation didn't fully commence until 2021 following some delays related to COVID-19, where our staff were diverted to other work, but also working through the complexities of the interface with legislative reform, the criminal and general act that went through the parliament in 2019, suffice to say, I think both the department and the vendor really underestimated the complexity of that work, and we have implemented significant learnings along the way. Justice Connect is much more than an IT project; it really is a cultural change piece that will require business process change, the product was not the off-the-shelf solution that we originally identified that it would be.

CHAIR - Thank you. Do we have one more burning question in the Supreme Court before we move on?

Ms WEBB - A couple, if I may.

CHAIR - Quickly. If we could have quick questions and nice, quick answers.

Ms WEBB - This relates to the area of judicial commissions and around the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court annual report in 2024-25 had the chief justice noting that despite the Judicial Commissions Act 2024 receiving royal assent on 13 December 2024, the act's yet to be proclaimed, and so therefore we haven't been able to presume, establish, and begin the work of a judicial council to oversee judicial conduct. Can you confirm that the legislative framework is in place, but the operational complaints mechanism is yet to be designed and completed and put in place somehow, and what's the status of that?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much. I really appreciate the question and understand where it's coming from, and frankly, we're investing in a modern and fit-for-purpose justice system. The passage of the Judicial Commissions Act 2024 was a key commitment of this government to support a consistent and contemporary judicial system that provides Tasmanians with confidence that judicial officers are accountable to expectations of judicial behaviour.

Before the act is proclaimed, I'm undertaking the necessary steps to establish the judicial council which will be led by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the honourable Chris Shanahan SC, and the council will include three other members: the chief magistrate, an Australian lawyer, and a non-legal member who will bring qualifications and diversity of experience to the council. The appointment of the council and commission members is expected to coincide with a proclamation of the act during 2026. I'll just see if the secretary wants to add to that, but I think that summarises where we're up to.

Ms WEBB - During 2026. The funding that's provided, I'd seen the Reserved by Law table, table 6.2 on page 129 of budget paper number 2. We've got the Judicial Commissions Act receiving \$95,000 in 2025-26, this financial year, which presumably was towards the end. It jumps up then from 2026-27 onwards to the \$220-odd thousand, et cetera. I'm just wondering what did the \$95,000 cover, and what are we expecting to be spending those fundings in the outyears on?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much for the question. Frankly, there's been a lot of work that's already done in terms of the preliminary work to prepare and undertaken by the department. That work includes the selection of the appropriate candidates to form the judicial council and any commissions as prescribed by the act; the establishment of a website and its content to provide public information and promote accessibility; the development of processes, practices and procedures, as well as forms to operationalise the functions of the judicial council and the engagement of key stakeholders.

The appointment of council and commission members is expected to coincide, as I said, with the proclamation of the act in 2026. Going forward, they will certainly have work to do. It's hard to say exactly how much work, but I think we'll then have a process that is more fit for purpose to ensure that justice is not only done but seen to be done in Tasmania.

Ms WEBB - I'm interested in: are you able to provide a breakdown of that money that's budgeted for 2026-27, the \$220,000 and et cetera, in the outyears? What are we expecting that to be spent on? What modelling have we done to show us how that - why do we know that's the amount required, and what will it be spent on?

Mr BARNETT - Thanks very much for that. It's more of an operational question, and I will pass to the secretary but indicate that I take this very seriously. We got that legislation passed. It was for a very good reason. We want confidence in our judiciary and our justice system by all members of the public, and that's the motivation behind all of this, but having said that, I will pass to the secretary in terms of those operational matters.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. Through you. The budgeted amount over the forward Estimates comprises an allocation for the principal officer that the agency has established in anticipation of the commencement, as the deputy has said, so that we can try and undertake some of that work, such as establishment of a concept website and content and public information materials, a logo, forms, and all of those really critical things that the council will need, of course, subject to the views of the council, and then an allocation for the payment of members of the council and any commissions that are established.

I don't have a breakdown explicitly of the attribution of those costs to particular positions, but that's on our best approach or best endeavours of what the anticipated workload of the council will be. We have budgeted for it to enable it to be able to fulfill its statutory functions.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. Did you have one last question, or we're –

Ms WEBB - No. That's fine.

Output Group 1.2 (b)

Magisterial Court Services (b)

CHAIR - Thank you very much, and we will now move to 1.2: Magisterial Court Services. Ms Webb.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. We've talked on some issues already under the previous line item that touch into this space as well in terms of managing demand and case complexity, et cetera. I saw that in our interim Budget last year, we had money of about \$800,000 allocated in both 2025-26 and 2026-27 for increasing demand and case complexity, but then it dropped away into the forward Estimates in last year's Budget, and at the time we discussed it, Attorney, you said to us the May Budget next year will no doubt have a more considered approach.

This year, we seek key deliverable Magistrates' Court increased demand and cost pressures of \$2.2 million in 2026-27 and \$2 million in each of the outyears. What specifically is this funding going to be targeted to do in terms of addressing increased demand and cost pressures? Have you modelled the increased demand and cost pressures in order to target this uplift? That's probably a good starting point.

Mr BARNETT - Well, thank you very much, and first of all, I'd like to put on record my thanks to the Chief Magistrate and all of our magistrates and those who support our Magistrates' Court, of which there are many. It's greatly appreciated. As you've noted, there is an increase of \$2.2 million in the 2026-27 year for the Magistrates' Court with a \$2 million per annum from 2027-28 to support continued increases in demand for services, case complexity and court security costs.

Having said that, it's best if I pass to the secretary in terms of operational matters and the specifics, but again, put on record my thanks for the work that they do. I note that magistrate Chris Webster, after 50 years, is retiring in and around December and acknowledge on the record now and going forward his outstanding service to the justice system in Tasmania.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. Very grateful that the government's recognised the increasing demand pressures on the court. And that's based on, obviously, the department working very closely with the court to ensure that we can try to predict, through modelling and other means, that workload based on previous lodgements, but also some of the changing environment that the court finds itself in, noting that the budget itself is subject to a great deal of fluctuation.

There are a number of matters within the Magistrates' Court purview, or costs, I should say, that are outside of its control, including things like cost of the mortuary ambulance for the coronial division, the engaging of counsel to assist the coroner, interpreters, security costs and the like. So the budget risk, if you can describe it as that, that the department maintains that the court has, reflects a whole host of those components, but most notably probably the increased demand for services seen through an increasingly high number of lodgements, and this really seeks to address the underlying demand for services as opposed to new work or anticipated outcomes that the court will provide.

Ms WEBB - I find it interesting because there's a clear, then, indication, I would have thought, that what we're looking at is not just a necessarily temporary uplift in demand, but an expected ongoing uplift in demand that really is about core funding then, surely? But we're

funding it in little tranches of key deliverables as uplifts. So, at what point do we accept the level of demand and then actually fund it in a core sense to the right level, deputy.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much for the question. Of course, it's a very important matter. It's monitored very carefully and the department provides briefings to me on a regular basis. In terms of the Magistrates' Court and the Supreme Court and its progress, I would like to highlight to the committee that it's not just access to justice in terms of improved efficiencies, the judicial process, but the availability of the judiciary across our regions.

And I'd like to note the department and the Magistrates' Court have worked to ensure that court sittings are returned to Smithton and Queenstown, with both previously impacted through venues not being available or undergoing renovations. And this return marks an important milestone. Access to justice in the regions is important and it's something to celebrate. And I can talk more about that later in terms of the north-west coast and the west coast, but I will pass to the secretary to add to the answer in terms of the specifics.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy, through you. Just to clarify that the \$2.2 million in 2026-27 in additional funding that has been provided continues over the forward Estimates, with \$2 million provided on an ongoing basis, in recognition of the increasing demand on the court. I also think the department, working closely with the court, is always looking at how future funding may be prioritised as we work towards not just awaiting the outcomes of Lloyd Babb's review, but also the impact that Astria will have in terms of business processes and potentially using staff differently.

And also as the budget reflects, the review of fees across the court, I think also provides us with an opportunity to look at whether we're actually utilising that revenue from the services we provide appropriately and whether we have looked at that in a manner that makes sure it reflects the value of the service we're providing.

Ms WEBB - No, thank you for that. And then in terms of that, because it does say under that key deliverable, that it's being - the additional funding is being provided on the basis that the fees review will be undertaken and that the Magistrates' Court (Criminal and General Division) Act 2019 will be proclaimed, which relates to the Astria project. So, in terms of the fees review, what's the timeline on that?

Mr BARNETT - Yes.

Ms WEBB - Is it going to be done in this financial year?

Mr BARNETT - The fees review, I think - yeah, the fees review is really important and thank you for asking about it, because it's obviously on the revenue side and it is important there needs to be a review, because some of the fees, as you know, they don't go up by CPI. They haven't been reviewed for some time. So, I've instigated this with the department and that work will happen this financial year, frankly, sooner rather than later from my perspective. But that's a matter for the department. And yes, this review will take place this year and I'm looking forward to that.

Ms WEBB - Would that be a process that also involves consultation with the community and with external stakeholders, or is this just an internal departmental review?

PUBLIC

Mr BARNETT - Well, I'll let the department feedback on it. I'm sure we'll get feedback from relevant stakeholders, but it's primarily a departmental review, assessing what's appropriate, fit for purpose. We'll look at other jurisdictions and, you know, we'll go from there. So, in terms of that review, I'll just see if there's anything else. I'll give you some examples. The court collects fees in the form of filing fees for civil claims, various applications, mediation fees and, in some cases, fees for filing complaints.

If a person is convicted of an offence, a magistrate may order the payment of court costs, \$33. So that's one example. A portion of the fees are paid into a public account, with the balance of the fees retained by the court to support its operations. So, the court registrars have the power to waive fees on receipt of an application from a party. This process enables the impecunious to access justice without first having to overcome the hurdle of paying a fee, understandably and importantly.

As at 31 March 2026, the Magistrates' Court has seen a drop in fee revenue, seeing a 6 per cent drop in revenue from civil fees and a drop in overall revenue due to the transfer of the court's Administrative Appeals Division to TASCAT on 1 July 25, and the changes to section 58C of the Coroners Act, which was proclaimed on 1 December 25, which removed the ability of the court to charge fees relating to documents requested under that section. So, I'll just draw that to your attention. As I say, as an attorney minister for Justice, I'm very keen for that review to take place and get that report and recommendations. I'll see if the secretary would like to add anything.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. Further to Ms Webb's question around what that process would look like, I think, as you've said, deputy, a jurisdictional review, absolutely, as a starting point, which some of that work's already started, in terms of where we sit alongside comparative jurisdictions and then obviously respecting the independence of the court that has its own committees that look at rules and fees and the like, but also some of the fees pertaining to the Magistrates' Court jurisdiction are set by government, like fee penalty units and the like. So, it will be a broad consultation process that respects the existing processes and governance frameworks in place around the setting of rules and fees as well.

Ms WEBB - Has work already been done to establish the factors that have contributed to a drop in fees collected that you just described a minute ago, deputy? And is that because we're waiving more fees for people, because people's circumstances are pretty straitened at the moment?

Mr BARNETT - Yeah, thanks very much. I will pass, because it's more of an operational matter, but there has been a drop, which I noted. But in terms of the factors behind that, it's best for the secretary to respond.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. So, there certainly is a discretion within the court to waive fees in certain circumstances, but I think one of the predominant reasons where we've seen a 6 per cent drop in revenue from civil fees has been the transfer of the court's Administrative Appeals Division to TASCAT on 1 July last year. So that's obviously removed an opportunity for the court to charge fees relating to certain documents. And that's something that I think is really critical for us to take into account as we look at the review, given the changes in jurisdiction and how that has potentially changed the composition of revenue streams for the court.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - Through you, Chair. Just to add to my earlier answer with regard to the Magistrates' Court at Circular Head at Smithton on Wednesday 6 May was the first sitting, 6 May 2026. It was presided over by the Chief Magistrate Geason, and I'm really pleased. It's high time that occurred, because it hadn't occurred since November 2020, is my advice. Inadequate premises. But now it is adequate in terms of Queenstown, for any west coasters. The Magistrates' Court sits in Queenstown every eight weeks for two to three days at a time, and that's just started in August last year. That's now back on track. And I thank the West Coast Council for making their council facilities available for the length of the time that it did.

CHAIR - Thanks.

Mr BARNETT - I wanted to put that on the record and thank those concerned.

CHAIR - Thank you, deputy. Mr Hiscutt has a question.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you. Just mentioned in budget paper 4, page 49, it talks about the case load for the Magistrates' Court criminal justice and youth justice divisions. Outstanding for six to 12 months old, nearly 2800, and 2200 older than that. My question is: how does that statistic compare to other jurisdictions around the country? Do we have any comparative data to see how we're running in that space?

Mr BARNETT - That's also a good question in terms of jurisdictional analysis, and my department, who are on my right, will often get requests from the attorney and Minister for Justice on jurisdictional comparisons. I haven't got that in front of me, but I'll just check if the secretary or deputy secretary may be able to assist. All right. I'm advised we don't have that comparison at this stage.

Mr HISCUTT - No worries. Is that something you can take on notice or something we should do our own research on?

Mr BARNETT - We would, I am advised - would need to do further research to -

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. We'll look into it, thank you.

CHAIR - No, thank you.

Mr BARNETT - - yes, to follow up on that, but I think it's a good question.

Mr HISCUTT - Interest - yes.

CHAIR - Thank you, deputy. Did you have a burning question on magistrates before we move on?

Ms WEBB - Yes, just one last quick one. Yes, I would, because it relates to a good news story, which is the witness intermediary scheme, which is a good initiative. The pilot was reviewed in 2024. Twelve recommendations were accepted by the government in relation to that review - in principle, accepted, and apparently the funding, I believe, has been made permanent. I just want to check how many of the 12 recommendations have been implemented,

and is that something you can provide to us in terms of some detail? Not necessarily verbally at the table here, perhaps; in follow-up, if necessary. And just confirm that their funding for this program will be consistent and stay the same across this budget period and the forward Estimates.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for making reference to a good news story.

Ms WEBB - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - Much appreciated from an honourable member. And I know you're interested in this. I do just note that it's probably output number 5, group 5, but more than happy to respond as well in terms of this very important scheme.

Ms WEBB - Okay.

Mr BARNETT - And it does use those intermediaries to support communication between the criminal justice system and children and vulnerable witnesses. I get feedback consistently on its importance and its role. The intermediaries provide recommendations to Tasmania Police, Tasmanian courts about reasonable adjustments that can be made to support the communication needs of children and vulnerable adults. This ensures vulnerable witnesses can give their best evidence.

The role of the intermediary in the justice process is provided for by the Evidence (Children and Special Witnesses) Act 2021, which allows an appropriately skilled and experienced intermediary to assess a witness' communications need. The role of the intermediary is wholly impartial and independent. And a pilot of the scheme ran from 1 March 2021 to 29 February 2024, and it now continues on an ongoing basis with the Justice Support Service. I could add further that I've been, I've seen and I'm aware of how important it is.

Ms WEBB - And it's not at risk of cuts in terms of operational efficiencies as we go forward?

Mr BARNETT - Let me just pass to the secretary in terms of operational efficiencies. Of course, that's very important across the department. But certainly, it's been working well and I'm very pleased with the scheme and how it's been operating. But having said that, I will pass to the secretary.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy, through you. As I noted at the beginning of the session, we are working through how we allocate operational efficiencies across outputs, but also particular initiatives or services or structures that we might look at changing. And it probably is too early to rule anything in or out, other than I know that each part of the agency is looking at what we're delivering and whether we can do that better, with the ultimate outcome of providing a better service. But we're very cognizant of the commission of inquiry recommendation around broadening the scope of the very successful witness intermediary scheme and our priority is to maintain services that deliver those critical services to members of the community.

CHAIR - Thank you very much.

Output Group 1.3

Births, Deaths and Marriages

CHAIR - If we could now move on to - you right?

Mr HISCUTT - Yes.

CHAIR - Yes. 1.3, Births, Deaths and Marriages. And Mr Hiscutt.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you. Last year, it was stated that the Collins Street relocation was expected to be completed from mid-2026, but it seems that the Budget has a variance included in it for more money for this financial or coming financial year to complete that project. Just wondering whether that's been delayed or more money's been required than was originally anticipated in last year's Budget.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the question. I'll pass to those on my right who are ready to respond to that question.

Ms BOURNE - Yes. Yes.

Mr BARNETT - It's probably more of a corporate services question. And we'll see if we've got that information before the committee.

Ms BOURNE - Thank you, deputy. I'll see if I can seek further information around the allocation of funding across the forward Estimates explicitly as Mr Wailes approaches.

Mr WAILES - All building works to be completed on this relocation by 30 June.

Ms BOURNE - Thank you. Thanks, Gavin. But that relocation that you refer to, Mr Hiscutt, is certainly well underway and anticipate that that will be finalised by June 2026. So, as we talked about last year, from memory, that the new leases for office accommodation in Cambridge as well as a new site in the Hobart CBD are well underway, with many staff already relocated into 199 Collins. And we will hopefully look to finalise those relocations as the year progresses, but certainly well on track.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. If that's completed by June this year, the statement in the variance to expect it says that in the 2027-28 it drops off because that's completed, which implies there's money in this year's Budget to do it, although you're saying it's already completed by the end of - sorry, next year's financial year, but it's already completed this financial year, so seeking advice.

Ms BOURNE - Through you, deputy, with thanks to Mr Wailes. That was the anticipation for the anticipated allocation at the time. In a good news story. The contracts were executed and those moves have taken place quicker than we had originally planned for.

Mr HISCUTT - Love a good news story. Good to see. There's some savings for you as well in this year's Budget. Well done.

Ms BOURNE - Thank you. Yes.

Mr HISCUTT - That was all. Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the question.

CHAIR - Any other questions in this line item? No.

Output Group 1.4

Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

CHAIR - If we could now move to 1.4, Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Mr Gaffney.

Mr GAFFNEY - Thanks, Chair. TASCAT seems to be featuring quite regularly in discussions in our place and legislation now, which is good and often arises in the chamber.

Mr BARNETT - Yes.

Mr GAFFNEY - Attorney-General, the 2026-27 Budget is anticipated to see a rise of 1.3 million in revenue from appropriation for TASCAT, the variation explained by the access to justice program and delivery of support to increase continued demand associated with conferral of jurisdictions in July 2026. Why does it drop substantially in the following year? Isn't it realistic to assume that the financial burden of TASCAT will only increase on year? This is only the second year since the conferral of 64 Acts from the Administrative Appeals division of the Magistrates' Court to TASCAT.

Mr BARNETT - So thank you very much for the question. Through you, Chair. I'm noting, of course, TASCAT as one of the - from my point of view, one of the best justice reforms, in the last decade, making it easier, more affordable and faster for Tasmanians, businesses, community groups and others to gain access to justice. It's working very well. I put on record my thanks to the president Malcolm Schyvens and all those involved in the administration of TASCAT.

Before I pass to the secretary, you've noted the legislative reforms that are coming through the parliament, and frankly that's important and necessary to streamline the process so that they can do things more efficiently and also allow more Tasmanians to access TASCAT in a more affordable, fast and easy manner, and frankly that's working pretty well. In terms of the specific question around the Budget, I'll just pass to the secretary. Thank you.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. Through you. The additional appropriation of \$1 million a year continues over the forward Estimates, as has been noted. Again, I think the allocation of operational efficiencies sees a reduction over the forward Estimates in TASCAT's overall appropriation, but also the additional \$505,000 for the TASCAT access to justice program also falls off, for lack of a better term, over the forward Estimates, which would also account for some of that reduction, unless Mr Wailes has anything else to advise me.

Through you, deputy. The only additional comment to that is in the 2026-27 year, it includes the twenty-seventh pay, which means that beyond that, the forward Estimates do not include that. There's also another commensurate reduction in the outputs funding.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. Thank you. In the Strengthening Justice overview, it says the 2026-27 Budget includes an additional \$4 million over 4 years for the Tasmanian Administrative and Civil Tribunal. If we look back at the 3 years of comparable forward Estimates in table 6.2, page 127, of November's budget papers, it's actually only \$0.9 million with 2029-30 forward Estimate only showing \$146,000 gain over the 2028-29 forward Estimate. I couldn't find out where the comment that it's increasing over \$4 million over 4 years from what was already budgeted. Could that be explained?

Mr BARNETT - Thanks very much for the question. We'll just see if we can get some assistance. Perhaps through you, Chair, I've got to introduce Gavin Wailes, who's our chief financial officer, to assist the honourable member with this question to see if the chief operating officer can assist the committee.

CHAIR - Welcome to the table, Gavin.

Mr BARNETT - Of course, if that's challenging, we're more than happy to take matters on notice.

CHAIR - Take it on notice.

Mr WAILES - Thank you, deputy. Through you. The commentary's on a gross basis. There's the additional \$1 million per year on the permanent basis which the secretary alluded to, which is added to each year. We've also got the reductions of the operational efficiencies, which have generally been applied across our budget papers and each output on an overhead sort of basis as we work through the details over the next 12 months and 2 years, which we'll then refine in future years. While there is \$4 million that's been added, there has some which has been notionally removed at the moment which will be tidied up as we finalise what those efficiencies actually are.

Mr GAFFNEY - What's the expected timeline for tidying up the efficiencies?

Mr BARNETT - Through you, Chair. Obviously, these things do take time. There needs to be work undertaken. The announcement today in terms of the voluntary redundancy scheme and the expressions of interest will take time, but there's other work that needs to be done in terms of operational efficiencies, and I think the secretary outlined a range of measures where we're looking at making operational efficiencies. I'll just see if the secretary or the chief financial officer wanted to add to that answer.

Ms BOURNE - Through you, deputy. Just to note that as reflected in budget paper on page 127, there's still an anticipated increase in the tribunal's funding, noting Mr Wailes' comments around how we continue to work through the efficiencies that will apply to that output.

Mr BARNETT - Can we just be really clear, though, there is an increase over the forward Estimates for TASCAT, and I'm just looking at - the additional funding for TASCAT ongoing has resulted in higher funding for TASCAT right through forward Estimates: \$8.53 million in 2025-26 through to above \$9 million each year across the forward Estimates. That's my advice, and the budget significantly increased TASCAT above the 2025-26 Budget. If you compare it to the last year, TASCAT absolutely has received additional funding, and I think the secretary would confirm that.

Ms BOURNE - Yes, that's right.

CHAIR - Thank you. I have a follow up by Ms Webb, if that's all right, Mr Gaffney.

Ms WEBB - Sorry, I got distracted there for a second. I may have missed this may have just been answered, but I was trying to pay attention to Mr Wailes' answer to member for Mersey before saying that we've built in in the figures in the budget operational efficiencies. Was that correct: that the figures we're looking at in the budget have got operational efficiencies in the future years built into them already?

Mr BARNETT - Through you, Chair, the secretary did answer that question earlier in terms of those efficiencies, which the secretary did indicate that they are part of the budgets going forward. Unless you wanted to add to that, I don't see any further reason to add to it.

CHAIR - Mr Gaffney.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes, thank you. As a follow up to the discussion we had in November, can you give us an update on how TASCAT is faring now that the Additional Jurisdictions Act has come into play and has been in effect for nearly a full year? What impact has that had on the organisation?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much for the question. I meet regularly with the president, and of course I meet with my department way more regularly on an ongoing basis in terms of updates with respect to progress and achieving the objectives of the various legislative reforms that we've seen through this parliament over many years and more recently this year. We have absolutely streamlined the process, made it easier, faster, and cheaper for Tasmanians to access that justice. In terms of the detail around that, I'll just pass to the secretary or the deputy secretary, perhaps.

Ms van ADRICHEM - If it would be of assistance, I can provide some headline statistics, if you like, around a number of matters that have been considered by the tribunal.

Mr GAFFNEY - If you could table those.

Ms van ADRICHEM - Yes. In a separate document?

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes, a separate document to save some time, if that's okay. That would be good, because we can, through that, ask questions if we need to.

Mr BARNETT - Yes, happy to.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. Thank you. I note the president of TASCAT in its latest October 2025 annual report stated, 'We have no backlog of any statistical significance; however, we are at a tipping point. It is imperative that any additional jurisdiction transferred to the tribunal comes with the necessary funding, especially to support our registry.

Without such funding, I fear that the tribunal would most likely experience a decline in our key performance indicators, which in turn would impact upon those who rely upon our

services. So, my questions would be: has TASCAT maintained its no backlog status; does it expect to do so; and will the government funding be sufficient to match jurisdictional transfers?

Mr BARNETT - Thanks very much for the question. Obviously, it's a good question, noting the annual report last year of the president, and as I say, I meet regularly with the president and thank TASCAT for what they do, and it absolutely is efficient. Obviously, there needs to be efficiencies across all government agencies and indeed all parts of government, and you've seen in the Budget increased funding for TASCAT over future years. We're pleased and proud of that. It does recognise their increased jurisdictions.

We get ongoing updates from the president, and of course those matters are always considered carefully, and we will absolutely commit to continue to take into account their feedback with respect to how to operate more effectively, efficiently, and deliver affordable access to justice in an easy way, which is absolutely a great strength of our justice system which is TASCAT. I'll just see if the secretary wanted to add anything to that.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. Just to note or reiterate what you have said in terms of the dialogue between the president, obviously, the deputy but also the department, particularly through Ms van Adrichem, and to clarify also that the tribunal has experienced a continuing increase, particularly in the mental health stream, due to a significant increase in the number of applications for treatment orders, which has required the tribunal to prioritise the hearing of matters in that stream where treatment orders would lapse if they were not heard in the required statutory time frame. I understand there was a trial of these revised procedures and significant discussion with relevant stakeholders as well.

If you could refer to it as a backlog, albeit that's probably too strong a term, the tribunal has a magnificent track record of how expeditiously it deals with matters and obviously provides a more accessible forum for the range of matters that it deals with, but there has been a really significant increase in that stream, which has meant that it's had to potentially delay some things.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. I hear all that. My question was: has it maintained its backlog status given that the president had said that, unless there's extra funding to deal with these extra cases, matters of significance are not going to be met in a timely manner. So perhaps a table asking the president, has that occurred? I understand, increase. We want to know, has the increase in the cases been met with an increase in funding, so there's no statistical backlog in performance?

CHAIR - We probably do need rather short answers, if we can, to keep on track.

Mr BARNETT - Sorry, Chair, through you.

CHAIR - That's all right.

Mr BARNETT - The deputy's secretary has offered to share the numbers with this committee and has offered - and to put that on notice, or, in fact, to speak and share the numbers with you right now.

CHAIR - Yes.

PUBLIC

Mr BARNETT - And I've got the numbers in about a paragraph which I could share with you, which might assist the committee. And then, of course, we can add to that with further answers on notice. So, from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, the tribunal has received 6776 lodgements, held 5352 hearings and made 6406 finalisations. That's incredible.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - Huge. So, there were 11,822 telephone inquiries received by the tribunal through the interactive voice response system and it received 287,237 visits to the website. So, I'll just share that with you in terms of you've seen the lodgements and finalisations, it's, like, very significant.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes. That's not the question.

Mr BARNETT - Yes.

Mr GAFFNEY - That was last year.

Mr BARNETT - Yes.

Mr GAFFNEY - And the president said, yes, we are maintaining that.

Mr BARNETT - Yes.

Mr GAFFNEY - I want to know - and it can be taken on notice or provided - since that, has there been an increase? Are they still maintaining - I think he said we have no backlog of statistical significance so I just want to know what's happened since that comment.

Mr BARNETT - Well, why don't we get back to the committee with the numbers. I've outlined those numbers to the best of our ability, in terms of the time frame

CHAIR - Yes. It'd have to be taken on notice.

Mr BARNETT - We're sitting here at 1 June, so we'll try and assist the committee. Unless you've got that with you now.

Ms van ADRICHEM - I have just a general update to say that the tribunal has advised that numbers for this financial year are still on track, noting that we're not at the end of June yet, and they're not showing a significant backlog in terms of clearance rates.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes.

Ms van ADRICHEM - So at this point in time, things remain on track.

Mr GAFFNEY - Perfect answer. Thank you.

Ms van ADRICHEM - Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - Does that assist the honourable member?

PUBLIC

Mr GAFFNEY - It definitely does.

CHAIR - Thank you. I just have a supplementary from Mr Hiscutt.

Mr HISCUTT - Just because in budget paper 4, on page 46, it has the general division pending cases over 12 months old, which I presume, essentially, is what we're talking about here. Only 5 per cent, which is amazing, 2023-24. 5.4 for 2024-25. But then the target goes up to 10 per cent. Wouldn't we be, if we're achieving those numbers, setting our target and ambitiously not expecting them to go backwards. Could you speak to that at all?

Mr BARNETT - Well, possibly. What page are you on?

Mr HISCUTT - Page 46 of budget paper 4.

Mr BARNETT - Page 46.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. Performance, and it's just got targets of - - -

Mr BARNETT - Yes. We'll just see if we can assist the honourable members.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. Thank you. I just wonder why the targets are higher than - yeah.

Mr BARNETT - If you could just bear with us one moment. See if we've got that information, otherwise we can get back to you. We'll see if we can assist the honourable member.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you. I appreciate that.

Mr BARNETT - Through the chief financial officer, Gavin Wailes.

Ms van ADRICHEM - Thank you. Through you, minister. So, the target is 10, but we're performing better at 5.4.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes, it was a good news story that we are. I just wonder why the target is 10 when we clearly are doing better and can do better. Should we not set our targets more? It looks like we're setting our target to go backwards.

Ms van ADRICHEM - Thank you. The director of finance - it's still a relatively new division, so I think it's building in some flexibility around what the target ought to be, noting that the performance to date has exceeded those expectations.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes, I just was concerned with Gaffney's problem, that if it's not being funded, that we're setting ourselves to not fail, but to not achieve as good as we can. But good to know that it's just a preliminary and hopefully next year's performances and targets will be more appropriate. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. Mr Gaffney with one last question.

Mr GAFFNEY - And one last question. The operational efficiencies deliverable note says, 'Restructuring and combining related functions, investment in digital and AI solutions to

streamline processes, reviewing and reprioritising activities and service delivery models'. So, my question would be: will operational efficiencies be found by letting TASCAT employees go? How does the government anticipate that this will go, noting a far greater caseload from recent jurisdictional changes?

Mr BARNETT - Well, two quick things in response before I pass to the secretary. One is that we're increasing funding to TASCAT. It's deemed a very significant and successful reform in the last decade; it continues to operate and do well across government. However, we've noted there needs to be efficiencies, operational efficiencies, and we always want continuous improvement. Certainly, as a deputy and as a minister, I've always promoted continuous improvement across all of my departments and having a long-term plan and approach that's been consistent with everything that I've been involved with. Having said that, I'll pass to the secretary.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy, through you. Not much to add from earlier response other than that we're working through our operational efficiencies in a planned and strategic way as part of our broader program of work. As I indicated earlier, there will inevitably be a need for a reduction in staffing numbers across the agency, noting that we are also prioritising our investment in IT and other digital projects, including in TASCAT, where the government's committed just over half a million dollars to deliver enhancements, rather, to its case management system, so that we can generate efficiencies and utilise better - well, not better, I beg your pardon - but utilise the staff we have so that we can prioritise service delivery doesn't necessarily mean a reduction in staff. But in terms of whether we'll be reducing numbers in TASCAT or any part of the agency, at this stage, it's too early to say where those reductions will come from, because we're working through it in a methodical and strategic way.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. If we have no further burning questions on TASCAT.

Output Group 1.5 Tasmanian Legal Aid

CHAIR - If we move to 1.5 Tasmanian Legal Aid. Ms Webb.

Ms WEBB - Thank you, Chair. This is always an interesting area to ask questions about because it's hard to track all the comings and goings of short-term commitments made and then ending and then other ones starting and ending, and it's got the mix, of course, of Commonwealth into state funding as well. And quite frankly, I don't know how Kristen Wylie and her team manage with such uncertainty going forward, really. They must have to do gymnastics - Cirque du Soleil-style gymnastics to get through this. I'm trying to track what is coming and going. We had in the 2024-25 Budget some additional money provided for legal services and advice to people impacted by child sex abuse and things like, I think, a duty lawyer at AYDC. That was a couple of years. I think we've now finished that.

If you could confirm that the funding that was announced back in 2024-25 has come to an end, or whether we're still seeing some elements of that in, say, the 2026-27 or 2027-28 Budget, and help us specify what that is if it's there in this line item. And then, of course, in last year's 2025-26 Budget, we had \$2 million indicated as a key deliverable in 2025-26 and

another \$2 million in 2026-27. That was for general demand pressures and response to increased demand.

And so presumably that's represented here, and that's probably what then results in a drop away from 2027-28 when we look at the line item and it drops by over \$2 million, and then across into the forward Estimates stays at that lower level. So, I'm just trying to track the announcements made in the previous two budgets and where they're up to, and whether them coming to an end accounts for the drop in 2027-28. That's my starting point, and then I'll have some additional questions once we clarify that.

Mr BARNETT - Okay. Thanks very much for the question. Thank you for your acknowledgement up front in terms of Tas Legal Aid and your support for their work and just want to put on the record my wonderful thanks and acknowledgement of their work throughout Tasmania. You mentioned Kristen Wylie and others, the board and all of Legal Aid. I've put on the record my thanks for their service, and I know how important it is for vulnerable and other Tasmanians who have that service. They undertake excellent work.

CHAIR - We probably do need to get to the answers. It's just that we are short on time.

Mr BARNETT - So last year's budget we provided an additional \$4 million for Tas Legal Aid over the next two years. An additional \$3.5 million was granted through the Solicitor's Guarantee Fund to Tas Legal Aid in addition to that. May 2025 and January this year, following a comprehensive assessment process I approved grants in excess of \$10 million to support a range of initiatives that demonstrate alignment with the set priorities and objectives of the Solicitors' Guarantee Fund.

Our government's also supporting innovative programs within the legal assistance sector by allocating 1.2 million over two years in the 2024-25 Budget to expand Just Healthy Families program, Tasmania's first health justice partnership, delivered by the Women's Legal Service Tasmania in partnership with Legal Aid. In terms of the specifics, I will pass to the deputy secretary, if that's okay.

Ms van ADRICHEM - Thank you, minster. Through you. Just for clarity, I won't touch on the Commonwealth baseline and State appropriation baseline. But for 2025-26, as the deputy mentioned, there was a two-year base funding increase of \$2 million, so that will conclude in 2027-28, but it is in the 2026-27 Budget.

Ms WEBB - That's account for some of the drop there in 2027-28.

Ms van ADRICHEM - Yes.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

Ms van ADRICHEM - Acting judges concludes in 2027-28 as well, so that's \$380,000 in 2025-26 and \$380,000 in 2026-27.

Ms WEBB - Does this relate to line item 1.5 Tasmania Legal Aid?

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Ms van ADRICHEM - It's the acting judges' allocation from the 2025-26 Budget which allocated \$1.2 million over two years, which is then divided between Supreme Court and Tasmania Legal Aid.

Ms WEBB - Okay.

Ms van ADRICHEM - And commission of enquiry response in 2025-26 was \$388,000. In 2026-27 it's \$324,000 and in 2027-28 it's \$324,000. And then there's the state top up allocation which has been a longstanding contribution. In 2025-26 that was \$106,402, in 2026-27 it's \$127,049 and it increases to \$136,000 and is ongoing in the future years.

Ms WEBB - That's built into those line - through you. It is built into this line item there in those core figures?

Ms van ADRICHEM - That last one is in the legal assistance line item.

Ms WEBB - That's the next line. I'm sorry. Tas Legal Aid funding is confusing enough. Can we just stick to that particular line item because there's so much coming and going. The thing that bothers me is that we seem to keep having to top them up and having to - they have to go cap in hand to the Solicitors' Guarantee Fund for what looks like very core services for them, when I read it. On the other hand, we're balancing a backlog in the courts, which is absolutely going to be connected into this space if we're not providing enough support through Tas Legal Aid and meeting the demand that's there.

So can you explain why we're not in some comprehensive way having an understanding of what's needed here and building it all in, instead of in dribs and drabs announced differently each year, building it all into the core funding for them.

Mr BARNETT - Thanks very much for the question and, I think, we're all agreed around this table of the importance of their service and their services. I think in terms of the STF they are specific, dedicated, time limited funding initiatives, like the trial hub at the Tasmanian Legal Aid. And they have a range of literacy volunteers, they've got funding, obviously, for a range of other special projects, and they are all on the public record, so I don't need to go through them. I'll just see if the -

Ms WEBB - Although, deputy, before we move on from that, when I do look at them, they look like pretty core things that don't necessarily have a time limited application. So, two and a half million dollars from the Solicitors' Guarantee Fund for criminal or a duty lawyer service at the Magistrates' Court and the mental health stream of TASCAT, now, is that only expected to last two years or is that an ongoing thing? We've got one year's worth of funding of \$167,000 for a youth justice lawyer in the Magistrate's youth justice division. Are we expecting that to only be needed for one year?

Mr BARNETT - Well, as I say, these have gone through a process. They've been assessed independently by a panel. They come to me. I review them very carefully and those I support, I think, absolutely support them and so, this has been independently assessed and reviewed and we've made recommendations -

Ms WEBB - But it sounds like core funding. It sounds like core function. Why aren't you funding them as core?

CHAIR - Let's just hear the answer.

Mr BARNETT - You might think some of it is, but some of its specific purpose and time limited, and that's really what I'm saying for special projects. You've identified one or two there and, I think, there's an argument for and against. But my point is that, in terms of the funding, we've provided \$4 million. There's \$2 million in the 2025-26 Budget, two million dollars in the 2024-25 Budget, and I think the deputy secretary's outlined some of those other numbers. I'm happy for the deputy or the secretary to answer that. But I'm not discounting the importance of Legal Aid. I see it as important and that's why the government's been backing Tas Legal Aid in different ways and in different forums.

Ms WEBB - They're facing a \$2 million cut in 2027-28. Are we expecting them to have a lesser demand in that year?

Mr BARNETT - Well, we'll continue to review the work of Tas Legal Aid and I have meetings from time to time with Tas Legal Aid. I thank them for their services, I said, in my opening remarks. I'll just check if the secretary or deputy wanted to add to that. No.

Ms WEBB - Are we no longer funding them to have the duty lawyer at AYDC, then, under that commission of inquiry funding which has now come to an end, I think, judging by the budget papers? Are we expecting they're going to withdraw that service from AYDC?

Mr BARNETT - Yes. I thought it was continuing, but I - that was my understanding, but we'll confirm that with the committee. Who would like to respond?

Ms van ADRICHEM - Through you, minister, it'll continue until 2028.

Ms WEBB - Okay. Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - That's good.

CHAIR - Thank you. I might just combine legal assistance and Legal Aid, possibly.

Mr BARNETT - Yes.

CHAIR - Because I think the two pieces, sort of, go together. If I just ask both questions here, then we'll probably move through those.

Output Group 1.6

Legal Assistance

CHAIR - The question is: how will the Justice Department absorb a reported \$9.3 million annual funding reduction without reducing the frontline services? And can you guarantee that no Tasmanian will lose access to legal assistance or family violence services or Legal Aid as a result of the funding reductions?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much for the question. As I've indicated, we take it very seriously and we've provided that funding support in the past budgets and in this year's Budget.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - So, can you guarantee that no Tasmanians will lose access to legal assistance, family violence services or Legal Aid as a result of the funding reductions?

Mr BARNETT - I have to check which page in the budget papers you're referring to, the \$9 million figure?

CHAIR - Well, 9.3. I've got it on my list of questions. I've tried to colour code myself, so I know it's in pink.

Mr BARNETT - Yes.

CHAIR - I'm sure you'll tell me if that's not right. I'm sure the secretary will tell me if the \$9.3 million is not right.

Mr BARNETT - Just checking the numbers and where in the budget papers.

CHAIR - I'll just find where it is.

Mr BARNETT - I'll see if the deputy can assist the committee.

CHAIR - That'd be lovely. Thank you.

Ms van ADRICHEM - Through you, minister, I think what you, respectfully, may be referring to is a 2021-22 State Budget commitment of \$8.8 million over four years.

CHAIR - Yes.

Ms van ADRICHEM - That was then extended in 2023-24 by \$820,000. So that concludes at the end of this financial year. The purpose of that commitment was to replace the Solicitors' Guarantee Fund, which wasn't available at that point in time. So the government committed a number of years ago to continue core services throughout that period since 2025 to have now been to Solicitors' Guarantee Fund grant rounds held.

CHAIR - Are they still reliant on the short-term Solicitors' Guarantee Fund grants instead of secure recurrent funding?

Mr BARNETT - I think the point being made, you mention the \$9 million.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - I think the deputy's responded accurately.

CHAIR - Yes. I know. But I have a question as well about - because it was mentioned -

Mr BARNETT - I'm making a point that government stepped in.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - Our government stepped in to fill in those gaps, and we've now filled in the gaps and now the SGF is of an adequate amount to be able to provide support. And I can

PUBLIC

give you a heads up, it's my intention to progress, to further the Solicitors' Guarantee Fund round before the end of this year. In terms of applications, we'll open applications. But further discussions will need to be had with the relevant board members.

CHAIR - Just a final question on that. So why are essential legal services, including community legal centres and tenancy support, still reliant on a short-term Solicitors' Guarantee Fund grants instead of secure recurrent funding? And I guess that's a question for you, deputy.

Mr BARNETT - Yes. No, I appreciate the question and where you're coming from and, of course, we appreciate the work of our community legal centres, Tas Legal Aid and various other stakeholders as -

CHAIR - The people who need them.

Mr BARNETT - Women's Legal Service is another one. But as I've indicated, the government stepped in for a number of years to pay for support, and now - - -

CHAIR - I understand that. But my question is: why are we still reliant on the Solicitors' Guarantee Fund rather than - - -

Mr BARNETT - Well, we're delighted with the Solicitors' Guarantee Fund, that we've got enough money.

CHAIR - Okay. It's a grant.

Mr BARNETT - It's a very important process and it's time limited, project specific, and they do absolutely fulfil an important role in our justice system, so I just wanted to acknowledge that.

CHAIR - No.

Ms WEBB - We're funding essential, ongoing things, though, through that. They're not time-limited projects. They're having to go cap in hand for their core functions, these community legal centres, including Legal Aid, including the Tas Legal Service and others. They go cap in hand every year.

CHAIR - Thank you, yes.

Mr BARNETT - I think the only thing I would add to that is that we are, and have stepped in in terms of the federal government's deficit funding in terms of their lack of support for our legal justice system in Tasmania, and we've had to step up and step in, and certainly not just through our budget but through the Solicitor's Guarantee Fund. And I wish we were sitting around a senate estimates table and you could ask the federal attorney-general some questions about Legal Aid funding for Tasmania.

CHAIR - Thank you, deputy. And I think we've got time for one more before we take a break, Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commission.

Ms WEBB - I had some more under 1.6.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - You had more, did you?

Ms WEBB - Sorry.

CHAIR - Sorry, I thought we were wrapping up. All right. Okay. Ms Webb, yes.

Ms WEBB - If I might, just another one. I think it would relate to 1.6, Legal Assistance. There are sector and community concerns that elder abuses occurring within family relationships is not adequately recognised or addressed in our state's family violence framework in either the areas of prevention, advocacy or clear legal assistance pathways under that, because elder abuse doesn't get classified as family violence. The questions I had around that are: is there any dedicated funding or resourcing provided for elder abuse prevention in your agency, and: what specialist advocacy or legal assistance pathways are available for those seeking help regarding lived experience of elder abuse?

Mr BARNETT - First thing I would say and acknowledge is the minister, Bridget Archer, is doing an excellent job as Minister for Ageing and takes this matter very seriously, as do I. And I thank her for her leadership in that regard in terms of elder abuse. And, of course, across government it is a priority.

The second thing is that we are very focused on reforms to our family and domestic violence reform measures that are so important. Minister Jane Howlett and I announced the first tranche of those to be progressed and I'm very pleased about that, particularly with respect to coercive control. There'll be more said in due course, including with respect to image-based sexual abuse. But you've specifically talked about elder abuse, and I know the deputy secretary can add to that answer.

Ms van ADRICHEM - Thank you. Thank you. Through you, minister. Under the National Access to Justice Partnership agreements, the specialist elder abuse services that are provided by Legal Aid will be funded through that mechanism from 1 July this year onwards, and that's in the amount of \$2.241 million that's transitioning into the Legal Aid Commission.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. From a Commonwealth funding source?

Ms van ADRICHEM - Under the National Access to Justice Partnership agreement, yes.

Ms WEBB - Thank you, appreciate that.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Output Group 1.7

Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner

CHAIR - If we can now go to 1.7, Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner. Mr Hiscutt.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you. There's once again a significant cut in the appropriations between the 2026-27 and the 2027-28 Budget there that doesn't actually recover. In fact, the

2029-30 is still less than the 2026-27. I'm just wondering if I could have an understanding of how that office will operate with a tightened budget.

Mr BARNETT - All right. Look, thank you very much for the question. Before I pass to the secretary there, I would want to do a shoutout and pay a tribute and congratulate Sally Sievers AO for taking on the new role as Tasmania's new anti-discrimination commissioner. And Ms Sievers is a former chief executive officer of the Northern Territory council of social services, previously served for a decade as an anti-discrimination Commissioner for the Northern Territory, as well as a principal community visitor. And I just wanted to note that and thank the acting commissioner for all the work that she's done to support the role of the government and the anti-discrimination laws in Tasmania. I'll just pass to the secretary to assist the honourable member further.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks deputy, through you. I think again there'll be a reflection of an apportionment of some of the operational efficiencies across outputs. Also, the tail, if I can call it that, of existing budget efficiency dividends, one of which was applied to the Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner in terms of its training revenue, which it's anticipated that it does recover through a fee-for-service model. And I note that the staffing establishment of the office remains stable.

Mr HISCUTT - Okay. That's good to know. Thank you. And regarding that, I was going to ask how many total positions are held in this area, and are there any unfilled positions?

Mr BARNETT - We'll just check if we've got the answer to that.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes, if you've got it. Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - And I should note that, compared to last year's 2025-26 Budget, the funding for ADC is higher across the forward Estimates going forward than the 2025-26 Budget, and that's in table 6.2. Having said that, I'll just check if the secretary or deputy can assist the honourable member.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy, through you. As of 1 March 2026, the Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner had 11 staff, equating to 10.1 FTE. I'm sure Ms van Adrichem will step in if I mischaracterise where it's at. The acting anti-discrimination commissioner's substantive position is vacant. It wasn't backfilled when Ms Saturno stepped up to the acting ADC role. And there's another position that has not been backfilled due to an internal personnel matter, so effectively two - and over to you.

Ms van ADRICHEM - Through you, minister, just a slight correction. There was a period of backfill for the acting anti-discrimination Commissioner, but that position ended a number of months ago. And I would also like to add that there is a graduate, undertaking duties within the anti-discrimination commission as of this point in time until 31 December, as an additional position.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you very much for the answer. And how many education or training or community engagement activities were undertaken by the anti-discrimination commissioner or office in the last financial year?

PUBLIC

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much for the question. Of course, education and awareness are important in terms of ensuring that all Tasmanians are supported and encouraged to have an inclusive environment. We support freedom of speech, freedom of democracy, freedom of thought, worship and association, of course. And under the legislation, we have a framework which supports that and allows Tasmanians to enjoy those fundamental freedoms and rights. I'll just check in terms of the specific part of that question whether the secretary can assist.

Ms BOURNE - Sure. Thanks, deputy, through you. So, from 1 July 25 to 31 March 26 the office undertook 83 community engagement sessions. And for the same reporting period, 58 training and community education sessions were delivered to 665 people across a range of public, private, local government, not-for-profit schools and tertiary institutions.

Mr HISCUTT - Been very busy. Just a last one. With the complaints lodged with the commissioner, are there any trends that we should be concerned about?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the question. We'll just check with the department if we can assist the honourable member. Of course, you know, the work in terms of supporting people with disabilities, children, vulnerable Tasmanians and so on is all very important. I'll just check if the secretary can assist.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy, through you. Without reflecting on trends, I wouldn't seek to sit in the chair of the acting anti-discrimination commissioner. But in terms of facts, disability discrimination continues to be the highest attribute of discrimination and prohibited conduct. And in relation to inciting hatred, race is the attribute most complained about, followed by religious belief or affiliation or activity, and then disability.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you for the answer.

CHAIR - Thank you. If there are no further questions, if we could stop the broadcast, we'll take a 15-minute break. Thank you. And we will come back -

The committee suspended from 10.59 a.m. to 11.15 a.m.

Output Group 1.8

Elections and Referendums

CHAIR - Thank you, deputy, and I notice that we now have Mr Andrew Hawkey at the table, and we have 1.8: Elections and Referendums, and we have Ms Webb.

Ms WEBB - Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR - Any questions from you?

Ms WEBB - Just looking at that line item, it's a fairly steady line item across the forward Estimates, but a couple of things just to clarify around it: other than the reserve by law funding, which obviously isn't going to be touched with operational efficiencies, are expectations that the electoral commission finds operational efficiencies, though, to contribute to overall cuts that need to be made across the board; and if so, what's the quantum that we're expecting this year and across the forward Estimates?

Mr BARNETT - I might pass initially to the secretary and then, of course, welcome the TEC Commissioner, Andrew Hawkey, to the table and thank him and the team for their work and support to the people of Tasmania. Been a busy year with an election last year. We've had 2 legislative council elections, 7 local government councillor recounts, and 2 local government byelection-associated non-voted processes. Having said that, I'll go straight to the secretary to assist the honourable member.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. Through you. As noted, we're still working through the detail of how we'll achieve our efficiency targets, and noting the independence of the commissioner, we'll continue to work collaboratively with him in terms of how he may and I suspect already has done a great deal of work in terms of looking at the structure, but where there might be opportunities to drive further efficiencies, but that's certainly a work in progress, and at this stage, it's a discussion that's still happening and needs to happen in a great deal more detail.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. It comes at a time that the electoral commission has only recently gone through a review of its operational structure and put in place a new operational, organisational structure. That's, I'd say, barely bedded down. I'm interested to hear about how that is bedding down and what we're looking at in terms of recruitment and retention figures across the time since we've had the new organisational structure in place, if that's something, deputy, that either you or the commissioner can answer.

Mr BARNETT - Yes. I can initially respond and note that the organisational expansion concluded in and around December last year. That's, of course, been bedded down, which no doubt the commissioner can speak to very shortly, and as the secretary said, there's ongoing discussion and consultation between the TEC and my department. I know they meet regularly. They work through these objectives and discussions, and I think it's fair to say the identification and securing that long-term corporate office and the surge workspaces in southern Tasmania to ensure capacity and capability for cyclical elections and any future snap state elections. Let's hope that's not anywhere round the corner.

Ms WEBB - Fingers crossed on that one. That's good.

Mr BARNETT - I think 2029's in people's minds at the moment, but that's a matter for the parliament and the premier, of course. Let's just see if the secretary would add, and then I'll go to the TEC Commissioner.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. Without stealing the commissioner's thunder, only to note that it has completed the expansion from 16 to 34 permanent FTE to match the significant change in the nature of its work, and I commend the commissioner on how they've undertaken that task and note that I think many of those positions are predominantly covered by reserved-by-law funding in any event, but through you, deputy, I think the commissioner's best placed to talk to how that's tracking.

Mr BARNETT - Yes. Thank you. Chair, are you happy if we go to the commissioner?

CHAIR - Yes, absolutely.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you.

Mr HAWKEY - Thank you, deputy, and through you. The office did expand to 34 late last year, and it was a phased-in approach over about 18 months, which meant a range of new individuals with new skills got to at least see firsthand how we run our elections, which has been very helpful. The tri-directorate structure has been very beneficial in sharing the load and providing a better distribution of skills and resources to meeting the immutable deadlines that we face and the increased challenges in areas such as the funding disclosure area, which of course commenced on 1 July in the middle of the 2025 state election. Again, I commend all the great work the staff have done in dealing with that and also the political participants, as they were in the middle of an election, and so the rules were different through that process.

We have had 1 staff person receive a promotion in New South Wales and has left, and another person has got a promotion in Health, and we are looking to refill those positions, as they're critical roles. One is in relation to the portal, which is the funding disclosure portal, which is only weeks away from coming online, and staff of the commission have written out to political participants about getting involved, which will create efficiencies in itself in how we process and manage and make transparent the claims in that area.

The other position is in relation to operations, and one of the key things about this change with the expansion of the office is only 9 of the 34 people in our office have been through a major local government election. There's a lot of training. There's a lot of knowledge/management gap that we're filling and people in new roles to address that issue, and that's going really well. The structure today is going as well as I would've liked and has really helped ease the burden on those who have carried a lot in years gone by.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

Mr GAFFNEY - Can I add a follow up to that?

Ms WEBB - Sure.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes. Just a quick follow up: that's a huge turnover of experienced people with knowledge base.

Mr HAWKEY - No, we only had 14.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay.

Mr HAWKEY - We only had 14, and then we're up to 34.

Ms WEBB - Because of the expansion.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. Thank you.

Mr HAWKEY - Only 9 of them have been in those roles in the past.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay, got you. Thank you.

Ms WEBB - Couple of other areas to touch on and picking up on some of the things you just mentioned there around the introduction of the new political donation disclosure system,

you mentioned the portal's about to come on board. We've been operating without the portal since it became live last year as a requirement.

I know that there are administrative costs that can be recouped by political participants in the lower house, not by participants in the upper house, but by the lower house. Has that arrangement flowed smoothly? Has there been the anticipated level of recouping of administrative costs from political participants, or can you reflect on that a little bit for us, not obviously on an individual basis, just broadly?

Mr HAWKEY - Yes. There was the disclosure process, then there's the elections claim process for a house of single election which had been undertaken, but then there's also an administrative fund that is made available to members of the House of Assembly, and all this is available on our website. You can see what's going through; it's not confidential. In general, we're finding the political parties, which are bigger structures and have bigger admin fund available, are making claims. Only some of the independents have made claims to date, but that may change over time. Again, it's all fairly new, and the process of identifying what can be claimed by individuals is an evolving process.

Ms WEBB - No doubt we'll look at it more through the electoral matters committee, but on that, then, the claims made through that administrative funding, is that part of your reserved-by-law funding, through you, deputy, rather than the other operational funding?

Mr HAWKEY - Yes. Through you, minister. Yes, there are different elements of reserved-by-law funding, and one is for the EDFA, the Electoral Disclosure and Funding Act. There are other ones under the Electoral Act. There are others on under redistribution under Aboriginal land council, but there's a separate one that's covered under there.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. And the other area I wanted to touch on was the boundary changes that have some appropriation through the reserved by law for elected council boundary changes. It's \$95,000 in 2025-26. No, that's the wrong figure. Sorry, \$355,000 in 2026-27 is the figure. What's the expenditure of that in terms of what do we need to - do we need to employ a new person to come in and do that process for us? Do we need to have some sort of online system or something that does that for us? What's the expenditure there?

Mr HAWKEY - Through you, minister.

Mr BARNETT - Yes, please.

Mr HAWKEY - There are a range of costs. We have historically used the Victorian Electoral Commissioner's boundary-maker system, which is essentially a building-block graphical structure that takes current enrolment and proposed future enrolment at the lowest ABS level, and we then build divisions from that, and we were looking to talk to the Victorian Electoral Commission to use their system again, which essentially comes at no real cost.

The money put aside relates to the calling of the staff. There'll be use of staff, which again, we're not fully sure whether that's internal or needs some extra staff. There'll be costs for map creation. There's also a bit of travel because the commission would normally travel to the north for public hearings and different things like that. So, there's a little bit of cost in a range of areas, but we think that that's a reasonable amount to cover those costs.

Ms WEBB - And then in terms of other boundary changes, of course we've got the federal - at the federal level, the AEC is looking at boundary changes for Tasmanian divisions at a federal level, which then flows through to a state level. What's the process and the timing of - if that passes federal level later in the year, when do we bring it into effect here at a state level for our lower house elections?

Mr HAWKEY - So through you, minister.

Mr BARNETT - Yes, please.

Mr HAWKEY - So the usual practice is that it's a legislative change undertaken for the Constitution Act. And so, I would discuss this with staff in DPAC because it's under the administration of the premier, and that would be discussion with them as to the timing. In 2018, I actually wrote to the secretary of DPAC to request a slight delay because the boundaries at a federal level came in three months before the expected state election which had gone full term at that point and I believed it was not appropriate for electors to have to learn their new boundaries, and also that they'd been represented by members for four years, therefore they should have a chance to provide a vote on where they thought the Parliament had gone, and so they were implemented directly after. I have not commenced any discussions with DPAC at the moment.

Ms WEBB - Of course those ones weren't as dramatic. The other side of that I'm wondering about, are there any cost implications in implementing changes that have flowed through from the federal level, and if so, what year would they be experienced here in this budget? Which of the out years?

Mr HAWKEY - So essentially there's a communication that's undertaken to electors who have changed division and that's usually a joint thing between the AEC and the TEC to inform because, again, it's with a unique case in Tasmania where we share boundaries and names of divisions so there is great clarity to the elector to keep that connection. And last time they actually delayed that notification. So, in that sense, we'd be looking at the same. And I think, actually, that is part of the \$300,000. There's a certain portion there that will go in informing.

Ms WEBB - I see.

Mr HAWKEY - But again, we don't yet have - we don't yet know what the final outcome will be. We don't yet know the timing of that, and we don't yet know what the government's doing here.

Ms WEBB - But we've built it in here to the - - -

Mr HAWKEY - There's probably \$50 to \$100,000 in there that would probably go towards that. In my discussions with the finance director here, that was part of the discussions there as well.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

CHAIR - Mr Hiscutt has a supplementary, first of all.

PUBLIC

Mr HISCUTT - Yes, quick follow up on that. Just the legislative council redistribution, just the timeline on that. Knowing that obviously the elections are in May each year, 2027, will that be expected to be discussions leading up to and then implemented after that.

Mr HAWKEY - So the next redistribution is triggered by a 10-year gap between the commencement of the last committee and that is due for around October, November this year. So, in that sense, I will write then to the Minister for Justice to inform him that a new one needs to be created. I expect that that will commence early next year. So probably an initial proposal is undertaken, and that's probably - that's, you know, guess at the moment is probably March we'd be looking at that. Then there's a 28-day consultation period of which the public can respond, and then there are public hearings. And the group which starts as the surveyor-general, me, and a representative of the ABS expands to become the augmented commission because the chair and member of the commission join that for a review process. Back when it went from 19 to 15 members, there was actually a secondary proposal because there were some changes that were seen as significant that extended that to a further period. That may occur that may not. So, what I'm trying to say there is that we don't have a set period but it's probably looking to go to around May or after the May election. You've then got that transition period that the tribunal or the augmented commission would look at. So, I certainly wouldn't expect the new boundaries to be in before next year's elections.

Mr HISCUTT - But soon after.

Mr HAWKEY - But for the following ones in 2028.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr HISCUTT - And a new one to ask, if that's okay, Chair.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr HISCUTT - In relation to the local government elections, obviously they're due September, October this year. There's the targeted reform bill currently going through Parliament which if amended, I don't think would come back to the lower house until August. Does the government have an understanding of how that would progress?

Mr BARNETT - Yes, I'm more than happy to pass to the commissioner. That bill in particular relates to just more DPAC-related, but I understand there has been consultation with DPAC and the TEC. I don't know if the Commissioner could add to that.

Mr HAWKEY - So we were originally concerned about the time frame with the fuller bill and discussed with the possibility that any critical things the government wished to do were probably better in a smaller bill, which the government then put forward.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes.

Mr HAWKEY - So from an electoral point of view, there are two key areas of impact, I think, from this bill, the things that are relevant to the elections. One is the reduction in the number of councillors to be elected and the other is the ability for the commission to provide alternative voting services, similar to the legislation the government passed for parliamentary elections, which we implemented in 2025, both for the legislative council and for the state

PUBLIC

election and the 2026 legislative council. So, in 2022, the legislation changed to be compulsory in the August before the election. So, the commission likes to make sure it's agile. So, we are already undertaking preliminary discussions with councils and with our own operational team to look at what it will be. So, we will be prepared for that if it comes in before - in time for the election.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes.

Mr HAWKEY - The Commission has already met last week to giving principal support to establishing telephone assisted voting for local government elections if the legislation passes in time. The key thing here, and this is something I've raised with councils, is that we had over 8000 people use it for the state election. If we're looking at similar numbers for local government, then this is a massive increase in workload and additional cost to councils. On average, it took around four minutes to do a House of Assembly ballot paper for the state election. Now, again, we had columns with candidates, a lot of people voting just for one column. So, it was a reasonably smooth process. Where we talk about local government, somewhere like Hobart, we had 44 candidates all rotated. We had a mayor, a deputy mayor election. We had elector poll. So, it's probably going to be more like 10 to 15 minutes for someone to complete a vote. But we certainly found with postal voting outside of the country, there is very little confidence that postal votes can be sent out and come back in time due to the way postal voting has moved around the world. So, in that sense, we, and I think electors have taken confidence, knowing they can do this, to be assured their vote's there. And so that will be - we're preparing for that adjustment.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. Okay.

Mr BARNETT - Can I just jump in through you, Chair.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - To say, obviously minister Vincent - who's in your house - can have more to say as a relevant minister of a local government in answer to some of these questions. But I think the Commissioner's outlined some of that and I would want to say the reforms in terms of print disability and the alternative voting at the state election, I think you said 8000, you know, this is a hugely important reform in terms of people with disabilities, vision impairment, to allow them access to our democracy. And this is a great reform and I'm really proud of it.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr HAWKEY - Can I just clarify one thing. Sorry. If I just clarify. So, there were 8000 individuals which were overseas or interstate electors, but we had over 200 people with a print disability that used it for the state election.

Mr HISCUTT - I have a different question. Do you have a follow up?

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes, just a follow up from that one. I would suggest - and want to hear - whether a council has eight elected members or 10 or 12 - whilst that has some work, it's not going to be a huge amount of work to be able to cater for that, is it?

PUBLIC

Mr HAWKEY - No. When we went to all in, all out local government elections a decade or so ago, the commission received from Victoria their computer count system, which is a data entry.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes.

Mr HAWKEY - So it's more how many candidates stand. And we had 35 million keystrokes for the last local government, so we managed that process. So, whether we're electing five or seven or nine or 12 is immaterial to the timeliness.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms WEBB - Just following up from that.

CHAIR - Yes.

Ms WEBB - So when, in terms of timelines of potentially the bill passing the Parliament entirely, maybe not till August. The deadline for people nominating for council, how close does that get to the deadline for nomination?

Mr HAWKEY - So the key dates for the local governments are set in legislation, and so essentially the notice elections around early, about 6 September, somewhere around there, it's expected. Then there's about a fortnight for people to nominate.

Ms WEBB - The mid-September.

Mr HAWKEY - Yes.

Ms WEBB - So we're a month out.

Mr HAWKEY - So mid-September, the rolls will close somewhere in the middle there. Yes, so we'll work with - we'll keep an eye on the Parliament to see when the legislation gets through to when we can implement it. But one interesting fact, from 2025, is those that can recall, we were concerned that a state election and a federal election might clash, and we asked the government to defer it by two weeks. And the federals chose our normal polling day. But those two weeks also allowed the legislation to get broad assent prior to us being able to implement them for the 25 elections. So that delay helped us with getting that - be able to implement that election.

Mr BARNETT - Yes. I can give the committee a heads up that I know minister Vincent to - because I was acting for minister Vincent on our House of Assembly and then it's gone upstairs - is to progress that as soon as possible with that ambition to get there by the end of the year. But that's the ambition, but obviously it's subject to parliamentary process.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. Just an understanding question, and I'm sure you can help me get this. There's obviously only about a million dollars in appropriation, but the spending is - the expense is quite considerable and it's also disproportionate. The appropriation is fairly consistent and yet - and I understand that the expense would be different, considering election

cycles. But just if I can understand how that all interacts with each other. Is it being appropriated and then reserved until elections or where does the other appropriation come from?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the question. I think it's quite - it is a little bit complex. There's reserve by law and, of course, others. But maybe if I just pass to the secretary to start the answer to that and we can add to that.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy, through you, you're correct. My understanding is that the 26-27 appropriation funding which the member refers to is 948,000. Reserve by law funding totals 7.248 million, and as Mr Hawkey referred to, the RBL proportion comes from a number of the pieces of legislation. And that would be the main reason for the discrepancy is the significant proportion of the commission's work that's funded by reserve by law as opposed to appropriation.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. If we have no further questions on 1.8. Thank you, Mr Hawkey.

Mr HAWKEY - Thank you.

CHAIR - And, deputy, if we now go to 1.9 Tasmanian Industrial Commission.

Output Group 1.9 (b)

Tasmanian Industrial Commission (b)

Mr BARNETT - Exciting times ahead.

CHAIR - So just a question. Budget papers, paper number 2, page 132 mentions a decrease in the TIC output, reflects the intended transfer of public sector industrial relations to TASCAT in 26-27. So, with the decrease being quite significant from 1,445,000 in 2025-26 to 731,000 in 2026-27, is the TIC at risk of being wound up and fully incorporated into TASCAT?

Mr BARNETT - So firstly, in answer to that question, obviously it's the similar or the same to last year's Budget, and that anticipated the transfer to TASCAT, and hence the savings are still in this Budget as they were the last Budget. But I would like to make it clear to the committee that - because I was asked about this in Budget Estimates last year and I've been asked in question time previously in the House about the unacceptable delays, the Tasmanian workers and others to have important matters heard by the TIC.

And, in fact, Mr O'Byrne, the honourable member for Franklin, raised with me a case of a worker whos' been waiting for more than three years and had not been able to get a progress update from the TIC. And it's not -

CHAIR - Well, we know ourselves how long it can take. In the parliament, seven years without updates.

Mr BARNETT - Well noted. So it's not an isolated case.

CHAIR - No.

Mr BARNETT - That's my point, and you -

CHAIR - So are they likely to be incorporated into TASCAT?

Mr BARNETT - Well, if I can just summarise and say there have been a range of examples, the lengthy and frustrating delays, and I'd be happy to outline to the committee in more detail in that regard. But soon I will be writing to stakeholders and will be conducting targeted consultation including public sector unions in respect to a potential reform to the TIC to improve performance and efficiency in the interests of the unions and all those parties who appear or have matters in this jurisdiction. We've put a proposal to move the industrial matters to TASCAT.

I continue to believe that proposal has a lot of merit. However, I am open to other proposals and I will write to stakeholders accordingly. I'm very much focused on solutions to unacceptable delays and continue to explore options. And we want the right outcome for workers and for all the parties, and we'll continue to work on solutions, noting that it is the TIC that needs to be accountable for those delays.

CHAIR - Absolutely. And what will their main duties be now that they're losing public sector industrial relations?

Mr BARNETT - What would the - say again.

CHAIR - The main duties of the TIC. They're losing the public sector industrial relations. Without that work. So obviously they'll have a lot less work to undertake.

Mr BARNETT - Well, as I say, I think -

CHAIR - That would be a fair tranche of their work.

Mr BARNETT - Yes. And as I say, this Budget is very similar to last year's Budget.

CHAIR - I understand that. Yes.

Mr BARNETT - And what I'm advising the committee and, essentially, announcing that I will be looking for solutions going forward. I'll be consulting with key stakeholders, unions, business and others on the best way forward.

CHAIR - So, next year we might some answers?

Mr BARNETT - Well, I'd be more than happy to update the committee on the various delays, and we've got those before us if you're interested, and to happily outline some of those concerns that we have.

CHAIR - Well, perhaps we could have that - perhaps you could forward that to us, the table of that document.

Mr BARNETT - Be more than happy to.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - That would be really good, rather than go into detail now. Thank you. And, Ms Webb, you have a question? Thank you, deputy.

Ms WEBB - Just a couple of follow ups on that. So, at the present time, the TIC is - yes, there's delays and obviously some issues there. But they also have specialist industrial expertise, and that's the focus of that tribunal. So, with the shift to TASCAT, which is more a generalist tribunal, are we going to be requiring that there are people there in TASCAT who are expected to have industrial expertise in order to undertake this role with the shift? And has that work already begun to ensure that we're populating TASCAT with the right mix of people for this work?

Mr BARNETT - Discussions have taken place with the president of TASCAT and, of course, my department, looking at the options very carefully. And the answer is, yes, you'd need to have capable, competent, professional people to undertake any review in terms of industrial relations matters before it under the TASCAT umbrella. But at the end of the day, I'm looking for solutions. That's my recommended proposed one, but I'm more than happy to talk to other stakeholders and get their feedback on the best way forward.

Ms WEBB - In terms of the timeline, are we going to be recruiting new people to be there at TASCAT available to do these matters as they come through, or -

Mr BARNETT - I think the first step is that I'm consulting on the options.

Ms WEBB - Right. Okay.

Mr BARNETT - And that's what I've advised the committee and others this morning, and we'll be doing that pretty much forthwith.

Ms WEBB - And has there been modelling done on whether the shift - the potential to shift to TASCAT risks being more legally complex or more costly for workers because they may have to get legal representation in that environment that they may not need in a TIC environment? Has that been modelled out as part of this thinking?

Mr BARNETT - We've obviously looked at that very carefully and I'm more than happy for the secretary to speak to that part of it. But we've worked our way through that particular option. But what I'm saying today is that, yes, I think there's a lot of merit in that. Others might have a slightly different view in terms of how we can improve the performance of TIC in terms of their timeliness and efficiency in getting accountability injected into the Tas Industrial Commission so that they can actually perform as intended and deliver as, I think, most parties would wish them to do. And, frankly, the performance is not where it needs to be and hence the need for reform, and I'll be consulting carefully on that.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. We have no further questions. If we move now - if we move to 1.10 and 1.11, they both work together and both by Ms Webb. Office of Independent Regulator and Office of the Implementation Monitor.

Output Group 1.10 (b)

Office of the Independent Regulator (b)

Ms WEBB - Thank you. They're not together. They're separate entities.

CHAIR - No. But they're one after the other.

Ms WEBB - Yes. We'll deal with them separately.

CHAIR - Ms Webb will take those.

Ms WEBB - In terms of the Office of the Independent Regulator, thank you. I know Louise Coe's here today. Thank you for being here to answer questions. This is an area that's really important and it's going to have a major change in the near future, and it's acknowledged in the budget papers that the Independent Regulator shifts into the new Commission for Children and Young People once it becomes established after 1 July this year, I believe. What I'm interested in is it indicates in the budget papers that the funding shifts across. If it's same quantum of funding holus-bolus that shifts across from the department to the new Commission for Children and Young People, or what will that look like on the budget books?

Mr BARNETT - Yes. Thank you very much, and I'll quickly open and then pass to the secretary to offer a more specific response to the honourable member, but I just want to say the role of the independent regulator's very important. I thank Louise Coe for her work and the work of the independent regulator. As you've summarised fairly in your opening remarks in terms of that transition to the commission, after its establishment, as you know, we've advertised for that role as well, and of course that needs to go through due process. In terms of the detail and the timeframes, I'll pass to the secretary.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. Through you. Pertaining to the budget, the government's committed \$2.5 million per annum to establish the new commission and to ensure it meets its operational requirements, the new agency to be established as a separate agency, as members would be aware, following proclamation of the provisions of the Commissioner for Children and Young People Act, with funding to be transferred from the Department of Justice to the commission during the 2026-27 financial year.

As members would also be aware, as part of the creation of the new agency, the functions of the Office of the Independent Regulator as well as the existing Commission for Children and Young People be transferred into the new agency, which will result in a budget for the new commission of an estimated \$8.5 million per annum.

Ms WEBB - We are just rolling the same amount into that other line item. One line item to another, basically. I'm getting nods. Thank you. Which will be helpful, given that's a fairly decent proportion, then, that's coming across from the regulator line item to the new Commission for Children and Young People line item.

What I'm interested in, though, when I look at the numbers here in the budget paper across the forward Estimates for the Office of the Independent Regulator, it's fairly flat. Are we then expecting that this is an area that is going to effectively have a cut, because flat numbers across the outyears means a cut, essentially, when we know there's no indexation there

PUBLIC

or uplift around inflation? Are we expecting there to be cuts to operational scope, cuts to staffing, cuts to what it does?

Mr BARNETT - I will pass to the secretary but note the Independent Regulator's been up and going since 1 January 2024, soon after I became an attorney, and Louise Coe's been busy with her team since then, implementing the roles, functions and responsibilities, information sharing and assessment, Child Safe Framework and so on. Going forward, I will pass to the secretary on that question.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. As the CCYP's expected to be its own standalone agency with its own chapter in the budget in the 2027-28 budget papers, effectively, the department's assisting the transition so it has a budget to commence with, and it will be a matter for the new commissioner in anticipation of the next budget process to make requests of government, if considered necessary, as to whether or not there's any additional appropriation it requires.

Of course, we'll look at its staffing profile with the two offices coming together; potential gaps, given the three commissioner roles that will be established; and for the Department of Justice's purposes, in terms of forward planning for how we'll meet our operational efficiencies, effectively doesn't necessarily take into account the new commission because it will no longer be part of the department.

Ms WEBB - We won't see these two line items, currently 1.10 and then also 1.15. The independent regular line item and the Commission for Children and Young People line item won't appear in next year's Budget, because it'll be a standalone entity separate to the department entirely?

Ms BOURNE - That's correct.

Ms WEBB - Okay, and it'll have to put forward its own budget for that next Budget. Thank you for clarifying that. I appreciate that. The independent regulator has noted that with the Child and Youth Safe Framework, CYSOF, coming in, it's been a real challenge for a lot of not just government agencies but also other non-government organisations that have to comply with a range of things there. Have you had an indication that there is a higher-than-anticipated level of need there around education and capacity-building that requires investment?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the question, and I will pass to the secretary. I meet from time to time with the independent regulator, and they have an independent role, of course, and as you've said, will move into the Commission for Children and Young People in the not-too-distant future. In terms of the Child and Youth Safe Framework, that has an important impact on not just government but a whole range of community business and other organisations where it's relevant, and the independent regulator in terms of education and awareness has been doing a lot of work in that regard. I might just pass to the secretary to add to that.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy, through you. Without speaking for the regulator, as the deputy has said, there's been a great deal of work undertaken by the office to support all organisations to embed the standards, and the office has provided tailored compliance advice to more than 60 policies and procedure documents submitted by organisations across sectors.

From the commencement of engagement sessions in 2024 until 31 March 2026, the office has provided 489 engagement sessions across the state, reaching approximately 4259 individuals, and I understand that its third year of operations will focus on refining that engagement approach and how the office uses its data to ensure that its regulatory response is fit for purpose and actually - I shouldn't say 'actually', but is on an ongoing basis proportionate to the risks posed by entities that it continues to see from the material before it as its databank effectively grows.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - Yes. Just to add to that, police were included as a reportable under the conduct scheme in April 2026 by regulation, and you would be aware that was consistent with the Woolcott recommendation, and we've got legislation that's been recently released, Commission of Inquiry (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill, which will retrospectively include police in the Child and Youth Safe Standards.

Ms WEBB - Yes, which only expands the remit, if you like, for the regulator.

Mr BARNETT - Yes, that's right. I just thought you'd like to know that.

Ms WEBB - Yes. Again, thank you. I'm happy to move on, and I'm mindful of time, too.

CHAIR - Yes. No, that's fine.

Ms WEBB - And the next line item, which is the office of the implementation monitor, I won't dwell on it in the interest of time. I don't think the monitor is here today. I see there that there's the reserved-by-law funding, which is presumably for the role itself, for the implementation monitor, and that's steady across the forward Estimates.

The line item, though, when I look here in the budget papers at table 6.2 is quite flat. It in fact goes down a bit in the outyears of the forward Estimates. That seems concerning, just because essentially we know, if it's flat or it's gone down, that's a cut to what it can do or a limitation to the scope. This is at the same time that the scope of the role has increased because we've added monitoring implementation of recommendations from the Woolcott review which you just mentioned a minute ago, deputy, so there's more work to do there for the office of the implementation monitor. What are we expecting this role and the office of the implementation monitor to deliver across the forward estimates under effectively a reduction in funding year to year?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the question. I wanted to say thank you, firstly, to Robert Benjamin as the implementation monitor. Thank you for his work and his office. It's now well established, had its first annual report 30 September last year. They've got a lot of work to do, and they're getting on and doing the work, and I'll check with the secretary, but my understanding was there was some increased funding support for this year.

Ms WEBB - It's pretty flat.

Mr BARNETT - In terms of going forward, let's just check on that so that we can assist the honourable member.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. Through you. There is a slight uptick, albeit minimal.

Ms WEBB - It's not even inflation, though. It's not indexation or inflation.

Mr BARNETT - I think there's -

Ms WEBB - No, I don't believe it's going to be.

Mr BARNETT - Let me just clarify. Certainly, we remain committed to the funding of the office of implementation monitor to ensure it can effectively and efficiently monitor, evaluate, and report on child safety reform and ensure its results in meaningful and lasting reform for children and young people.

We've made a commitment to the implementation monitor that the funding will be able to support his work, and that will be worked through in terms of being reflected in the next budget. So, the government is committed to the referral of relevant recommendations of the Woolcott review, which we've just been speaking of, under section 13 of the act to the IMPLEMENTATION Monitor to ensure ongoing transparent monitor of the child-safe reform program. So, I can just put that on the record.

Ms WEBB - Okay. So if it's identified between now and next budget that he can't manage with a flat allocation there, that might be reconsidered?

Mr BARNETT - So I'm just noting that what I said is a commitment that has been made.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. We have no further questions on that area.

Output Group 1.15 (b)

Commissioner for Children and Young People (b)

CHAIR - If we could go to 1.15, Commissioner for Children and Young People. And deputy, just wondering if you'd be able to provide a brief update on the establishment of the commission since November 2025, and what mechanisms are in place for the commissioner to report critical findings to parliament without political or departmental interference?

Mr BARNETT - Firstly, the government takes it very seriously, and the Commission for Children and Young People Act 2025 passed December last year. And department's established the Commission for Children and Young People project to manage the establishment of the new commission. I'll ask the secretary to speak to that very shortly.

And following the passage of the Act, retirement of the inaugural commissioner for child and young people commenced in - the recruitment of the inaugural commissioner commenced in January this year, and it's expected that the new Commissioner for Children and Young People as an agency will be established in 2026-27, with recruitment processes to be undertaken for the commissioner for Aboriginal children and young people, as well as the child advocate in 2026. That's the advice I have.

PUBLIC

The work of the current interim Commissioner for Children and Young People and the independent regulator will continue whilst the transition to the new organisation progresses. I understand the former interim commissioner finished on 31 March 2026, and my colleague the honourable Jo Palmer appointed a new interim commissioner, Roslyn or Ros Cornish, as we know her - many of you know her -

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - - on 17 April 2026. So Ms Cornish will act in the role until 7 July 2026 or until the process to appoint a new commissioner is finalised.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - Does that assist the committee?

CHAIR - It does, but I also wonder what mechanisms are in place for the commissioner to report critical findings to parliament without political or departmental inference, so if you can -

Mr BARNETT - Well, that's important. It's consistent with the legislation.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - That needs to be independent, and that process is independent and it's set up under legislation which the parliament certainly strongly supported. We've got a youth panel and they have been involved in the selection panel, I must say. And I might just see if the secretary would like to add anything.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy, through you. Just seeking some further detail in terms of explicit provisions in the new, so to speak, CCYP Act.

CHAIR - Yes.

Ms BOURNE - But as the deputy said, it's very much based on ensuring a robust and independent commissioner with a range of functions. So, deputy, through you, we might need to look into that and potentially provide that to the committee later on in the day.

Mr BARNETT - We'd be more than happy to.

CHAIR - No, thank you. And just one last question, because I'm sure there are other questions by members here. Do you have a better idea at this stage of how many staff will be recruited and what sort of roles there will be within the office?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for that. I will pass to the secretary; a more administrative or operational matter. I mean, it's really set out in terms of the roles, functions and responsibilities of the commission in the legislation, and the department has been working through implementation program and working closely with the minister Jo Palmer, her office and department. So there's been good work across government, but I will pass to the secretary.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy, through you. In terms of the ultimate or ideal structure for the new commission, that will be a decision for the incoming commissioner. That said, with the bringing together of the office of the independent regulator and the current Commissioner for Children and Young People, there will be a staffing establishment to begin with, so to speak. And whilst I can't talk to the current numbers of the current interim Commissioner for Children and Young People, as at 31 March the office of the independent regulator had 20 staff, and it's anticipated - well, they will all come across.

CHAIR - Yes.

Ms BOURNE - So it's a complement for the new commissioner to begin with to work out what gaps they may have.

CHAIR - No, thank you. Do we have any further questions on that area?

Output Group 2.1 (b)

Crown Law (b)

CHAIR - If not, if we could move to 2.1, Crown Law.

Mr GAFFNEY - For those people who are very interested in this proceeding and listening online, Crown Law includes the office of solicitor-general, the Office of the Crown Solicitor and the state litigation office. So my question would say - the explanation in one of the variables says 'reflects the increased demand for services offset by operational efficiencies'. Would this mean reduced headcount or manpower at a time with substantially increased demand?

So on one hand we're saying there's an increased demand for services, on the other hand we're saying there's operational efficiencies. So I'd just like to understand, in each of those three areas - the office of solicitor and Crown and state litigation - is it possible to get a breakdown of FTEs over the last three years, perhaps, or at a certain point in time and then table that or gather that information?

Mr BARNETT - So, through you, Chair, we'd be more than happy to assist. I think we've got some numbers on full-time equivalents that I think I'll pass to the secretary to, you know, advise the committee accordingly. And then, of course, we're more than happy to help in addition to that. But you're right, the Crown Law - obviously the office of solicitor-general, obviously the Crown solicitor and then the state litigator, so all of that together. But you've asked a more specific question. I'll just see if the secretary can assist.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy, through you. I don't have figures that go back three years, but maybe if I talk through the ones that I have and then we can see if there are any gaps. So as at 31 March 2026, the Office of the Crown Solicitor had a head count of 39, or 35.1 for FTE. As at 30 June 2025, that office had a head count of 36, or 31.9 FTE.

As at 31 March 2026, the office of the solicitor-general comprised a total of seven staff. I don't have a previous year comparison in front of me right now. But in terms of the office of the state litigator, as at 31 March 2026, the office had a headcount of 27 - 25.4 FTE - and as at 30 June 2025, the office had a head count of 29, or 27.54 FTE.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. Thank you. Through you, attorney-general, would it be possible to get a table of that information for perhaps the last two or three years, so that would then - next year, when we come back to this same situation, we can see what's happened with the funding and that impact on FTEs within each of those three groups, if possible?

Mr BARNETT - Yes. Through you, Chair, more than happy to do that.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes. And acknowledging that sometimes there's extra funding from other sources for specific projects as well, okay. My last question on this one: attorney-general, given the recent public interest in legal costs incurred by members of both local and state government regarding different circumstances, in matters relating to their position in government - and I'm talking about state government here - and protecting the interests of the Crown, are these members seeking the legal services advice of the offices of the solicitor-general and Crown Solicitor and the state litigation officer before engaging external legal services? So I just want to understand what the process is. If so, has this been done in every case, and what cost to those officers?

And there's only three more parts to this, and I'm quite happy to forward this on to you, if you need be. What is the decision-making process that allows a minister or member of the government to engage in external legal services? How is the likely success of an action measured before a decision is made to proceed? And what is the threshold for when an action becomes a private matter?

My last two questions: when an action is determined to be in the Crown's interest to pursue with external legal services, who or what pays the fees? Does it come out of the group output or are they allocated to a government department, agency or GDE?

And lastly, what operational efficiencies are possible for the legal fees incurred by ministers and members of the government? So I just want to understand the processes behind, yes, the legal support for members of parliament, whether they be ministers or members of, and how is that determined?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much for the question. I can take that question and answer the question. The process, as you've asked, is really clear. The process is set out in guidelines. That's called the policies and guidelines governing the granting of indemnities and legal assistance. They're on the Department of Premier and Cabinet website and available publicly. They are the same guidelines that applied in the last 20 years, including under the former Labor government. And they state that indemnity and legal assistance can be considered against legal processes brought under several circumstances.

I made the point earlier in terms of those circumstances. So it might be civil proceedings, criminal proceedings, but it might be inquiries or investigations, including integrity bodies, coronial inquiries, anti-discrimination matters, any other body with some inquisitorial power. So in terms of the processes and the answer to the question, they are available on the DPAC website.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. And my last question here along that line, is that decision for you to go - is it your decision that undertakes, yes, that member is eligible for support from this

group, this group or this group, or is it a decision that goes to Cabinet because it's, you know, of interest to: 'Where is that money being spent? Is it being spent appropriately?'

Mr BARNETT - Yes. Thank you very much for the question. I appreciate where you're coming from. It's quite an extensive policy and guidelines that are on the department website. I don't know how many pages. It's quite detailed. I've summarised to the best of my ability, I think, the process - and it has applied for decades in Tasmania in terms of request for or support for indemnity for legal assistance for members of government and ministers. Of course, there are processes with respect to public servants as well which we could assist you with, but very similar sort of guidelines. The secretary could speak to in terms of the public servants process, but that's all set out on the website.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. Okay. Thank you. And my last question there, if a minister is in a situation where they think they need legal assistance, whether it be whatever group, do they have to put that in a request through writing or through an email to you or to a service so that there is some trail, email trail or correspondence trail, because that person is asking for financial support, whether it be through one of the Crown services or whether it be through their own legal services?

Mr BARNETT - As I've indicated, it's on the DPAC website. So it goes through the Department of Premier and Cabinet in terms of those policies and guidelines, and it's got to be consistent with those policies and guidelines, which are quite comprehensive for all to see. And they've been consistently on that website, is my understanding, and available for at least nearly 20 years, is my advice.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. And is there any concern that we're operating a different area now that they need to be updated and revisited? Because, you know, something 20 years ago may not satisfy the community nor members of parliament with the increasing pressures we have in a more modern, communicative world. So I'm just wondering, is there anything on the horizon looking at updating those?

Mr BARNETT - Yes, my understanding is there have been some changes to some degree over the last 20 years. I don't know exactly what they are or have been and at what time, but I'm just making the point that they have been broadly very similar in terms of indemnities for ministers, and support for legal assistance has been pretty broadly consistent over that period of time.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes. Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. Ms Webb.

Ms WEBB - Yes, to follow up on those if I can. So, in terms of the process - and I'd appreciate it if you could provide me with the detail of this rather than point me to go and read something extensive on the DPAC website - if a minister was going to initiate legal proceedings that then may require or be sought to be supported by taxpayer-funded legal assistance, would they need to get the approval of that taxpayer-funded legal assistance prior to initiating the legal action, or is it something that they would seek after having initiated the legal action?

Mr BARNETT - Well, through you, Chair. As I've indicated, they are quite comprehensive. They are guidelines and procedures on the DPAC website, Department of

PUBLIC

Premier and Cabinet. They're available for all to see. It's not for me to second guess or comment on those guidelines. They are broadly consistent for the last, nearly 20 years.

CHAIR - So you would suggest questions for the Premier tomorrow?

Mr BARNETT - I'm making the point -

Ms WEBB - This is the Attorney-General we have before us.

CHAIR - No, I realise that.

Mr BARNETT - Yes. I'm more than happy to answer the questions. I'm just making the point - and I won't be going to specific matters, of course, that may be before any court, but I do note that the policy and guidelines in terms of granting indemnities, in terms of legal assistance, have been broadly consistent for nearly 20 years, is my advice. They cross a range of matters in terms of legal matters before court - civil proceedings, criminal proceedings, investigations, coronial inquiries, anti-discrimination matters - all of those matters, and they're all set out there in terms of the process.

Ms WEBB - Will an answer to my question be available in that document, or will it not be specified in that document when I go to look for it, and therefore, I've lost this opportunity to answer the question? Do you know the answer to this question, Attorney-General? Does a minister have to seek to get the publicly funded legal support prior to initiating an action or can they seek it - or should they seek it - after they've initiated an action?

Mr BARNETT - Yes, well, look, I can't -

Ms WEBB - It's a pretty straightforward question.

Mr BARNETT - No, I can't answer hypothetical questions.

Ms WEBB - No, no, it's a process question. It's a process.

Mr BARNETT - I've been very clear in terms of the process and the guidelines.

Ms WEBB - No, you haven't.

Mr BARNETT - They're clear. They're on the DPAC website.

Ms WEBB - Is this detail in those guidelines? Is the answer to my question in the guidelines?

Mr BARNETT - You're putting to me what would appear to be a hypothetical question and I can't answer a hypothetical question.

Ms WEBB - No, it's not at all. It's a process question.

Mr BARNETT - The guidelines are there, it's a public document and I draw it to your attention.

PUBLIC

Ms WEBB - It's a plain and simple process question. According to the processes that the guidelines lay out, if a minister is going to initiate a legal course of legal action and they're going to seek publicly funded support for that, must they seek that support prior to initiating the action and get permission for that, or do they wait till after they've initiated the action and then seek the support? It's a process question only.

Mr BARNETT - Yes.

CHAIR - Is there a course of - I think, realistically, is there a course of action when accessing public money?

Ms WEBB - That's not the question. I've been really plain about the question. I don't want it to be diluted, I want it to be the answer.

Mr BARNETT - So, through you, Chair. The answer is there is process. The process is very clear in those guidelines. They are very substantial and comprehensive, and I can't second guess and make comments with respect to that. They are very clear. They're on the website. They've been around for nearly 20 years, is my advice.

Ms WEBB - Great. So, are you unwilling or unable to answer my question? If it's in the guidelines, you're the Attorney-General, sounds like you're very familiar with the guidelines. Are you able to answer my question according to the guidelines, what the answer is, or are you unwilling to answer my question?

Mr BARNETT - I'm referring you to the guidelines.

CHAIR - I think we've ended our questioning here.

Ms WEBB - Can I ask another question?

CHAIR - Yes.

Ms WEBB - Yes. So, can you confirm whether the government has sought or received legal advice? I'm not asking for the legal advice. So let's be really clear now. You don't need to go to that. Has the government sought or received legal advice regarding the release of procedural information pertaining to the current legal action involving the former minister Ms Ogilvie? Has the government sought or received legal advice regarding the release of procedural information pertaining to that?

Either you can or you can't provide information about it, because clearly the government has a policy of saying nothing about procedural matters that may relate to this, even if they're framed as purely process questions, like my previous question. You're clearly stonewalling me. So, do you have legal advice? Did you seek or receive legal advice, presumably through the Solicitor-General, about whether you should or shouldn't release procedural information?

Mr BARNETT - It's very difficult for me to comment on a matter that is before the court.

Ms WEBB - Nothing I'm asking you is about that.

PUBLIC

Mr BARNETT - No, I've indicated earlier it's a complex matter. There's confidentiality involved. We have to be very careful, through you, Chair, with respect to answering questions in this space, and I draw that to your attention.

Ms WEBB - So, my question is just, has the government sought legal advice regarding what could or could not be disclosed publicly about procedures and process around this?

CHAIR - I believe the deputy has answered the question as he sees fit.

Ms WEBB - It's clearly just process questions that I'm asking.

CHAIR - I understand that, but the deputy -

Ms WEBB - There's nothing to touch into the detail of the matter before the court at all.

CHAIR - But the deputy has answered the question as he sees fit.

Ms WEBB - I think it's the deputy putting the court up as a big blank wall to block accountability questions.

CHAIR - So, do we have any further questions?

Ms WEBB - Yes. I do.

CHAIR - Okay.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. On this line item, I have a couple of additional questions.

CHAIR - Yes.

Ms WEBB - One relates to - I'm not sure if it fits here, but I can't see where else it might fit - the Tatarka review, which was relating to the reimbursement of commission inquiry legal assistance moneys. On 25 September last year, you announced that the government will seek reimbursement of legal assistance that was provided that was assessed as part of the Tatarka review. I believe there were two people who may have been asked to repay grants totalling \$19,745, and one individual should be required to repay \$56,430.14. The question is: what progress has been made to reclaim those three identified individuals' legal assistance fees?

Mr BARNETT - Very good. Thank you very much for the question, and I know we've had questions on this in the past, and so we're more than happy to update the committee accordingly. So, in terms of the Tatarka review, 25 September 2025, when I tabled that review into the payment of legal systems to officers appearing before the commission of inquiry, on the day of tabling the report, I announced that the government accepted all the recommendations of the Tatarka review.

In accordance with the review findings, the government is seeking repayment of legal assistance fees from three individuals. The review found of the 27 individuals who received independent legal assistance, 15 were found to have acted appropriately with no action required; two could be asked to repay grants totalling \$19,745; and one individual should be required to pay \$56,430.14.

I have instructed the Department of Justice to commence the process to recover the public moneys from people who did not comply with the policy or who did not act in good faith as is appropriate, given the findings of the review and the importance of ensuring the proper use of taxpayer money. The independent reviewer has recently provided his report on the remaining nine individuals. We are now commencing the procedural fairness process which we undertook for the previous report and recommendations, and once that process is complete, we intend to table this report, as we did with the first report. Having said that, I'll just see if the secretary can update the committee further.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. You've summarised the position perfectly. Nothing further to update.

Mr BARNETT - Okay. Thank you.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. I appreciate that update. Now, the other area that is in this line item that I'm very interested to follow up that we talked about a little bit last year in Estimates is around model litigant arrangements and the requirement that the state follows model litigant guidelines when acting in legal matters.

Last year, I asked you about what auditing or monitoring or analysis was done of any complaints made relating to the state potentially not following those guidelines and that model properly. At the time, the answer to me was that there was no formal process or auditing that was done to catch up that, which I found concerning at the time.

Alongside that, I note that the Woolcott review also pointed to this area and the need to actually be monitoring, measuring, analysing instances in which there are complaints made about failure to follow model litigant guidelines. However, I believe that that was a recommendation in the Woolcott report that the government only noted and didn't actually agree to. I'm going to come back to it to ask, last year at Estimates, you endeavoured or committed to looking at what appropriate mechanisms should or could be put in place to be monitoring this more closely; what progress have you made on that commitment?

Mr BARNETT - Yes. Thank you very much, and I remember this time last year, we had a discussion about -

Ms WEBB - Well, it was only as recently as November or December.

Mr BARNETT - Sorry, November, not this time. November last year, we had that discussion and Tatarka review, and I mentioned our response to Tatarka just then in summary, and in terms of that legal assistance and the importance of the process going forward and being a model litigant, that's at the forefront of my mind, as it is with the department, on a regular basis. We've talked about Crown Law and their role.

You've made mention of the Woolcott review. Part A was released by the government on 4 November 2025, followed by the release of part B, which focused solely on the justice system, 2 December 2025. The review's made 27 recommendations, several of which include sub-recommendations, and we tabled our response to the Woolcott review of 26 March 2026, and I should note, of course, we take that very seriously.

PUBLIC

I want to say thank you to Peter Woolcott for his work and diligence with Radha and his team. It is greatly appreciated, and we want to see continuous improvement in the way justice and the systems roll out across our public service, and we take those recommendations very seriously. I will ask the secretary to add to that in terms of the other part of the question.

Ms WEBB - Perhaps an actual answer to my question would be good, if we have that.

Mr BARNETT - Well, with the greatest of respect, through you, Chair, I think my answer did provide much of the answer that's necessary, (1), on Tatarka; (2), on Woolcott, but -

Ms WEBB - It wasn't about Tatarka. It's about Woolcott, and it's about how we're going to be doing oversight and monitoring of potential noncompliance with model litigant guidelines.

Mr BARNETT - Through you, Chair. The Woolcott review was very clear.

Ms WEBB - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - It was in November and December after Estimates last year. You've made reference to Estimates last year. We take the Woolcott review very seriously, and I know you're interested in it, through you, Chair, to the honourable member. That's why I've made mention of the Woolcott recommendations, of which there were 27, so I will not contend to say that it wasn't an adequate answer. It is absolutely the answer, because the Woolcott recommendations are very important. We take them seriously, and I'll ask -

Ms WEBB - You've rejected the one that's relevant here, so that's why I asked what other mechanism is being put in place.

Mr BARNETT - I'll ask the secretary to add to the answer.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. Through you. Going back a step to prior to the Woolcott review findings being publicised, there was the discussion in November around complaints with respect to the state's lawyers who, it may be alleged, have not complied with model litigant guidelines, and there has been a great deal of work undertaken by Crown Law, and particularly the director of Crown Law, in terms of how we can utilise the department's existing complaints policy, which is quite well refined and talks about relevant options, particularly when complaining about independent statutory officers or where complaints relate to the health and wellbeing of a child or young person, and I think that is a useful mechanism moving forward.

At the same time, we're in the final stages of revising those guidelines, and we anticipate that we will consult on those very soon, and noting the handing down of the Woolcott recommendation, particularly the establishment of an oversight office, which we're considering, with a view to providing further advice to the deputy on, because I think improving the system is always front of mind, but whether or not we can do that using existing services or structures, as opposed to establishing a separate office, to oversight compliance with those obligations is something that we're working through at the moment and we'll continue to provide advice to government on.

Ms WEBB - Thank you, and I appreciate that. That was a good answer.

CHAIR - Thank you. Do you have one last quick question, in the interests of time, on Crown Law?

Ms WEBB - Yes. Just following on that same area of model litigants, what have we got in terms of data, say, for example, in the most recent complete year around complaints of noncompliance on model litigant guidelines?

Mr BARNETT - I'll see if the department can assist; otherwise, we may need to take it on notice.

CHAIR - Happy to take it on notice?

Mr BARNETT - Yes, we're more than happy to take it on notice. That sort of data might require more information-gathering.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

Output Group 2.2 Legislation Development and Review

CHAIR - Thank you. If we could now move on to 2.2, and we have legislation development and review. Mr Hiscutt.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you. I just wanted to understand if the department was up to date with its review schedule, how that is all going. Is there anything that is overdue for review?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the question, and thank you for the strategic legislation policy group within the department and all the good work that they provide the Attorney-General and other departments. I'll pass to the deputy or the secretary for this question. We might just get clarity around the question. Is there anything in particular -

Mr HISCUTT - Not in particular, just in general. This is, as I say, reviewing legislation, making sure things are up to date. I just wanted to know if there was anything that was concerning any areas in that area. If the answer is, 'No, we're not concerned about anything', that's an okay answer.

Mr BARNETT - Well, I know there's a lot of work that goes on.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes, that's what I'm saying.

Mr BARNETT - There's a huge amount of work, but perhaps a quick summary from the deputy.

Ms van ADRICHEM - Through you, minister. At this point in time, we're not aware of anything that's out of date and are across various projects.

PUBLIC

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. Good work. Obviously, this department also seems to be struck by the operational efficiencies as they are across the board. I just wanted to know with the increased number of - and I believe this department would cover OPC for amendments and things like that. With the increased number of Independents in the lower House, is there sufficient funding in this area to - right; I'm getting an answer there - to ensure that there's sufficient funding for amendments?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much for the question. I just indicate through the chair that OPC, Office of Parliamentary Counsel, for which we're all very grateful, is part of DPAC.

Mr HISCUTT - Right.

Mr BARNETT - Might be a good question for DPAC.

Mr HISCUTT - No worries, then. I'll put the question back to, yes, where are the operational efficiencies expected to be found in this department?

Mr BARNETT - Right. So, I'll just pass to the secretary on that matter.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy, through you. I think if you reflect on the budget chapter in the appropriation for this particular output, it does reflect the conclusion of the commission of inquiry legislative program, which we are absorbing into core business.

There is a growing volume of legislative work and it's an ongoing discussion with both Ms van Adrichem and the director of strategic legislation and policy about prioritising that work program, which obviously we do in very close consultation with the deputy's office, as that work program can ebb and flow. And there'll be ongoing discussions with that area of the agency in terms of prioritisation, potentially refinements to how it does its business, as alluded to earlier in this session.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you.

Mr HISCUTT - Now, a question -

Mr BARNETT - Just to assist the honourable member, in terms of the legislative program, we've had 11 bills in my portfolios that were developed and passed through the parliament since the 2025 state election, and we've got 10 bills that were developed through the office and were either introduced or debated in the parliament since the election last year. So, that gives you a little feel for the amount of work that's been done.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. Any further questions on this area?

Ms WEBB - Yes, a couple of quick ones, if I may.

CHAIR - Yes.

Ms WEBB - Last year in this - last Estimates, in this line item we discussed the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General were looking at facial recognition software and the laws and

regulations that apply in that space as it relates to privacy. That was being reviewed at that level and there was a working group continuing to work through that and other projects like the TLRI privacy report recommendations. So, I'm interested, then, in checking in to see where that review work within the department is up to, both on the facial recognition laws and regulations and the TLRI privacy report recommendations.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much for the question. And the Standing Council of Attorneys-General is a busy council. They do a lot of work, meet four times a year. Thank you for your question. There's a lot of work priorities, one of which, of course, was the Bondi massacre and the terrorist attack, which has, you know, taken up a lot of time and effort, which absolutely is a must.

We've got a range of areas of action and work. You've made reference to the use of artificial intelligence but also facial recognition. That work is ongoing. But I'll just check with the secretary, too, because there is obviously an operational work underneath SCAG, and the secretary does a lot of that great work with the time, so I might just pass to the secretary to outline how that's going.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. As Ms Webb and the deputy have alluded to, there's a crossover of similar work across multiple areas. There aren't any significant updates on the work that SCAG is progressing around facial recognition at this point in time, but we could potentially look into that to make sure that I haven't missed anything on that front. The agency's focusing on relevant commission of inquiry and other review recommendations relating to RTI reform, which includes *Personal Information Protection Act* matters and review of the PIP framework generally is probably where we're focusing most of our effort.

Ms WEBB - Thank you, I appreciate that. Do we have a current understanding of what state laws may apply to the use of facial recognition systems by businesses in Tasmania, and is there any monitoring or auditing of the use of facial recognition technology within businesses in Tasmania at this present time at a state level?

Mr BARNETT - That's a good question. I'm not aware of anything specifically. Of course, you know, workplace protection orders, for example, is important, and the role of facial recognition in those relevant retail establishments, but that's slightly - you know, it's relevant but it's not directly to your question. But it is something that I'd draw to your attention. I'll see if the secretary has anything else to add. Yes. And it's a fair point that it's primarily a Commonwealth responsibility, and you've made mention of facial recognition and privacy-related matters and the TLRI report as well.

Ms WEBB - It's an interesting one, isn't it? I'm asking because I know that facial recognition is being utilised in some Tasmanian businesses currently.

Mr BARNETT - Yes. Yes.

Ms WEBB - And there may well be laws, either Commonwealth or state, that apply to that, but I'm not aware that we are in any way assessing whether people are complying with those laws or whether they're breaching those laws or what our status is on that front. So, I'm just interested if there's any discussion or looking at that.

PUBLIC

Mr BARNETT - There is discussion, and the recent Federal Court case with Bunnings with respect to facial recognition. And I've met with relevant stakeholders with respect to that particular decision and then how we may or may not respond to that. So, I think that's fair to say stakeholders are aware of that Federal Court decision and the need to prepare a response.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - And the use of facial recognition technology in those venues: is it compliant? Is it with federal law? Is it compliant with state law? And is it something we're taking advice on? And I think it's fair to say that we are.

Ms WEBB - Okay. Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - But I appreciate the question, because you're very up to date on that.

CHAIR - Thank you. You're fine now?

Ms WEBB - A quick one.

CHAIR - One last quick one on this.

Ms WEBB - Okay. This TLRI agreement that we have, we signed it on 7 February 2023 by the three founding bodies, the state government being one of those three, and it establishes their annual contribution to TLRI operational costs, \$200,000. So, the clause in that agreement says that it will be reviewed by the parties every four years from the date of execution. That would be February 2027, so just looking ahead to next year. So, I'm just in anticipation, wondering two things. Is TLRI's ongoing funding in this Budget across the years beyond that review, and are we planning to review it ahead of February 2027?

Mr BARNETT - Yes. Thank you very much. First of all, I'd want to put on record my sincere thanks to Jeremy Prichard and the TLRI. They are undertaking quite a lot of work for the state government and, indeed, others, and the quality of their work is high. So, just to note that.

It would be my expectation that we would meet the commitment that has been given in terms of that review, which is February next year. I meet from time to time with Jeremy Prichard regarding his work and planned work, and I communicate with the TLRI, write to them and ask for work and research with respect to relevant projects and bills, and it is appreciated. I'll see if the secretary, who's very involved with the TLRI on the board and taking a leadership role there, if you'd like to add anything.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. Wearing my board member hat, I know that the board is very conscious of the approaching date of the renewal, and I'm sure without pre-empting it we'll no doubt be seeking further engagement from the founding partners as that approaches, including how it potentially could be further refined, given the passage of time and the evolving nature of how the board undertakes its business.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Output Group 3.1

Prison Services

CHAIR - If we could move on now to 3.1, Prison Services. Mr Hiscutt.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you. I was just wondering if I could have an update of the number of prisoners in remand and sentence and if I could have that by gender, please.

Mr BARNETT - Absolutely. We can assist you if we are getting on to corrections. Yes. I wonder if we could transition to our deputy secretary, Colin Shepherd, who could come to the table, perhaps, and assist the honourable member.

CHAIR - Yes, absolutely.

Mr BARNETT - We certainly have those answers for you.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you very much.

CHAIR - And we have -

Mr BARNETT - Yes, and Narelle Pamplin, Director of Prisons.

CHAIR - Absolutely.

Mr BARNETT - If you're happy, chair, I'd like to invite her to the table.

CHAIR - Absolutely. Thank you. Thank you, deputy.

Mr BARNETT - Excellent. Excellent. So, if I can thank Narelle Pamplin for her excellent work and leadership role and, of course, all those in our prisons system, noting the importance of corrections, and rehabilitation is a top priority for our government. In terms of the answer to your question, I'll pass to the deputy secretary in terms of the numbers and the gender breakdown with the percentages as well. Just a heads up, I receive these numbers on a regular basis, so hopefully not too far away.

Mr SHEPHERD - Thank you, deputy, and through you. So, as of 28 May 2026, total number was 851, made up in 496 sentenced, 350 remandees and five were awaiting entry. And that breakdown is: males sentenced was 462, remand 329 with four awaiting entry, so a total of 791 for males. Females is 34 sentenced, 26 on remand and one awaiting entry, so female total of 60. And prisoners who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, there were males 238, females 22.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you for that. The cost per prisoner per day, I just had a slight misunderstanding. In the Estimates last year it was stated, I believe, to be \$472.27, and yet in budget paper 4, with the performance indicators it has it at \$489.9. And although that's only \$17 across 365 days and 850 people, that is about five and a half million [dollars]. If I could understand what is the correct figure there and why there seems to be a discrepancy.

PUBLIC

Mr BARNETT - Thanks for the question. I'll see if the deputy secretary can assist, or the Chief Financial Officer, Gavin Wailes.

Mr WAILES - Thank you, deputy. Through you. So, with some of our performance information in Corrections, and it applies to Community Corrections as well, is the cost per prisoner per day is adjusted in arrears for inflation. So, if you have a look, as you say, on page 54 of budget paper 4, the \$507.7 in 2024-25, the 2023-24 actual has been adjusted so that it's comparative in real terms. So it's just been increased slightly from what was produced in the previous year just to make it comparable with the \$507.70.

Mr HISCUTT - So, the \$472 has been adjusted to \$489.

Mr WAILES - To reflect CPI increases.

Mr HISCUTT - But they are reflecting the same year, as I understand it, so wouldn't the CPI be the same? I've misunderstood something here.

Mr WAILES - Yes. So, if you -

Mr HISCUTT - They were both for the 2023-24 year.

Mr WAILES - Yes. So, if you go back to the previous year it would have had the \$470 - I can't remember what the figure was comparable with the year previous to that.

Mr HISCUTT - I understand.

Mr WAILES - It's now been adjusted so it's now correct.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. So that we know the real term is - yes.

Mr WAILES - Yes. With the more recently produced figure.

Mr HISCUTT - No, that makes sense. Thank you for clearing that understanding for me. And I note that apparently there was a drop in that price for 2023 - sorry, 2022-23 to 2023-24, as noted. However, this year - from 2023-24 to 2024-25 - it has increased and we're expecting an increase according to the targets in this as well. Just wondering what that dip was for or whether there's other efficiencies or what we learnt there. Is there any explanation?

Mr BARNETT - Through you, deputy secretary.

Mr HISCUTT - Through you, minister. Thank you.

Mr SHEPHERD: Through you, deputy. Part of the reason that the price is going up is because we've got more prisoners in the system.

Mr HISCUTT - Again, just to understand the question here, I would have thought the more the price per prisoner per day would - the total cost is up, but wouldn't the cost of prisoner per day decrease the more there are through the efficiencies gained or -

PUBLIC

Mr SHEPHERD - Through deputy. Unfortunately for us, we don't find the same cost efficiencies that other jurisdictions find. And I'll say we have a reasonable number of our prisoner cohorts who are in our maximum and medium areas, and so they are more expensive to manage.

Mr HISCUTT - Okay. Thank you very much for that. Understanding that. And I would just like to ask the number of workers compensation claims and how that's trending over the last three years in that space, through you, minister.

Mr BARNETT - Thanks very much. Through you, Chair, thanks for the question in terms of workers compensation claims. I'll pass to the deputy secretary.

Mr SHEPHERD - Thank you. Through you, deputy. So, workers compensation from 1 July 2025 to 31 March 2026 we've had 99 claims: 63 musculoskeletal and 36 psychological. And the cost is \$5,699,668.

Mr HISCUTT - Do you know how that compares to the previous year? Thank you. So, that was only to March.

Mr SHEPHERD - So, that represents a 20 per cent increase from the 82 claims received in the same period in 2024-25.

Mr HISCUTT - It's an increase. So, have we got any learnings or actions to reveal regarding that? That's a significant increase.

Mr SHEPHERD - I think we take our workers' health and safety very, very seriously. As you can appreciate, working in Corrections is an inherently risky business. We've actually seen some of our numbers around assaults going down but there is a reality, as I say, that just because of the nature of the work we are seeing that there's been an increased issue.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. But has the nature of the work changed year on year? I guess that's what I'm asking, what the trends are - why that has increased so significantly over the course of only one year.

Mr SHEPHERD - Again, we're definitely seeing that our prisoner numbers are going up, and so as they go up, I think we're starting to see some of those impacts.

Mr HISCUTT - Okay. Thank you very much. And I was just going to ask how many vacancies currently exist in that department, through you, minister. Sorry, minister -

CHAIR - Through the deputy.

Mr HISCUTT - Sorry. Yes. Deputy.

Mr BARNETT - So, could you repeat the question?

Mr HISCUTT - Sorry. How many vacancies are currently in the department in that area?

Mr BARNETT - I would like to pass to the deputy secretary, if that's okay. But I'd like to add to the answer on your workers compensation if I could, because this was noted in the

budget speech by the Treasurer. It's a very important issue across the government that you've highlighted the prison service. We're committed to, obviously, health and safety in the workplace. The department's injury and management unit continues to work closely with the TPS on management to monitor and review the work-related injuries.

Early intervention and active case management by the injury management coordinators has made a positive impact on the management of workers comp at the TPS. My department continues to work in terms of early intervention and regular communications with injured workers, their managers, treating medical practitioners to support positive return to work outcomes. And the collaborative focus has seen improved results, including average time lost per claim, the average costs per claim has stabilised and the number of people who are being returned to suitable work earlier.

But there's a lot more work to do, as it noted in the Treasurer's budget speech, across government, including in the prison system. So, I want to acknowledge your question and, I think, the intent behind it to focus on improvements going forward. Thank you.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you for that.

Mr BARNETT - Deputy secretary?

Mr SHEPHERD - Could I just ask for some clarification. When you say vacancies, what exactly are you seeking?

Mr HISCUTT - So, I guess, how many positions are you seeking to fill currently within that are unfilled. Sorry, I'm not quite sure of the terminology of questions. I'm still new to this myself.

Mr BARNETT - No. That's all right. I think I can pass to the secretary. But we've just had a recruitment effort, which was successful, and now we're going out for further recruitment. So, we're doing our best to employ more in our prison system, but in terms of those numbers I'll pass to the secretary.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy, through you, maybe if I start with the current FTE: as of 25 May it's just over 471 - so, 471.67 FTE or a head count of 474. And I think without stealing Mr Shepherd's or the director's thunder, effectively, there is not an ultimate number of correctional officers that we are recruiting to as the deputy's referred to. There's been significant and ongoing recruitment. Historically, we have budgeted for about 500, have not historically met that target, if you can call it that.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. I guess that's what I'm asking, how much is the -

Ms BOURNE - But there's, therefore, not a true vacancy figure.

Mr HISCUTT - Right. So there just could always be more, I guess, but there's not a target, exactly, to hit.

Ms BOURNE - Yes. And Mr Shepherd [inaudible].

PUBLIC

Mr BARNETT - In summary, I can say since March 2014, we've had 497 new correctional officers who have been recruited, resulting in a net increase of 234 correctional officers. And as I've indicated in my earlier remarks, we've got a new recruitment campaign that's underway and we've just congratulated 11 new correctional officers, including four women and seven men between the ages of 23 and 46. And I was out there for national corrections week just a couple of weeks ago, congratulating and thanking our correctional officers for what they do. And of course, the team across the prison service.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - So, the deputy secretary could assist with a final question.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr SHEPHERD - Sorry, I was just going to add that the direction that we've been given is we can continue to recruit correctional officers.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes.

Mr SHEPHERD - So, this year we've got three recruit schools planned. We've got two that are happening and a third one later in the year. But in addition to the correctional officers, the reason why I was asking for the clarification is we've got about 180 or 200 staff who work with the TPS, who are our therapeutic and administrative staff.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. Okay. And is that at, relatively, capacity or are you still recruiting in that space as well?

Mr SHEPHERD - We're still recruiting in that space because obviously we have some movement as people leave the job, but we're certainly recruiting up to the numbers that we think we need.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. If I could just ask a quick question with regard to overtime. So, would I be able to - obviously it's relative to workers compensation and numbers that you don't have, and I'm happy to take it on notice, but I just wonder if I could have the overtime figures for the last three years, please.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much. Let's see if we can assist the honourable member.

CHAIR - As I said, more than happy to take it on notice if you don't have it ready.

Mr BARNETT - Right. I think we have got the overtime numbers. It continues to be a cost pressure.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - Huge cost pressure.

Mr BARNETT - And I know the Director of Prisons, who's sitting at the table, and her management team have a very clear focus on improving all aspects of the TPS operations, including reducing overtime, which is a major cause of budget overspend.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - I could say a lot more, but let's just see if the secretary could assist the member.

CHAIR - Just the figures would be great.

Mr SHEPHERD - Through you, deputy.

Mr BARNETT - The deputy secretary.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr SHEPHERD - So, 2023-24, the actual figure was \$12,286,789; 2024-25, it was \$13,910,882 and 2025-26 to 31 March is \$11,502,162 - noting that our average prisoners numbers over those years have increased from 767 to 841.

CHAIR - Yes. No. Thank you. And one final question that I have - and I notice in our budget book where it mentions therapeutic - educational, therapeutic, criminogenic programs. Do you still have the gardening programs for the prisoners? Because my understanding was that was something that was very well thought of by the prisoners, particularly - obviously not the serious prisoners, but the others who could go outside. So, has that continued or has that been cut?

Mr BARNETT - So, thank you. That might be a -

CHAIR - Sorry, through you, deputy.

Mr BARNETT - Yes. Sorry, Chair.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - It may be a good question for the director, perhaps.

CHAIR - Yes,

Mr BARNETT - And as I pass to the director and welcome Narelle Pamplin to the microphone. And noting our Job Ready Program has very successfully taken up with the Civil Contractors Federation in recent weeks, and I'll be out there, I think, on Wednesday with the women at the women's prison in terms of the Job Ready Program. So, again, focusing on rehabilitation and transition back into civilian life.

CHAIR - But the gardening program, I believe, was very well accepted previously and my understanding is it had been ceased. So, has it been restarted?

PUBLIC

Ms PAMPLIN - Through you, deputy.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms PAMPLIN - We haven't recommenced that program as of today, but I know that a number of staff have brought that forward to me as a particular potential way forward. We have a very big commitment on increasing our programs, as the deputy has mentioned, and that will certainly be one that we're reviewing and looking to reinstate as appropriate into the future.

CHAIR - No. Thank you very much.

Mr BARNETT - Thanks, Chair.

Mr GAFFNEY - I've got a follow-up to that.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes. Thank you. Could you also make comment regarding the - I think it's the assistance being provided for people being - or prisoners going back into the community by a Men's Resources Tasmania group that are working with that. How is that working or what is that aiming to do?

Mr BARNETT - I'll pass to the director on that. And obviously the Men's Resources Tasmania group is - thanks for noting that, but I'll pass to the director.

Ms PAMPLIN - Through you, deputy. Men's Resources Tasmania provide an excellent service into the prison. We are working with them predominantly around supporting our peer support men's groups in the prison area. So, they provide really valuable one-on-one coaching, mentoring and support to people in the prison. We're also talking with them about extending their services into community through throughcare. It's a very big gap, as you would well imagine, about the transition from prison into community. And Men's Resources Tasmania have done a piece of work for us about increasing their capacity for throughcare support provisions.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes, because what we don't want is people going back out into the community then finding themselves back in jail again.

Ms PAMPLIN - Absolutely. One of the key evidence-based provisions is in coaching and mentoring.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes.

Ms PAMPLIN - Men's Resources Tasmania do an outstanding job particularly in that area.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes. And another question just on that. Through you, Attorney-General. Are there issues with people going back out in the community not being able to find a proper rental position, so therefore, they are not allowed to be released into the communities?

How does that work? That if they can't provide a rental opportunity or a place where they can be, how does that impact on their release from prison?

Mr BARNETT - Yes, can I just kick it off by saying that's a really important area, rehabilitation and reintegration. To your question about coming back into civilian life, housing is important as part of that. We've got particular resources and initiatives focused on that. But I will pass to the deputy secretary and/or the director to respond.

Mr SHEPHERD - Thank you deputy, through you. So, that obviously is a challenge for people exiting prison, but we have a number of programs and relationships in place with external organisations. So, we've got Beyond the Wire, which offers a multi-partner throughcare service for high- and complex-needs individuals who're exiting prison. Between 1 January and 31 December, 44 participants have been accepted into the Beyond the Wire program and all of these get a personalised case plan.

We're just going through the process of renewing the deed with Beyond the Wire and we're looking to increase funding to them so that they can provide even more services because they do an absolutely amazing job. And there are also currently 12 Rapid Rehousing properties across the state - seven in the south, one in the north and four in the north-west. And these are tenanted to the Beyond the Wire program participants. And then anyone leaving custody and requiring housing assistance will receive support through Housing Connect, which is a one-stop shop for all Tasmanians in need of housing assistance.

So, specifically all prisoners now may request a housing need assessment through Housing Connect up to 30 weeks before their estimated release date. And then I think you'll see through our Risdon Prison construction program funding, we have talked about funding and we are looking to purchase property in the north-west which will be for female prisoners exiting prison.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. And just on that, how long has that program, Beyond the Wire, been - how do you measure that? So, you said 44 people have gone through the program. At the end of the day you come back and say, well, none of them have come back to jail, or five of them have or - do you know what I mean? So, how do you measure the effectiveness of the program so that the money is being spent wisely, I suppose?

Mr BARNETT - You go.

Mr SHEPHERD - Through you, deputy. I'm not sure that we have the statistics around that that you're alluding to. What we obviously measure is recidivism rates.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes.

Mr SHEPHERD - And what we've seen is, at least for the last couple of years, our recidivism rates have been decreasing.

Mr GAFFNEY - That's great.

Mr SHEPHERD - A little bit of caution around that because the way that we're analysing the data has changed a little bit as a result of the new Astria program coming in. But we still believe it's a fair reflection. We actually consider that recidivism is decreasing, but

PUBLIC

we're not necessarily comparing apples with apples. What we're definitely seeing with Beyond the Wire is, because a lot of their practitioners have got lived experience, they really resonate with people exiting custody.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes.

Mr SHEPHERD - What we have with them is a case management load, if you like, that we request that they provide each year and we monitor against that, so they are providing up to the number as per the deed. And what we're seeing is that they are definitely showing really positive outcomes for people exiting prison.

Mr GAFFNEY - And congratulations on that, taking prisoners back to their own community, if you can, with housing and whatever. That's really important for people from the north-west coast or the north, or anywhere out of Hobart, that they get reconnected to the community that they know.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes.

Mr SHEPHERD - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - Yes,

CHAIR - Good. Thank you.

Mr GAFFNEY - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. Thank you for that. So, if we have no further urgent questions on this -

Ms WEBB - I've got one question on this line.

CHAIR - Sorry?

Ms WEBB - I've got one question on this line, if I might.

CHAIR - Sorry?

Ms WEBB - I've got a question on this line item, if I might.

CHAIR - A quick question, because we have quite a few to go through before we go to lunch at quarter past, so quick questions.

Ms WEBB - Yes, and then we're coming back. We've got half an hour on this still afterwards, right, on this?

CHAIR - We do, but we also have other items, so quick questions and quick answers.

Ms WEBB - Yes. It might be something that you could take on notice and get back, because it's going to ask for some detail. In last year's interim Budget, there was \$500,000 in 2025-26 for family violence intervention programs through our prisons, and we discussed it in Estimates then. I'm following up on what we discussed then to check, because at the time, there was nothing in forward Estimates, and you said there'd be more to look at in the May Budget.

I don't see anything specifically in this Budget about family violence intervention programs in the system, so I'm keen to have your reassurance that we haven't seen a drop in total funding provided for family violence intervention programs within our corrections system.

Last year, we had a list of the various programs that were provided and data on how many people were participating, how many people were completing, and I wouldn't mind an update on that, which is probably something that could be provided later, because it'll be a long list of things that we don't have time to necessarily read out, but it was the family violence program, the EQUIPS foundation, dialectical behaviour therapy, making changes, New Directions sex offender treatment, resilience program, Respectful Men, and EQUIPS aggression program. Could we get an update from the department on those and potentially provided through to us at some stage?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much. The short answer is that we still maintain this is a very serious matter. The scourge of family violence, including in our prisons, is something that we do not want, and certainly since 2015, we've had 13 different bills to strengthen our legal responses to family and sexual violence. You've made mention of the dedicated residential drug and alcohol treatment program, and that's planned for the new maximum-security unit, the Correa unit, and, of course, that was noted in our 2024-25 Budget.

It's noted in this Budget. I also note the Greens want to cut that entirely, which surprised me a great deal and disappointed me as well, but we're still very focused on that. We're getting the Respectful Men program and the family violence discussions paper more generally. I'll just check with the secretary or the deputy, if you wanted to add to that.

Mr SHEPHERD - Thank you, deputy. Through you. As you point out, the funding has not been renewed, but family violence interventions continues to be a high-priority service area within the rehabilitation and reintegration unit at the TPS with the staff in profile skilled and trained to provide clinically evidence-based interventions for family violence offenders. I'm happy to provide you with that list that we provided last year in the interest of a quick question and a quick answer, but we've also got facilities-based teams across all of our prisons, and within those, we still have specialist family violence program clinicians.

The other thing that has happened, which is really exciting for us, is we've been able to facilitate with the Commonwealth a new, innovative perpetrator response program, Respectful Men, which is available to remandees held in custody for family violence offences, and that's \$3.4 million worth of funding that provides targeted intervention to lay the foundation for addressing underlying cause of offending through the TPS criminogenic intervention programs, and this is almost nation-leading, I would say, because remandees are generally a group who miss out on programs because normally programs are only available for people who have been sentenced.

Ms WEBB - Yes, that's right.

PUBLIC

Mr SHEPHERD - This is a really amazing opportunity, we believe. The work starts within the prison, but it will follow the remandees out into the community.

Ms WEBB - Great. Thank you for that. Thank you. I'll look for that updated list, then, through on notice.

Mr BARNETT - Can I just say we'll provide that on notice. It was similar to last year's question, so we'll provide that on notice.

Output Group 3.2

Community Correction Services

CHAIR - So, if we could now move on 3.2 Community Corrective Services. Just very quickly, a quick question: in November 2025, it was advised there were 18.3 offenders per operational staff in Community Corrective Services. Just wondering what the current number is.

Mr BARNETT - Sorry, apologies.

CHAIR - There were 18.3 offenders per operational staff in Community Corrective -

Mr BARNETT - Right.

CHAIR - Has this changed at all?

Mr BARNETT - Perhaps we could have the Community Corrections director, Chris, to come to the table.

CHAIR - Welcome, Chris.

Mr BARNETT - I don't know if Chris can get the papers open to respond to the Chair's question.

Mr CARNEY - Hello, everyone, and through you, deputy. In answer to the question, it went up to 18.8 through the ROGS data for this financial year, which the national average was 18.6, so we're still maintaining that really close national trend.

CHAIR - Thank you. For the record, this is Mr Chris Carney; is that right?

Mr CARNEY - Yes.

CHAIR - If I could just ask one other quick question here: remember the ankle bracelets? I believe that comes under your area, if I recall. Can you just advise the number of ankle bracelets available that we actually have and how many are in use, but also are there wrist bracelets that are in use for the partners of the domestic violence? My understanding is that an offender will have an ankle bracelet but that the partner may also have a bracelet of a type so they actually know if they come within - so just a number, and I'm happy to take it on notice if you don't have it.

PUBLIC

Mr BARNETT - No, we've got the number because we thought you might ask this question.

CHAIR - No, that'd be great. Yes, thank you.

Mr BARNETT - For the year ending March 2026, 217 electronic monitoring devices were issued to monitor persons under home detention, parole, high-risk offenders orders, and family violence perpetrators subject to monitoring under a family violence order, and importantly, Tasmania's electronic monitoring program includes the ability to provide victims with electronically monitored duress alarms.

CHAIR - Yes. How many of those?

Mr BARNETT - In terms of the duress alarms, we're ready for that question. For the year ending March 2026, 82 duress alarms were issued to victim/survivors, which are monitored 24/7 to better protect the community.

CHAIR - Does that relate to the bracelets? Does that go off if the ankle bracelet comes - so is there something that they have? I had an idea -

Mr BARNETT - Well, they're linked to the electronic monitoring, but I'll ask Chris to add to that answer.

CHAIR - Yes. Thank you.

Mr CARNEY - Yes. It's not actually a bracelet; it's a little peg that they can actually just throw into their purse or put in their pocket, and we can link it to the perpetrator's electronic monitoring device, so if they come into proximity, it sets off an alert that the monitoring unit can respond to.

CHAIR - What would the proximity be? Is it different, or is it a set 20 metres, 10 metres? Is there a set distance?

Mr BARNETT - It's best for Chris to answer.

CHAIR - Yes. Thank you. Through you, deputy, yes.

Mr BARNETT - It's more operational, but it's clearly relevant to the circumstances. But Chris -

CHAIR - Just an interesting one.

Mr CARNEY - Through you, minister. It is set. For family violence offenders, it's actually part of their order what they're not allowed to go into.

CHAIR - How far, yes.

Mr CARNEY - But we'll also put in some pre-warning zones so we can actually start to see whether perpetrators are transitioning more closely to their victims, which means that we

PUBLIC

can respond more effectively and at a sooner time so it doesn't escalate to them breaching the order before we actually take some action.

CHAIR - Thank you. Just the final question: do we have enough ankle bracelets, deputy, or are we short? Do we have spares? Have we got sufficient numbers of the ankle bracelets and these little devices for the family victims? Do we have spares, or have we got a waiting list, in other words, for people needing one?

Mr CARNEY - Through you, minister. We maintain a shelf stock. We also maintain an excess stock. We have stock spread out throughout the state. We have quite a comprehensive stock management system to make sure that devices are in the locations where they're needed at the time. If the device fails, if there's any sort of malfunctions, there's devices that are regionally quite accessible so we can make sure they're replaced. We continue to plan forward in response to orders that come through to make sure that we have enough fat in the system. There is no waiting list for this. We make sure we're ahead of it as best we can be, and we've certainly never fallen short.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. A follow-up from Mr Hiscutt.

Mr HISCUTT - Just in case they fail, what is the failure rate of those sort of items?

Mr CARNEY - Sorry. Through you, minister. We haven't actually had a technical failure. Occasionally, they're cut off. Occasionally, perpetrators or wearers will damage them quite significantly. In those cases, we would also have devices in locale to be able to replace them if necessary. The technology is really quite comprehensive. They're shock-resistant. They're difficult to pull off. They're really challenging to damage. You can take a bath while wearing it and recharging it. They're actually quite a compact and well-used device here in Tassie but also nationally and also internationally. So, the failure rate is not a significant issue that we're dealing with.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. When you said that, I wasn't sure whether that was something to deal with or not but thank you.

Mr CARNEY - Yes. It was probably a misspeak on my part.

Mr HISCUTT - No. It's probably a fair point that they haven't in case it happens, but it's good to know that it doesn't happen.

CHAIR - Thank you very much.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you.

CHAIR - We have no -

Ms WEBB - Yes. Just a quick one on this one.

CHAIR - A quick one.

Ms WEBB - What elements of this service are, in terms or operational efficiencies, frontline and back of it?

Mr BARNETT - Thanks for the question. Obviously, I've mentioned in my opening remarks it's a tough Budget and obviously operational efficiencies, we're looking across government agencies, including the Department of Justice, in terms of how that's going to roll out. Obviously, the secretary's outlined her answer earlier, but obviously the secretary can add to that answer.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. Through you. Only to note that as part of the strategic approach we're taking to look at achieving our efficiencies, we're finding, as I'm sure you'll no doubt hear, that sort of a distinction between frontline and backline doesn't really lead to the ultimate outcome of making sure that we prioritise service delivery. Obviously, Community Corrections has a broad mix of probation officers, supervisors, those who work in the court, those who work in our monitoring and compliance unit, all of which provide different, albeit essential, services one way or the other.

So, we haven't made any decisions at this point, and are certainly not anticipating using a - sort of a unilateral frontline, backline, essential, non-essential mandate to make the decision. We work very closely with Chris and his executive team about potential further opportunities to refine service and prioritise what they do. Clearly, we do have cuts built in, so we are going to be looking for cuts in this space across the forward Estimates.

Mr BARNETT - I think it's fair to say across the government we're looking for operational efficiencies. But we note in terms of frontline services and providing support in those priority areas that the government's identified. I should note that it was a couple of weeks ago I was with the Community Corrections office in Launceston and online with Chris and the team in Hobart and elsewhere to acknowledge their work and to say thank you for their service over the last 12 months.

CHAIR - Thank you. If we could now move to - sorry.

Mr BARNETT - I should also note, we have got additional funding in our budget for Community Corrections, so I hope that's not - unaware.

Ms WEBB - An uplift for one-year period, is it? Let's just be really clear -

CHAIR - Thank you, deputy.

Ms WEBB - If we want to discuss that, we could discuss it, because it's a very brief uplift and then cuts across the forward Estimates, just to be really clear.

Mr BARNETT - I think it's - through you - to be very clear, more than one year. I think it's over the four years.

Ms WEBB - Is it over two?

Mr BARNETT - But we'll just ask the deputy or the secretary to confirm that.

Ms WEBB - Okay. So if you look at the line item, and it does go down, I think.

Mr BARNETT - Well, if you could put that on the record, please, deputy.

Mr SHEPHERD - My understanding is that it goes across the forward Estimates.

Ms WEBB - So we go from \$28 million-plus in 2026-27 to \$26 million in the next year, 2028-29 we've got \$24 million-ish, and then \$25 million. So, nothing comes close to the 2026-27 amount, so it looks like a cut to me.

Mr SHEPHERD - Sorry, I was responding to the deputy's comment that there's been more money put into Community Corrections.

Mr BARNETT - Yes.

Mr SHEPHERD - And that's what's happening. And there's \$2.4 million per year that has been allocated for Community Corrections across the forward Estimates.

Ms WEBB - Sure. But the total amount there in your preparation across the forward Estimates goes down after 2026-27.

CHAIR - Thank you. Thank you, deputy. Do you want to make a comment, secretary?

Ms BOURNE: Through you, deputy, just to add to what Mr Shepherd has said. As discussed in other outputs, the next financial year is slightly inflated due to the 27th pay, and the profile over the forward Estimates has a reduction to account for the cessation of the additional commission of inquiry response treatment program funding that Community Corrections received, as well as some other operational efficiency allocations that have been spread across the forward Estimates.

CHAIR - Thank you. If we could now go to 3.3 Enforcement of Monetary Penalties. I think we should be able to get that actually done before lunch. Thank you.

Output Group 3.3

Enforcement of Monetary Penalties

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes. There's not a lot of questions on this one. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you, Mr Carney.

Mr GAFFNEY - It's had its first reading in the lower House and it was suggested in the second reading speech, or in that writing, there was \$80 million in outstanding penalties that are still to be paid. What percentage, I suppose, do you anticipate will be collected under the new bill and under what timeframe, and does that include extra staff to be able to undertake that work?

And whilst you're considering that, as a supplementary, what is the distribution pattern in terms of dollars per year of when those collected penalties - so that's \$80 million over how many years? What year was there that hasn't been collected? It's interesting that we've introduced legislation for that. So just some parameters there would be good.

Mr BARNETT - No. Thank you. Fair question. And you're right with the MPES legislation being debated. I think it was tabled in the House on 5 May, continues to experience

a significant increase in demand for Corrections enforcement, increased demand to 31 March 2026, more than \$11.9 million in speed camera infringements were referred to MPES compared to \$10.5 [million] the same period 2024-25. The 12 months to 30 June 25, more than \$14 million in speed camera infringements were referred to MPES.

You asked about the amount collected and then the amount outstanding. The total amount of monetary penalties collected by MPES for the period 1 July 2025 to 31 March 2024 was \$21.4 million, and that was an increase of \$2.8 million or 13 per cent on the same period to March 25. The total amount collected by MPES for the 12-month period to 30 June 2025 was a record high of \$26.3 million. You asked about the amount outstanding. The total debt outstanding at 31 March 2026 was \$76.6 million, and this was \$3.5 million higher than the 31 March 2025.

So, the amount is significantly impacted by increased referrals, higher-value debts which are generally more difficult to collect and more difficult for debtors to pay. \$34.3 million of the overall debt was subject to payment plans as at 31 March 2026, allowing for debtors unable to pay their debt immediately to pay over instalments.

I've got details on collection rates, debt finalisation rates, referral of debts to MPES, et cetera. But you've raised some good points and that's one of the reasons we're bringing forward some of those reforms set out in the legislation.

Mr GAFFNEY - It looks as though this year there's an increase in some funding for that, but then it drops off again. So, is that another operational efficiency of the new bill? But I would have thought if it was a collection agency, there need to be more people on the ground doing the collecting. So, I just would be interested to see how that works.

Mr BARNETT - Yes. Thanks for the question. Let's see if the secretary and/or the chief financial officer can assist the honourable member.

Mr GAFFNEY - Is it another 27th pay? Just wondering.

Mr BARNETT - So, through you, Chair, Gavin Wailes.

Mr WAILES - So, through you, deputy.

Mr BARNETT - Yes.

Mr WAILES - There is the 27th pay. There's also, with the additional permanent funding that's been provided for the prison and the Community Corrections and others, an attribution across some of the smaller outputs with an overhead component.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes. Okay.

Mr WAILES - And so, that tends to show an increase in funding of that overhead element as opposed to the direct service delivery. So, for MPES for next year, there isn't any additional funding.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. So, we're assuming, even though we're trying to get an extra \$80 million back through this process, that the staffing numbers will stay the same. Or is the

staffing number going to drop because of operational efficiencies? I'm just wondering how the department is going to do this or how do they see it working.

Mr BARNETT - I think I've mentioned the legislative reform process that's currently before us, but maybe the secretary could add to that.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. That's something that we continue to monitor. MPES was afforded some additional funding when the new fixed speed cameras came into play so that it could - take advantage, obviously the wrong term, but noting the uplift in the number of fines coming through. And that's something we'll continue to monitor, particularly as the legislation works its way through. The staffing establishment as at 31 March was a head count of 27. And again, that's something we'll continue to work with the director on as we work through those operational efficiencies and what will be required from each output.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. And my last question before we break, is there a correlation between, I suppose, the money they get back in of the \$80 million and the amount of people we employ to be able to get the \$80 million back in? Do you see what I mean? Is the proof going to be in the pudding?

Mr BARNETT - Let me kick off, if I could. The legislation before us, which is in the parliament, will deliver a range of reforms which will make it, I would say, streamline the process and make it easier and better and faster for MPES to do the work that it needs to do and which we want it to do.

And I should thank Wayne Johnson and his team for his work at MPES. So, giving them the tools to make that work and to be more efficient. You mentioned the nearly \$80 million, the \$76.6 million, and we obviously want to work on that as quickly and as efficiently as possible. But I think that legislation will allow at least some improvement in that area. It's not just limited to the number of people on the team. Did you want to add to that or does that summarise it?

Mr WAILES - Through you, deputy. It's a little bit of a sliding scale when it comes to collections, because there are a number of processes that just sort of operate sort of by default. So it's as if having enough staff to process that administrative function, but then from that you can get into other more proactive elements of operation where you may - you get less return on investment, so to speak. So, somebody might spend a number of hours but not collect a commensurate amount of recovery from that.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes. Okay.

Mr BARNETT - And I'll give you one example: obtaining the debts from people interstate and having agreements with our interstate counterparts to be able to get that money directly from them.

Mr GAFFNEY - They're on holiday, aren't they?

Mr BARNETT - It's not easy, but I think the legislation will help make that easier.

Mr GAFFNEY - No. Good. Thank you.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - Thank you, deputy. So, if we now take a 45-minute break and we'll resume here at 2 o'clock. And if we could stop the broadcast, please. We will have to be short and sharp for our sessions after.

The committee suspended from 1.17 p.m. to 2.02 p.m. 2.02 p.m.

Output Group 5.1 Victim Support

CHAIR - And welcome back, deputy. And if we could start this afternoon's session with 5.1, Victim Support, and Mr Hiscutt.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you very much. As I understand it, there's a \$2 million drop-off for no longer providing the victims of crime counselling service and associated programs related to the commission of inquiry. Can I just confirm that that implies that there's been \$2 million per year, each year, expended on that up until this point? If that question makes sense.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much for the question. In terms of victims of crime, obviously it's a key focus for our government, and I appreciate your question around the budget side of things. Could I also welcome to the table Robyn Pearce, who's the Acting Deputy Secretary in this part of the Justice portfolio. And I think the secretary might have some information in terms of victims of crime.

And if I could just open the batting by noting its importance. And in terms of the victims of crime compensation assistance, we've got a victims assistance unit supporting the criminal injuries compensation commissioners in finalising awards under the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act*.

Our government's increased the funding for our victims of crime support areas with additional funding of \$299,000 per annum, or \$1.2 million over four years in the 2024-25 Budget, as recommended by the commission of inquiry. But I think your question goes deeper than that in terms of the differences over the years ahead, but in that regard I'll pass to the secretary.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy, through you. There are, or there have been, I should say, some changes to the establishment of - or the creation of - Justice Support Services, which includes victims of crime, which occurred in mid-2025, as well as some work associated with the creation of the implementation of the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework that may go to the member's question.

So, time-limited funding of \$829,000 for three years was provided to support the design and implementation of the CYSO. This funding concluded in 2024-25. As part of the restructure, the Victims Support Services now operates under two structures. So, there's Victim Support and Victims of Crime Assistance and Redress. And as indicated earlier, some of the other reductions over the forward Estimates would be related to the general allocation of operational efficiencies. But there have been no staff reductions in either the victims assistance unit or the redress response team.

Mr HISCUTT - Okay. I guess it says between 2026-27 and 2027-28 there's about, close to \$2 million reduction, and it explains that as the decrease in appropriation reflects the funding

profile for the commission of inquiry response initiative. So, the question was: has that been spent at that amount to the previous years?

Mr BARNETT - Yes. Thanks very much for the question. In terms of the funding I mentioned earlier, it's allowed for the engagement of additional staff to meet the increased demand to respond to the commission of inquiry recommendations. The annual report numbers differ as a result of the establishment of the Justice Support Service, and perhaps the secretary might express and outline to the committee how that works and that change.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - In terms of the completion of the Child and Youth Safe Organisations associated work, the creation of the Justice Support Service, as driven by the Department of Justice restructure, better align related and similar services which have a focus on victim/survivors, vulnerable children and adults, to improve governance, accessibility, accountability and responsiveness. So, there was that time-limited funding of \$829,000 over three years. But having said that, I will pass to the secretary just to explain to the committee how that restructure has impacted on the budget.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy, through you. And it was remiss of me not to mention, Mr Hiscutt, another reduction that's not - sorry, a reduction that's also reflected over the forward Estimates would be the cessation of the additional commission of inquiry specific funding that was provided to Victim Support and Victims of Crime Assistance and Redress.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. About how much per year was that?

Ms BOURNE - Through you, deputy. That was an additional \$299,000 per year originally provided in the 2024-25 Budget.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. No worries at all. New area. Last year - six months ago, not last year - we've spoken about the difficulty in getting feedback to see whether our responses were being effective or not. And there was a conversation that the Justice Support Services was setting up a charter that would provide live feedback on whether they were effective or not. Can I get an update as to where that's at?

Mr BARNETT - Yes. Thank you for the question, and a fair question coming from last year. How's it going? It's more of an operational matter and I think it's relevant to Ange McCrossen, who I know is in the room, so I'll just see if she's available to speak to that question. Here she is, and welcome to the table.

Ms McCROSSEN - Thank you. Through you, deputy. Yes, the work is still progressing. We haven't quite landed the published charter, although we're calling it a service framework, which would come with a set of commitments in terms of what people interacting with Justice Support Services could expect, and also a complaints mechanism for us to track trends and themes that come in for further workforce development and training.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. And so, would there be any proactive ability to check how things are working? Or would it only work off if someone who'd received those services reached out to you to complain or to react?

Ms McCROSSEN - It is based on a complaints and feedback mechanism as opposed to proactive engagement.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes.

Ms McCROSSEN - But we do have access to a number of different advisory committees and groups which we're keen to consult with once we've got the service charter or the service framework drafted. And I think that would be one of the important parts to consider: how can we engage with those groups in a proactive way as opposed to reactive?

Mr HISCUTT - Yes.

Ms McCROSSEN - Yes.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you for that. And I'm sure you've heard of many stories in our system where victims of violence and survivors have had unhelpful experiences in the systems, situations like Rachel's Voice. And what is the government doing to ensure that people are getting the support that they need?

Mr BARNETT - So, thanks very much for the question. It's a key focus for our government in terms of victims of crime and in terms of the discussion paper on family violence and - family and domestic violence, we've had Family and Domestic Violence Month just last month. The minister, Jane Howlett, and I had the honour of announcing the first tranche of reforms in terms of coercive control, in terms of increasing the ability and the timeframe for victim/survivors to respond, rather than one year, go to two years, and that draft legislation to be released in coming months. In terms of adding to that answer, I'll pass to the secretary.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy, through you. In recognition of the need to better align like services, particularly those that have a focus on victim/survivors, vulnerable children and adults, as the deputy referred to, back on 8 May last year, Justice Support Services was established. And that change was also linked to the relevant commission of inquiry response, which found that barriers to sharing information were obviously really critical to address.

And that restructure, I think, really has supported a cultural change and, as Ange has already referred to in the context of the service delivery framework, making sure that that's a trauma-informed approach that's victim centred. And also part of that restructure was fundamentally informed by the lived experience of victims of crime and victim/survivors as well, so that we can ensure that as an agency that provides different supports at different times, people aren't falling through the gaps.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you for the answer.

CHAIR - No. Thank you. If we have no further questions on this area, we will move to Victims of Crime Assistance and Redress. Mr Gaffney.

Output Group 5.2

Victims of Crime Assistance and Redress

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. Thank you. The full and final compensation costs for the abuse stemming from the commission of inquiry and other claims are still unknown to a certain

degree with anecdotal speculation that it could get close to \$1 billion. The 2026-27 Budget and forward Estimates allocate a total of just over \$314 million over those years, a figure which I assume must also cover the historical forced adoption redress scheme.

The question was, then: the budgetary impact of settling the claims of victim/survivors could well be at least twice that of 314, probably more; have you an estimate of the final total at this point, and would it not be better to factor this across forward Estimates so its impact can be properly considered and that compensation to victim/survivors can be settled without further delay?

The projected \$314 million is what people have said is well below the anticipated funding. Wouldn't you be better off to have a more realistic figure across those forward Estimates so that you don't have to go back asking for funding from Treasury or wherever it is you might get it from to help out, because there could be a delay? That would be my question.

Mr BARNETT - Thanks very much for the question. It's what you'd call a very big and sizeable question in terms of the commission of inquiry. The government has made its position very clear over the past several years in terms of its support for the 191 recommendations and the findings and the government's commitment to progress those, which it has been doing, and that's come up in discussions over this table, even today. In terms of the actuary advice, in terms of the costs from the taxpayer to support those, the work of the commission of inquiry and its implementation, I'll pass to the secretary to assist the committee but just note it is important. We do take it as a priority, and we do act on advice from actuaries accordingly, but I will pass to the secretary.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. Through you, and if I need to seek further advice from Mr Wailes, we can certainly do that. As the member has noted, to inform the estimated liabilities informed by actuarial advice, as at 30 June 2025, the actuary assessment of the estimated outstanding claim liabilities for child sexual abuse in institutional settings is \$578.867 million, which includes civil claim liability of \$472.658 million, and national redress scheme applications to the value of \$106,209,000.

The department has recently sought to engage a further actuarial assessment to ensure that those estimates that are feeding into the budget process moving forward are as accurate as possible in light of emerging trends in terms of the types of claims and anticipated liability.

Mr GAFFNEY - Thank you. If I read that incorrectly, then I added those forward works up to \$314 million, and you've just given me some more figures much greater than that already without doing an extra process. I'm just wondering, have I missed something here? Because, according to me, it's about \$314 [million] over the forward Estimates, and you've just mentioned figures much higher than that. I was just wondering how that works.

Mr BARNETT - I'll just check if we can assist the member and the committee in terms of those figures. We've got Gavin Wailes at the table. Through you, Chair, we might pass to Gavin, if that's all right, secretary.

Mr WAILES - Thank you, deputy. Through you. As Kristy alluded to, a couple of years ago, the liability was \$574 million. The year before that, it was \$640 million, and what has occurred in the budget papers is we record the compensation payments which then reduce the

value of the liability through the forward Estimates. You'll see the value of the provision liability is decreasing every year, which is reflective of those payments.

As part of our annual financial reporting, we'll be getting a revised actuarial assessment which will be due in mid-August this year, which will then be included within the revised Estimates report that's produced for 31 December, and then will be included in next year's Budget. What we've got in the budget papers at the moment is the most up-to-date information that we have from the actuary, but for next year, we'll obviously be providing an updated set of calculations from the actuary, and that's something we've got a contract to do each year for the next few years to make sure it's all up to date.

Mr GAFFNEY - Can you say who you contract it out to, or is that -

Mr WAILES - Yes. GM Actuaries, who are the only local actuary, I believe, within the state.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. That's my question on this part of that.

CHAIR - Thank you. Very quick question, as we have 15 minutes and several items still outgoing.

Mr GAFFNEY - I've got one left.

Ms WEBB - Sure. You keep going with yours.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes. Okay. We all believe that it's reprehensible that individuals from certain institutions can just play that card. With the vicarious liabilities laws that are coming up, will they have sufficient weight to hold those institutions to account? Will the bill prevent another round of legal cases if those institutions once more choose to go to the courts to avoid liability? If or when the bill passes, I hope that they can finally be held to account in fully compensating victim/survivors for both the original abuse and that from the institution that fought them as a second form of abuse. I'm just wondering, are you confident that the new laws will have the strength and be able to hold up against the institutions that tend to avoid it?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the question, and I understand where the motivation is coming from. Obviously, we take this very seriously. SCAG and Tasmania acted proactively in 2019 with the *Civil Liability Act* and extending vicarious liability for organisations for child abuse by individuals akin to employees, and the extension only applies prospectively as supported by the royal commission, but that High Court decision in *Bird v DP*, as you allude to, is very concerning. It's been discussed very seriously all around Australia.

We've preferred a national approach wherever possible, and that's been discussed through SCAG, but firstly, I do want to acknowledge all those victim/survivors. They have been heard. We are acting and certainly acknowledge Steve Fisher and Beyond Abuse, and his advocacy. That draft legislation will be released for consultation in the coming weeks, not months, before it's finalised and introduced into parliament. We do plan to progress.

You've asked how confident we are. We're as confident as we possibly can be, but it is subject to that legislation being introduced and then passed through the parliament.

PUBLIC

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay, thank you. That's all.

CHAIR - Thank you. Do you have a quick question?

Ms WEBB - Just a super quick one on the historic forced adoptions redress, and noting that the state apology delivered in 2012 apologised to mothers, fathers and their children who are now grown up. The two questions pretty simply are: why does the government's redress scheme solely apply to the affected women and mothers but not also include the children separated from their birth mothers; and can you provide the number of affected mothers, their children, and fathers who also lost their children?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much for the question, and with respect to the last part of that, I'll pass to the department shortly in terms of those numbers, but we do have \$4 million in our Budget. We're pleased and proud of that for this year for mothers who've been subject to historical forced adoption practices. It's a nation-leading redress payment of \$75,000. We've folded in that \$10,000 for counselling into that \$75,000.

CHAIR - I think the question was, though, why doesn't it apply to children.

Ms WEBB - To the children.

Mr BARNETT - That's right.

CHAIR - I'm sorry. It's just that we asked -

Mr BARNETT - No, I understand, but there's a context here, and it's come out of the historical forced adoption practices that occurred over many decades, and we take it very seriously. That's why we've acted on that. We do feel very concerned. That doesn't mean that there's not a flow-on effect to others in terms of adoptees, but we do and have made that commitment to the mothers subject to that forced adoption practice.

With respect to the last part of the question, I'll pass to the department.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. The information that the department has around estimated number of adoptions that occurred in Tasmania from 1951 to 1992 is approximately 8100. The cost of the scheme can be an estimate only as we can't be certain about how many forced adoptions occurred. In terms of information that we have to date around the interim scheme, deputy, can you talk to those? So, as of -

Mr BARNETT - Yes. Yes. That might assist the honourable member.

Ms BOURNE - As of 20 May 2026, 14 payments totalling \$140,000 had been released under the interim scheme.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. I still didn't hear an answer to the question of: why not the children who were taken from their mothers in that forced adoption process? Why did we land on only the mothers, not the children?

Mr BARNETT - Okay. Thank you. Because it's based on a process that the government has listened to those mothers involved in the forced adoption process, it's providing the redress

for affected mothers who've lived through that forced adoption practice, which is the reason for the redress scheme.

Our government recognises that historical forced adoption practices caused profound and enduring harm, not only to mothers who were pressured or coerced into relinquishing their children, but also to the children who were separated from their families. We acknowledge that many adoptees carry life-long grief, identity loss, unanswered questions and a sense of disconnection that can be devastating and irreparable. I'll put that on the record and note that absolutely.

Output Group 5.3

Office of the Public Guardian

CHAIR - So, our next area is Office of the Public Guardian, and I will just ask one very quick question. I've got several, but I'll just find my most important question. So, can you provide some information with regard to the Office of the Public Guardian about complaints that might've been received in the past year? How many complaints were received? What generally were they in relation to? How many were resolved and concluded, and how many remain outstanding? And I'm quite happy to take it on notice if that's easier with the amount of questions in that.

Mr BARNETT - Yes. Thank you very much, Chair. We have got those answers here, which I think we can assist the honourable member and the committee.

CHAIR - Yes. Yes.

Mr BARNETT - And I would want to do a shout-out and thank you to the Public Guardian, Jeremy Harbottle, and his team, who are -

CHAIR - Does a wonderful job, yes.

Mr BARNETT - Who does do a wonderful job, for which we're very grateful. And, of course, that's an appointment for, you know, guardian of last resort. I'll just see if we've got the numbers for the honourable member. Okay. Look, we don't have all the details, so if you're happy to -

CHAIR - I'm quite happy for you to provide it to me in writing for the questions.

Mr BARNETT - I'm happy to take that on notice, that specific question.

CHAIR - Yes, not a problem. Yes.

Mr BARNETT - So, if you're happy, we've got lots of figures here, but it doesn't particularly address part of your question.

CHAIR - No, no. I'm just going with my most important so I would get that to you.

Mr BARNETT - No.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - We'll get back to you.

CHAIR - Thank you. No other members have questions on that area?

Output Group 5.4

Safe at Home

CHAIR - If we move to Safe at Home, 5.4. Ms Webb.

Ms WEBB - Just a quick one on this one, then. The key deliverable there in this space is around the Keeping Women Safe program, which is \$450,000 in the 2026-27 financial year. The current Australian Government funding agreement for that program runs out 30 June 2027, so presumably continuation, then, is contingent on further federal funding past that agreement date. When will we know if it's to be extended, the federal agreement, and if it isn't extended, in practical terms, what will cease occurring in terms of service delivery here?

Mr BARNETT - Firstly, thank you for asking about Safe at Home family violence service. It's a important service. We appreciate it and those involved. And again, I'm standing with the Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence, Jane Howlett, herself just last week with the Safe at Home manager for Hobart from Tasmania Legal Aid. With respect to the funding profile going forward, I will pass to the secretary to assist the committee.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy, through you. Without taking up the committee's time, as members are probably aware, the Australian Government has funded certain state and territory governments under the Keeping Women Safe in Their Homes program. That grant will cease, as the member has said, on 30 June 2027.

Officer-level discussions continue with the Commonwealth, and noting that additional top-up funding has been provided by the Department of Premier and Cabinet under the federal Funding Agreement on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses. It's an ongoing discussion with the Commonwealth to ensure that the service can continue, noting the allocation in this year to support it doing so. But we need to continue to have those discussions about what happens post-2027.

Ms WEBB - And we don't have a timeline on when to expect -

Mr BARNETT - To assist the honourable member and the committee, I have written to the federal minister already some time back and asked my department to have ongoing engagement with the federal department.

Ms WEBB - Great.

Mr BARNETT - So we're onto it and we'll continue to be onto it as we progress.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. Appreciate that.

CHAIR - Thank you. No further questions on that?

Output Group 5.5

Working with Vulnerable People

CHAIR - If we move now to 5.5, Working with Vulnerable People. Mr Hiscutt.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you for that. It's interesting to note that Working with Vulnerable People doesn't have an appropriation line noted to it, just an expense for that. And I also note and congratulate the government for the reduction or the removal of fees for the volunteering with vulnerable people. That is a great initiative that's been put forward. However, I would've thought that would've had some effect on the ability of that output to function. Could I have an explanation of how that's been costed into that area?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the question. Before I pass to the secretary, I just appreciate the good work of the Registrar and the work of the Registration to Work with Vulnerable People. This is also discussed at a SCAG level across Australia. There's recommendations out of the commission of inquiry of that need to flow through to the scheme as well. We got recommendations from the Woolcott report that affect that registration for Working with Vulnerable People. But I will pass to the deputy secretary, Robyn Pearce, on this one to assist the honourable member.

Ms PEARCE - Thank you. Through you, deputy. RWVP is funded through the fees that are paid by persons who are seeking to be registered, so it shows in the Budget in table 6.6 on page 137 under the line item of 'Other revenue'. So, that's where the income comes from.

The expenditure that is currently being undertaken for things such as the volunteers being able to access their certificates free are actually coming from both of these, but retained revenues as well, and those retained revenues are also assisting with the expansion program.

Mr HISCUTT - Is there a length of time that that fee reduction stops the - sorry, the fee-free volunteering, does that have a certain time period that's going for or is that indefinite at this stage?

Ms PEARCE - Through you, deputy. It's in place for two years.

Mr HISCUTT - Two years, okay. Thank you for the answers to that question. And deputy, there is a considerable drop-off in that area in expenditure, which I can't see explained in the line item, from about \$10 million down to \$4 million over the coming Estimates. Can I get an understanding of where - are we expecting fees to go up so that we don't have as much - or how would that - or less people getting vulnerable people cards? What's the explanation for that?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you.

Ms PEARCE - Sorry, if I could just ask, would you mind - through you, deputy - repeating the question?

PUBLIC

Mr HISCUTT - Sorry. There's just a significant reduction from about \$10.5 million down to \$4 million. I'm just wondering what the explanation is for that reduction.

Ms PEARCE - Okay, certainly. Yes. Through you, deputy. That's a reflection of not only the change in the 27th pay and the operational efficiencies, but also it shows the finalisation of the RWVP expansion program which is currently in place. So, that's the introduction of the new IT system to be able to support, as well as the changes that are being made for the expansion of the system.

Mr HISCUTT - The revenue, as you said, was all on that other page, so is the revenue expected to change at all, or does that revenue go somewhere else if it's not being expended in that line item?

Ms PEARCE - Through you, deputy. The revenue will increase as the range of persons who are covered by the scheme increase, and then there'll be the commensurate change in expenditure, as well, will come with that. But there is a significant expenditure in those first couple of years that are going to the expansion program.

Mr HISCUTT - Okay.

Ms PEARCE - And that's why the drop-off occurs.

Mr HISCUTT - It just seems that it drops off, continues to drop off, even into the forwards.

Ms PEARCE - Correct.

Mr HISCUTT - So, if there is any excess, I guess what I'm saying is that if it is only funded through the fees, it's currently funding \$10 million in the next year, \$7 million from those fees coming up, but does the amount we receive drop off commensurate with the amount we're spending drop off? Like, are we expecting the Working with Vulnerable People cards to be cheaper in the future because there's not as much overhead to - or those programs to - I notice someone else has moved the table again. Do you understand the question? Like, it's - yes.

CHAIR - Mr Wailes.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you. I think Gavin Wailes might be able to assist.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you.

Mr WAILES - Thank you, deputy, through you. So, the RWVP expansion program has been funded by retained revenues of the department in previous years, will be funded through existing retained revenues that we have. We've also received Commonwealth grants as well to supplement that and also from future revenues.

Mr HISCUTT - What I'm asking is, what is the baseline revenue from fees for - yes.

PUBLIC

Mr WAILES - Sorry, deputy. Through you. If you go to 'Statement of Comprehensive Income', and I can't remember the page off the top of my head, but 'Other revenue' includes the RWVP licensing revenues.

Mr BARNETT - Can I jump in? Is that table 6.6? Yes, on page 137.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes, it is. This is the other revenue that's approximately \$22 million and goes up commensurate with - yes.

Mr WAILES - Yes. It's relatively flatlined at the moment. The new aged care expansion hasn't been included yet because that hasn't been made law, but that's part of the future of the expansion program, but at the moment, the revenue's a fairly flat line based on averages from previous years.

Mr HISCUTT - What percentage of that other revenue is fees from - are we able to figure out what that is, fees from Working with Vulnerable People card registrations?

Mr WAILES - It's about \$4.3 million per year.

Mr HISCUTT - That is probably the baseline expenditure we should expect.

Mr WAILES - Yes.

Mr HISCUTT - That makes sense.

Mr WAILES - Which I think is just consistent with - sorry, it would be about \$4.6 million as per outyears 2 and 3, effectively, with spikes initially for payments that are made under that particular project.

Mr HISCUTT - That's come from that extra - yes, perfect. Thank you.

Mr WAILES - It's essentially a self-funding program.

Mr HISCUTT - No, that all makes sense now. Thank you very much for the explanation.

Mr WAILES - Thank you.

Capital Investment Program

CHAIR - Thank you. If we move now to Capital Investment Program, which is fairly self-explanatory on page 134, but do any members have any comment they wish to make about it? If not, thank you very much, Attorney-General, for the Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation section. If we could stop the broadcast while we just change over at the table because we will now have the Integrity Commission.

The committee suspended from 2.34 p.m. to 2.36 p.m.

DIVISION 2

Integrity Commission

PUBLIC

CHAIR - Thank you, deputy. And if you would like to introduce those at the table for 1.1 Integrity Commission.

Mr BARNETT - Thanks very much, Chair. It's a pleasure and honour to introduce our CEO of the Integrity Commission, Ellen McKenzie, and actually note that it's her second budget Estimates. So, welcome to the table and welcome to the committee. And also together with Ellen is the Director of Corporate Services, Karen Kingswell from the Integrity Commission.

CHAIR - Thank you. And we have Ms Webb starting the questioning in this area.

Ms WEBB - Thank you, Chair. Yes, just to start us off, a straightforward one for the start is around the key deliverable that relates to the Integrity Commission, the \$500,000 each year over the forward Estimates to assist with amendments that have been brought in that are going to put additional responsibilities on the Integrity Commission. So, how was that amount of \$500,000 a year arrived at? Was it identified and requested by the Integrity Commission in its budget bid and what will it be spent on? How will it be allocated?

Mr BARNETT - Maybe if I kick it off and note in terms of the second part of your question, yes, it's \$500,000 additional. The Integrity Commission has strengthened oversight and responses to misconduct in anticipation of the mandatory notification framework reforms passing parliament. And the funding delivers on a commitment by the Premier.

Our government has stood by its commitment; it's in the Budget and has continued to increase the funding for the Integrity Commission. The funding will enable the commission to manage the changes to the workload arising from our reforms, and, of course, that will take time over coming months, but I think the chief executive is far more able to explain how that will roll out in the months and over the period ahead in terms of mandatory notification. And no doubt we're more than happy to answer other questions as well.

Ms McKENZIE - Yes. So, yes, we did make a budget bid submission. The amount, though, of the half a million dollars, as the attorney has indicated, was a matter of government arrangement. And in terms of the expenditure of the additional moneys that are coming the way of the commission, we will be using that to resource what we hope to be an expanded complaints and oversight unit within the commission that will enable us to operationalise mandatory notifications and make the other consequent changes that we need to make in terms of our management of our oversight and compliance practice, which we estimate will expand substantially in size.

And in fact, we are estimating, as best as we can, something in the order of a threefold increase in the number of notifications that we'll receive. And there'll be a flow-on effect for our education and engagement team, because we anticipate that we'll identify a number of misconduct risks and systemic gaps that we'll want our education and engagement team to go out into the sector to deliver education about.

Ms WEBB - Indeed. And so, can I ask then, in terms of the budget bid that was put in, what was the quantum of funding requested to cover these additional tasks?

Mr BARNETT - That's best answered, I think, by the chief executive.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - But I do note that the bill has passed the House of Assembly in terms of the mandatory notifications bill, but has not yet passed the Legislative Council, and we are hopeful for it to progress, but of course that's a matter for the Legislative Council.

Ms WEBB - It is, indeed.

Ms McKENZIE - Yes. So, returning then, in response to the honourable member's question, we did put in a budget base bid submission because we were looking for funding to be added to our base funding on an ongoing basis because, of course, upon the passing of the mandatory notifications bill, that additional work will continue to be a component of our ongoing daily work at the commission. And we sought an amount of \$1.358 million in 2026-27, \$1.382 million in 2027-28, \$1.413 million - I'm talking about additional funds - in 2028-29 and \$1.453 million additional in 2029-30.

Ms WEBB - Yes. Thank you. So, you got about a third of what you asked for, essentially across this Budget - each of the forward years - by the sound of it. That's unfortunate. What will be the approach to managing that clear shortfall in what was modelled to be required? What will you have to do in order to meet your statutory obligations, presuming this bill passes and just on the basis that there'll be that uplift in responsibilities?

Ms McKENZIE - Through you, deputy. So, what we're looking at doing is the way we approach our oversight and compliance work within the Complaints and Oversight Unit, and that's part of an overall strategic planning project that we've been undertaking at the commission, and that will flow on to the work that we anticipate we'll be asking the staff within the unit to do.

But to enable us to do that, one of the preliminary steps that we'll be taking is to undertake a review of the current work that we are carrying within our oversight and compliance practice, and we anticipate that there will be a number of matters in that current practice that we will be ceasing to monitor going forward because they've been on our books for a period of time or whatever it is that's happened in relation to that matter.

But we will be engaging in some correspondence with relevant agencies involved in those matters to ascertain from them what has happened. But if the matter is substantially aged or there has been no significant progress and none suggested to us going forward, then we will no longer monitor those matters.

So, that will significantly reduce the workload we're currently carrying and open up the field in terms of the work that we'll be getting in. We will also be looking at the structure of our oversight - our Complaints and Oversight Unit - to see whether we have the type of staffing that we need to manage that work going forward. And we anticipate using those additional funds that we will be able to recruit some additional staff to help us manage that work going forward.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. That sounds like a challenge to figure out how to make that work, but you're clearly turning your mind to it.

PUBLIC

A different set of questions then around legal proceedings. How much across the, say, two most recent years, 2024-25, 2025-26, the current year and then the first year of this Budget, 2026-27, has the Integrity Commission spent on legal proceedings?

Ms McKENZIE - Through you, attorney. I can give an indication of legal fees that we've paid. I don't think I'll be able to break it down. I might just consult my Director of Corporate Services in terms of how that might be broken up in terms of type of legal advice.

Ms WEBB - Is that something I could ask for on notice, a bit more of a granular breakdown? If you can give me the total figure here at the table, perhaps we could follow up with a more granular figure later.

Ms McKENZIE - Well, what I can indicate to the honourable member is that actual legal fees that we've paid to date in 2025-26 - and I think the figures go up to the end of April. I'm just checking with my director of corporate - is \$92,849. And we buy in, if you like, legal services because we don't have in-house legal capacity, although a number of us are trained lawyers, but none of us are actually operating as lawyers.

Ms WEBB - It's not your roles. Yes.

Ms McKENZIE - It's not our particular roles and we have to be very careful about that.

Ms WEBB - Do you have the 2024-25 figure, the full year before?

Ms McKENZIE - Yes, I do. It's \$55,492. And if it would be of assistance - I beg your pardon, I'm actually looking at the wrong figure there - 2024-25 is \$85,881. And if it would be of assistance to the honourable member, I can give you 2023-24 as well, if that would help.

Ms WEBB - Sure.

Ms McKENZIE - \$133,317. So, that's legal fees that we have paid in relation to particular matters.

Ms WEBB - Thank you, I appreciate that. And what's being budgeted for in the 2026-27 financial year in terms of legal fees?

Ms McKENZIE - \$100,000. But of course, that's a bit of guesstimating, if you like, because we never know from, I suppose, month to month what matters might crop up where we might need to seek legal advice.

Ms WEBB - Okay. And can a person who's subject to an Integrity Commission investigation commence legal proceedings to challenge the ongoing work of the commission? For example, whether that's during an investigation or whether that's, say, at the stage where there might be a report to be made public or not?

Ms McKENZIE - There are provisions in the act which enable people to take action before the courts in relation to decisions that may have been made by the board or whoever it might be at the commission, depending on who the decision-maker is.

PUBLIC

Ms WEBB - And so, potentially then, those sorts of proceedings could delay the progress of the investigation or the potential publication of a report.

Ms McKENZIE - Legal proceedings are one of the number of different factors which may delay the progress of any particular matter that the commission might have at any one time on its books.

Ms WEBB - And without commenting on anything specific at all, is this something that has occurred for the commission to have to overcome as a challenge, a delay of that nature in progressing an investigation or in making a report public?

Ms McKENZIE - I'm not sure that I'm able to answer that question in view of the -

CHAIR - If you prefer not to answer.

Ms McKENZIE - I think it's difficult for me to answer that question in view of the provisions under the confidentiality provisions under the act.

CHAIR - Yes, sure. That's fine.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

CHAIR - No.

Ms WEBB - I can, if that -

CHAIR - I might just ask a question, if I could, with regard to education and training. Obviously that's a really important part. The more people understand and the more they know, then hopefully the less they get into trouble. So, with education and training, how many people in the department undertake the education and training or actually go out in the community, and has the funding or the lack of funding - the more difficulty that you have trying to make the money go round, has that impacted? So, how often would staff go out into areas to actually undertake education and training?

Ms McKENZIE - Through you, deputy.

CHAIR - Sorry, through you, deputy, yes.

Ms McKENZIE - The team does a lot of training. In terms of the overall numbers within that team, we have a team of five. And in terms of actual trainers, if you like, within that team, three of the staff within that team do go out and do training, and on occasion other members of the commission also get involved in delivering training, members of our complaints and oversight unit. I, too, get involved on occasion in the training that we go out into the sector to deliver.

We also have some trainers on contract whom we occasionally engage to conduct training for us if we ourselves are unable to do it. It might be a geographic issue or whatever it might be. We just simply don't have internal capacity.

Now, true it is, if there were additional funds available I would certainly look at putting more resources in that unit. Under our current budget, or perhaps I should say 2025-26, I have actually restructured that unit, and we have actually recruited additional staff to support the work of that unit, and that has actually made quite a big difference in the work that the unit is doing, and they have actually as a result, I think it's fair to say, been doing a lot of strategic work both in terms of policy development, plus also developing some new training modules which they've started to go out into the sector to deliver, and we're getting some very positive feedback in relation to that training, and we're getting a lot more uptake in relation to that training as well.

CHAIR - Thank you. Which sectors primarily - obviously parliament, local government.

Ms McKENZIE - Parliament, local government. I'm sorry, through you, deputy.

CHAIR - Through you, deputy, yes, yes.

Mr BARNETT - Please, no, go ahead.

Ms McKENZIE - Tasmanian state sectors, so government departments, local councils, Parliament House itself.

CHAIR - Yes.

Ms McKENZIE - We do both induction sessions for new members of parliament plus also training for members of parliament, and we try to do that on an annual basis, and every time a new - a member gets elected we do an induction as well. And we're also looking to expand the parliamentary-related training to members of - those members of the staff of ministers and whatnot as well, so to broaden the remit of our training.

CHAIR - And it's probably a difficult question for you to answer, but I'm just wondering, how much extra would really make such a difference to you to be able to undertake the training? Are you able to quantify an idea of an amount that would make a real difference to actually be able to, you know, provide the training and education you want? Because, as we know, the more education and training, the less work that comes back to you, because people understand what they should and shouldn't be doing.

Ms McKENZIE - We have actually done some previous modelling in relation to additional resources for that unit and we actually factored that into the budget base bid submission that we did earlier this year.

CHAIR - Yes.

Ms McKENZIE - And, in fact, we were looking, as I recall it - and I'll correct myself if I'm wrong - we were actually learning - looking at potentially two additional resources for that team.

CHAIR - Which would equate to how much in dollar terms?

Ms McKENZIE - One would've been a band 6 and one - at the time, we were looking at a band 5. I'm not sure that I have the figures.

CHAIR - No. Band 6 and band 5.

Ms McKENZIE - Band 6 and band 5, for what that would equate to in terms of salary. But had we received a bit more additional funding, I certainly would've been very seriously looking at putting additional resources into that team to help expand the work that they could do in terms of going out and doing training.

CHAIR - Thank you very much.

Ms McKENZIE - I think one of the things we have to very seriously consider - and I know that there are differing views about this, and I understand it, because I've had the experience myself of experiencing training in person but also online, and it is a different experience.

CHAIR - Yes.

Ms McKENZIE - But we are increasingly going to have to look at online training because we won't necessarily be able to go out and deliver it in person.

CHAIR - You don't have the resources to do it in person?

Ms McKENZIE - No, we don't.

CHAIR - Thank you, yes.

Mr HISCUTT - A follow-up, if I could. Just in relation to that, is that team based throughout the state or are they all based in the south?

Ms McKENZIE - Through you, deputy. They're all in Hobart.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. With all that training that they're doing, is there much regular engagement with the north and north-west to facilitate training in those regions?

Ms McKENZIE - Through you, deputy. We do go elsewhere in the state and we have done so. There obviously are challenges associated with doing that, because one of the things that we have to ensure is that, if we are organising such training, people will actually be there because it's a big expense for us to have to do that.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes.

Ms McKENZIE - But we certainly do. And, in fact, one of our key training resources is our investigating misconduct training that we periodically roll out, and our next suite of that training will actually be conducted in person in Launceston around the middle of this year.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes, beautiful. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you very much.

Ms WEBB - Can I go on?

CHAIR - Ms Webb, you had a further question?

Ms WEBB - Yes. Thank you. I've just got a quick one to follow up that before one other area. In terms of having to transition to some online training instead of in-person training, which particular areas of training may be in that category that might get transitioned to online? Only that I note the Woolcott review's recommendation that there needs to be ethics, ethical training for all senior managers.

I presume that kind of training is best delivered in person because it's going to involve scenarios and all those sorts of things, and it relates to culture change, and it's hard to get culture change off a screen. Are you anticipating that's something that's going to go online or that some of the existing components might go online?

Ms McKENZIE - Through you, deputy. I'm not sure that our thinking or planning in relation to pivoting to online training is as sophisticated or planned-out as all of that. However, the training that Mr Woolcott, I think, had in mind, as it turns out, our team had already been working on developing a new training module in relation to ethical decision-making for senior managers within the state sector, and they have been rolling that out and getting some very, very positive feedback about it.

And I think that that would be a very useful vehicle for us potentially to look at filling the gap that Mr Woolcott has identified in his report. And indeed, again, we've not really thought about it, but I would've thought that that's probably something that you'd look at doing in person.

Ms WEBB - Yes.

Ms McKENZIE - Because the synergy that you get within the room with people kicking ideas around and sharing experiences and ideas, that's really best facilitated in a room when you're all together.

Ms WEBB - Agreed. Thank you. Yes, I agree. Just to come back, because you mentioned before about potentially you need to pare back to some extent some of the oversight for other activities that you've been involved in in order to pick up the new roles or new work that will be coming through under the act that's coming down the pipeline. The one that I'm wondering about is the oversight role that the Integrity Commission plays in relation to the Tasmania Police - and it's an important oversight role.

Currently the Integrity Commission needs to be notified when it's reasonably suspected that a member of the police has engaged in serious conduct or whenever a commissioned officer - so that's someone of a senior rank, inspector or above - has complaints, is subject to a complaint. And there's a really key role there for the Integrity Commission to either investigate itself, potentially, or to pass back to the Commissioner of Police.

At what point does Tasmania Police notify the Integrity Commission about the potential misconduct that may need to be investigated by their officers, and how does it interact with the internal system that TasPol have, which I think is called Abacus, which is their complaints and internally raised matters system? At what point in that process of things being logged on Abacus does it come to the Integrity Commission?

Ms McKENZIE - Through you, deputy. We have an oversight and compliance program that's specifically dedicated to Tasmania Police, and we have an agreement with them, and under that agreement they notify us of all their matters, and they'll continue to do so once the new regime kicks off, obviously. And it's a very key part under that dedicated oversight and compliance program that we have in relation to Tasmania Police of our oversight and compliance practice, and I don't anticipate in the new world that we'll be inhabiting once mandatory notifications goes live that there will be any substantive change to our approach to that area of our work.

Ms WEBB - Right.

Ms McKENZIE - And in terms of our stakeholder engagement - and we do a lot of it across the sector and elsewhere - it is a very, very busy part of our stakeholder engagement in terms of our interaction with Tasmania Police. It's ongoing and it's regular.

Ms WEBB - Does the Integrity Commission therefore, in that oversight and in that auditing sort of function it has around complaints there for TasPol, have access to the TasPol complaints system? Can you actually get in and see in their system, or are you reliant on what's sent to you?

Ms McKENZIE - Through you, deputy. We don't have live access, if that's what you're asking. At the moment, we receive material upon request, and it was the subject of a recommendation that was made in one of the particular inquiries that've been conducted over the years. I know there's been a lot of ongoing discussion and debate about it, but I'm happy to say that in terms of our access to material, we have a very collaborative and respectful relationship with them, and we don't have difficulty getting access to the material that we need.

Ms WEBB - In terms of their internal system, which is divided into complaints and into internally raised matters, do you have oversight of both those things that might come through both those internal systems?

Ms McKENZIE - Through you, deputy. We are notified of misconduct matters, if you like. As to whether they fall within complaint matters that the police may be receiving or matters that they're otherwise undertaking oversight and compliance in relation to, I couldn't really say, but they -

Ms WEBB - I'm just wondering about the distinction made between a complaint in the Abacus system versus an internally raised matter in the Abacus system, and whether it's only things that come in through the complaint side of things that potentially come to the Integrity Commission, and whether internally raised matters are also required to come to you under the same arrangements that are stated there.

Ms McKENZIE - Through you, deputy. I'm not sure that my knowledge is detailed enough to be able to answer that question with any specificity.

PUBLIC

Ms WEBB - I might follow it up later through other scrutiny avenues we have with the commission.

CHAIR - Thank you. You have one last quick question?

Ms WEBB - Probably not a quick one. We could wrap that up, if you'd like, because it's not a quick one.

CHAIR - Okay, then.

Ms WEBB - When was the last time you did an audit of police investigations into misconducts, the ones that they did for themselves in their own systems?

Ms McKENZIE - Through you, deputy. I couldn't give you a specific date, and subject to the deputy's views, perhaps that might be something that we could answer.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. Take that on notice.

Mr BARNETT - They're more than happy to take it on notice, if you're happy to do that.

Ms McKENZIE - Yes, I'm happy to do that, because I don't want to talk off the top of my head and get it wrong.

Ms WEBB - If I send through a question that relates to the details around most recent audits in that space, will that be suitable? Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - To be clear on the question, if we could, through you, Chair.

CHAIR - No, that's fine.

Mr BARNETT - If you could just repeat the question so we know what to take on notice.

Ms WEBB - I'm going to ask a question about the last couple of times an audit process was undertaken of the TasPol internal complaints misconduct investigations. Sorry, I've lost my wording right in front of me here.

CHAIR - Did you want to just read that out again?

Ms WEBB - I'm just trying to find where I had it written.

Ms McKENZIE - I might actually be able to give a little bit of assistance to the committee at this stage, because I do have some information which is accurate up to the end of April. The information I have to hand indicates that at present, we have three ongoing audits in relation to Tasmania Police matters. I can't speak to whether they're in relation specifically to complaints, but nonetheless, I can confirm that we have three audits running at present.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. That's an audit of a particular investigation process?

PUBLIC

Ms McKENZIE - Through you, deputy. It's an audit in relation to a Tasmania Police-related matter. I don't want to go into specificities as to whether it's in relation to a complaint, but I can indicate we have three audits running at the moment.

Ms WEBB - Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. You're happy to have that on notice?

Ms WEBB - Yes. Thank you.

CHAIR - You're fine with that. Thank you very much, and thank you very much, deputy and Ellen, for coming in.

Ms McKENZIE - Thank you.

CHAIR - We really appreciate you giving us the time. If we just stop the broadcast while we change over at the table.

The committee suspended from 3.00 p.m. to 3.01 p.m.

DIVISION 7

Office of the Ombudsman

Output Group 1.1

Decisions on Complaints Referred to the Ombudsman and Health Complaints Commissioner and Right to Information

CHAIR - Thank you, deputy, and if you would like to introduce those at the table now that we have item 1.1: Decisions on Complaints Referred to the Ombudsman and Health Complaints Commissioner and Right to Information.

Mr BARNETT - That's right. Thank you very much, Chair. I'd like to welcome Dr Grant Davies, who is our Ombudsman, also Health Complaints Commissioner, the Custodial Inspector, the coordinator of the Official Visitors Program, the de facto Tasmanian information and privacy commissioner and Tasmania's National Preventive Mechanism, and if I'm correct, I think it's the second budget Estimates of Dr Davies.

Dr DAVIES - That's right.

Mr BARNETT - And also the Deputy Ombudsman, Natasha Freeman. I welcome Tasha Freeman to the table as well.

CHAIR - Thank you, and thank you, deputy.

My first question would be: in November 2025, the office indicated it was effectively at capacity and may require additional recurrent funding, and while the March 2026 RTI review recommended increased resourcing for both the Ombudsman and agencies, just what additional recurrent funding has been provided, and how will that funding improve timeliness and decision quality across the RTI complaints and oversight functions? In other words, is it enough; what can you actually do with it; and how much more would you like?

Mr BARNETT - I will pass -

CHAIR - Sorry, through you, deputy. Yes.

Mr BARNETT - Sorry, I'm sure you know that this is best answered by the Ombudsman himself. I will pass to Dr Davies.

CHAIR - Yes. Thank you, deputy.

Dr DAVIES - Through you, deputy. Since my appointment, I've been having a look at the efficiency and effectiveness of the office. I'm not in a position really to comment in relation to the adequacy of the funding in toto until I've had further work done in relation to efficiency and effectiveness of our processes and workloads.

CHAIR - Okay.

Mr BARNETT - Chair, in response as well, of course, the Ombudsman works with my Department of Justice, and the secretary's on my right, but there's ongoing discussions and considerations of requests and needs, and they work that through together, but of course, I won't say anything further other than to say they're operational matters that I know the secretary and Dr Davies work through.

CHAIR - Through you, deputy. The Ombudsman reported in 2024-25 that 86 per cent of RTI decisions reviewed were set aside or varied. I'm just wondering what specific action has been taken since then to improve the quality, legality and consistency of RTI decisions made by public authorities.

Mr BARNETT - We've actually done a lot as a government in terms of the RTI Uplift work through the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Of course, that'd be a relevant question tomorrow for DPAC, but they've led the charge in that regard. But I do know my secretary has been very involved in the excellent work of the government across very many agencies with respect to the RTI process in terms of the importance of openness and transparency, which we support. I might just pass to the secretary in terms of the reforms in that place and note that the government is very keen to progress those reforms.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy, through you. As you've noted, there is a great deal of work happening in terms of reform to the *Right to Information Act*, most recently initiated by the independent review of that act, which comes under the purview of DPAC, but also the relevant commission of inquiry recommendations, which the Department of Justice has had carriage of, which include a number of sub-recommendations as well.

We are providing advice to the deputy to inform consultation on legislative reform to progress recommendation 17.8 very soon, as well as supporting the Department of Premier and Cabinet around achieving the recommendations that the government supported coming out of the independent review of the right to information framework.

CHAIR - Thank you, and through you, deputy. The office reported worsening delays for people seeking their own information from DECYP, including child sexual abuse victim/survivors. What measures have been implemented since November 2025 to reduce

PUBLIC

those delays, and what are the current average processing times for own-information requests in that agency?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much, and I'll need to pass the details of the back half of your question to the secretary to answer that, but just a note that Dr Tim McCormack's report with Rick Snell was taken very seriously and responded to by the government, and I went through law school with both those gentlemen and have a very high regard for them. In terms of the specifics, I will pass to the secretary.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy, through you. I won't attempt to speak for the Department for Education, Children and Young People. The Department of Justice has responsibility for furnishing the right to information annual report each year. And I think what we note when we are collating the material from relevant agencies is that timeliness of responses can be impacted by a variety of factors, including volume, complexity, ongoing regulatory or legal proceedings and the need to consult with third parties. But as to the specifics of the delay that Dr Davies has outlined with respect to DECYP matters, it's not a matter that I would have any further insight to share.

CHAIR - No. Thank you.

Another question I would ask, with regard to the health complaints - and I noticed that last year in the 2024-25 annual report, that 35 complainants, 8 per cent of the total, that the prisoner phone line had 122. Just wondering if you can give me an update on the health complaints form or the health complaints line. Through you, deputy, what the figures might have been.

Mr BARNETT - No, thank you, Chair. I think it's best for Dr Davies to perhaps respond to that question.

CHAIR - Yes.

Dr DAVIES - Thank you. Through you, deputy. In terms of the health complaints data, the -

CHAIR - And I appreciate that you might not be able to compare it totally. I just wanted -

Dr DAVIES - So this is -

CHAIR - To date?

Dr DAVIES - Yes, it's as at 30 April, so we've still got a couple of months of the financial year to go.

CHAIR - Yes. No, that's fine. Just to give an indication.

Dr DAVIES - We've received 1204 approaches compared to 1399 the previous 2024-25 financial year. So, it would suggest to us that there will be an increase in our overall approaches, growth in demand. Most of those approaches are in relation to inquiries. So, around 84 per cent of our approaches are in relation to inquiries, not complaints. And of course, some of that is in

PUBLIC

relation to our work with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, where we're required to consult with them. Yes, so I'll leave it there.

CHAIR - I guess just through that, are you still receiving quite a large number from the prisons? Just wondering, through you, deputy, whether a large number are actually still coming through from prisoners, and if so, what the general complaint would be. Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - I'll just pass to Dr Davies. He might be able to assist the Chair.

Dr DAVIES - Thank you. I'll just get the information. So, in terms - I can give you a general comment.

CHAIR - Yes, it'd just be interesting. The numbers seem to be quite large previously.

Dr DAVIES - Okay. So, the Tasmania Prison Service accounted for 182 complaints so far this year.

CHAIR - So, that's increased.

Dr DAVIES - That's 33 and a quarter per cent of all ombudsman complaints. And we know that if you affect one human right, like liberty, other human rights are put under pressure. So, it's not unusual that we would see a large proportion of telephone calls from the prison service in relation to complaints.

CHAIR - So, through you, deputy, are you able to give an indication, are they because of overcrowding in cells, are they of lack of time out of cells? Are you able to give an indication of what the complaints might be?

Dr DAVIES - Through you, deputy. So, generally, we would see complaints about time out of cells. That is nothing new. And also complaints about access to medications that they were receiving in the community that aren't necessarily available in the prison.

CHAIR - Through you, deputy. So, how would that be addressed? If people are in prison and they need their medication, and if they're complaining that they're not receiving it, obviously that's a problem for that person. So, how is that addressed or why is that situation occurring? I know it's a bit of a difficult question for -

Mr BARNETT - It's probably a matter in the Corrections portfolio as well.

CHAIR - Yes, I know, it was just a little bit of a difficult question, but it was just -

Mr BARNETT - Ms Pamplin was here earlier, as the Director of Prisons, and of course our deputy director.

CHAIR - The complaint.

Mr BARNETT - But I think in terms of -

CHAIR - To the Health Complaints Commissioner.

PUBLIC

Mr BARNETT - The Health Complaints Commissioner, please.

Dr DAVIES - If I may, deputy.

CHAIR - What would you do about it?

Dr DAVIES - Through you. So, it's not a one-size-fits-all in terms of medications.

CHAIR - No.

Dr DAVIES - You can actually get perfectly acceptable substitute medications that are more appropriate for a custodial environment rather than the community.

CHAIR - Through you, deputy. So, it's not that they're not receiving their medication - not receiving the medication they don't want. And I appreciate, well, that might be for the prisons, but the complaint has gone to the Health Complaints Commissioner.

Dr DAVIES - Yes.

CHAIR - I'm just wondering what they actually do about that complaint when it's received, or how it's addressed. So, through you, deputy. Do you actually go to the prisons and check out whether that person is getting medication, whether they're getting substitute medication, whether they're not getting any medication? Because I think that's rather an important complaint because it can have a real impact on someone's health and wellbeing.

Dr DAVIES - Through you, deputy. So, of course, you hurdled my jurisdictions.

CHAIR - Yes, yes.

Dr DAVIES - We talk to each other, unsurprisingly, given that I hold all of those hats. So, we are able to look at those issues through my Official Visitor role and through my custodial inspection role. But the process we would take in terms of how we would resolve that complaint is we would send an enquiry to the SCMU, the Statewide Complaints Management Unit. We'd ask about responding to those concerns. We'd get that response, we'd make an assessment, and if we required further information, we would ask the prison service again for that information. We are able to investigate. We do that infrequently in a custodial inspection - custodial area. But generally, we are able to get appropriate responses and we actually check. The detainee can call us back and ask us how that's resolved. We can write to them and that is a confidential process.

CHAIR - So they usually are resolved?

Dr DAVIES - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you. Did you have a - go ahead. Yes, Mr Hiscutt.

Mr HISCUTT - Sorry.

CHAIR - No, that's right.

Mr HISCUTT - This is just an understanding question. Obviously a year in, but still very new to these sorts of things.

Part of the other revenue is fees received from energy entities to the Energy Ombudsman. As I understand it, I think last year was about \$900[,000], this year \$792[,000], and then expected in the forwards nearly a million up. Please give an explanation of what they are, what that looks like, that area. It's just something unknown to me, if I could. Through you, minister.

Dr DAVIES - Through you, deputy. It's an industry-funded scheme, so we charge industry bodies on a rated basis around how many complaints they receive. So, unsurprisingly, the larger organisations will get charged more. We have increased the funding in the forward Estimates because we've employed an engagement and investigation officer, which will enable us to do some outreach and community engagement work in the energy space because it's becoming increasingly complex.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. And so, this is the fee you charge to the energy entities to do that work?

Dr DAVIES - Correct. That's right.

Mr HISCUTT - And so, that's why you're expecting the income to be increased.

Dr DAVIES - That's right.

Mr HISCUTT - So, that'll reflect on the expenditures as well. Thank you for that.

CHAIR - Did you have any questions?

Ms WEBB - Thank you. Yes, I've got a couple of questions.

I'm interested in the funding for the TNPM - that comes in your space - and the degree to which we're funding this to meet statutory obligations. I note in the key deliverables there is some funding in 2026-27 and 2027-28 relating to the office of the National Preventive Mechanism, the TNPM; nothing in the out years.

So, can you talk me through that key deliverable, the extent to which it provides for us to meet statutory obligations in this area, and what, if any, impact is going to be that there's not additional funding there in the out years? Through you, deputy, if I might ask that question of the Ombudsman.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, I think, Dr Davies.

Ms WEBB - Yes.

Dr DAVIES - So, thanks, deputy. This is a matter of ongoing negotiation with the government in terms of the TNPM. What I can say is that the TNPM has commenced doing their work there. They've commenced the project. They're in the early stages of scoping out prevention of children receiving out-of-home care and experiencing restrictive practices in those settings.

Ms WEBB - Right.

Dr DAVIES - We're just scoping that out at the moment, and we've employed three additional staff in order to do that.

Ms WEBB - Is that the only sort of operational side of the role that's being planned at this point in time? Because obviously this is - TPM is responsible for scrutinising and going out and checking our OPCAT obligations across all places of detention. What else beyond the particular project you just described then - which I presume is a limited number of children in out-of-home care who might be subject to restrictive practices - what other areas are going to be covered?

Dr DAVIES - Through you, deputy. Because we have limited resourcing, we're taking a project-based approach to our role. We clearly can't do everything all at once. This is the first one that we're looking at. We will be looking at other aspects of places of detention like aged care, for example.

Ms WEBB - Disability services, perhaps.

Dr DAVIES - We would be working closely with the Disability Commissioner in relation to that. Of course, we have the custodial inspection function as well, which covers the other aspects of our OPCAT.

Ms WEBB - Somewhat aligned, but not entirely: may I ask to what extent - clearly we're not going to be OPCAT compliant. We can't make claims to that if we're not able to fully fund and then to the TPM role across more than just the limited scope that was described here. What would the funding be required to ensure that we could be OPCAT compliant in your view? Had you put in a budget bid that specified an amount you were looking for in that space?

Dr DAVIES - Through you, deputy. We're doing some work in terms of the overlap between the custodial inspection functions and the NPM functions in the office. We're just in the early stages of looking at that policy and workflow overlap. I'm not in a position to answer that question, particularly given that we've received the funding that we asked for this year in the NPM and custodial inspection space.

Ms WEBB - So, that's the \$155,000 in 2026-27? Is that what you requested and that's what you've received?

Dr DAVIES - That's correct.

Ms WEBB - Right. Thank you. Can I also ask, last Estimates we talked about there being a report that was being prepared for an inspection project that was undertaken, and it was undertaken as the senior adviser for the Association for the Prevention of Torture, Mr Ben Buckland, and it was going to be delivered in the first quarter of 2026. Is that inspection report completed and published?

Dr DAVIES - Through you, deputy. The short answer is 'no'. We were ambitious in terms of our capacity to deliver on that. We expect that it'll be in quarter 3 or 4 at the end of this year.

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Ms WEBB - Right. Some time this year?

Dr DAVIES - Yes.

Ms WEBB - Can I keep going?

CHAIR - Yes, that's fine.

Ms WEBB - Last year we also spoke about the updating of the RTI guidelines from your office and being a priority for the first half of 2026, so can you update us on progress made updating those guidelines, noting they're a very longstanding set of guidelines desperately in need of updating?

Dr DAVIES - Through you, deputy. We are in the process of starting that now, so it's very early stages at the moment. We would anticipate that those guidelines would be completed by the end of this year.

Ms WEBB - Okay. So, another project for delivery this year at some stage?

Dr DAVIES - That's right.

Ms WEBB - And then, in terms of the external review decisions around RTIs, which was a matter of a massive backlog there for the Ombudsman's office for quite some time, are we now at a business as usual sort of stage of things where we can say that there isn't a backlog, or are we still getting through the last parts of what we had known to be that massive backlog of recent years?

Dr DAVIES - Through you, deputy. We are getting through that. We're almost there. I think we've got three left of the 45 that was original.

Ms WEBB - Right.

Dr DAVIES - We would anticipate that that would be completed by sort of the middle of the second half of this year. But it's worth noting that we've had a 79 per cent increase in our external review requests this financial year up to April 30, so that's a substantial increase.

Ms WEBB - It is, isn't it? Can you give some indication potentially from the last full year, or maybe even this year to date, when you're undertaking those external reviews - particularly the contemporary one, the more contemporary ones, not the backlog? Are you finding that you are commonly finding fault with the original determinations or the internal review determinations and having to then indicate great more release than had been previous provided to that request and RTI request? Is it typical for you to overturn or to extend what was previously provided?

Dr DAVIES - Through you, deputy. I would not necessarily frame it in terms of fault. I think given that our expertise is in this area, we do sometimes vary our decisions or the decisions of departments and internal reviewers, I would say, and we do that more often than we don't. But in large part they're not substantial variations. They're extensions of the decision that's already been made.

Ms WEBB - There's still an indication, though, that the original determination wasn't made per the act. It was not to the extent that was under your more expert determination allowable to be made under the act, which concerns me. Perhaps the updated guidelines will help with accuracy.

I'm just wondering about the increased, then, number of external review decisions that you're seeing come through. Do you attribute that to anything in particular? Is it because across the board there's a higher number of RTI applications going into government agencies and those who need to respond, or is it not related to an uptick in overall RTI activity?

Dr DAVIES - Through you, deputy. I don't think you can attribute it to one particular issue. Certainly the number of AI-assisted applications have increased substantially.

Ms WEBB - Right.

Dr DAVIES - That creates a substantial resourcing issue for us, because as you could appreciate, they'll put a 20-page RTI application in, we'll make a decision or make a preliminary decision, and we'll get 10 minutes later a 20-page response to that which we have to go through.

Ms WEBB - And that's how you know it's an AI-assisted -

Dr DAVIES - Some of the language as well. We have instituted a process in terms of our complaints management to say, 'If you're using an AI tool to write your complaint, please indicate that, and please limit your complaints to three pages'. That has only just been implemented, so it may or may not be more or less effective. But certainly the -

Ms WEBB - How did you arrive on three? Just to pick up there, if you don't mind. How did you arrive on three pages? Because my office is very open about this. We put in RTI requests on a regular basis. I regularly, after following the act and going through internal reviews, put through external review requests. Almost always I get more back as a result of that request because I haven't been given the full amount that was requested in the first instance, to the extent that was required. Sometimes, though, for a complex matter, you need to make a case for an external review that may be more than two pages long. How did you arrive at that?

Dr DAVIES - Through you, deputy. I'm talking about complaints in general. Obviously RTIs are different.

Ms WEBB - Right. Right.

Dr DAVIES - But if someone's using an artificial intelligence tool to draft their complaint, they can ask it to make the complaint to be three pages.

Ms WEBB - Okay. So, you're restricting that to RTI-assisted complaints, not all complaints?

Dr DAVIES - No, complaints in general, not necessarily RTI complaints. We are seeing AI being used in the RTI space, but we are asking people to indicate that.

Ms WEBB - Interesting.

CHAIR - Thank you. You have one last question?

Ms WEBB - Yes. The key deliverable around resourcing of the Custodial Inspector that was the \$233,000 in 2026-27 for AYDC monitoring and the commission of inquiry recommendation matters, what will change with that? There's that provided in this financial year but then nothing in the forward Estimates. Does that mean that we'll be reducing some form of oversight around AYDC in relation to commission of inquiry recommendations as a result of that dropping away, or what will be the impact of that being funded just in this year?

Dr DAVIES - Through you, deputy. With the introduction of the Commission for Children and Young People, there'll be a process of discussion and consultation with them around what aspects of that role they are willing to or prepared to undertake. There's also, as I indicated, some review of the policy and workflow overlap between NPM and the custodial inspection space, so it's a bit early to indicate what the need will be in the outyears.

Ms WEBB - Certainly will be a conversation for next Estimates potentially, if there's nothing there. It's not a good time for us to drop away from oversight of AYDC, given where it is in its trajectory towards presumed closure. Thank you for that. Maybe this is for you, one last super quick one.

CHAIR - A very quick question, thank you, for the deputy.

Ms WEBB - Super quick. I've got two whole minutes. I'm just working off memory here.

I'm pretty sure one of the commission of inquiry recommendations pointed to the opportunity to extend the NPM function into the new Commission for Children and Young People and that they be allocated as an NPM function for our state as well as it sitting with the Ombudsman for the areas that the Commission for Children and Young People covers.

Are we looking to formally potentially do that, given what the Ombudsman has just talked about a discussion about the new Commission for Children and Young People potentially incorporating oversight functions at the Ombudsman's office, a custodial inspector function that NPM might already be doing?

Mr BARNETT - A couple of things first in response to that. Thanks for your full range of questions to Dr Davies and the importance of the newly established or to-be-established Commission for Children and Young People. It'll have a very substantial role, function, responsibilities. It will be well resourced and we take it very seriously, and I've mentioned earlier, Jo Palmer has a particular interest, as well as the other members of government.

I will ask the secretary to respond to the last part of your question, but I just want to make the point, in terms of the NPM, we've taken a proactive approach as a government, and we legislated on this, and I credit the former attorney-general. In the 2022-23 financial year, we put in \$425,000, and then under the 2023-24 Budget, Tasmanian NPM received a further resourcing of \$700,000 to continue the work, bringing the total contribution of the Tasmanian government to about \$1.15 million. Now, my advice is that represents the single largest financial contribution to date by any Australian government across this country in relation to OPCAT implementation. Just for the context of the committee, I think that's important.

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Ms WEBB - How many of the 12 recommendations from the NPM implementation reports of 2023 and 2024 have been implemented, Attorney-General?

Mr BARNETT - I can get back to you, and we'll need to take that -

CHAIR - You may need to take that on notice.

Mr BARNETT - I'm happy to take that on notice, but I just don't want it to be lost. Perhaps there's an impression with somebody listening or reading the *Hansard* that this hasn't been taken seriously. We have factored in with that funding support; and the back half of your question, I'll see if the secretary's got an answer to assist the committee.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. Not too much more to add. As Dr Davies has alluded to as well, the manner in which that particular COI recommendation is implemented is something that really needs to involve a discussion with the new Commission for Children and Young People.

CHAIR - Thank you, and thank you, deputy.

Ms WEBB - Appreciate that.

Mr BARNETT - That's all right.

CHAIR - If we could stop the broadcast, please, just to change over at the table.

The committee suspended from 3.31 p.m. to 3.32 p.m.

DIVISION 5

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions

Output Group 1.1

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions

CHAIR - Thank you, deputy. And if you would just like to introduce Mr Coates to the table.

Mr BARNETT - Yes, of course. I welcome Daryl Coates SC, Tasmania's Director of Public Prosecutions, to the table - someone who's very familiar to colleagues around this table and, I don't know, countless times has been to budget Estimates. So, this is another one of those. Thank you for your service and support for our justice system in Tasmania. And I'll pass back to the Chair and the committee.

CHAIR - Thank you. And I would pass to Ms Webb to open the questioning.

Ms WEBB - Thank you, Chair, and thanks for your time, Mr Coates. Through you, deputy. The thing I'm interested in is: last year we talked about the annual report of the office of the department of public prosecutions, which identified challenging criminal backlog and that there had been a 60 per cent increase in the last four years, which the annual report said

needed a multifaceted approach including increased funding to the office, also increased funding to defence counsel and Tas Legal Aid, and to the police disclosure office.

When we discussed it in Estimates, Attorney-General, you pointed out that the Justice Forum was a mechanism to discuss solutions for that within the department and within the stakeholders relevant. Mr Coates pointed out, to his suggestion, that he had brought, apparently, to that forum, which was around statutory discount for early pleas of guilty, and at the time, Attorney-General, you indicated the government was giving serious consideration to this option. So, I'm looking for an update on where that's up to, what serious consideration has been given, and have you arrived somewhere as a result of that serious consideration?

Mr BARNETT - Thanks very much for the question, I really appreciate that. And again, thank you to the members of the Justice Forum for their feedback on a whole range of areas in terms of reforms and in terms of discounts for early plea of guilty. That is something that we have and we are considering very carefully, and I'll have more to say in the not-too-distant future. Obviously, in terms of the Lloyd Babb SC review report and recommendations, which is due 30 June, there would be a very high expectation of consideration by Lloyd Babb of that.

So, I think there's a principle there that the government and the attorney is strongly progressing in terms of what you call 'flesh on the bones'; the details in and around it need to be carefully considered. So it's probably fair to say I'm waiting for further professional advice from Lloyd Babb SC, to be putting it pretty frankly with you, and to be confident that there will be progress and reform in this area brought to parliament in due course. And I'm most keen to progress, but we're waiting, as I say, for further advice and, of course, from my department as well and liaising with others. And, of course, we'll have ongoing discussions with the DPP and others on this very important reform.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. In relation to that backlog that we discussed, it's barely six months, really, since we discussed it, I think, at the last Estimates. Are we looking at a situation that's maintained at the same sort of level? Has it become worse? Is it improving in terms of efforts that are already being made towards that? Are there any comments that can be provided on that?

Mr BARNETT - I'm happy for the Director of Public Prosecutions to respond, unless the secretary wants to jump in with any big-picture numbers for the committee.

Ms BOURNE - Not at the moment, thanks, deputy.

Mr BARNETT - No. The DPP might want to help the committee.

Mr COATES - Well, as at 12 May, the total number of matters pending in our list was 790, as distinct from - I'll just try and find it - 846 of 1 July. So, it's gone down.

Ms WEBB - So, it's improved somewhat.

Mr COATES - Yes, it's improved somewhat. Yes.

Ms WEBB - And have there been particular factors that have contributed to that, do you think? Through you, deputy.

PUBLIC

Mr COATES - Well, it can go up and down by - obviously, we don't control the matters that come into the list. I've tightened the DPP guidelines to make matters be dealt with in the Magistrates Court more, where there's sufficient penalty there. So there's been a significant number of matters that either haven't reached us because we've increased the, say, the values -

CHAIR - The threshold.

Mr COATES - the threshold, or alternatively, if it has come to us, rather than just indict, we've sent back to the Magistrates Court to be dealt with summarily. I suppose the other thing we've looked at in the last 18 months is that, instead of when the files come in they just be allocated amongst our staff, before we do that, we get a senior person to look at it. They can much more confidently determine whether it should be a discharge or is it likely to be a plea of guilty. So, they'd be dealt with quicker.

Ms WEBB - Like a triage?

Mr COATES - Yes, triage. We found if we gave it to our less-experienced staff, then they would send it back to the police to be completed, where on some of these matters you can determine whether it's going to be a plea of guilty or it's going to be a discharge without having the police to complete it. So, we've tried to do that to make some efficiencies. Yes.

Ms WEBB - That sounds like a good idea. The other question I had related to, in the budget papers, some discussion about the decrease in appropriation, revenue and associated expenses from 2028-29, and it mentions that that reflects the conclusion of funding which had been a 2024-25 Budget initiative, which was to do with increased capacity to respond to commission of inquiry recommendations.

So, I guess my question around that is, given that that drops away in 2028-29, have you concluded having to devote resources into that area, will you be concluded by that stage, and will that have any other material impact other than not having to complete responsibilities that that had been funding previously?

Mr BARNETT - So, just quickly, I will pass to the DPP, obviously, to answer that question, but just to note that we in my department liaise on an ongoing basis with the DPP in terms of budget requests and resources required to do the job, including going forward. So, we look at that on an ongoing basis, including for future years. I think you're looking at 2028-29, so I just indicate that these matters will be addressed both now and then on the way to 2028.

Ms WEBB - Things might change between now and then.

Mr BARNETT - Yes, that's all.

Ms WEBB - I understand.

Mr BARNETT - Yes. Go ahead.

Mr COATES - Firstly, although we got an increase in funding for commission of inquiry, we had other funding taken away. So, it's about the same. I've always been very conservative with the budget, so I've taken a few more risks. For example, I used to - for example, we'd have part-time employees who are entitled to become full time. So, I'd always

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allow the budget for a full-time equivalent for that, but now I don't. I just fund them because, I think, at the level of staffing we have, although some part-time people will request more days or to become full time, other people who are full time will request to become part time. So, I've had some gains there. That's basically how we've been managing it.

Ms WEBB - We've trimmed some margins there. Thank you.

CHAIR - Mr Gaffney had a follow-up question.

Mr GAFFNEY - Thank you. To the numbers that you - I think there'll be people listening and going, 'Gosh, that's a lot'.

Mr COATES - Yes.

Mr GAFFNEY - So, in your time as the DPP, has it always been quite high or is that like the numbers? Do you know what I mean? So, has it always been, or does it fluctuate or - and your FTEs, I'm just interested to see the relationship between the cases still to be done and the number of staff you have to be able to do that.

Mr COATES - I don't think you can compare what we do now to, say, 10 years ago.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay.

Mr COATES - So, we do a lot more summary work now than we used to - so, regulatory work - and that is in part funded by MOUs with the department. So, that's taken into our FTE. So, for example, once we only had one person doing summary because the only summary work we would do is WorkSafe, but now we do it across the board. Secondly, we've got other responsibilities that we didn't have. So, we've got the high-risk offenders unit and we've also got unexplained wealth. And, of course, the number of committals has increased significantly, so I don't think you can - you can't compare our workload now to, say, 10 years ago.

Mr GAFFNEY - Years ago. Okay. Are you always being asked to take on more responsibilities and tasks with basically the same budget? I'm interesting in that relationship. Because, I mean, how does that end up?

Mr COATES - Through you, deputy, to be fair, some of the extra tasks over the years that we've been asked to take on - for example, the high-risk offenders - we've been given the funding for it.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay.

Mr COATES - But I think there are other decisions that are made which may not affect us directly, but, say, some - if there's a new funding initiative in the police, that could have a significant flow-on effect to us.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes. Flow-on effect, yes. Okay.

Mr COATES - And I'll give you an example: drugs. They used to be our easiest prosecutions, but the ones that we used to do, we don't do anymore. They're done in the Magistrates Court.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay.

Mr COATES - So, they're all very complex with financial records and telephone records, and so they become our most complicated - one of our most complicated prosecutions.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR - No, thank you.

Ms WEBB - Just a brief one, really, in relation to recruitment and retention and how that's sitting with your office at the moment. Are you in a situation where you have a full complement of staff? Have you got vacancy control measures in place? Is this an area that you need to be looking to make operational efficiencies in now and into the future?

Mr COATES - Through you, deputy. We do have a couple of vacancies at the moment, where we're about to advertise for a level 3 solicitor and a level 2 Crown counsel. Retention at the lower levels will always be an issue because prosecution is obviously a very stressful job, so people try it, some people love it, some people don't, so they go on, try elsewhere. At the higher levels we don't have many people leave. We're always obviously mindful before advertising that we've got the funding to do it.

CHAIR - And a follow-up question from Mr Gaffney?

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes. I'm interested, when you said level 3 and level 2, would you envisage that that position would go to somebody from Tasmania, or are we having people coming from the mainland looking at work down here? What's your experience in, say, the last three or four years?

Mr COATES - A bit of both. For example, we've had practitioners come from the Northern Territory DPP, although we seem to have swapped. One of ours has gone there. We've had people come from New South Wales, the ACT. Predominantly the people that come to our office are from locally.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay.

Mr COATES - But we do - and often some of the - not always, but often some of the people that come from interstate have been from Tasmania, and they've -

Mr GAFFNEY - Have returned.

Mr COATES - gone and they're wanting to return home.

Mr GAFFNEY - Thank you.

CHAIR - Through you, deputy. I noticed last year you were talking about two-day in-house conferences where you have inside, internal and outside speakers. Does that eat into your funding, or is that specific funding that you actually get to do that, or do you have to try to find that within the funding you get? And if so, you know, are you able to continue doing that? Because obviously it's very important to help particularly the junior.

PUBLIC

Mr COATES - Yes. It's within the funding that we've got, so, yes, we are continuing to do it. Often we have outside speakers in - we had one in -

CHAIR - Was it Kate Warner previously?

Mr COATES - Yes, we had Kate Warner previously. We've also had a Crown prosecutor from New South Wales come down to our last one to talk about section 97A of the *Evidence Act*, which is a new provision which they've for quite some time.

CHAIR - Okay.

Mr COATES - In addition to those conferences, we also have a monthly Friday afternoon -

CHAIR - Like a debrief or -

Mr COATES - Teams hookup where one person within the officer, my senior person in the office, will have a topic and discuss the rest of the office that topic.

CHAIR - Okay.

Mr COATES - Yes.

CHAIR - No, that's interesting. One other question I would just have with regarding the matters, the FTEs and how many you have - and I notice obviously in Launceston with my office being directly beneath currently the DPP office. So north-south, north-west -

Mr COATES - Yes.

CHAIR - How many staff or, I guess, solicitors or counsel - whatever you call them, how many would you have in each area?

Mr COATES - I've got in our Burnie office - we've got three in crime and one in child safety.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr COATES - In Launceston we've got one in child safety and - hang on, I'll do a count.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr COATES - About five which have advertised recently for level 1s across the state. I was hoping to get another one in Launceston, but we didn't get any for Launceston.

CHAIR - And in the south?

Mr COATES - There's much more in the south. I don't have a - I can give you a total figure, but -

PUBLIC

CHAIR - No, no, no.

Mr COATES - Of course, people in the south travel to Launceston and Burnie.

CHAIR - To other areas.

Mr COATES - Yes, and Burnie as well, yes.

CHAIR - So I notice - through you, deputy - that you're moving shortly, moving offices shortly, so that's due to occur. Obviously you need a bit more room.

Mr COATES - I think, yes, for beginning of July. We wanted to do - where we were, we wanted to do some renovations to create some more room, but they wouldn't give us a long-term lease, so we moved to where we -

CHAIR - I think that's a common issue in that building. No. Look, thank you very much. Do we have any other questions?

Mr HISCUTT - A quick one.

CHAIR - Mr Hiscutt.

Mr HISCUTT - I probably should've followed up a while ago. But with those 790 overdue cases, I was just wondering what the oldest case, or, you know, approximately how long some of those have been sitting there for.

Mr COATES - I don't have the figures for the actual oldest, but I can tell you there are - hang on, should be able to tell you.

Mr HISCUTT - That's all right.

Mr COATES - There is 395 matters over 12 months of those 790.

Mr HISCUTT - Okay.

Mr COATES - But of those 395 matters there are only 43 matters that we haven't filed an indictment or Crown papers for.

Mr HISCUTT - Okay.

Mr COATES - So they're just waiting for a time period. And I can say for the 790 matters, we've filed papers, so that's - we've filed papers in 484 of them. Some of those matters - and that's at 12 May. Some of those matters of those 790, we wouldn't have even received the committal papers for, so that's the best I can answer at the moment.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. Thank you. I appreciate that.

CHAIR - No, thank you. If we have no more questions, we'll give you an early minute because you've been so good at answering the questions. Thank you so much. We'll let you get back to your important work. Thank you very much, deputy.

Mr HISCUTT - Back to your case load.

CHAIR - And we'll stop the broadcast and come back at 4.15.

The Committee suspended from 3.51 p.m. to 4.15 p.m.

DIVISION 6

Department of Justice

CHAIR - If we could start the broadcast please. Thank you very much, deputy, for being back, and if you could introduce - so who's at the table now. We will start with WorkSafe Tasmania. So this is under, obviously, Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs.

Output Group 4.1

WorkSafe Tasmania

Mr BARNETT - Thanks very much, Chair. Thank you for the opportunity today, particularly with my hat on in terms of consumer affairs and, as you've correctly noted, WorkSafe Tasmania and then Consumer Building and Occupational Services. And at the table, of course I've got my secretary Kristy Bourne and the acting deputy secretary Robyn Pearce, and Liz Radcliff is also here, executive director of WorkSafe Tasmania, as is Brad Wagg, acting executive director of Consumer Building and Occupational Services.

So, we'll support the committee in any way we possibly can, but just to note that in terms of consumer affairs protecting consumers, supporting fair trading, strengthening building standards, helping ensure Tasmanians are safe at work. Budget continues, housing and consumer reforms including stronger renter protections, action against phoenixing and dodgy builders and \$6 million in support for consumers affected by construction company failures while a new home warranty insurance is implemented.

We're also progressing reforms for long term caravan park residents and undertaking a full review of the Residential Tenancy Act in 2026, and continuing to support practical work, health and safety regulations that protect workers while giving businesses the certainty they need to operate. Having said that, I'll pass back to you, Chair. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you, deputy. And Mr Hiscutt, if you could lead off the questioning please.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you. And we'll start with a stats question. How many businesses have been assessed in WorkSafe? Obviously how many businesses has - I'll start again. How many businesses have been assessed in the last year? And can you provide the number per region?

Mr BARNETT - When you say assessed -

Mr HISCUTT - As in have been - someone gone out to check whether they are complying?

PUBLIC

Mr BARNETT - Right. I'll just check if we've got those numbers or whether you'd like the executive director to come to the table.

Ms BOURNE - We've got the inspections.

Mr BARNETT - Inspections.

Mr HISCUTT - Inspections, sorry. Yes, that's probably the better word.

Mr BARNETT - We have got some answers there and - actually, before doing so, through you Chair, we've got a clarification from an earlier comment.

Mr BARNETT - I was wondering if we could clarify that as soon as possible, and then we'll come to the question if we could.

CHAIR - Thank you. Yes.

Ms PEARCE - Thank you. Through you, deputy. I just wanted to clarify, in relation to the information I provided on the source of funding for the volunteer fees under the working with vulnerable people checks, that funding is actually being provided by the Department of Premier and Cabinet to the Department of Justice, rather than from the retained revenues, which is what I indicated in my earlier response.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you. If we just go directly to the acting deputy secretary.

Ms PEARCE - Yes, thank you. Through you, deputy. From 1 July 2025 to 31 March 2026, there was 1565 workplace inspections conducted. The information in relation to a regional breakdown isn't available at this point in time.

Mr HISCUTT - Okay. Is that something that you could take on notice or is that easily available?

Mr BARNETT - No, we're happy to take that on notice and get back to the committee.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you. I'm just wondering what the turnover rate for staff at WorkSafe Tas is, including inspectors.

Mr BARNETT - Thanks for the question. It's a detailed operational matter, so I'll just check if the acting deputy secretary is able to assist.

Ms PEARCE - In relation to inspectors, the turnover rate was 14 per cent for the last financial year. That's just the inspector workforce. I don't have a turnover rate figure for the whole WorkSafe staff.

Mr HISCUTT - That's okay. Yes, that's good to know. And do you know if there's any interesting data or trends with respect to serious injuries that are worth taking note of in that space?

PUBLIC

Mr BARNETT - Yes. Perhaps, Ms Radcliff, our executive director, could assist the honourable member. If executive director could come to the table, Liz, and welcome to the table. I think Liz's first budget Estimates. In terms of a question around trends - maybe you could repeat the question.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes, the question was: is there any interesting data or trends with respect to serious injuries in your inspections and outcomes?

Ms RADCLIFF - Through you, deputy. Thanks for the question. Can I just ask a clarifier. When you talk about serious injuries, are you talking about injuries that result in workers' compensation claims, time off work or claims from a particular industry?

Mr HISCUTT - No, just in general terms, I guess is what - has there been anything throughout the year that you said - or that's a change I - wasn't what I expected to be there or anything like that. So it wasn't particularly - though if you've got a follow up, Mike, to clarify.

Ms WEBB - Use the definition that you use here in performance information. Rates of serious injury. There must be a definition there for serious - because they're looking for a definition of serious injury, I think, was the clarifying question.

Ms RADCLIFF - Yes.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - So through you, Chair.

Mr HISCUTT - Happy to have it as that, or lesser injuries as well, I guess, is what I'm sort of saying.

Ms RADCLIFF - Yes. So we're not seeing any changes in patterns or any themes that are happening in terms of serious injuries.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes, that's what I'm looking for.

Ms RADCLIFF - We are still seeing a number of serious injuries occur, which is saddening. But we know no particular themes that we've seen in the last 12 months.

Mr HISCUTT - Good to know. Thank you. Just sometimes year-on-year, all of a sudden you see a few extra of these things occurring. I just wanted to know what to look for in the future. That's sort of what the question was. Come back if anyone else has got - - -

CHAIR - No, no, that's fine. I might just ask a question. With regard to recalls, and you might recall last year that we actually had recalls to do with contaminated sand - children's sand. Have there been any particular recalls this year along similar lines? And just wondering, because I remember how difficult that was, having to take it out of schools and asbestos.

Mr BARNETT - Yes. So maybe before I pass to the secretary or deputy or executive director, just, you know, it was a really big issue.

CHAIR - Yes.

PUBLIC

Mr BARNETT - This time last year we were going through that, weren't we, at the last Estimates.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - And we actually had a ministerial council meeting in Canberra. It was very focused on that right around Australia. Every jurisdiction was doing something a little bit different, and that, frankly, made it a little challenging. If there was more of a consistent approach across Australia, where we had advice and guidelines from the federal government - - -

CHAIR - So have we learned something from that? Has anything changed that we would have a more consistent approach?

Mr BARNETT - I think we have, because we've had a ministerial council meeting. But I think the deputy secretary or acting deputy secretary might speak to it, or Ms Radcliff, in terms of the learnings from that.

CHAIR - No. Thank you. Yes.

Ms PEARCE - Yes, thank you. Through you, deputy. Certainly these matters get dealt with through multiple levels of government. So, there's a consumer network conversation, there's - in the work health and safety space - through Safe Work Australia, there's management of asbestos imports. That also happens from the work health and safety regulators on how they go about managing, and that information all gets shared to look at how can we actually improve the way in which we go about that.

So, there's cross government discussions that look at improved sharing of information. It's always a bit of a challenge because every jurisdiction is going to handle these things slightly differently and assess and monitor the risk, but there's very, very strong cross jurisdictional relationships to be able to work through those matters.

CHAIR - So, was there anything in particular this last financial year along similar lines that came to notice of WorkSafe?

Ms PEARCE - So, the only other particular matter that came up was some asbestos in wind turbine brake pads at a wind farm that was identified, and in that particular matter there was a notification that occurred. It wasn't identified as being any broader than that particular instance, and the removal works were undertaken.

CHAIR - Right. No. Thank you very much.

Ms WEBB - I'm just looking at the explanations in the budget paper around - well, now I've just lost my spot - around the variations. It talks about safe farming, or a key deliverable from the 2024-25 budget that seems to drop away in the out years here, and I'm just wondering if that project was completed and what it delivered. Here we are.

So, the variation in appropriation of revenue and expenses for WorkSafe Tasmania output from 2027-28 onwards reflects the profile of the 2024-25 key deliverable, Safe Farming

Tasmania, and also operational efficiencies. But in terms of the Safe Farming Tasmania project. Presumably, that was time limited. Forgotten now how many years it went over, but it's concluding by 27-28. What are we expecting that to have delivered and is it warranted to continue to be funded past that date.

Mr BARNETT - Yes. Thanks very much for that. I can speak to that and to say that the Safe Farming effort so far has been absolutely fantastic. It's part of our 2030 strong plan backing our agricultural sector, \$300,000. The Safe Farming program's a joint initiative between WorkSafe Tasmania and the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment. It was modelled on the WorkSafe Tasmania's Work Health and Safety advisory service. It's part of the agriculture sector. I've had a lot of contact with them over the years, including when I was minister for primary industries and water for a number of years.

I thank Phil and Stuey for the leadership they've provided to both the Safe Farming Tasmania for all those years. The government's worked closely with the farmers, Tas Farming and farming bodies to do everything we can to ensure farmers and people working in agriculture are safe at work. The Safe Farming Tasmania program was developed in consultation with industry and is supported by an industry-led stakeholder reference group. Its members are strong advocates for the rural community and I thank them for their efforts.

And the Safe Farming reference group has requested a change to the delivery model of the Safe Farming program, and so we're working with them to deliver the best possible model. I don't know if the acting deputy secretary can speak to the model going forward, which is backed in by our government very strongly.

Ms PEARCE - Thank you. Through you, deputy. The Safe Farming program is going to continue. What is going to happen is that the Workcover Tasmania board is going to be taking over the governance and funding of that program from this point on. It will be moving to a model where the delivery of that is by an external provider, which we will be going to a procurement process in order to get an appropriate provider who can then be able to deliver that through a governance program monitored by the Workcover Tasmania board but informed still by a reference group, which will have industry representation on it.

Ms WEBB - And what funding will need to be attached, then, to the that once it transfers to the Workcover Tasmania board for governance and funding?

Ms PEARCE - So it - sorry, through you.

Mr BARNETT - No. You continue one, but we've got the chair of the WorkCover board sitting on my right, which is my secretary, and we're very pleased to say that WorkCover board is funding that support. But I think, Robyn, you might want to just finish what you were saying about the program.

Ms PEARCE - Thank you. Through you, deputy. So, funding of \$400,000 per annum has been allocated for that.

Ms WEBB - And so where then will that come from the budget going forward? Or how do we see that represented?

PUBLIC

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. Through you. That won't be represented in the Budget. It will be, as it's moving forward it'll be a WorkCover funded program. That's something that will come out of the budget of the WorkCover board, which is separate to the budget process but will be reflected in terms of the board's annual reports and the like. And -

Ms WEBB - Just forgive me for my ignorance, where does the WorkCover board's money come from then, if not from the state government? Is that derived from a different source? Sorry for my ignorance on it. I'm just trying to understand.

Mr BARNETT - No. That's a very good question.

Ms BOURNE - Not at all. Ordinarily, or I should say, the majority is from the premiums that it sets across the entire Tasmanian workers compensation scheme. So, not just State Service but private employee, employers.

Ms WEBB - Are there other projects like this then, that we fund out of the WorkCover board that you could just alert me to. Something similar that's been put into that space to be funded for governance purposes?

Ms BOURNE - Thanks, deputy. There are a range of projects that the board champions, but of course funds. A number of those are undertaken in consultation with stakeholders, and some of those services are provided similar to the way in which Robyn's talked about Safe Farming being provided through an external party. One of those, for example, is the support or services that are currently provided by Worker Assist Tasmania, which is a longstanding partner of the WorkCover board, providing free and independent advice about workers compensation.

There's also the One Safe Tasmania program that provides support for smaller medium enterprises that the board funds, as well as the WorkSafe helpline, which is, I guess, the first port of call for an individual, whether it be an employee, employer to call to seek advice. There's a range of other projects that look at psychosocial harm, the importance of providing support to families following a workplace injury or death.

Ms WEBB - But those are all not sector specific, they're more broad base.

Ms BOURNE - That's right.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

CHAIR - I have Mr Hiscutt has a follow-up question.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. Follow on those, you'll take advice. To Ms Webb's question, there's a reduction of 700,000 in WorkSafe between 26-27, 27-28, which is accounted for by what's been stated. However, the expenses for the WorkCover Board Tasmania doesn't reflect that increase. If it's been shifted from one to the other, why would we not see it in the expenses output for that?

Ms WEBB - It was about 400,00, I think, was said.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. The 700 total. Some of that operational efficiencies, but - yes.

Ms WEBB - Yes.

CHAIR - Mr Wailes?

Mr BARNETT - Gavin, please. Gavin Wailes.

MR WAILES - Through you, deputy. It's my understanding that while the WorkCover board haven't - they haven't officially approve the expenditure within their budget yet, because their budget hasn't actually been set for next year or future years. While the funding currently sits in appropriation for next year, the WorkCover board expenditure shows up on page 139 in the administered expenses part of our budget chapter, and their revenue is in the preceding table as well. So from next year we'd expect to see once - should the board approve it, we'd expect to see an uplift of around 400,000 for that particular project.

Although, we probably wouldn't have any narrative in here specifically for it, because that would be a WorkCover board decision. We'll obviously have that information.

Ms WEBB - But if we asked you a question about it you'd be able to tell us, presumably, next year.

MR WAILES - Yes. We would.

Ms WEBB - Let's see if we can manage that.

MR WAILES - Yes.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you for that answer.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

CHAIR - Do you have any further questions on this area?

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you for the question one. I just wondered, they have in budget paper 4, the performance information for WorkSafe has the workers compensation premiums as a percentage of wages, about 2.21, 23-24, and 2.3, which is within what the estimated target would be, which is good. I'm just wondering if there's a breakdown of those for psychosocial versus musculoskeletal as a percentage? Did that question make sense?

Mr BARNETT - Yes. I think you're homing in on the importance of the increasing psychosocial claims and payments over time, and that's been rising significantly in recent years, which you've sort of hinted at or noted at, alluded to. We'll just see if we can assist the honourable member. The treasurer has made comments in the Budget, as you know, in terms of the importance of this going forward and in terms of sustainability and providing support for our workers, and making sure that's sustainable. I'll just see if the secretary or the team can assist.

Ms PEARCE - Thank you. Through you, deputy. I would say that that's unlikely, can enquire further. But the reason I say it's unlikely is that premiums are collected from employers within an industry, so the breakdown of premiums will be an industry-based breakdown on

which industries did the premium come from, rather than what the injury or potential injury profile would look like.

Mr HISCUTT - Okay. Is there anything, I guess, WorkSafe can provide as what they've seen in that space through -

Ms PEARCE - Through, deputy. In terms of industry profile of psychosocial harm?

Mr HISCUTT - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - To assist the honourable member, in terms of the psychosocial harm compared to physical harm, surely you've got that at your fingertips.

Ms PEARCE - Yes. We do.

Mr BARNETT - You might be able to assist the honourable member to put that on the record so that we know there is a significant increase in psychosocial harm over past years and to the day and going forward. Not sure if those numbers are before you, otherwise we can take it on notice and get back to the honourable member.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes. That would be very useful. Thank you, deputy.

Ms PEARCE - Just a moment. Sorry. You have it.

Mr BARNETT - I can tell you that the - let me summarise in terms of psychosocial injury claims have grown across both private and public sectors in Tasmania over the past decade. In a recent review by the fund actuary, psychological claims as a proportion of total fund workers' compensation claims have grown from 11.8 per cent to 28.8 per cent in the last decade.

But let's take on notice and get back to the committee with some of those figures that I think the honourable member's looking for, because I think it's a really important question and the committee deserves those answers.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - All right.

CHAIR - Thank you, deputy. Did we have any further questions?

Output Group 4.3 (b)

Consumer, Building and Occupational Services (b)

CHAIR - If not, if we could move to 4.3, Consumer, Building and Occupational Services. And Mr Hiscutt.

Mr HISCUTT - Right. Where shall we start? Last year we spoke about the difficulty in interpreting legislation, so there was mixed views from the regulator, the permit authorities, building surveyors and licensed practitioners. And a statement was made, 'It's a very detailed, technical area with lots of pieces of technical information, so one of the challenges that we're

setting ourselves at the moment is trying to work out how we can detangle it and make it simpler and easier for people to understand and navigate'. I just would like to ask, has any progress been made in this area in the last six months?

Ms PEARCE - Yes. Through you, deputy. Yes, there certainly has. CBOS has been going through a fairly substantial regulatory review program, and one of the areas of priority that we have identified is that need to simplify and make more accessible the information that will help people to be able to apply the legislation and regulations.

A particular area of focus is our determinations, because the determinations issued by the various statutory heads are quite complex. We are just in the process of looking to engage a person on a project basis to lead that part of reviewing the determinations to look at how we can simplify them.

And just as a matter of course, we've reviewed the way that we write to licence-holders in the event that a licence is being rejected in order to simplify that language and provide better explanations, as well, of the reasons for the decision so that people are better informed, and are highlighting through the process of going through and reviewing everything that we do, where are those opportunities to make improvements so that once we then start looking at reviewing and building the new systems we can look to build that into the way that we do work into the future. So we've been in the discovery phase, if you like.

Mr HISCUTT - Yes.

Ms PEARCE - And we're now just starting to launch into implementing some of those initiatives and the things that we've identified.

Mr HISCUTT - Have you received feedback yet from any stakeholders in relation to that? You said you've sent out more simple messages. Have you received feedback from people who receive those messages? Through you.

Ms PEARCE - Through you, deputy. Not directly in relation to the letters, but certainly in relation to our engagement with key industry stakeholders when we're engaging with them about the work that we're doing, the changes that we're looking at making. There's a lot of support for that, and we're holding regular forums with different stakeholder groups or individuals, depending upon what the issue is, to get their involvement in the design of it, as they have much better insight from their engagement with their members about where some of the sticking points are. And we'll continue to have those as just a fundamental part of the way in which we undertake the work into the future.

Mr HISCUTT - All right. Thank you. Again in the performance information, as the consumer complaints resolved within 60 days are sitting around 82 to 80 per cent over the last couple of years with the target of 90, I just wanted to know what the organisation was doing to try to get to the target in that.

Mr BARNETT - Thanks for the question. Yes.

Ms PEARCE - Yes. Through you, deputy. Continues to be a challenge to work our way through these, because the matters are usually quite complex. The review program that we are working on is aimed at looking to improve our efficiency and both how we go about doing it,

PUBLIC

making sure that we've got good clarity about how to apply the legislation and the requirements, make sure that the clarity of our response is there. That will then help to answer a question once rather than things that can sometimes come back to us on multiple occasions.

Mr HISCUTT - All right. Thank you. Just jumping to a different area - and I think this is the right area for it - regarding Rental Deposit Authority. What is the total amount of funds held by the Rental Deposit Authority at the most recent date you can provide?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the question. We'll see if we can assist the honourable member and the committee. This is a question that comes up reasonably consistently, and we'll see if we've got the answers for the honourable member.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you.

Ms PEARCE - Through you, deputy. The value of the bonds currently held by the Rental Deposit Authority as at 22 May was 76.8 million, and that's for 41,190 bonds.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you. And can I ask how much interest is earned off those rental deposit bonds? Do we have that information?

Ms PEARCE - We should have. Yes. Through you, deputy. I have a figure at 31 March, and the interest earned on the bonds at 31 March was \$1,987,249.

Mr HISCUTT - No worries.

Ms WEBB - In the current financial year so far?

Ms PEARCE - Yes.

Ms WEBB - To date? Yes.

Ms PEARCE - Yes, that's right.

Ms WEBB - To that date, yes.

Ms PEARCE - Yes. Thank you.

Mr HISCUTT - And can you outline the legislative basis governing how these funds can be used?

Ms PEARCE - Through you, deputy. Yes, I can. I'd have to go to the specific section of the Act, but the Act provides that the Rental Deposit Authority is only able to use those funds for the purpose of the Act.

Mr HISCUTT - Thank you. If the others have some other questions, I'll come back to -

Ms WEBB - Sure. Just a quick question on the area of retirement villages. Retirement village residents face complex contracts, ongoing fees and limited bargaining power, typically. Protections need to remain fit for purpose as more Tasmanians age into these housing models. I'm wondering about - will the government review retirement village laws to ensure protections

remain contemporary and effective for older residents, and will any review include, say, the current charges, the exit fees, the contract transparency, dispute resolution, et cetera, that is involved in those arrangements?

Mr BARNETT - Yes. Thanks very much for the question. It is an important area, and in terms of retirement villages, we have had some communication in my office with the Retirement Villages Association that represents those. It's obviously relevant to the Retirement Villages Act as well as the national Australian Consumer Law, the types of fees and charges that residents are liable to pay, including the recurrent charges and special levies.

CBOS has identified 84 potential organisations that currently operate in Tasmania as a retirement village, so that's probably useful background. In terms of the rest of the question, I think I'll need to pass to the secretary or the deputy secretary.

Ms WEBB - Essentially, are we going to be reviewing the laws around that and the protections and things around it?

Ms PEARCE - Through you, deputy. There were some amendments made to the act in 2023, as well as the regulations were recently remade with some changes made to the regulations. CBOS has been undertaking a proactive audit of retirement villages and are still in the process of compiling their report on the outcome from those audits. And those audits will certainly inform what are we seeing on the ground, and whether or not there are particular matters that indicate that there should be some advice to government about whether there should be any changes.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. If I could ask you a question, deputy, and I did mention this earlier, and this is the area, obviously, that falls under, which was the *Retail Leases Act 2022*.

Mr BARNETT - Yes.

CHAIR - And just noticing, there are quite a few really important areas in this Act. Rights and duties before retail leases entered into, administration of act, application of act, security deposits, entering into retail leases, outgoings, rent, alterations, refurbishment, relocations, a lot of it relates to tenants. And I think the concerning - or what concerns me - is that there are only two sections of that act that have actually been proclaimed. So the majority - I think it's section 1 and section 88, have been proclaimed.

So, are you able to advise when it's likely to be proclaimed? Because, as you'll appreciate, I believe it's relevant to upcoming legislation as well, to amendments that may be made, but it's also relevant to many of the issues contained herein. And I'm not sure about other members, but often I think you just assume that when something receives royal assent, you don't necessarily understand or even consider that proclamation day might be a different date. So it's just 2022. A lot of the areas - and I was looking at my second reading speech to say that if some things were within five years, well, we're not far from that. It hasn't been proclaimed yet.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much, Chair. And I think you've made some good points in your second reading speech and again today, and we've agreed to take on notice the earlier question you put.

CHAIR - The amount that they're up.

Mr BARNETT - Yes.

CHAIR - I'm just wondering with regard to this particular one that comes under CBOS.

Mr BARNETT - That's right. And if I could respond.

CHAIR - Yes. Absolutely.

Mr BARNETT - So when the debate occurred in the Parliament, there were significant issues raised about the potential operation of the act, and the likelihood of significant amendments will need to be made to the act to rectify legitimate problems identified during debate. What we do know is that the act will modernise Tasmania's regulatory framework for retail tenancies and bring our laws more closely into line with other jurisdictions.

It will replace the Fair Trading (Code of Practice for Retail Tenancies) Regulations. It's important that our government gets the implementation of the Retail Leases Act right. And the retail industry is one of the largest economic sectors in Tasmania. It's one of the largest areas of employment in the state. So in line with the commitments previously given during debate on that legislation -

CHAIR - In 2022, with respect.

Mr BARNETT - Correct. Yes, that's right. Stakeholders are being consulted on further proposed amendments, including in drafting of regulations and supporting documents. And I am advised that that consultation is taking place currently and going forward. And we're certainly committed to ensuring the views of the stakeholders are heard. Having said that, I will check if there's any further update from the deputy secretary on that matter.

Ms PEARCE - Through you, deputy. There has been some substantial consultation that's happened with a range of stakeholders, including Shopping Centre Council Australia, Australian Retailers Association, Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman, Australian Property Institute, Property Council of Australia, Restaurant & Catering Australia, as well as with the Law Society and TASCAT, in order to understand some of their issues and concerns with the way in which the legislation was proposed to operate.

There's been some further discussions with the Shopping Centre Council of Australia earlier this year, and as a result of that, some advice has been provided to government for consideration on potential amendments, in order to ensure that the Retail Leases Act can operate as desired and intended once it's passed - once, hopefully, amendments proclaimed - yes.

CHAIR - It was passed. This is the thing, it actually was passed. And there were 31 amendments - my understanding - in the lower house.

Ms PEARCE - Yes.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - So just to get a real understanding. So we've got an act that's not proclaimed, so it's not operational, but we can amend it, so it will come back to the parliament to be amended, even though it's never been proclaimed. Because I know that I've got amendments for the particular bill that's coming up which really are a waste - well, they won't be in effect until the bill comes into effect. So I can make amendments, which looks like I'm making amendments, but they won't actually be relevant until the bill is proclaimed.

Ms PEARCE - Yes. Through you, deputy. When the bill was last before parliament -

CHAIR - In 2022.

Ms PEARCE - the number of matters that were raised were extensive in terms of concerns with how it might operate, which is the reason why the commitment was given not to proclaim it, and instead to go back and consult about what further amendments needed to occur so that the concerns that were being raised by stakeholders could be addressed.

CHAIR - With respect, where was the commitment made? Because I don't recall it being made in our house. Maybe it was, but I might have missed it. I don't know whether other members can recall.

Mr HISCUTT - I wasn't there.

CHAIR - I don't remember anyone actually mentioning that it wasn't going to be proclaimed when we passed it, so that received royal assent. That's all. It's just interesting, deputy.

Mr BARNETT - That's a good question. I don't know all the answers on that. What I can commit to you today is to work with you. You put forward particular amendment -

CHAIR - I have amendments being drafted at the moment.

Mr BARNETT - That's right. And my commitment would be to work with you, and indeed, any other members of parliament that have a special interest in this particular legislation, who want to bring forward their amendments, their ideas for improvements to the legislation and how we do it.

So frankly, it's disappointing, and that's probably putting it mildly from my point of view, in terms of expectations of standards for which I would expect of legislation going through the parliament. So I think you've raised some really good points. I'd like to commit to work with you, and indeed, anybody else who's keen to progress this legislation, to get it to a standard that we can all be satisfied with.

CHAIR - And I am interested, as I mentioned earlier, as to how many other acts are sitting unproclaimed that we assume.

Mr BARNETT - Yes, and we've agreed to take that on notice.

CHAIR - We have got a question on notice with regard to that.

Mr BARNETT - That's right.

CHAIR - No. Thank you, deputy.

Mr BARNETT - Yes.

CHAIR - Did you have a question, Mr Gaffney?

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes, I have a question here on behalf of COTA, and it's to do with, similar to the retirement villages, but the residential part. So, we know we've got that legislation in front of us and some of us have spoken to that. And I've been very impressed with both the response from the government and CBOS about some of the issues I've raised. But one of the concerns from COTA is older, long term residents in caravan and residential parks may have limited housing alternatives and need clear, enforceable protections.

So, their concern is, what interim protections are available for residents facing rent increases, eviction, park closure, sale of land or changes to park rules before new legislation commences. So, they have some concerns about the new legislation coming in. What protections might they have between that and it being - receiving royal assent or being proclaimed? So they've got some concerns about their security of tenure and whatever. So, I'm just wondering whether there's a comment or you can provide some information.

Mr BARNETT - First of all, I would like to comment, and thank you for your observations, and note the legislation's before the legislative council. So, I don't want to go there, but I put a lot of time and effort into this. I thank my department and CBOS for all the work that's been done, but particularly the residents. I particularly visited the Beauty Point caravan park association. Shirley and the team done an incredible job advocating for the community, and it's my commitment to progress this bill as soon as possible. It's obviously in the upper house.

I do know other members of Parliament have a similar view, including Cecily Rosol, member for Bass - Greens member for Bass. But I want to work with all members of parliament to progress this as soon as possible to protect the interests of long term residents, and of course, getting a balanced approach with those that own those caravan parks. So, we're wanting to progress this, get on with the job and implement as soon as possible. I'm not sure I can say too much more than that.

Having said that, the current law does apply. I might ask the deputy secretary, in terms of the law that currently applies, in terms of the protections under the current law, that this will be absolutely an improvement because other jurisdictions have these sort of laws and codes of practice in terms of model rules that you made reference to in your question. Once all that's passed and implemented, those model rules and the law will be in place, but until then we have to go with what we've got. And I just passed to the deputy if you want to add to that answer.

Ms PEARCE - Thank you, deputy, through you. It's really going to depend upon what the issue is as to what part of law may or may not apply. Consumer law may apply if there's false misleading conduct, but it's going to depend upon just what's occurred as to what protections might actually be in place.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes. I suppose I'm raising this on behalf of the Council on the Ageing, is that they've got some concerns that once some amendments are made, and I think everyone's

supportive of that, from what I've - from old conversations - from the time that it's passed in the chamber, in parliament, and by the time it gets royal assent, is there are residents in caravan parks afforded protection? Because there could be a caravan park owner might say, 'Oh hang on, I better do something here because this is going to happen in 18 months' time or 12 months' time or 6 months' time' or whatever. And it's a case-by-case sort of consumer law. Is that what you're saying?

Ms PEARCE - Yes. Through you, deputy. Yes. It's really relying on existing contract law at this point in time and the contract law will prevail until such time as the new legislation takes effect.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. That's good. That's an answer for the COTA group.

Ms PEARCE - Thank you.

Mr GAFFNEY - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. And if we could now go on, deputy, to 1.3 Trade, and Mr Gaffney.

Mr BARNETT - Right.

Mr GAFFNEY - Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - All right. I might just say thank you to the team at the table, the Justice team, secretary, deputy secretary and all the others from the justice department.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much indeed. And having said that, look forward to welcoming the Trade Tasmania team and the Department of State Growth and thank them for their work as they come to the table.

CHAIR - We might just stop the broadcast, just while we're changing.

The committee suspended from 4.57 p.m. to 4.59 p.m.

DIVISION 11

Department of State Growth

Output Group 1.3

Trade

CHAIR - Thank you, deputy, and if you'd like to introduce your team at the table.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you. I will, absolutely. I'd like to introduce the acting secretary of Department of State Growth, Shane Gregory, on my right, and on my left, Michael Mogridge, deputy secretary, Economic Development, and on Mike's left, Cam Shields, who's the head of Trade Tasmania for the department.

Having said that, in short, small business backbone of our economy, trade incredibly important. We're increasing in terms of our exports and really pleased with the work of Trade Tasmania in particular on the back of a very successful Singapore and Indonesia trade mission. I'll pause there. We don't have a lot of time, but really appreciate the opportunity to promote this very important part of government's agenda.

CHAIR - Thank you, deputy. And Mr Gaffney has some questions.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes. Just a few. The government is reducing the revenue by appropriating its output from 14 to \$4.4 million over the forward Estimate. How does the government anticipate the reduction of revenues by appropriation through operational efficiencies will impact the business economy and Tasmanian productivity, particularly through our important export economy?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much for the question, and to indicate our strong support for trade and Trade Tasmania. Our exports are growing. We're backing it in a whole range of ways. I will pass to the deputy secretary, Mike Mogridge, to help respond to that question.

Mr MOGRIDGE - Through you, deputy. Just looking across the forward Estimates, what has been baked in is - part of the forward Estimates includes a trade strategy for the next two years that's going to be allocating about \$2.5 million per annum.

In relation to that, I think the government is taking a fiscally-sensible approach at this juncture to have a look at the outcomes in relation to the trade strategy. The government's just released the Trade Strategy 2030 and subject to ongoing engagement in relation to the outcomes of that, it will inform further investment in relation to the trade strategy program.

I think the other thing just to turn our minds to in relation to the forward Estimates for trade is that there are operational savings that the agency has provisionally allocated and we need to work through as part of the machinery of government changes our ongoing understanding of the functional alignment of the different outputs that currently exist in State Growth. And I think that's a process that we're about to step through over the next, say, six months. And that'll drive an understanding of the sorts of efficiencies and also the sorts of service delivery that we can then look to when we're joining the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes. And don't get me wrong, I understand and I'm not against what's happening, but it seems, though, for the last so many years, State Growth have worked really hard in the international markets trying to put Tasmania out there - blah, blah, blah. And by 2030, our ambition of 15 billion. 'We have the ambition of \$15 billion in annual exports by 2050 as part of our Tasmanian strategy.' That's two and a half times our current. And so now the group that was focused with being the economic catalyst for international markets has seemed to be subsumed and evolved somewhere else, and we've got something else happening. So, what impact will that decision have that potentially 2050 Budget line figure?

Mr BARNETT - Well, just quickly, the 15 billion by 2050 hasn't changed. That's an ambition that we have. We're very ambitious in terms of our exports. Exports means jobs. We are growing it faster than the national average in terms of exports of goods and services.

The 5.5 million is a commitment over two years. It's for our new Tasmanian trade strategy and of course, the action plan that sits under that will review support for our exporters and the trade strategy going forward in future years. But in terms of the next couple of years, as the deputy secretary's outlined, it's very strong.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes. Is there a risk here, though, that small businesses in Tasmania need, government - need, save for a better word - the State Growth to actually get out there and develop those markets and whatever. And the momentum's there across the world. And yet the concern, I think that came from the - there was a business growth strategy was released as a draft for feedback earlier this year and noting that many small business export Tasmanian products are less equipped to enter global markets.

So, there is a fear within that sector that the current momentum might be held back, might slow down and they all suffer. So what assurances or how do you measure the impact of where you're changing the format now in real estate growth and putting something else in?

Mr BARNETT - All the feedback I'm getting from stakeholders and businesses and exporters is strong engagement. We've had lots of stakeholder engagement in the development of the trade strategy. It was very comprehensive across Tasmania. We've now tabled that and it's out there in the public arena. In fact, I've got a copy of it here, Tasmanian Trade Strategy 2030.

We're very pleased and proud of that. Thank all those that had input. We have, in fact, got a total investment in trade - it's more than 30 million over the Budget and forward Estimates ensuring our economy remains strong and resilient and grows. So, we're backing that in, and the feedback I'm getting is very positive, particularly our recent trade mission. We've delivered results already in terms of 4 tonne of exported lamb from TQM out of the back of Cressy there into Singapore with the hope of growing that over time. So, that's the feedback we're getting. I'll just see if the deputy wanted to add to that.

Mr MOGRIDGE - Through you, deputy. Only to add, I think the forward - next couple of years under our trade strategy budget allocation also includes ongoing commitment to our wonderful trade advocates overseas, and they, over the last year, I think, generated \$23 million in support. So, that's a direct conduit to the supporting trade output in relation to local businesses.

The other thing I would add is there is, as part of our ongoing trade strategy over the next couple of years of allocation, some Austrade functionality which is really going to direct support locally, regionally in building capability and understanding for how you tap into markets.

So, we are trying through the strategy to use a sort of comprehensive process of supporting businesses in Tasmania, and I think what we will do through the scorecard process, which is a level of accountability for the trade strategy moving forward, is continue to build our understanding on those outcomes and then that will inform the government, I would imagine, on forward strategy.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. So, from a layperson's point of view, what number of staff or what will be the trade-off here if you're going - if you're reducing here and feeding in here, what number of staff do you think - will there be decreases in the number of staff working in

that space on international markets or are you suggesting there'll be a similar cohort of workers to try and keep Tasmania out in front?

Mr BARNETT - If I can just kick off by saying we remain resolute and ambitious in our plans to get to 15 billion by 2050. We have been growing faster than the national average. We hope and continue to do so. The trade and investment advocates across the globe are really well placed to suit Tasmania's growth going forward. And, of course, across Department of State Growth you know that the operational efficiencies are important, as it is across all of government, and we take that seriously as well. So we need to make sure we get the balance, but we remain resolute in our support and the budget, I think, reflects that.

Mr GREGORY - Deputy, through you. If I can add, the machinery of government changes that effectively transform the current Department of State Growth into Building Tasmania don't abolish everything else. The other functions, including business, trade and economic development skills - all those other functions move to new homes, into other agencies. So it's not that they simply disappear. They continue.

Yes, there are operational efficiencies that will be found through the machinery of government changes. They'll come in a number of ways. There will be some FTE reductions. The government's been quite open about that and we're working through voluntary redundancy processes at the moment. But there'll also be efficiencies that will be found by bringing some other functions together. Some of the work that we'll do around corporate functions will provide some efficiencies.

So, there's quite a bit of work to do. The machinery of government changes is substantial. We couldn't point to any particular at the moment, say, 'Well, there'll be two people here and five there'. There's a lot to work through, but we will really be looking for a lot of efficiencies arising from rationalisation of our leasing footprint, using more technology to be more efficient in how we do things. But it's critical to understand that the functions that exist within State Growth don't simply disappear because of the transformation of the department.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. Thank you. I've got two other questions. No disrespect here, but I'm always worried when we have ambitions from government to, say, \$15 billion by 2050, because it wasn't that - it was only a decade ago they were saying, 'The healthiest state by 2025'. Do you know what I mean? I get concerned when I hear statements of, '30 years down the track', with no accountability, really. The question here is where are we with the TFES after Tammy Tyrell's senate enquiry, the federal government's \$95 million injection over two years and the new review that must be due to report? Can you give us some information about - because that's, obviously, something very important with trade freight equalisation.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the question, the two-part question. Obviously, Tasmania trade equalisation scheme very relevant to the minister for Transport, but of course it's relevant -

Mr GAFFNEY - And I would suggest Tourism, Trade as well.

Mr BARNETT - I would note infrastructure and transport, so I'll just note - because coming days you'll be able to have that opportunity. It's funded and administered by the Australian Government, as you've noted. It's certainly critical for Tasmania, business, our jobs, our economy, our exporters, of course. And frankly, those rates aren't keeping pace with the

cost of living in Tasmania and the cost of doing business. We've consistently advocated for changes to the TFES - the government, with the federal government - and we are not disadvantaging current contractors and current customers to better reflect those increasing costs.

We welcome that senate select committee report that you made mention of and reported that the scheme is out of date, doesn't deliver. And the Australian Government's commenced an independent review of that scheme and the Bass Strait Passenger Vehicle Equalisation Scheme, which you'd be aware of, in October 2025. We welcome that.

We also welcome the Australian Government's independent review and the 25 per cent increase in the TFES over the two years from 25-26. The government's provided a written submission insisting that reforms do not leave any Tasmanian or Tasmanian business worse off, and that any changes to the scheme must provide an uplift in support for scheme clients, not just a redistribution of existing expenditure.

The Department of State Growth participated in face-to-face consultations, I'm advised, in November last year and February this year, including in Hobart, Launceston, Devonport, Burnie, King and Flinders Island. And the department held an industry round table on 1 April, I'm advised, as well, supporting further discussions on that. Additional feedback from the consultation was provided to the reviewers in late April, and I know the Minister for Transport is like a dog with a bone in terms of advocating accordingly, as is the premier.

We will not relent. The Australian Government has a job to do. This review is important. I really appreciate your observations, and I hope that every member around this table and around the Parliament will advocate strongly to the federal government, of whatever power and persuasion those members of Parliament are, but particularly the federal government to ensure Tasmania gets a fair share.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay. Now, I'm not sure if you're the right minister for me to ask this question. It's to do with the TEU, the Twenty-Foot Equivalent Unit rate. I know it's to do with transport but it's obviously to do with trade as well, I would think. And I was just wondering, have you got a comment about the latest Gulf crisis and the spike in fuel affected that and affected trade?

Mr BARNETT - Absolutely we can comment in terms of fuel security, because in Singapore I took time out to meet with the Minister for Trade and Energy and Workforce, Tan See Leng. That was an excellent meeting; very productive. And then I also met with both our major suppliers in terms of United, which is a major supplier of our fuel in Tasmania, and Viva and Vitol who owns a big part of Viva. So, they were the two main suppliers. I took time out to meet with them, advocate for Tasmania, was very pleased with the productive meetings.

I know that the Minister for Energy and Renewables is now together with the Department of State Growth having further discussions. The secretary might wish to - or the acting secretary might wish to add to that answer, but absolutely we're very focused on the impact of fuel on Tasmania, not just residential but business and our exporters.

Mr GREGORY - Through you, deputy premier. The important thing to understand at the moment, and we provided a number of briefings to members of the legislative council and the house of assembly. But fuel supplies are secure in Tasmania and we continue to hold very

strong levels of fuel in the state, as good as 12 months ago. So, the work of the Australian Government and government here working with the fuel companies and making sure we have a supply flowing has been very successful. So we're not short of fuel.

Obviously, there is a pricing impact with fuel. That's been alleviated, to an extent, by the federal government's reduction in the fuel excise. Through a number of working groups in our incident management team, we are working closely and engaging with all key industry sectors just to understand the pressures they're facing and what we might be able to do to help them out to alleviate that. So we're working with the construction industry, we're working with the transport industry, just testing some ideas of things that we can do to help them out.

Mr GAFFNEY - Thank you. And I would put on the record that those briefings are very good for members of Parliament, but it's also good for the general public who may be listening to this, to also hear that reinforced through this conversation so that they feel and are aware of what's happening. Because I know there are people watching.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - Yes. No, thank you.

CHAIR - And final question from Mr Hiscutt on this area.

Mr HISCUTT - Only just an observation I made now, and it may be - hopefully, you can explain it. But the appropriations across this Budget and the forwards matches precisely to the expenses. However, this year, for 25-26, the appropriation's 12.5 million but the expenses is 14 million. I'm just wondering why this year is different in relation to the forward years in that context.

Mr BARNETT - That comes down to all those rollovers.

Mr HISCUTT - So that's just forwarded money from the previous years?

Mr BARNETT - That's right.

CHAIR - Thank you. And while we have finished questions in this area, just two points I would just ask, deputy. We had one area where it was, 'please provide a comprehensive table format of the breakdown of consultancies,' previously, by Ms Webb, and you were going to table a document. And there was another one from TASCAT that - a proposed table document. As the documents don't appear to have been tabled, are you happy for us to send these two on notice to you?

Mr BARNETT - Yes, please.

CHAIR - Thank you. Just to confirm.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you. Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you very much and we really appreciate the time that you and your team have spent with us today and thank you very much.

PUBLIC

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Chair, and thank you, committee, and all those officers at the table and behind the table who have done so much work to prepare for today. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. If we could stop the broadcast, please. Thank you.

The committee suspended at 5.16 p.m.