



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

TRANSCRIPT

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A

Hon. Roger Jaensch MP

Thursday 26 November 2020

MEMBERS

Hon Ruth Forrest MLC (Chair)
Hon Mike Gaffney MLC (Deputy Chair)
Hon Sarah Lovell MLC
Hon Dr Bastian Seidel MLC
Hon Rob Valentine MLC
Hon Meg Webb MLC

WITNESSES IN ATTENDANCE

Hon. Roger Jaensch MP, Minister for Housing; Minister for Environment and Parks; Minister for Human Services; Minister for Aboriginal Affairs; Minister for Planning

Michael Pervan, Secretary, Department of Communities Tasmania

Ms Mandy Clarke, Deputy Secretary, Children and Youth Services, Department of Communities Tasmania

Ms Pamela Honan, Director - Youth and Family Violence Services, Department of Communities Tasmania

Claire Lovell, Director, Children and Families, Children, Department of Communities Tasmania

Mr Rod Fazackerly, Principal Finance Officer, Department of Communities Tasmania.

Ms Ingrid Ganley, Director, Disability and Community Services, Department of Communities Tasmania

Mr Peter White, Deputy Secretary, Housing, Disability and Community Services, Department of Communities Tasmania

Ms Jessemy Stone, Director, Housing Programs, Department of Communities Tasmania

Mr Tim Baker, Secretary, Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and the Environment

Ms Louise Wilson, Deputy Secretary, Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and the Environment

Mr Wes Ford, Deputy Secretary, Environment Protection Authority, Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and the Environment

Mr Andrew Crane, Manager Policy Advice and Regulatory Services, Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and the Environment

Mr Jason Jacobi, Deputy Secretary, Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and the Environment

Ms Ginna Webster, Secretary, Department of Justice

Mr Nick Evans, Deputy Secretary, Regulation and Service Delivery, Department of Justice

Mr Brian Risby, Director, Planning Policy Unit, Department of Justice

Mr Jarrod Bryan, Registrar, Resource Management and Planning Appeals Tribunal

Ms Sandra Hogue, Acting Executive Commissioner, Tasmanian Planning Commission

Mr Steve Gall, Director, Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania, Department of Primary Industries,
Parks, Water and the Environment

The Committee met at 9 a.m.

DIVISION 2

(Department of Communities Tasmania)

CHAIR -Thanks, minister, and welcome to the Estimates Committee hearings for the last day of this year. I invite you to introduce the other members of your team at the table and the others you bring forward during the hearings, and if you wish to make a brief opening statement. We will on our side endeavour to be very brief in our questions and we would like to have brief and direct answers.

Mr JAENSCH - I would like to introduce at the table to my right, Professor Mike Pervan, Secretary of the Department of Communities Tasmania; and Mandy Clarke, Deputy Secretary of Children and Youth Services. I also acknowledge up-front the Tasmanian Aboriginal people, the original owners and continuing Custodians of the land we are meeting on today, and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

If I can make just a brief opening overview.

I am sure this has been the opening line for all of the presentations. It has been a very challenging year for our community, our state and our people, particularly those who are already vulnerable and facing challenges of their own.

I have been very pleased to be part of a government that has put extra resources into a range of Human Services, both for those members of the community who are under our direct care, and those who may need it as a safety net. As a direct part of our COVID-19 response, we are putting \$2.1 million over the next two years into child safety initiatives. While we are doing this, we are also continuing our longer term reform and redesign activities around child safety as well. I am sure we will be able to discuss many of those during these discussions.

We also have continued to invest in increased costs of out-of-home care, with a \$55 million contribution in this Budget. This will include, as a very small proportion of that investment, development of a therapeutic residential On Country program, which we have been committed to for a year now, but particular attention was drawn to that in the context of the recent review of the Many Colours One Direction program in the Northern Territory.

We have also included in this Budget \$200 000 to develop and enhance our support for the informal kinship carer community around Tasmania as well. We are piloting some extra supports for them, and that will inform some longer term arrangements we hope to be able to put in place.

We have also provided \$513 000 to increase the capacity to respond to young people under 16 years old who are turning up unaccompanied at shelters and at crisis services, which have not been in the past well-equipped to deal with their needs. A task force is responding to their needs, and we have provided some immediate resources to take first steps.

The Budget also includes \$1.8 million for a dedicated specialised child and adolescent mental health service for children in out-of-home care - and more broadly across the Human Services sector, we have invested more, and asked more, of our network of community service partners - TasCOSS, the Neighbourhood Houses, [inaudible], COTA and those who work with

people affected by family and sexual violence. I really want to take the opportunity to thank them for stepping up, and for their remarkable work, this year in particular, to assist people. I am sure their extra efforts have saved lives during this very difficult year.

We have extended funding to a number of those organisations to give them certainty in line with PESRAC's recommendation number 12. We have increased that core funding to ERO, and indexation is also delivered in the Budget so that the community service sector has a strong footing going forward.

I thank them, and I thank my departments and our network of community service organisations for pulling together so well this year. I'm proud of the work they have done.

Thank you.

Output Group 1 Children Services

1.1 Children Services -

CHAIR - I will invite Meg to open the questions, including the overview, if you like.

Ms WEBB - Minister, you mentioned the PESRAC interim recommendations. In the Budget Papers there's a table that shows lead agencies, but it doesn't indicate anything about what has already been completed, what's in train, if it's funded in this Budget and, if so, where, for example, or within what existing resources.

I note that eight have been allocated to the Department of Communities Tasmania. As an overview, perhaps you could give us an indication of which of these eight might relate to the Human Services portfolio, and whether you consider them to be finalised, ongoing or yet to get underway. Can you please quantify or point to Budget allocations that they relate to?.

Mr JAENSCH - Because I don't have a brief organised by PESRAC recommendations, I would be happy to provide to the committee a summary of action taken against the relevant PESRAC recommendations from our agency.

Ms WEBB - And any interrelation to the Budget Papers?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, where there is a link to the Budget Papers, I think we can do that, unless Mike has - in fact, here it is.

Ms WEBB - Is it something you would like to table, because it's probably quite detailed?

Mr JAENSCH - It is quite detailed, but I've got references to -

CHAIR - Let's get started.

Mr JAENSCH - Can we go through the top of these?

Ms WEBB - Yes.

Mr JAENSCH - Okay. Recommendation 33, regarding Volunteering Tasmania, was-

The State Government should engage with Volunteering Tasmania to develop support measures to enable organisations to retain and attract

Volunteering Tasmania has provided a vital service, and through the response, under the stimulus and support measures package announced by the Premier, Volunteering Tasmania received \$130 000 in funding to rapidly deploy volunteers to assist in the response and recovery efforts. During that time, Volunteering Tasmania has had more than a 100 per cent increase in volunteers registering to support the community.

Recommendations 57 and 58, emergency food relief, and recommendation 62, food security. The Government has invested approximately \$800 000 in additional funding for emergency food relief in response to COVID-19. Our major emergency food relief distributors have delivered tens of thousands of hampers, meals, and over 1 million kilograms of fresh and staple items around the state. Recommendations 57 and 58 suggest that the Government carefully monitor and plan funding for emergency food relief to ensure Tasmanians in need can access help.

Prior to the pandemic, the Government was already working on long-term planning to support food security for vulnerable Tasmanians to better understand the demand for emergency food relief in our community and inform our decisions into the future. The importance of this work was reaffirmed by PESRAC's recommendation.

CHAIR - Number 44 was one I don't think you've touched on.

Mr JAENSCH - Sorry. There was additional funding for emergency food relief providers as well - 144 000 for Hamlet to provide 1200 meals per month to the Safe Night Space in Hobart; \$100 000 for Foodbank Tasmania; and \$156 000 for Loaves and Fishes to ensure distribution of emergency food relief around the state.

PESRAC's recommendation 62, that we consider school and community-based models of food security: the Government is already funding a number of programs in schools to build nutritional literacy of our young people, including through the Tasmanian School Canteen Association, and we will continue to work across government to strengthen food security.

PESRAC's recommendation 12 was the one about -

should immediately modify contracts with community service providers, where performance has met expectations, to extend their duration to provide appropriate funding certainty.

The response is the that Department of Communities Tasmania reviewed all contracts and found many were already on multi-year footing. Those due to expire were all renewed and extended for the maximum period possible consistent with business plans and approved government funding across the forward Estimates. The department will continue to review contracts to align their duration with government funding programs.

The other you mentioned?

CHAIR - That was 44, which is housing-related. Maybe we could deal with it under Housing.

Ms WEBB - Yes we can. I asked about the Human Services-related parts of those eight allocated to Department of Communities so it can move on to housing.

We note this line item is an incredibly large amount of money and one small heading with no detail to break it down into the different component parts. Perhaps you could assist us: we are asking questions so we can group them - the component parts that sit under this - and, if possible, give an indication of how that quantum of funding on that line item splits into its component parts.

Mr JAENSCH - Which table are you referring to?

Ms WEBB - I am looking at page 52. It is the revenue from appropriation by output and the output group we are looking is 1.1, Children's Services. It is a very large amount of money under one brief description. If you could break it into its component parts for us and give us more of a breakdown on how that funding is allocated.

CHAIR - Maybe you can look at the expense summary and look at how it is expended. How much is expended in each area. That is on page 32. That is expenses as opposed to appropriation.

Mr JAENSCH - We have another officer who will join us at the table shortly. Can we come back around to this?

Ms WEBB - To be more specific then, noting the footnote there on that line item, footnote 3, indicates some matters around the variation across forward Estimates and one of the things that identifies this is -

... the decrease from 2020-21 to 2021-22 also reflects the completion of 2018 election commitments.

Could you breakdown for us the election commitments coming to an end representative in that decrease and will assist us to group questions against those potentially?

Mr JAENSCH - We will come back round to that one as well when we have our finance officer.

Ms WEBB - I am going to make a note of that for myself.

In relation to the Child Advocate. Some questions on that role if that is all right, minister. First, I am interested to know about the funding allocation for the role of Child Advocate and associated activities.

Mr JAENSCH - Funding for the Child Advocate position?

Ms WEBB - And associated activities.

Mr JAENSCH - I have an overview of the activities here.

Ms WEBB - I do not need the overview of activities yet. I would prefer the funding allocation in the first instance.

Mr JAENSCH - We will get you a number, but the funding for the Child Advocate position comes from core funding for Children's Services. The Child Advocate position is one this Government has created and it has been an evolving role over the last couple of years and is really hitting its straps right now. My interaction with the Child Advocate has been very positive. We have frequent briefings and I have found the Child Advocate's role has been particularly useful a good example was most recently with the attention that was on the Many Colours One Direction Program in the Northern Territory, the Child Advocate's recent visits up there and her one-on-one contact with individual young people, gave us some insights into how they were experiencing the program. Her involvement with subsequent interviews with those young people alongside the Secretary, I think really helped us to hear the voice of the child in our decision-making in that work.

I also participated during COVID-19 in a number of webinars and group chats facilitated by the Child Advocate, so I was able to hear directly from young people in out-of-home care in COVID-19 around their experiences of lockdown and the modified arrangements we had around their interactions with their Child Safety officers. I found it a very useful channel, as someone who wasn't directly involved in their care as a Child Safety officer or part of the management of those programs, whose job was first and foremost to hear and channel the voices of those young people.

Ms WEBB - Perhaps I could ask you some specific questions, minister? Would that be all right?

Mr JAENSCH - I'd be happy to take your specific questions.

Ms WEBB - Last year we talked at Estimates about public reporting of the activities of the Child Advocate. At that time, you undertook to review and potentially come to a position of being able to report on the activities of the Advocate in a more detailed way. I'm interested that I'm not seeing anything specific other than broad description in the annual report. I am interested in what data you're making publicly available around the activities of the Child Advocate.

In particular you might recall from last year, the sorts of things I was interested in were -

- Referrals to the Child Advocate of individual children in out of home care who required some interaction with the Child Advocate,
- Where those referrals came from - who was the referrer: the child, another adult, a service provider.
- The responses to those referrals in terms of what actions resulted - not specific details about each instance but just in broad categories.

And then a breakdown of -

- whether they were individual matters;

- were systemic issues being raised; and
- responses in relation to that.

We discussed that last year. Where have you arrived with reporting on the activities of the Child Advocate?

Mr JAENSCH - There are various parts to your question; I trust I have someone taking notes on matters we may need to follow up on.

Ms WEBB - In the first instance I am interested in what consideration you gave after our discussion last year to the public reporting of the activity of the Child Advocate, and if that has actually been undertaken somewhere.

Mr JAENSCH - I am happy for Mandy to speak to this but I have here and I'm prepared to table an annual activity statement for the Child Advocate's activities for 2020. This is, I think, the first time we have done this, and I am happy for Mandy to speak to the broader program.

Ms WEBB - Just before you start, Mandy, if you don't mind, minister, is that a public document you've put in the public domain prior to this?

Mr JAENSCH - Not prior to this. This is the first time and by tabling here, I make it a public document.

Ms WEBB - Is it the intention that would be an annual reporting that would be put into the public domain as a matter of course without having to be requested at Estimates?

Mr JAENSCH - I will ask Mandy to refer to our intentions there.

Ms CLARKE - The first question of - will it be an annual commitment - yes, we are committed to do that annually. The document in front of you responds to your questions, Ms Webb, in the sense that it does break down the type of activity that the Child Advocate has been involved with. It will break that activity down into individual advocacy work via referral sources, so there is a clear indication of the work the Child Advocate's been undertaking and we provide commentary also on the systemic advocacy work. Unfortunately, our Child Advocate, Sonia, couldn't be with us today. Obviously, she's on leave - she would be the one who would be talking to her report.

Ms WEBB - Perhaps next year.

Ms CLARKE - Yes. Importantly, I will draw a couple of key things that Sonia has done some very good work on during the year. Sonia has established Youth Change Makers, which is a forum of young people in care. That is a lovely platform for us in the Child Safety Service to receive input into design or policy procedures. The Building Blocks report talks to some of that and the detail that has been occurring there.

Ms WEBB - Can I pick up on that one, if you do not mind? Minister, can I ask you about the Youth Change Makers Forum the Advocate has established? How does that sit alongside, or differ from, the CREATE Foundation being funded to interact with children in

out-of-home care and provide an opportunity for their voice to be captured and their input to be provided?

Mr JAENSCH - They have been working together.

Ms WEBB - Why are we doubling up and having two things doing very similar things?

Mr JAENSCH - We are collaborating; it is entirely positive.

Ms WEBB - We are funding two functions essentially doing the same thing. It is a very worthy thing to be doing, absolutely we want to hear the voices of children in out-of-home care.

Mr JAENSCH - It is coordinated rather than duplicated.

Ms WEBB - Can you explain that a little more how it is coordinated and not duplicated?

Ms CLARKE -The establishment of the Child Advocate has involved CREATE and there is a CREATE role that sits in with the Child Advocate. Part of that has been some additional support to the Child Advocate to establish some systems.

In future years, what this report notes is that in having a look at the data across the state and as the service as evolved as the minister has alluded to, we will continue to evaluate. The Child Advocate is very conscious of needing to have a further presence in the north and the north-west, and some of the information we have gathered here, and which is in the activity report, will refer to that.

It is ongoing and we will continue to evaluate those decisions as to what is the best way forward.

Ms WEBB - Highlighting the opportunity to have a better presence in the north and north-west, is that because CREATE does not have a presence in the north and north-west, that you are suggesting that might be a focus for the Child Advocate? I am presuming we are talking about the Youth Change Makers and that aspect of the role, because that was where my question was directed.

Ms CLARKE - Sorry, I did not want to create any confusion. The Youth Change Makers is a statewide established process.

Ms WEBB - And CREATE is a statewide process?

Ms CLARKE - Yes, it is.

Ms WEBB - My question was really about explaining better, the fact that we fund CREATE Foundation to make young people's voices in out-of-home care heard and bringing that into the decision-making space and we are now, through the Child Advocate, undertaking a similar program. It sounds, on paper, that we are doing that. How is that not duplication? Where is that coordination as opposed to duplication?

Ms CLARKE - CREATE actually commenced in October 2019 and it was co-located with the Child Advocate, as I indicated,

Ms WEBB - CREATE was? CREATE has been around since before 2019.

Ms CLARKE - This particular function in supporting the Child Advocate was established in October 2019 and the particular role is co-located; they share an office currently.

Ms WEBB - Maybe it hasn't been clear to me. The Youth Change Makers Forum: is that undertaken by CREATE in partnership with Child Advocate?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes. They support each other in it.

Ms CLARKE - The Youth Change Makers Forum is for young people with experience of care, and was established by the Child Advocate and CREATE so that young people can participate directly in shaping the child safety and out-of-home care systems.

Ms WEBB - That is much clearer than what is reported in your annual report which does not mention CREATE, hence my question about whether it was doubling up, because it seems to do exactly what CREATE does.

Mr JAENSCH - I understand.

Mr VALENTINE - On this issue, with regard to the ages of children referred. You have given us referral sources and number of referrals. Do you have a breakup of the ages of those who are being referred?

Mr JAENSCH - They are on children who are on orders, so they would typically be under 18. Youth Change Makers has involved children aged from 13 to 24 years, as I understood.

Mr VALENTINE - I am asking for the numbers, the referrals.

Mr JAENSCH - Okay.

Ms CLARKE - We have not actually reported on that data. What I will do is take away your comments and talk with Sonia about that in the sense of next year's reporting and what can be included in an annual report in relation to ages of the children.

Mr VALENTINE - It is interesting. I remember when I was lord mayor, there were kids as young as six on the street. They would have been referred. That is why I am interested to know what the age protocol is.

Ms WEBB - The children on the street would not necessarily be part of this program.

Mr JAENSCH - It is for children in out-of-home care.

Ms WEBB - This is only for children in out-of-home care who are under orders.

Mr VALENTINE - They actually have to be in care?

Ms WEBB - They have to be under orders and in care.

CHAIR - Can I ask a question before you go on?

Ms WEBB - Further to that, I was going to say, in addition to ages of children, I think it would be interesting to see the ages of children also against the referral source, because it tells us how we are reaching children and what mechanisms for referral are most effective for different age groups.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, can you see in that report of the table of referrals?

Ms WEBB - I see it as opposed to source, but in terms of Rob's request to have the age of the referees, I guess, I think that against source of referral is also pretty interesting. It would tell you how you are doing reaching into the space.

CHAIR - The number of staff who actually support this area and the Budget, is there a specific budget allocation?

Ms WEBB - I asked about the Budget. They are getting the information apparently.

CHAIR - It is coming later. But is that a matter for when we get the other person here?

Mr JAENSCH - That will help, but with regard to Mandy, we have one Child Advocate.

CHAIR - Are there any staff in support?

Mr JAENSCH - The staff in support is the Child Advocate.

Ms CLARKE - The Child Advocate is based in our office, they actually do receive, I guess, what I would describe as administrative or coordination support by the general direction at function that is there. That is perhaps the best way I would describe how they receive administrative support. Importantly, obviously I would not call it support, but they have ready access to the Director of Children and Families, who is with us today, and myself. We are all in the same office together.

Mr JAENSCH - Then there are these strategic partnerships, say, with CREATE, around other particular activities. Only the advocate can be the advocate as a person to go to.

CHAIR - The nondelegable responsibility, yes. Does the advocate have a degree of independence around their work?

Ms WEBB - Not like the children's commissioner does, minister, correct? Because they are within the department.

CHAIR - I am asking about the degree.

Mr JAENSCH - Not like the children's commissioner, but with a very different brief. The Child Advocate has that individual child advocacy role, whereas the commissioner's role is systemic, except for our young people in the Ashley Youth Detention Centre. That is the distinction between the two.

Ms WEBB - Can I ask some more questions about the referrals then? What I note is that, from the reporting annual report, a deal of effort has gone into in particular ways to our children in out-of-home care, aware that the Child Advocate is there and the services and support provided. I note in the annual report, talking about a mail-out to all children in care, I presume - was that a physical hard copy mail out to over 1300 children?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

Ms WEBB - Did that extend to every child in care, including infants?

Mr JAENSCH - Over 1300 children and young people; that is about the number of all of our children in out-of-home care.

Ms WEBB - We sent a letter to one-year-olds, three-year-olds and five-year-olds?

Mr JAENSCH - I would be happy to table the product, which I believe we have all the children.

Ms WEBB - As well as sending a letter to the children, extending all the way down to babies, we have created technological solutions, an app, I presume and a website, I believe.

Mr JAENSCH - Can I speak to that then?

Ms WEBB - No. Well, I am going to ask a question about it if that is all right; I do not mean to say no.

Mr JAENSCH - I am sorry, I thought you were asking me.

Ms WEBB - I would prefer you to answer my question about it, if that would be all right.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, we did all that. Next question.

Ms WEBB - Noting that we have sent letters, some to children who will not be able to read them, and on the assumption too that many children are not going to read a physical letter sent to them, even if they are old enough to do so, we have technological solutions in terms of apps and websites. I am interested to know much confidence you can have, minister, that all children in out-of-home care are actually aware of the services and supports available through the Child Advocate, particularly because that role is specifically designed to give them individual advocacy assistance. Alongside that question, the reason I am asking about your level of confidence, that's the question, is because only four of the referrals have come from children and young people themselves - a very tiny proportion and particularly around technology, I think in terms of your confidence about how well these children understand the support provided to them. First, what percentage of children in out-of-home care do we know has access to the internet? Second, what percentage has access to devices that allow them to access to use the internet? Third, what percentage has the digital literacy to do so?

I realise that's a set of questions: the first one is, what's your level of confidence that the children in out-of-home care are aware of, and then can access, this support in the context of those other matters?

Mr JAENSCH - You are right. There are a lot of challenges getting the message through to all young people in out-of-home care - differing ages, differing developmental stages as well. Also, sometimes those kids are dealing with disruptions to their life and a range of other things, and so processing information about a service that's available to them may not be top of their mind. There is a range of different ways we have to do it.

Ms WEBB - That's right. So, how are we ensuring?

Mr JAENSCH - What I understand talking to the Child Advocate was that a postal mailout was a physical thing addressed to the child that went direct to them into their hands, and granted there will be some young children who were unable to read and understand that. On balance, this went to children.

There is also a range of other avenues established for children and young people to make direct contact with the Advocate by mobile, free call, text, messenger, email, a webpage et cetera. You will see that there is around the annual activity statement and the other document, the developed branding, she's done that with the assistance of the young people in the CREATE program as well.

Ms WEBB - The level of confidence, minister, was the crux of my question.

Mr JAENSCH - My level of confidence is that the Advocate is exploring a range of options to ensure we get the message of her services being available to as many children as possible. Am I confident that every single child fully understands that and is set up to access it? No, I don't think we ever will be, but I am confident that the Child Advocate is continuing to look at different ways of doing that.

Ms WEBB - I'm interested then to understand where you can point to where in any of the mechanisms set up, sending a letter, mobile apps et cetera so that children in out-of-home care under the age of seven are effectively being connected to and made aware of this very important service of individual advocacy for them, particularly because, as you say, they are facing so many challenges. I think under seven would probably be a relatively high proportion of kids in out-of-home care.

Mr JAENSCH - I understand the issue that you're raising. I don't think we will ever be able to guarantee that we -

Ms WEBB - I asked you to point to somewhere where you are doing it.

Mr JAENSCH - What I can do is point to the effort that's being made. I expect also that there will be an awareness raising of the availability of the Child Advocate Service through Child Safety officers, care teams and care planning for children in out-of-home care and their carers. So, that will be part of the awareness raising so that those households know and that direct carers would have the opportunity also to promote those services to the young people that suit them best.

Ms Clarke, can you add anything?

Ms CLARKE - The only thing I would probably add is the Child Advocate has importantly been involved in care planning and care teams' processes. Imbedded into those

processes is the child and youth wellbeing framework. One key domain of that framework is participation, and participation really is about ensuring in your system you do have mechanisms for the voice of the child. Of course, the Child Advocate is a very important function in that, but I think that generally speaking structurally when we talk about the system, what we are progressing is imbedding that inside care team meetings, but also care case and care planning processes.

Ms WEBB - It will be interesting to get the data that Mr Valentine asked for regarding ages of children, and we will see how many children under the age of 7 were matters that were referred.

CHAIR - It would also be helpful the number of children in out-of-home care -

Ms WEBB - In age brackets so we understand there is a relative proportion who are coming through.

CHAIR - We might already have that detail. Just the number of children in out-of-home care.

Ms WEBB - And in the different age brackets, so we can [measure] it against how the referrals are, or who is being referred, in those age brackets.

CHAIR - I will just let the minister get those numbers while he has them.

Do you have them by age group? Not at all? We'll see what you've got. You may need to take some on notice.

Ms CLARKE - Sorry, minister. I'm just looking. We do have an average daily number in out-of-home for the 2019-20 year - 1102.9 children for the 2019-20 financial year.

CHAIR - No breakdown of age.

Ms CLARKE - No, I'm sorry we don't.

Ms WEBB - So, if we could have that, it would be good.

CHAIR - Are you able to provide that level of detail on notice? We are happy to have like from 1 to 5, 5 to 10, 10 to 15.

Ms WEBB - Yes, exactly.

Mr JAENSCH - We will provide what we can, by the way of breakdown, either by age or age cohort groups.

Mandy, do you want to also mention - we referred to the number, that 1300 that appears in a lot of documents - there has been a slight change in the breakdown of reporting, regarding third party guardianship. Could you just refer to that too?

Ms CLARKE - The figure I quoted to you is actually for children in out-of-home care. A number that is also quoted of children is 1325 children. This figure is about a change in

definition in national reporting to do with the number of children in out-of-home care. Historically, that has included children on third party guardianship. Where stability had progressed for people, and there had been third party placements in place, they'd been included in those numbers.

We can provide two figures - the average daily number of children in out-of-home care or third party guardianship. The new number that will be quoted into the future is the average daily number of children in out-of-home care, which removes the third party because they are no longer in the out-of-home care system.

Mr JAENSCH - Year on year, if you are looking across Estimates hearings over the years, you would have seen a figure which has tended to climb a little bit each year, but it has been in the order of between 1200 and 1300 kids in out-of-home care.

This year the number will be listed as 1100 kids. It has not been a drop. There has been a category being those under third party guardianship that is not counted as part of out-of-home care now.

CHAIR - Lovely, we keep changing measures.

Mr JAENSCH - I think it is a more accurate one.

CHAIR - Well, it probably is, but it just makes it hard to track.

Mr VALENTINE - Minister, we've been talking about ICT and a whole-of-government approach. Can you indicate what level of conversations you have been having with the minister's, Mr Ferguson's, portfolio in ICT with regard to trying to assess and review the information systems happening in your area for that whole-of-government approach?

Mr JAENSCH - I will mention a couple of things, and then pass to Mr Pervan.

In the context of COVID-19, in particular, payments were made to foster carers and out-of-home care carers for young people in our system, to assist them with some of the costs of dealing with working with children at home, we also assessed a need for devices and data to enable kids to be able to participate in learning from home and also things like being able to contact the Child Advocate as well - longer term and broader in terms of digital literacy and access for people across Tasmania. Mr Ferguson's digital access and digital literacy activity is something we will contribute to.

CHAIR - Mr Ferguson did say that it is up to the agencies to deal with their own agency effectively.

Mr VALENTINE - I am talking about the back office, human resource information systems, finance.

Mr JAENSCH - You are talking about the departmental systems.

Mr VALENTINE - Maybe I didn't make it clear.

Mr JAENSCH - I am talking about the kids.

Ms WEBB - We can talk more about the other later though.

Mr PERVAN - By and large our corporate systems pay a subscription fee to the Health Department and we still share theirs as we have already entered into a shared service arrangement. We are part of their business case for a new Human Resources Information System and I am looking forward to getting the benefit out of all their hard work. There are all ongoing discussions around other parts of the corporate suite, particularly finance and worker's compensation. That will enable us to get much better data around the workforce and their movements at the moment. We have to interrogate the payroll system which is a good source of the data but not great for workforce planning which is key particularly in Mandy's area.

Mr VALENTINE - Doing rostering of staff and things like that it might well be the same as a Health system.

Mr PERVAN - The management of multiple awards as other agencies have pointed to; if it can work across Health and DCT it can work across the whole of Government. We are really part of the test case, if you like, for the new system they are going to procure in terms of our own individual systems still hosted at Health, in particular child protection information system you might be familiar with.

Mr VALENTINE - I am very familiar with that.

Mr PERVAN - That is still going and hanging together with a prayer. We have been funded to upgrade that system and we are currently working through what that upgrade looks like with a particular interest in making it interconnectable with the police and Education systems. At the moment, be it family violence or on child protection issues, we have to manually print out data and sit down in a room together and glue it and paste it together.

Mr VALENTINE - You are talking about five departments coming together?

Mr PERVAN - Yes, we are upgrading systems with a view to being able to automatically move notifications between police, Education and us so it happens faster and in a real live sense.

Mr VALENTINE - Thank you. Good to hear.

Dr SEIDEL - Are we having any time lines there? It is quite a crucial aspect. You actually cannot do your work if you have a system that is being held together by paperclips and Post-it notes because that is what it is. So what sort of time lines do you envisage to have a system ready that meets the needs of your client and your department? Otherwise we have the next year and the year after.

Mr JAENSCH - I am happy for the Secretary to take this one.

Mr PERVAN - We are in the process of detailing our call to market. The project is being led by my colleague who is just passing me over a big note. I won't talk for very much longer other than to go through the key time lines as you requested. In September the integrated client information program - RFI - request for information that closed on the 23 October will identify relevant business applications and vendors, which may be able to satisfy some or all of the program's objectives and will give us the best solution that we can get from the market.

There were some delays because of COVID-19 and getting those details finalised and to market, but we now have the response to the RFI, I expect over the next year we will be moving to procure the solution and implement it.

Dr SEIDEL - By next year's Estimates, you will have procured a product?

Mr PERVAN - We will have procured a product, whether it has been implemented or not. We will have to report back on it next year.

Mr JAENSCH - Can I add a little bit to that discussion? There have been some other examples of real-time manual information sharing across different parts of government as well, particularly during COVID. One of the things we identified early was that a large number of the concerns brought to the Child Safety system come from teachers in schools, but we know there is a pattern towards the end of each term of a number of concerns being raised because teachers who have had eyes on kids and families are not going to see them for a few weeks and they want to pass on information they might have. Going into lockdown and closure of schools in particular, we were anxious to ensure we did not have just a longer version of that where there were no eyes on young people who may be at risk or families that may need help.

One of the things that happened was that there were a series of vulnerable students' panels. Regional and joint agency meetings were held and groups were set up across the state where Child Safety, police and Education were able to share the intelligence they had around families that they held concerns for and ensure that between them, through their various ways of monitoring and being in contact with those families, they were able to keep each other informed and then identify risk as well.

There is a level there of non-technology, non-system, but very practical sharing.

Dr SEIDEL - You basically had meetings with verbal exchange of information. Is that what it is?

Mr JAENSCH - No, I think it was a little bit more formalised than that in terms of breaking down some of the barriers that had previously existed in terms of information sharing across services, which are quite tightly constrained by legislation, but for which operating workarounds were found, and that is one of the things we are going to try to retain from the COVID experiment and embed longer term. It was valuable.

Ms WEBB - Just to follow up on that if I may. You are talking about sharing information and personal data and things like that amongst government agencies and you said you did not need to make legislative change despite constraints there, you had operational workarounds. Did that also include non-government entities as part of those case conferences or discussions that were held?

Mr JAENSCH - I believe so: not necessarily in the room but certainly linked into the networks so, for example, Aboriginal community organisations. I might ask Mandy if she is able to comment further on that.

Ms CLARKE - I might just provide a little more context.

Ms WEBB - I am mostly interested in the data-sharing aspect. That is the question that I am asking about and who was involved in sharing the data.

Ms CLARKE - In relation to the vulnerable student panels, what occurred is I was already referred to the Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework. That is common language and it is a common tool available across departments and the Department of Education has made great gains on that.

What actually occurred through that period was with the Child Safety Service and the Department of Education. The Department of Education had obviously progressed its work, and still does, using a scale of vulnerability between tiers 1 to 4. The Child Safety Service works with children in the higher level of tiers, being tiers 3 and 4. The level of information occurring was at very granular level. Throughout COVID, the main concern of departments was the visibility of children or families we knew would be at risk. That does not necessarily include children in out-of-home care because we have eyes on those children and their circumstances.

The two departments, particularly in the tiers 3 and 4, shared information. What has occurred following COVID, following the initial pandemic, is that both agencies continue to work to embed that structure. Where it has relevance in relation to IT is that we have a team member who has been working or at least staying abreast and liaising with the Department of Education people who are developing a case management tool. The intention is that over time those sorts of services can continue to be embedded and ensure that there is good ongoing communication in, I guess, a more live manner.

Ms WEBB - Just to come back to the actual question I asked, which was: were there any entities other than government departments and agencies involved in the sharing of information and in that system?

Mr JAENSCH - I will ask Mandy to wrap if I miss it but as I understand it, this sharing was across departments. I understand other organisations networked in at local level which would receive the benefit of that sharing, but not necessarily be given information. Mandy, is that correct?

Ms WEBB - But not necessarily have access to the data and information.

Ms CLARKE - That is correct. The focus was for the safety and wellbeing of the children so there were only two departments sharing the information.

Ms WEBB - Okay, so you are telling me categorically that information wasn't shared beyond those two departments?

Ms LOVELL - Minister, I have some questions for you I would like to move onto now but on a different matter. I am aware that you answered some questions yesterday about allegations surrounding James Griffin and I have a couple of further questions to clarify some details around that for you, bearing in mind that this is a fairly complex and somewhat tangled matter. You said yesterday that you became of Mr Griffin when there started to be reporting in the media. Can you please clarify if that was when there was some limited reporting in 2019 when he was stood down from his position? Is that what you were referring to or were you referring to the broader reporting that has happened this year?

Mr JAENSCH - My comments yesterday referred to me as minister and my office becoming aware of matters around Mr Griffin when media inquiries were made to the Government in September 2020 and it was brought to me because there was reference in that to a link with Ashley Youth Detention Centre.

Ms LOVELL - Before that you said you became generally aware of Mr Griffin when there started to be reporting in the media. Was that the reporting that happened this year or the reporting that happened in 2019?

Mr JAENSCH - It was September 2020 when we responded to media requests to the Government. There was a link mentioned to Ashley. Subsequently, I became more aware as there was broader discussion on media coverage.

Ms LOVELL - That is not what you said yesterday. You first became aware in September 2020 when inquiries were made through the Government. Is that right?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

Ms LOVELL - I have the transcript here. I can read your words back to you if you like. The question was, 'Minister, can you advise when you as minister were made aware of the allegations surrounding James Griffin', and your response was -

Generally I became aware of Mr Griffin when there started to be reporting in the media but I was made aware of matters pertaining to Mr Griffin as they relate to my portfolio, including a possible link to Ashley Youth Detention Centre, following media inquiries to the Government in September 2020.

Mr JAENSCH - That's exactly right. September is before October so I was aware specifically in September.

Ms LOVELL - So you first became aware in September 2020 when inquiries were made?

Mr JAENSCH - And then more generally through October as the media interest in the matter grew.

Ms LOVELL - When there was some reporting and when Mr Griffin was stood down from his position at the LGH in 2019, to your knowledge was there any review at that stage into his history of employment within the State Service?

Mr JAENSCH - I wasn't involved with any matters to do with his stepping down or the circumstances then or the investigation at that time. I haven't been involved. I have no awareness of that.

Ms LOVELL - You were first made aware that Mr Griffin worked at Ashley Youth Detention Centre in September 2020 when those media inquiries came through. Is that correct?

Mr JAENSCH - And we sought advice from the department, yes.

Ms LOVELL - In terms of seeking advice from the department, what steps did you take when you became aware he had worked at Ashley Youth Detention Centre?

Mr JAENSCH - The advice I had was he had worked at Ashley for a period of some months from late 2017 in the position of nurse. We were also advised there was no record of any complaints made by young people or staff at Ashley in relation to Mr Griffin associated with that time and that there were other investigations underway and that our department was fully cooperating.

Ms LOVELL - I have some further questions on Ashley if I could continue with that line.

CHAIR - Keep going on it.

Ms LOVELL - Minister, again following up on some questions that were asked of you yesterday. You said yesterday that you didn't know or you weren't aware of whether any children or young people exited Ashley into homelessness. When children and young people exit Ashley, are they required to give an address as to where they're going to or where they're expecting to live?

Mr JAENSCH - When a young person who is on detention is released from Ashley with notice, an exit plan is undertaken by the case management team. The exit procedure for young people ensures that collaborative exit planning and review processes are applied to young people leaving detention after serving their sentence. During the process, engagement occurs with a parent or carer or guardian and the young person who is encouraged and supported in contributing to the exit planning process.

Exit planning involves working with Community Youth Justice, Child Safety, Save the Children, Education, NDIS, and any other relevant stakeholders to ensure that community intervention plans align and are in the best interests of the young person. All young children have an accommodation option confirmed in their exit plan. For young people who are under the care of the state on care and protection orders, out-of-home care placement orders are identified.

There will be young people from time to time who have an identified accommodation option who aren't under the care or guardianship of the secretary who have been linked to service providers - people like Save the Children with their bail program and their through care service who then self-select out of those options and may present at shelters or other places.

Now, this is the dilemma of young people who have disengaged from their families, who aren't under care and protection, who may be 17 or 18 years old and we offer what service we can for them, but we cannot compel them into a form of accommodation.

Ms LOVELL - As part of that exit plan, they're required to give an address where there is an address the case manager would be aware of?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

Ms LOVELL - Okay. Do you have any data on how many of those young people gave the address of a shelter, for example?

Mr JAENSCH - I don't have data with me.

Ms LOVELL - Or is work done as part of that case management to confirm the address that they've given?

CHAIR - As legitimate, you mean?

Ms LOVELL - Yes, confirm it as legitimate, confirm where it is. Is it a home, is it a shelter? Is that part of the normal case management that's done?

Mr JAENSCH - Madam Chair, could I ask Mandy and maybe even refer to Pam Honan who might be able to speak to that process that's gone through there.

Ms LOVELL - Thank you. That would be helpful.

Ms CLARKE - We will just introduce Pam, I think, who might just go the heart of the questions so -

Mr JAENSCH - And her title for the *Hansard*.

Ms CLARKE - Pam is the Director of Youth and Family Services in Children Youth and Families.

Ms HONAN - As part of exit planning, children are involved in that process and all efforts are made to ensure that where they're going is safe and appropriate. The options of where they nominate to go or where they're referred to directly is assessed and confirmed. In some instances that may be transitional arrangements through shelters that also offer support but it is a planned process and a direct referral process.

Ms LOVELL - Do you have the numbers of children who, in the last year, exited Ashley into a shelter or transitional accommodation?

Mr JAENSCH - I will just ask Ms Honan. Do we keep data on those categories of accommodation that they're going to?

Ms HONAN - It just so happens, minister, yesterday I did do some research around this, anticipating this very question.

Mr JAENSCH - Are you happy for Ms Honan to -

Ms LOVELL - Very diligent. Thank you.

Ms HONAN - I can advise that 10 people in Tasmania left a youth detention centre access crisis and transitional accommodation and the Housing Connect Front Door and support services in 2019-20. There were some positive outcomes for these clients who moved into long-term tenure and achieved case management goals. As the minister did suggest earlier, though, some young people opt out of those options and those support services.

Ms LOVELL - And 10 out of how many? How many children exited in that same period?

Ms HONAN - I don't have a total number of how many exited through that year, but of those 10, yes, some were referred directly to that service, some self-selected to that service after other placements or other options had been broken down or they opted out of.

Ms LOVELL - Minister, how many children in all have all exited Ashley in that same period? We know 10 of how many?

Mr JAENSCH - Do you want to put that on notice?

Ms LOVELL - Yes, I am happy to put that on notice.

Mr JAENSCH - Please do.

Ms LOVELL - I am happy for you to take this on notice if you need to, but how many children or young people exited Ashley into out-of-home-care?

Mr JAENSCH - We should be able to do that because we know what the numbers are.

Ms LOVELL - I would hope so.

Mr JAENSCH - I expect our numbers will reflect those who were in Ashley who were on orders at the time and were still in our out-of-home care system.

Ms LOVELL - That is what I would assume. That is the question.

CHAIR - Is that the question, Sarah, to clarify that is what you are asking?

Ms LOVELL - Yes. The question is, how many exited Ashley into out-of-home care?

Mr JAENSCH - Just to be clear, I think that the way we would give you a number on that would be to identify the number of young people who have been at Ashley who are on care and protection orders at the time and left Ashley still on care and protection orders as opposed to exiting into out of-home-care because I don't think out-of-home care starts on release from -

Ms LOVELL - Would that not be part of their care plan?

Ms WEBB - It may not be the same number.

Ms LOVELL - That's my question. You may have children who are on care and protection orders whilst they're in Ashley who then exit into out of-home care but as part of that exit plan management, if they're exiting into out of-home care, there could be more children who weren't on a care and protection order. Could that have happened?

Mr PERVAN - It depends on how old they are and their care and protection order. If their care and protection order is to age 18 and they turn 18 while they're in Ashley - and sadly we do have a significant number of that age coming through - they'll exit as a free citizen.

Ms LOVELL - But presumably then they're not exiting into out-of-home care?

Mr PERVAN - No, but what I'm saying is the numbers going in may be different so we'll need to analyse that data and come back to you.

Ms LOVELL - That would be good. Thank you. That's clearer.

Minister, how many children and young people exited Ashley on a Friday in the last year?

Mr JAENSCH - I think we have some numbers on that.

CHAIR - If you have a number on a Friday, you must have the total number which you shouldn't need to take on notice if that's the case.

Mr JAENSCH - I'm not taking anything on notice here; I'm just -

CHAIR - No, you said you would take the total number on notice but if you can tell us how many on a Friday I reckon you'd have the whole lot there, wouldn't you? Anyway, we'll see what data you've got.

Ms LOVELL - I'm surprised you don't have that total number.

CHAIR - I'm sure it's in there somewhere

Ms WEBB - It's a fairly basic piece of data, I would have thought.

Mr JAENSCH - We have done some checking back through and in relation to this issue that was in the Estimates hearings yesterday about children referred to Ashley on a Friday -

CHAIR - Referred to or out of?

Ms LOVELL - Exiting on a Friday is the question.

Mr JAENSCH - That's a separate set of issues. Pam, would you be happy to respond to that?

Ms HONAN - We would need to collect the data specifically, but I can comment that it's not a practice to release young people from custody on a Friday. The date that a person is released from custody is dictated by the order and it would not be appropriate to release a person other than the day that their order has expired and they are able to be released.

Ms LOVELL - Minister, just to clarify, you said that you would take on notice the total number of children and young people who have exited Ashley in the last financial year.

The number of children who have exited Ashley into out of-home care and -

Mr JAENSCH - No. I just want to check the discussion we had just previously regarding what you mean by in that children who are on orders at the time they are released would be going to a placement or have a placement identified.

Ms LOVELL - Correct.

Mr JAENSCH - And, therefore, technically be on out-of-home care.

The number you'll get is the number of kids who are on orders at the time that they were released because their planning would identify their accommodation.

Ms LOVELL - Yes, and I'm happy to word the question that way. Further to that, will you take on notice the number of children and young people who were released or exited Ashley on a Friday?

CHAIR - As per their order?

Ms LOVELL - Yes.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, we can do that.

Mr VALENTINE - Just on the issue of children who are exiting as free citizens, as the secretary put it. What sort of care, what sort of service is provided to them, to actually find suitable accommodation if they have nowhere to go?

Ms HONAN - With young people who are exiting the service, some of them being over the age of 18, the same process applies that if they aren't on a care and protection order. We would work with them well before they are due to exit the centre to identify appropriate placements, appropriate supports, appropriate mentors in the community who can assist their transition into the community.

Ms WEBB - To pick up on that, that concept that if they've turned 18 and they are exiting Ashley as free citizens, if they were on care and protection orders when they went into Ashley, turned 18 prior to being released, released at 18, are we in fact then offering them the opportunity to be involved in what was the Home Stretch program. I believe it's now called the T to I program, Transition to Independence, where we continue to provide various measures of support to young people in out-of-home care beyond the age of 18? It is now standard to do that, I understand. Even if they are exiting Ashley, having gone in on an order, are we providing that same program as they come out of Ashley?

Mr JAENSCH - I expect that as young people on care and protection orders, they would have case planning and management. They would have a care team working with them with Child Safety officers with the advocate with their carers if they are in foster care. Their need for additional support and extension of support for them and their carers beyond the age 18 would be part of that plan. So, yes, they would have access to that extension of care as they need it.

Ms WEBB - So, if I were to look at a plan put in place for somebody exiting Ashley who had gone in under an order, turned 18, we would see in that plan, let's say it's de-identified so we don't know who they are. We would look at it and see explicitly that they were being dealt with under the T to I, Transition to Independence Program?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, there would be elements of payments and support available to them according to their needs as they transition. This is the idea of the extended care -

Ms WEBB - Yes, it's a flexible program, I understand. We can come back and talk about that more in a moment; it's one of the other areas.

CHAIR - I think most people exiting Ashley would need some ongoing support.

Ms WEBB - You would think that. If they have gone in under statutory orders, they are the responsibility of the state, and the state has now said we will accept that responsibility for some measure of support through to the age of 21. So, we are still as a state agreeing that we will provide support, even if they are exiting Ashley at the age of 18.

Mr JAENSCH - Absolutely. The point though is that we have some young people coming through who, at the age of 18, not being on care and protection orders any longer, or needing to be, and having served their period of detention are free adults. Whilst we can offer them a range of supports and care and services, they are also free citizens and we can't compel them.

Ms WEBB - Indeed, we can be responsible, we are responsible as a state. So, is any auditing done so that we could be reassured that every child who exited Ashley, having gone in under statutory orders, turned 18, was exiting as an adult? Could we have their care plans audited to see that yes, they were provided with T to I assistance, or at least that was made available to them? It was considered in terms of the planning?

Mr JAENSCH - I would expect that everybody who is on orders with a plan as they approach ageing out, would have live discussions in their care teams as part of their planning. Ms Clarke, would you?

Ms WEBB - For the young people in Ashley.

Ms CLARKE - To respond to your question is we will have a look at those young people exiting on child protection orders and we will do a case review audit to examine what has actually happened for those young people and if we have room for improvement, we will make the improvement.

Ms WEBB - Thank you for that commitment, that sounds excellent and gives us confidence we are undertaking our responsibilities.

Mr JAENSCH - I would like to table further information we referred to earlier. Average daily children in out-of-home care by age category for 2019-20 and average daily children in out-of-home care or third party placements by age category for 2019-20.

Ms WEBB - Once we have the age categories for the referrals to the Child Advocate, we can cross-check to see how proportionately they relate to each other.

CHAIR - That will come later.

Ms WEBB - Minister, I noted in yesterday's session in relation to Ashley and the strip and personal searches undertaken on young detainees and going to briefly quote a statement then have a question to follow it. You said -

Communities Tasmania has also been working with the Department of Justice and Department of Police Fire and Emergency Management to update and consolidate the powers for personal searches of youth in custodial settings in the Youth Justice Act 1997. These amendments will strengthen the provisions to protect the well being and best interests of youth in custody by ensuring that personal searches are in line with human rights standards and principles and contemporary best practice.

First, congratulations for recognising the need to incorporate the human rights standards and principles here and doing so explicitly. In the absence of having a legislated human rights act or charter in this state, do those principles of human rights standards and contemporary best practice only apply in situations of personal searches of youth in custody or do you apply them in a systematic way more broadly across this portfolio area?

Mr JAENSCH - I understand the charter you are referring to is reflected in our legislation, Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997. It is frequently reflected on by the Commissioner for Children and Young People in understanding the rehearsal of her scope of work and responsibilities under the legislation. We have refreshed a charter of rights for Tasmanian children and young people in out of home care in line with those more higher order new end charters. Do you want to reflect on that at all, Mandy?

Ms CLARKE - The only further comment I would make is importantly universal rights, education, health, those sorts of things are on site in Ashley and, importantly, the cooperation of the teams to ensure people are learning whilst they are in detention, their healthcare needs are actually being met and being delivered through the Department of Health. Other factors get picked up in the domain of the child and well-being strategy of nutrition, diet, often for many young people, you would appreciate. It is an opportunity for them to probably have a more stable diet than they have had for a little while. That would be the only other comments I would make.

Ms WEBB - Minister, that nice explicit recognition within the act relates to the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child. With other areas of your portfolio responsibilities beyond captured under that act relating to children, do you recognise and implement human rights standards, principles and contemporary best practice in those other areas to having recognised the central importance of it in the area of children?

Mr JAENSCH - All of us working in the area would be guided by those principles. In how they are mobilised in our operations, it would be the extent to which they are locked into our legislation and things we adopt in relation to say, our formalised Charter of Rights for Children in Care

Ms WEBB - I am talking about non-children related parts of your portfolio, Housing or Community Services, the other areas which we will come to talk about a bit later, once we have dealt with the children's services area. Do you explicitly recognise human rights and aim for principles and contemporary best practice in a systematic way in those other areas also, or

because as you say, without a legislative imperative as there is in the children's area, we do not hold ourselves to account in those other spaces around human rights?

Mr JAENSCH - We are entirely accountable. It is less clear to me what you are seeking here in terms of how that has been formalised in our operations.

Ms WEBB - That is what I am seeking from you: is there a systematic way we apply an understanding of human rights, standards, principles and contemporary best practice beyond the areas we are required to do so in terms of children under that particular act, to other areas of services within your Human Services or Housing portfolios?

Mr JAENSCH - I would say no, I do not have specific examples for you about how charters of rights are embedded in our operations. However, say, in the area of Housing, our Homes Act very clearly outlines what our purpose and any intention, including a social obligation we have to provide housing for categories of people.

CHAIR - We are straying into another portfolio now, we will get back to children.

Ms WEBB - That is okay, I am speaking about the human rights aspect in the children's area and that is where it stems from.

CHAIR - That was straying to Housing.

Mr JAENSCH - And a global human rights charter, I think is what you were moving towards.

Ms WEBB - Yes. Well, it probably had elements of overview because it was looking at how that stretched across the others. I am happy to move on from Ashley for now. I have plenty of other areas to go to, but I am also happy for others to jump in.

CHAIR - We will start another area, we will swap around after that.

Ms LOVELL - Minister, can you confirm for the committee what the process is for children and young people when they come to attend court in Hobart from other parts of the state, where they are brought to the court generally by contract security staff.

Mr JAENSCH - Children in out-of-home care? Children on orders, or children generally?

Ms LOVELL - Yes, children generally attending court in Hobart.

Mr JAENSCH - I think this is another portfolio responsibility. My portfolio responsibility is regarding children, those in out-of-home care, on orders and in youth justice. The circumstances of children arriving and leaving court in Hobart is more appropriately a Police and Justice matter.

Ms LOVELL - So as the minister responsible for youth justice, that is not part of your responsibility?

Mr JAENSCH - Once they have entered the correction detention system under the Youth Justice Act.

Ms LOVELL - As the minister responsible for children that is not your responsibility?

Mr JAENSCH - My responsibility is for children primarily with the child safety system.

Ms LOVELL - Okay.

Ms WEBB - What about children who are on out-of-home care orders who are in that circumstance?

Ms LOVELL - Those children then.

Mr JAENSCH - Children in out-of-home care orders and they are -

Ms LOVELL - Attending court.

Mr JAENSCH - And their attendance at court.

Ms LOVELL - What is the process for those children in terms of when they arrive at the court?

Ms CLARKE - Generally, because that young person has a child safety officer. Importantly, we have after-hours services in the child safety service and any specific detail I am happy if you would like cleared up for the Director of Children and Families to step you through that detailed process. It tends to be because they are on a child protection order there is a child safety officer. All children in out-of-home care have an allocated child safety officer.

Ms LOVELL - And that child safety officer is with them when they attend court?

Ms CLARKE - If it is their nominated child safety officer. I am going to defer to Claire Lovell, Director of Children and Families in the Children, Youth and Families portfolio.

Ms C LOVELL - Our response will depend a lot on the circumstances of the matter, including the status of the young person with the Child Safety Service or otherwise; the circumstances of the matter with regard to the time of day, night, weekend or whenever it occurs, and whether our after-hours service has involvement in that; whether the young person is already receiving services from Community Youth Justice - if they are already on Youth Justice Order and it is a breach of bail matter, or something like that, it would be the Youth Justice worker who is primarily involved; if it is an emergency matter, our Child Safety after-hours emergency service can assist and attend court with young people.

Ms S LOVELL - Minister, can I ask you then for children who are in out-of-home care - your responsibility - would there be circumstances where young children or young people attending court, at various times of the day or weekend, are essentially left in the custody of the Tasmania Prison Service staff?

Ms C LOVELL - I might need to be stepped through that scenario again so I understand, I am sorry.

Ms S LOVELL - In the instance where somebody is on out-of-home care, on a care and protection order and attending court for whatever reason, could there be circumstances where those young people are attending court on their own, and are left in the care or under the supervision of the TPS staff, on remand even, in the remand cells that you are aware of? Is that something that can -

Ms C LOVELL - I do not know that I can answer that. A Child Safety officer couldn't accompany them in remand but a Child Safety officer would be available to them at the first opportunity, as soon as practicable.

Ms S LOVELL - That's my question really. Are there circumstances where that could happen?

Mr JAENSCH - Are there circumstances?. We are trying to get to the particulars that you are asking.

Ms S LOVELL - I am not referring to any particular case. Something that could happen.

Mr JAENSCH - A set of circumstances? I am happy for us to hunt this one down.

Ms HONAN - There are a number of scenarios as to how a young person could end up in custody at the Hobart Watch House. To clarify, it is not the Remand Centre. Young people under 18 are not remanded or kept in cells within the Hobart Remand Prison, it is the Watch House, which is a level underneath.

It is designated as a custodial setting and the Tasmania Prison Officers have the same delegations as a youth worker would in a detention centre, under the Youth Justice Act.

A young person who is not on a child care and protection order would be dealt with like a normal member of the public as in sometimes young people who might be, who are on a form of a child protection order which is not a guardianship order, for example, whereby you would be bringing in a guardian to deal and assist with the matter.

If the young person is already on a Youth Justice order, then it might be appropriate that a Youth Justice worker is brought into the court to assist with informing the court of the status of that young person, and providing information and then assisting thereafter with transporting them to a place of safety or a particular designation.

In cases where a young person is transited between Ashley Youth Detention Centre and the Watch House, it is not a transfer, it is a young person in custody on transit between one facility and another. They would be transferred down using the security company we use for that purpose and have a contract with who are trained in working with young people and transport. The young person would be expected at the Watch House; they would be handed over if they had to be held in a custodial environment until the matter was brought before the court. That would go through a normal process where they would normally go through a screening admission, appropriate searching and then taken to court.

Ms S LOVELL - And that is with TPS staff at that stage?

Ms HONAN - It is. There would be a hand over of that if they had to be held within the facility. It is not the remand centre, it is not the prison.

Ms S LOVELL - No, no, Sorry, I misspoke there.

Ms WEBB - I am just going to skip quickly back to a particular matter related to Ashley that I forgot I had a question about it.

Minister, yesterday you asked about vulnerable children being put into isolation at Ashley Youth Detention Centre and you responded quite rightly that it is prohibited under the act to do that in a punitive way but what you said was that young people are only isolated, and I quote, 'Where necessary and appropriate.'

Can you please provide some particular detail about under what circumstances it is considered 'necessary and appropriate' to place a young person in Ashley in isolation?

Mr JAENSCH - If you are happy, I will ask Pam to maybe refer to that, being more familiar with operational detail of those decisions.

Ms WEBB - I would expect that as minister responsible for such a sensitive matter that you would have some clarity yourself around what would be necessary and appropriate to isolate a young person who has been detained in Ashley.

Mr JAENSCH - As you commended on my comments yesterday about there being specific circumstances and purposes for which young people may be isolated for their safety and the safety of others and to de-escalate as part of our therapeutic approach, what I am not is a practitioner applying those principles in a consistent way in those settings, and I would like to defer to someone who knows the operational realities of that better than I do. I think that is okay.

CHAIR - The minister is within his rights to refer the question to any of this staff.

Ms HONAN - As you pointed out, minister, it is used for safety reasons - safety reasons for the young person themselves who may be threatening harm, safety reasons for other residents who may be threatened by the behaviour of particular individuals, and for the protection of property.

It is very short-term most of the time. Some people can be placed in their cell. It is more as 'time out'. I think isolation is an unfavourable term for what it is really used for, the majority of the time. It is more time out, to de-escalate. The person is observed for the time they are in there. Lots of the time there is music being played, there is pacing, lots of strategies that are adopted in working with that young person to help them de-escalate and better manage their impulsivity, which is deemed as a safety issue at that point in time.

Ms WEBB - Are there records available in terms of providing us with data about how many instances of the use of that mechanism has been utilised in the past year? For example, how long the isolation period was for and is that audited or reviewed in some sense at arm-length from those who are involved in applying it?

Ms HONAN - For every young person who is placed in isolation, the records of that are maintained. The reasons for it, who made the decision - it has to be approved by an operational coordinator for a 30-minute period and beyond that it is delegated to a higher authority - and for the duration of that. Those records are reported to both the commissioner for children and a custodial inspector every month, as well as myself. I apply scrutiny around anything that I see that I am concerned about in terms of the length of duration, the repeat or any kind of theming to make sure that I am satisfied that it has been applied in adherence to the procedure.

CHAIR - Do you have another one on that?

Ms S LOVELL - I can keep rolling if you like but I am happy for us to share.

CHAIR - Is there anything else on Ashley? Are we done with Ashley?

Ms S LOVELL - I do have one question related to Ashley. Minister, do you have a record of the number of young people who have participated in the Many Colours One Direction program?

CHAIR - We are moving off Ashley.

Ms S LOVELL - This is related to Ashley. Who have participated in that program who have then subsequently been detailed in Ashley Youth Detention Centre?

Mr JAENSCH - I think your question goes to people who were at Many Colours One Direction who subsequently entered Ashley? I am happy to take that on notice. Over what period did you want?

Ms S LOVELL - Do you mean going back or subsequently?

Mr JAENSCH - In terms of your question, numbers of young people who were at Many Colours One Direction who have subsequently served time at Ashley.

Ms S LOVELL - Ideally over any period since that program has been in operation or has been used by the Tasmanian Government.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you.

CHAIR - We will have a morning tea break and come back to this same line item. We will be moving through. This is a big area. We have many topics in this area and a lot of responsibilities. We do need to come back to the question about the breakdown.

Mr JAENSCH - We do have Mr Fazackerley joining us.

CHAIR - If he could come to the table directly after morning tea?

Mr JAENSCH - That sounds good.

Ms WEBB - Will you have the breakdown of the election commitments ending that is referred to in the footnotes so that we can work our way through that?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes

The Committee suspended from 10.30 a.m. to 10.46 a.m.

CHAIR - Minister, if you would like to introduce your new person at the table, and we will go back to those questions posed earlier.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you, Madam Chair. My new person at the table is Mr Rod Fazackerley, Principal Finance Officer, Department of Communities Tasmania.

Mr FAZACKERLEY - There are two questions, as I understand it. The first one is the breakdown of the appropriation number - the \$148.143 million that was mentioned. I have that broken down into hours of operational units, if that is okay. I will read those down: Adoptions, \$3.4 million; Child Safety Services, \$25.5 million; Family Violence Child Services, \$1.4 million; Out-of-Home Care, \$63.6 million; Director Children Families, \$2.2 million; Family Violence Adult Services, \$1.9 million; Strategic Program Development and Evaluation, \$2.5 million; Quality Improvement Workforce Development, \$1.5 million; Service Centre Operations area, \$3.7 million; Dep sec, \$6 million; Community Youth Justice, \$3.1 million; Custodial Youth Justice, \$10.5 million; Director Strategic Youth Services, \$0.4 million; and Grants, \$22.3 million. The total is \$148.143 million.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

Mr FAZACKERLEY - The second question was about the movement between the years in Table 2.2, I think, the Output Group Expense Summary.

Ms WEBB - It's coming to an end, as the footnote says. The election commitment is coming to an end; that explains the drop.

Mr FAZACKERLEY - I will probably go through the movements if you like and then touch back on that.

The first year, 2019-20 to 2020-21 there is a movement of \$5.5 million, an increase, which largely reflects rollover funds of \$4 million from the prior year; and additional net funding of \$1.9 million for out of-home-care demand growth.

We saw in that space the new allocation \$18.750 million this year, and in our system we have a previous allocation from the year before of \$16.882 million, so the net of those two explains that movement.

In the next year, which is where we get into the question. There is a decrease of \$10.3 million. In terms of headline acts to explain that, there is the progression of that out-of-home care demand growth figures, so we see a \$3.9 million reduction from the \$18.75 million in this year.

That goes to the Budget Papers at this stage. We look at the key deliverable statements we see that out-of-home care demand growth allocation is \$18.75 million in 2020-21, \$14.8 million in 2021-22, then dropping down to \$10.8 million in the last two out years and that is ongoing recurrent funding. It just reflects that progression which is about improvement

in that system. The \$3.9 million there, another \$4 million in round terms, in terms of rollovers being finalised.

I said in that explanation for the first year there is \$4 million-worth of rollovers in our system. We show those coming out in the next year. If that makes sense because they are a one-year allocation, if you like.

CHAIR - This is under the new Financial Management Act. You are allowed to roll over a certain amount. What is it? Is it a percentage amount?

Mr FAZACKERLEY - No, these are agreed fixed amounts. They are called rollovers now. You might have heard them referred to as section 8 carry forwards in the past. So the same thing -

CHAIR - Not in the past because this is the first year for the Financial Management Act.

Mr FAZACKERLEY - We see the money being rolled from 2019-21 in the first year and then in our system we reflect the fact that is a one-year allocation, and we show that money being removed in the second-year reconciliation. The third major item to explain that net movement is again a removal of \$2.4 million for the Family Support Gateway funding. The initial dollars to support that agreement sat in the committee service output and we moved it into this output but only for the term of the current agreement. That agreement ends 21 June. In 2021-22 we show the \$2.4 million backing out, that is not saying anything about ongoing funding; that is just reflecting the fact that in our finance system we have only moved dollars to support the current agreement.

That explains the \$10.3 million in that year. In the next year we see a move net decrease of \$4.125 million, so \$4.1 million, and that is pretty much all explained by that next step down in the out-of-home care demand growth of \$4 million. In the last year we see a bump back the other way, a \$2.868 million increase explained wholly by application of indexation of \$2.9 million.

The committee would appreciate I have read the headline acts. There are lots of little minor accruals adjustments in the system that probably add some noise. In terms of going back to your question about the ceasing election commitments, why I didn't mention them in my reconciliation is that for some of those ups-and-downs, some of these things are also reflected in carried forward funds.

If I go through them now there is extending out-of-home care to 2021, a \$1 million reduction; IFES, the Intensive Family Engagement Service, \$3.2 million; out-of-home care continuing learning incentive, \$500 000; the strengthening the permanency of placement process, \$300 000; and support the young people exiting care, \$50 000. They are all the 2021- 22 movements that you are primarily interested in.

Ms WEBB - Represented by their footnote statement of election commitments funding.

Mr FAZACKERLEY - Yes, that is right.

Ms WEBB - Great, let us talk in a bit more detail about those then with the minister. Thank you for that. What was called the Home Stretch campaign, now the Transfer to

Independence, which is the extension of out-of-home care to 21 years that was initially \$1 million a year for three years and 2019-20 financial year, was to be the final of those three years.

In the first year, though, we heard last year, the 2018-19 year only spent just over \$200 000 of the \$1 million due to delays in appointing the positions and not rolling it out as quickly as intended, so that carried over. Did that carryover into the 2019-20 year? Across the years with that initial commitment coming to an end, has the full complement of money been used across the years, the \$3 million originally committed?

Perhaps you could breakdown the elements within that program. My understanding is the elements in it were carer payments, after care support adviser positions, direct financial assistance to young people and administration elements including a coordinator. Could you explain whether the full \$3 million has been spent over those three years committed and how that is broken down?

Mr JAENSCH - I have some data here, but I think in the context of the breakdown you have just had and the issue of the carry forward as well, Mandy are you able to answer the question?

Ms CLARKE - Regarding the breakdown of key areas expenditure by financial year, in 2018-19 for salary staff, which would be the actual departmental staff funded to carry out the work, \$1 million was allocated. After care support payments \$156 000 so the slow startup has meant that all funds have been brought forward and will continue to be brought forward. In relation to the 2019-20 year, the breakdown of areas of expenditure is \$40 000 after care support being \$783 000. Then in the 2020-21 year, salaries \$62 000, after-care support of \$13,000 [inaudible] and extended care payments of \$262 000.

Mr JAENSCH - Just for *Hansard*, I think that when you referred to salary for 2018-19, you said \$1 million.

Ms CLARKE - I did. Sorry, minister. I got way ahead of myself. It's actually \$1000. Sorry about that.

Ms WEBB - With the \$3 million initially committed, which was to extend over the three years, has all of that \$3 million been expended yet, given that it was rolling over? Is the current year we're in the final year of that three-year commitment?

Ms CLARKE - That's exactly what we're checking, because that's not my understanding.

Mr FAZACKERLEY - If there are any unexpended funds this year, because it's a discrete program, there's certainly no issues of carrying those dollars forward. I understand we've moved some money forward, and if the program is progressing and there are unexpended funds at the end of the current financial year, they would be rolled forward to the next year.

Ms WEBB - Given that there may be unexpended funds in this - the final year of that initial commitment - that roll forward into the next financial year, is it a commitment to continue the program in its full expression, or just use up the residual funds and the program comes to an end?

Mr JAENSCH - There has been a spend that has been less than the budgeted provision; there is the carry-forward as shown and, as Mr Fazackerley has explained, will be done; and there will be a budget process for next financial year and out years, where we review and resubmit for a longer-term budget.

Ms WEBB - It is the intention, from your point of view as minister responsible for the program, to continue the program, in terms of making an argument for that budget allocation, and taking it forward as a fully funded program beyond that three-year 'pilot'?

Mr JAENSCH - That continues out to 2021-22 now.

Mr FAZACKERLEY - Sorry, that was my mistake. We had to carry some funds forward, but I'm just looking at another one. We've actually, through Treasury, formally moved \$1 million out to June 2022. I thought I would correct the record.

Ms WEBB - That doesn't cover the full forward Estimates, so my question remains, then, about the intention to support this program to continue as a permanent part of the portfolio.

Mr JAENSCH - We will have this discussion around potentially each of the election commitments ending or reaching the end of their funded period.

Ms WEBB - No doubt.

Mr JAENSCH - The answer is that those programs will be reviewed, and new proposals brought for further budgets and for the out years as part of the normal budget process.

Ms WEBB - Excellent. Can you describe the review?

Mr JAENSCH - This extending of out-of-home care to 2020-21 has been very well received. It has had some good results. We need to obviously review it as a pilot to see how it can be refined, and then a budget would be considered through normal processes.

Ms WEBB - Excellent. What's the formal process for reviewing and evaluating? You said it has been well received. Is that just an anecdotal observation? Obviously, we could look at raw numbers, but to know whether it was of value and make a budget bid, I presume you would need to demonstrate something beyond that. Is a review occurring in a formal sense?

Mr JAENSCH - Mandy can speak to the formal review.

Ms CLARKE - Yes, there has been anecdotal evidence, where we've received feedback from young people but, more importantly, we are looking at and have commenced some qualitative evaluation. Young people who have been participating in the program are answering questions seeking as much engagement as possible in terms of direct feedback from them about what has worked well, what hasn't worked so well, how we can improve it, analysis of some of those items of expenditure - is it actually meeting the need - but particularly listening to people who are participating in the program.

I wouldn't say it would be a formal quantitative piece of research from an evaluation perspective, but I would say it is more qualitative in trying to get some feedback from people and make some informed judgment.

Ms WEBB - So an internal review within the department, thank you. To finish off on the numbers, in 2018-19, we understood from Estimates last year that in the budget about 28 young people would be covered by that program. In fact it was actually 18, which is fine - we know it was a bit slow getting started.

In the 2019-20 year, the modelling said 48 young people would be covered in that year.

How many were supported in the 2019-20 year, and how many have been modelled for or planned for this current 2020-21 financial year?

Mr JAENSCH - I understand that as at 30 September this year, 81 young adults have benefited from the extension of care funding - 22 in 2018-19; 50 in 2019-20; and in 2020-21, nine so far, in the first quarter of the year, that being the sampling period for this financial year.

Ms WEBB - To clarify those numbers, they are not discrete from each other. The 22 from 2018-19 - some of those would have been included in the 50 in 2019-20?

Mr JAENSCH - No, I think they are new.

Ms CLARKE - The information we're looking at clearly states 'new'.

Mr VALENTINE - I am trying to make sense of the performance measures, about children in notifications per 1000 population -

2016-17 - 54.5 per cent
2017-18 - 54.3 per cent
2018-19 - 36 per cent
2019-20 - 14.8 per cent.

Then you look at the average daily children in active transition at response, and you have a huge number in 2018-19 - 147.8 per cent. Everything else is sort of like in the 80s, 40s.

Investigation outcomes determined within 28 days is 7.1 per cent.

If you look at all of those, the average daily children in out-of-home care is relatively even.

It seems to me that either you have fewer children getting noticed and then referred, or you have stressed staff and work is not progressing according to the plan.

Mr JAENSCH - We also have some changes in the way we are doing this.

Mr VALENTINE - Does that account for it?

Mr JAENSCH - That is the story we need to tell, because of things like the introduction of the advice and referral line, and changing the pathway for what were straight-up notifications that would be recorded at arrival, to an earlier intervention and a longer assessment period, and fewer children ultimately entering the statutory system. This is an important thing. It goes to the heart of the redesign of the Child Safety Service.

I would like Mandy to refer to some of those performance matters that you have raised.

Ms CLARKE - I don't have those performances.

Mr JAENSCH - Do you want the table to refer to? Table 2.3, is it?

CHAIR - Is that the annual report you are referring to?

Mr VALENTINE - It is out of the annual report.

Ms WEBB - It's the same note. It correlates to what is in the Budget Papers.

Ms CLARKE - In response to the question of whether we have we fewer people referring matters, so the introduction of the advice and referral line occurred in December 2018. That's based on a conversation. The purpose of that conversation is about truly understanding what people's needs are, particularly families' needs, and how we can better support families. An early intervention response is preferred. The overall objective of the Government's reform known as Strong Families, Safe Kids is fundamentally about shifting the curve for children's wellbeing in relation to their safety and particularly keeping families together out of the statutory system as much as we can possibly can and ensuring it's safe to do so.

When people call the advice and referral line, the individual practice approaches that occur in advice and referral are the first primary assessment. From that, if any detail is identified in advice and referral that the matter requires a more detailed assessment to the Child Safety Service, a referral then occurs. The data in front you indicates that there has been a 16.5 per cent reduction in the number of matters that were being referred to the Child Safety Service as part of its traditional intake system that existed prior to December and the filtering process at that point was extremely difficult for a statutory service.

What we have in this information in front of you is that the assessments that are now occurring have reduced. Our belief is that they have reduced because the assessment process at advice and referral through conversations is linking those families that can be supported well and early and the referral pathways are showing that. For those families and particularly children and young people where there needs to be an assessment because we have concerns and worries about their safety, those matters are referred to the Child Safety Service.

Importantly, what that data also tells you is of those matters that are coming into the Child Safety Service, the substantiation rate, which is in that list as well, has increased when compared to previous years, so that is an indicator to us in overall performance that the matters that are going into Child Safety are the right ones and that the Child Safety Service assessment, in most cases, is getting substantiation rates that are higher, which in overall terms over a 12-month period indicates that the work of advice and referral is really starting to take shape in terms of their capacity on assessment work, the referrals that are coming are the right referrals and that's evident by the substantiation rates starting to climb.

Mr VALENTINE - The substantiation rate here goes 17, 18, 19.5, 19.6, and 15.7, so it's actually going down.

Ms CLARKE - Yes.

Mr VALENTINE - Not climbing.

Mr JAENSCH - I think there is a line there which is about children who are the subject of substantiation during the previous year who are the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 12 months. Is that the one you're referring to?

Mr VALENTINE - Yes.

Mr JAENSCH - That's a measure of a number of cases where there was a child found to be at risk of harm in one year and turned up again the next year in the books, so that decreasing is a positive movement although it's only 5 to 10 per cent but it's still measurable.

Mr VALENTINE - Why is the investigation outcome determined within 28 days going down to 7.1 per cent, and 6.8 per cent in 2019-20, and that's going down from 16.7 per cent?

Mr JAENSCH - My understanding, and I will pass to Mandy for the detail, is that we're taking longer because we're starting earlier. There are cases or concerns being raised through the advice and referral line service that we spend more time getting to the bottom of before putting them formally into the Child Safety system.

Mr VALENTINE - You are getting more information to work with, is that what you're saying?

Mr JAENSCH - More information but also an assessment of whether the matters require support and other services to assist the family to be safe for the kid rather than considering first the removal of the child from that family while those matters are dealt with.

CHAIR - Just to clarify minister, some of those children in that period would actually not end up in this child safety system.

Mr JAENSCH - That's the whole idea. Whilst there is risk and maybe trauma in the family home setting, removal may also disrupt and create trauma for that setting and for the child and affect the chances of that family being able to do its job better looking after that kid.

There is early triaging of that risk. Certainly, where there is clear risk to a child, the intervention can take place. In a far larger number of circumstances we are not reaching for the statutory intervention as the first line of response, but more to what can be done to keep this family safe, to assist it and apply a range of other services so you can avoid separation wherever possible.

Ms CLARKE - No, minister, I think you have captured it.

Ms WEBB - It is a well-regarded intention to do that, to try to avert removal if we can put effective services and support in earlier.

The first four years of the Strong Family, Safe Kids redesign, which is what you are describing, has had an evaluation done by UTAS.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes it has.

Ms WEBB - Is it completed and available in the public domain?

Mr JAENSCH - The UTAS evaluation is complete. It has made a series of recommendations. Those are being reviewed and there is some advice we have received.

The aim is to be able to release that alongside our next steps action plan for the next phase of activity under the Strong Family, Safe Kids.

The intention is it will be released because what we wanted to be able to do is at the same time say what we are doing about that. That is not ready to fly just yet.

Ms WEBB - Can I just ask a couple of things about that then.

Firstly, can you indicate how many recommendations were made in that report?

Mr JAENSCH - 43.

Ms WEBB - Is it the Government's intention to accept all those recommendations?

Mr JAENSCH - That is what we're working through right now. How we respond to those.

Ms WEBB - What's your timeline on that consideration being given and then, as you say, the release of your next steps action plan alongside the evaluation report?

Mr JAENSCH - We've got advice to look at right now and we are asking questions of the department. As soon as we are satisfied we have got the next steps action plan.

Ms WEBB - Not this year. Are we looking into the new year?

Mr JAENSCH - By early in the new year.

Ms WEBB - The next steps action plan says in the annual report will focus on continued reform of Child Safety Services.

In broad terms can you mention what remains as areas of focus, or future reform.

Mr JAENSCH - I will ask Mandy to list a longer list of issues, but one of the things you would have seen in our earlier election commitment activities I want to progress further through the next steps is reforming more of inside the Child Safety Service and the out-of-home care settings including permanency and stability for young people who have entered out-of-home care.

To reduce the number of moves and placements in out-of-home care and to identify for children, as early as possible, what their trajectory can be to either reunification with their family or to some other form of permanent or stable longer term placement.

We understand one of the issues that does damage, destabilise and can retraumatise kids is multiple placements that may fail. Kids end up being moved from placement to placement and carer to carer throughout their period in out of home care. If we can do our best to eliminate

that by identifying permanent options for them early or at least for those kids who need to remain in out-of-home care, ensuring stability wherever possible. They are the key areas for focus in my view.

Ms WEBB - That is continuation of things already underway.

Mr JAENSCH - Into the next phase.

Ms WEBB - Can I ask to continue with that line of questioning?

I would like to talk about some elements of that pathway through Child Safety Services. You were talking about the unification of permanency options then, so I will go to that first of all. With regard to families involves with Child Safety Service and where children have been removed during out of home care, how many families were reunified with children during 2019-20?

Mr JAENSCH - Eighty-five.

Ms WEBB - How many families had a reunification case and care plan in that time and potentially on the pathway?

Mr JAENSCH - Case and care plan relates to the individual child and their care.

Ms WEBB - Perhaps you can give me that number of how many reunification case and care plans are in place and how many children were reunified, as opposed to families, because those numbers then would relate to each other?

Mr JAENSCH - The first figure is not a reunification case and care plan. Each individual child under our system has a plan and they are recognised when they are reviewed annually.

Ms WEBB - I am not asking about that. Let me change the terminology so we do not divert.

Mr JAENSCH - I want to tell you the percentage of those that are meeting that requirement has been steadily increasing and improving over the last few Estimates.

Ms WEBB - Up to three in four or 74 per cent or thereabouts, so we still have one in four children in out-of-home care who do not have a case or care plan in place.

Mr JAENSCH - No, they do. I am assured in the vast majority of those cases, the children to have a care plan in place, but it may not have ticked over the formal sign off of a review within the 12-month period, but it will have been the subject of the regular care planning process.

Ms WEBB - Can you guarantee 100 per cent of the children in out-of-home care have one of those care plans in place, whether it is adequate and appropriately reviewed in a timely fashion, or not?

Mr JAENSCH - One hundred per cent? Mandy, where would you say?

Ms CLARKE - Perhaps the way to respond to your question Ms Webb, is to say there has been absolutely ongoing commitment to improve the case and care planning process. Commencing early in the New Year, we have a very different approach to this exercise that is not necessarily triggered by data metrics and time responses. It is purely based on need and ongoing review of process.

In that regard, we are not going to waver in that commitment. I would expect to see, as would Claire, that number continues and the end of the day, you still have to report data and there will also be data timing and lag issues; however, I would be expecting to see that number continue to rise.

Ms WEBB - The number presented is to do with ones reviewed within the required time? I absolutely have no doubt about the commitment to improving that situation, so it is not a reflection on that commitment, but we cannot say for certain that 100 per cent of children in out-of-home care currently have a care plan in place?

Ms CLARKE - Ms Webb the challenge is there is movement in and out of a service every day in a service like this. To answer that question, would be an accurate answer because information we have today can change by 12 o'clock today.

Ms WEBB - Other than a new entrant into out-of-home care and maybe there is a particular grace period during which we would understand they might be without a care plan because they are newly into the system. Other than that circumstance, are there any other circumstances in which there would be a child in out-of-home care who didn't have a care plan in place? That if we were to audit right now, we would discover?

Ms CLARKE - I might just bring Claire Lovell to the table who can actually explain the real detail of the operation in that sense.

Ms WEBB - I don't necessarily want to go down that rabbit hole. I'd rather return to my original line of questioning potentially. It seems like the answer might be no. We can't guarantee that there isn't, so I'd like to move on from that. If we can just arrive at that.

CHAIR - I'm not sure if I can arrive at that - it's a [inaudible] saying.

Ms CLARKE - In order to arrive at and provide a rationale to that decision, we would need to bring our Director of Child Safety to the table. Would you like to do that?

Ms C LOVELL - Every child in out-of-home care does have a case and care plan. They must have a case and care plan to be transferred through from our response teams to our case management team. They all have one to being with. It is not necessarily so that they are current though in that they must have been resubmitted and approved within the 12-month period to be considered current.

However, we were speaking before about our [inaudible] child protection information system, and that it is being upgraded. At the moment unfortunately our practice has come ahead of our system capacity, so what happens is that our case management practices that we use around planning and decision-making for children occur. So, there's active planning and decision-making occurring for the children, but then we have the component in our information

system that needs to be filled out because it doesn't necessarily support our case work - that is another thing that must be done to the side and submitted and approved to keep that.

Ms WEBB - Thank you for that explanation, that makes sense. The actual question I started on there was around reunification and the minister took us down the pathway of a different [inaudible]. To be more specific about the question around reunification, because that's the space we're in, what I'm interested to know is: there are children in the out-of-home care system who are under orders, who identified to be on a reunification pathway. I'm interested in the numbers for 2019-20 of number of children who are identified to be on a reunification pathway, and then also the number of completed reunifications in 2019- 20.

Ms C LOVELL - We don't have the breakdown of planned versus unplanned restoration. The majority of our restorations, restoration being the new terminology for reunification within child safety. The majority are planned and for each of those planned ones there is a restoration plan. We do have occasions where they are unplanned and they happen quite suddenly often due to a young person who self-selects to return home.

Ms WEBB - But you could give me a number for the number who are on those restoration pathways?

Ms C LOVELL - Yes.

Ms WEBB - And then you could give me a number separately for the number of children restored to their families?

Ms C LOVELL - Yes. I think the data we have currently is those which have been completed, so the number of children exiting out-of-home care that are completed, rather than the ones that are in train at the moment. I don't think we have that.

Ms WEBB - Perhaps you could find out why?

Ms C LOVELL - We can find out.

Ms WEBB - And then what I'm interested to hear about is what further developments have occurred within the context of the redesign in relation to reunification support. So, because I've just noticed there were comments last year that there is a lot of that focus coming up in the next 12 through the redesign in relation to reunification. So, what has been occurring to progress that further, and has any particular focus been given to support arrangements for the birth families post-removal?

Ms C LOVELL - Two questions. I'll start with the restoration. Yes, there has been very dedicated efforts to progressing restoration for children in out of home care. We've had additional resources and staff members focused on that. Working with the teams to identify children who can be restored, and developing plans and progressing those so they are more in train than there would have been this time last year.

Ms WEBB - The additional resources put into that space - it's within existing resources but redirected into that?

Ms C LOVELL - I believe they were new resources.

Ms WEBB - Extra resources. What was the investment in that?

Mr JAENSCH - That is part of our Strengthening the Permanency of Placement process, that was \$900 000 over three years.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. The second part of that question related to what particular support arrangements have been put in place beyond what was already there for [inaudible] families post-removal of children.

Mr JAENSCH - I would like to ask Mandy to speak to that one. There is some work under way there.

Ms CLARKE - First, in response to that, our focus when working with families into the future is about perusing options that ensure parents have some support at the front-end way before the legal process starts. That will be something we will be focusing on, in Strong Family Safe Kids, to ensure that before we arrive into a very adversarial court process - which is challenging for everybody involved - we do everything we possibly can to work with parents in a helpful manner, which includes ensuring they have adequate supports and representation, that can offer some non-legal support advocacy to them.

Ms WEBB - That's speaking about intensive support prior to removal, prior to that legal moment. I am asking about for the families in which removal has occurred, what support has been put in place for those families post-removal. The reason I am asking is that it is quite a necessary part of a successful pathway to restoration.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you I will ask Claire to respond to that.

Ms C LOVELL - In terms of new services and referral pathways, not so much, but in our case practice, yes. We are starting to really embrace the care team approach. The new practise is that happens immediately at the earliest opportunity to form a care team which is inclusive of parents, and that is our number one strategy for identifying what their unique needs are, so we can respond to those.

Ms WEBB - The care team is focused on the children or child, not the birth parents. Are they just part of the care team or is it focused on the parents?

Ms C LOVELL - Now we are using the wellbeing framework and understanding that the child's needs can only be met by the adults who care for them. They don't stand alone. Whoever is looking after a child at that time, or whoever may be looking after the child in the future, we need to be understanding and responding to their needs in order to meet the child's needs. As part of that practice framework we understand the unique circumstances of the families and responding to those through appropriate referrals, and also informal networks that may assist them.

Ms S LOVELL - Minister, can you confirm that all foster careers have and are required to have a current Working with Vulnerable Children card?

Mr JAENSCH - They are required to, yes.

Ms S LOVELL - Can you confirm that they all do?

Ms CLARKE - Internally right at this time there is a range of requirements with our foster carers that we have placed under audit, checking right across the system. Are we confident that we can advise our minister that all requirements which go broader than just those checks and ensuring that an adequate systems are in place to respond to that and importantly monitoring -

Ms S LOVELL - That was going to be my next question. Understanding that it is currently under audit, how often does that audit process take place? What is the process normally for that to be monitored?

Ms C LOVELL - At the moment it's not an audit process; it's a live project of continuously seeing which cards have expired or are coming up for expiry and making contact with those people and offering them support if they are having difficulty for some reason in renewal. If it expires, we have a process of letters of warning and continued offers of support.

Ms S LOVELL - It's an ongoing, constant process of monitoring?

Ms C LOVELL - Constant, yes.

CHAIR - How long has that been the case.

Ms C LOVELL - Sorry?

CHAIR - When did that live process start?

Ms C LOVELL - I don't really want to make a guesstimate. It has been within the last 12 months so, yes.

Ms SLOVELL - Prior to that, what was the process for that monitoring?

Ms C LOVELL - Prior to that it was part of the annual review to ensure they had a current check, but we don't want to wait until an annual review, which could be close to 12 months beyond the expiry in the worst case scenario so that's why we're using a more active monitoring process.

Ms S LOVELL - Is it a requirement for all adults in the house to have a Working with Vulnerable People card? For example, if there are other adult children or other adults in the house, are they all required to have -

Ms C LOVELL - Yes.

Ms S LOVELL - Yes. Does part of that monitoring process include those people as well?

Ms C LOVELL - Yes.

CHAIR - Minister, I would like to ask you about your department's investigation into the so-called Brahminy Program, or Many Colours One Direction -MC1D. In the report was released by your department following the ABC stories, it notes -

In 2015 the program operated under the name of the Brahminy Program. In 2015 the program changed its name to Many Colours One Direction -

as you've said -

... to reflect the beliefs of Mr Brahminy and his aboriginal father and the memory of Mr Brahminy's aboriginal mother whose life-long wish was for cultural harmony.

That's what the report said. I feel this might gloss over what actually happened. It didn't just change its name, the organisation; it went from an ACNC registered public company, limited by guarantee, to a private company owned 100 per cent by Mrs Brahminy. Are you aware of that?

Mr JAENSCH - Keep going.

CHAIR - We will come back to whether you were aware of that. If transparency were a consideration, a not-for-profit entity registered with ACNC with a turnover of \$250 000 is required to lodge an audited set of financials statements each year with ACNC.

I would have thought the need to provide the audited set of financials make it easier to monitor the activities of program participants and how the money was being spent but, instead, the department contracted a company owned by Mrs Brahminy - a private company, with no reporting requirements. Why was that?

Mr JAENSCH - This goes to the procurement of services and the due diligence undertaken, and the checks and balances in place to ensure the organisation was an appropriate place for us to do business with and to have children and have -

CHAIR - And then you could track how the money was being spent.

Mr JAENSCH - - children in our care.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr JAENSCH - I will ask Mandy to speak about the procurement process, but in this discussion the thing for me that has given me most confidence is the nature of the way the transactions happen in that we have contracts around special care packages for each of the kids. They're reviewed six-monthly. They're paid in arrears.

They represent reasonable value for money compared to similar packages that we procure from other organisations in the market. In terms of how the money flows through the company and its ownership structure, that's one matter regarding probity and accounting and audits, et cetera and due diligence.

In terms of how Tasmanian dollars are spent to buy outcomes for Tasmanian children, that is based around the special care package for the individual child which is reviewed, as I understand it, six-monthly. I might just ask Mandy to fill in any gaps then regarding the procurement and the due diligence.

CHAIR - Can you just answer if you knew, though, that this was a company - not a public company, it was a private company that you had no oversight of any of their - and they weren't actually even compliant with ACNC requirements -

Mr JAENSCH - That claim was raised and as part of the review, we checked that out and we've got a response to that issue and satisfied ourselves regarding the compliance and the -

CHAIR - The ASIC records are interesting in that.

Mr JAENSCH - I might just give Mandy a chance to locate that and I would be happy for you to speak to it, Mandy.

Ms CLARKE - The MC1D investigative report states that for reasons of completeness we looked at this issue. We did verify that the Brahminy Foundation Limited did comply with the Australian Charities not-for-profit and that was in relation to the Brahminy Foundation.

CHAIR - Not the private company, 100 per cent owned by Mrs Brahminy.

Ms CLARKE - The report does give reference, I am trying to find the page, in relation to the legal structure. The funding arrangements for special care packages - to provide some further information on that - is based on an individual basis, as the minister has mentioned. A quote in accordance with how we deliver special care packages applies across the board to every special care package provider. These services are funded essentially on an invoice basis in arrears and internally that it then cross checked. All special care package providers deliver services on an arrears basis.

CHAIR - As the deputy secretary said, the report says for reasons of completeness. I am interested in what that actually means in the sense that a private company is completely opaque you have no vision of the structure, the governance, the financial management, any of that because there is no sight. So how can that be complete and clear? It is completely opaque. I go back to the question, were you aware that you were contracting with a company that was privately owned by a single individual?

Mr JAENSCH - I think the reference to completeness has to do with, in terms of the matters that have been raised, that the review had within its scope but which may not have related directly to the safety and wellbeing and therapeutic journey of the young people in Ashley. For completeness, the review considered these matters because they have been raised or there have been questions raised and a community or public interest in them. That was the reference to completeness, rather than saying that it was in itself a complete and forensic analysis of the business structures of the organisation.

CHAIR - I go back to the question, minister. You can make that interpretation. That is fine but were you aware that you were contracting a service with a business owned wholly and solely by one individual, without any transparency around their governance or any other compliance matters they may have in terms of financial management?

Mr JAENSCH - No, bit in terms of -

CHAIR - No, were you aware of that?

Mr JAENSCH - You have asserted a range of things that we didn't know and asked me yes or no. I need to break that down because when we procure services we run our own due diligence on the provider.

CHAIR - And you did that?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, and the previous investigation or audit review that we conducted.

Ms CLARKE - The department did undertake due diligence of the operation in 2017. As a part of the investigation review we also admittedly looked at due diligence but very much from the perspective of the care for the children because it was an investigative review of care concerns. Importantly, in that process we were verifying information that we had to hand that was sourced as part of due diligence when we engaged the services of MC1D for a young person. I won't say the date because I am not 100 per cent sure of that date but it was dated back I think into 2018. Information was checked in relation to the standard checks and balances that we would require of any organisation in the delivery of special care packages and their responses was not comparable as it would be for any other organisation and we were satisfied on those grounds.

CHAIR - Even though their financials are not audited, not reviewed, that is not a concern for you, minister? This is what I am struggling with. I am not disputing the level of care here, I am asking you about the structure of a company 100 per cent owned by one person that you have contracted with.

Mr JAENSCH - I don't have specific advice with me regarding the audit status of that company.

CHAIR - It was a 100 per cent private-owned company, not subject to ACNC requirements.

Mr JAENSCH - As I said, we have satisfied ourselves as part of the normal procurement of special care packages, equivalent procurement processes, that the money we are spending and the level of service that we are getting and the competence and safety of the organisation to conduct this checks out for us. I do not have specific advice with me regarding the analysis of the business model. A review was undertaken in 2017 which went to issues of governance and that related to the resilience of the delivery model and the governance layers around it, which also gave support to continuing use of Many Colours One Direction as a special care package provider for us.

With regard to your specific question, am I satisfied regarding the specific audit statement? I would be relying on that earlier audit and our due normal diligence process.

CHAIR - The change, the company changed. It went from an ACNC-registered company to a private company with one director and it is 100 per cent owned by one person.

Mr JAENSCH - If you would like to give me the details of your question on notice, I will get a more complete response for you.

Dr SEIDEL - I thought it was a simple question: were you aware that the company structure changed from a registered charity to a privately held company? Did that influence your evaluation process or were you alarmed of why the structure of the relation changed?

CHAIR - Particularly if your review in 2017 considered governance because -

Mr GAFFNEY - Chair, I think the minister has answered that. It has been put on notice and they will return and respond to that. I think they have answered that.

Mr JAENSCH - The change of structure is noted in the review. Regarding your question, I would like to take it on notice and to be able to come back to you with a more complete response.

Ms WEBB - Out-of-home care learning incentives, finished with that one have we now? We have come to the end of the commitment on that? Let's talk about where we landed with a three-year commitment from 2018-19 through to the current year that we are in, so we are finishing up with it this year.

What has been the expenditure over the previous two years and what is allocated this year? Have we met the committed funding allocation that was originally planned? So just for others' purposes, these are the payments to incentivise young people in out-of-home care to finish year 12 or the equivalent?

Mr JAENSCH - Through the learning incentive allowance, 16 young people received the allowance in 2018, 30 young people in 2019 on completion of year 12 or equivalent in that year. To support those young people, payments were also made to 11 carers of young people who completed year 12 or equivalent in 2018, and 73 carers of young people who undertook year 11 or 12 in 2019.

I am pleased to report that we have already made payments to 17 carers at the beginning of 2020 to support young people in their care who have commenced year 11 or 12 this year. The note there is that the payments to carers are made in the beginning of the year, acknowledging that they are to assist with the extra costs of supporting the young person, the payments to the young person are more on completion, paid at the end. This is one of the election commitments Mr Fazackerley was referring to before, which is funded for this financial year and will be subject to us reviewing and considering as part of the budget process for the next budget and out-years.

Ms WEBB - In terms of the allocation of funding that was made, was it used each year and has it carried over, and therefore is it also being rolled over into the next financial year?

Mr JAENSCH - Of the \$1.2 million allocated to the Learning Incentive Allowance program over the three-year period, approximately \$353 000 has been expended up until 30 June 2020.

Ms WEBB - That's quite a reasonable amount to continue rolling over.

Mr JAENSCH - I'd say it's a very healthy amount. I'm just checking on that table we were looking at before if it has been named as carried forward as the other initiative was.

Ms WEBB - What review or assessment has been done of its effectiveness in terms of the outcomes sought, and therefore will you be making an argument for it to continue beyond the initial election commitment?

Mr JAENSCH - I'll be seeking advice from the department on those matters as we head into budget planning for next August's budget.

CHAIR - We'll need to move onto another output group very soon.

Ms WEBB - I wanted to ask about the Youth at Risk Strategy, again another three-year election commitment made back in 2018. We are in the final year of that and 34 actions over a four-year period were to be completed by July 2021. At Estimates last year we talked about the fact that eight of the 34 had been completed and 20 were still in progress. I'm interested to have an update on the 34 actions and particularly those 20 that were still in progress. Where are we at and has the funding been expended as planned across the time frame of that strategy?

Mr JAENSCH - Of the 34 actions for implementation across multiple government departments to improve outcomes for youth at risk, the majority have been completed. Those that remain are being progressed as part of the current and ongoing reform process, including Strong Families, Safe Kids and the Youth Justice Blueprint initiative, which is about planning and reform for a therapeutic Youth Justice system approach, part of which is Ashley and part of which is the broader diversion, therapeutic and rehabilitative response that we have.

In terms of delivery of the Youth at Risk Strategy, key actions completed include creation of a wellbeing assessment tool based on the six wellbeing domains in the Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework; recurrent funding of \$641 418 per annum provide to Save the Children to provide ongoing support for young people on bail and youth transitioning from juvenile detention -

Ms WEBB - Is that recurrent beyond the life of the strategy, that \$600 000 per year for Save the Children?

Mr JAENSCH - I will be receiving advice about ongoing funding, so it's not a one-off.

More key actions completed include the establishment of the Children's Advocate position; creation of an online referral service directory to assist practitioners to identify the best supports available for children and young people; funding of \$836 405 per annum to meet the operational and staffing requirements of Colville Place, the youth at risk response centre at Moonah for nine young people at a time; improved access to assertive family supports through the creation of Intensive Family Engagement Services; and the development of Youth Matter, a practical guide to increase youth engagement and participation in Tasmania.

We have also committed to the development of a second youth at risk response centre in Launceston. I understand that we've located a property there and in the Housing portfolio we'll be investing in development of a similar youth at risk facility to Colville Place, as well as youth supported accommodation through the Education First Youth Foyers in various centres.

Ms WEBB - I'll talk about those in Housing. Presumably Colville Place and the new one to come in the north are being committed to in terms of funding support beyond the Youth at Risk Strategy time and that's locked in?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

Ms WEBB - In terms of the Youth at Risk Strategy there was a lot of investment from a whole range of stakeholders in developing that and then participating in implementing the actions. Is there public accountability around the conclusion of the strategy period where we could go and see what's become of those 34 actions and which ones have carried forward already, and might be planned to?

Mr JAENSCH - There will be a closure report on the effect of this which I'll be considering when it comes up to me from the department.

Ms WEBB - You mentioned a moment ago the integrated therapeutic rehabilitative Youth Justice response. I recall back in 2018 you talked about 'Ashley Plus' and there was to be an Ashley Plus working group to develop this approach. Has that come about or what's become of that effort?

Mr JAENSCH - The blueprint is bigger than that in terms of being system-wide. When we talked about the redevelopment of Ashley we talked about it being redeveloped as a therapeutic facility, that's the infrastructure. Also accompanying that is a program of retraining and management change internally for the operation of Ashley, but the broader Youth Justice system is the subject of this blueprint project which is now afoot. I might ask Mandy if she can speak to that briefly.

Ms CLARKE - The intention of the Youth Justice blueprint in terms of its broader application is across the service system. Our interest in this is particularly from a community Youth Justice perspective. We currently have somebody at the moment undertaking a jurisdictional analysis. Our task here is to provide advice to our minister. We already have a therapeutic response in process for detention in Tasmania. We're looking into how all those pieces connect together for young people from a Youth Justice perspective generally, which will encompass community Youth Justice. It's another important piece at that front end before young people enter into detention to provide some advice to government and that will include targeted stakeholders in preparing what will be a blueprint paper that can lead us to more of a strategic directions document in relation to youth justice.

Ms WEBB - You're saying, minister, that Ashley is already a therapeutic Youth Justice model -

Mr JAENSCH - It's a work in progress.

Ms WEBB - and now you're putting community Youth Justice alongside that and the therapeutic model too. To what extent would we see Ashley as a therapeutic Youth Justice model presently?

Mr JAENSCH - As part of the redesign of Ashley there has been over the last couple of years, and most intensively over the last year or so, a new model of care being developed in Ashley and staff training to that model of care, which has less of a corrections and more therapeutic focus. It also comes to the techniques that staff there used. It goes from the way they conduct searches for security to the way situations are de-escalated through special training to bring the energy levels down to negotiate with young people and keep them safe by separating them. That will be supported by the physical work that is about to commence in

coming weeks at the Youth Detention Centre. We have signed contracts now for the physical development.

Ms WEBB - The \$7.3 million physical redevelopment?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes. We have contracts, and in coming weeks they will be starting on a series of changes to that structure that align better with the therapeutic approach and make it less like a prison and more suited to creative spaces - even things like acoustically making those spaces less alarming for young people when they become elevated. So, a range of works are underway there

That needs to sit within a broader youth justice system, which has the same ethos about its purpose and the way it works with young people. At any one time, there are 10 to 15 people in Ashley, but there may be 200 in the community Youth Justice in various programs and settings. Sometimes those young people will move from one to the other.

Ms WEBB - Your expert advice, when it was reviewed, was that Ashley could be closed, and that money invested in a community therapeutic approach for all those children - the ones who are there, and the ones who have been imprisoned in Ashley, but you did not go down that path. Do you think, objectively, an independent assessment of the model at Ashley would be deemed to be a therapeutic Youth Justice model?

Mr JAENSCH - As I said before, it is a work in progress. It has to do with the physical setting, and also the training and the conduct and the methods used inside the fence, and we are working on both.

Ms WEBB - I understand your assertion about the changes, but do you think that by an independent expert assessment it would objectively be deemed to be a therapeutic Youth Justice model?

Mr JAENSCH - I am not an expert, but I expect you would find it is a facility and community of practice in transition.

Ms WEBB - So perhaps not yet. Thank you.

Ms LOVELL - Minister, can you confirm whether there are any staff currently at Ashley who have had complaints or reports of behaviour or allegations levelled against them that are linked in any way to the investigation that had commenced at Ashley recently, who have not been stood down?

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you. As you are aware, there is an investigation with an independent inquirer underway, regarding three people who have been stood down from Ashley. We need to let that do its work, and it will roll into a commission of inquiry once that is established early in the new year.

Ms LOVELL - That commission of inquiry has not been established. My question was whether there are any other staff that have not yet been stood down?

Mr JAENSCH - It's being established. The strong advice we received is that we need to let the inquiries do their job, and make all of our information available to the inquirers, and

subsequently to the commission of inquiry, and not to, in public discourse, start searching into details of related matters. We now have an inquiry to invest all of our information in. All concerns or allegations that come up should be referred into that process, and it may, we are advised, compromise those investigations if we continue to have speculation on involvement of people over time in relation to various allegations.

We know there have been a couple of instances over the last week or so where people have maybe drawn their own conclusions from little bits of information being available, and I don't want to go there.

Ms LOVELL - To be clear, minister, I will take it from what you have said that you are not willing to answer the question.

Mr JAENSCH - No, I would prefer not to. Thank you.

Output Group 2

Independent Children's and Youth Person's Review Service

2.1 Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People -

Mr GAFFNEY - It is not really a question here. I have contacted the Commissioner's office, there was no issue with the Budget - they do great work. I noticed it was \$7000 for next year's budget, and the year after it goes up again another \$6500. There is no question here.

Output Group 4

Disability Services and Community Development

4.1 Community Services -

Mr VALENTINE - I am interested to know what sort of periodic interaction you have with the Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People?

Mr JAENSCH - I am meant to be having my regular catch-up with the commissioner right about now.

Mr VALENTINE - How often do you do that?

Mr JAENSCH - I have a regular meeting scheduled with the commissioner today. My calendar shows it was cancelled because I am here.

Mr VALENTINE - What sort of things do you discuss with regard to the aspirations that the Commissioner for Children and Young People might have, and how you might apply them within Department of Communities Tasmania?

Mr JAENSCH - The commissioner generally gives me a broad update of what her activities have been in the intervening period. She also copies me in and writes to me frequently

where she has made a submission to an inquiry, or where she sees the need for an issue to be addressed.

We have a lot of communication by correspondence, but then we have regular meetings where we discuss those in more detail - like the matters that were raised in the review of Many Colours One Direction, like the development of guidelines for media reporting on vulnerable children, and issues affecting them, where we see that the commissioner may have a role in leading some of that discussion from outside of government, and working with the media as well. They are the sorts of matters we discuss. It is a good opportunity for us to get into some detail in a fairly informal meeting, outside the official exchange of formal correspondence and reports and things during the year.

Ms WEBB - Minister, I would like to talk about the gambling support program. I am interested in clarifying your understanding of your role in this space, given that when we discussed this in Estimates last year, you made some comments, and I will quote, that -

My responsibilities are in how we deal with problem gamblers.

Another one was -

My job is to manage how we deal with people who have gambling problems.

That was your statement of your role at that time. Do you now have a fuller understanding of your role, given that the gambling support program is, in fact, tasked to identify, prevent and reduce gambling harm? That is well beyond how we deal with problem gamblers: identify, prevent and reduce gambling harm.

Perhaps you would like to clarify your understanding this year on the scope of your role in relation to the gambling support program under your remit?

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you. Yes, we are both right. The focus of my responsibilities are to do with harm, and people who experience harm from gambling - the 0.6 per cent or thereabouts of people at highest risk, and the 1.4 per cent or 1.6 per cent of the population at moderate risk.

Part of the response to their needs is to work in a preventive way, and work through a community approach to support people affected by gambling problems, to educate the community more generally, and to develop resilience in the community to enable them to identify and respond to that harm when they see it.

It is a broader remit, but it is focused on people who experience harm from gambling.

Ms WEBB - You would understand though that your remit is to prevent gambling harm which is therefore focused ahead of people actually experiencing it, so it's not just people experiencing it.

Just to clarify your understanding of the figures that you've quoted, to be honest about those figures you would need to say that our data tells us that at least that many Tasmanians

are experiencing gambling harm currently. There's an acknowledged underestimate in prevalent studies in this space by the people who undertake them so our data tells us that at least that many.

Do you know how many Tasmanians that represents, the people who are at least in those three categories of harm?

Mr JAENSCH - I have various documents which go to the proportions of the population. I don't have an exact number of people.

Ms WEBB - Let me assist you with it.

Mr JAENSCH - I expect that you would.

Ms WEBB - Under the present population of Tasmania, the three categories have identified harm where we know at least that many Tasmanians are actually experiencing harm is about 27 000 Tasmanians in those three categories. We know there are at least that many, plus the Productivity Commission tells us five to 10 others around them are experiencing that. So if we say five - we take the most conservative and we take the lowest of that underestimate - 27 000 - that's putting us well over 100 000 Tasmanians who are being directly harmed by gambling.

Do you accept those figures, minister, as the most conservative estimate?

Mr JAENSCH - The figures that I have around harm - you've quoted that problem gamblers at the last Social and Economic Impact Study - SEIS - in 20, 0.6 per cent of the highest risk; 1.4 per cent moderate risk; 4.8 per cent, low risk. I think you're putting those categories together and then applying a multiplier to them. I can see what you're doing there but -

Ms WEBB - I'm putting those categories together and arriving at 27 000 Tasmanians in that underestimate.

Mr JAENSCH - You're free to assemble that from those proportions and add your multipliers. I don't challenge it; I accept what you have to say. I'm not contesting that there's that number of people who are affected by gambling.

Ms WEBB - Just to clarify, minister, I'm not adding a multiplier. Those are the figures.

Excellent, so we're agreed that on the most conservative estimate on -

Mr JAENSCH - You keep on adding layers of more conservative so don't -

CHAIR - Don't verbal the minister.

Ms WEBB - On the figures we have available to us, we have 27 000 Tasmanians.

Mr JAENSCH - If you say so, if those maths work. I'm going to stay with the percentages that have come to me through the formal documents that inform what we do.

Ms WEBB - Exactly, and I'm using those figures and it's useful to place them as actual people in our state, so well over 100 000 Tasmanians are affected by gambling harm currently on our most conservative estimate.

Mr JAENSCH - By your maths.

Ms WEBB - No, by your figures

Mr JAENSCH - By your maths.

Ms WEBB - By your figures, minister, and by the Productivity Commission's estimate that between five to 10 people around every person harmed are also being harmed and I'm using the five.

Mr JAENSCH - I will go the Ministerial Council on Gambling defining problem gambling which is 0.6 of 1 per cent of our population -

Ms WEBB - At least.

Mr JAENSCH - is categorised by difficulties in limiting money and/or time spent on gambling, which leads to adverse consequences for the gambler, others and for the community; 0.6 of 1 per cent is what I'm linking on the SEIS and the discussion paper for the fifth SEIS that's run its course recently and sought submissions. I will stick to those definitions.

If you want to add other categories of risk and -

Ms WEBB - I'm not adding any, I'm using yours, just to be clear.

Mr JAENSCH - I'll be clear as well: 0.6 of 1 per cent relating to problem gambling that causes adverse consequences for the gamblers, others and the community.

Ms WEBB - The harm that's caused in those other two categories of harm is also well-recognised so I'd hate to think you're dismissing harm caused in the moderate-risk and the lower risk category.

Mr JAENSCH - No, I'm just being more specific.

Ms WEBB - I would hate to think that you would be underplaying that harm.

Just to speak about the COVID-19 situation for a moment, in relation to the shutdown period when our highest risk and most harmful gambling activity of poker machines was not available to people, we had an alleviation of harm in that space for that period of time. Then looking at the intention to reopen gaming areas in venues at the end of June, what interactions did you have around the planning for that reopening of venues? Is there any extra investment or activity that should be undertaken within the context of the Gambling Support Program, to manage and respond to, and support that reopening?

Mr JAENSCH - During the COVID-19 social distancing restrictions, which we are still in, but certainly during the closure of venues, the Gambling Support Program provided clear

and concise gambling information via the COVID-19 website and other outlets, and the gambling fact sheet, which are accessible -

Ms WEBB - Excuse me, minister, there was nothing on the COVID-19 website about gambling. A lot of other risk areas during that time were well highlighted - things like additional alcohol use, other drug use, mental health conditions. In none of those COVID-19 pages was gambling mentioned, and no support lines were listed in those sections.

Mr JAENSCH - I'm advised the Gambling Support Program - GSP - provided clear and concise gambling information via COVID-19 and gambling fact sheets which are accessible through the following sites: the GSP homepage, the Know your Odds homepage, Communities Tasmania Services Impacted by COVID-19 website, the Treasury Liquor and Gaming website, and the Know your Odds Facebook page.

Ms WEBB - But not the central COVID-19 webpage for the Government, where we alerted the community to all sorts of other support and additional risks?

Mr JAENSCH - My advice relates to the COVID-19 fact sheets.

CHAIR - Just while the minister is looking, I think we need to make sure we wrap this up by 12.45 p.m. because we do need to move on to Housing. That is not just this line item, it is all the rest.

Ms WEBB - I will just have a couple more minutes on this and then I'm happy to move on.

Mr JAENSCH - That information directs people to the suite of services that the GSP provides, including in person; individual and group counselling; local community education; community development provided in business hours by Anglicare, the Gambling Helpline Tasmania; the telephone-based counselling referrals information service-24 hours a day by Turning Point Eastern Health; and the Gambling Helpline, which provides online counselling referrals and information provided 24-hours a day by Turning Point, as well.

Ms WEBB - My question to you is in regards to the central COVID-19 website which was the Government's key platform of communication about this time. It contained absolutely nothing about additional risks with gambling, about support line numbers, even though it did cover that for a whole range of other comparable risks.

CHAIR - That's a statement, okay, so we need to -

Ms WEBB - Were you aware of that, minister? Were you aware that the COVID-19 website had nothing about gambling risks?

Mr JAENSCH - I will check into that. I have reference here to a COVID-19 fact sheet.

Ms WEBB - To move on from that, I would like to, because this Budget in its forward Estimates, go into the time period of the new model proposed by your Government in licensing. Part of that changes some arrangements that impact your responsibilities around the Gambling Support Program, because of the changes to community support levy, and I would like to ask you some questions about that.

Last year in Estimates we discussed the fact that under the model that's being proposed, the Community Support Levy will increase, partly because it is being applied to casinos for the first time ever, which is a positive thing, and partly because the Government has committed to doubling it and keeping that figure high.

My questions in relation to that are about the uncertainty that remains, particularly after the consultation conducted in February this year about matters to do with the framework.

Currently, the Community Support Levy is split up as half, 50 per cent going to gambling support, 25 per cent to charitable organisations and 25 per cent to Sport and Recreation organisations.

The consultation document put out in February this year identified this proposed change would be an opportunity to review how the Community Support Levy is spent. When will that review process be occurring and who will be involved in doing that review?

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you. I don't have detail on that with me. I expect I would need to get that from Ingrid. I invite Ingrid Ganley to the table.

Ms GANLEY - To answer that question, the review process is actually sitting not within the Department of Communities Tasmania, but through the Liquor and Gaming and Finance section of government. As a key stakeholder, we would participate in any reviews occurring with information and data we collect, and also the programs and support we currently have in place.

Ms WEBB - Are you aware of the time frame, minister, or is Ingrid, when those matters will be reviewed and then decided upon under the new model?

Mr JAENSCH - As Ingrid mentioned, that's being managed by another department.

Ms GANLEY - I'm not aware at this point in the time frame.

Ms WEBB - With the increased amount of CSL collected under the new model and potentially topped up by the Government, are you expecting the proportion of that increased amount will remain at 50 per cent that goes to gambling support programs under your remit?

Mr JAENSCH - I won't speculate on that. There's been the consultation process you've mentioned and a review coming up, which we'll participate in and put forward all of the information we have. That will inform what that breakdown is in the future.

Ms WEBB - Would be disturbed by the idea less than 50 per cent of the ultimate CSL under that model might be devoted to gambling support programs, knowing 50 per cent money collected is coming from people who have a problem with gambling?

Mr JAENSCH - I'm going stay with my previous answer. I'm not going to speculate on how I'm going to feel about a hypothetical.

Ms WEBB - It wouldn't concern you then, necessarily, if that proportion dropped.

Mr JAENSCH - That's just the other side of the same argument.

Ms WEBB - It's interesting as the minister responsible.

Mr JAENSCH - We'll be in that process and putting forward the data we have. We're very grateful and very supportive of the increasing of the Community Support Levy and there being more resources to distribute. We'll be part of the process of determining how this is distributed.

Ms WEBB - We certainly don't know at this stage there'll be more resources devoted to gambling support programs.

Mr JAENSCH - Well, we don't have the answers on lots of things. The department has run consultation and we'll be part of the next step.

Ms WEBB - Will you give a commitment to advocating for 50 per cent of the new amount to be collected to be devoted into the space your responsible for, which we know is highly important?

Mr JAENSCH - We will be advocating for the needs as we understand them through the work we do.

CHAIR - Are we ready to go to 90.2?

Ms WEBB - We can if you like, unless other people have things under 4.1. I could speak about other things under 4.1.

CHAIR - We need to prioritise. If you've urgent questions, go, but if not, we'll move on.

Ms WEBB - That's fine we can move on.

Output Group 90

COVID-19 Response and Recovery

90.4 Emergency Accommodation Support -

CHAIR - This is the funding to assist those who have to isolate - that is the emergency accommodation.

Ms WEBB - It is actually not clear because the terminology used in these papers is actually different.

CHAIR - Page 26.

Ms WEBB - Two things are listed on page 26 - an emergency accommodation assistance listed and there emergency accommodation support frontline workers. I think you were referring to that second one, Chair.

CHAIR - No, it is not. We have already dealt with the other one under another portfolio.

Ms WEBB - That is right, exactly so - the terminology is different because it is called emergency accommodation assistance on page 26 and in this line item it is called emergency accommodation support and the numbers do not align. I do not see in the description on page 26, a one off half-a-million dollar investment described. Perhaps you could clarify this line item 90.4 emergency accommodation support is that half-a-million dollars allocated in this financial year and what specifically this is delivering.

Mr JAENSCH - Emergency accommodation assistance or support?

CHAIR - Are they different, minister or are they the same?

Mr JAENSCH - Emergency accommodation support is associated with emergency accommodation for frontline workers.

Ms LOVELL - Perhaps the question is the line item on page 52 - 90.4, Emergency Accommodation Support, has a one-off payment of \$500 000 - what is that for?

Ms WEBB - That is what I just asked him.

Mr JAENSCH - COVID support and recovery emergency accommodation support 500. Yes.

Mr PERVAN - That was an allocation from the Premier in the early days of the COVID response to cover everything basically other than the emergency accommodation for front-line workers. It covered the quarantine hotels, providing accommodation to people who could not safely isolate anywhere else. It did not cover the safe sleeping spaces initiative for homeless people, but it did cover quarantine for people who could not safely quarantine at home for instance because of reasons of family violence and so on. Largely it got gobbled up by quarantine hotels. We also provided emergency accommodation for some temporary visa holders and some others who just found themselves caught out in those early days where they did not have anywhere else to go.

CHAIR - There is no future funding for that?

Mr PERVAN - We hope not, because we hope we do not need it.

CHAIR -Can I clarify this minister, Professor Pervan is talking about is funding already been expended. This line item is about \$500 000 in the 2021 year spent after June and is all expended.

Mr PERVAN - Very much so.

CHAIR -And there is no note to reflect that in the Budget Papers.

Mr JAENSCH - As I think you will recall there was a series of announcements every week as we went into the pandemic and made decisions about the responses to be required, put things in place for what we knew and then they were superseded often by other programs in return, but, again, Mr Pervan might be able to add.

Mr PERVAN - The Community Support Fund is also a source of funding also used at the Premier's direction to cover the cost of the quarantine hotels. It is very much the number of hotels and their expenses are funded through -

CHAIR -It would not have gone anywhere near covering that, would it?

Mr PERVAN - -are funded through an appropriation held in Finance-General as we liaise with Treasury, basically on a weekly basis on what the demand levels coming in. With the impending international arrivals, we will see the occupancy go back up. We are over 8000. We have processed just over 8000 people through the quarantine hotels since the beginning of the event and will expect that to leap up again. It very much is funded in response, because it is still part of an emergency response to the demand for quarantine which is adjusted in accordance with Public Health advice and what's happening interstate and overseas with infection rates and so on.

CHAIR - I don't what the plan is, minister, for the international arrivals - I sort of hope they don't come here, quite frankly, but anyway, that's a personal view. So, there is no money in this area - maybe it's all in Finance-General - I just want you clarify yes or no on that.

In relation to the cost of quarantine hotels, the cost of other people - like Tasmanians returning from Victoria and other places, or people coming to live in Tasmania from other places - it's not a full cost-recovery cost that they're charged. So, there's still a significant out-of-pocket I imagine. Unless you charge the international returnees the full cost, recovery will be much more than what they're paying now and there's still a gap here. Where is that funded from?

Mr JAENSCH - I think that's not in that - it's in Finance-General and rolling provisions.

Mr VALENTINE - I have a question on safe sleeping spaces, which you mentioned.

CHAIR - That's next. We'll get to that.

Mr VALENTINE - Next? Is it a Housing issue? It's not Community Services?

CHAIR - No, we'll get to that later on. That will be after lunch. Any more emergency accommodation support? No.

Output Group 90

COVID-19 Response and Recovery

90.5 No Interest Loan Scheme Increase -

Mr VALENTINE - I am interested in this. It's \$500 000 extra per year for two years. Can you let us know how much loan capital is currently being managed by NILS Tasmania?

Mr JAENSCH - I will see if I can do that. Do you know John Hooper? He's been flat out. He's an innovator and he's doing a great job, and it's come at a very important time. He's been able to do that, particularly for people who might otherwise have ended up with payday lenders and other unscrupulous operators.

Regarding funds under their management. I have a lot of detail. I'm looking for the one you have asked for. We know what the value of loans for various periods are, but I'm not quite sure what the total value of their pool is. I'll get you a value on the pool.

Mr VALENTINE - I've got an extra question on that. So, the one you've got.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

Ms WEBB - Do you want to put the second question so that they can maybe take that on notice?

Mr VALENTINE - Well, can you advise the average loan length, amount borrowed, and default rate on NILS loans?

Mr JAENSCH - Loans issued in 2019-20 - I've got a number and a total value. I don't know if I've got an average value of loans, but microfinance loans in 2019-20 totalled 2795 loans.

Mr VALENTINE - What constitutes micro? What value? There's 2000 of them?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes. Loan programs - no interest loans up to \$1500 for household items and services. I would expect those are the microfinance, and no interest microbusiness loans of up to 3000, and low interest step-up loans of up to \$3000 for household items.

Mr VALENTINE - Do you have a breakdown of the numbers?

Mr JAENSCH - I have only microfinance and microbusiness, unless someone else here has a breakdown?

Thank you for coming back in. We can properly handle this on notice if you want but if you have information to hand, Mr Valentine was going with a breakdown of average value of loans across the different -

CHAIR - Have you been at the table before?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

Mr VALENTINE - Average loan length, amount borrowed, and default rate on NILS' loans.

Mr JAENSCH - There are different categories of NILS loans, microfinance, microbusiness, and I see a third one, step-up loans as well.

Ms GANLEY - We would need to take that one on notice because of the detail.

Mr VALENTINE - I'll put that on notice. The amount of capital currently being managed by NILS?

Mr JAENSCH - I don't have a figure in this paper on the total value of capital we have churning, mainly the value of loans at a point in time or issued in a period, so we could get that as well as part of the pack.

Mr VALENTINE - Can you tell us how many NILS loans have been made in Tasmania and the geographic spread of those loans, noting that the only NILS office appears to be in Battery Point?

Mr JAENSCH - NILS has been working on expanding its access points for NILS, including through the network of some Neighbourhood Houses and other outlets as well, so that particularly during COVID-19 there were more accessible access points for it and they have also been doing more telephone-based low-doc approaches to establishing these loans as well.

Accessibility has been a big push. It has been part of what has been funded with the extra money that we have provided to them and it is one of the reasons, as I understand it, the funding is split over two-and-a-half financial years - to enable them to initially get up to speed, get those access points and those systems running, which they did very quickly and then be able to roll them out over a longer period.

Mr VALENTINE - Can you give us the geographic spread by region?

Ms GANLEY - We would be able to get it.

Mr VALENTINE - I will ask that on notice.

Ms WEBB - You can apply for NILS loans through a lot of emergency relief providers and other support services statewide.

Mr VALENTINE - Geographic spread of current loans. That is all I need.

Ms WEBB - I've got a quick one on this one because it is the extra money you tipped in during COVID-19 to NILS. I would like to understand what proportion of that has been utilised for loans for education devices.

Mr JAENSCH - I thought you might have a reason. I think we have here that the use of loans for computer education devices increased from 5 per cent of the activity to 15 per cent in the April-June peak pandemic quarter.

Ms WEBB - During the shutdown when children were at home and needed to access school. I would like a number of how many families then took loans out to get devices to provide their children with that access, and do you regard it as appropriate in a free public education system that we would require low-income families to have to take out a loan for their child to access a free public education system during a shutdown?

Mr JAENSCH - Do you want the number of families that received loans for this purpose?

Ms WEBB - Yes, I do.

CHAIR - I am not sure the detail would be there that says they bought it for the child rather than for themselves because some adults would be right into work from home.

Mr JAENSCH - And for entertainment as well for the kids.

Ms WEBB - I'd be interested to know how many worked for educational purposes during the school shutdown. Was there intersection between the efforts being made in the Department of Education to provide children with access to digital options through dongles and devices through schools and people feeling they needed to take out a loan as a low-income family so their child could have a device to access the free public education system?

Mr JAENSCH - I'm sure there'll be crossover. I know there was provision made by the Department of Education to assist children to access online learning. I know that in out-of-home care we provided assistance to foster carers and foster households in order to be able to not only procure devices but also data to support that. People have also used NILS as a way to get devices as well. As to a breakdown of exactly what they were used for, I don't know what we can get or hope to derive from that because I'm sure that, as with any device, the work computer or mum's phone or whatever ends up getting used for lots of other purposes as well.

Ms WEBB - Let's see what information we can find to see whether there was an educational intent as the primary reason for taking out a loan by low income families so the child could access education as opposed to another option, say through DoE, where they would be provided with something, as was done quite effectively through out-of-home care.

Mr VALENTINE - And if it's possible to get a broad set of categories that loans were provided for as well?

CHAIR - What sort of items, you mean?

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, items, purposes. I'm not interested in getting exact numbers.

Ms WEBB - With that extra COVID money, do you mean, Rob?

Mr VALENTINE - It'd be good to know exactly what -

Mr JAENSCH - I suggest that we follow up that request from the record of the meeting and ask NILS what breakdowns and what numbers et cetera they can provide us from information they already held, as opposed to asking them to manually create or go back and create data for us.

Mr VALENTINE - That's okay, but it would be good, as the member to my right has just mentioned, during COVID what the purposes were and if they can separate that out.

Ms WEBB - For this extra allocation that was given.

Output Group 90

COVID-10 Response and Recovery

90.6 Child Safety System -

Ms WEBB - I think we've covered some of this already because it was this extra money during the COVID response that allowed for things. I'm a little confused in terms of the Budget Papers because on page 25 under the heading 'COVID-19 Response and Recovery Measures', the first one described is the Child Safety System, which I assumed correlated to this line item, 90.6. The amount described on page 25 is funding of \$2.1 million provided in 2021 to support a range of child safety initiatives and it also talks about a total of \$2.5 million having been provided over two years from 2019-20. There are already two different amounts there and when I look at page 53 at the actual line item in revenue from appropriation, that amount is a one-off amount in 2020-21 for \$1.25 million. Could you talk me through those different numbers?

Mr JAENSCH - Rod is on his way. I would think it has to do more with the timing of budgets.

Ms WEBB - Some might have been redirected from within existing resources and some might have been new funding. I'm interested to hear a little bit about that.

Mr FAZACKERLEY - In looking to the numbers, if we look at the revenue from the appropriation number that you're talking about, the words in the front on page 25 are correct, so it is a total of \$2.5 million appropriated over two years and that is reflected with \$2.1 million in 2020-21. What we see in the revenue for appropriation figures in the back is in fact a budget disclosure issue that might be confusing here because the prior year 2019-20 figures in the Budget Papers reflect original budget allocations and of course the original budget allocation for COVID-19 was zero because it did not exist at the start of the year.

We see the second part of it with a similar comment to the emergency accommodation support, which was \$1 million over two years, half a million in each year and we only see the \$500 000 in the second year. For the current year, the 2020-21 Budget, because the original allocation in 2019-20 was zero, that does not show in that revenue from the appropriation table.

Ms WEBB - It would only show it in actual at a later date.

Mr FAZACKERLEY - It would show it in actual at a later date, that is quite correct. I think that is where the confusion is. The narrative in the front of the paper is correct and that is the narrative we should go to.

Mr JAENSCH - That is why NILS is only showing as \$500 000 as well.

Ms WEBB - Thanks for clarifying that, I appreciate it.

We have described some of those elements already that are listed on page 25. I note about halfway down the dot point list there is \$480 000 to enable therapeutic residential care programs to keep one additional house open for a six-month period. Was that to ensure social distancing could be maintained or because of additional children or young people who are going into that therapeutic residential care space during the time?

Mr JAENSCH - I will ask Mandy Clarke to comment on that.

Ms CLARKE - That allocation of funding through this year is a contingency to ensure that through the COVID-19 pandemic we have extra capability if we have to support young people, either young people in out-of-home care but, more importantly, we are turning our minds to under-16 unaccompanied children, particularly if in the event there was to be an outbreak further because we have come through the pandemic now, but that was what that allocation was for. It is through our therapeutic residential care service provider CatholicCare.

Ms WEBB - How many beds are in that additional house you are keeping open in case?

Ms CLARKE - I might take that on notice so I give you an accurate answer. It is either four or five.

Ms WEBB - Okay. Can I also ask about the second dot point on this list, which is the one-off \$200 payment for children and young people in care to ensure they have internet access and are provided with mobile technology? How long did you expect the \$200 to last in providing internet access and what kind of mobile technology, in addition to internet access, did you expect them to get for \$200?

Mr JAENSCH - I will ask Ms Clarke to answer that.

Ms CLARKE - I don't have that information with me at the moment. I am not entirely sure if that is an accurate statement in the papers here. We actually have an allocation of a technology fund that we made available, so perhaps for reasons of accuracy we will take your question on notice and provide information in relation to that particular item.

Ms WEBB - If there were a fund, perhaps you could provide information in relation to the fund, as in how many children it provided funding to, the quantum of funding, what the funding was for and if it is still available, or have they been provided with one-off funds and are unable to come back for extra assistance if circumstances were requiring that?

Ms CLARKE - Where funds have not been fully expended through the original allocation or carried forward, they sit as contingency funds specifically allocated to COVID and COVID management. In response to your earlier question around that data, we will provide that information.

Ms WEBB - From your knowledge of it now, though, what was the quantum in that fund? The total amount of funding made available in the fund? If you don't know that is fine.

Ms CLARKE - If you keep going I can add it to the other bits.

Ms WEBB - I just have one further question.

Ms CLARKE - In relation to that technology fund we refer to for children in care, \$260 000 was allocated, 71 applications were approved at a total cost of \$67 920. The remaining funds have been held over for other COVID-19-related needs, as I have indicated.

Ms WEBB - How did people young people and children and their carers in the system become aware that that was available to them?

Ms CLARKE - Our Child Safety officers really mobilised through this period to ensure that every household was aware. This also related to ensuring that any children in care had their educational needs met and they had the technology available to them.

Ms WEBB - The system you had in place to do that allows you to feel confident, minister, that no children in care had their education interrupted or jeopardised through the lack of access to devices or internet access?

Mr JAENSCH - What this shows is the significant and very reasonable attempts made to ensure that there is provision. The other thing we did was to ensure that there was clear and consistent messaging when schools were for all intents and purposes closed but they were still available for the education of children whose families couldn't provide a supportive environment for learning at home.

That was spoken about in various ways but we landed on that language. Partly it would service the sons and daughters of people who were working in our hospitals and our response and essential services. Partly also for people who for other reasons couldn't support their kids and provide a safe place to support them learning at home. For those families there was encouragement for them to avail themselves of schools still being open and their children being able to be supervised there through those periods.

Ms WEBB - Just to return to the question I put to you then. Notwithstanding that schools were available and notwithstanding the provision was there for young people and children in out-of-home care to be provided with digital and internet access, as the person who is actually statutorily responsible, can you be 100 per cent confident that no children in out-of-home care had their education interrupted or jeopardised?

Mr JAENSCH - Everybody had everything interrupted this year. Everything was turned on its head. What I think we have laid out in this and other hearings is a range of measures have been put out, promoted, made available, made provision for, communicated to the best of our abilities using every reasonable effort across the board. You keep on asking me to give definitive statements. I will not. We have worked hard to ensure we are covering the field across our areas responsibility and where they overlap with Education and other providers of services.

Ms WEBB - Where I was going to with that, was there a process that was surveying or checking in or auditing across the carers in out-of-home care who are caring for the children under your statutory responsibility to assess that their needs were met during that time? Have we done that as a check back which would give you the confidence I was asking about?

Mr JAENSCH - I would ask the deputy secretary to correct me if I am wrong, but as is the way with lots of things in the response to an emergency a rapid assessment is made and provision is put in place. It is deployed through whatever means we have. Through direct mail, through communication, through Child Safety officers, through the regular follow-up and planning meetings that are done with those households to make sure they have what they need and if they are aware of the services or programs or assistance available to them. I don't think that there was an initial 'Stop everything, we need to do a survey.'.

Ms WEBB - I'm not talking about [what?] initially I asked you about post.

Mr JAENSCH - It is more based on our working knowledge of the cohort. Mandy can speak about what follow-up and evaluation there might have been.

Ms CLARKE - I will just go one step back on this topic. What we did as a key informant was quickly formed stakeholder engagement forums. It was almost a bend of the non-government sector and our government agencies. You wouldn't be able to tell who was government and who was non-government.

They met frequently. We facilitated those. We ensured we stayed on top of those. We maintained issues registers so we could keep track of any issue raised. That was a primary mechanism we used to ensure we were identifying issues, and as those issues arose, that we were responding to them.

In relation to the children in care, we did research work and an analysis of our own data, particularly in relation to older carers, so that we had particular people who were vulnerable on our radar.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

CHAIR - Any other questions on that line item? We will move to 90.15. I will come back to that one - TasCOSS.

Output Group 90

COVID-19 Response and Recovery

90.15 TasCOSS -

Mr GAFFNEY - It just says in the statement \$175 000 each over two years. What was the money for? Can you explain that to us? I'm not overly fussed by it, but just -

Mr JAENSCH - Off the top of my head, it's \$350 000 in total to TasCOSS over two years to support its network of member organisations, to enable them to respond to COVID-related changes. Now, I believe in particular there was an IT and communication aspect to that in managing their networks. Mike, do you have any supplementary information?

Mr PERVAN - No, there's not.

Mr JAENSCH - No. But it was a provision to enable them to ramp up the capabilities, particularly the communications capabilities of their member organisations to support the communities they service through COVID-19.

Mr GAFFNEY - How do you evaluate whether that money is spent effectively? Is that an expectation from TasCOSS to file a report? Is the \$175 000 a yearly thing or can they use \$200 000 in the first year and \$150 000 in the second year? I would like a bit more information. If you don't have that now, we might put -

Mr JAENSCH - No, no.

Mr GAFFNEY - If you have it, that's great. If not, we can ask.

Mr JAENSCH - I will take it on notice, but I expect that any transfer of funds like that would be via an agreement with a defined purpose and an expectation of acquittal to go with that.

Mr GAFFNEY - We might put that on notice.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes. It is budgeted in two financial years so I expect that it is staged over that time.

Mr GAFFNEY - That's fine. We'll question that.

Mr JAENSCH - We will get that for you.

Mr GAFFNEY - That's good. Thank you.

CHAIR - Any other questions on the TasCOSS line? Okay. Rob just wondered if he could put an additional question about the NILS scheme on notice to you about any unmet demand, I think it was.

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, basically whether it's oversubscribed, if you can put it that way.

Mr JAENSCH - Okay.

CHAIR - If you're happy, we will add that to the list of questions on notice?

Mr VALENTINE - Are you happy for that to be added?

Mr JAENSCH - I'm very happy.

Mr VALENTINE - Thank you.

CHAIR - We have already touched on the capital investment program with regard to the Ashley Youth Detention Centre refurbishment. I don't know if there are any further questions on that or anything else you want to add to that line, minister, regarding that project?

Mr JAENSCH - No. Just that contracts have now been signed with a builder. That work is expected to commence within weeks. A feature of the build that has now been included is the development of a step-down accommodation facility within the Ashley complex for young people who are starting the process of transitioning out of Ashley to give them a more independent living experience and to support them with the skills that they will need in the accommodation they go into afterwards.

CHAIR - In the community.

Mr JAENSCH - That's, again, part of the therapeutic approach, we're conditioning them for independent living or being able to live independently when they move out of detention.

CHAIR - Any other questions on that matter? Thank you, minister. We will break for lunch now and we will come back and start Housing and move through Housing and then go onto Minister for Environment and Parks.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you.

The Committee suspended from 12.55 p.m. to 1.45 p.m.

Output Group 3 Housing Services

3.1 Housing Services -

CHAIR - We will start with Output Group 3.1 under the Housing portfolio, Housing Services.

Ms LOVELL - Minister, I believe you have confirmed the current housing stock number is at 12 509. Is that correct?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

Ms LOVELL - In September 2019, it was 12 504, so that is a net increase of five dwellings, yet the target you have set or the commitment you have made is to see a net increase by July 2024 of up to 1582 dwellings.

Mr JAENSCH - That is the new builds, the 1500.

Ms LOVELL - So 1500 new builds -

Mr JAENSCH - Which is different to net.

Ms LOVELL - Let me just have a look at that because it was pretty clear from what you said yesterday -

Mr JAENSCH - I am going to qualify those numbers because there is a little more to them. The 12 509 is social housing across public housing, Aboriginal housing, community housing and other. The others are relatively small amounts so we will not be distracted by them. This is the housing stock owned by the Director of Housing, whether Housing Tasmania is managing it or whether it is being managed by another party, typically a community housing provider. The community housing providers also have their own stock on top of that, some of which will have been transferred to them or built by them under grants and that they own through programs that we have run. The 12 509 refers to the number of social housing properties owned by the Director of Housing, not the total number of social housing properties available in Tasmania or receiving allocations from the social housing register.

Ms LOVELL - I think people want to understand the commitments you have made around increases in the number of social housing dwellings and what that means in real terms for people who are waiting on the list for social housing. Perhaps we will start from scratch because this is a little confusing with what was said yesterday and what we are hearing now. Currently, social housing owned by the Director of Housing Tasmania is 12 509. The 1582 net increase you referenced yesterday in social housing dwellings - actually, let us take it back a step. You have made a number of commitments around the number of houses that will be built, new social housing to be delivered. Can you tell the committee now what is that target? How

many new homes are you going to be delivering over whatever time period you'd like to say - what commitments have you made around new social housing?

Ms WEBB - You could date it from 2015, the start of the action plan.

Ms LOVELL - No, I'd like from now.

Mr JAENSCH - The overall target from the beginning of Action Plan 1 is 2351 new social housing dwellings.

Ms LOVELL - What was the date that commenced?

Mr JAENSCH - It's 2015.

Ms LOVELL - Okay.

Mr JAENSCH - We acknowledge that in the first four-year action plan, the supply really started to hit the ground in the latter part of that first four-year period. A lot of work was done prior to that to set it up, to scope that work, to enter into the partnerships and to tender with our community housing providers and others, but the housing really started to turn up at the end of AHAP 1 in the fourth year and has maintained a strong rate of delivery since then.

Ms LOVELL - Putting that aside - numbers, we're talking about 2551 new dwellings from the beginning of the action plan -

Mr JAENSCH - No, 2351, and that's made up of 1051 social housing dwellings under action plans 1 and 2; 300 social housing dwellings under the Commonwealth debt waiver; and 1000 social housing dwellings under the Community Housing Growth Program that's been announced most recently with the additional \$100 million.

Ms LOVELL - You can understand why this is confusing for people when they hear all these numbers thrown around. What people want to know is: how many social houses there are and how long they will have to wait?

Mr JAENSCH - People are easily confused and it's not straightforward when you consider that there is a significant program as well of investment in housing that is not standalone social housing dwellings but equally as important for addressing our waiting lists like supported accommodation.

Ms LOVELL - I think that complicates matters.

Mr JAENSCH - That's true but we need to talk about the whole spectrum of delivery because not everyone is on the list waiting for a house.

Ms LOVELL - Correct, but we can simplify it for people. We can make this clearer that it often is made. The number you gave yesterday was 1259 social housing current stock owned by the Director of Housing Tasmania.

Mr JAENSCH - No, 12 509.

Ms LOVELL - Yes, and last year that number of social housing dwellings owned by the Director of Housing Tasmania in September 2019 was 12 504?

Mr JAENSCH - Without checking, if that's what we read into *Hansard* at the time.

Ms LOVELL - Would you like us to check? I don't know if that's been read into *Hansard*.

Mr JAENSCH - What you're asking is: why not an increase?

Ms LOVELL - No, what I'm asking first of all is to confirm those numbers.

Mr JAENSCH - It is 12 504.

Ms LOVELL - That is a net increase of five in the 12 months essentially.

Mr JAENSCH - Owned by the Director of Housing.

Ms LOVELL - Correct. The number you gave yesterday in terms of a net increase in social housing dwellings was 2351.

Mr JAENSCH - No, 2351 is the number of housing dwellings we aim to deliver across AHAP 1, debt waiver and the Community Housing Growth Program to 2023.

Ms LOVELL - Can we get a breakdown? That is, for 2023, not 2024?

Ms WEBB - That is 2015 to 2023?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, June 2023.

Ms LOVELL - From now until 2023?

Mr JAENSCH - From 2015 to June 2023. This is also useful for you to build a picture. As at the end of September, 826 total social housing dwellings were delivered.

Ms LOVELL - September this year?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, from 2015 to September this year.

Ms LOVELL - To clarify, of the 2351, the target that was set in 2015, 826 of those have been delivered as at -

Mr JAENSCH - No, because 2351 was not set in 2015. It's been added to since then.

Ms LOVELL - Okay. Can you repeat that, sorry, minister - that last comment?

Mr JAENSCH - The 2351 includes 1051 social housing dwellings that were committed under action plans one and two of the Affordable Housing Strategy.

Ms LOVELL - Let's come back to that because I will ask you for that breakdown. What I took away from what you said a moment ago was that 2351 was the number of social housing dwellings, the plan, the commitment, made at the beginning of that action plan in 2015.

Mr JAENSCH - No. If you take actions plans 1 and 2, 1051 social housing dwellings have been delivered.

Ms LOVELL - Right, 1051, okay.

Mr JAENSCH - Plus then, subsequent and additional to that, using the savings from the debt waiver, we've committed to deliver another 300 social housing dwellings, and -

Ms LOVELL - And 1000 through the community housing?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, 1000 through the Community Housing Program.

Ms LOVELL - Yes, so that adds up to the 2351?

Mr JAENSCH - All in the time frame from 2015 to 30 June 2023.

Ms LOVELL - Yes, okay, thank you. That's what I was establishing.

Mr JAENSCH - At the end of September, 826 social housing dwellings were delivered, out of the 2351 -1525 to go.

Ms LOVELL - Yes, which adds up to 2351, right, okay. So, 826 delivered - can you give me the breakdown then of which of those were owned by the Director of Housing, and through the community?

Mr JAENSCH - Okay, we'll take that on notice and get back to you.

Ms LOVELL - Thank you. Of that, as well, is the 2351 the total of those three figures added together? Is that a net increase in social housing dwellings?

Mr JAENSCH - That's the numbers delivered.

Ms LOVELL - Net increase?

Mr JAENSCH - No, that's the number of houses to be built.

Ms LOVELL - Yes, so what is the net that you're expecting?

Mr JAENSCH - Each year there are around 50. Do you want to speak to the projected net increase mass there so that we're not relaying it? I introduce Peter White.

Mr WHITE - In terms of the net increase, we look at the supply of housing coming on stream as you've indicated. Over that period, 2351 is the number of social housing dwellings. A number of those are being delivered by community housing providers and may be on land they've acquired or provided through churches, or whatever it might be, local government even, et cetera. Hence, when you're seeing the supply numbers and you're seeing the portfolio

numbers that relate to those owned by the Director of Housing, they don't include those types of projects. However, people from the housing register are being allocated to those properties.

Regarding the net increase in social housing, we work on around 40 sales per annum out of our portfolio, I'm talking -

Ms LOVELL - Forty dwellings going out to sales?

Mr WHITE - Director-owned properties, so of those approximately 12 500 properties we have in allocation, we have a strategic asset management plan and as part of that we look at the sale of properties and we budget on around 40 per annum. We have extrapolated that forward in looking at the net and also an allowance for 10 properties on average to be demolished. In some cases that is so those sites can be redeveloped. We have a situation say in Hobart or wherever it might be, knock down some older homes and build new units. That is the way we look at properties that come off, if you like, so those together you are looking at about 50 per annum.

Ms LOVELL - Does that include where properties might be damaged or subject to arson or burnt out or fire?

Mr WHITE - We would not include those because often with those, we would rebuild. You might lose some property to arson, but under the Tasmanian Risk Management Fund, we would then rebuild that so it nets off. They are not included in the 2351 so there is a net to zero there, if that makes sense.

Ms LOVELL - Yes, that does.

Mr WHITE - We are looking at that. Our extrapolation would be that for this financial year 2020-21, we expect to see an overall increase of 260 dwellings.

Ms LOVELL - Net?

Mr WHITE - Yes, 260 in the social housing portfolio. As I said, this will not be seen in the number of dwellings owned by the Director; it will be those that have been delivered. In the following financial year, we are looking at approximately 437 and then in 2022-23, up to 735 net increase.

Ms LOVELL - Okay, so 2021-22 is 735?

Mr WHITE - Yes.

Ms LOVELL - Do you have one for 2022-23?

Mr WHITE - Sorry, that was 2022-23. I will say those again if you like.

Ms LOVELL - Thank you; sorry, I have it wrong.

Mr WHITE - So 2020-21 was 260; 2021-22 was 437; 2022-23 is up to 735, and, as you may understand, a lot is predicated on the \$100 000 million project for up to 1000 dwellings and that process has only just closed. It will take us a few months to be able to release that and

work through that process. In the 2023-24 financial year, at this stage we are estimating an additional 50 dwellings of net increase at this stage. That will provide -

Ms LOVELL - By June 2023 with those figures you have given me, you are expecting a net increase across the board of 1432?

Mr WHITE - To June 2023; that is correct.

Ms LOVELL - This year we have had the numbers for how many were delivered in terms of what is owned by the Director of Housing. Do you have a breakdown of how many or what the net increase has been across those other avenues as well?

Mr WHITE - In 2019-20 financial year just completed, 354 new homes were delivered. That included 38 social housing dwellings under the Community Housing fast-track program; 41 under the regional supply program, social housing; 53 through the Community Housing Stock Leverage Program; and 16 social housing homes delivered under the Private Developer Purchase Program. In addition to that, we had 24 new backyard units targeted at young people and larger families. We also had 10 new social housing units under the Site Redevelopment Program, which is where we would demolish a home and build units to increase the supply. That is the social housing that was delivered in 28 crisis accommodation pods, which were the ones in southern Tasmania to support women and men.

Ms LOVELL - Just for the sake of being able to compare apples with apples, when we are talking about the 260, 437 and 735 over the next three years net increase, does that include that same breakdown of all of those?

Mr JAENSCH - It would be a range of different programs.

Ms LOVELL - The number you have given me for this past financial year is 354. Is that net?

Mr WHITE - That's not a net figure. That's the gross number of new dwellings purchased.

Ms LOVELL - Presumably if you take off the 50 a year, you said. Normally you allow for -

Mr JAENSCH - For completeness, sales are typically to tenants through our Streets Ahead Program.

Ms LOVELL - Yes, but they're not on the social housing waitlist anymore.

Mr JAENSCH - No, but they are not in social housing anymore either and the sale to the tenant returns funds to the pool we can use to build more housing.

Ms LOVELL - I accept your point. I don't think it is relevant in how we are talking about numbers.

Mr JAENSCH - It goes to again the supply issue. It helps us to build more houses and ensures people on low incomes secure housing.

Ms LOVELL - In a way.

Mr JAENSCH - It doesn't kick them out. Put it that way. It is them being able to have a house still and us being able to build another one.

Ms WEBB - If you do that with the money gained.

Ms LOVELL - Yes.

Mr JAENSCH - In 2019-20, 29 homes were sold; and five were purchased under our Home Share Scheme, 14 through our Streets Ahead Scheme, and 10 on the open market.

Two-thirds of the sales went to people on low incomes through special home ownership programs we fund through Housing Tasmania's affordable housing outcome.

Ms LOVELL - Of the 354 new homes, 29 are not in the social housing stock and have been sold.

Mr JAENSCH - No, they weren't. They weren't necessarily new homes.

Ms LOVELL - Homes out of the entire stock. You had 354 new; you lost 29 out of the stock numbers. You can see how this is difficult for people to get their heads around, when you make commitments around a number of homes to be delivered, but then it is hard to have a level of accountability because of the way it is reported.

Mr JAENSCH - And some people thrive on that confusion.

Ms LOVELL - I don't think anyone thrives on it, minister. I think people just -

Mr JAENSCH - They do. Some of them love the confusion.

Ms LOVELL - I don't think anyone loves it. People waiting for houses would like to understand it.

Mr JAENSCH - The fact of the matter is that it is not simple and straightforward. We haven't limited ourselves to delivering one type of house as many times as we can right across the board, the way some historical housing programs have run here. We aim to work across the market with the supply and demand for housing.

We deliver housing in lots of different formats through lots of different arrangements. Some of which we own, some of which other people own. Some of which we have under long-term leases and we move people through. Some of which we are the broker for in between.

It is complex and it is also wrong to think we can simplify it down to something everyone can get just like that.

Ms LOVELL - It's probably wrong to assume people can't understand it. I think the level you can break it down to -

Mr JAENSCH - You have to allow people to sit down and unpack it. I make no apologies for it being a little bit more complex than everyone would like.

Ms LOVELL - Nobody is asking you to apologise for that, minister.

Let's go back then to the net increase in housing expected over the next three years. Net increase we are expecting is 1432. The net increase in the last 12 months of homes owned by the Director of Housing Tasmania is five. Are you expecting those numbers to be consistent over the next three years?

Of the 1432 to be delivered, can you give me a breakdown of where you are expecting those home to come from, either owned by the Director of Housing or Community Housing providers.

Mr JAENSCH - There will be a range, but the majority of new ones will be Director of Housing-owned.

Ms LOVELL - The majority of them will be Director of Housing-owned.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes. The expression of interest process we have out at the moment and the last two we have run for the \$300 000 under community housing [inaudible] will make use of existing Director-owned land as part of the deal. We are also open to proposals and should be starting to look at them now because the EOIs closed yesterday at 2 p.m. There will be proposals from community housing providers and a local government council that owns land and they will bring a proposal. There will be a range of different cocktails there through which we can maximise how many houses we get for our \$100 million.

Ms LOVELL - Essentially you've set the target?

Mr JAENSCH - All of them will be on a 20-year agreement to 40-year ground lease - but a 20-year management agreement during which time those houses will be allocated to and successively allocated to people who are on the Social Housing Register. We won't necessarily own all of those.

Ms LOVELL - You've set the target without understanding where they are coming from?

Mr JAENSCH - We know what the demand is for housing across the state by local government area, how many bedrooms, what age cohorts they will be for. We have \$100 million. We believe we can on average get a home for \$100 000 in a deal with third parties who will be co-contributing to the construction cost of that house and then managing it under an agreement for 20 years.

Ms LOVELL - But the details of the negotiations around those deals is still to come?

Mr JAENSCH - The EOI process closed yesterday. Pete and his team will be assessing them over coming months and negotiating a series of contracts and agreements.

Ms LOVELL - Going back to what you said a moment ago, you said that you expected the majority of those that net increase in homes to be owned by the Director of Social Housing.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

Ms LOVELL - When you say majority, do you have a number?

Mr JAENSCH - No. We know how much land we have made available into that tender process and we are also growing that amount of land through things like the Huntingfield land release and other rezoning of land to be available.

Ms LOVELL - So it is basically based on land available?

Mr JAENSCH - Land available, but there is also going to be consortia who come forward who have a builder, a housing manager and say a landowner, like a council, and they put forward a proposal whereby they will be asking us to invest with them in building houses.

Ms LOVELL - Is this the expression of interest process you have closed yesterday?

Mr JAENSCH - Some of it will be our land, sometimes it will be somebody else's land.

CHAIR - Can I clarify that? The almost-partnership model, joint venture, whatever the model is, I am not sure exactly what it is, are you as the minister effectively providing the land and the other party will build the house or are you paying them to build the house? I am not sure how the \$100 million is being expended here.

Ms LOVELL - Maybe it is still to be negotiated?

Mr JAENSCH - Pete will clean this up for me in a minute. There are many different combinations, but a typical one might be the Director of Housing's delegate to my left owns the land and puts out a contract. We want a house on this to be run as social housing by a community housing provider. The community housing provider comes along and says, 'Okay, we'll borrow or finance \$100 000 or \$150 000 ourselves. We will need \$100 000 from you. We will build a house here. We'll manage it for 20 years under an agreement whereupon we receive rent capped at 25 per cent of the tenant's income or whatever the current amount is and we will also receive Commonwealth Rent Assistance. We will maintain the property and manage the tenancy.'

CHAIR - Who owns it?

Mr JAENSCH - The property will remain under the ownership of the Director and there is a 20-year agreement - 30-year for those ones - but what that means is that we retain ownership of the asset but we have a specialist social housing provider managing the tenancy. The tenants will all be people who are on the social housing waiting list.

Ms LOVELL - The state continues to own that beyond the terms of that 30-year agreement?

Mr JAENSCH - The state continues to own it and the community housing provider has the revenue of a guaranteed rental income over the life of that agreement from their tenant, plus the Commonwealth assistance that tenant attracts, which would not come to us if we were managing that property. That arrangement -

CHAIR -Until the rules change?

Mr JAENSCH - is an important addition to how far Tasmania's dollars go with regard to delivering housing.

Mr VALENTINE - Do they get a chance to buy at it some point, if their circumstances change?

Mr JAENSCH - Sometimes, among these deals, there may be opportunities for that, perhaps. It has not happened in the past.

CHAIR -That would be a policy decision, wouldn't it?

Dr SEIDEL - I will be very specific, minister. You mentioned the Huntingfield development. That is the biggest development for Communities Tasmania ever, isn't it? In your brochures you sent out with the Budget Papers, you said you have already delivered the Huntingfield development but it hasn't even received development application approval.

Saying that specifically for that development, are you retaining ownership of the land or are you selling off the land? How do you specifically envisage this will work? You have quarantined 15 per cent of the housing for social purposes. Specifically for Huntingfield, how is that going to work?

Mr JAENSCH - There will be a combination of different arrangements. Some will be on the open market, some will be retained by the Director and developed as social housing, some will be retained by the Director and then sold under HomeShare and other programs to low income households.

We are aiming for diversity in the tenancy models, the ownership and the block and housing sizes in that subdivision as a designed thing from the beginning rather than as infill to an existing housing area, or as broadacre public housing like we have seen in some areas in the past.

This is a new approach over a large area to create a blended community with a diversity of different housing, so that we don't have concentrations of disadvantage, any stigma associated with that or social issues, but we have a more natural spread of diversity in a community.

Ms WEBB - To follow up on that, the 15 per cent that was mentioned by the member for Huon, and it is in his electorate, 15 per cent encompasses what specific elements that you listed there as potential elements of different housing sorts? You made a 15 per cent commitment to social housing on that site. Is that to be retained ownership by the Director for Housing? Is it to be a block that is sold to a person on a low income, which then would not be regarded as social housing? Not that it would be a bad outcome, but we would not count it as one of the 15 per cent, would we?

Mr JAENSCH - I will let Pete speak to that. The 15 per cent has been taken as a benchmark for social and affordable housing.

Ms WEBB - Social and affordable. That was my question.

Mr JAENSCH - We are aiming to break the mould and create some formats of housing that are going to provide far more affordable home ownership than might currently be available.

To be able to assist people on low incomes into ownership of a very affordable home is part of what we are looking for, particularly with these townhouse-style developments with a very small land component. Their mortgage costs might be less than they would be paying for rent in the same area.

Ms WEBB - As the 15 per cent includes social and affordable or, let's say, planned to be affordable, what amount are you committing to for the social housing on that site?

Mr JAENSCH - Pete, can you provide any more resolution of how we get that down to a final decision?

Mr WHITE - Yes, minister, I can certainly help. The 15 per cent is seen as a minimum for the social and affordable aspect. As the minister said, we're all reasonably clear on what social housing means. That would be by and large in Huntingfield land lots retained by the Director of Housing and then made available and developed probably through CHPs, through the same sort of arrangements, long-term land lease or whatever it might be, with community housing providers.

In addition to that, we have opportunities with HomeShare. HomeShare targets people on moderate to low incomes. That's why we have the social housing. Clearly in today's interest rate environment, and with the opportunities we see down in Huntingfield, we expect HomeShare to be quite popular.

The other aspect we would be looking at with the community housing providers as part of the affordable housing mix is what some people call build to rent models, where the CHP may development the housing, make it available at 75 per cent of market rent. In those cases, it would not necessarily get the same level of capital support that we provide for social housing. They're the sort of arrangements we're looking at as well, as the minister said.

If you've seen the master plan of Huntingfield you'll know that there is a variety of lot sizes. One of the things we've looked at is smaller lots that can suit older people or smaller families who don't want to be in a strata title arrangement because that can be problematic but also don't want a 700 to 800 square metre block because they have to mow the lawn.

There's a mix of those housing tenures. By their nature, those blocks will come at a relatively affordable price compared with a standard block.

Ms WEBB - Indeed. I have two questions on this. The first one is in this space.

CHAIR - This is for the Huntingfield?

Ms WEBB - Yes, it's on Huntingfield. It's directly following on. That was public land. We've rezoned it and we're developing it. What proportion of that land stays in public ownership? That's why I'm pressing you for a figure on social housing that remains in the ownership of the Director of Housing.

That will effectively be the only portion of the site that stays in public hands. Can you give me at least a minimum commitment on that, knowing that we might end up with more? For context, it was always land put aside for public housing.

Mr JAENSCH - Of the whole site, about half of the land will be developed for housing. The remainder will be public open space.

Ms WEBB - You've mistaken my question. I'm asking you about the developed land.

Mr JAENSCH - I understand, of the housing lots.

Ms WEBB - Yes, a proportion of the developed land.

Mr JAENSCH - We've said that of the 470 or so lots there, about 15 per cent will be social and affordable housing.

I'm not prepared to draw a hard line as to exactly how much of that is going to be social housing retained in the ownership of the Director of Housing, because there are a number of these other models which I think we need to retain the flexibility to deliver the result. In terms of the overall land parcel, and the process we have been through, we are doing it to deliver housing supply that is diverse and includes social and affordable housing. This land, whilst it is owned by the public through the Government, is being put to a design purpose to deliver housing that includes social and affordable housing - which we go to great expense to try to retrofit elsewhere at consternation to the neighbours sometimes - so this is a design rollout.

We have an overall housing shortage in Tasmania so every lot and every home built assists in meeting demand, and the revenue derived from selling those blocks gets reinvested in building more housing. In terms of how the value of the asset is being put to work for the public good in Tasmania, I think that narrative is better than me trying to land on whether it is 7.5 per cent or 10 per cent or 6 per cent of the titles being social housing.

Ms WEBB - I am mainly interested in a minimum commitment because if it is 15 per cent for social and affordable housing, it could be 1 per cent social housing, for example, and 14 per cent affordable we land on. To many people, to many stakeholders and many community members, it would be an unacceptable result to arrive at public housing- retained ownership by the Director of Public Housing at 1 per cent, for example. Is there a minimum commitment you are prepared to give in terms of social housing?

Mr JAENSCH - I think you are asking me to make an arbitrary commitment within the range of zero to 15 per cent of what will be retained by the Director. I don't want to do that. I would rather just refer to it as social and affordable housing.

Ms WEBB - That comes to my second question and it ties into the narrative you were just describing about the mixed arrangements of value that can be derived from that parcel of land. We know from the almost adjacent parcel of land developed in recent years in Huntingfield, that it was a very small block compared to what we are talking about now. From memory, in the vicinity of 40 blocks or something like that.

Mr JAENSCH - Which one?

Ms WEBB - In Huntingfield itself.

Mr JAENSCH - The earlier stage?

Ms WEBB - The first stage, and here is what happened with that stage. The intention was 'Here is public land we are going develop it; we are going to sell it as affordable house-and-land packages, it is going to be affordable housing and add into our affordable housing quantum for the state. Won't that be a good news story?'.

Not one single block of that land, not one single block, was affordable housing in the end. We had public land with the very good intention of it being affordable housing which ultimately in the mix of things, my understanding is the excuse being that the time it took for it to be developed, the market went gangbusters, and suddenly it was not affordable anymore.

We derived no benefit and no addition to affordable through that last instance. With that in such recent memory, minister, knowing that we can pave the way to anywhere we like with good intentions, how can we be assured that if you are not prepared to give a minimum social housing parcel for Huntingfield - the large development - that all your good intentions about affordable up to 15 per cent could actually go down the same path as that previous first stage development went? We end up with zero from that adding to affordable housing in this state. Where is your confidence that you can guarantee for us that won't happen?

Mr JAENSCH - I hear what you are saying. I cannot account for the detail of the previous stage sales, but I understand where you are coming from.

Ms WEBB - You acknowledge that the facts of that are correct? We didn't get one single affordable housing outcome.

Mr JAENSCH - I hear what you have to say about that. I do not have my own -

Ms WEBB - Perhaps your director could advise you.

Mr JAENSCH - I think what you want to do is make sure that this Huntingfield development doesn't become sold-off as general real estate and not deliver on what we are talking about in terms of the diversity housing to be provided, including social housing for people who need it, yes.

Ms WEBB - Indeed, of the 470 properties there, we could - with the commitments you're not prepared to give, end up literally with no social or affordable housing at that site, virtually none.

Mr JAENSCH - The legislation under which the Director owns and manages and develops property is pretty clear about what we need to be able to deliver with that land, what the purpose of having that land and using powers like those under the Housing Land Supply Act is for.

Ms WEBB - Are you saying there's a legislative imperative that we must deliver some particular outcome from this development in terms of social and affordable housing?

Mr JAENSCH - That then can be clearly sheeted back to decisions taken in the parliament and through both Houses of this parliament through the debates on the disallowable motion regarding the rezoning, what the purpose of this was for and, as government -

Ms WEBB - All you risk there is political skin.

Mr JAENSCH - - being the owner and developer of that land, I think we can be held to that purpose.

Ms WEBB - All you're putting on the table there is some political damage versus no affordable housing outcomes.

Mr JAENSCH - I think that's worth more than something - than some arbitrary number that I've put on the record in the Estimates hearing.

Ms WEBB - I think a genuine commitment from you to a minimum outcome -

Mr JAENSCH - Fifteen per cent social and affordable housing minimum.

Ms WEBB - But the affordable part of that is entirely precarious, as we learnt from stage 1 - entirely precarious.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, it may not satisfy you but I know what you're looking for and I understand why. What I'm not prepared to do is commit to an arbitrary figure.

Ms WEBB - Don't commit to an arbitrary figure -

Mr JAENSCH - No, I won't.

Ms WEBB - commit to a genuine figure, minister. Will you go away and come back, prior to development applications going in for that site? You've still got some time up your sleeve, they haven't gone in yet - will you come back and for the community and the Tasmanian taxpayer who currently own that land, prior to development applications going in with a minimum commitment, that this is a genuine gesture to the community, that you understand there would be an expectation of a minimum commitment of social housing on that development?

Mr JAENSCH - I think we have given the 15 per cent minimum social and affordable housing and we can be held to that commitment.

Ms WEBB - That's a hollow commitment, minister.

Ms LOVELL - Minister, I was on a bit of a roll with my maths there and I lost it so can we just back to the start?

Mr JAENSCH - Let's roll it on.

Ms LOVELL - No, I'm only joking. I'm not taking you back at all. No, I'm only joking. I wouldn't do that to anyone, least of all myself. Can I just wrap up what we were discussing with the net increase in social housing across all those different avenues?

What I'm hearing, based on what you've told me around how those numbers were landed at in terms of how much it cost to deliver a social dwelling and the expression of interest process that closed off yesterday, but essentially what you're saying is that to be able to meet that commitment and deliver that number of social homes, you require pretty significant numbers or investment of third parties to come onboard? Would that be fair to say?

Mr JAENSCH - Absolutely.

Ms LOVELL - Yes.

Mr JAENSCH - This is how you build a house for \$100 000.

Ms LOVELL - Yes, exactly. I understand that. That's fine. I'm happy to move on -

Mr JAENSCH - Otherwise, you can't do it.

Ms LOVELL - Well -

Mr JAENSCH - And this is why - and I'm not being political here but, compared to some other models that are out there, this is a very efficient gearing of the state's investment into stock that it will own long term and have -

Ms LOVELL - Yes, provided you can get those third parties to come onboard.

Mr JAENSCH - And those third parties are assisted by, amongst other things, the NHIFC provision - the National Housing Infrastructure Finance Corporation financing option - which is available solely to community housing providers and their ilk at very low interest rates -

Ms LOVELL - Yes.

Mr JAENSCH - - which we have helped to negotiate 2.06 per cent for 12 years is the rate that they're operating at.

Ms LOVELL - Yes.

Mr JAENSCH - If we can leverage our \$100 million, their not-for-profit status, historically low interest rates in the general market - lower still under NHIFC - we can get a long-term agreement, and there's another \$6 million a year coming in through Commonwealth rental assistance. This is how we get more houses for the dollar, for Tasmanians.

Ms WEBB - Yes. I understand all of that. I'm not disputing what you're saying, but I think it's fair to say that those agreements haven't yet been reached so we will let that play out and -

Mr JAENSCH - They're the type of agreements we have been building and running with over the last five years and -

CHAIR - Are they by expressions of interest? That sort of thing?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, and there is an underpinning agreement with the community housing providers as well to transfer management to them of another 2000 properties which improves their business cases as well.

Ms LOVELL - These are the types of agreements you have been running with over the last five years and yet the net increase in social housing dwellings owned by the Director of Housing in the last year was only five, so what is going to be different if the majority of these 1432 houses are going to be owned by the Director of Social Housing? What has changed and what is different that will enable you to have a much bigger increase?

Mr JAENSCH - Under the agreements we have been working under so far, amongst them there were agreements where the title of the land transferred to the community housing provider rather than being retained by the director.

Ms LOVELL - So what's different now is that is not the intention?

Mr JAENSCH - We're doing it a different way. We will retain, but we will enter into a longerterm agreement.

Ms LOVELL - So it's a different agreement.

Mr JAENSCH - It's a different type of agreement, a different type of deal.

Ms LOVELL - So we'll just have to let that play out and see how that expression of interest process goes.

Mr JAENSCH - The number of houses delivered has been comparable in terms of leverage but where they land on the stats is a different story.

Ms LOVELL - Yes, because they're not owned by the state, so that is the difference.

Mr JAENSCH - But they're still social housing and allocated for.

Ms LOVELL - I understand that, but the big difference in these agreements from what you're saying is that the intention is that those homes will not be transferred to the community housing provider but retained by the state?

Mr JAENSCH - In general, yes, but there will be some agreements which involve other people's land rather than a transfer.

Ms LOVELL - Yes, but the majority of the 1432 will be retained by the state.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

Ms LOVELL - We will have to see how that plays out.

Ms WEBB - I just want to clarify something you are taking on notice, to come back with specific figures on what Sarah was running through with you. As of September 2020, 826 social housing dwellings were delivered and you are going to come back with the split between those owned by the Director of Housing and those owned by others. That then left us with

1525 yet to be delivered by June 2023, so could you also come back with the split on the expectation of -

Ms LOVELL - I think that is what they are talking about with the expression of interest process that hasn't been negotiated yet.

Ms WEBB - So you are saying that is the bit we can't lock down yet and we will just have to wait and see?

Mr JAENSCH - In terms of that last request of the forward delivery of 1525 from now until June 2023, some of those will be under AHAP 2 existing programs involving community housing providers and debt waiver and a large part of them will be part of the new EOI process. In the EOI process there will be, depending on what is in the tender box right now, a proportion of those that won't be built on our land, it will be built on other people's land. We will know once we have contracted that what the breakdown is of different ownership.

Ms LOVELL - Just for the sake of consistency in terms of those questions on notice, we have been talking about 1432. Can I confirm that 1432 was the number of homes to be delivered by June 2023?

Mr JAENSCH - The net increase.

Ms LOVELL - Is 1525 the total to be delivered by 2024?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, 1523 is the houses from now till 30 June 2023 that will be delivered.

Ms LOVELL - So the breakdown you gave me before -

Mr JAENSCH - The 1432 is the projected net increase.

Ms LOVELL - You said 50 per year is what you took off to get from the gross to the net.

Mr WHITE - Ignore the net for a second we will talk about the gross numbers.

CHAIR - So we'll we ignore what the minister said?

Mr WHITE - No, I'm not saying that at all. I think the minister said it more eloquently than I.

What we're saying is the number of new social housing dwellings from 2015 to June 2023 is 2351. That is the gross number, of which at the end of September 826 have been delivered, which was in our report issued recently. That leaves 1525 to go to reach that target, so that's a gross number. The figures relating back to the 1432 figure is essentially the net increase that's expected in the financial years across 2021, 2021-22 and 2022-23 so through to the end of June 2023 in terms of total financial years. They're slightly different time frames but the 1432 represents essentially the new supply expected over that duration less the sales and demolition figures we gave previously.

Ms LOVELL - So the sales and demolition figure you gave me before was 50 a year?

Mr WHITE - Correct, 40 sales and 10 demolitions - they're our expected figures for each financial year.

Ms LOVELL - Can you just recap for me the difference in time frames? You said there was a difference in time frames so we're talking about to the end of June 2023?

Mr WHITE - Yes. The number provided in terms of the net changes is for the financial year 2021, so from 1 July 2020 through to June 2023. The figure of 2351 relates back to 2015, the start of the Affordable Housing Action Plan, through to June 2023.

Ms LOVELL - Shouldn't that add up?

Mr WHITE - Well, they're different time frames.

CHAIR - I think we have probably prosecuted this as far as we can.

Ms LOVELL - I'm happy to move on.

CHAIR - Do you have another question?

Ms LOVELL - I do have some different questions.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you for persisting.

Ms LOVELL - It's not just me, minister. I don't think I'm an unintelligent person and I think other people watching this, people who are not as familiar with these numbers and this portfolio, want to understand it.

Mr JAENSCH - We're managing a large and complex portfolio with many different sorts of products in it and constantly changing with different sorts of arrangements with a range of different partners.

Ms LOVELL - Yes. Also, I think it's important that when commitments are made that there's a level of accountability and that people can follow through on ensuring that those commitments are met.

Ms WEBB - Just a quick one because it's probably pretty straightforward to update this. In the original Affordable Housing Plan for 2015 to 2025, there was work done in the development of that prior to 2015 to model Tasmania's housing needs and that identified we needed 2392 new dwellings a year to meet long-term housing needs and 656 of those would need to be low-priced and affordable. That was the modelling done then.

When we spoke last year, you talked about the fact that UTAS was going to do some new modelling of future demand that would take into account changes in the market since that original modelling was done. Has that new modelling been undertaken so we can update those figures and understand as a state what our total need in terms of new dwellings is and particularly our per-year need for low-priced affordable homes?

Mr JAENSCH - There are two decks to this one. There has been some more research and modelling done and I will ask Pete to maybe refer to the Constellation Project in a moment.

The other thing that guides our immediate investment is the social housing register itself which tells us where there is actual known unmet demand because of where people live, where they've nominated they want social housing, how many bedrooms they need, what other features suit their needs in terms of disability access, anything like that. That is our primary resource to guide our immediate investment program.

Ms WEBB - Minister, could you share your own internal modelling, based on the waiting list, that provides an understanding of the type of regional and household need that exists in that housing list, because we mostly just talk about that list as a number. It would be fascinating to have a clearer picture of what that need looks like, and then we could hold ourselves to account even more effectively against commitments made and the actual need that's there.

Mr JAENSCH - There are two ways of dealing with that. One is with the raw housing register data. In the EOI process that has just closed, part of the material that was available for those who are tendering was a breakdown, by local government area, of demand for one- to four-bedroom properties -

Ms WEBB - Based on the waiting list?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, and of the total waiting list - with a pro rata down to 1000 properties - how many would we be looking at in Burnie or Waratah-Wynyard et cetera to meet that so organisations pitching to deliver might have an idea of where demand was greatest, and for what?

That is being used to drive our procurement, and that will be used to drive our assessment as well alongside value for money.

Ms WEBB - And it's publicly available?

Mr JAENSCH - It has been, yes, and it is on the tenders website.

Mr WHITE - Yes, it is sitting on our department's website, minister.

Mr JAENSCH - The other thing is the use of that primary data, if you like, and a bit more clever modelling being done with it. I might ask if Peter could speak briefly to that project.

Mr WHITE - Thanks, minister. We're involved in some work, started at a national level, under a group called the Constellation Project, a group of organisations that have come together to look at ways in which housing and homelessness could be addressed better. The organisations involved include Mission Australia, PriceWaterhouseCoopers and the Red Cross. We are able to work with a team from those organisations and do a fair bit of analysis of our housing register and broader needs. That was able to give us a set of targets and types and typologies of dwellings for the different demand needs we have from young people, to older people with disability, families, et cetera. That work really informed the material we made available under the EOI process.

We are effectively able to establish for each LGA, targets that we are trying to achieve - if we get the 1000 dwellings, for example, in the EOI process - and importantly the type of dwellings we are looking for.

Ms WEBB - Notwithstanding the value of that - which is modelling based on the waiting list, the register - what I am asking is if there is broader statewide modelling being done, as you had discussed in last year's Estimates with me? We know that the affordable housing need - and in fact the broader new dwelling need for the state - isn't limited to our social housing register. So, the broader modelling work that you flagged was going to be updated by UTAS, where is that?

Mr JAENSCH - I'm advised that work commenced, but was paused earlier in the year when the pandemic emerged and it may need to be reset. Are you able to speak to the UTAS project -

Ms WEBB - Are we publicly funding that work for UTAS?

Mr WHITE - Yes, we did some work with them. It looked more at extrapolations of population projections, and I think we took some of that work into our Constellation Project as well. The work around Constellation did look at the housing register, but it also looked at some other demographic trends, migration and other projections as part of identifying what they saw as the future need for social housing in Tasmania.

Mr JAENSCH - Which might have all changed now.

Ms WEBB - Yes, as was done in that original modelling, it's not just about the need for social housing. It's that broader understanding and modelling around the statewide total need for housing and -

CHAIR - We could get the COVID refugees down here.

Ms WEBB - Is there a plan to update the broader modelling that was done, as we had discussed last year, given it sounds like it started a bit - it paused and we used a bit of it. Are we to expect an update of that modelling in some complete way at any planned time in the near future? Yes or no is really fine. If no, because the caravan has moved on, by all means just say so.

Mr JAENSCH - Not as a discrete separate project, but as a rolling program of work, including the register-informed stuff, the Constellation methods, and more information as it comes to light. Over the next 12 months we will also be looking at settlement policies and things for Tasmania as part of our reform and development of the Tasmanian planning policies. I think that sort of work will inform this as well.

Ms WEBB - Yes, it would align well with this modelling to be done for you.

Ms LOVELL - Minister, I wanted to ask you about maintenance of public housing. I believe last year you spent \$8.8 million on public housing maintenance, which was about one-third of the total budget allocated.

Mr JAENSCH - I am just having a look at some of these notes. I will give you this to start off with, then we will take it from there. I was asked about this in the House of Assembly yesterday. The \$8.8 million relates to planned maintenance, not the overall maintenance budget.

To clarify, the total general maintenance spend in the 2019-20 financial year was \$24 299 408 - almost \$2 million more than was first budgeted.

Ms LOVELL - Okay, we will say \$24.3 million - so that is all on public housing maintenance?

Mr JAENSCH - This is public housing owned and managed by Housing Tasmania. In addition, under the public building maintenance fund, a further \$4.8 million was invested into maintenance upgrades. That is a total of \$29.16 million spent on maintenance on public housing owned and managed by the Director of Housing in the 2019-20 financial year.

Ms LOVELL - Okay. Just putting aside the \$4.8 million from the public building maintenance fund. The total spend, the \$24.3 million. What was the budget for all maintenance planned - and presumably that is emergency maintenance or unplanned.

Mr JAENSCH - So that is the overall, yes, the \$24.3 million.

Ms LOVELL - That is what was budgeted, and that was what was spent.

Mr JAENSCH - So 2020-22 was budgeted, \$2 million was added, and another \$4.8 million was added later on.

Ms LOVELL - What is the budget for this year? What has been budgeted?

Mr JAENSCH - The general maintenance budget for 2020-21 is \$22 114 237. In addition to that, we will continue to deliver additional funds related to public building maintenance as a stimulus measure, and we have secured some additional funds there, combined that is \$9.55 million additional to the \$22.1 million.

Ms LOVELL - Is that \$22.1 million included in line item 3.1? Is that where it is in the Budget, in Housing Services?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, it is.

Ms LOVELL - Thank you.

Ms WEBB - Can we talk about the Private Rental Incentives Program? I am interested in understanding where that scheme landed by the end of 2019-20, not the COVID-19 allocation. I am not moving on to the line item. We are still in Housing Services. I would like to talk about it in its normal iteration, although it is probably going to cross into COVID-19.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, so up to 30 June 2020, from July 2015 start, so this is not only for the financial year but from the beginning of the private rental incentive, 231 households through that Private Rental Incentives Program -

Ms WEBB - So 231 altogether but not necessarily tenanted at 30 June 2020?

Mr JAENSCH - Out of a target of 435, which is to June 2023.

Ms WEBB - So we are working towards June 2023?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, 435.

Ms WEBB - In which we hope to hit the 435 and at 30 June 2010, we are 231 now. That is the number of people who have been tenanted but not necessarily number of people who are tenanted currently, at 30 June 2020? Would that be fair to say, some may have exited the scheme?

Mr JAENSCH - Tenancies who have taken advantage of the scheme over its duration, that is correct.

Ms WEBB - At 30 June 2020, how many people were in tenancies on that date under this scheme?

Mr JAENSCH - Can we take that on notice?

Ms WEBB - Regarding properties that came into the first tranche of that scheme and then you extended it and offered further tranches, what proportion, you can give it to me as numbers, of whatever the number was for the first tranche carried through into the second tranche?

Mr JAENSCH - We will take that one on notice too, Ms Webb.

Ms WEBB - When you come back to me with that number on notice that I asked for a moment ago, which is the number actually tenanted at 30 June this year, that will probably also tell us at that same date, how many people had exited tenancies, had to come into the scheme but then weren't in the scheme at that point in time. I am interested in that cohort. In terms of the number of people who exited the scheme as tenants, I am interested in how many, what the number is? Where did they exist to?

I am particularly interested to know whether they presented to Housing Connect for assistance of some sort; if they received assistance of some sort, I am interested to know if they ended up on our public housing waiting list.

Mr JAENSCH - We will see what we can assemble in numbers to answer that question, given that there may be people who have done their own thing and have not involved us and who may have taken up other options we are not aware of.

Ms WEBB - You won't be able to track those ones. That's why I am asking you about whether some who have exited have landed back into the assistance space which we do have information about, who have required assistance through Housing Connect of some sort and specifically if they have ended up back on a social housing waiting list.

You would appreciate that the reason I am interested is that all the investment which goes into this space, which is effectively subsidising private landlords, is it just an exercise in getting

people off our social housing waitlist for a period of potentially just a year or two and then they end up right back there afterwards? I am trying to assess the degree to which that may be the case and perhaps it isn't. That is why it would be interesting also to understand how many have exited tenancies, to see how enduring that situation has been for them as an assisted situation.

Mr JAENSCH - And also how viable an option it is at a time of an acute housing shortage that we have been able to help people on lower incomes to compete for tenancies in the private market at a time when we know it's a competitive field. This was never set up as being 'forever housing' but housing for a couple of years in a market at a time when we need it. The options for people to go from that into other private rental or to home ownership.

Ms WEBB - Indeed, if that's where they have gone. That is why I am interested to see where they have gone. Even when they have exited do you keep that data?

Mr JAENSCH - They don't belong to us so what they do after is up to them but if they have been known and we have assisted them through other programs, we will be able to track some of them.

Ms WEBB - If they have returned to our housing support system in some sense, to Housing Connect, and certainly if they returned to our waiting list, we should be able to know that.

CHAIR - I am just thinking whether you can get that information in a relatively short time frame. That is tracking individuals, I would think. I am trying to give a realistic expectation of receiving information back.

Mr JAENSCH - It is going to be very incomplete. It will only relate to those who currently have a continued relationship with us.

CHAIR - See what you can provide.

Ms WEBB - Have you utilised the full complement of funding you allocated to that scheme across the years it has been in operation? I know there was difficulty in finding sufficient and appropriate properties.

Mr JAENSCH - We have added to investment in the program over time and I don't believe we are fully subscribed at this stage. We still have more to secure. We talked before about there being 231 out of 435 across the three programs, aiming for 310 under our Affordable Housing Action Plan, 50 under the debt waiver, 75 under the COVID-19 package, a total of 435 being the target. We are sitting at 231 at this stage.

Ms WEBB - The length of tenancies offered, _ has that remained consistent or what is the profile?

Mr JAENSCH - We changed that after the first year - after the pilot - to two years. Revised under action plan 2 after the pilot in action plan 1, the key revisions were more secure lease terms for two years and we also moved to there being a single community housing provider as the manager.

Ms WEBB - A head lease sort of arrangement?

Mr JAENSCH - We lease it and I think it's the manager who manages the tenancy. They do the leasing. We fund them.

Ms LOVELL - Minister, can you confirm the number of unassisted requests per night for crisis accommodation in Tasmania over the last -

Mr JAENSCH - Unassisted?

Ms LOVELL - Yes, where people have just rung themselves or presented at a crisis accommodation.

Mr JAENSCH - As opposed to referred?

Ms LOVELL - Yes, exactly, not through a referral service.

Mr JAENSCH - The latest final data we can give you is for the 2018-19 financial year. The daily average unassisted requests was 31 and the total for the year was 10 596.

Ms LOVELL - When will you have data available for the past year?

Mr JAENSCH - In December. The AIHW assembles that data and reports it so we'll have its official figure in December.

Ms LOVELL - How does that compare to the previous year? Presumably it's a year that that is recorded over?

Mr JAENSCH - The daily average in 2017-18 was 25.6 and the total for the year was 9355.

Ms LOVELL - I've been looking through the Budget and admittedly I've only just tried to find this now, but can you point to funding commitments for crisis accommodation or homelessness services?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, \$5 million was invested in expansion of shelters in the Hobart area, including Bethlehem House and Hobart Women's Shelter.

CHAIR - Was that in terms of the Safe Space?

Mr JAENSCH - No, that's not Safe Space.

CHAIR - Okay.

Ms WEBB - No, that's different.

Mr JAENSCH - No, that's the shelter expansions last year.

Ms LOVELL - That was last year?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, June last year.

Ms LOVELL - And this year?

Ms WEBB - The shipping containers?

Mr JAENSCH - No, we call them pods - extensions to Bethlehem House and Hobart Women's Shelter and also the leasing of seven, four- and five-bedroom family units in the Hobart area as well.

Ms LOVELL - Sorry, is that for the last financial year?

Mr JAENSCH - That was committed and delivered at the end of 2019-20.

Ms LOVELL - What about for 2020-21 and the forward Estimates?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, in the Housing and Homelessness Support Package, committed in April this year, extends across into this current financial year; \$4.3 million was committed to expand the Safe Night Space into a 24/7 model. Before Christmas, we put \$150 000, I think, into a six-month pilot of the Safe Night Space with Hobart City Mission here in Hobart. In April we committed \$4.3 million to expand that into a 24/7 service operating in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie. That was funding that would take them through to December.

Ms LOVELL - So April to December was \$4.3 million?

Mr JAENSCH - That's right. More recently, we have committed \$16.8 million to continue the Safe Space program at those three locations to 30 June 2022. This figure includes \$6 million for mental health and other health services to people sleeping rough who use those facilities.

Ms LOVELL - That is included in the \$16.8 million?

Mr JAENSCH - Included in the \$16.8 million. The important thing is that the Safe Space isn't just a shelter for people who are sleeping rough, but the intention is to help them settle and get a feed and a proper sleep, so then refreshed they can engage with a range of other services that are provided which come to the site, be they health services, drug and alcohol and Housing Connect as well. The aim is that people then graduate from that Safe Space, not back to the streets, but on to the next stage of more secure accommodation.

Ms LOVELL - It is an important part of that program.

Mr JAENSCH - There has also been investment in the Waratah Hotel redevelopment which will be finished in coming weeks before Christmas. The Waratah will be a supported accommodation facility longer term. We have used the Commonwealth housing debt waiver to part-fund the purchase of the Balmoral Motor Inn at Goodwood, partnering with Hobart City Mission again. That will be 31 beds for longer term housing. It is social housing but it is not entirely. It is partly a supported accommodation facility there as well.

Ms LOVELL - Just taking you back to the Safe Space funding, you said \$16.8 million through to 30 June 2022. Is there further funding committed beyond that date?

Mr JAENSCH - The model has been evolving since it was first invented about 12 months ago and we expect it will continue to evolve. We have made the commitment of funding out to 30 June 2022 at the same rate as that we kicked it off in April, and we will continue to stay close to Hobart City Mission, Launceston City Mission and Salvation Army to see what works best and how that service evolves. Before the time that the current funding commitment expires, as we have done before, we will be able to see what the commitment needs to look like beyond that.

Ms LOVELL - So we will have a look for that next year.

Mr JAENSCH - We are modelling it on a fairly expensive model at this stage.

Ms LOVELL - The funding for Balmoral, 31 beds: where is that in the Budget and what is the breakdown of that?

Mr JAENSCH - That would be in new projects. The source of the revenue there was savings generated from the debt waiver. That is \$2.1 million in savings from the debt waiver.

CHAIR - You said savings from the debt waiver, it's actually money that you have not had to spend?

Mr JAENSCH - That's right. It was money that was going to be sent to Canberra as principal and interest payments. We have been saved from doing that. The temptation is for it -

Ms LOVELL - Thanks to Jacqui Lambie.

Mr JAENSCH - Jacqui played a very important role at just the right time. She was a very good co-conspirator.

CHAIR - It's money you don't have to spend on interest.

Mr JAENSCH - It is not new money from somewhere else, it's always been Tasmanian money. Always was and always will be. We have saved it from Canberra.

Ms WEBB - We are supposed to be delivery new supply.

Mr JAENSCH - New supply includes the purchase of a property that was not available for people to live in before.

Ms WEBB - And long term?

Mr JAENSCH - Then own it forever.

Ms WEBB - It is supportive accommodation.

Mr JAENSCH - We have a contract for 30 years. With our single capital investment in the purchase, we secure is a 30-year agreement for that to be used to house people from the social housing register.

Ms WEBB - A long-term tenancy, not a crisis model or a short-term model?

Mr VALENTINE - Not a Common Ground model.

Ms WEBB - I am just checking we are not spending the waiver money on crisis accommodation, which does not take people off the waiting list.

Mr JAENSCH - Like Burnie Lodge, Bilton Lodge, others with a longer term tenancy but a level of supported tenancy.

Ms WEBB - We count them in our social housing numbers, yes?

Mr JAENSCH - We do. Some people say it is not housing; it is not a house so we don't count it. We call it supply.

Ms WEBB - We don't count crisis accommodation in that? To clarify I am only making that distinction because earlier in our conversation when you were speaking about social housing supply, you mentioned some crisis accommodation, the pods. I'm clarifying - we don't count crisis accommodation?

Mr JAENSCH - We name them separately as supportive accommodation on a distinct line from social housing.

Ms WEBB - That's fine.

Mr JAENSCH - For the person who needs them, it is a home for them.

Ms WEBB - You don't need to explain it to me, minister, I understand the difference. I was picking up the distinction. I can't recall now what the member for Rumney's question was to you about the commitments but there was some mixing of things that fell into the three separate categories.

I would like to talk about homeless children. Can we talk about homeless children under 16? This is under Housing Services. Are we talking about homeless services too? I want to ask about shelters or have we moved on because that should have come this morning?

Mr JAENSCH - We can talk about homeless services. The Under-16 Homelessness Taskforce work was more typically the Human Services portfolio, however.

Ms WEBB - I want to follow up on some questions related to shelters for young people, which probably should have come this morning.

Mr JAENSCH - There is a difference and we can talk about shelters here. I am very well briefed and supported here.

Ms WEBB - You may recall, minister, that we spoke last year in Estimates about children under the age of 16 presenting to shelters. I asked you then and I am going to repeat the same question this year: how many children under the age of 16 presented to shelters in the financial year 2019-20?

Mr JAENSCH - We are limited to AIHW - the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare - 2018-19 figures. In that year, 98 unaccompanied children between the ages of 12 and 15 presented to specialist homelessness services in Tasmania.

Ms WEBB - Okay. How many of those received a bed? When it says 'presented', does that mean they received a service, they received a bed? I'm interested to know how many may have presented and not received a service, were turned away?

Mr JAENSCH - We'll take that on notice.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. Within that cohort that didn't receive a service and were turned away, we know that anyone under 13 would have been because we don't provide services to under-13s through those youth shelters. How many were under 13.

Mr JAENSCH - Twelve.

Ms WEBB - Okay. Under the age of 12.

Mr JAENSCH - You're looking for a number?

Ms WEBB - The number of children who were turned away because they were too young to receive a service at that service that they presented to?

Mr JAENSCH - I will take that on notice.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

Mr JAENSCH - I note that the Colville Place youth at risk facility in Moonah has been dealing with this cohort, or part of it. We're building another one of those in Launceston in the current Budget as well as new youth crisis accommodation - eight units there - and 15 transitional units in Burnie with YFCC.

Ms WEBB - Those are presumably for over-16s, the transitional units and the other ones you mentioned -

Mr JAENSCH - The youth at risk facility in Launceston will be for younger children.

Ms WEBB - Probably like Colville, for younger children. And the number of beds in each of those facilities? Colville is eight or six?

Mr JAENSCH - I think it's nine in Colville.

Ms WEBB - Eight?

Mr JAENSCH - Eight plus one - nine. Let's say nine.

Ms WEBB - Okay. The one in Launceston?

Mr JAENSCH - A similar number there.

Ms WEBB - Is it a new build?

Mr JAENSCH - I understand it's a repurposing of a building. We purchased a building and we will be remodelling it to make it fit for purpose.

Ms WEBB - Within this Budget is money allocated for both the purchase and remodelling and the operations?

Mr JAENSCH - Operation is in this Budget as well, yes.

Ms WEBB - The beds in that one - how many beds?

Mr JAENSCH - In the youth at risk?

Ms WEBB - The northern one, yes.

Mr JAENSCH - Eight. Eight or nine.

Ms WEBB - Statewide we've got 16 to 18 beds based in Hobart and Launceston available for children down to the age of 12 who are unaccompanied and homeless?

Mr JAENSCH - From 12 to 16. We also have in the Budget \$513 000, I think it is to implement early recommendations from the Under-16 Homelessness Taskforce, particularly in terms of a service response and establishing the advice and referral line to be able to respond and provide outreach, reunification and other supports to young people who are identified in this situation.

Ms WEBB - In that \$513 000, what proportion of that went to the advice and referral line to build that capacity?

Mr JAENSCH - I don't have a breakdown on that.

Ms WEBB - I would like to know the breakdown of that. If there was a further portion of that \$513 000 that didn't go to the advice and referral line, did it go to existing services like TYSS and SIP for that response you're describing, or was there a new service?

Mr JAENSCH - No, not a new service, existing providers.

Ms WEBB - Existing providers. It would have been TYSS or SIP because they're the ones who deal with this cohort?

Mr JAENSCH - I understand it may also have involved other organisations like Aboriginal -

Ms WEBB - Okay. Sure. From particular cohorts.

Mr JAENSCH - - community controlled organisations.

Ms WEBB - I would be interested to see the breakdown of where that additional money went to do that. That was one of those early recommendations of the Youth Taskforce. Do you have medium- to long-term recommendations?

CHAIR - One at a time.

Ms WEBB - Sorry.

CHAIR - Give him a chance to answer.

Mr JAENSCH - As part of this additional funding of \$230 000 to TYSS and SIP during 2020-21 is included in that. Increasing annual capacity from 80 to 114 active clients across both services. I'll get a more complete breakdown of the under-16 taskforce 513 000 [inaudible]. It's a different portfolio than this; we know them.

Ms WEBB - Yes, I know; I bled it over into this place, yes.

CHAIR - We need to move on. Any other questions?

Ms WEBB - I did have some other homelessness ones.

CHAIR - We're not there yet.

Ms WEBB - We could do safe spaces here because it's a homelessness service. That's the COVID safe spaces. Do you want the broader program or the COVID [inaudible]? Now's the space for it because it's a homeless service.

Mr JAENSCH - Chair, Mandy Clarke is able to shed a bit more light at the table on the under-16 investment. For *Hansard*, Mandy Clarke, Deputy Secretary of Children's Services.

Ms CLARKE - The work of the under-16s has actually been primarily led from Children, Youth and Families and very closely with Pete and Jess in Housing. To clarify, none of the additional funding was allocated to the advice and referral line whatsoever.

The working group currently in place is a cross-representation of community and non-government providers, along with Government. Our first task of the working group was to respond to the immediate actions that led from the taskforce.

The group has met on three occasions since it was established - I'm not quite sure when it was exactly established - June this year. More recently, the group has looked at the development of the whole-of-government policy framework for responding to this matter in regarding children, young people under the age of 16 who are alone at risk of homelessness. The application of that whole-of-government policy is consistent with the Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework.

The additional funds outside of the targeted youth and the supported youth program are actually dedicated towards members and community Aboriginal organisations who importantly also support young people. The working group's current brief is mapping through the processes where we are introducing a front door into this matter using the advice and referral line.

The next step in this process in response to the crisis accommodation is to link the advice and referral with the shelters. The working group recently agreed to the establishment of a small working group that would include shelters and is co-chaired by Shelter Tasmania's CEO and myself.

Ms WEBB - Those shelters will still only receive or provide service to children down to the age of 12 or 13 depending on which shelter it is? The reason I'm asking is obviously, we still won't have an accommodation and care response to the under-12 group?

Ms CLARKE - The brief and the remit of the working group is to actually identify suitable options. In using and applying the Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework, that framework is centred upon development milestones of children and will be the common vehicle in which we actually are making policy decisions. Our first brief in the working group was, as I indicated, to attend to the immediate actions. We are then required to provide advice as a working group to the minister for future options.

In our planning to date, the various age ranges from 12 to 16. There are different needs. The working group is supported by a policy person in Children, Youth and Families, who is actually doing that work in terms of scoping what might be alternative options or what options are available in the current system.

Ms WEBB - To clarify this age group is now defined as 12 to 16, instead of under-16?

Ms CLARKE - That might be my language.

Ms WEBB - I'm asking because we [inaudible] drop down to everybody under 12.

Ms CLARKE - I am sorry, I probably did not select my words very well then. Under-16.

Ms WEBB - One final detail from what was then described, the whole-of-government response being developed by that working group - what is the time line?

Ms CLARKE - At this point, we have done a first draft. The feedback from the working group overall was very positive terms. The feedback we received would value-add to that document. The person assigned to this work is obviously wrapping that feedback up. Our intention is to provide the first draft of that framework to consult with some of our colleagues in our other agencies, including Health, because we have only just had a member come in, before we provide advice to our minister.

Ms WEBB - I am very pleased to hear that will go on the role [inaudible]

Mr VALENTINE - I appreciate you have given some money during COVID-19 to Safe Space, but what is the long-term commitment is to the Hobart City Council, City Mission and those sorts of organisations, to provide Safe Space for homeless people.

Can you give us a really good overview of what that landscape looks like for you?

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you, Mr Valentine. It is an evolving thing. What we have done, is through the investment in the Safe Spaces is create an increased intake model. Previously, we also supported Outreach and also put some money into that, but the ability to bring people

into the Safe Space with a view of referring them through into other forms of more secure setting that meets their needs, with services laid on.

That is why we have invested in the 18 single bed extensions

Mr VALENTINE - Pods.

Mr JAENSCH - Pods at Bethlehem House, 10 two-bedroom women's and children's pods at Hobart Women's Shelter, the seven four- and five-bedroom units managed by Hobart Women's Shelter

Mr VALENTINE - They are standalone units with ablution facilities and those sorts of things?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, and they can suit a family. There is a real dearth of this sort of crisis accommodation.

Mr VALENTINE - There are no shared facilities?

Mr JAENSCH - Without shared facilities. They will be managed quite carefully as potentially mixing other family members in.

The work underway is turning the Waratah Hotel into a supported accommodation facility, securing the Balmoral Motor Inn at Goodwood which will become similarly a 31-bed facility. There is new social housing in the city centre at Goulburn Street nearing completion with 25-beds and other projects in the pipeline.

Having brought people into somewhere like the Safe Space, if the service connection works there and there is more capacity in the next level of the system for them to be referred into, rather than all the shelters being full, you have had your soup and a night and you are back out. The aim is, if we can get people to engage with the services, we will have more capacity in that next layer of transitional, shelter or supported accommodation to move them through into.

Mr VALENTINE - Are you funding support personnel with some of these?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, with the extension of Bethlehem House and Hobart Women's Shelter that comes not only with the costs of building but also the contract to manage and the expansion of services they offer.

Mr VALENTINE - Is that something where Common Ground fell down? Not fell down, but was less useful as the support person was taken away.

Mr JAENSCH - I do not know all the detail of that. Where we are going to? Is the ability to bring people in off the street and take them somewhere and move them to the next step rather than back out into the cold?

Whilst there will always be people who find themselves in dire straits and some people who will make their own choices from fairly poor options and find themselves sleeping rough and homeless. If we can reduce the pool of people who are stuck in that cycle and move them

through a system into more secure housing that meets their needs and we cover more of those niches, I think we can aim to have the real rough sleeper end of the homelessness spectrum down to a maintenance level, if you like, as opposed to it being a population we need to extend services to.

Mr VALENTINE - What commitment are you making in years to come?

Mr JAENSCH - We'll keep reviewing and responding to the need and the proposals that come forward from people who are working on the front line, as we have several times now with Hobart City Mission and similar organisations around the state. There have been repeated investments in their capacity and their new evolving models.

Mr VALENTINE - Are you doing this in Launceston too?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, we have a Safe Space in Launceston as well, which has a women's and a men's wing there. It is very well used and subscribed.

Mr VALENTINE - in the north-west?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, at the Salvation Army in Burnie.

Mr VALENTINE - Good.

Output Group 90 COVID-19 Response and Recovery

90.1 Private Rental Incentive Scheme -

CHAIR - Oh, Sarah's gone. I think she may have addressed those in the earlier discussion on that -

Ms WEBB - We may have covered it.

CHAIR - so we will move on to the Statewide Safe Spaces.

90.10 Statewide Safe Spaces -

CHAIR - Just following on from what Rob was asking - you did speak about this earlier, minister, but I want to follow up on the mental health supports for homeless clients that you reference in this because I believe it is funded from within this \$14.3 million.

As we know, there's a huge demand on our Mental Health Services. We have inadequate mental health services despite the commitments to invest in them. Are you confident there will be adequate services to assist these people when there are so many others out there who can't get what they need already?

I know Mental Health is not your portfolio, but this is part of your committing to a service here.

Mr JAENSCH - I understand these are contracted services.

CHAIR - Who's being contracted to deliver them?

Mr JAENSCH - Could I ask Jessemy Stone to come to the table?

Thanks Jess, could you refer to the arrangements for provision of the Mental Health Services' association with Safe Spaces?

Ms STONE - We have through the budget, through to the 30 June 2022, two parts - Mental Health Statewide Outreach Service Providers consisting of clinical mental health services through the Mental Health Services of the Government delivered through the Health department in partnership with Communities Tasmania on the -

CHAIR - So stretched at the moment they can't meet the need, but anyway.

Ms STONE - This is additional funding -

CHAIR - ...Have you got the people, though?

Ms STONE - Well, they have been because it was introduced already, so under the introduction during COVID-19, and you'd have to speak to Health on the number of FTEs statewide, but this is additional funding and it's an increase to that funding as well.

The second part is general health. There's a health screen approach and we're extending that with Moreton Group providing that through contract and that's been extended through to -

CHAIR - Statewide?

Ms STONE - again, statewide and that's not only available for the people in Hobart, Burnie and Launceston Safe Spaces it's also available for all coming through Housing Connect who may receive emergency brokered accommodation - hotels and caravan parks - and it also includes people in our crisis shelters as well. Those statewide mental Health Services and the health screening is really an example of working closely together with our homeless shelters and what you would call in the Safe Places, broader than the rough sleeper cohort.

CHAIR - Minister, with regard to the health assessments or support what specific services? Can they see a GP; can they access a termination if a woman is pregnant and needs a termination - if its medication that has run out, for example; what is the extent of that support?

Ms STONE - My understanding is that all those services are included. It is probably best to be speaking on the Health portfolio, but my understanding through the contract is they are the examples that are included.

Ms WEBB - I have question that relates to this. Given that you have tipped money into the Safe Spaces for COVID-19 on top of what was already there and it is a great investment and those services sound wonderful, for the last three winters in a row we have had housing crises become a headline and an extra bucket had to be tipped in for brokerage to save caravan parks and other options like that to try to get people out of tents and public spaces.

When we look ahead to winter next year, are we anticipating yet again that we will be in a similar situation or has your best modelling pointing to a different scenario next year where we don't have to tip in an extra bucket of \$5 million or whatever it might be?

Mr JAENSCH - Because the circumstances which can result in people becoming homeless are many and varied and outside of our direct control in many cases, what we can speak about with certainty is that next winter, compared to last winter and the winter before, there will be the Safe Spaces in operation. There will be the increased shelter capacity. There will be new shelter capacity being built. There will be longer term versions of the extended shelters like new Bethlehem House will start to be built to replace old Bethlehem House with its extension.

There is a pipeline of work which year-on-year is growing the capacity of that system to take people in and find them secure appropriate housing and services, together with the rollout of the longer term independent social housing stock.

CHAIR - So you are saying you think they will be right?

Mr JAENSCH - I am saying we are better equipped each year to respond to that need and whether it will be enough or whether it will be too much, let's find out. Let's not back off just yet. There is plenty more to do.

The Committee suspended from 3.43 p.m. to 3.57 p.m.

DIVISION 11

(Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment)

Output Group 3

Natural and Cultural Heritage

CHAIR - Thank you minister. I will get you to introduce the new fresh faces at the table.

Mr JAENSCH - To my right I have Tim Baker, Secretary, DPIPWE; to my left, Louise Wilson, Corporate Heritage and Lands; and Andrew Crane, Manager of Policy Advice and Regulatory Services, DPIPWE.

CHAIR - Did you want to make an ever-so-brief opening statement?

Mr JAENSCH - I will forgo, but I reserve my right to do so at any time.

CHAIR - The first line item 3.5 but there are some overview questions. I will go to Dr Seidel first.

Dr SEIDEL - My question is about the Waste Action Plan and its implementation. The Government has committed to local government to implement a waste action plan and the Container Refund Scheme. Can you advise us if the starting date of the Container Refund Scheme was communicated with local government?

Mr JAENSCH - The Container Refund Scheme will commence operation in 2022. We have had an industry-based reference group that has been giving us information and concepts. We have a ministerial advisory group that has been working with the department to process that and to review what is happening in other jurisdictions, other models. There is some advice that has been presented to me recently on a preferred way forward and some options which myself and my colleagues will now consider further and then put our proposal forward to start drafting legislative arrangements.

We expect that will be a process that will run through next year. We have been told clearly from other jurisdictions not to rush the introduction of these schemes because they have to be right and we haven't had one operating here before. We can learn from other people's mistakes but we aim to have that Container Refund Scheme operating in 2022.

Dr SEIDEL - The beginning of 2022 or first quarter?

Mr JAENSCH - During the calendar year. We'll take advice as to how that rolls out. There are a number of stages to delivering it but we want to have it operational in 2022.

There might be elements of it that are in process before that.

Ms WEBB - I have some follow-up questions on the same topic in overview. Minister, you mentioned you have an expert reference group established to provide some advice on the scheme's design. Can you give details about the specific representatives on that expert reference group, please?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, I can. We have two groups that have been feeding in. I have a ministerial advisory group. I might ask Wes Ford, Director of Environment, the EPA, to come to the table and the deputy secretary as well. I'm looking for the section on representatives on the reference group.

Ms WEBB - While Wes is finding that, is the expert reference group the same thing as the ministerial reference group?

Mr JAENSCH - No, they are two different things. One is the ministerial advisory group which provides advice to me, the reference group is more about gathering the views of various stakeholders and sectors.

Ms WEBB - That's the one I'm asking about, thank you.

Mr JAENSCH - That first group, Wes, are you able to speak to the coverage of that?

Mr FORD - I can speak in general terms, but we can provide a full list on notice.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

Mr FORD - The expert reference group includes members from the Hotels Association of Tasmania; from the beverage industry so from companies like Coke and CUB; people from the sector that deals with recyclable material and people from the waste management sector. There are about 14 or 15 individuals who are members of that committee. We can provide a full list of them.

Ms WEBB - Thank you, and I'd appreciate it if when you provide that list if it would be possible, minister, to also have indicated against that list any members who are listed on the Government's lobbyist register or represented by registered lobbyists on the register.

Mr JAENSCH - Is that something we're able to cross-reference?

Mr FORD - Yes, I'm sure that's fine.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

Mr JAENSCH - The important thing there is that we know and expect that amongst the members of the reference group there are organisations represented which have publicly stated views on the best model for doing this. In some cases, quite enthusiastic lobbying for their version of what should work.

The expert reference group process gives us a way to receive that, 360 degrees from everyone who has something to say, as a way of gathering all the information that we can get. This is where the advisory group is slightly different.

Ms WEBB - I'm interested to understand with a bit more specificity about the expert reference group and the way it has met and its scope. Has it been meeting? Are those members dealt with individually or brought together in some sense? Is there somewhere I can read about the scope of its role?

Mr JAENSCH - I'll ask Wes to comment on how it has operated.

Mr FORD - The expert reference group has met on two occasions at this stage and those have been via Microsoft team meetings. Because of COVID, we haven't been able to have face-to-face meetings.

The reference group individuals have also been engaged with the Container Refund Scheme policy team on individual matters that are relevant and we can provide you with a copy of the terms of reference at the same time.

Ms WEBB - Thanks so much. I appreciate that. To clarify, minister, one further question on the same topic of the Container Refund Scheme, at the moment are you contemplating both schemes running and administered by government or outsourced to private contractors? Are both those models in the mix for consideration?

Mr JAENSCH - There's a range of different architectures out there. There aren't many that are fully run by government. Within the industry-based models and the contracted services, there are a couple of different models that seem to be one or the other. That has been what other jurisdictions have chosen.

That is really at the heart of the advice that is coming to me now and that we are weighing up and considering.

Ms WEBB - So everything is still in the mix at this stage? Thank you.

Dr SEIDEL - I have a question about the natural heritage strategy for Tasmania. The department's website still has the strategy for 2013-30 on it and that also includes threatened species and biodiversity. According to the strategy document, an implementation plan was meant to be developed from 2013 for the first five years. Has an implementation plan actually been developed?

Mr JAENSCH - I will ask Andrew Crane to address this question.

Mr CRANE - The plan hasn't been developed and the reason is that when the strategy was developed, it was developed to be consistent with what was then Australia's biodiversity strategy. The idea was it could be a state strategy that nested essentially underneath the national strategy. At the time of completion in 2013 the Australian Government determined that it would revise its biodiversity strategy. We have had our strategy up on the website because it provides a lot of information and direction in terms of important actions to be undertaken but it is not a strategy that has been endorsed in itself.

Subsequently to that, the Australian Government has reviewed yet again its national strategy which is now called the Strategy for Nature. We adopt an adaptive management approach so we put in place the necessary actions but the strategy itself hasn't been essential for guiding those.

Dr SEIDEL - Would it be worthwhile the website, then, because it is a bit misleading, isn't it? It was meant to be implemented within five years and the implementation was meant to be reviewed as well. Neither has really happened but the website does not state it, so a disclaimer on the website probably would be reasonable. What do you think, minister?

Mr JAENSCH - I would be happy ask Mr Baker to respond to that.

Ms WEBB - On this department and RTIs, you may report on this in your annual report and if that is the case I apologise that I haven't looked, just point me to it. If you don't do detailed reporting on the number of requests and the numbers refused, could you run through that with us now?

Mr BAKER - The short answer is we do report.

Ms WEBB - If it is in your annual report, you do not have to read through it.

Mr BAKER - I won't, but I want to make a couple of observations. We have made significant improvement this year. In the much talked about Auditor-General's report our agency was one that was highlighted as having significant improvement. I won't run through the numbers for you, but I can tell you that on almost every measure we have made significant improvements, which is due to the fact that we have tried our best to add additional resources. We are adding additional resources again to help in the overall coordination and on measures like the number of requests that have been released in full and the amount of RTIs that have been referred, there has been a significant improvement. In almost every measure in our department over the last 12 months, we have made improvement and all of that detail is in the annual report.

Mr VALENTINE - In regard to ICT and this whole-of-government approach, I am wondering what sorts of discussions have taken place with the ministers involved? As I asked

you last time, it was in the Department of Health virtually so what about this particular department and what is being done to progress that whole-of-government approach?

Mr BAKER - Thank you, Mr Valentine, a topic close to both of our hearts, given our former careers. The department takes a lead role in whole-of-government IT. I sit on the whole-of-government IT steering committee and there are a number of IT functions for which this department provides for whole of agency. The most obvious one of those is emergency service response when it comes to mapping and geosystems. For example, we provide all those types of services for COVID and obviously in the COVID response, we are running the Good to Go app, we are running all the application systems, but in terms of the broader whole-of-government agenda, we are committed to it and are playing an active role.

Mr VALENTINE - Including your back office?

Mr BAKER - Yes, indeed. I note with interest this week that the review into the public service was announced and that talked about one government and that is something we are very interested in as well. As another example, we provide IT services for the Service Tasmania shops for DPAC and that is no longer a service inside our department but we provide it on DPAC's behalf. There are a number of services where we provide whole-of-government services and as we take a lead role in that program.

Mr VALENTINE - And commitment to the what used to be called the office of e-government or whatever it is called now, their policies and project management expertise.

Mr BAKER - Absolutely. That is certainly something that has been discussed at length from a head of agency point of view and we are taking an active role in those discussions.

Output Group 3 Natural and Cultural Heritage

3.5 Threatened Species -

Dr SEIDEL - I bring us back to the Budget Papers, page 269, Table 10.5. Earlier this week when we had the Premier here, he talked about how valid some of the performance information is that is being put in tables, and I wanted to ask a question about one of the performance markers about changes in status of threatened species. I just want some explanation of whether there are ways to make it clearer if we have more threatened species or fewer threatened species over a given time line and whether there are other ways of we can publish that data in a simpler, more effective way.

Mr CRANE - As a former head of the threatened species section in the department, I can comment on this. The reason we have maintained the particular reporting measure is for consistency in the sense that it allows a year-on-year comparison. Having said that, I would say there are other measures that can also be applied. One of the complexities in this space is that the figures can, to put it crudely, look bad when there is a taxonomic revision of a species. You can have one species that someone looks at closely genetically and through an exhaustive process determines that there are in fact three species and so will go from one of those threatened species to three. There has been no change in status other than understanding how

the species actually fit together as a genetic group. It does not mean things have got worse. That is not uncommon and would actually account for the majority of changes in threatened species for things perceived through our measure to be in decline, when in fact they are reviewed and better understood scientifically.

Dr SEIDEL - The reason I am asking is I think on the departmental website there was a table that listed the number of threatened species; I think it was in 1995 and then 2001 and a 2019 table and based on the table we actually have more threatened species now than we had in 2001 and 1995. I was just trying to find ways we can reflect that in the Budget Papers as a performance marker because I couldn't make any sense of the data provided in the Budget Papers as to whether we are doing better or worse; it was not clear to me. Would you consider using the table that I believe was on the departmental website at some stage to update, because the change is quite clear. We have more threatened species there and it would be hard to argue if you put a disclaimer there and say it might not be quite as bad but it would make it easier to understand rather than using the current performance marker. Do you have any view on that?

Mr BAKER - I guess my answer again is yes, because we are always about continuous improvement. We have talked about this in other forums with some of the members around this table, particularly thinking about areas like salmon reporting and how we are always looking for better datasets. I am more than happy to do that, and I think Mr Crane made a good point, which is more threatened species probably is an indication of a better understanding of threatened species in Tasmania.

Mr JAENSCH - I would only caveat that with I'm sure there is a process by which there is agreement on what's included in the Budget Papers and what isn't.

CHAIR - It's all being reviewed in DPAC.

Mr JAENSCH - Particularly with a view to providing the ability to give a time series - as you've referred.

CHAIR - A bit of an outcomes-focus is what we're looking for.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

Mr BAKER - I would also make the point that I have sat at tables like this at Estimates and been criticised heavily for moving and changing these kinds of performance indicators. A few years ago we did a clean-up, so to speak, or some changes, so I think Mr Crane is right - we need to tread carefully here to make sure we provide consistency in reporting. But also, if there are better data that we can report, we're always happy to look at it.

Dr SEIDEL - I will still be here next year. I'll pick you up on it.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr BAKER - It's more downstairs I'm worried about.

CHAIR - Your performance information is next to useless if it doesn't actually report on outcomes and the impact of government effort in an area. DPAC has this year put a footnote

against theirs, and basically haven't put any in because they were absolutely meaningless. I always award a prize each year for the most useless set.

Mr VALENTINE - You didn't get it this year.

CHAIR - No, the Premier got it this year. It's usually the Minister for Energy. Yes, there have been criticisms with changing them, but I think the big criticism since I've been here is not having outcomes-focused KPIs.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, I hear you. Definitely.

CHAIR - I don't think there's anything wrong with reviewing it in terms of outcomes.

Mr JAENSCH - Just for the record, I'm uncertain as to whether we can unilaterally commit here to that inclusion, but certainly will take it into the discussion with the -

Ms WILSON - Through you, minister. Just for some background for this year, we actually did look at this and have some discussions around improving this KPI. Given time frames, it was very difficult to get the change, but what we did do was try to make the footnote a bit clearer. We also have an agreement with Treasury, who we work with, to change the performance measures - so we've got an agreement to talk about this set of KPIs before the next Budget Papers are out.

Mr JAENSCH - I take that suggestion on board. Great. Thank you.

Dr SEIDEL - Just one more question from me, about Table 10.1 on page 253. It's about the Save the Tasmanian Devil program that has come in for 2020-21, 2021-22, and no funding for 2022-23, 2023-24. Can you comment on why there's no funding allocated for this particular program?

Mr JAENSCH - The Tasmanian Government, in the 2018-19 State Budget, committed \$450 000 per year for four years to the Save the Tasmanian Devil program. The funding followed the cessation of the Commonwealth funding for the program in July 2017, and is in addition to the minimum \$1 million the state Government allocates annually to the program.

The aim of the additional funding was to support the program in reviewing and consolidating knowledge gained and lessons learned over the past 17 years. Future decisions on additional funding and associated resourcing of the program will await the outcomes of a review currently being undertaken by the department.

Mr BAKER - It has been a highly successful program for a long period of time. It's due for a review, and we're conducting that review. The out-workings of that will be a better understanding of what the best funding model is for it - but it will continue to be funded, because it remains a key priority for the department. I think I can say that on behalf of you.

Mr JAENSCH - You can, indeed.

Ms WEBB - Just to follow that up, specifically what is the time line for that review?

Ms WILSON - We're doing some internal work at the moment before we put anything to the minister about going out to stakeholders in a more public way, because there hasn't been a comprehensive review for some time of the program. The devil program has evolved and been so successful, it has actually grown immensely. There are a number of partners we're working with, and different components have grown as well, so we're basically doing a bit of stocktake internally for each of those components - mostly with our team, but also with the partners within the various components.

The internal part of that review is about to come to an end. We will then be planning how we go out and talk to our broader stakeholders generally, because there are a lot of people with an interest in the program, and we really do not want to be planning the next five to 10 years in isolation. We want to be working at a holistic level with all our partners.

Ms WEBB - I take it, minister, that this is an internal departmental review with the purpose to inform you of potential future actions? It is not an independent arms-length outside review?

Mr JAENSCH - No, but there will be engagement of a wide range of stakeholders in it. The critical timing, from a resourcing perspective, would be to informing the budget process for 2022-23, which will be taking place towards the end of next year.

Ms WEBB - While there is nothing reflected in the Budget for those out-years, it does not necessarily mean there would not be continuation of funding in this space?

Mr JAENSCH - No, it is funded this year and next year.

Ms WEBB - I am talking about 2023-23 and 2023-24. There is nothing reflected there, but that is not necessarily to say we will not be funding something in this space?

Ms WILSON - If I look through the brief, I might have the number, but this actually reflects the additional funding provided for four years, a few years ago.

Ms WEBB - That does not reflect the base funding of the program?

Ms WILSON - No. We still have some -

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, on top of the base funding of \$1 million, annually.

Ms WEBB - So across the forward Estimates, the program is still funded?

Ms WILSON - Absolutely.

Ms WEBB - Thank you for clarifying that. I appreciate it.

Mr BAKER - On devils and their review, I make the observation that in my time with DPIPWE, there is no animal in Tasmania for which more has been done. It is not our animal, it is the Tasmanian people's animal. There are lots of stakeholders, all with really strong ideas on how we should be managing the program. We are taking it one step at a time. Those stakeholders will need very sensitive and careful management, because they are so committed to the program, which is a great thing. We want to make sure we get it right.

Ms WEBB - I have a couple of questions on the devil program. Is it the case that the devil hotline has had its hours of operation reduced? If so, why has that occurred?

Mr JAENSCH - I am not aware of that operational matter. Is there someone we could bring to the table?

Ms WILSON - The hours of the hotline have been reduced. We did an analysis of the demand for the calls, and the impact on the service provided was minimal.

Ms WEBB - I also understand that in September the website would say that if you had an injured or orphaned devil, contact the Save the Tasmanian Devil program hotline. Now the website says to contact the Injured and Orphaned Wildlife Program, with a number for business hours, and Bonorong Wildlife number for all hours. So, there is no more specific referral there for injured devils, is that the case? Why was that change made, if it is the case?

Ms WILSON - Part of the thinking is that we actually have a number of different hotlines in the Natural and Cultural Heritage division. We have the whale hotline, the devil hotline, injured and orphaned. We are finding there are a lot of similarities and synergies between their actual referrals et cetera, so with the reduced hours for the devils, as a backup referral through the injured and orphaned, we have staff who can join up with the devil program. Where there is specific devil support needed, they can then make a call or get advice from somebody from the devil team, and make a call whether action is needed right then.

Often, with injured and orphaned wildlife, if it is after hours, action is not always taken right then and there. People are given advice about what to do with an injured animal or an injured devil, and then somebody is organised to go and meet that person if it's required and take the devil to specialist care.

Ms WEBB - It's not we've lost the specialisation of, say, an injured or orphaned devil being able to go to someone who's got expertise in that? The capacity to have a specialised response is still available?

Ms WILSON - Yes.

CHAIR - Minister, do you have any data on the effectiveness of the virtual fencing on threatened species like the devil?

Mr JAENSCH - I don't think I have a virtual fencing brief. Can you bring some expertise to the table for that, or maybe generally? We could provide some information in our session?

CHAIR - As you know it's a mitigation measure around mine sites and things like that, particularly in our electorate, minister.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes. I'm happy for Louise to have a crack.

Ms WILSON - I'll give you a high-level answer. I might be able to get some more detailed information and take that on notice. Virtual fences have been used in different areas

in different scenarios by different groups. The devil program has used virtual fences in different areas of Tasmania. The Department of State Growth has also used virtual fences.

At this point we have different results from those trials. I think the State Growth results weren't as positive as the results from the devil program. Our results were, I think from memory, something like a 50 per cent reduction.

CHAIR - On devils, or wildlife?

Ms WILSON - I'm sorry, I will have to come back to you on those specific details. I might be able to find the information if I flash through here.

Mr JAENSCH - One might affect the other. Less roadkill than -

Ms WILSON - I might just read this out so that I get it correct -

Virtual fence technology was trialled between 2014 and 2017 in the north-west at Arthur River-Marrawah Road, with analysis of results demonstrating a significant reduction of up to 50 per cent of the number of animals killed after the installation in that region. Then additional trials of virtual fencing were led by the Department of State Growth on the Huon Highway. They did not produce comparable positive results, indicating that the efficacy of this mitigation method depends on a range of environmental, physical and other unique site characteristics.

To extend this to our internal review, we've been having discussions about what we do now we have different sets of results. What we need is some analysis of the circumstances and the factors impacting the different results.

CHAIR - Has there been a review on the Murchison Highway near Fossey River, do you know, minister?

Mr JAENSCH - Lou, can you comment on that?

Ms WILSON - I'm afraid I'm not able to.

CHAIR - That's been there for quite a while.

Mr JAENSCH - We can find out and get you some feedback on it. We could provide an update on that. Do you want that for the committee, or do you want that ...

CHAIR - No, we'll send it through the committee. We'll write to you as one of our questions on notice.

Mr JAENSCH - Just an update on currency and coverage of that.

Ms WEBB - In terms of threatened species, there's the Save the Tasmanian Devil program and there's work to protect orange-bellied parrots. Apart from -

Mr JAENSCH - Which is going very well.

Ms WEBB - Yes, indeed. Apart from that, is the rest of the work done regarding compliance with regulatory functions under the act, things like planning approvals? I want to understand what staffing and funding is provided to do other specific threatened species work on rare and endangered land species? What funding might be allocated to that?

Ms WILSON - The department has a branch that deals with threatened species, conservation programs and functions. That includes the conservation management programs of Save the Tasmanian Devil and the orange-bellied parrot program. They perform some functions. We also have the threatened species section, which is a dedicated section of staff. Minister, do you mind if I ask Andrew to talk about that particular section because he used to head that section and knows the work extremely well?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

Mr CRANE - I might start with the staffing level, which is 11 highly qualified professionals equating to 8.8 FTEs. The work done in that area is part of what you described, which is providing advice to regulators. It is also providing advice to the general public. It is providing advice to the science and research community and also facilitating their research in a number of different ways. One of those is providing permits, as we are required to do under legislation. It is also working with those scientists who often refine their research to ensure it is often complementary.

Research is an interesting field where we have quite a large pool of international and national researchers. That has been impacted with COVID-19 but we have a large number of researchers coming to Tasmania to undertake work. We support those researchers in the kinds of research they are undertaking, partly to assist them but also to get outcomes from that research that delivers a conservation benefit to us. It has been highly productive. We work particularly closely with the University of Tasmania but also the Australian National.

We work with other research organisations such as the CSIRO and part of the University of Tasmania Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies. I am thinking particularly of handfish research and handfish conservation efforts. This has been enormously successful with captive breeding programs for the red handfish and the spotted handfish. That is a recent initiative supported by the Government. It has been enormously and unexpectedly successful.

We also work with other research organisations, other government departments and other organisations and agencies such as the Forest Practices Authority, to help develop their research programs. They undertake research programs and we make sure they are complementary. We try to ensure that research is directed towards practical outcomes for conservation.

We also participate in a number of recovery teams for a listed species. The forty spotted pardalote recovery team, orange-bellied parrot, swift parrot. The giant freshwater crayfish does not yet have a recovery team but we are working towards that. All three listed handfish species have a single recovery team and we participate on that. We also provide a lot of information on data management - the preparation of note sheets which set out critical conservation information and make sure it is publicly available. We work with the Commonwealth to develop such things as recovery plans and conservation advices.

Part of our role is educational. There is a compliance element. The area that I specifically manage has a wildlife ranger team which conducts enforcement and compliance activities. I

have focused, and I am acutely conscious of this, that I have focused on birds and vertebrates. We do a lot of work with invertebrates as well and support research on freshwater snails and butterflies. We have recently been doing some specific work on understanding the distribution of three endangered butterfly species in Tasmania. Almost two-thirds is work on threatened plants. There is a lot of work in that space, working with the kinds of regulators I have mentioned. Plants are static, so data management is critical in understanding the distribution of these species. A lot of effort has gone into ensuring that we have a robust system which is presented through the Natural Values Atlas. That information is available through the list. This ensures we have a high-quality dataset that is publicly available for people to be able to identify locations of threatened species, both flora and fauna. That probably covers the suite of most of our activities. I am sure I have missed many but that is the crux of what we do.

Mr JAENSCH - We have one fungi enthusiast who is keen to see fungi better understood in Tasmania.

Mr BAKER - I have the general manager of Parks here. The 300 staff in Parks also work in threatened species. We have a marine conservation program which protects threatened marine mammals. As secretary, I would say, it is a major area and core business across the whole department lead by the threatened species team.

Ms WEBB - Just two bits of detail I would like to pick up on from that, if that is okay.

The research sounds quite fascinating and no doubt there is probably funding that comes into the department from external research partners or entities you are working with, or for. What is the quantum of that as a source of income into the department?

Mr JAENSCH - Andrew or Louis, is that something that you have off the top of your head or we take it on notice.

Mr BAKER - We would have to take it on notice.

Ms WEBB - Is that all retained within the research activities undertaken or does it go more broadly into the coffers of the department.

Mr BAKER - It is very much dependent on the funding source which always comes with hooks attached, as I describe it in our departments.

When we get the money, there is always an agreement for how we are going to spend that money. We have a number of provisions or trusts, where the money sits, but is very much dependent on the nature of the money. Very rarely does this department get money without those hooks attached about how specifically we are to spend that money.

Mr CRANE - Whilst money may come into the department, most of our emphasis recently has been working with partners. A good example is working with the three Natural Resource Management - NRM - regions in Tasmania.

The Australian Government has injected significant funding into Tasmania for threatened species research. It has done that in conservation, not just research, but action through the NRM regions. So, we work with them and they are highly flexible in their capacity to engage researchers and others to underpin their work.

For example, that has yielded over \$700 000 of swift parrot investment in the state over the next three years. There are two programs for giant freshwater crayfish. One for the north-west, and one for the north. There is also hooded plover work being done.

That is a major way in which we coinvest our personnel resources to support those programs. That funding goes to the regions. It doesn't come to us.

Ms WEBB - I imagine a very key part, when it comes to the threatened species is the monitoring elements in place in different programs. Given climate change and that we are all quite aware of the changes occurring already in that context, is it that you have had to invest potentially more into those areas. Either with resources or staffing, technology or focus to increase levels of monitoring in order to be particularly nuanced about the impact of climate change on threatened species.

Mr CRANE - Certainly, we've noticed that. What we have also noticed is the level of community interest in this particular aspect of conservation has grown enormously. What that has allowed us and indeed allowed the community to do is engage in Citizen Science Projects.

I mentioned we have 8.8 FTE equivalent and as the Secretary has mentioned, we have that as a core responsibility to the entire department. But even so, we have over 600 listed species. What we have had to do, and when I say had to, we have been able to partner with enthusiastic community groups, and members of the community to undertake this kind of monitoring.

Particularly true in flora where there are a dedicated group of volunteers who work through the Botanical Gardens and the three NRM regions and ourselves, to go out virtually every weekend, and monitor Tasmania's threatened flora, often in obscure locations and in difficult conditions.

That yields us an incredible data set which we would not otherwise be able to obtain. We would not have the resources to do that.

It also engages the community in conservation efforts. It is always heartening to see grandparents, parents and children undertaking this kind of activity and learning about the threatened species.

Ms WEBB - It's fantastic leveraging. Beyond leveraging enthusiasm in the community, and citizens scientists, has the department needed to increase its resourcing into the area of monitoring with more funding or staffing time, or is it something that has stayed pretty static?

Mr JAENSCH - Andrew, would you care to comment.

Mr CRANE - The only comment I would make, it has remained fairly static, in the sense we have always been adaptable and focused on key issues that have emerged at any one time. Clearly, there has been a significant investment in the Tasmanian devil and monitoring of the orange-bellied parrot and swift parrot and, as I mentioned, there is a growing citizen science case interest which we support.

Mr VALENTINE - I am interested in the growth of threatened species; I see the list on your website, but can you give us an indication as to how much that has grown over the last 12 to 24 months?

CHAIR - That was the question asked earlier and we are going to get it on notice.

Mr VALENTINE - Okay, its already been asked. Can you give us an update on maugean skate and whether there has been any work?

CHAIR - In the water.

Mr VALENTINE - I know it's in the water.

Mr JAENSCH - Very briefly, we have had a very productive relationship with the Institute of Marine and Antarctic studies in this area. Over the last five years there has been significant funding directed into that partnership at UTAS to support research into the skate, including the relationship between the environmental conditions in the harbour and the ecology and the life history of the species. That program of monitoring and research to gain more information about the species is continuing over this summer and we are continuing to work with IMAS on a program.

I was surprised when I was inquiring into it how relatively little we know about the critter and its range. What we do know about it is that it seems to live in extremely challenging and changing environments, and its niche would seem it is able to survive things others won't.

CHAIR - A bit shy.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, it is a bit shy like Mr Baker. There is a lot left to learn about it is my point. Speaking with some of the IMAS researchers recently, I was impressed by the work that remains to be done to even understand its proper range and whether it is limited Macquarie Harbour or if it exists in other waterways around the coast. Martin, if you care to add some proper information to my over view.

Mr READ - There are a number of recommendations from the report from IMAS primarily involved in population analysis. The department has had recent discussions with IMAS about some of the short-term monitoring. Gill netting to understand more of the size distribution of skates and have confirmed this will happen in the coming months of late January early February.

IMAS has also indicated it is keen to trial some new technology that will give us some firmer information of population of the skate in Macquarie Harbor. That involves a fairly advanced technology that is either light [inaudible] or sonar that might be attached to the bottom of a boat and go to known skate habitats and areas to have a firmer estimate on population size.

Mr VALENTINE - Is it only know to inhabit Macquarie Harbour or has it been discovered elsewhere.

Mr READ - Previous information is that it was also found in Bathurst Harbour. There has been a number of more limited surveys done historically in Bathurst Harbor and the recent one has not found the skate, but it has been known from that area.

CHAIR - Any other questions on threatened species.

Output Group 7

Environment Protection and Analytical Services

7.1 Environmental Management and Pollution Control -

Mr JAENSCH - This is Wes Ford, Deputy Secretary, Environment, and Director of the Environment Protection Authority - EPA.

Mr VALENTINE - There has been an increase in the appropriation of 18.84 per cent and 27.25 per cent for 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 respectively when compared to last year's forward Estimates.

Can you explain why the grant payments associated with implementing the Nyrstar Groundwater Monitoring Strategy - which is the reason the increased appropriation has been provided - is so much higher than disclosed in last year's Budget?

Mr FORD - In 2016-15 the Government entered into an arrangement with Nyrstar to provide \$5 million of funding into a \$10 million funding program and that was intended to deliver over about three years. For a variety of reasons that program didn't commence when it was first proposed it would, so there was a subsequent grant deed issued by the Government that continued the amount of money but pushed the grant to be out over the next three years.

Because of the complexity of the work Nyrstar was doing that needed to move the money forward, so there was an underspend last financial year that was declared as a saving and that was carried through. At this point in time we've paid out about \$2.6 million. They've just put in a claim for \$1 million and there's \$1.4 million outstanding which is covered in this Budget and we currently anticipate the project will finish in this financial year.

Mr VALENTINE - That's a dollar-for-dollar is it?

Mr FORD - It's a dollar-for-dollar arrangement.

Mr VALENTINE - The expected outcomes - do you have some stringent outcomes that you are requiring of them, in giving them that sort of money?

Mr FORD - The program is designed to capture the groundwater out of the site. We have 100 years of contamination of the groundwater with zinc, cadmium and a range of other materials, so what they're seeking to do is effectively set up a concrete wall underground to intercept the groundwater as it flows down the hill and then put in a series of bores in order to be able to collect the groundwater. They then put the water through the processing plant and the early successes they're recovering about 90 to 100-odd tonnes of zinc a year and when they expect this to have finished, they expect to increase that to about 200 tonnes of zinc a year so that's 200 tonnes of dissolved zinc that is not going to go in the Derwent River.

Mr VALENTINE - Sounds good to me.

Mr FORD - I was onsite this morning looking at the drill rig and they've commenced their drilling of a 750-metre horizontal bore that runs from the southern part of the site to the northern part of the site.

Mr VALENTINE - That's 750 metres?

Mr FORD - Yes, 750 metres of a horizontal bore and they are about 200 metres away from hitting the intersect between the sandstone and the dolerite, so it's a fascinating engineering project.

That part of the project is about \$1.5 million-worth of investment and has been delayed by about six months because of COVID-19. They had to bring those operators from Queensland and because of COVID-19, they weren't able to travel.

Mr VALENTINE - Do you test the riverbed in that area to be able to monitor exactly what's coming out of that bund, if I can put it that way?

Mr FORD - Nyrstar runs an extensive monitoring program because they want to be able to demonstrate that it's working. They have a number of groundwater monitoring bores in place above their curtain and below their curtain to measure the change in flow and the change in concentration in zinc, and they are measuring what they are recapturing in zinc metal from their wastewater treatment plant.

Mr VALENTINE - In 2022-23 the expected appropriation for the output is 5 to 6 per cent higher than indicated in last year's papers. Can you tell us why there is this ongoing boost for the appropriation for the output?

Mr FORD - That is the output in its entirety? There has been a number of changes in relation to the output itself. There's been a change over the next couple of years in relation to funding associated with analytical services; there has been additional funding provided in relation to increased capacity for environmental assessments; and there is funding provided in the next two years to support the programs associated with the development of the container refund scheme and for the waste levy; so that funding increase accounts for the increase across the entire portfolio.

Mr VALENTINE - Are you able to provide the number of times water quality limits have been exceeded at each of the wastewater treatment plants across the state in the last reporting year?

Mr FORD - It would be better taken on notice because if you wanted across the 79 plants, there will be exceedances for all of them.

Mr VALENTINE - Is that all right?

Mr FORD - Yes. In terms of the way the wastewater treatment plants work, and the complexity of their water quality processes and their limits when you look through the

operations that have been assessed by the select committee, it noted some of these sorts of challenges. I have limited data with me, but a more comprehensive report -

Mr VALENTINE - Is it data that is easily extracted?

Mr FORD - There is data. It depends on the question, because it depends on whether the question relates to pathogens, nutrients, sediments. Across each of the wastewater treatment plants there are a variety of very different water quality conditions. The conditions that operate on the Pardoe wastewater treatment plant are very different to the conditions that Macquarie Point operate against.

Mr VALENTINE - A different type of sewage?

Mr FORD - Same type of sewage, different type of system. Pardoe is our only primary treatment plant in the state, so that is basically just macerating and taking the solids out and discharging the rest of the material untreated out into through a long pipeline in Bass Strait. Macquarie Point, Selfs Point and Blackmans Bay treat the sewage to a much higher standard. Blackmans Bay - being the newest plant in the system - is one of the best-performing plants in the system. When you look at it on a plant-by-plant basis, it's really a question framing exactly what the question and the detail might be.

Mr VALENTINE - I understand, I was interested more in the heavy metals side and the pathogens side particularly. If you can get me a broad overview as to how the system is operating across the state, I would be that would be good.

Mr FORD - And if you believe it is appropriate, particularly through the current process in terms of the select committee, I am happy to reappear there to go through some of that material in significant detail because maybe it comes to the heart of what the committee is currently looking at.

Mr VALENTINE - How old is what you have given the committee compared to what might have happened over the last 12 months?

Mr FORD - Like a lot of data processing when you look at it on an annual basis it tends to be dealt with on a financial year reporting process so the data that is currently available is definitely the 2018-19 data. The 2019-20 data will be currently being worked on. This data feeds into -

Mr VALENTINE - It is probably not much different.

Mr FORD - No, it will not be much different to what's already provided.

Mr VALENTINE - I don't want to cause you extra work for no reason.

The State Waste Action Plan - can you give us an update where that is all at? You had consultation with local government in June 2019, I believe?

CHAIR - Do not repeat what was said earlier, minister, if you would not mind, just any other additional information because that was asked in overview.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you, Wes, for your answers there. The Container Refund Scheme is one area of work that is being conducted as a major deliverable under the Waste Action Plan.

Mr VALENTINE - That's what I had down here to ask.

Mr JAENSCH - The second one, the other big body of work is to do with establishment of a statewide levy on waste being disposed of at landfill. This will generate a revenue stream to support waste diversion, education and development of a new circular economy, if you like, alongside the operation of the Container Refund Scheme.

There has been considerable work from the department on development of the governance structure for how a waste levy would work and the ministerial advisory group that I referred to before is going to be providing input on that next. Hopefully, we will be able to bring out a piece of draft legislation in the new year for broader consultation with a view to getting that underway and a levy operating in 2021.

Mr FORD - I will just add, in terms of the work that has been done, as part of the Budget process we've been provided with funding to deliver on both of those programs. Part of the waste levy program requires us to understand the organics industry in Tasmania so we will be very shortly releasing a consultancy request through the tender process to get a consultant to undertake a thorough and contemporary analysis of the complete organic industry in Tasmania. That's the domestic, municipal, industrial -

Mr VALENTINE - The Interlaken site where that's happening.

Mr FORD - That is part of that process. Anything in terms of organic waste will be incorporated into that study, which will give us a very good starting point to determine how to factor organics into the waste levy component.

Mr VALENTINE - A number of sewage spills were notified to the EPA and associated sites.

Mr JAENSCH - I will just add, while Wes is assembling that, in relation to the Waste Action Plan also, this Budget includes \$5.5 million of state money to match Commonwealth money and the commercial recycling sector to get more commercial recycling activity happening in Tasmania. There is \$10 million of new money as well to invest in waste recovery and sorting - materials recovery, facilities and others, working with local government in particular to derive some cleaner, sorted recyclable material streams to support that industry as well.

Mr VALENTINE - What sort of work are you talking about? Plastics, glass?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

Mr VALENTINE - Cardboard?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes. The things that we're not going to be able to export anymore to somebody else.

Mr VALENTINE - I was going to say possibly being processed here on the island.

Mr JAENSCH - Well, at first sorted into streams of quality that can be either processed here or fed into a value chain that might exist somewhere else in Australia or overseas.

Mr VALENTINE - Okay.

Mr JAENSCH - As an ingredient then to a product. You know, as a material that can be made use of.

Mr VALENTINE - Whether it goes into road base or whether it goes into outdoor furniture or whatever.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, exactly.

Mr FORD - Just in the context, part of the discussions I had with TasWater a number of years ago, I was concerned about the timeliness of their reporting processes. TasWater has significantly improved the reporting to the EPA so in the 2019-20 financial year, 114 incidents were reported about TasWater infrastructure associated with wastewater treatment plants.

Of these, 96 were associated with spills from either wastewater treatment plants or the sewerage network itself, primarily pump stations failing. The remainder were odour complaints, principally around Longford, and they don't include another 25 odour complaints around Longford that we couldn't attribute between TasWater and the abattoir itself so -

Mr VALENTINE - Noise complaints?

Mr FORD - I don't have any records of noise complaints about TasWater. Are you talking about noise complaints more generally?

Mr VALENTINE - No, not to do with TasWater; complaints on noise pollution full stop.

Mr FORD - I don't have the number of complaints from noise. We have a significant number of complaints for noise across the state. We have a couple of locations where noise is recorded and complained about. We have a number of complaints about Nyrstar from one individual. That one individual's complaints represent the majority of the complaints database in any one year.

We also have a number of noise complaints that emanate from the West Tamar area in relation to the industrial sector around the George Town and we have a number of complaints associated with noise from the aquaculture industry in the northern part of the Channel.

Across the course of the year in 2019-20, as a result of those complaints, we undertook 17 separate noise surveys across various parts of the state to try to ascertain whether the noise generated was a nuisance noise or was in breach of any regulatory limits.

Mr VALENTINE - What about smoke pollution from fires? I know generally that is local government, isn't it? Do you get involved in that in any way, shape or form?

Mr FORD - Through the minister, yes, we do. This is one of the Budget reporting numbers we didn't report on in air quality in Tasmania. We have three nationally accredited reporting stations in Hobart, Launceston and Devonport, and we have another 35 additional stations which work on optical readings that produce the real-time data.

Mr VALENTINE - That's in particulate?

Mr FORD - That's in particulate. Predominantly, the winter smoke is due to wood fires, summer smoke is generally due to bushfires and the autumn and spring smoke is generally due to burnoffs.

CHAIR - Minister, you said you have a role to play in that. It seems that there's a bit of a no man's land around some of this. Council say they can't deal with a significant burnoff that's going on next to a neighbour who has potential health issues - even if they don't - if it's right next to your property in a rural setting, we're talking. Then the EPA can't act on that either, is that right? What's your involvement?

Mr FORD - Through you, minister, under the smoke regulations there are a set of defined offences for backyard burning off.

CHAIR - I'm not talking about backyard, I'm talking about big burns from private landowners clearing land.

Mr FORD - We have no regulatory process that deals with large-scale burnoffs for fuel reduction or for land clearing. There is a general provision within the legislation around nuisance and people who are aggrieved can seek to try to make a case that there is a nuisance.

One of the challenges we're dealing with fire and smoke is how you take action in relation to one demonstrating that there is a nuisance and where they are related to burnoffs, particularly in fuel reduction since there is inevitably a trade-off between the safety of Tasmanians and the requirements by having appropriate fuel reductions.

CHAIR - I'm not talking about fuel reduction, let's talk about land clearing because that's not fuel reduction and land clearing is a different matter. How does that fit?

Mr FORD - There is no specific regulatory requirement for the EPA to manage the smoke associated with fires associated with land clearing.

CHAIR - Is there a capacity for council to deal with it?

Mr FORD - Councils and EPA can both deal with it in the general nuisance sense but the bar gets set pretty high. I think most councils would take the view that their environmental health officers don't have the capacity to be able to deal with smoke-associated nuisance issues from land-clearing burning.

CHAIR - Minister, do you see this as a bit of a bit of failing, coming from a rural area, yourself, where you have a higher burden of chronic disease including upper respiratory conditions?

Mr JAENSCH - I think it is a part in some ways of living in rural areas that are cleared land and may still have some clearing being undertaken in them.

CHAIR - What if you're a person who has lived there for a long time and someone else comes in and does it?

Mr JAENSCH - It is one of the things that you get living in rural areas to a certain extent and I think that one of the mitigations for that might be, as we do for other controlled burning, advice for those managing burns and people who live in those areas as to how to choose their days and how to respond, if the issue you are raising is about more forewarning of people in the area of burning activity that they could then make their own plans and choices about how -

CHAIR - When they're asked not to do it at a certain time and they do, is there power then to act? If they are asked not to do it at a certain time by council, by Tasmania Fire Service, by a neighbour?

Mr JAENSCH - You would put it in the same bag as fuel reduction burning in that regard where it was a planned activity.

CHAIR - There appears to be a gap in the legislation, minister. It would be good if you could have a look at that.

Mr JAENSCH - I take that on board.

Output Group 7

Environment Protection and Analytical Services

7.2 Analytical Services -

Mr VALENTINE - Can you explain why the appropriation for 2020-21 and 2021-22 has been increased by 71.28 per cent and 71.56 per cent, respectively? Last year's Budget provided no indication that the boost begun in 2019-20 would be part of a three-year plan.

Mr FORD - Last financial year the Government increased the consolidated allocation to Analytical Services by \$1 million, recognising that a significant change in the business, particularly in relation to TasWater utilising a mainland laboratory, had fundamentally changed the viability of the laboratory at a time when costs of laboratory services worldwide have increased significantly, so there needed to be a rebasing process. The minister at the time provided a one-year allocation and in so doing requested that there be a business case prepared to analyse, which was done. As a result of that, additional funding has been provided in the two financial years, so this financial year and next financial year.

Mr VALENTINE - It goes down to \$2.284 million in 2022-23, so you are saying it should be okay when it gets to that point?

Mr FORD - I will refer that one back to the minister. I can't stand the Government's budget process.

Mr JAENSCH - Future budget processes are what they are. We will take applications from community and within our agencies as well when we are determining future budgets.

Mr VALENTINE - But if you're giving it a boost over two years and then all of a sudden you are putting it back down to where it was, isn't it a recipe for not failure but hard times for them?

Mr JAENSCH - We will take budget submissions on their merit each time the cycle comes around. There is going to be a fair bit of this happening over the next couple of years, with this late budget and the next one in August next year and then moving back into a regular cycle after that. There will be a series of budget processes to process these things.

Mr VALENTINE - It does testing for the public, does it not?

Mr JAENSCH - It provides a range of services.

Mr VALENTINE - So is it an indicator that they're not charging enough for the testing they're doing?

Mr JAENSCH - Maybe the secretary can come in on that one.

Mr BAKER - The costing model for AST has been a challenger for both Wes and I for some time and when I say I, I mean the secretary and the previous secretary as well, as has been a sustainable business model for the service. It provides a critical service to many industries and particularly the shellfish industry is an example of where without AST's service and the fact that they're local and can provide testing quicker than what would have to happen on the mainland, that industry would have to close for longer and that would have an immediate financial impact.

I think as the minister and the director have indicated, what we're doing working with the manager of the area, who is an outstanding officer, is working through what is the best long-term financial sustainable model for AST, because like any business, they are market exposed. There are services they offer to organisations like TasWater and other private organisations, and like any business they tender for them, they win some, they lose some. We've got to work that through, but the core services of AST which are critical to the state will continue to be funded and there have been occasions, and Wes can talk to this, where my predecessor topped that funding up from the whole of DPIPWE budget because at the end of the day, it's whole of Tasmania environmental service. We will be working that through and the minister is absolutely right that we will come knocking asking for the money once we have worked out what the best financial model is.

Mr VALENTINE - So you are approaching it in a strategic manner.

Mr BAKER - Indeed.

Mr VALENTINE - Excellent. Well, if they're essential, I hope they get the attention they deserve. Can you provide shellfish testing statistics and results over the past two years per year per region?

Mr JAENSCH - Wes, could you please provide the detail?

Mr FORD - In the context of what sort of testing? AST provides a testing service for shellfish but the shellfish program itself is run under the Primary Industries portfolio, so I don't have any of that data with me. It's a question probably more for Tim because AST provides a client service and it's not for AST to release its clients' data. In this case, AST -

Mr VALENTINE - Okay, and you're the client.

Mr BAKER - The industry is the client. I'm happy for you to put that question on notice through the minister and we'll have a look at it and respond. The data is available so I'm sure we will be able to answer the question.

Mr VALENTINE - If it's available somewhere else that I can get to, don't worry about it. Can you point me to the -

Mr BAKER - Not at this precise moment, Mr Valentine, but I'm sure we can if you put a question on notice.

Mr VALENTINE - Thank you. I'm presuming this area hasn't had any involvement with COVID in any way, shape or form?

Mr JAENSCH - I'm happy for the secretary to answer that.

Mr BAKER - The director and the deputy secretary have day-to-day operational responsibilities so they are probably better to answer that, but it has had involvement.

Mr FORD - I suppose like all parts of government there has been a response process. One of the early things the laboratory was able to do for the department was start to produce hand sanitiser when it was unavailable anywhere in the state and AST started producing hand sanitiser for government.

Mr VALENTINE - The last question is about reporting in 24-hour blocks. Has the new system of reporting been installed yet? Last year there was a comment made with regard to the way they report and that they couldn't report in anything less than 24-hour blocks which provided slightly erroneous statistics.

Mr FORD - The system to allow that reporting to occur is still under construction.

Mr VALENTINE - Is that right? How much longer do they have to wait?

Mr FORD - It's a fairly significant investment the agency has made to build an integrated laboratory management system for all of our laboratories and, like everything, COVID has impacted the ability to get that completed on time, so it's about six months behind schedule.

Mr BAKER - I want to make just one more point in relation to COVID and AST. I've spoken a bit this week about the fact that the department had a large amount of staff work from home. AST was one of the areas where that just wasn't possible and Wes and the manager of the area did an outstanding job in changing the way the operations of AST worked so we could get better spacing and distancing in the labs. We had really good feedback and a constructive

relationship with the relevant union as a lot of these changes were outside of the normal industrial agreements.

We were able to run dual shifts instead of running single shifts. It was a good example of how the agency was able to cope with COVID-19 life and still meet all of the targets, as you can see, but in a COVID-safe way.

Mr VALENTINE - Are they out at New Town?

Mr BAKER - Yes, St Johns Park.

Mr VALENTINE - Near Forensic Services?

Mr BAKER - Yes, they are.

CHAIR -Minister, in relation to this, and I will refer to COVID-19 as an opportunity, has that thrown up other opportunities for the greater utilisation of the service so they can generate more of their own revenue?

Mr JAENSCH - Potentially.

Mr FORD - It opens up the opportunity to start to think about we restructure the business. As Tim said, looking at the structure and the client base, to change the way we operate we will clearly have to sit down with the union and negotiate a completely different working agreement than provided under the current award. The current award limits us in regard to the rest of the State Service.

We would have to have a specific agreement in place to run -

CHAIR -To take on new customers, external customers?

Mr FORD - No, we can take on new customers

CHAIR -But that is what I am talking about more, Wes.

Mr FORD - We can take on new customers. If you look at the statistics, the number of tests we have delivered over the course of the last financial year has gone up. That is primarily because we have taken on new customers.

CHAIR -Right. There are other industries like the dairy industry and other agricultural sector industries, is AST actively seeking that as an opportunity.

Mr FORD - We generally get customers coming to us. We have to be very careful of the market failure problems. We are working in an area where there is market failure but there are some laboratories that do very specific services, for example, the wine industry.

We have not ventured into that space to seek clients because we do not want to be competing with private Tasmania-based laboratories. So generally people find us.

Mr VALENTINE - How many FTEs in that?

Mr JAENSCH - In the AST?

Mr BAKER - Currently 39 FTEs. That's about 46 people.

Output Group 8 Parks and Wildlife Management

8.1 Parks and Wildlife Management -

Dr SEIDEL - A few questions on workforce and staffing levels. How many ranger positions do we currently have filled and how many positions are vacant?

Mr JAENSCH - I will ask Mr Jacobi to respond to that but I am very happy to advise that we have, as part of an election commitment to boost staffing in Parks by an additional 15 positions through a budget allocation of \$7 million over four years, diligently followed through.

We have additional ranger positions recruited as part of that commitment, giving us increased staffing at Lake St Clair, Arthur River, Deloraine, St Helens and Bruny Island. Two of those ranger positions were Aboriginal-identified positions. If you would like to given an update overall?

Mr JACOBI - The numbers of staff in the PWS varies on a da- to-day basis. We have a typical workforce in the order of anywhere between 400 and 480 staff. Typically, we employ a large number of people over the summer season. We reduce our staffing through winter and increase in response to visitation, but also in response to significant pressures like wildfire and planned burning. Our staffing varies across the year at any point in time but typically from season to season. Most notably our staffing has increased overall, particularly in ranger numbers, by approximately 18 positions since a similar time last year.

The Government election commitment of 15 new rangers has significantly improved our capability in a number of core locations where we have, through growth and general increasing visitation, required some extra staffing.

Dr SEIDEL - I think you know where I am leading to. How many of those positions are contracts of less than a year in length?

Mr JACOBI - I'd have to take that on notice. That would require a bit of work to calculate. If you are talking exactly of those of less than a year, we would have to go back and look at each individual position and how long they are contracted for.

Dr SEIDEL - How many of those positions have guaranteed hours of fewer than 50 hours per year?

Mr JACOBI - Again, I would need to go back and look at that. We have a number of casual staff who support a wide range of functions, from visitor services offices in our visitor centres to the Discovery Ranger Program. As I mentioned before, we have seasonal positions

as well. We use those positions depending on the nature of the work and the amount of time that they are required.

Dr SEIDEL - Do you think it is an issue to have those fluctuation levels? You say, it is about meeting certain demands but it is hard for employees on potentially short-term contracts, limited working hours, particularly in this COVID-19 environment. Wouldn't it be a great idea to have more permanent staff with longer guaranteed hours to improve incomes and to have certainty at work?

Mr JAENSCH - Just before the deputy answers - we are working in a natural environment through the seasons. Part of the work of Parks involves managing seasonal issues like peaks of visitor activity, fire season, fire preparation and those sorts of matters, which you can't change, you can't smooth throughout the year, particularly where there's specialist skill sets involved. There will always be a need for us to be able to have seasonal surge capacity and to be able to bring in the people we need to do that work in those seasons.

Mr JACOBI - I will make a couple of general comments. The first thing is the permanent base has increased. Since the last round of wage and negotiations under the PSUWA, the department has made 25 staff who were fixed term, permanent under those new rules. Of those 25, 15 were in Parks.

The strategy we are putting in place is to increase the base, but then also to allow us to have flexibility. The lesson, and I'm talking whole-of-agency now, of COVID-19, of bushfire season, of fruit fly in the Biosecurity areas, is we have to have surge capacity and we have to have the ability to bring staff on when we need them and then have the ability to take them off when we don't. From a whole-of-government point of view, a lot of those staff are on interoperability lists and then move around government. I make the point we have increased the permanent base and we will retain our flexibility, particularly to handle crisis management in the department.

Ms LOVELL - Minister, when the secretary says you have increased the permanent base. Have they been new positions or have they been filling vacant positions?

Mr JACOBI - It is a combination of both, Ms Lovell. The 25 I talked about were fixed term employees who have been made permanent under the new arrangements of the PSUWA. I would make the point that we were making that assessment anyway, because it is not cost-effective to continue to run fixed-term employees over long periods of time. That is not what this agency is about, and it is not what we want to do, because at the end of the day you have to go through recruitment processes. That is why we were very keen and we supported heavily the decision to bring in those new roles. As Mr Jacobi indicated, the ranges that were part of the Government's announcement were permanent employees. So, it is a combination of both.

Ms LOVELL - When you talk about some of those people, particularly who are doing surge work or seasonal work across different government departments, are they staff members, and - perhaps you might need to take this on notice - could we get a breakdown of how many people are in that kind of work arrangement, and what their permanent contracted hours would be? Are they on a one-hour a week contract, and that is their permanent contract, and they do other bits of work here and there that is not guaranteed? Or do they have guaranteed hours across different departments?

Mr BAKER - It does vary in our department, and it varies on the nature of the work. Earlier in the week, Ms Rae Burrows talking about biosecurity and making the point that we have staff who are required to do hours in the morning when flights come in, and work at night when flights come in. It does not make sense to keep those staff on during the day, so we have two rosters of staff.

Minister, specific to this output, it might also be worth having Mr Jacobi talk about what it looks like for firefighters and some of those seasonal workers.

Ms LOVELL - I can understand there is plenty of seasonal work that needs to be done, but I am sure you would agree that this makes it very difficult for people to cobble together a full-time job, or a job they can live on, if they are expected to be available to do surge capacity work or seasonal work when it is required. It is not really a secure job that is meaningful enough for people to be able to live on, in many instances.

Mr BAKER - Through you, minister, I think it is worth a practical example from Mr Jacobi about how it works in Parks.

Mr JACOBI - Through the minister, I think it is worth making the point that the seasonal nature of our business is incredibly effective. The flexibility that it affords both government and the employee is probably more so than it appears on the surface. We have a number of employees who are part-time or permanent part-time, or in seasonal roles, and particularly in the firefighting space they work incredibly hard - very long days, extraordinary hours - in very remote environments for close to six months of the year. They look forward to having some downtime. Many of them have off-season work and they come back to us.

Mr JAENSCH - Boring desk jobs to make up for it all.

Mr JACOBI - They certainly come back to us year after year because that rotation actually suits them quite well. It is not the case in every case. Certainly in the fire space, I think it is fair to say we are recognising that our planned burning obligations and commitments are growing, particularly with the changes in the seasons and climate change. The shoulders when we need to do planned burnings is increasing. We are directly recognising that at the moment, through considering opportunities for making some of our seasonal positions permanent part-time, if not in fact permanent.

We are currently in negotiations with the unions about doing that. I think that is a recognition - in addition to the 25 that the secretary mentioned before - of the fact that with some of our workforce, the seasonal nature is no longer appropriate, and it is more appropriate that we go with a more permanent workforce.

Can I just add that the skill sets are quite different and unique? It is not easy to have a person who specialises in firefighting, and then in the off season when there are no fires, to put them in a visitor's centre delivering education and interpretation. The skill sets are very often quite specific.

Ms LOVELL - There would be training that would address that.

Mr JACOBI - They can. I am not saying it is not possible, but we actually have people who love to come back to us and work on a seasonal basis delivering that particular skill set.

You have interpretive people who are specialised in education, who are not interested in firefighting or doing anything else; they just love that engagement with people.

Many of the people we do attract, do it because they love it. They don't necessarily always do it because they need the employment.

So, there is a balance there between maintaining employment and continuity, and also recognising the uniqueness of the skill sets that need to be applied.

Ms LOVELL - I accept that might be the case for some people, but I am sure there would be others who would prefer to have consistent work, which means they are able to pay their mortgage and be guaranteed that income year round.

Mr BAKER - Again, I would like to reiterate my strong preference, and the department's preference is, that where there is sufficient work for a 12-month role, we make those roles permanent. That has been a genuine desire from the department, and a genuine shift in the way we are looking at these cases - one, because it is in an individual's best interest, and two, because it is in the Tasmania taxpayers' best interest, because of the cost and time it takes to recruit in the public service.

So, we are essentially looking at these roles, doing a business case, determining if it is possible, if it makes sense, if it is in the public interest, and we are moving. I think the 25 we have done already is a demonstration of that.

Ms LOVELL - Just one final comment. Again, I accept that, and I think that is a good move, but I encourage you, minister, to ensure you are not just considering permanents and making jobs permanent part-time, but also making jobs meaningful enough in terms of the guaranteed hours that people are given in those permanent jobs.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

Ms WEBB - Minister, I would like to ask a few questions about the staffing at Maria Island. My understanding is that the Government has decided to move the visitor services officers from Maria Island to staff the Triabunna Visitor Information Centre, and to, amongst other things, sell tickets. Therefore, the ferry service is sort of badged as a new service called the Maria Island Gateway.

Can you explain that change, and whether, in an overall sense, that is a reduction in what would have been combined state Government, local government staffing to manage Maria Island?

Mr JAENSCH - I'm happy to take that, then pass to Mr Jacobi if I missed anything.

The Glamorgan-Spring Bay Council decided to close their visitor information centres on the east coast from 31 October. Parks and Wildlife negotiated with the council to repurpose the Triabunna visitor information centre as the Gateway to Maria Island, to improve quality of the pre-visit services and public information.

The Gateway to Maria Island National Park officially opened on 1 November, and is serviced by Parks staff to provide pre-departure visitor information, sale of park passes and booking information for the Maria Island Penitentiary and camping grounds and experiences. The services provided by Parks will bring together all visitor experiences into one single pre-departure location.

I understand that the services provided by Parks, from the Gateway, are for Maria Island experiences only. Staff are not providing a regional tourism visitor service, and there is no reduction in Parks staffing levels or service or emergency response requirements for Triabunna or Maria Island parks and reserves.

I am not directly familiar with the operations. I will ask Mr Jacobi to add any detail, but my understanding of the model is that it is like the one that I experienced when I visited Cradle Mountain. There is a visitor centre, which I come to as my point of entry, where I pay my fees and get my information.

CHAIR - Haven't you got a Parks pass?

Mr JAENSCH - I'm being a generic visitor. I am being the ordinary man. The reasonable man.

That is the point where I come to, enter that experience, ask my questions, get my instructions, pay my fees, and have my questions answered. I then enter into the experience. There are other staff and services and facilities that I meet when I am there, but there is no surprises for me - so I have the right shoes, and I am prepared for the experience I am about to embark on.

Mr JACOBI - I think you've answered that very well.

Ms WEBB - Perhaps I can ask a few more questions, just to be absolutely clear. The local council were withdrawing from the visitor centre, and so there was then a gap, which would have been that pre-departure service. The state Government staff in the parks staff have now been moved off-island into that pre-departure space to provide that service which is obviously a valuable one, as you say, minister, and has left no staffing on Maria Island?

Mr JAENSCH - I will ask Jason to fill in the gaps.

Mr JACOBI - Thank you for the opportunity to make this very clear. The situation is that there is ranger staff on the island; there always has been and there always will be, and those staff are permanent and some of them live on the island.

There were also some Visitor Services officers who are specialised staff trained in engaging with people and providing public education and information. They also used to be based on the island. When the visitor centre at Triabunna became vacant and was no longer being proposed as a regional visitor centre, we seized the opportunity to establish it as a new gateway for Maria Island. As the minister rightly pointed out, one of the challenges was that people were getting to the island and then finding out that there were no shops and nowhere to buy stuff and they didn't necessarily have the right gear and whilst the Visitor Services officers on the island were able to provide good information to them, it would have been better getting that before they left. Our occupation of the new Triabunna Visitor Centre was negotiated with

the council under a rent-free arrangement for three years and under that arrangement the services are purely for the Maria Island National Park. We are not providing any regional tourist service at all.

Ms WEBB - But you are selling tickets to the private ferry.

Mr JACOBI - The ferry tickets are able to be purchased online and I am advised up to 70 per cent of tickets are typically purchased online but occasionally you have the odd walk-up where a person will either not know that they can buy it online or they'll ask to buy it from the visitor centre and we have an arrangement with Encounter Maria whereby we do the transaction on their behalf and receive a revenue benefit for that transaction. Our Parks Service staff is remunerated for the time that it takes to issue that ticket.

To be clear, that is a very small part of the service being provided. What we've done is combine all of the penitentiary bookings and the camping bookings which Parks runs all in the one-stop shop now at Triabunna, so rather than having to go to multiple different booking portals to get your Maria Island experience, you now can get it all in one place. I am convinced it will translate to a significant improvement in service.

The last thing I would add is that on particular days of the year when there is a high threshold number of people, we are committed to sending Visitor Services officers across to the island with our visitors. On the first ferry they will go over with guests, clients, visitors, spend the day on the island and then come back with them in the afternoon. We have the capability to do that at any time and the ranger staff will always be on Maria Island and will continue to be for emergency responses or any questions that might arise, or in the event of a wildfire. Nothing changes - we have staff there to respond and we would send crews across to the island at very short notice.

Ms WEBB - It sounds quite clear that the pre-departure services are now going to be much improved and that's a really positive thing. I'm interested about that on-island quality of experience too. You mentioned the capacity to send Visitor Services staff over when there is high demand. Is that going to be based on the level of bookings for the ferry and indicators like that so you know when to do that ahead of time?

Mr JACOBI - Yes, there are a number of different triggers that we have established. They are around high fire danger days, so on a particular day that meets a certain threshold of fire danger we might send over additional Visitor Services officers just to provide that added level of support and coordination if there were to be a fire in a worst-case scenario. Certainly there's a threshold that's been established around the numbers of people so when we get to that threshold we will send the Visitor Services officer over and they will just be roaming and providing additional support and attention to visitors as necessary.

Ms WEBB - Are there other sorts of work health and safety assessments that were done about the removal and, most days I'm imagining, not having Visitor Services staff on the island and whether there's a risk assessment around that or some sort of assessment of the appropriateness?

Mr JACOBI - There was very comprehensive analysis done around all the implications and risks associated with moving the Visitor Services officers to Triabunna. It was done in full consultation with all of the staff on and off island because it's important to remember that not

all of the staff were actually on island; many of them were living in Triabunna, and this is as much about providing staff also with the opportunity to be more closely located in a community rather than isolated on an island, so there are staffing benefits and welfare benefits to the employees associated with this new arrangement as well.

Ms WEBB - Would the sorts of roles the Visitor Services staff undertake on island include cleaning? The reason I'm asking about that is we're particularly mindful, as we see today, about cleaning in a COVID context and I'm just wondering if that was something that Visitor Services staff did on island. How is that being managed now to ensure COVID-context cleaning levels are maintained on island?

Mr JACOBI - All the staff have responsibilities for COVID-safe preparation but what we're able to do now with the new Triabunna setup is provide a lot more information to visitors before they leave and before they arrive at the island. One of the beauties about Maria Island is that it is one of those islands where you can self-discover. You don't need to be chaperoned. One of the real advantages about the shift to Triabunna is that we can provide a lot more information upfront and people can get off the boat and know exactly what they want to do and how they want to spend their day. In terms of cleaning, there would have been some activities and things that Visitor Services officers did involving cleaning but that has been addressed in the risk assessment. There is no additional significant impost on the ranger staff who are on Maria Island as a result of this change.

Ms WEBB - In terms of how that scenario played out with the need for the state to adjust its staffing arrangements and plans because of a local government decision, are there other areas where there might be a potential trigger for something similar to happen where, if local government were to step away from a service they provide, Parks would have to step in and potentially adjust its operations?

Mr JACOBI - It is opportunistic. We're always on the lookout for where there is a material advantage in the delivery of services to the public and, obviously, whether it was state or Commonwealth or even an operation delivered by a private operator, if there was a particular advantage in moving into that space or withdrawing from that space, we would be looking out for that.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

CHAIR - No other questions? I would like to note that I think Parks has done an amazing job of some of the walks while we've been locked in Tasmania. Best thing ever, so well done to the team. I think you should let them know, minister, how good the work is.

Mr JAENSCH - We definitely will.

Output 8 Parks and Wildlife Management

8.2 Crown Land Services -

Dr SEIDEL - The majority of coastal land is crown land in Tasmania. I am wondering what the activities are to prevent and mitigate coastal erosion?

Mr JAENSCH - There are a couple of particular initiatives that have been supported in this Budget, including \$12 million in the north-west along the route of the coastal pathway between Burnie and Wynyard or that part of it that runs between Burnie and Wynyard to protect the asset of the coastal pathway and rail corridor from further coastal erosion. It's a very active coast there. Also in the Lewisham foreshore area, there is a commitment of \$610 000 over two years towards remedying the longstanding erosion issues where the coastal reserve that sits between people's homes and the sea is retreating and needs to be stabilised.

There are sites where we've got people and assets that need protection and there is active work in remediation and protection underway. More broadly, this is something we need to be looking at in our parks and coastal reserves but also from a planning perspective as well longer term, and this is one of the areas we might touch on in the planning context about how we adopt progressive policies regarding how we make decisions about our coastal areas where there is inundation or erosion risk and what our various options are in the future to respond to that in a changing environment under climate change. Is there any other commentary that you want to make regarding crown land in particular in our reserves?

Mr JACOBI - Probably not.

Dr SEIDEL - You have mentioned two high-profile sites. Is there any data on how many sites are currently being looked at and what work is being done? What sites have been identified at high risk? Again, prevention is far more cost-effective than mitigation and clean-up work. I am aware of the high-profile site, but I am asking what else is actually going on with regard to work right now?

Mr JACOBI - Through the minister, there are probably three sites across Tasmania which I am aware of that are currently front of mind. Lewisham, as the minister mentioned, is probably one of the most significant in the extent of the erosion and potential risk to property. Sisters Beach and Hellyer Beach also in the north are front of mind, again because of the proximity of the residential and private freehold and the full frontal dune.

The challenges are significant and the extent of coastal erosion is enormous across the entire state. To best explain it, it varies from quite simple seasonal natural and small events that repair and restore themselves every year to those such as Lewisham, Sisters Beach and Hellyer Beach where the extent of the erosion has probably reached a point where action needs to be taken.

CHAIR - Action was taken at Hellyer.

Mr JAENSCH - There is also work being done now with Waratah Wynyard Council on the Sisters Beach area in a co-funding of some action there as well.

Mr BAKER - I am also aware that work is being done out of the Climate Change Office in relation to this and our department is providing input into that. Climate change is not in our department; it is in the Department of Premier and Cabinet. I am happy to provide you with some additional information on that.

Our involvement would be around mapping from our mapping services and the other side of the department and also we are providing additional environmental advice. I am happy, through the minister, to provide it because it is not actually being led by us.

Dr SEIDEL - The Climate Change Office actually did commission a report on a site in my community, Garden Island Creek, five years ago and as you are aware no action has been taken since. I tabled a petition just last week so I urge you to consider the course of Garden Island Creek.

CHAIR -Can I just follow up on that? In terms of the mapping of the coastal erosion, is that looking at the vulnerable areas or the areas currently experiencing erosion? Do we have a rating for all coastal areas that can be provided in that?

Mr BAKER - As I said, it is an initiative being run out the Climate Change Office, not ours, but I am happy to provide you with an answer on that.

CHAIR -On those areas if it is possible to get that information: how does this intersect with the planning? Hellyer Beach is a classic example. That land that those houses are on was originally crown land. It was sold to council and I understand not to be developed as housing. It was developed for housing and then the houses nearly fell into the river. So then the government has to spend money to fix that little problem up. Regarding planning in areas of coastal erosion, because it is crown land, the joining bit here between the sea as you talked about down at Lewisham, that is the matter here. How is that being managed?

Mr JAENSCH - There is a whole raft of different approaches there. You can look through the lens of who manages the land and assets and how they are responding to it, but then there is broader more strategic mapping and analysis of hazard and risk. The aim is always to have decisions informed by the best available information at the time, both in a planning context and people's own management of their assets, properties and choices.

It's a complex area. It's got land management decision-making roles in it and a couple of different levels of government, but also planning and policy work and state policy as well. The live issue at the moment is the acceptance that the past isn't always going to be the best guide to the future in how these systems behave, particularly mobile or dynamic coastal environments.

CHAIR - Which they pretty much all are.

Mr JAENSCH - Climate change and increased frequency and severity of extreme events are things we have to increasingly factor in.

Mr GAFFNEY - In a nutshell, the coastal policy has stalled quite often over the last 20 years. I'm really aware of that and so are you guys because nobody, no level of government, wants to put their hand up and say, 'We'll take responsibility for this.'. What we're seeing now is more a reaction to some of the situations instead of being proactive.

I know the Climate Change Office, the local government and the federal government will need to get involved and make some really hard decisions, and not abrogate their responsibility because they don't want to put their hand in their pockets further down the track. I'm aware of that in the Port Sorell area, a lot of studies were done 15 years ago showing the impacts of

climate change, the impacts on sea level rise, and we just blundered ahead hoping that something was going to happen.

CHAIR - It never did.

Mr GAFFNEY - There's mapping that shows that within so many years unless something happens there, 600 metres inside the rivulet in Port Sorell there will be houses underwater.

Mr VALENTINE - Show us the report.

Mr GAFFNEY - I think it's really good that somebody is now going to look into it, pull it together and have some actions out of it. Otherwise, in 10 years time, there will be another committee here saying, 'We're doing another report looking at this stuff.'. There will be three or four other areas that will have to be covered. I'm pleased to hear that there will be something done and there's more effort being put back to the climate change situation.

Mr JAENSCH - We have a Climate Change minister who's the Premier.

Mr GAFFNEY - We did have a climate change portfolio a few years ago, too, which was then disbanded.

Mr JAENSCH - It didn't fix these things.

Mr GAFFNEY - I mean it was taken away and lost some of its power.

Mr VALENTINE - Climate policy can be invoked by local government planning schemes. That's the only way it does get invoked.

Output Group 90

COVID-19 Response and Recovery

90.5 Crown Lands Transaction Turnaround Time -

Mr GAFFNEY - It's quite a significant figure - \$1.9 million and an extra \$300 000 over two years. It says it's to respond to increasing sale requests, applications for development increasing operational costs. It's come from the PESRAC recommendations. I'm interested to see who will be the lead agency for this? I couldn't see anything in the PESRAC report that would say that you are the lead agency. It's looks as though it's either State Growth or DPAC, so I'm interested. It's a line item here, but who is actually going to be the lead agency?

Mr JAENSCH - I think it spans a number of different parts of different agencies, so Crown Land services, Land Titles Office, and Planning. There are various areas there where the intention of PESRAC, as I understand it. If I'm thinking about the right recommendation, it was that we need to do everything we can to reduce bottlenecks in the necessary processing of things like crown land landowner consents where they relate to development applications that are entering the process, as a way of enabling DAs, investment and economic activity to proceed unhindered, wherever possible.

Mr GAFFNEY - While the funding is here, how many staff will that involve? Will those staff, be it direct line managers, be it you will be -

Mr JAENSCH - As I understand it, the staff stay where they are and we increase the capacity of those units with where they are in government to do more work, more quickly.

Mr GAFFNEY - It says increasing sales requests. That is interesting. It obviously started on 1 July. What sales requests are we looking at here?

Mr JACOBI - The growth in demand for land for development sits fairly and squarely in my portfolio, in Crown Lands. We have a division, or a branch, in the Parks and Wildlife Service called Property Services.

Property Services is a team of very specialised people who deal with land, by and large crown land that is not reserved under the Nature Conservation Act. That crown land is everything from unallocated state land parcels that haven't been assigned for a particular use to road reserves or strips of coastal foreshore.

The Crown Land Administration Fund - CLAF - funding that has been provided, which is just over \$2 million over two years, will enable us to address the significant growth and increase in the demand for government state land, crown land, to be made available for development. We have a number of sites that we have identified over time, through various assessment processes, that are available for sale and suitable for sale for particular uses.

The funding will enable us to expedite some of those sales. At the moment we are challenged with the number of development applications and permits that we process. We haven't been able to expedite those sales as quickly as we would like. We are looking to employ potentially up to two additional staff over those two years to expedite the sales of those particular crown land parcels.

There is potentially up to a number of four staff that the funding enables us to create new positions for the two year period, to also expedite our response to development applications and requests from members of the public to do things on crown land. That could be anything from authorising an encroachment or allowing - through a lease or a licence - a person in the community to use a piece of crown land that has no other valuable or suitable use, but which could be adhered to their property and used by them under licence or lease.

Mr GAFFNEY - I'm pleased to hear that because it was put to me that maybe this has had something to do with the major projects legislation as well, and I am pleased to hear that it hasn't. Some people have said to me 'Is this what it is about?'. I said I will ask at the table, but I'm pretty certain it is not.

My only question is, if in two years time, you have been able to facilitate a lot of the sales, but there is still more to do, would it be part of the organisation to go back to DPAC, or wherever the funding came from - Treasury - to say we still need further finance, we need to continue this because we still have more work to do?

Mr JAENSCH - Just an interesting figure - there are about 1200 applications annually for use of crown land like this. That gives you an idea of the volume of demand.

The extra funds have been applied for and released because of unmet demand, and there being a bit of a backlog. It has been recognised as a bit of a bottleneck, so we need to address it. So, we monitor demand over time as well.

Output Group 90

COVID-19 Response and Recovery

90.7 Parks Support -

Mr GAFFNEY - Minister, \$7 million is a significant amount of money in one year. If you just explain to us how that will be spent. It has a bit of a promo there, but it will be good to hear from you. How do you think those funds will be spent?

Mr JAENSCH - The issue is that we've had some fairly drastic revenue reductions during the COVID-19 period. Things like remitting people's licence fees and having the parks closed for considerable periods of time, while we have also kept our workforce on them, doing things, as well.

There has been a hole, and it's one that will catch up with us because it's been relied on as part of the regular churn and revenue for our parks across the state.

There's been some projections of lost revenue and there has been a Treasury allocation made to address that in the immediate term, but there will continue to be monitoring of progress to see if the full revenue loss is realised, the way it was projected. Treasury is in a position to work with Parks to make sure that it doesn't have a shortfall for its essential activities and staffing as it goes through the year.

The secretary may wish to speak?

Mr BAKER - Sure. The first point I would make is there were no job losses inside the Parks and Wildlife Service, or in fact the department as a whole, as a result of COVID-19. That's no small thing in an organisation the size of Parks and DPIPWE.

DPIPWE is an interesting organisation because it relies on retained revenue quite a bit across a number of areas of our operations. Parks is probably principal among those areas of our agency. It's been really hard to make an assessment of what that revenue is going to look like in the current environment. We just don't know. It is really sort of 'finger in the air' type stuff.

This is a significant investment in the Government, but the take-home message, particularly for any staff listening in Parks, is that the Government has been very clear that no-one is going to lose their job because of COVID-19 or because of revenue shortage, and no services are going to be cut. This is Treasury and the department working together to come to a figure that we think is a pretty good finger in the air, recognising that the Premier and the minister have been very clear that it will be topped up or not. I don't think I've quite agreed to give any back if the revenue is higher, but 'keep the change', as the minister said.

Of all the figures in all the pages in all of the Budget for our department, that's the one that's giving a level of comfort to our staff, to know that the Government is committed to ensuring there will be job losses as a result of COVID-19, or services cut.

Mr GAFFNEY - There's only so many years you can do to sustain that sort of funding. From parks entrance fees, what's the percentage of people who go through, say, not in the COVID-19 year, the year before, from an international fee-paying guest to a national to a state?

If COVID-19 continues in the form it is, it could be some time before we have international guests coming here. If I can just see what's the breakdown of international, national and state percentage fees? I'm quite happy to put it on notice, but I think it's really important in the bigger picture.

Mr BAKER - While Jason looks up the figure, the first thing I would say is that we are working very closely with Tourism Tasmania to get a good projection on what future years are going to look like, but Tourism Tasmania will tell you they are a bit like us. Who knows what the borders are going to be, but we are modelling because we know the figures around visitors to Tasmania and the likelihood of them coming into a park, and Jason will be able to talk to that in a moment.

My other point is that visitor numbers and revenue, up until pre-COVID-19 is one of true success stories of our agencies. It has been going up, and it's continued to go up. When balancing the revenue that we attract, we have to remember that the Parks and Wildlife Service is the largest tourism business in Tasmania, but it also provides access to everyday Tasmanians to parks and reserves. So, we don't want to do anything to the fee structure which will negatively impact, or create a situation where it is difficult for Tasmanians to come into the park.

When we have looked at fee structures in the past, and we've done that recently, we've tended to focus on day passes or on the short-term passes which are more focused to tourists than they are to locals. My personal view is the current price of a two-year pass, or a single-year pass, is incredibly good value for Tasmanians. The minister has given clear direction that he wants to ensure we keep that value in the system, while trying to leverage as much out of the tourists, both national and international, as possible.

It looks as though Jason has found his figure.

Mr JAENSCH - The other thing that has been interesting in this context, that Jason might refer to, is how enthusiastic Tasmanians have been, while our borders have been more closed, to get out and travel around the state. I think they've been encouraged to do that. I think the voucher system has assisted that or motivated that, or tapped into something.

The numbers at places like Cradle have been unexpectedly strong through this period and what I think is yet to play out is, as our interstate restrictions ease, but international borders stay more restrictive, will Australians do what Tasmanians have done, and rebound by going and visiting somewhere close to home instead of an international holiday. Could we see a disproportionately high number of Australian visitors coming to see Tasmania because they can't go to Bali or somewhere over the next little while?

Mr JACOBI - Through the minister, in terms of figures in a typical year - I'm just looking at some of the data - it's incredibly difficult to project going forward but in a typical year, 15 to 20 per cent of our visitation to major parks and reserves are Tasmanians. I also have some information that indicates that between 10 and 20 per cent of our visitation is

typically international visitors and then you could expect that there's probably a variation of 60 per cent that are domestic from the Australian mainland states.

Our parks pass new entry fee system that we designed was specifically targeted at making parks entry more affordable for Tasmanians so the Government reduced the total fee for annual and two-year park passes for Tasmanians to make it more affordable. We've dialled up that the price for international guests, because we can't under the constitution -

Ms WEBB - Discriminate.

Mr JACOBI - discriminate against our mainland colleagues, we dialled up the figures on our day and short-term parks passes which, as soon as we open up the borders to international guests and arrivals again, we'll start to see a significant increase in our return, particularly on short-term parks passes purchased by international visitors.

We know from the research that we did, they are prepared to pay more. When they come to Tasmania and they go to iconic locations like Cradle Mountain, Mount Field and Freycinet they are prepared to pay much more than typically a Tasmanian or it may even be an Australian would.

Mr GAFFNEY - Last question, is it because of what's happened with COVID - and there are a number of projects that parks have been involved with whether it's assisting with building tracks, whether it be walking tracks or maintaining some of the tracks and putting some more repair work into areas - that you've been able to deploy staff to certain areas and say, 'Look, we're not going to have people here for a month, let's get in and fix this, repair this so it will come back in two or three years' time', where you've already done that work.

Has that been happening?

Mr JAENSCH - We've brought forward to resource some extra work across government to make sure that we're taking advantage of the downtime in Parks while visitors haven't been there but also to encourage contracts to be let, suppliers purchased, and people employed in the sectors that can operate while hospitality and others have been closed down.

That's been a big push right across government and I think that Parks has been a recipient of some extra stimulus boost and been able to turn it into projects. They have to book for them and in regional economies around the state, not just in the big cities as well. That's been a real advantage of being parks right now, in the same way that Housing has been, as a portfolio, a net recipient of stimulus on one hand, that can also address our mission of delivery on the other.

Mr BAKER - Minister, I think it is a really important point that there is sometimes a bit of a common misconception about the visitor numbers and the volume of international visitors. In a pure commercial point of view, Parks is not as exposed to the international visitors or international traders as some other businesses.

Our largest grouping is national visitors and borders, hopefully, are opening and international borders are staying closed so there's going to be more national churn, if you like. That is why it is really hard to gauge what those revenue numbers are going to look like. Interestingly enough, Parks could well be well strategically placed to see significant visitation increases over the next 12 to 18 months.

Mr JAENSCH - Then you won't need any more money.

CHAIR -Are there any other specific questions on capital investment? Thank you minister, and your team. We will take a short five-minute break while you changed your team.

Mr JAENSCH - Chair, could I thank the secretary, the deputies and the senior staff who have been up here at the table, for their work on all of those and through COVID-19. Those also who came but were not called upon.

Amongst them, for your interest members of the Committee, is Dr Kris Carlyon, who is our operations manager for the Macquarie Harbour Whale Rescue. He is a section head for Conservation Services, so thank Kris again for his work and the team he led and the crew of people who supported him through that. That has been a really important story for Tasmania this year.

CHAIR -Thank you, minister.

The Committee suspended from 6.11 p.m. to 6.19 p.m.

DIVISION 6

(Department of Justice)

Output Group 1

Administration of Justice

1.11 Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal -

CHAIR - Thank you, Minister, we are nearly on the home run or the home strait or whatever you call it. If you would like to introduce the other members of your team and decide whether or not you want to do an opening comment or not.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you, Chair. I am very happy to introduce to my right, Ginna Webster, Secretary of the Department of Justice; to my left is Brian Risby, Director, Planning Policy Unit; and Nick Evans, Deputy Secretary, Regulation and Service Delivery. Thank you all for coming.

I will reserve my opening statement in the interests of time.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister, we only have a maximum of an hour and five minutes for the whole of everything left.

We will move straight then to Output Group 1.11, Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal.

Mr VALENTINE - We have some percentages in there and the Budget is going to continue largely in the same fashion but we have some percentages in there. Do we have any numbers dealt with, average length of hearings?

CHAIR - Point him to what you are talking about, Rob.

Mr VALENTINE - RMPAT.

CHAIR - In the performance information is that what you are referring to?

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, the performance. Sorry.

Mr JAENSCH - What page?

Ms WEBB - It is in 182, and I don't think there is anything in there.

Mr VALENTINE - It is on page 182. It is performance information.

Mr JAENSCH - Can I invite Jarrod Bryan to the table?

Mr BRYAN - Is it the number of matters resolved within the 90 days? So the 59.71 per cent?

Mr VALENTINE - It is percentage but it doesn't have the numbers. That is what I am after.

Mr BRYAN - The annual report sets out the numbers of matters which were closed. The annual report of the tribunal, which we have the benefit of because the Estimates were a bit later than usual, indicated the number of files that were closed within the financial year, which was 146; I think was the number. My maths isn't the best, but I think from that we should be able to work out roughly the percentage of those matters which were concluded within the 90-day time frame, so about 60 per cent of 146 matters.

Mr VALENTINE - So 146 was the 100, so to speak.

Mr BRYAN - Those were substantive decisions. I am so sorry there were 146 files closed. There were 84 substantive decisions.

Mr VALENTINE - For 2019-20?

Mr BRYAN - Correct. Then there is a breakdown in the annual report under Table 6 which says about 69 per cent of those were done by consent and 31 per cent were done by consequence of full hearing. So it is 84.

CHAIR - I am interested to know how COVID-19 impacted your operations. I assume you weren't having face-to-face hearings or any other of those processes that you undertake in your role conducted by video link? How was it managed and did it actually delay matters?

Mr BRYAN - We're fairly lucky in that the premises we were in when COVID-19 hit had videoconferencing facilities hardwired into the hearing room. So we set up arrangements with practitioners and witnesses to have that system operate and we were very lucky that the legal profession were on board with helping participate through that remote access

arrangement. So we were able to continue as a result of that and with us now at the new tribunal premises in Barrack Street, we have even better videoconferencing facilities.

CHAIR - Did your staff work from the office or did they work from home?

Mr BRYAN - The tribunal is still very much hard copy-based so we did have to work from the Tribunal Registry but we were relatively lucky in that the premises we were in had a fairly large footprint that allowed people to be separated while at work.

CHAIR - Were there any delays as a result of the need to change practices? It seems like you have done it fairly promptly, but were there any delays in matters being dealt with?

Mr BRYAN - If they were, I don't think it was a result of the tribunal not being able to convene a hearing. It was probably more around where the witnesses might have been able ...

Mr BRYAN - ... It was probably more with the witnesses not being able to complete tasks or representatives being available because of the general impact of COVID. I don't think it was anything necessarily related to the tribunal's capacities. It may have been witnesses and things like that.

CHAIR - Did you see during the height of the north-west outbreak, particularly, a reduction in matters that came before you? People were probably distracted at that time with other things rather than perhaps appealing planning decisions.

Mr BRYAN - That would be a bit speculative for me to answer.

CHAIR - All right.

Mr BRYAN - I would have to look into those numbers to give you a reasonable answer.

CHAIR - You didn't notice any change in the basic day-to-day activity?

Mr BRYAN - I don't think so, but I would probably want to check and just look at the numbers of matters that came in over the months it occurred. Overall, we had a very similar number of appeals to the year before.

CHAIR - Did you? All right.

Mr BRYAN - I think we had 141 matters last financial year - sorry, the year before the last financial year and it's 146 this year. We had a surge before COVID hit, which might have meant it balanced out.

CHAIR - Okay.

Mr BRYAN - But I probably need to have a look at the numbers to give you an accurate answer.

CHAIR - That's all right. The numbers are fairly consistent. That's okay.

Mr VALENTINE - The councils were sending stuff through at the same rate?

Mr BRYAN - I believe so. There were a few councils that were affected. There was a lot going on.

Mr VALENTINE - Sorry?

Mr BRYAN - There was a lot going on during that period.

Mr VALENTINE - Yes. Was it broadcast so that people could link in?

Mr BRYAN - Our arrangements allowed for people who weren't able to attend to have recordings of any public hearings that we received. Generally there aren't very large public galleries at tribunals hearings.

Mr VALENTINE - It depends on the issue, I suppose.

Mr BRYAN - Quite. That's it.

Mr VALENTINE - I've seen some pretty big ones.

Mr BRYAN - Yes, you can do but -

Ms WEBB - It's not necessarily the size of the gallery that matters, it's the principle of transparency and public participation.

Mr BRYAN - Our hearing room was of a reasonable size so we had to give priorities to the parties, their witnesses and their representatives, but anyone else who could fit within the room while meeting COVID safety requirements could do so.

CHAIR - Do you know, if there were, how many recordings were accessed? Did you track that?

Mr BRYAN - No, but it should be something we could look into if we needed to.

CHAIR - I might get you to get that information if possible - the number of times that recordings of the public hearings were accessed. We will write to you, minister.

Mr JAENSCH - I'm happy for those to be provided, if it's possible to do.

Mr BRYAN - I think so. We would look back through correspondence that we received at that time. Anecdotally, I suspect there might have been one or two, but not a large number, to the best of my recollection.

Mr JAENSCH - Madam Chair, how have COVID arrangements affected people's ability to participate in these processes?

CHAIR - Correct, yes.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, exactly. If that's the aim, if there's any other -

CHAIR - If people have been attending in a public sense, not necessarily parties to a matter, that's one way. As you said, there was some facility for that, but if you lived on the north-west coast, you weren't go anywhere for a while.

Mr JAENSCH - No.

Mr BRYAN - The best recollection was there was one hearing where we had people by phone conference who listened into the proceedings. They couldn't attend any further.

CHAIR - Just accessing the meeting. Video or phone access, yes. Okay. Thanks. Any other questions on RMPAT? That's an easy let-off for you this year. We will move to 4.2, the TPC.

Output Group 4 Regulatory and Other Services

4.2 Tasmanian Planning Commission -

Mr JAENSCH - Sandra Hogue, Acting Executive Commissioner, joins us at the table. Thank you very much, Sandra.

Ms WEBB - The way we might have questioned you on this has changed, as we had the independent review report arrive just last yesterday. That has sort of thrown things because we probably would have been asking about that. Is there something, perhaps, you would like to start with by indicating where to from here in terms of this report, just so we understand what these next steps are?

Mr JAENSCH - We commissioned the report last year in 2019, thinking it was going to be a fairly niche process that we would wrap up and that give us the opportunity to test our Planning Commission model against the backdrop of all the reforms and changes that were happening in our planning system, and the growth phase that Tasmania is in at the moment and with things like the new major projects legislation. The whole planning system relies on the pre-eminent independent Planning Commission body, its independence, its ability to do its job. It is at the heart of our planning system.

The consultants were engaged. There were some issues like the reappointment of a substantive executive commissioner that was an outstanding matter at the time. We decided to hold that as an acting role while we undertook this review because we then had the opportunity to, depending on what came out of the review and what we decided to do next, appoint someone through a process when it was clear where we were going and what we were intending to do next.

COVID messed a lot of that in relation to time. Our report is being delivered, but we've had a far longer time of acting arrangements. I will take this opportunity to thank Sandra and her team for continuing in an interim capacity with a very heavy and important workload

through this time, with everything that's thrown at them. I record my appreciation for their forbearance, their patience and assistance.

We've received the consultant's report. We've had a quick look at it. What we thought we would do, given that so many people have been waiting and asking for it, who have contributed to it over a long period of time, is release it while we are digesting its findings and its recommendations.

Ms WEBB - Interesting that happens in some areas of government and not others. Goodness.

Mr JAENSCH - Well, here we go.

Ms WEBB - Bravo for putting it in the public domain as early as possible.

Mr JAENSCH - We've done that. Everybody can have it as their summer reading. We'll certainly be doing that in-house.

We'll be considering the recommendations and how the Government intends to respond to them. Through a Cabinet process that will then become a series of proposed amendments, if required, to the legislation, which we will consult on broadly. Hopefully, interested parties, having had an extended time to digest the material, will be able to have informed input to that at that point.

Overall, though, the most important thing is that the consultants found that the commission is held in very high esteem. Its independence is valued. It's been able to do its work without undue influence, which is what we needed to do. It's proposed some recommendations and some ways that we can lock that in and raise it a couple of notches as well, so that it is guaranteed an independent planning commission, fit for purpose for the next phase of our growth and development.

Ms WEBB - Thanks for laying out those next steps, minister. Are you able to suggest an expected time line then for, for example, legislation coming to parliament, a new arrangement being bedded down and the extended acting arrangements coming to an end?

Mr JAENSCH - I think in the first half of next year we would be preparing our response and putting that through the consultation process. What we might also be able to do for the sake of certainty, is also take some policy decisions regarding certain aspects where we might need to act sooner where we can, although there might be a need to follow those with some legislative amendments.

Ms WEBB - Would we expect perhaps by the end of next year, we will have whatever is going to be the next iteration?

Mr JAENSCH - I definitely would say so, and I think the investment of the decision to put the report out in full now is also an investment for us in people who are interested in this stuff who we are going to be consulting with are having a chance to really get into it. It will give them plenty of time to have a good look and a think about it so that when we get to our consultation and our debate on the changes that might be needed, we have an informed

conversation happening and hopefully we will have resolved a lot of the matters that might otherwise prolong its passage through parliament.

Mr VALENTINE - I haven't had a chance to read the whole report, but I am wondering whether the submissions that may have been made to that review - were there submissions made to the review, I know people were consulted - is it possible to see those?

Mr JAENSCH - I understand there was a series of interviews conducted. Were there written submissions received as well?

Mr EVANS - The consultants did primarily rely on going around the state and sitting down with people and interviewing but there were some people who wanted to have their views recorded and did provide them to the reviewers.

Mr VALENTINE - Can we see those?

Mr JAENSCH - We will consider that. Given that it was material collected by the consultants, on terms discussed with the consultants, I don't know if the permission to publish that was given at the time. They are the sorts of things we will have a look at.

Mr VALENTINE - When you read the executive summary, which is about all I have done, it mentions talking with stakeholders and this was the feeling, and I wanted to be able to read those accounts for myself.

Mr EVANS - When you get the opportunity to read the rest of the report, you will see a substantial part of it is a verbatim report of what the relevant stakeholders had to say about those matters.

Mr VALENTINE - It would still be good to get them, though.

Ms WEBB - I have done a quick skim of that executive summary and I haven't checked, but is there a list of the stakeholders who were consulted anywhere in the report?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

Ms WEBB - How were those stakeholders selected? Did they self-select, was it open, were they selected by the consultants or by government?

Mr EVANS - We did point the consultants to some obvious people they might wish to consult with, but people found out about it and away it went.

Mr JAENSCH - And it was an advertised open process.

Mr VALENTINE - It was advertised in all three major papers or on the web or what?

Mr JAENSCH - We will have to check that.

Ms WEBSTER - It was definitely on the website, our website.

Mr VALENTINE - Could you take that and get back to us as to access to the submissions themselves if there were submissions?

Ms WEBB - I want to move onto questions about the iteration as it is now, if we are finished with talking about the report? To pick up on a few things around the Planning Commission in its essence at the moment, I'm led to believe there is a legislative role that is defined for the Tasmanian Planning Commission, producing a state of the environment report and that this hasn't been produced since 2009, but it is meant to be produced every five years.

Can you explain that role for the commission and why it hasn't been undertaking that statutory requirement?

Mr JAENSCH - I will ask Sandra if she wants to comment on this, but give her a little bit of lead time for that.

Interestingly, the issue of the State of the Environment Report was one of the matters that was commented on in the review of Tasmanian Planning Commission, and the suitability of the commission as being the right place for that responsibility to sit within the system.

Certainly, there appear to have been reasons why that work hasn't been undertaken. The other thing that is happening with regard to our broader reforms - the development of Tasmanian planning policies et cetera - is that there might be other places in government which are a better home for the State of the Environment report.

Ms WEBB - We're now talking about now - not what may come down the track with the review results. So if we can -

Mr JAENSCH - If you're happy, I can just refer to the executive commissioner to make a comment.

Ms HOGUE - In the last two to three years - or maybe slightly longer - the commission has conducted two or three reviews on how to do the next State of the Environment report. We did employ somebody - not this financial year just gone, but the one previously - to do some work for us on scoping -

Ms WEBB - In 2018-19.

Ms HOGUE - In 2018-19 - scoping what the next State of the Environment report might look like. She prepared quite a lot of information for the commission on the latest methods for such reporting, and concluded that we needed to revamp it substantially.

She put a report to the commission to meet current best practice, and the way the commission operates at the moment. Basically it advised that it was probably sitting in the wrong place and needed to be somewhere else in government. The commission then wrote to the minister of the day - I don't think it was you, minister - saying the recommendation of the commission is that it goes somewhere else in government, and here are the options of what it should look like. There was a report prepared for that purpose.

Ms WEBB - That report, though, would have arrived presumably in 2019, if that was funded in that year, which was 10 years after the previous report?

Ms HOGUE - Yes, exactly right.

Ms WEBB - The statutory requirement is that it happens every five years. What happened at the one that was missed in the middle? You may not have been there, but perhaps you could provide me with an understanding.

Ms HOGUE - I was there. I didn't work closely on it, but there was a review done around 2005 as well. Then we went into the interim scheme process and resources were directed elsewhere at that point. It could be slightly longer than that.

Ms WEBB - I'm thinking about 2014.

Ms HOGUE - Somewhere about that point. I know questions about that have been asked in parliament in recent years. That answer had been given at that point - that the resources had been diverted. That's why there was a concerted effort to have a really good look at it two to three years ago.

Ms WEBB - Just so I understand how that fits in terms of decision-making and responsibility. It's a statutory responsibility that it's done every five years, and at the point it was due, in 2014, a decision was taken to divert resources elsewhere and not do it. Where did that decision sit?

Ms HOGUE - Prior to my time.

Ms WEBB - Is it a minister's decision? Is it a decision of the TPC, or the minister of the day? Who gets to decide not to meet a statutory responsibility?

Mr JAENSCH - There is communication between - at least in my experience - the commission and the minister on a regular basis. While the commission is independent and has its legislation and its roles and responsibilities, there needs to be communication and coordination between what the Government's program and expectations are, and how we were able to work together.

I don't have an answer for you, and I wasn't in the chair at the time. It is an interesting one, but it's been noted by successive ministers and governments that this is an area which needs review.

Ms WEBB - It's a fairly important question, because if somebody can decide to disregard a statutory requirement for a body such as the TPC, it is pretty significant to note who that decision sits with. Are you able to find out whose responsibility it would have been, under the legislation, to deliver, and therefore decide not to deliver that?

Mr JAENSCH - I can get some advice.

Ms WEBB - With regard to the TPC, I don't see any performance information presented in the Budget Papers. Would that be right? I might just be looking in the wrong spot.

CHAIR - There isn't any.

Ms WEBB - I am looking at page 182, Table 6.6, which would seem to be where it would be in.

Mr JAENSCH - It's an independent statutory body with its own legislation, so it is not part of government.

Ms WEBB - Would we find performance information measures reported on publicly, through an annual report?

Ms HOGUE - Yes.

Ms WEBB - My apologies, I don't have the annual report in front of me to look at. Can you give me confidence, minister, that other than being quite tardy on the State of the Environment report, the TPC has met its statutory obligations in the most recent financial year?

Mr JAENSCH - To my understanding, yes. I think it has gone over and above, because its normal, routine run-of-the-mill operations during the year have had, overlaid with them a couple of other considerable tasks, including the receipt and assessment of Local Provisions Schedules from 27 of the 29 councils, and also assisting some of those councils with the preparation of their LPSs, and subsequently the exhibition and hearings processes - all during COVID-19 as well.

That has been an enormous logistical challenge, on top of an enormous logistical challenge for an acting interim executive commissioner and her team. I have been very grateful for their hard work this year.

Ms WEBB - I am looking at page 181, at the dot point list under the Tasmanian Planning Commission that outlines the different assessment, planning and review tasks. Have some of those - potentially because of resourcing limitations - been displaced, in terms of how we would normally expect the delivery of those tasks to occur?

I am thinking about the Local Provisions Schedules, which would have been needed to come through the TPC. Has the delay in having those finalised from all councils, for example, displaced the Tasmanian Planning Policies, the TPPs?

Mr JAENSCH - No, the TPPs are not the role of the Planning Commission to create. This workload has had to be managed quite strategically across the TPC, as well as the planning policy unit, as well as across local government. There has a lot of communication and coordination, and some sharing of resources from time to time, to ensure we have been able to plan that work so we use the resources we have to the best advantage overall.

I am sure that, as in local government, we have been encouraging councils to make finalising their LPSs a priority, and maybe putting some of their other strategic planning work aside for a bit so we can get this stuff out of the way.

It's likely the TPC has also had to manage its workload and priorities during the year to be able to accommodate the new workload from the LPS process.

I would ask Sandra to comment on that, if she cares to.

Ms HOGUE - Functions that we have conducted during the year?

Mr JAENSCH - Have they been reprioritised, I think was the question.

Ms WEBB - And are they possible within the available resourcing?

Ms HOGUE - I guess we have done a lot of work inhouse to try to streamline our processes. We do have a big workload with the 27 LPSs - we currently have 25 with us, but two of them are approved - that we are currently assessing, plus the assessment workload.

We have these other obligations in the list, like maintaining digital versions of planning schemes. That is ongoing all the time and creates some projects as well to keep maintaining how we deliver some of our digital platforms and so on.

Fortunately, in the last couple of years we haven't had any reviews of park or water management plans, or any major assessments. We currently have two but in the last financial year we didn't, and we have had no other reviews and inquiries. We have been managing quite well, but we have done a lot of work on making sure that our systems are as efficient as possible, and we are continually trying to approve on those.

We can talk about COVID; people might be interested in that as well. There were a few delays from COVID but generally we have managed to keep things pushing through. We have a project management sort of approach to it, but sometimes with our assessment things aren't always in our control, like getting information back from local government, or even the parties to a process themselves, with requests for additional time and things like that. We have managed to keep things running pretty well.

CHAIR - Just on the local planning schedules, you said you have 27 out of 29 councils. Which are the two that you haven't got?

Mr JAENSCH - Dorset and King Island.

CHAIR - Which are the two that are approved?

Mr JAENSCH - Burnie and Devonport.

CHAIR - Well done, minister - big tick. What time frame would you expect to see in terms of getting the rest of them done? We'll go to the two that aren't there.

Mr JAENSCH - The two that are outstanding, as with other councils, have been offered and are receiving support and assistance. The barriers are different in different areas and their capacity, but they are also sometimes to do with quite unique local circumstances, as you can imagine with King Island, for example. We have extended assistance and offers of assistance to those two councils to get them in as quickly as possible, but the real push to get all or most of them in as soon as possible is it then gives the commission the opportunity to schedule a year's work, knowing what it has to deal with and what the stages are that it is going to have work through. At this stage, we look regularly at a Gantt chart with hoped for, likely and possible scenarios, depending on the matters that come up, with the aim of those assessments being completed and approvals by the end of next calendar year.

CHAIR - Are you aiming to get fairly consistent approach?

Mr JAENSCH - The whole idea of this is to get a consistent approach across all councils, albeit still with a unique planning scheme but it uses the same language, the same definitions, the same rules, as the one next door, with overlays where needed to deal with unique sets of local circumstances. For example Stanley and Hobart are different places, so they will have common elements but they will also have controls locally that reflect their uniqueness in the system.

Output Group 4 Regulatory and Other Services

4.3 Planning Policy and Reform -

Ms WEBB - You are not a statutory authority so you don't have performance measures in the Budget here for this line item. Is that reflective of the fact that we don't measure performance around planning policy and reform, or why would that be?

Mr JAENSCH - Brian, who is the master of this area of work, will remind me, as he often does, that they have a program of work and a series of things to deliver which tend to get routinely hijacked through the year as the minister comes up with things that require solutions, sometimes to do with other people's portfolios, and they've hopped to the task.

The PPU does not have a role in the routine delivery of assessments of things and the provision of those sorts of statutory services. The Planning Policy Unit's role is to develop and advise on policy and guide government, draft legislation, solve problems and fix other people's mistakes, and we've had excellent productivity over the year delivering things like the major projects legislation, seeing us through the application for the first time of the Housing Land Supply Act, working on things like the various other items that you've got in your book there that are responding to Tasmania's circumstances right now as well, including the ability to put together emergency accommodation quickly for expanding shelters in record time through planning directives that have let that happen in shorter than the normal period. Those sorts of responses have been fantastic and we need them to stay nimble, strategic and policy oriented. You can't measure that.

Ms WEBB - I'm sure there is a way you could, but we'll leave it at that for now. The footnote to this line item talks about an increase in planning policy and reform in 2020-21, reflecting additional funding for the metro plan and the regional land use review. Clearly they are two areas of work flagged for this coming year. What are the other priorities for the TPPs?

Mr JAENSCH - The TPPs, the big ones?

Ms WEBB - Perhaps you could just talk that through and the expected resolution of those priorities that are currently in the mix.

Mr JAENSCH - The Tasmanian Planning Policies is a matter I would expect to be fully resolved by the end of next year. We're going to have considerable consultation across government, the community and many sectors. The aim of that will be that when we get to the

end of next year we'll have our Tasmanian Planning Scheme in place across 29 councils, we will have the groundwork done for the review of our regional land use strategies and we will have the high-level planning policies against which to conduct those reviews going into 2022.

Ms WEBB - Can you talk a bit more about the regional land use strategy reviews that you are doing?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes. The regional land use strategies are intended to be reviewed on a periodic basis.

Ms WEBB - Are we 10 years behind on those too?

Mr JAENSCH - No, not quite 10 years.

Ms WEBB - How many years would we be behind on those ones?

Mr RISBY - The first ones were produced in 2011, so you wouldn't normally do a five-year of a strategy, you might do a 10-year view. They've got a 25-year horizon so it's good to keep them up to date. They are clearly overdue but certainly not 10 years overdue.

Mr JAENSCH - The intention was they took a long view as a strategic document, but Tasmania has changed as well and so have the strategies. Particularly the northern and the southern regional land use strategies have had significant surgery over time to adopt things like the Greater Launceston Plan. The southern one has at the heart of it a metro plan, being driven by the Greater Hobart councils, under their piece of legislation as well, which will feed into and be grafted into the middle of the Regional Land Use Strategy.

You will see a Budget allocation for work to start on some of those strategic investigations and data collection, which we'll need for the Regional Land Use Strategy reviews, but where we want to get to by the end of next year is the position where we can have statewide Tasmanian planning policies guiding a review of the three regional land use strategies so they are brought into more alignment and they are have more common language and structure to them that makes them contemporary.

They will then also inform what will be then due - a review of the statewide planning provisions that populate the Tasmanian Planning Scheme - and we will have a policy trickle down through those driving it, which has been the reverse of what we have been living with for the last decade or more, where we have had at the beginning, local planning schemes without regional strategies to guide them.

The regional strategies have been developed and now we are developing the policies that should have been at the top of the tree at the beginning. We will have all the elements of the planning system in place by the end of next year, then we will be able to start this continuous cycling of review and updating of the whole system.

Ms WEBB - Putting those TPPs as the high-level ones, we do not have state policies above that?

Mr JAENSCH - They are not planning policies.

Ms WEBB - No, but they would often be a high-level reference point or foundation for -

Mr JAENSCH - They must be taken into account and they override all of the part of the planning system.

Mr RISBY - The TPPs have to be consistent with the state policy, so in a real sense, the state policies are at the top but they affect other things than the planning system. Within the planning system, the TPPs are the primary element.

Ms WEBB - Regarding the review that has recently been done and the report that has been released, you talked us through that coming to fruition across the course of next year. I imagine that has some significant ramifications or will expect it to have for the PPU. Does the PPU have a role in the steps that will need occur next year, to progress the next steps of this process flowing from the review -

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, it will.

Ms WEBB - or will it be impacted by the decisions made?

Mr JAENSCH - Both. There are recommendations and findings in there regarding where the PPU should sit within government, and how we need to consider greater separation between the TPC and the PPU and their different roles.

Ms WEBB - Forgive me, minister, in the interests of time because I am mindful. The main thing I am interested in is not so much how it might impact the shape of it, but whether it has implications for resourcing and budget for the PPU next year? If so, is that accounted for in the Budget that has been allocated?

Mr JAENSCH - There is a general provision. There have been some extra resources created for specific work for the regional land use strategies and other matters, but I would say that the work with the TPC review outcomes would be part of the normal operations that we would be expected policy advice from PPU on.

Ms WEBB - Existing allocations? Right. You are not anticipating the quantum of work to be done by the PPU in relation to progressing this to be enough to displace other priorities?

Mr JAENSCH - No, I would not think so.

Mr VALENTINE - The regional land use strategy reviews. Are they being done in-house or they being outsourced?

Mr JAENSCH - The wholesale review of the regional land use strategies will have to be a collaborative work between local governments -

Mr VALENTINE - I realise local governments are going to be involved, but I was wondering whether it was going to be done by a consultant or done by the PPU?

Mr JAENSCH - The main body of that work is still some way away, maybe a year away. There is work going on at the moment involving the PPU working with individual councils and groups of councils in the north and the south in particular on specific issues they are identifying

as constraints that need urgent solutions ahead of a more fulsome strategic review of their regional land use strategies. There is that work going on all the time and I think that some of this resourcing for preparation for the reviews will involve engaging consultants, potentially. Brian might be best to speak to that.

Mr RISBY - I think that's correct. The real issue here is that the legislation is quite silent on who prepares strategies. There's a body of work we're doing to advise the minister on some more flesh on the bones around that as to what process we should go through and whether there needs to be some legislative modification to reflect a more detailed rollout of the manner of review of them. At the moment it's half a page of legislation which doesn't tell you a great deal and there's certainly not been a follow-through from the first ones that I know you were involved in in terms of ownership and process, so we need to provide some advice around that as well while we do the preparation on that data collection and the policies.

Mr VALENTINE - I might have already asked this but what is the time line for the delivery of the Tasmanian Planning Policies?

Ms WEBB - End of next year.

Mr JAENSCH - I hope that process could be finalised within next year.

CHAIR - Thanks, minister. We'll let some of your team go again.

DIVISION 2 and DIVISION 10 -

(Department of Communities Tasmania and Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment)

Output Group 3

Natural and Cultural Heritage

3.3 Aboriginal Heritage -

CHAIR - Thank you, minister, we're definitely on the home stretch now. We're onto Aboriginal Affairs. I'll get you to reintroduce your team at the table for the purposes of Hansard.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you, Madam Chair. Tim Baker, Secretary, DPIPWE; Professor Mike Pervan, Secretary of Department of Communities; and Kate Kent, Deputy Secretary, Community Sport and Recreation.

CHAIR - Did you want to make any comment to begin?

Mr JAENSCH - I will reserve my comments. I am saving them up, though.

Mr VALENTINE - The performance information is on page 270, and talks about permit recommendations provided to the Director of National Parks and Wildlife that include evidence of community engagement 100 per cent right across the board there. Obviously last night's news was significant to some in the Aboriginal community. Can you outline for us with regard

to the Eaglehawk Neck issue who was consulted and why there seems to be still concern that they were not?

Mr JAENSCH - As I understand it, the Department of State Growth applied for and received a permit signed by me to proceed with further work to determine the nature of Aboriginal Heritage and its presence and locations in an area they have an interest in conducting a development on. It is still part of the investigative process I am talking about now and I think it is a good example of how the process we have identifies the likelihood and potential sensitivities of heritage that may be in an area and can prescribe a staged approach to that to determine if those values are likely to be disturbed or affected before the next steps are taken to proceed with development. I would ask the secretary to add to that if he can.

Mr BAKER - I had a long conversation last night with the chair of the Aboriginal Heritage Council, Mr Rodney Dillon, who would be known to many people in the room, and Rodney was very comfortable with the process that has been undertaken. One of the challenges in this Aboriginal heritage space is that too many times the Aboriginal Heritage permit comes at the end of the process instead of at the start and then the discussion becomes around the fact that it is Aboriginal heritage, which is the reason that the development, or in this case the road, extension is not taken place. In this case what the Aboriginal Heritage Council has done is recommended a permit to the minister. As I am the director and section 14 of the act requires that I provide advice to the minister as well, I have endorsed the recommendation to the council to simply provide a permit to find out what is there so we can get a road design that will minimise impact and that is exactly the best way to do it.

I also make the point that a road is linear in nature and there is ability to modify the design in order to minimise or in fact potentially eliminate any impact on Aboriginal heritage. My final point is that any further work in terms to look at what else is there or any further design would have to go through a full process and receive a new round of permits, but the Aboriginal Heritage Council is a representative group of members of the Aboriginal communities and they looked at it and it is based on their recommendation - not any whitefellas' or women's - that we proceed in this manner. Mr Rodney Dillon was very happy for me to say that he considered this to be completely appropriate and the right way to proceed.

Mr VALENTINE - I think the concern was that the drilling of holes might actually go through graves. Do you have any comment about that?

Mr JAENSCH - My expectation would be that would be undertaken in a way informed by best practice so it could be exploratory without being destructive in itself, so I am hoping expertise is employed that can ensure that happens.

Mr VALENTINE - Do you know whether the studies undertaken in that space by particular researchers have been interrogated?

Mr JAENSCH - Certainly that was covered in the advice presented to me. I am happy for Steve Gall from Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania to join us. Steve, could you provide some insight into the steps of process and the expertise?

CHAIR -What's Steve's role for the purposes of Hansard?

Mr GALL - I am Director of Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr GALL - We provide advice to proponents on how to assess potential projects and to navigate through the Aboriginal Heritage assessment and, if necessary, permitting process.

With Eaglehawk Neck, we have a lot of oral history that there are Aboriginal burials there and there's no doubt about that. There were some excavations in 1909 and 1919, but we don't know the exact locations of those digs. Aboriginal human remains were gathered from those excavations and given to TMAG. TMAG in about 1996 repatriated those human remains back to the community.

In order to understand the risks to the development of and to Aboriginal heritage sites, such as burial sites, we expect a thorough archaeological assessment process. What we've done to date is develop a system where it's controlled process, by which they will do scientific archaeological digs, 50 metres by 50 metres, a series of up to 80 or 90 test pits. It's fairly linear, so it's a large area. There is a clause in the process that where Aboriginal human remains are found, in the event that they do find any of that material, it invokes the Coroner's Act, so it stops work, and then we will be brought in to have discussions about how to proceed from there.

There's probably a minimal chance of Aboriginal human remains being in the corridor itself from what we understand, but it's only hearsay, so we need to have something a bit more tangible than that to move forward.

Mr VALENTINE - Thank you, minister, I appreciate that, and an assurance probably by you that you're going to do everything you can to make sure that Aboriginal heritage is protected.

Mr JAENSCH - Well, discovered and known in the first place before further decisions about work on that site is undertaken.

Mr VALENTINE - Watch this space.

Mr BAKER - Can I just make one very quick point recognising the time, which is Steve himself is a member of the Aboriginal community and the Aboriginal Heritage Council is obviously a member of the Aboriginal community? This is the Aboriginal community giving advice -

Mr VALENTINE - giving advice to the Government.

Mr BAKER - Yes, this is not anyone telling the Aboriginal community how and what to do with, quite frankly, their heritage.

Mr VALENTINE - That's encouraging. Thank you.

CHAIR - Minister, are you confident that our legislative framework is robust enough to prevent what was internationally condemned - and rightly so - destruction of some of the most significant Aboriginal heritage in our country by Rio Tinto? Western Australian law permitted

that. Are you confident our legislation will not enable in such an abhorrent way, destruction of Aboriginal heritage in this state?

Mr JAENSCH - It would be hard to see how that could happen, but I think the wake-up call that came with that event has rippled out and probably making us all look at everything afresh. What the implications -

CHAIR - You will do a review of our legislation to ensure that that's the case?

Mr JAENSCH - We have a review of the legislation underway right now. We're in consultation right now on review of the Aboriginal Heritage Act, the second review that we've undertaken. There is also work being done nationally on this. There is discussion about how we get greater consistency nationally in how we protect and manage Aboriginal cultural heritage. This is a very good time for us to be reviewing Tasmania's -

CHAIR - I think it is an essential time to do it.

Mr JAENSCH - It is going to be well informed.

Mr VALENTINE - It's important to the Aboriginal community to set the processes that are going on.

Ms WEBB - Quickly, that review, where is it in terms of being completed? When would we expect the review to be completed and an updated act potentially to be brought to us?

Mr JAENSCH - Tabling of the report in parliament in March on the second cycle of consultation. That is when we will have that back to -

Ms WEBB - A review report in March?

Mr JAENSCH - A review report in March.

Ms WEBB - Is it the expectation that there will be legislative amendments and change to flow from that?

Mr JAENSCH - I expect so, yes.

Ms WEBB - To be undertaken next year?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

Mr VALENTINE - Can we see the submissions to that?

Mr JAENSCH - We have had a policy of publishing submissions, yes.

CHAIR - Minister, that's one piece of legislation. It is a very important piece of legislation but there are other pieces of legislation governing mining, planning and other aspects that could indirectly or directly impact on our Aboriginal heritage. I am just talking about this act. I am not sure which act in Western Australia enabled that atrocity to occur -

Mr JAENSCH - No, neither do I.

CHAIR - We need to do a broad review to make sure there aren't other avenues for such destruction to occur in Tasmania.

Mr JAENSCH - I agree.

Mr VALENTINE - Especially with the big infrastructure projects we have.

Mr JAENSCH - Any development in Tasmania is bound by the provisions of the Aboriginal Heritage Act, as it is with the Threatened Species Act, as it is with any of those assessment processes. Everyone is bound by this legislation. That is why we need to make sure it is very good.

Mr BAKER - Members will remember that the department undertook a review of the act and after multiple attempts we finally managed to take the most abhorrent and racist elements out of the Aboriginal Heritage Act, including the name itself, which at the time was the Aboriginal Relics Act. That is something we are immensely proud that we were able to do - after seven attempts to get it changed, we finally got there.

A component of those changes was a review and that is the review being done at the moment. That was a commitment given by the Government and the department at the time to members of the Aboriginal communities that this was our first step, our first change. Part of that change was the introduction of guidelines in the act and we have been working with a number of industries about creating guidelines for Aboriginal heritage.

We have done a lot of work here. The act is still not good enough from the department's point of view or the minister's, I know, and we are absolutely committed to getting an act that is suitable and recognises the significance of Aboriginal heritage in Tasmania.

CHAIR - It makes me feel sick thinking about what happened in Western Australia.

Mr VALENTINE - It is important that with the infrastructure program going forward, that the other departments that are involved with that are on board with it.

Mr JAENSCH - The other thing the secretary mentioned earlier is where we position consideration of heritage in the development assessment process so that it one of the matters that is given earlier consideration. So that work can be planned for it and around it, rather than Aboriginal heritage being encountered as the thing which will frustrate you or delay at the other end of the project when you are already substantially committed. That is a pragmatic thing which we can do and which I am also considering in my Planning and my Parks portfolios as well as where we deal with Aboriginal Heritage, and do it earlier.

Mr BAKER - I make the point that the single biggest factor for industry was the increasing of the penalties to match built heritage and to remove the institutional -

CHAIR - You can't replace something that is destroyed like it was in Western Australia. You can't replace that.

Mr BAKER - I agree but what it has done is crystallise in the minds of many people in this state that they need to come and talk to Steve and Steve's team because if they don't, they are not going to get what was, quite frankly, a tokenistic fine. They are going to get significant fines now. Fines are not about post. It is about sending a message around the significance of the heritage and the impact.

Ms WEBB - It is not just development. It is also policy as well.

CHAIR - We are out of time but there is still a line item we haven't covered which is Aboriginal Affairs. It would be my expectation that the committee will leave that line item open for when we return for our Budget wrap-up because there may be questions related to that and further questions on this line item.

Mr JAENSCH - How does that work?

CHAIR - It means there can be more questions asked in the Budget wrap-up week when we go through each output group and we do notify you of which output groups are open for further debate.

Mr VALENTINE - Questions on notice.

CHAIR - No. Items that are left open for further debate. To let you know you need to have some departmental officers in the Chamber around the time we are dealing with it. You can rest assured we will probably have more questions around this area.

Thank you. We have used our full allocation and I appreciate it has been a long day for everyone.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you.

The Committee adjourned at 7.26 p.m.