

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Wednesday 7 June 2017 - Estimates Committee B (Petrusma)

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Wednesday 7 June 2017

MEMBERS

Ms Armitage
Mr Dean
Mr Finch
Ms Lovell
Ms Rattray (Chair)
Mr Willie (Deputy Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE

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

Ministerial Office

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

Department of Premier and Cabinet

Kate Kent, Executive Director, Communities, Sport and Recreation
Ann Herbert, Manager Policy, Communities, Sport and Recreation
Brook Teale, Senior Policy Analyst, Communities, Sport and Recreation
Alex Schouten, Manager Programs and Services, Communities, Sport and Recreation
David Strong, Acting Director, Corporate and Culture, Corporate Services

Department of Health and Human Services

Michael Pervan, Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services
Michael Reynolds, Acting Deputy Secretary, Corporate Policy and Regulation Services
Eleanor Patterson, Acting Chief Financial Officer
Erin Wise, Manager, Budget Development and Advice, Budget and Finance

Peter White, Chief Executive, Housing and Disability Reform
Ingrid Ganley, Director, Disability and Community Services
Ginna Webster, Deputy Secretary, Children and Youth Services
Gail Easton-Briggs, Assistant Deputy Secretary, Children and Youth Services
Jeremy Harbottle, Manager, Planning and Program Support
Susan Diamond, Director, Program Support, Learning and Development
Mathew Healey, Director Strategic Projects
Lisa Howes, Manager, Office of the Secretary (support)

The committee recommenced at 2 p.m.

DIVISION 3

(Department of Health and Human Services)

Minister for Human Services -

CHAIR - Welcome, Mrs Petrusma and your team who would have had a busy morning but also had a busy time collating information. We acknowledge that and appreciate it.

We will give you an opportunity to make an opening statement and we have advised the President that we may need extra time past 5 p.m. but if we finish beforehand we will close it.

We have a new member of the parliament and this committee, the honourable member for Rumney, Sarah Lovell. The member for Elwick is no longer the newbie, he is seasoned now.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Have you shifted chairs in the Chamber?

CHAIR - We do that regularly. We have some familiar faces that have been around a bit longer, including mine.

Minister, we will invite you to make an opening statement and then we will begin with the output groups.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Before we start I will introduce those sitting at the table with me. I have with me here today Mr Michael Pervan, Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services and Mr Michael Reynolds, Acting Deputy Secretary, Corporate Policy and Regulation Services.

The Hodgman Liberal Government has a strong agenda to assist vulnerable people and to give every Tasmanian the chance to participate in and contribute to community life in Tasmania. The 2017-18 Budget is all about building Tasmania's future. To assist Tasmanians in need, to experience improved outcomes, there are many initiatives that as a government we have been working on to bring about long-term sustainable benefits.

This long-term benefit is coming about through significant transformations, including the redesign of Child Protection, Strong Families - Safe Kids, the Affordable Housing Strategy, the Joined Up Human Services Project, the Youth at Risk Strategy, the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the actions on Safe Homes, Safe Families that we are undertaking across the Human Services portfolio.

Through these initiatives in housing, disability, family violence, the community sector, child safety services and youth services, we will achieve real long-lasting change. However, fundamental change takes time and hard work to ensure that it achieves the desired outcomes and is imbedded. This transformation also requires a strong enduring partnership with our hard-working community sector organisations.

Outsourcing services to the community sector happened nine years ago in Tasmania and has played a pivotal role in the delivery of health and human services in Tasmania, in fact across Australia. This Government recognises and thanks the community sector for all their hard work that is being undertaken by all these organisations.

Whilst community-based organisations have always played an important role in the lives of Tasmanians, this has increased considerably in recent years with the contracting of traditionally government-delivered services to the non-government sector, such as disability support services, community housing management and out-of-home-care services.

In a number of the reform process which we are currently progressing, including Joined Up, Strong Families - Safe Kids, the Affordable Housing Strategy, Out Of Home Care Reform, Family Violence Action Plan, the Youth at Risk strategy and the EVIS. Community sector organisations are not just playing their part, they are at the heart of the improvements and fundamental change we are undertaking. They are equal partners in our reforms which I hope they will always continue to be.

We respect the excellent work they do and are committed to working with this sector to achieve improved outcomes for Tasmanians in need. More importantly their role will always be recognised, for their hard work to be supported.

The increased investments in Human Services in our 2017-18 Budget and Forward Estimates were borne from a strong desire to assist Tasmanians most in need and to continue to transform systems, so we have long-term sustainable benefits. This investment includes nearly \$270 million for community sector organisations this year; \$62 million over the next two years under the Affordable Housing Action Plan; now with the Forward Estimates \$750 million dollars for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and an additional \$900 000 for Joined Up; \$51.2 million for out of home care, Strong Family-Safe Kids and a new information system for Child Safety Service; \$3.2 million for new Youth at Risk facility at Moonah; and \$2.4 million for Save the Children to continue their award winning youth justice program.

Finally I acknowledge and thank the secretary and all the staff of Human Services, who each and every day go above and beyond as they go about supporting Tasmania's in need. I thank them for their dedication and support.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister, you have certainly covered a lot of areas in that overview. Some of them we will drill down into as we get to each line item. I am interested in the out of home care area referred to on output 7.1 on page 89. Can I have a few details of the initiatives being undertaken in that reform?

Output group 7 Children services

7.1 Children services -

Mrs PETRUSMA - The 2017-18 budget invests an additional \$27.5 million to ensure when children and young people come into care their individual needs are met and supported with appropriate and tailored therapeutic support.

The \$27.5 million will support the work already underway by the department to progress phase 2 of the out of home care reform. A component of this additional funding will also be utilised to enable the implementation of all the recommendations in the in the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Out of Home Care in Tasmania report. This includes an additional \$1 million over four years to the commissioner's office to assist with independent external oversight and monitoring of the out of home care system.

Details on the budget continues the Strong Families-Safe Kids initiative across the Forward Estimates, with a total of \$17.35 million. An investment of \$6.3 million into a new information system for Children and Youth Services to assist in their working with children.

CHAIR - We know that there has been a significant increase in out of home care services. Does that mean additional staff to deal with that? How are we dealing with those increased numbers? That is really important.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Under the Strong Families-Safe Kids, the \$20.6 million announced in the 2016-17 budget is part of that reform. There would be an extra 31 staff employed in the Children Youth Services over two years. Extra staff being employed in Children Youth Services in this current financial year and the next financial year.

CHAIR - An increase in staffing numbers is a key point. These children often have complex needs related to the trauma and situation itself. How do we deal with those needs, with the people who are dealing with those children and the pressures they must feel? Do we have some mechanisms in places around caring for our staff and those children?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Very much so. In regard to the \$27.5 million extra investment into Out of Home Care, staff said to us that they had children with very high needs who needed more support wrapped around them. We are talking about children who have usually experienced a high degree of trauma to have come into Out of Home Care. This conditional funding supports the needs of children in Out of Home Care. They might be children with disabilities; have mental health issues; need extra counselling services; or extra therapeutic support. The foster carer might need a specially modified vehicle, for example, or they might need disability aids for the homes. This gives us extra money to help to support the needs of the children.

In 2010, during the Inquiry into Child Protection, we went to Child Protection saw the computer system that was in place then. It was very slow and antiquated. The child protection worker would sit down, make entries into the child protection system; they could go off and have a coffee before it saved a document. It was very slow and cumbersome. The feedback we had from them is that it needs a total rebuild to be able to work in the 21st century but, more importantly, to be able to communicate with other systems. We want to develop a holistic human services support system where the Child Protection system can talk to the Housing computer system, for example. It can talk to Police; it can talk to Justice. At the moment, our IT system is a silo. It allows us to generate what we want to do under Strong Families - Safe Kids, to generate a OneCare plan for a child where different agencies can have input into that child, especially with Education, which is a key partner.

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CHAIR - We have been talking about this for some time now. What is the exact time frame for that?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is finally happening. There is \$300 000 to -

CHAIR - That will not get a system in place, though.

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, the \$300 000 is to undertake a business case as to what the new IT system needs to be. It has to have the right functionality to not only do what we need it to do for children in Youth Services, but also to be able to speak to other systems across government and to non-government sectors, which are key partners. There is a 'A Certain Thing Be Done' business case. We have \$6 million allocated to develop the system. I will ask Mr Mike Reynolds who knows how the business development process for the new IT system will progress.

CHAIR - The young ones always know more about IT than us older ones.

Mrs PETRUSMA - He will like it that you said that he is a young one.

Mr REYNOLDS - The money is being administered through the Treasury process. There is still to be advice about how to seek funding for the projects but we do have a number of projects in mind for the IT networks. They would fall both across the health network and the human services network for the department.

CHAIR - And Police and Education?

Mr REYNOLDS - We are looking at our own department, but those other departments will be managing their own projects separately and individually.

CHAIR - Won't this still have a silo effect? Is it not more about having a whole encompassing system in place?

Mr REYNOLDS - That is certainly what DPAC is doing a lot more of. There is a greater focus on the whole-of-government approach to IT strategies, which we want to adopt across government, to ensure we do not have those silo approaches, so we can have the opportunity to share information where it is relevant and warranted. We want to ensure that our systems can talk together, as much as anything, as that has been a problem in the past. It is certainly an opportunity for us. We welcome investment by the Government to put money into the ICT area for the department. It has been an issue for us for some time now. This is a welcome investment.

CHAIR - How is carer availability for Out of Home Care tracking? It is always a challenge to find people who are generous with their time and their home and the like. How is that going? Do we have numbers and a breakdown of areas?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I do not have the numbers, but we always need more foster carers. You would have seen in the newspapers recently, we were running a continual advertising campaign to recruit for more foster carers. We always want to have more foster carers, not only to look after children, but also to give other foster carers respite. Foster carer recruitment is something that we are very keen to work on and always recruit more foster carers, but also to work with our non-government partners.

CHAIR - Do you have some numbers?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes, we do. The total foster carers we have, as households, is 244.

CHAIR - Since you have been running the campaign to encourage people to think about it and then possibly put their name forward, have we had an increase in that campaign?

Mrs PETRUSMA - We did have some foster carers come forward.

CHAIR - It would be interesting to know whether that campaign is actually working, or whether as a community we need to have a different look at how we encourage people to open their hearts.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I know that quite a number of foster carers came forward. From that campaign we had 40 enquiries that have now progressed. That is quite a good effort from a campaign to get 40 households who are willing to become foster carers. Non-government organisations also recruit foster carers.

CHAIR - Not-for-profit church organisations, that type of thing?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is it. There is a lot of recruitment going on.

Mr WILLIE - Picking on a number of your comments, minister, I will address those in a minute. I would like to go back to a comment you made in the parliament recently, where you said that 'Professor Maria Harries' greatest fear is that the Labor Opposition wants to dismantle it'. To give some context to that comment, you were talking about the child protection redesign. Do you stand by that comment?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It has been concerning that Professor Harries said to me that when governments change, the new government, if it is not convinced about the necessity for the reform, can stop or change the reform. The thing about Strong Families - Safe Kids is that a lot of research has gone into developing Strong Families - Safe Kids and the model has been well developed.

Mr WILLIE - What I am asking is, are you -

Mrs PETRUSMA - I am answering your question. What Maria Harries has stated is that the temptation for people to think that the redesign or the process is not occurring properly and to then think that they only need to invest in more child protection workers is one that many jurisdictions have come to. The inevitability of that latter strategy would be maintenance of the status quo of discontent that marks the current professional environment alongside an increase in costs. She is an internationally recognised expert on child protection, who has made it quite clear a number of times that you cannot just throw money or more staff at a problem as complex as child protection and expect change to happen. It is not just to put more money into staff but to make sure that the child protection redesign goes as it is designed to do, that the right staff are put in place, and that the processes keep on continuing without -

Mr WILLIE - I understand that, minister. I am asking if you stand by the comment that you made in parliament.

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Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes, the concern is that if a new government comes into place and does not continue with the great work that is being done under the child protection redesign, that the child protection redesign will fail and that we will come back to the status quo.

Mr WILLIE - That is very interesting because I have had a conversation with Professor Maria Harries. I asked, 'Is that a true reflection of you, given our last meeting that we had?' I think your chief of staff was there. I said that there is a lot of good stuff in the child protection redesign. She said to me that a member of your staff said that, 'You know Labor will dismantle this,' which is completely false. That is a misrepresentation of that meeting. That comment of yours last week deeply concerned me and that verballing Professor Maria Harries in that way, is unfair to her and it is also not a true reflection of the comments I have made to her personally.

CHAIR - Can we have a question out of that?

Mr WILLIE - Yes. I can move to some of the other comments the minister has made in her opening statement. You said there are 31 new Child Safety Service workers. Yet in an ABC news story you said there are 45 more Child Safety Service staff now than in December 2013.

In the other place, my colleague asked you to provide a breakdown and you were unable to do so. Can I please have a breakdown of those staff, what positions they are? You should have that information available to you.

Mrs PETRUSMA - As I stated downstairs, the reason we have more staff now than there were in 2013 is because of two reasons. First, this Government stopped the vacancy control the previous government had in place. We have also been actively recruiting more staff and we have added more funded positions to Child Safety Services. We have employed more FTE for dedicated sick relief, more staff for the North West Coast plus put in place a new co-manager for the North West Coast to be based in Devonport. We have employed more staff through Strong Family-Safe Kids. Our current approved establishment is now 211.3.

Back in 2013, there were comments made in the media from 2011 onwards the department was making savings in child protection -

Mr WILLIE - I heard you this morning. I would like a breakdown of those 45 staff.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I am answering the question. By keeping vacancies open, in other words vacancy control, he said at the time there were 20 vacancies in child protection workers alone and the department needed to actively recruit to maintain its budgeted staff of 135 child protection workers. In other words, there was only 115.

Even the unions have stated they could not remember a time when vacancies were less than 12 for child safety officers for over decades. We stopped vacancy control with at least 20 staff from there alone. By the time you add on to the staff that we have employed on to Strong Family-Safe Kids, we are up to 211.3 now as an approved establishment. This is where the numbers all came from.

Mr WILLIE - You are not answering my question. I am asking for a breakdown of those 45 positions. You should have that information and be able to provide that.

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Mrs PETRUSMA - There are more staff now under this Government than there was under the previous government.

Mr WILLIE - Why can't you provide me a breakdown of those positions?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I said 20 staff came from the vacancies. We have 211 now. There were 115 child protection workers. If you take that up to the 211 that is where you get the reference -

Mr WILLIE - This is the claim you made. You should be able to back it up with evidence and you can't.

Mrs PETRUSMA - We will take it as a question on notice.

Mr WILLIE - Thank you.

CHAIR - The member can always have the opportunity to leave that line item open and further explore that on the floor of the House when we get back into the parliament.

Mr DEAN - The staff cannot answer the question.

Mrs PETRUSMA - We will take it as a question on notice. Mr Pervan stated how the department was set up before we came into Government to what it is now is very much different, but we will endeavour to get that information.

Mr WILLIE - It is not plausible that you do not have it available. It is a claim you made in the media.

CHAIR - Next question.

Mr WILLIE - I want to address some of the comments made in the opening statement. You said a portion of the \$27.5 million for out-of-home care will address the Children's Commissioner's recommendations. What portion?

Mrs PETRUSMA - There is \$1 million going to the Commissioner for Children which is \$250 000 over four years which is a 27 per cent increase in his budget. The rest of the seven recommendations, the department has developed their strategic plan around those out of home recommendations. An implementation plan is going to be put in place.

From that work, the final determination of funding for those different initiatives will be determined. The department has only just got the funding now. Out of the recommendations, the department has already completed recommendations 1, 2 and 3. Recommendations 4, 5, 6 and 7 are already under way.

Work is being done on all of those recommendations - especially recommendations 5,6 and 7 - and they will be determined through further consultation with the Commissioner for Children.

Mr WILLIE - What portion of the money is going to the Children's Commissioner's recommendations? You have not been clear on that - \$1 million for his office.

Mrs PETRUSMA - One million dollars for his office -

Mr WILLIE - How is the rest of that money being included?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Then there will be funding for the advocacy campaigning and the visiting program for individual children.

Mr WILLIE - A dollar figure?

Mrs PETRUSMA - There is a body of work to scope out what the model will be for the visiting program for individual children and young people. Once that body of work has been determined, then we will be able to determine what the final cost of that visiting program will be.

Mr WILLIE - Can I just go back to you saying that Recommendation 1 has been completed? Is there a strategic plan and an implementation plan?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes, the strategic plan has been completed.

Mr WILLIE - Can I have a copy of that? And the implementation plan?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Recommendation 1 was to prioritise the development of the strategic plan and implementation plan. The strategic plan was launched in March 2017. The strategic plan is being completed; the implementation plan is currently being drafted.

Mr WILLIE - So Recommendation 1 is not complete?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The strategic plan is. The implementation plan will be completed by the middle of this year.

Mr WILLIE - Given that they are the Commissioner for Children's recommendations, have you been consulting with him about who should be involved in the reform? If so, who are they?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes. For recommendation 2 his recommendation was to more closely integrate the out-of-home care reform and the Child Protection redesign, and provide the resourcing required. Government processes have been established to enable common oversight effort in collaboration to ensure that they consider an integrated body of work -

Mr WILLIE - Has he recommended people to you to be involved?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Commissioner for Children was involved in the development of the strategic plan and the implementation plan as well so.

Mr WILLIE - What I am asking is, has he recommended people to be involved in the reforms? Have you asked him?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Commissioner for Children is very much involved in the development of these recommendations.

Mr WILLIE - Has he recommended people to be involved in the reforms?

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Mrs PETRUSMA - We know that he has recommended Maria Harries be involved, and himself to be involved - he has not recommended for me anyone else -

Mr WILLIE - Have you asked him?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The department has been having conversations - he helped to develop the strategic plan and he has been involved in the implementation.

Mr WILLIE - You said the strategic plan was completed in March, did you?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes. It has been available on the website as well.

Mr WILLIE - Yes. We will come back to that.

Ms LOVELL - Minister, across the department, and then if you could provide a breakdown as well for each service, how many worker's compensation claims have there been in the past year?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Across the Department of Health and Human Services there has been 127 claims.

Ms LOVELL - Is that claims lodged or claims approved and -

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is claims across the Department of Health and Human Services.

Ms LOVELL - Approved claims?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Lodged.

Ms LOVELL - Claims lodged. Thank you. Do you have a breakdown of which of the different services they have come from?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Ambulance Tasmania is 48. Public Health services is one. Children and Youth Services is 36. Housing, Disability and Community Services is six. Corporate Policy and Regulatory Services is four. It is a total of 95. Sorry, it is 95.

Mr REYNOLDS - The 127 was an extrapolation of that data -

Ms LOVELL - Do you have a number for leave taken by employees that has been attributed to stress leave?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Is there any particular department you want?

Ms LOVELL - Again, if you have an overall figure and a breakdown.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I have sick leave, as a percentage, by group it is 4.92 per cent, which is less than last year's 5.15 per cent. Sick leave comparison by group - I won't give Health because that is under Health business - in Human Services and Children and Youth Services it is 5.24 per cent this year versus 5.75 per cent last year.

Mr DEAN - Do you have numbers for those rather than percentages?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is a sick leave rate comparison by group. It represents the number of average FTEs taking leave as a proportion of total paid average FTEs, which gives a percentage.

Mr DEAN - Sorry, can we get the numbers? If you need to take it on notice that might be the way to do it. Numbers mean something. Percentages really mean nothing.

CHAIR - Minister, that is the same query that we put to the previous minister this morning about percentages when you don't know what the number is. Does it necessarily reflect and indicate what is happening?

Ms LOVELL - I should have asked this when we were talking about worker's compensation claims and I am not sure if you would have this data at hand: of the worker's compensation claims, do you have a breakdown of the number that was for physical injuries, and the number that was related to stress or mental health issues?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I have stress-related issues; for Children and Youth Services it was 10. For Housing, Disability and Community Services it was three.

CHAIR - I have a question but I am not sure if I am jumping in on someone's area so let me know if I am. I am always interested in the elder abuse strategy. I am going to be in that bracket one day so I declare an interest. There is \$150 000 in 2017-18 and it is the last instalment of a three-year funding commitment. What are the initiatives left to be rolled out, or are we supporting the ones we already have in place? What KPIs have been established to assess the effectiveness of this program? Can we have some numbers of the recording of elder abuse?

Mrs PETRUSMA - With the elder abuse strategy, we funded from 2014-15 to 2016-17, three years, an extra \$150 000 on top of recurrent funding and we have put another \$150 000 on top of recurrent funding. There already is base funding of \$147 000 per year that goes to Advocacy Tasmania, which is recurrent funding for the Elder Abuse Helpline.

CHAIR - That is pretty much what it is, the Helpline.

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, this is \$150 000 on top of that. If the Helpline's recurrent goes on forever, that is never funded. There is \$150 000 extra, which goes above the \$147 000. The \$150 000 is broken down where Advocacy Tasmania get an additional \$20 000 on top of its base funding dollars to continue its work in regard to Elder Abuse Helpline and Advocacy Tasmania, extra materials. COTA gets \$100 000 to continue elder abuse prevention activities. That is on top of COTA's other funding they get from the Department of Premier and Cabinet, for example, the Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy and to support seniors and everything else COTA does. \$30 000 goes towards the Elder Abuse is Not Okay campaign, so the total spend on elder abuse in this year is nearly \$300 000.

CHAIR - Other than Advocacy Tasmania, COTA gets the bulk of that, about \$100 000.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes, to continue their elder abuse prevention activities.

CHAIR - Other than Seniors Week, what are those?

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Mrs PETRUSMA - Seniors Week is all funded by DPAC. COTA gets funding from DPAC. There is \$346 000 to support Tasmanian seniors provided through DPAC, which supports COTA, Seniors Week and the Active Ageing Plan. The \$100 000 for COTA will enable them to continue to build the capacity of those Tasmanians through the You're Worth It: Peer Education Program, which guides those who work with other Tasmanians to identify elder abuse amongst their clients. COTA are currently working on developing a guiding set of principles which respect and protect older Tasmanians and will conduct events and forums which raise awareness of elder abuse.

CHAIR - Does that meet some key performance indicators? Is there some sort of requirement in place they meet some KPIs around that funding?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Definitely. They all have to acquit their grant. I attended one of the sessions of the You're Worth It: Peer Education Program. It was very interesting. They had a lot of people in the room educating on the elder abuse and what to look for, especially in regard to financial abuse. It was a very good program. I can go through those statistics.

CHAIR - I would like some numbers, thank you.

Mrs PETRUSMA - The 2015-16 statistics, the year to date to 31 March as well, so it is a comparison. Elder abuse cases, 2015-16 was 227, year to date it is 185. Percentage of calls in relation to older women, 2015-16 was 63 per cent, year to date is 64 per cent. Percentage of calls in relation to persons above 80, 2015-16 it was 42 per cent, year to date it is 40 per cent. Percentage of calls from concerned family members, in 2015-16 it was 37 per cent, year to date it is 39 per cent. Percentage of calls from older Tasmanians experiencing abuse, 2015-16 it was 29 per cent, year to date it is 36 per cent. Percentage of calls when they found out about the health line via television commercials, in 2015-16 it was 46 per cent, year to date it is 22 per cent.

CHAIR - Minister, are the percentages of the original two figures you gave me? Is that it? Is that the percentage of the figures?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes, the elder abuse cases, then of those cases the percentage of calls, the breakdown. The breakdown of the 227 and the 185 is the breakdown in regard to those different parameters.

CHAIR - And that year to date figure is up to the end of April?

Mrs PETRUSMA - End of March. Advocacy Tasmania reports on a quarterly basis.

CHAIR - Effectively we are tracking to have possibly around the same number.

Mrs PETRUSMA - The elder abuse, 2013-14 it was 244; 2014-15 it was 259. We had a decrease last year of 227. Extrapolate out the 185 it will come in about 246, which is roughly in line with 2013-14 statistics.

CHAIR - Is that telling you what it is telling me: we are not hitting the mark here? We are not actually gaining anything.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is a bit like family violence. We are glad people are identifying they need to ring the hotline to seek help. If there was nobody ringing the hotline at all we would be very concerned. We want people to be aware of it and to utilise the service.

CHAIR - We actually want people not to be doing it.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Tragically we know the Guardianship Administration Board has stated, for example, inheritance impatience is an increasing issue. We are glad people are recognising the fact that they might be experiencing abuse and are reporting it. If we were not getting any numbers it would be more concerning. We are glad that people are seeking help.

Ms ARMITAGE - Previously you told us how many calls were about financial issues. Did you give us a break up of how many calls were about psychological and emotional issues?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, I did not get that far.

Ms ARMITAGE - Just to know whether they having emotional, psychological issues or were they financial.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I can keep on going with it. In 2015-16, 61 per cent of helpline calls were in regard to financial and material with the year-to-date March. So year-to-date in March is 69 per cent in regard to psychological and emotional; 2015-16, 78 per cent; and up to 31 March 2017 it was 85 per cent. Physical abuse was 24 per cent in 2015-16, which has increased to 30 per cent. Social abuse was 18 per cent in 2015-16. That has gone up to 44 per cent. Neglect was 9 per cent in 2015-16, but it has gone up to 16 per cent. Sexual abuse was 1 per cent in 2015-16 and 1 per cent in 2016-17.

Ms ARMITAGE - What do you denote as 'social'. You said 'social abuse', so what would that be?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I introduce Ingrid Ganley, Director of Disability and Community Services.

Ms GANLEY - 'Social' captures the other areas that are not really psychological areas. It is not allowing people to do things or not engaging with family members, saying that they cannot catch up with your family members and things like that. We need to get you the exact definitions from the data.

Ms ARMITAGE - It was interesting to see what 'social' might have been that was all.

Ms GANLEY - Sometimes callers call in because they have witnessed other people not necessarily a family member being mean.

Ms ARMITAGE - So anything that is not captured in the others.

Ms GANLEY - Yes, basically.

Mr DEAN - How many of cases have been referred to police or other organisations for follow up complaints. What sort of a percentage charge rate has come out of that of that?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Out of the helpline calls, 74 then had referrals made. Of those 74: 49 per cent went to Advocacy Tasmania; 5 per cent went to community social workers; 74 per cent

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protective information was passed on to clients; legal services, 24 per cent; Police, 40 per cent; and Guardianship and Administration Board was 27 per cent for the year to date.

Mrs PETRUSMA - One person can have multiple referrals. For example, one person might have been referred to Advocacy Tasmania, legal services and to police. Advocacy Tasmania will take people through different options. The person might want to be referred to police, and to the Guardianship and Administration Board as well as legal services.

In the year to date, as at 31 March, there have been 59 referrals, of which 73 per cent went to Advocacy Tasmania, 10 per cent went to community social workers, 98 per cent was protected information passed on to clients, 37 per cent were referred to legal services, 47 per cent were referred to police - that is an increase from last year - and 44 per cent were referred to the Guardianship and Administration Board.

Mr DEAN - I guess one would have to go to the police to find out what happened as a result of that 47 per cent that were referred on to them.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes. Because of their privacy laws we cannot follow up from that point on.

Ms ARMITAGE - I was wondering, are we still promoting elder abuse services? I know you were doing television and radio advertisements before. Are we still doing that or are you looking to do that again?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes, \$30 000 of the \$150 000 is being used to fund the campaign in 2017-18. During 2017-18, the community awareness television campaign will air at the key times of the year, for example during Elder Abuse Awareness Day, Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day, during Seniors Week -

Ms ARMITAGE - Similar to previously.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes, similar to previously, but we utilise it differently - we advertise in the phone book and we are on the Advocacy Tasmania website, on the DHHS website. We go through seniors' organisations, we are in doctors' surgeries, we promote it far and wide through posted pamphlets, handouts, how people can contact.

Mr WILLIE - This morning, minister, you confirmed that right to information requests are sent to the Premier's Office, and then for a couple of examples that were given where there had been a two-day delay, you gave the explanation that the Premier does a lot of press conferences and he needs to be informed of those sorts of matters. Do you stand by the comments you made in your press conference on 2 March, where you were not briefed on a delayed RTI?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, I was not verbally briefed before I went to that press conference on the RTI.

Mr WILLIE - Why was the Premier briefed on those matters and you were not?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The press conference I was doing was of a morning time. This is going out that day. It depends on the time of the day that it all occurs. The press conference was on

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affordable housing and the launch of the Community Housing Stock Leverage Program. I was not briefed on that and that is why I corrected the record later on that day.

Mr WILLIE - Why is the Premier briefed on these matters, but you are not?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is not a case of who is briefed on what, it was a case of the circumstances at the time.

Mr WILLIE - You said that right to information requests are sent to his office because he does a lot of press conferences and he needs to be informed. How come you are not getting those briefings?

Mrs PETRUSMA - As to whether he is briefed or not, I do not know. I do not know if he is then briefed on it like I was not briefed on it, but the fact is, nothing was done wrong. The proper process was followed and I reject any allegations that there has been any manipulation of any RTIs.

Mr WILLIE - I am not talking about manipulation of RTI content. We are talking about delays.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Are you inferring that something was done wrong? Mr Pervan gave a very good explanation this morning that just about all of them go out at the same time to the minister, as they do, to the recipients, barring a couple of circumstances.

Mr WILLIE - I will move on as that was done to death this morning. About Joined Up Services, you were talking this morning in future tense, as though a lot of these things are about to happen or they are happening. What happened to the funds for Joined Up Services in last year's Budget and how were they acquitted?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I will call to the table Mr Mathew Healey, Director of Strategic Projects. Joined Up is a major project that has been going on. We have had funding for two years to do the program and the \$1.2 million was to fund a small project team that was under mapped to trial five different initiatives designed to inform and test different aspects of a more coordinated streamline human service system.

Part of that funding has gone towards doing the person based initiative which lead support coordination service for up to 30 clients who have multiple and complex needs. The Government has partnered with Baptcare, Mission Australia and the Australian Red Cross to deliver a nine month trial of the service. That service has commenced and clients have commenced. There is also an organisation called Connector.

Mr WILLIE - You are still talking in recent and future terms. I am asking what happened last year.

Mrs PETRUSMA - You are asking me how the funding was used; I am answering how the funding was used. It helped to fund the project team. There have been five initiatives trialled. What the next budget commitment does is allow the lead support coordination service to continue.

Mr WILLIE - I am not asking about the next budget commitment.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I would like to finish answering your question. There are resources being developed for Joined Up. I will get Mr Healey to explain how the funding is being used for the first two years.

Mr HEALEY - Joined up Human Services is a very ambitious initiative to try to deliver support services for some of those members of our community that have some of the most complex needs. For the last couple of years, the project team has been working on the detailed design of a service system. Been working with the non-government sector to pull together a service system now up and running. We now have clients receiving services within that system.

Over the past couple of years, as the minister said, there has been five projects pursued. One was a place based initiative in the Huon Valley. They did a detailed analysis of the service system to understand where the strengths and weaknesses of interactions between organisations were. Once they had completed analysis, they then worked with the local service network to identify strategies to strengthen the way services worked together to deliver better outcomes for individuals. They are, at the moment, working together on five or six initiatives which they hope to boost the service system. We will go back to do another analysis, to see whether or not that has actually improved outcomes for individuals within the local community.

If that process delivers better outcomes for individuals, we may be able to replicate in other parts of the state to start to get that ground swell of local action going to support individuals with complex needs. The most significant part of the project is the Lead Support Coordination Service. The project team has been working with a number of partners, in great detail work out how do we conduct a universal vulnerability assessment for an individual.

How do we then get them to work through what outcomes they want to target in terms of improving their own circumstances. How do we hold the entire service system accountable for delivering on those outcomes in a way we can measure to say, yes we are improving outcomes of this family. Let us replicate that in other parts of our system.

Through the partnership with Connector, we have now got a single web-based service system that allows vulnerability assessment to be conducted, care plans to be produced, referrals to be sent out to partner organisations and all of the outcomes of that work to be tracked and recorded and reported back to us.

That is a pretty significant system we are now rolling out. We have now got people receiving assistance within that system. We hope over the next 12 months we can demonstrate, and the whole point of the trial is to demonstrate, all of that work can now be deployed to deliver better outcomes for some of our most vulnerable persons.

Mr WILLIE - The money in last year's budget was allocated towards the trial down in the Huon Valley, the web system and essentially preparation of the roll out.

Mr HEALEY - It is not preparation. It is system design. It is designing an entire lead support coordination service. The expenditure in the project has been to date in the order of \$900 000. That is the amount that has gone to provide Tasmania with a capability to deliver better outcomes for some of our most vulnerable people. We are now seeing the trial going out. We are now seeing people within the service receiving supports, and some people with really challenging histories. We are getting to some of those people that we hoped to get to. We are building a very good relationship with Mission, with Baptcare, with Red Cross, and they are seeing that this could work. For the first

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time in a very long time, a broad range of community sector organisations are starting to think that maybe they can work together to resolve some issues for some of these people.

Mr WILLIE - While we are free-ranging, Chair, can I go back to the \$27.5 million figure for the Out of Home Care reform. How was that figure determined, minister?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The \$27.5 million was determined by the Treasurer, basically. It was determined as what we needed to deliver a better service for our children. I cannot believe you are thinking that \$27.5 million is an amount of money that is not significant.

Mr WILLIE - I did not say that at all.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is a significant amount of funding. It is a very big injection into our Child Protection system. We are investing an extra \$51.2 million over the forward Estimates in Child Protection. Whether it is through Strong Families-Safe Kids, Out of Home Care or the design of a new computer system, it shows how serious this Government is about redesigning our Child Protection System in Tasmania for the benefit of the children and young people who use the system, as well as the staff and the carers.

Mr WILLIE - Minister, I welcomed the investment, so I do not appreciate you verballing me like that. How is that \$27.5 million figure determined, given that there is still a whole lot of work to be done, and you cannot indicate how much money will be needed for each recommendation?

Mrs PETRUSMA - We have been given an amount of dollars that the Treasurer has given us. It will be determined by the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary as to how that money is best spent, but the money will be invested in providing better outcomes for children in Out of Home Care. That is the most important reason for getting that money.

Mr DEAN - Chair, are we going to go to the upwards groups? We are jumping all over the place.

CHAIR - We are in 4.1.

Mr DEAN - We were talking about disabilities.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Systems management had nothing to do with Out of Home Care

CHAIR - I said that if anyone would like to ask a question, they could speak up.

Mr DEAN - Could I ask a question on the overall summary at the beginning where we talked about the sick leave? Do you have a record of the number of staff in your area that have taken family violence leave?

Mrs PETRUSMA - We are not aware of any to date. Staff are encouraged to make use of that leave. They are very much aware that it is there if they require it, but nobody has actually taken it.

Output group 5 Community Services

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Mr WILLIE - Minister, I would like to start with the \$2.5 million for community organisations, which covers cost and sector capacity building. How many organisations does that go to? Is there any thought to use that money more strategically with collaborations amongst organisations, so there is some sort of accountability to that funding?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The \$2.5 million goes to around 225 community sector organisations delivering around 500 services and the sector would be very disappointed to hear you saying that they need accountability and how they spend that. That money is to fund the fact that your government had an election promise in 2010 you would fund the sector at 3.3 per cent, instead that was cut back down to 2.25 per cent. The extra \$9 million was to make up for the fact that indexation was cut by your government. When you add the \$2.5 million it works out to be about 0.9 per cent, so when you add it to the 2.25 per cent, it bring up indexation to about 3.15 per cent. It is there to assist community organisations to meet the increasing costs of providing services, which they were originally promised under your government but was cut.

Mr WILLIE - We are honouring that, minister, and I am not suggesting -

Mrs PETRUSMA - You are not honouring that.

Mr WILLIE - Yes, we are honouring that money.

Mrs PETRUSMA - You have not given them an extra cent in your alternative budget.

Mr WILLIE - Our alternative budget needs to be read in conjunction with yours.

CHAIR - We are not talking alternative budgets. We are talking about the Budget we have in front of us.

Mr WILLIE - I am not suggesting that money should be taken away. What I am saying -

Mrs PETRUSMA - You promised in 2010 and then cut it as a budget saving measure.

Mr WILLIE - You have just interrupted me and you were annoyed when I did that to you. If you are going to stop me then at least you could have the courtesy to let me finish.

CHAIR - Do we have a question around this year's Budget?

Mr WILLIE - Yes, I am asking if there is any thought to community organisations collaborating around that funding for some sort of project?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Community sector organisations are getting the funding because under the previous years' government the funding was cut, making up for the fact the indexation they thought they were getting under the previous government. This money was to make up for that to help them to meet the increasing costs of services. The fact you are saying to the 225 community sector organisations who are delivering 500 services, you want them to not use that money to meet increasing costs of service provision or indexation, but to use it for something else will not be welcomed by the sector.

Mr WILLIE - That is a matter for them to answer. You cannot speak on behalf of the -

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is now on the record for them to answer.

Mr WILLIE - It is a question. That is all.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is there for them to meet the increasing costs.

Mr WILLIE - My next question is neighbourhood houses. In your visits to neighbourhood houses what sort of response were you receiving when there was a reduction in recurrent funding to neighbourhood houses? I know in my time spent in neighbourhood houses, people who frequent the houses were openly hostile towards the Government for that funding cut. The services had to be reduced in those neighbourhood houses. I am sure you were hearing similar sorts of things. It seems to be why you have restored the funding.

Mrs PETRUSMA - You were saying before my conversations were too long. I can honestly say I have never gone to any single neighbourhood house in this state where I have ever had a hostile reception. The fact you were saying they had a cut to recurrent funding? They have never had a cut to recurrent funding under this Government. Their base funding has continued. They have had their indexation. There was an election commitment back in 2014 of an extra \$25 000 over two years, but that was an additional funding. It was not part of their base funding. To say they had recurrent funding is a mis-truth and it is misleading. It is misleading this committee because there was never a cut in recurrent funding. We then put in place two years of an extra \$15 000 on top of recurrent funding for two years. We have then added on an extra \$10 000 for this year. In total for neighbourhood houses they are getting a total of \$6.357 million for this financial year. On top of that they get indexation and ERO, plus they also get a share of the \$2.5 million as well.

Mr WILLIE - So in real terms they receive \$10 000 less.

Mrs PETRUSMA - No. Their base funding is still being maintained. Under this Government they have more money. I will take you back to 2014; if it was your government, there would not have been an extra cent for them. You had not one single extra dollar for Neighbourhood Houses back in 2014. It was only this Government that took money forward to the election, and we have honoured that commitment for four years. Under this Government they have received four more years of funding than they would have under your government.

Mr WILLIE - You committed for two years and there was expectation to go to \$35 000.

Members interjecting.

CHAIR - Order. For the record, the ERO is the Equal Remuneration Order cost, for anyone wondering what on earth an ERO is. I want to remind not only the minister but members as well, we are looking at this Budget and what we have in front of us. If we can just keep a focus on that, all of us.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Chair, we wanted to add on to the family violence answer, if we may, please.

Mr PERVAN - We have consulted the department. We are aware of one employee who has accessed family violence leave, but we do not actually record it officially because of the sensitivity of the matter. We only know of that one because advice was sought from HR.

Mr DEAN - There must be some form or some way of recognising it because a person is only entitled to - I think it is 10 days per year under that system. There must be some way of recording it somewhere where it is known they are accessing leave under the family violence policy.

Mr PERVAN - I think that takes place in the discussion between the supervisor and the employee. It is not actually recorded on the form; it is kept in that conversation. I will confirm that though during the course of the afternoon.

Mr WILLIE - I have a question on consultancies. How much has been spent in the past year by the department on consultant work?

Mrs PETRUSMA - This is across DHHS. For the 2015-16 financial year, DHHS entered into 32 consultancy contracts, with a value of \$2.2 million. For the 2016-17 financial year, there have been 10 consultancy contracts, worth \$2.8 million.

Ms ARMITAGE - I have a question with regard to the program that you have for grandparents taking care of their children. I realise you fund Baptcare and Mission Australia. I wonder what the funding is, whether it is increased with CPI, whether it has remained the same or whether it has dropped.

Mr Dean - And how many are on that program.

Ms ARMITAGE - That would be good to know as well, yes, how many. I am not sure they would have that there because they give the funding to Baptcare and Mission Australia, which do the programs.

Mrs PETRUSMA - The budget for grandparents raising grandchildren is a total of \$336 198, \$165 988 goes to Baptcare and \$170 210 goes to Mission Australia.

Ms ARMITAGE - So it has increased considerably.

Mr DEAN - If you are funding that amount of money, one would think that you must have an idea of how many grandparents are being supported under these programs. How many families do we have that are being supported?

Mrs PETRUSMA - As at 31 March we are supporting a total of 35 grandparents raising grandchildren in families.

Mr DEAN - There are 35 grandparents raising grandchildren.

CHAIR - How many applications have we had to that program?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That includes those - as they come in that is how many are supported, so they have been supported through that app, so it would have been 35 for this year's

CHAIR - Only 35?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It states 45, so it varies year by year.

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Mr DEAN - It is a small number. I thought there would be a lot.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I do not have the number of children. Because they are not children in Out of Home Care, we do not keep records of the number. Grandparents who are looking after their grandchildren are outside the statutory care system. If they want extra support they will come to us.

Ms ARMITAGE - Some grandparents have three children.

Mrs PETRUSMA - They can also access funding through the federal government. They can get family support payments and family supports and other payments and supports. Centrelink and the federal government do assist.

Mr DEAN - I will start at Community Services, the neighbourhood houses and the funding there. The member for Elwick has raised one or two issues. The extra funding of \$30 000. I thought it was an extra \$25 000.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It was \$30 000 in 2014-15, 2015-16, and it is \$25 000 this year.

Mr DEAN - I thank you very much for the information. I made a short speech in parliament on it. I forwarded it around some of the neighbourhood houses. They were delighted that they were getting some extra money to carry out those programs. They would have had to have ceased had they had not received that money. That is much appreciated.

It is \$25 000 this year, then how long is the \$30 000 in place for?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Next year we will re-look at the Budget to determine what the risk is and whether it is going to be continued.

Mr DEAN - I urge the government to continue.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is why we have given them extra funding for four years now. We very much appreciate the great work that they are doing. They are truly grass roots in action. They are the heart and soul of their community which is why we provided extra funding to them over the last four years.

Mr DEAN - There is no doubt that some of these neighbourhood houses are keeping families and kids out of becoming our next lot of criminal, offenders. They are doing a great job.

Another point I want to touch on is the capital funding for the Northern Suburbs Community Centre. Most of this was announced last year, so this is all the funding that is provided. This will see that establishment completed. When is the completion date?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is a very exciting project. I have been in parliament for seven years and it is the first time to see a brand-new created neighbourhood house on a totally new site. When you see the team there, it is like giving birth to a long-gestation baby. It is a great thing to behold. It is \$1.7 million that has been allocated for that facilities. I am delighted to say that it is due for completion in September.

Mr DEAN - It is pretty much on time?

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Mrs PETRUSMA - It is at 42-44 Alanvale Road. It is located in a much better position. It is closer to services; it is on a bus route; it has great parking - a huge parking space; it has a lot of green land around it. It is a fantastic location because it is a bit further out of town.

Mr Finch - The other one was at Rocherlea.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right. This is even better located and it going to be offering

Mr DEAN - The southern end of TAFE.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes, it is a much better location. We are also funding a new site for the Derwent Valley Neighbourhood House. We have purchased the old Blair Street Primary School in New Norfolk. That is \$325 000 we are investing in providing a new neighbourhood house for New Norfolk. It is a very exciting development as well.

CHAIR - Is that a repurposed building? You are not starting from scratch?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The site cost \$125 000. It is a new site -

CHAIR - Did you buy that from the Education Department?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes, for \$125 000. We are reinvesting \$200 000 in fixing it up as a kindergarten. It has a great playground already there. So we are fixing it up. The Minister for Health has recently announced new mental health funding to be delivered to the neighbourhood houses. That is going to be an extra \$75 000 per year to the neighbourhood house program over the next three years of \$225 000 in total.

We have also established food cooperatives through the neighbourhood houses across the state in different locations to help them.

Mr DEAN - That is great. What is happening with the Gambling Support Program, do we know the numbers of people being supported in that program? I would like a comparison to see whether those numbers are increasing or decreasing.

Mrs PETRUSMA - In regard to in person new support clients with Anglicare Tasmania, I can start with 2013-14.

Mr DEAN - Yes, if you could. I want a comparison over the years as to whether it is increased.

Mrs PETRUSMA - In person new support clients with Anglicare Tasmania in the 2013-14 was 216. In 2014-15 it was 206. In 2015-16 it was 253. In 2016-17, this is year to date to 31 March it is 158.

Mr DEAN - In 2016-17 we have 158 being supported or being benefited under this program.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I have more different programs.

In person individual support sessions, again through Anglicare Tasmania, in 2013-14 it was 879. In 2014-15 it was 727; in 2015-16 it was 671; and then year-to-date 31 March it was 541 individual sessions.

Mr DEAN - That is the number of sessions been convened in a year with all of those persons you have identified.

Mrs PETRUSMA - We have Gambler's Helpline Tasmania total calls. These are all calls received, but these can include a lot of wrong numbers, hoax calls, prank calls and hang-ups which has shown a steady decline. It can give you those statistics.

In 2013-14 was 1139. In 2014-15 it was 743, in 2015-16 it was 499. In 2016-17 it was 288. The next parameter is of those total calls have broken down into what were actually clinical calls which has shown an increase. Of those total calls, the actual true Gambler's Helpline Tasmania clinical calls 2013-14 it was 246. In 2014-15 it was 240, in 2015-16 it was 291 and up to 31 March it is 191.

There are fewer people ringing the help line that are wrong numbers, hoax and prank calls, but the clinical calls are actually increasing. It is becoming better refined.

There are the on-line clinical contacts. Gamblers Help on-line clinical contacts which is email and can be on-line chat. That is showing an increase. In 2013-14 it was 22, in 2014-15 it was 29, in 2015-16 it was 93, and in 2016-17 year to date it is 76. People are also turning to other methods.

Mr DEAN - What is the success rate through this program? That is the measure of whether it has been successful. Do you have any statement or position from Anglicare and the others providing these services as to the success rate in removing them from the gambling? I suppose that is a success.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes. I suppose if you look at electronic gaming machines, there has been a decrease in people using those. In 2014-15, \$193 million was spent. In 2015-16 it was \$191 million spent. If you look at the gambling losses by gambling type, if there has been some decrease, maybe that is the sort of effect.

Mr DEAN - It is an interesting area, isn't it?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes.

Mr DEAN - Thank you.

CHAIR - Mr Willie, any more in community services before we head to disability?

Mr WILLIE - I am happy to head to disability.

5.2 Disability Services -

Ms LOVELL - Minister, the taxi subsidies I understand are being extended for a year. Will they continue indefinitely?

Mrs PETRUSMA - In regard to the taxi subsidies for NDIS participants, the Tasmanian Government is operating transport programs that will be transitioning to the National Disability Insurance Scheme in accordance with the bilateral agreement. Both special needs buses for students with a disability travelling to school and the taxi subsidy component of the Transport Access Scheme for NDIS participants are to be transitioned under the agreement.

As you said, because of their voicing concerns with the transition, there has been a deferral. After discussions with the National Disability Insurance Agency and other Australian jurisdictions through a senior officials working group on transport, it has been decided to further extend the Taxi Subsidy Safety Net program and transition of other age cohorts until 30 June 2018.

This is also to provide time for Tasmania, along with the other states and territories, the Australian Government and the National Disability Insurance Agency, to ensure that reasonable and necessary transport supports are provided to NDIS participants on a nationally consistent basis. There is a working group that is occurring at the moment that we are part of, along with other states. We will be working through that working group to resolve these issues.

Ms LOVELL - And if the issues are not resolved?

Mrs PETRUSMA - We would continue to work with the NDIA, but every state and territory is affected by this, so it would be all states and territories working together to resolve this issue, along with the NDIA.

Ms ARMITAGE - I know the NDIS is under you, but what about ECIS – the Early Childhood Intervention Services - is that still continuing? Are they still in the same premises? I thought they were looking to move to a better premises. I was wondering how that is working. My understanding was it was ceasing, but last year you mentioned that it was continuing. What is the situation with ECIS currently?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Department of Education will continue to operate all early childhood intervention services until 1 January 2019 to ensure ongoing service provisions to children and families already utilising the services during the phase implementation of the NDIS.

Ms ARMITAGE - By then the full NDIS should be rolled out?

Mrs PETRUSMA - If their children have turned four years of age, they will be referred to the NDIS gateway.

Ms ARMITAGE - They will all be covered?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes. The Department of Education is working with the NDIA to ensure high quality of service provision, but ECIS does it up to four years of age until the zero- to three-year-olds enter the scheme.

CHAIR - Minister, is the department experiencing any difficulty accessing qualified service providers to deliver NDIS skills and services?

Mrs PETRUSMA - We have actually had a huge increase in services. We are up to 616 services now.

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CHAIR - Have you given me that information?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, I will try to find it. We had 91 providers at 1 July 2013 and we are up to 616 registered providers now in Tasmania.

CHAIR - So there is no issue with accessing.

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, there is plenty of providers and it breaks down to 463 organisations and 153 sole traders. There are definitely plenty - people have more choice than they have ever had before. Up to the end of July we are going to have 2200 participants. At the moment 2200 participants have 616 providers to choose from for services.

CHAIR - Is that number sustainable? Will people drop away from the area or drop out of the area because the numbers are going to build.

Mrs PETRUSMA - The numbers build quite rapidly, because over the next two years we have to bring in an extra 8600 people. We are up to 10 600, so organisations are registering now. The participant controls their package and organisations need to build up brand recognition and get to be known they offer good services. It gives them an opportunity to start building up their client base. Because every person with a disability is very different in their needs, it allows capacity building in the organisations at the same time. It also allows them progressively to put on staff. We need about an extra 2000 staff members. Sorry, staff in a disability service organisation so this allows them to gradually recruit staff and build up their capacity at the same time.

Ms ARMITAGE - One question I have been asked to ask was regarding autism and schools involved. Have we had an increase of uptake in schools now involved in the program?

Mrs PETRUSMA - With the Rethink Autism the schools include East South, Don College, Illawarra Primary School, Reece High School, Tasmanian East School South, Windermere Primary School, Geneva Christian School, Leighland Christian School, St. Joseph Catholic Primary School, the Disability Assessment and Advisory Team and Glen Huon Primary School, Campbell Street Primary School and the Autism-specific Satellite Unit have also had students who have used the program.

There has been good feedback from parents who have been using Rethink Autism. One parent was saying to me her little girl is now able to recognise words, numbers and colours for the first time - things she was not able to do prior to using the rethink program. Cassy Le Fevre, chair of Autism Advisory Committee, stated when you actually stand back and look at data from one month to the next you go wow, this is what the child has achieved this month. It is going well.

The other thing we have made the committee aware about is we have formed a partnership with the Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism and Spectrum Disorder, the world's first national cooperative research effort focussed on autism. It is a groundbreaking research collaboration that brings together the finest ASD professionals and takes a whole-of-life approach. We are contributing over \$800 000 in cash and in kind over the next four-and-a-half years to establish and run this autism research centre in Tasmania. It is a major investment of this Government because of the whole-of-life approach Autism CRC takes. This partnership enables Autism CRC to have a strong presence in Tasmania and allows the state to participate in and benefit from ground breaking world class research.

We have also formed a partnership with the Social Attention and Communication Surveillance apps research project. This provides a reliable and predictable tool for identifying children at risk of autism. The SACS tool, which will be used as part of a research project in Tasmania over the next two years will be used by the Child Health and Parenting Service nurses at routine health checks between 12 and 24 months. Up to now in Tasmania there have been no screening tools in use, which has demonstrated a high accuracy rate at detecting very young children with autism. We have three very exciting projects that we are doing at the moment in regard to autism.

Ms ARMITAGE - We can market this to the schools to remind schools that might not have the program.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Schools are aware of it, but individual schools determine whether they want to use the resource. Parents can use it before they get to school and it can be used in childcare.

Ms ARMITAGE - So parents can access it individually?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right. We have a number of children accessing it. Home school children are using it as well. We have a number of children accessing it outside of those schools.

Ms ARMITAGE - It is readily available; it is easy to find on your website. People know that it is available.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes, 49 licences have been in use.

CHAIR - Minister, is me is the Rethink program on the autism continuum of care program, or is that is a different one?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes, our commitment was to have an autism continuum of care, which is under the Autism Advisory Panel, which was set up to develop the autism continuum of care project. That has been going over four years.

CHAIR - And Rethink is one of those.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Rethink, SACS and collaboration with the autism CRC is also part of that continuum of care.

CHAIR - I want to clarify that. I am not sure that anyone is watching, but if they are they would be interested in that.

Mr DEAN - I had a couple of questions. One was in relation to Disability Services to assist those on waiting lists who are not eligible for funding from the NDIS. We provide approximately 12 000 additional hours. Do we know the numbers of people we have in that area who are seeking that support in the meantime? What is the position?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Our commitment was to fund people outside of the NDIS. It has another two years to go. It provides 12 000 extra hours of support. As people transfer into the NDIS those hours of support will transfer to different people. Some people might only need 10 hours of extra support a week; it is variable. It varies all the time, depending on who goes into the NDIS and who is remaining out.

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Mr DEAN - Those hours will go to those people outside the NDIS. Are you able to answer the question of how many do people are currently accessing those hours, or some of those hours because they are not in the NDIS?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It fluctuates because we are continually transitioning different groups in.

Mr DEAN - Have you a rough idea? Is it 100 people?

Mrs PETRUSMA - There are 554 clients at the moment who are getting packages of hours outside NDIS.

Mr DEAN - Can one say then that the demand out there for those people who currently sit outside NDIS but clearly are suitable for the NDIS support. Are they all being given some support or do we have a number that cannot get support?

Mrs PETRUSMA - There would still be some on the wait list for support. Over the next two years they will be moving into the NDIS. As people move into the NDIS or a spare capacity arises in shift hours we keep on looking at the wait list to see who we can assist next. Every two months they have a meeting to look at who is waiting on the needs register to see if they can give extra hours of support or provide a package of care to who is not yet on the NDIS.

Mr DEAN - My other question relates to a number of questions similar to last year we have been asked to ask.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is around housing, isn't it?

Mr DEAN - It could relate to housing but it also could relate to disability. It relates to disabilities in Tasmania. It is a question that crosses both line areas. We can leave it until Housing but last year we produced this page of questions to the minister.

Mrs PETRUSMA - We did.

Mr DEAN - The questions were answered in that way. If you are looking for time.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is a good idea.

Mr DEAN - I have written on them.

CHAIR - Shelter Tasmania has been very proactive in this space as everyone here will acknowledge. There is one down the bottom for the Treasurer so somebody might pass that on to him.

Mrs PETRUSMA - You do not want me to give you the answer to them now.

Mr DEAN - If you have the answers.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Do you want me to read the actual question in?

Mr DEAN - It might be helpful.

Mrs PETRUSMA - This is Shelter Tasmania, questions to the Budget Estimates Committees.

Question 1. We welcome the commitment of \$15 million in the financial year 2018 to support Tasmania's Affordable Housing Strategy 2015-2025. Can the minister please clarify which initiatives from the strategies will be funded by this allocation?

I can indicate this includes Home Share, the Youth at Risk Response Centre, the Community Housing Stock Leverage Program, the completion of Huntingfield land release, ongoing site acquisitions in areas of high demand, completion of the Somerset Elderly Units, commencement of new social unit construction in inner city Hobart, delivery of 60 units on sites owned by the Director of Housing, commencement of the Private Rental landlord incentives initiative, commencement of the Youth head leases program, completion of the Devonport Youth Supported Accommodation facility, expansion of the Launceston Youth Supported Accommodation facility, completion of a group home in Devonport for people living with disability, upgrade of crisis and transitional accommodation state-wide, and commence construction of the supported accommodation facility for elderly people.

CHAIR - They almost cross over into housing, don't they?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Question 2. The federal government's Budget 2017 committed ongoing matching funding for the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. Why has this funding commitment only been shown at \$2.8 million in the financial year 2017 and not in the financial year 2018 in Forward Estimates? Can the minister also please indicate whether the state Government's matching funding is shown in the Budget papers?

It comes under Housing Services 5.3. Matching funding always comes under the previous government. If we had to identify everything under each of those line items it would be a huge budget paper. Housing Services includes funding for it.

CHAIR - I am pretty sure that Patty's listening, even if she is not watching.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right. Under the new NHHA the federal government announced recently, recurrent funding for homelessness is now backed up in that new agreement so it will continue across the forward Estimates.

Question 3. Last year's budget included a welcome commitment to funds supported accommodation for older homeless people. Can the minister provide an update of the current status of its application under the Australian Aged Care Approvals Round for this initiative? Can the minister also please indicate the amount of funding allocated by the Tasmanian Government for this initiative and whether this includes both capital and operational costs?

With regard to this initiative, we are partnering with an approved aged care provider to develop supported elderly accommodation for older Tasmanians in need. This initiative has been informed by award-winning interstate models that are achieving good outcomes for residents who would otherwise be at risk of homelessness.

A funding allocation of \$12 million was set aside for our Affordable Housing Action Plan to develop, supported elderly accommodation for vulnerable residents. I am delighted to announce that we were told last week that 40 bed licences have been approved by the Australian Government under the Aged Care Approvals Round - ACAR.

We will be partnering with Winterringham Specialist Aged Care to deliver assistance for these 40 older people who are at risk of homelessness.

CHAIR - Whereabouts is that facility?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is at a site in southern Tasmania, in Hobart. People who will be going into this will be people aged over 50 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It can quite often include women who, because of divorce or family violence, have become homeless and are living on the streets. Mr Pervan and I do Sleeping Out with the Salvos. When you do that of a nighttime they take you around the streets of Hobart and you meet a lot of homeless older women, which is quite sad.

CHAIR - How is the northern part of the state being catered for?

Mrs PETRUSMA - There are 40 beds. If people want to come down from other areas of the state - these people are homeless anyway - if there is room - This is a trial. It is very rare for the federal government to provide Aged Care Approvals Round beds for this sort of facility.

Victoria has a couple. We are the second state after Victoria to have gone through this process to get approval for this type of facility. It is because of Bryan Lipmann, who is the CEO of Winterringham. He provides this specialised aged care. Normally aged care beds are only for people aged over 65, but this is for a younger cohort.

The recurrent funding for this comes from the federal government. The recurrent funding does not come from the state because it is treated like an aged care facility.

It is an exciting announcement. These people usually need a lot of extra care that they cannot get in other facilities.

CHAIR - Has the Commonwealth committed long-term to this? It is a great initiative.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes. Once you get the bed licences, it is an ongoing commitment. For Tasmania to have pulled this off is a big coup for this state. We are the only state outside of Victoria that has managed to achieve this.

CHAIR - The issue is that these circumstances might not stay constant. They might be quite fluid. Once things are sorted in their life -

Mrs PETRUSMA - Very much so. The model encourages that if we get these older seniors stabilised into a warm bed, provided with the right -

CHAIR - Fifty is not an older senior.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I know. Because they have been homeless or at the risk of homelessness, they have actually aged a lot more than what they would be if they had been in warm, safe accommodation with good food, et cetera. The aim of the facility is if they do get stabilised, it is to actually facilitate for them to go.

CHAIR - We are mindful of the time, unless we want to be here until 7.30 p.m.

Mr DEAN - You did talk about people coming from the north down to the south if they needed this sort of support. If you knew of anybody or Anglicare or they can build them, they will know about them.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is a very specialised form of care that Wintringham does there. People from around the state will be able to come into Wintringham; it is a very specialised service. Wintringham applied with us for the bed licences. We managed to get it because Wintringham is known as the expert in this specialised delivery of this service.

CHAIR - If we can finish off with those. I would like to finish Disability Services before we head to Housing.

Mrs PETRUSMA – I will continue with the questions from Shelter Tas –

Question 4 - We are pleased to see the continued allocation of \$6 million for the Devonport Supported Youth Accommodation facility. For this program to run successfully, it will be essential to have certainty around staffing and support when it opens in early 2018. The minister indicated that funding has been allocated for the operational costs of this facility.

I can confirm the funding costs of this facility have been identified.

Question 5 - Housing Tasmania has estimated that 4700 people with disabilities in Tasmanian will need affordable and appropriate housing -

Ms Armitage - We asked that question already, did we?

CHAIR - Is that the one Mr Dean did?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No.

We welcome the inclusion of young people with disabilities in the Devonport youth housing development. Aside from this supply, have other capital funds been allocated to increase housing options for people with disabilities? What negotiations has the Tasmanian government engaged in with the Australian government about capital dollars to increase the social housing supply to meet the increased demand expected to be generated by the NDIS?

There are a number of capital projects that will deliver new homes to people living with disability. These include the Devonport's quality accommodation facility, the Regional Supply Initiative. There is a group home being built at Devonport; there is development of a 10-unit facility in Newnham. There is also a group home being developed at Somerset and 15 homes at Newstead. Negotiations are also occurring with the federal government about the new National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness which will include targeting new supply of social houses for people living with disabilities.

Mr DEAN - Where is the one in Newnham?

Mrs PETRUSMA - At Abbeyfield.

Mr DEAN - They had aged people living in it, and now they are opening it up -

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes. We have bought it and are redeveloping it. We are rejuvenating it. It is a great site and it will have a new lease of life.

Mr DEAN - It is a great little centre. It is not that far from the neighbourhood house, either.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is a great

Ms ARMITAGE - It is a shame that could not have been the northern Wintringham, in some ways.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Give us time. Other states tried to get this were not successful.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, minister. You will need that because there is a question for the Treasurer, you will pass it on.

Mr DEAN - I think the Treasurer's question has been answered.

CHAIR - It will just jog somebody's mind.

Mr FINCH - In 15 budget Estimates, I have not seen a minister ask and answer her own questions.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Thank you, Mr Finch.

Mr FINCH - Minister, we northern members share an interest in New Horizons, the northern sporting club for people with disabilities. I am wondering if you could help focus of where they might fit, because they do not necessarily fit into the NDIS model. I have been thinking while we have been talking about what the future might hold for the organisation, which, as you know, has been around for over 30 years, is northern-based and provides for some 350 members as a sporting club for people with disabilities.

I know in the south the Special Olympics cater for people with intellectual disabilities. I know New Horizons have even contemplated looking at a southern operation of what they provide. You only have to watch the media from time to time to see how important sporting opportunities for people with disabilities are, and how much it means to the quality of their lives if they have sporting opportunities.

New Horizons provide all those opportunities for our young people to perform internationally and nationally, particularly with Aussie Rules coming on, futsal, boccia - all sorts of sports where they send teams away. I am also suggesting that it might not be a bad time for some officers from your department to just have a talk with New Horizons to see how they are going. They get terrific support from the community, but there might be a new way forward paved with the department that might offer more opportunities for people in this space. I am wondering if you can give us a -

Mrs PETRUSMA - Thank you, Mr Finch. I am glad to say that the department has undertaken a significant body of work on organisations like New Horizons as to where they might have the best fit in regards to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The department has undertaken initial mapping to review those organisations providing Information, Linkages and Capacity Building type activities - and how they might align to the NDIS's information linkages and capacity policy

framework going on from 2019. I will ask Ms Ganley to answer your question specifically because she has actually been the one who knows who the New Horizons Club and also what has been undertaken with that organisation.

Ms GANLEY - As the minister said, New Horizons at the present time is what we call 'block funded' and all our block funded services are being mapped across to the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building, and we have looked at that mapping. Exactly as you have described, the type of activity New Horizons provide would not fall under that Information, Linkages and Capacity Building. However, some of the supports they provide would actually be funded in individuals' plans to help them access those types of activities.

What we are doing with those providers in that group is working with them about how they look at their model and how they deliver their model, and how that can then work under the NDIS. It might be the individuals using the service actually have some funds built into their packages of support, with which they then purchase that service from New Horizons.

It is a slightly different way, but like all our providers, they are using a different way of getting the same outcome, which I believe would give New Horizons opportunity to expand because there would be more people accessing the NDIS. We are working with all the providers over the next two years to help them map how they get from state government funding now through to the NDIS model.

Mr FINCH - Yes. In the meantime, they can feel comfortable that their recurrent funding or their current support is in place?

Ms GANLEY - Yes.

Mrs PETRUSMA - For the next two years.

Ms GANLEY - With the block package, yes.

Mrs PETRUSMA - As Ms Ganley was saying, we encourage all organisations in that situation - we have been doing a lot of work with them, but we have also funded the National Disability Services and others like TasCOSS and everyone to look at sector capacity building, then to look at where they see would be the best fit for them in the future, to look at what the NDIS provides and to see what sort of options would be best that will suit what they are passionate about and how their organisation could deliver in the future from July 2019.

CHAIR - We can assure you they are passionate about life. They are the most enthusiastic group of people that I have ever come across.

Mr FINCH - Good fun.

CHAIR - And particularly when they are at the member for Rosevears' home. They love it.

Mr FINCH - For the Christmas function.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is a good thing. If they build up that good name, brand awareness, in the community and they are known for doing that, that is how they will be able to attract participants to use their services.

Mr FINCH - Belinda Kitto is the CEO on maternity leave at the moment. It has always been her vision to provide that service on a more expanded basis, a statewide basis. I hope that might be considered in conjunction with sport and recreation or the like. The opportunities are fantastic for people with disabilities and their carers.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is exactly right, and families. Yes, very good.

CHAIR - Mr Willie, last question before we have a break for a cup of tea.

Mr WILLIE - I have two, but I will be fairly brief. I am conscious of the time as we have a lot to do.

The NDIS is one of the biggest social reforms since Medicare and it has tripartisan support. I do not want to be misrepresented, but are service providers expressing concern with you about pricing and the pressure that is putting on their business model? I am wondering how the NDS work is progressing in supporting service providers?

Mrs PETRUSMA - A lot of work has been done on the pricing framework for the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Ms Ganley and I met with service providers recently to discuss different issues. When service providers raise issues that they are having with the NDIS, the state always raises their concerns with the NDIA. We have lobbied for them and had a few things changed. The NDIS is major reform, as you outline, so there are teething issues. I notice the CEO, Mr Bowen, announced yesterday they were going to put in place another 400 different initiatives to improve the NDIS for service providers and for participants.

All the states and territories come together at the Disability Reform Council to discuss issues. We are all on the same page to making sure that the NDIS is sustainable, but it also leads to service providers setting the prices necessary to be sustainable.

Mr WILLIE - How is the NDS progressing in supporting service providers?

Mrs PETRUSMA - NDS received a lot of money under the Sector Development Fund recently. We have managed to obtain \$3.33 million. We have a large amount of funding for the Sector Development Fund to increase capacity building for providers in Tasmania. The NDS has funding of \$300 000 to support the workforce with a focus on leadership, diversity and person-centred delivery. They also have -

Mr Willie - I am interested in the feedback.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It has its challenges, but it also has its successes. Every time a challenge is raised we work together with the NDIA and resolve it. We have one of the highest satisfaction rates in the NDIA and NDIS in Australia. Around 89 per cent of people are reporting very good or good satisfaction, which far exceeds the national average so we are going pretty well.

Mr WILLIE - A question came up with the Minister for Education and Training and he said the Education Department is looking at the IQ model for kids and what that might look like in the future. Are you working through that with him?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, that is his department. That is done with his funding of the students in his department. You would have to take it up with him.

Mr WILLIE - You are not talking to him from a disability perspective, as Minister for Human Services?

Mrs PETRUSMA - My department funds \$750 million toward the NDIS. The Education Department funds their contribution to the NDIS separately.

Mr WILLIE - I am aware of that, but I thought you would have input into -

Mrs PETRUSMA - I look after the people I provide services for. I would not expect him to look after the 10 600 Tasmanians I will be responsible for in future. You will have to ask him in regard to what he is planning on doing.

CHAIR - I would have thought that maybe you might actually share some of those people.

Mrs PETRUSMA - We might do, but I do not know about what this IQ model is, and I am not going to hypothecate.

CHAIR - On the strength of that, minister, we will take a 12 minute break and be back before 4.15 p.m. to finish off Housing. We have made a pretty good start into Housing. That is a positive. We will get through the rest of our line items and output groups. Thank you.

The committee suspended from 4.00 to 4.16 p.m.

CHAIR - Minister, we are on the home straight. I am sure that you are relieved about that. We have spent some time in Housing Services but there are a few more questions around Housing. Mr Dean has the call.

5.3 Housing Services -

Mr DEAN - How is the \$10.4 million made available for the purchase and construction of public housing split around the state? I would like to know what is happening in George Town, and what is happening around the state with that split of new homes. How many are expected? In the budget papers it gave an expected number.

CHAIR - Not enough.

Mr DEAN - No. That was what I was coming to.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I welcome back to the table Mr Peter White, Chief Executive Officer for Housing and Disability Reform. The question is how many of the new houses are being built in the north?

Mr DEAN - No. I would like to know how the \$10.4 million is being spent around the state. I specifically mentioned George Town because that sits out on its own.

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Mr WHITE - The \$10.4 million, are you referring to the Budget?

Mr DEAN - As I understand, it is \$10.4 million for purchase and construction of public housing. I have taken that from the budget papers.

Mr WHITE - That forms part of the activity under the Affordable Housing Strategy. We identified a number of sites around the state that were owned by the director and were suitable for redevelopment. We have 60 units in total being delivered under that program. I don't have a split of locations at the moment.

CHAIR - Can we have that provided?

Mr WHITE - We can provide a regional breakdown if that would help.

Mr DEAN - If I could have that please.

Mr WHITE - Will take that on notice for those 60 units.

Mr DEAN - I have been specifically asked by an organisation in George Town as to whether they will feature in that or if it will be in the main suburban areas.

Mr WHITE - There are no George Town sites in that package.

CHAIR - In the regional supply initiative?

Mr WHITE - That has not been awarded yet. It may be out of the regional supply initiative.

Mr DEAN - What will happen in that?

CHAIR - Can we have some observation around that?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Councils and not-for-profit organisations have submitted and tenders under our regional supply initiative. Up to 75 homes around Tasmania expected to be delivered under that program. The tenders are being assessed now.

CHAIR - When will we see the outcome of that?

Mr WHITE - We would anticipate to make those outcomes public in the next month or so. That program is designed as a one-off capital contribution toward the cost of construction and in return the organisations will use those units as long-term social housing for a period of no less than 30 years.

There are, within that portfolio, sites across the north and north-west in particular, quite heavily represented in that target of 75 units. I expect to be able to release that over the next month or so as we finalise that procurement process.

CHAIR - You know how many applications you have, is it over-subscribed?

Mr WHITE - We had more proposals on the table. We originally had a target of 50 but we have applied additional funds in to increase it up to 75. That is what we anticipate to be delivered.

We had more projects, but not every project offers the value for money we are looking for, or in the areas that we were looking for. We had a good response to that process, which has enabled us to select good projects in areas of need and offer very good value for money. A number of those projects will target elderly and people living with disabilities as part of the cohort of tenants.

CHAIR - We will know within a month.

Mr WHITE - I will say a month approximately.

CHAIR - You know now.

Mr WHITE - We have not finalised the internal procurement. I have a recommended list.

CHAIR - You can't tell me yet?

Mr WHITE - That is right.

Mr DEAN - Housing is of particular interest to me because I have the largest number of Housing Tasmania properties in my electorate than any other in the state. It is a big issue for me and it is one of my heaviest workloads, and for my staff in particular. What is the number of people on the list in each category? We are really working with one category now, how does that change from the category 1 list, category 2 and category 3. Category 3 was a never-ending thing, you never got off that.

CHAIR - You never got up.

Mr DEAN - No, you never moved away from it really because other people kept jumping in front of you with more need of supported housing or assisted housing. There is a rising number here in this area. What are we doing? There are these extra homes and the affordable homes, but is there anything else we might be doing? I went out to both Ravenswood and Rocherlea, the neighbourhood houses, to find out what their main concerns are about state housing. I will refer to that in a moment. Is there an answer for the numbers on the list?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The current wait list as of yesterday is 3771, so there actually has been a decrease in the wait list.

Mr DEAN - And the areas again. Can we get the breakdown of areas? We have done it previously.

Mr WHITE - We can certainly provide that on notice.

Mr DEAN - If you can, thanks, if we can get a breakdown on the areas. I am interested to see what the position is in Launceston. I want to raise an issue on maintenance. There is a problem in having maintenance concluded at the appropriate time. A contract with CHL in my area have to carry out inspections of their homes every 12 months, two years. What is the inspection?

Mr WHITE - CHL effectively aim to inspect the tenant as a tenancy inspection at least once every six months. As an asset they do their asset condition assessments for asset management purposes every three years.

Mr DEAN - I want to raise this issue with you, it is an appalling situation. I recently had a call from a lady in Rocherlea to have a look at her house. I walked into the house and it was an absolute disgrace. The house was falling apart inside, through no fault of hers. She appeared like she was doing everything right. The floor had rotted through in the bathroom and they tried to patch it up, but the hole was still there. There was also a stench there. The kitchen was a kitchen that Moses used in his time. The carpet was threadbare with holes through it. It was an absolute disgrace.

I got onto CHL with a very scathing report. CHL did the right thing and inspected this house and came back with the report that said, 'The house is appalling. We are immediately going to fix it.' My question is, how can a house get into this state when we have the 12 month and the six month inspections? Worse, a plumber had been into the house, sent there by CHL about three months previously, to repair burst plumbing pipes. In Rocherlea the brick house would have been built about 1970. How can this happen when these inspections are carried out. What the hell is going on?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I will get Mr White to answer that question.

CHAIR - One that has fallen through the cracks.

Mr WHITE - It sounds both figuratively and literally. It is the first that has come to my attention, and we, with each of our providers, have requirements in terms of their inspection regime on the properties. When the Better Housing Futures program commenced, the organisations had to do an asset survey of all properties across the portfolio within the first 12 months. We monitor their inspections on a quarterly basis; the number of inspections they make. Also, we monitor the level of maintenance they are doing across the portfolio. Clearly the organisations have a responsibility to comply with the Residential Tenancy Act. From what you are describing they may not have in this case, around minimum standards.

Mr DEAN - They did not and CHL accepts that.

Mr WHITE - Unfortunately, this seems like one of those situations where perhaps it has been overlooked, for whatever reason. I can't comment, given the specifics. If you are not satisfied with that response -

CHAIR - Perhaps you could provide Mr White with the address.

Mr DEAN - I can give you all of the details. This lady is happy for that to occur. CHL is now doing the house as a priority. All the details will be provided to you on that.

I have feedback from the areas I told about in Neighbourhood Houses. They were concerned with Housing Tasmania properties. First from the Rocherlea area, more affordable houses and options, et cetera. We see a lot of men, mainly young, couch-surfing throughout Mowbray. They are saying a lot of housing for those young men as well. A lack of support in Launceston with crisis accommodation for young men. Concerns of financial stress with public housing rents under Community Housing Limited rising in particular for one- and two-bedroom units, unsure if it is being offset with increased rent assistance but people are not coping with the change. They are saying increasing rents and their other income is not corresponding. That is creating problems.

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In Ravenswood the most outstanding issue is the lack of public housing. Rent increases - one person's rent increased by \$30 but his Newstart rose by \$3, causing stress. Another gentleman repeatedly informs Community Housing that his rent was too high and Community Housing ignored him, which put him under significant financial stress. They commenced arrangements to access his super, only to be informed there had been an error over the last 12 months, but the financial impact had already occurred. You might be aware of that one. It is a tragic situation.

Mixing young people with the elderly causes both parties significant stress. Insufficient maintenance - and I have already raised the issue with maintenance. People who do have antisocial behaviours in their households seem to be priority for maintenance rather than those who do the right thing. That is a very true statement. The noisiest people seem to get the attention.

CHAIR - That is in life.

Mr DEAN - Yes. 'The Tenancies Officers are inconsistent and try to blame us for not being able to inspect my place when she didn't turn up' - multiple people supported this. 'More chance to buy my place now I am on my feet. This is my home and where my friends are. I don't want to move.' They are some of the issues raised.

In relation to the purchase of homes, what is the position there and how many sales of HT properties have occurred in the last financial year?

CHAIR - That is the Home Share program, isn't it?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Do you want us to address any of their concerns that you have raised as well? In regard to the rent increase, if they have signed a lease with Community Housing Limited, what they now get is Commonwealth rental assistance, which they might not have received before. That might have been the \$30 a week they were talking about. That is not income to the tenant. It is always supposed to go to the landlord. If somebody gets Commonwealth rental assistance it is be paid them. We don't get Commonwealth rental assistance but a community housing provider does. If they were a tenant with us previously, they then sign a lease with Community Housing Limited, they then might get \$30 a week Commonwealth rental assistance. That Commonwealth money is to go to Community Housing Limited. The tenant is no worse off in dollar amounts because it is \$30 that is to go to the landlord. That may be where some of the confusion is. They are still only paying 25 per cent of their income, the same as if they were with us, except they get Commonwealth rental assistance.

That is where Better Housing Futures has a big difference. Because they can access Commonwealth rental assistance, which is estimated it will be about an extra \$70 million over 10 years that the community housing providers can get that we can't get, they can invest that money into new homes and into supposedly extra maintenance that the state taxpayer doesn't have to provide. It about an extra \$70 million that the community housing providers get over 10 years in Commonwealth rental assistance that they can invest back into new homes.

Mr DEAN - Thank you for that explanation. This will go to the Neighbourhood Houses. They will get a copy of what comes out of here today, in answer to their questions.

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Neighbourhood Houses and these sort of issues, if they are not happy with the explanation they get from Community Housing Limited, they are welcome to contact my

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office. I am responsible for both, and we will talk through the issues that they may have. It sounds like for some of them there may be an easy explanation around what actually is -

Mr DEAN - I generally get good service from Community Housing Limited, I have to say that for them. They were very happy to listen to issues. In most cases they address issues fairly quickly, so I am happy about that. That is a good position. With Community Housing Limited, there are some properties in and around my area that are still with Housing Tasmania in some instances. Most areas have gone across to Community Housing.

Mr WHITE - I would have said in those areas such as Rocherlea would all have gone over.

Mr DEAN - They have.

Mr WHITE - They would all be managed by CHL, that is correct.

Mr DEAN - There are some remaining ones in some of the areas. I need to have a closer look in and around some of the other neighbourhoods.

Mr WHITE - It certainly would be with a case where you have adjoining neighbourhoods such as Newnham being fairly close to Mowbray.

Mr DEAN - Yes.

Mr WHITE - Mowbray is part of CHL. Newnham is managed by Housing Tas still. They may be on the other side of the street or something like that, a different management.

Mr DEAN - Is that going to change in the long-term or is that the way it is going to continue, with Housing Tasmania on this side of the street and CHL on that side?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Better Housing Futures is over 10 years. That was a requirement of the federal government to transfer 35 per cent of stock to community housing providers, so we have achieved that target. We are the first state to do so. Community Housing Limited at the moment has 1117 houses. 96 per cent of all stock they could sign up in that area is signed up to them. That is actually the highest ratio in the state.

A lot of the feedback from tenants is that they actually have been very happy with the services provided by Community Housing Limited, which is why they have had such a high success rate of people signing up to have services provided by them.

CHAIR - The Home Share Tasmania program, the opportunity to purchase the home, can we have an update before we go to Mr Willie, then back to Ms Armitage.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes. The home shares are going very well. We are -

CHAIR - Just some numbers would be good.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes. Since the start of the Affordable Housing Action Plan, we have assisted 94 households into home ownership through home shares. We also have Streets Ahead, another program we offer to assist low-income Tasmanians to purchase Housing Tasmanian properties. That can be for tenants who are in those properties as well as low-income earners to

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actually get it put into their own home. Since the start of the Affordable Housing Action Plan there have been 80 people going to home ownership.

CHAIR - How do you know which one to apply for? Do you apply to Housing Tasmania and then they direct you? In the case of Mr Dean's constituent, will it go to Homeshare or go to Streets Ahead?

Mr DEAN - Or if CHL are managing their property say to CHL, 'Look, I am in a position now where I would like to buy my property'?

Mrs PETRUSMA - They can do that.

Mr DEAN - They can? Right.

Mrs PETRUSMA - They can. If they have managed to get a job and they want to actually move into home ownership, they can approach CHL to see if that particular property is for sale. Not all properties are for sale, especially if it is one we have just built brand new.

Mr DEAN - I understand that.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Under our asset management process an older -

CHAIR - If it is tired -

Mrs PETRUSMA - If it is tired and would need a lot of work, but they are willing to take on the house and invest in it themselves, then there is properties we would consider.

Mr DEAN - In this case it would seem they have been living in it for a long time, and they simply say, 'This is my home. My circumstances have changed. I am on my feet,' they would then say, 'Okay.'

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes. Contact CHL and then CHL would usually contact us to see what can be done.

Mr DEAN - Thank you.

Mr WILLIE - Minister, how accurate is the housing register?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The figures I read out were from yesterday.

Mr WILLIE - You are confident that is an accurate figure?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes, the Director of Housing said it is an accurate figure.

Mr WILLIE - So the housing register does not need to be reconciled?

Mr WHITE - Explain what you mean by that, sorry.

Mr WILLIE - It was raised with me that there was potentially an issue with the housing register and it may need to be updated, that there could be issues with it.

Mr WHITE - What we have is, as you would be aware, people who wish to apply to come on to the housing register come through Housing Connect. They are assessed and then they are prioritised based on their need. That list is then shared across both Housing Tasmania and the community housing providers involved in Better Housing Futures who must allocate tenancies from that list.

Prior to the housing management system coming online in November of last year, organisations had to manually then take the client off the register if they housed them. There were instances where that was not done, so actually what it meant was we had more people listed on the register because it had not been worked through. That was the case before.

With the housing management system coming online, that has automated the process so it is actually now the data that comes in the door at Housing Connect, which goes into SHIP is fed into the housing management system, which prioritises the clients. The organisations that draw from that list effectively have live access into the register. When they allocate a property to you, you then come off that register automatically.

The other area though is what we would say is the review of the register as people's needs change. You might have turned up six months ago at Housing Connect. Subsequent to that, you got a job, you got a home, et cetera, so therefore technically you do not need to be on the register. We have been working through a process with that and Housing Connect over the last few months working through the applicants on the register, to check whether their needs are still there and where they remain. As a result of that, some people have come off the register and that has identified some of those people who have been housed, say by one of the other providers, who have had their needs met.

In terms of the accuracy of the register, it is accurate for now. It is an ongoing process to keep up as people's needs change with ensuring that the register reflects an accurate view of need at a point in time.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It also depends on the tenants contacting Housing Connect to keep us updated of their current circumstances.

Mr WHITE - That is correct.

Mr WILLIE - In those instances where you are seeking to update applications, is Housing Tasmania writing to people asking them to reapply?

Mr WHITE - Yes, we have been going through a process of contacting the clients to give them time to essentially say 'yes, I am still in need' or, in some cases those people need a reassessment. In some cases it was, 'Yes, I am still waiting, my circumstances have not changed, everything is the same'. That means they stay on the register. In some cases their circumstances might have changed. They may now be homeless. They may have had a separation and other things that occurred. In those situations they are asked to go back to Housing Connect for a reassessment. They still stay on the register but they would go back for a reassessment. Some of those people may change their category of need.

Where people then do not reply to that after a certain period of time, we follow up with a secondary letter, an SMS or an email because often we have that contact as well, they may be taken

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off the register if they fail to respond. If that was someone who inadvertently, let us just say might have been away or might have been sick and came back a few weeks after that and said, 'I have just seen this letter, I still need housing', they would come back on to the register with no detriment to their ranking as part of that process.

Mr WILLIE - What is the time frame for them to respond?

Mr WHITE - Typically about a month. We give them four weeks from the letter to respond. After two weeks or so we will contact them again, and if we have not hear anything by the end of that four-week period, they would be treated as, 'Okay, they come off the register'. If they came back within, say, a month or so of that and said 'I was away' or there was some reasonable reason why they did not have that thing, it would be no problem in coming back on.

Mr WILLIE - Have you had any instances where people have been taken off the register and some time has passed before they have realised?

Mr WHITE - We have not as yet, because that process has only just been happening over the last few months. We have not had any situations as yet. We have made it very clear if the person, for whatever reason, was not contactable, and the circumstances still warrant being on the register, et cetera, they would not be worse off in the event of not being able to respond to us at that particular time.

Mr WILLIE - Minister, if you are returned to government, can you rule out handing over any more freehold titles?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I am never going to rule anything in or out. It is under our Affordable Housing Action Plan, there are no more titles to be transferred to the community housing stock leverage. The community housing providers, if that is what you are asking.

Mr WILLIE - So it is a possibility you could hand over more freehold titles?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I am not going to rule anything in or out, but under our four year Affordable Housing Action Plan, there are no more titles going to be transferred to community housing providers.

Mr WILLIE - Does the Government have any plans to expand the Better Housing Futures leaseholds?

Mrs PETRUSMA - With Better Housing Futures, as I said before, we have met our 35 per cent target. The 35 per cent has been reached now, and we are going to see that bed down how that performs over time. That was a 10-year plan and three years down the track now, so we are waiting to see how it goes.

Ms ARMITAGE - I notice \$18.2 million allocated for housing programs with \$1.5 million for a new Hobart women's shelter. With the entirety of the \$1.5 million is establishing a new women's shelter in Hobart, is it the building of the shelter or managing the shelter?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The total project is actually \$4 million for the Hobart Women's Shelter that gets completed in December this year.

Ms ARMITAGE - So it is actually for building?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes, it is a totally brand new Hobart women's shelter. It has had a 37 per cent increase in capacity. It is a \$4 million project.

Ms ARMITAGE - How many beds?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Fifteen units with 64beds.

Ms ARMITAGE - Do you have any numbers of women throughout the state that are in need in Hobart, Launceston, Devonport, Burnie and surrounds, for shelters?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Our statistics say about 15.5 per cent of people who go to housing connector report family violence is their primary need and homelessness. We have a number of different shelters throughout the state but we also have 15.5 per cent of clients sought assistance with domestic and family violence as the main reason.

We have another program called Rapid Rehousing. It is a program to get 50 houses available for women and their children or otherwise it could be used for the perpetrator, so the women and children could stay in the home and the perpetrator has to leave the house. With that program, we are up to 46 of the 50 houses now, so that program is going well. That allows us to have houses in different locations around the state.

Ms ARMITAGE - Are you purchasing those privately or out of your own stock?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is with rentals, so it allows us flexibility. They are shelters like the Hobart Women's Shelter, we are not going to disclose the location for obvious reasons. The advantage of rapid rehousing is the locations can be changeable, so if a perpetrator gets to know that is the location of where the house is, it allows us to move it. It is not a permanent building owned by us, we can actually change it around the state and have different location. The aim of rapid rehousing is to have the houses close to police and services so there is increased safety and security measures in place.

Mr WILLIE - Housing is a continuum and Airbnb is relatively new. Is the Government looking at what sort of effect that has had on the housing continuum? Is any study being done or data being analysed?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Concerns have been raised by the sector over Airbnb's impact on the rental market. There are a large number of new hotel accommodation rooms coming online soon, which is expected to decrease the need for homesharing accommodation and that will enable more properties to come back into the rental market. I note that Labor supports Airbnb. It is something the Government is continuing to take into account alongside other policy considerations. We will continue to monitor the developments and impacts of innovations in the visitor accommodation market, including the impacts on the long-term rental market.

Mr WILLIE - Are you tracking data?

Mrs PETRUSMA - There are a lot of new hotel accommodation rooms coming online that are expected to decrease demand for homesharing accommodation. Those new hotel rooms could be

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effective in your policy of wanting to turn hotel rooms into hospital beds. That could also affect rentals in the future.

Mr WILLIE - That works very well in other jurisdictions, Mrs Petrusma. Is the Government looking at this comprehensively?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Labor supports Airbnb as a policy.

Mr WILLIE - I am not saying we do not. I am asking you whether you are looking at this and the effect it is having.

Mrs PETRUSMA - We will continue to take other policy considerations into account. We will continue to monitor the development and impacts of innovations in the visitor accommodation market, including impacts on the long-term rental market. I am focused on delivering under the Affordable Housing Strategy, which is to deliver options for 1600 families and over 900 new homes.

CHAIR - Supplementary to that, are you talking about the MACq 01 facility? That is not low in market, by any means.

Mrs PETRUSMA - There are about a couple of thousand hotel rooms expected.

CHAIR - In the major population areas?

Mrs PETRUSMA - In major areas in Tasmania over the next few years. There is quite a substantial number of new hotel rooms to be coming on line. That is expected to decrease the demand for the homesharing economy.

CHAIR - You think the people who use Airbnb will transfer to that type of accommodation?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Hotel operators are definitely hoping they will, to make their hotels viable.

CHAIR - Most of those new ones appear to be more high end. I am comfortable where I stay, so I have not looked at many other options.

Mr DEAN - This question was raised by dads in the Ravenswood area. They only have two-day access but they are not entitled to a two bedroom or plus house. They are only welcome to a single bedroom house. They are saying, and I agree with them, it is discriminatory and it should no longer apply if that position is in place. What is the answer there?

CHAIR - Is there a policy?

Mr WHITE - There are policies around bedroom entitlements. Ours would not discriminate between male or female as it concerns a parent. It would come down to access days. I do not have the specifics, but if what I heard was two days a week, is that correct?

Mr DEAN - Yes, two days a week, dads who only have two days access to children are not entitled to a two or more bedroom house.

Mr WHITE - In reality there is flexibility in those allocation policies. Again, it might be something we would take up with CHL. In that area, for example, of Ravenswood, there is not

much stock that would be one-bedroom stock, to my knowledge. I would have thought there would be flexibility in allocating some of those people to a two bedroom home. I would be happy to raise that with CHL.

Mr DEAN - Can you take that up? That is great.

Mr WHITE - Yes.

CHAIR - I will move now to 6.1, which is Child Services System Management.

Output group 6

Children services system management

6.1 Children services system management -

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you Chair. The National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Tasmanian representative Trista Cocker suggests funding should be focused on preventing issues before they arise. What is the Government investing in long-term prevention strategies to help keep young people out of the child protection system?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Last year the Government announced \$20.6 million to bring about a whole redesign of child protection services, Strong Families, Safe Kids. One of the initiatives is to invest in intensive family engagement services. Of the \$20.6 million, we are going to invest \$1.5 million for the short-term purchase of intensive family engagement services. We are about to approach the non-government sector to seek proposals and pending the outcome of this process a panel of providers will be formed.

Intensive family engagement services they engage assertively with families on a voluntary basis and provide parents with a clear understanding of the seriousness of the situation. For example, that the removal of the child will be likely unless they engage with services to reduce the risk to the child. The relevant providers will work intensively with the family and other key stakeholders and supports to overcome personal and/or environmental barriers to safety. It will also build the strength, capacity and protections required for families to provide a consistent, safe and nurturing home environment.

The long-term intention of this service is to reduce the number of families requiring statutory intervention, as in placement in out of home care, through individually funded packages. They will be tailored to meet the needs of the family and can provide up to 20 hours of in-home support to the family. For example, a family might need; parent education, help with nutrition, help with transport access to take the children to school, drug and alcohol counselling, anger management, respite care and a raft of other services. This is to be flexible, based around the specific needs of each family.

Ms ARMITAGE - Is there a shortage of safe housing for vulnerable children?

Mrs PETRUSMA - What do you mean by 'safe housing'?

Ms ARMITAGE - I am referring to an ABC article on 29 May, 'Child safety officers fear for sibling groups at risk because of safe housing shortage'.

Mrs PETRUSMA - We have providers that offer to look after sibling groups. There are organisations that provide specific care for sibling groups to keep sibling groups together.

Ms ARMITAGE - Is there currently a shortage of this housing?

Mrs PETRUSMA - We usually go with a foster carer; the housing is not the issue. We assist families with large sibling groups. Earlier this year we had a very large sibling group. It was a sibling group of nine children and we searched for an appropriate property on the rental market. We wanted to keep that sibling group together. We found a large enough property that we could rent for the foster carers to help keep that sibling group together.

Ms ARMITAGE - The departmental data shows that in the north of the state 40 per cent of officers have case loads above their trigger point - 20 per cent in the north-west and 19 per cent in the south. How is this being addressed?

Mrs PETRUSMA - In regard to current caseloads, the daily average open intake cases per intake worker is 20. That is a decrease from last year, which was 20.4. The daily average open response cases per response FTE is 6.6, which is less than last year at 7.3, and the daily average children per case management work FTE is 18.8, which is less than last year which was 19.2.

Ms ARMITAGE - Are we addressing the issues though? They may have been less, but they are still above the trigger points.

Mrs PETRUSMA - The open intake cases, that is where it is at, the response is at 6.6 and case management is at 18.8 instead of 15. In the north-west we know there is increased case load, what the Deputy Secretary has done is employ three extra above the establishment. We are also putting in a new co-manager position in place on the north-west coast, because the current manager has worked across two sites, both Devonport and Burnie. The new co-manager will be based at Devonport to ease that workload. We are putting on three extra staff on the current establishment to address increased demand.

Ms ARMITAGE - Are there increased demands in the north because the north obviously had 40 per cent of officers with a higher case loads? Did I miss that?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It was the north-west we had the problem, not the north.

CHAIR - Minister, it has been suggested you have a very stringent appraisal and reporting system in place, but there has been some suggestion the back room may be performing well, but the front line services are lacking. It is following from the member for Launceston's question. Are you confident the processes in place now to address these matters are going to change community perception?

Mrs PETRUSMA - You are talking about child protection? There is a whole redesign of child protection. We know child protection across Australia is under increasing demand, increasing pressures. That is why last year we implemented our whole redesign of child protection services. The child protection redesign is to put in place a new and advice and referral service at the front end. To decrease the demand at the back end you need to decrease the demand at the front end.

That advice and referral service will be where people can ring up and about 90 per cent of the calls to child protection are not a child protection issue. Someone rings up and says my 17-year-

old's boyfriend showed her an inappropriate magazine. What can I do about it? Or a grandparent could ring up say my 16-year-old grandson swore at me. What can I do about it? They are not child protection concerns. Our advice and referral service will say that is not a child safety issue, it is a child wellbeing issue. We can refer you to appropriate services for advice. By decreasing that front end constantly dealing with calls not in regards to child protection or child safety we can let child safety officers focus on what they do best, which is looking after children who genuinely need Child Safety Services.

Mr WILLIE - A supplementary to the member for Launceston's questions. How many Child Safety Services staff are on leave have been allocated caseloads, and what are those caseloads?

Mrs PETRUSMA - They are reallocated.

Mr WILLIE - So there are no staff on leave with caseloads?

Ms EASTON-BRIGGS - When that happens, and of course it does happen with planned and unplanned sick leave, those cases are allocated to other members of the team and team leaders and child safety managers often take those cases on as well so they are not left sitting.

Mr WILLIE - When those team leaders and case managers take on those caseloads, how long a period is it for.

Ms EASTON-BRIGGS - Often for the time that person is on sick leave. We are utilising our resources quite creatively. We are moving resources around the state to be able to ensure that those case loads are managed really well and that the children are seen as they are needed to.

Mr WILLIE - If someone is on maternity leave, would those case loads be re-allocated to a team leader or would they be re-allocated to another -

Ms EASTON-BRIGGS - Staff that are on maternity leave are actually back-filled.

Mrs PETRUSMA - We back-fill positions. It is a policy that was not in place when we came into Government, but that is the position that we took, that we would back-fill those positions. We do back-fill people who are on long service leave and who are on maternity leave.

Mr WILLIE - I was going to ask that, but you interrupted me. The next question I have is: when children are assessed as low risk, is a notification recorded for them?

Ms EASTON-BRIGGS - The assessment process leads to a notification, yes. It depends on the threshold. I am not quite sure what is in your mind in terms of what 'low risk' means in the threshold process, but -

Mr WILLIE - Effectively, a child could be assessed as low risk and a notification would not be recorded?

Ms EASTON-BRIGGS - If there was a phone call, as the minister was pointing out before some of those examples, then that would not be recorded necessarily, but it does depend on the context and the circumstances of each individual.

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Mrs PETRUSMA - If somebody rang up and alleged that a child had been hit or had been assaulted by a father, it is counted as a notification because there is a child safety concern.

Ms EASTON-BRIGGS - Yes, that is right.

Mrs PETRUSMA - As I said before, if it is 'My grandson swore at me', that is not a child safety concern, so that is not recorded as a notification because it is not anything to do with Child Protection.

Mr DEAN - It could be.

Mrs PETRUSMA - If grandma then disclosed other things that were going on - but a lot of people ring Child Protection as an advice service. That is why we are going to set up an advice and referral service, which is going to be the heart of our Child Protection redesign, so that people can ring the service and actually get advice. If they need to, they can be referred to community sector providers. If the case reaches our threshold of risk, they will be referred straight into Child Safety Services.

Mr WILLIE - I might leave these for the next line item, I think.

CHAIR - Thank you. We are going to move to 7.1, which is Children's Services.

Output Group 7 - Children's Services -

Mr FINCH - We see there is a decrease in Children's Services output. It primarily reflects the transfer of the Child Health and Parenting Services to the THS at the beginning of the year. What was the thinking behind that?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes. The ANMF had requested that because nurses who are working under Child Safety Services cannot access salary packaging and the benefits they get under the Tasmanian Health Service. Also, there were more professional development opportunities available for them under the THS, for example, if they come under Women's and Children's Services, there are opportunities for them to work in paediatric wards - there are different areas they can work in, and also to increase their professional development. There was a lot better alignment with them to be under the THS in line with Women's and Children's Services than it was to be under Children and Youth Services. That was at the request of the ANMF.

Mr FINCH - A successful change then?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Very much so. There has not been a peep out of them, I do not think. They have been very happy.

Mr FINCH - That was offset by some additional funding, wasn't it?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The funding transferred with them.

Mr FINCH - Yes.

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Mrs PETRUSMA - The \$12 million that was allocated to Children and Youth Services went to the THS with them. They have all been very delighted with the change because if they get salary packaging, that is an extra - what? \$6000 to \$9000 in their pay packet. They are a lot happier where they are.

Mr FINCH - Wasn't there some sort of out-of-home care additional support funding that went with that?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, it was just the Child Health and Parenting Service. That was it.

Mr FINCH - It probably got a bit mixed up with my reading of what was going on there.

CHAIR - It has been a while since you have been doing any face to face parenting.

Mr FINCH - That is right. The grand parenting goes on though.

The Government demolished the Early Years Foundation. What has replaced that and has it taken up the functions and the research of the Early Years Foundation?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is a question for the Premier. That has nothing to do with the Department of Health and Human Services, sorry.

Mr FINCH - Right, okay, but I was thinking with children's services that was really...

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, that was a separate function of DPAC. They have the coalition to replace it now the Commissioner for Children is on and Elizabeth Daly, but it has never had anything to do with Department of Health and Human Services.

Mr FINCH - Okay, thanks.

Mr WILLIE - The Youth at Risk strategy paper has been released. How much input did NOETIC have through their consultation paper for youth justice options which was an \$80 000 consultation?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Their relative paper was to look at custodial detention options so that did have some input into the risk, but that was to form a whole body of work on its own in regards to custodial youth justice options. Youth at Risk strategy had over 46 consultation sessions were attended by more than 274 individuals and their construction was of this strategy.

Mr WILLIE - I know, I went to some of them. Action 3 says investigate and integrate in a flexible therapeutic custodial youth justice system. Is that not what NOETIC did?

Mrs PETRUSMA - NOETIC did look at doing work on that and there is more work a body of work that now needs to be done in regards to that body of work.

Mr WILLIE - Has the NOETIC paper been to Cabinet?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, it has not.

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Mr DEAN - I am not sure if it fits here or under the Commissioner for Children, but it was that question I asked -

Mrs PETRUSMA - Sorry, just to clarify, Cabinet will be shortly considering the NOETIC paper so it will shortly be before Cabinet.

Mr DEAN - The question I asked of the Premier yesterday he said it sat with you or your area and was in relation to volunteers and those that registered with Volunteering Tasmania. Volunteers coming into emergency situations working with children, do they need a children's clearance certificate to be able to work with children. That is volunteers registered with Volunteering Tasmania and where they are brought into emergency situations, want to work with the emergency occurring and they are going to be working with children, what are the requirements of those volunteers.

Mrs PETRUSMA - So the Premier said it sat under me, did he?

Mr DEAN - He said I should ask you the question.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Okay, because it actually sits under the Department of Justice.

Mr DEAN - This is the obvious way of getting out of answering a question. The Premier refers it to you, you refer it back to another department.

CHAIR - And we have already had the Minister for Justice.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Working with children has never sat under the Department of Health and Human Services. It is the Attorney-General who has the Working with Children chair.

Mr DEAN - I will get an answer to it.

CHAIR - You will endeavour to get that answer before next year.

Mrs PETRUSMA - So the question is in regard to volunteers. I believe it is all on the Department of Justice website as to who requires - when I filled in my own Working with Children check, there was a questionnaire to take you through and it tells you whether you need to get a Working with Children check.

Mr DEAN - The Commissioner for Children might be able to answer it maybe.

CHAIR - We will try. Thank you, Mr Dean.

Mr WILLIE - There is a lot of work being done in the child protection redesign. How is the training for mandatory reporters going?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The training for mandatory reporting? You mean as in people having to do mandatory reporting to Child Protection?

Mr HEALEY - The training of the entire system on how to interact with the new Children's Advice and Referral Alliance has not commenced yet.

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, this is in mandatory reporting.

Mr HEALEY - Yes. Our intention would be to be educating all parts of the system on reporting and interacting with the new Advice and Referral Alliance, which will provide some new avenues for reporting on issues of child safety and child welfare.

Mrs PETRUSMA - When you are talking about mandatory training, if you are a teacher you should know that you have to do mandatory reporting. That is something that the Education department also does. Mandatory reporting is in the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act. It is by legislation that if you are a teacher, you should know that you have to do mandatory reporting. I am unsure exactly what you are asking.

Mr WILLIE - Would you like me to respond?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes.

Mr WILLIE - Thank you. It was mentioned in the child protection paper that there would be training of mandatory reporters. I am asking the question: has that happened? It sounds like, according to Matt, that has not commenced yet.

Mr HEALEY - The child wellbeing teams are being set up in Education, so they are also starting to build greater awareness of how to deal with issues of child wellbeing, which includes child safety. The advice and referral service model, which is now out for people to understand and for us to start to implement, helps us to work with teachers so that we can, over time, increase their ability to report on not only issues of child safety but broader issues of child wellbeing, and get better outcomes for children. The short answer is, the sort of detail and training that is envisaged in the longer-term implementation of the redesign has not commenced yet because it needs to be done in the context of the new Advice and Referral Alliance. There is no point training teachers in how to report to an institution that we are just now implementing. The model, I think, was released yesterday for people to start to absorb and understand how they will interact with it.

Mr WILLIE - Teachers are just one category.

Mr HEALEY - Teachers are just one category. Teachers are a great example of the need to understand the broader wellbeing of the child and not just look at it through the narrow focus of mandatory reporting and child safety.

Ms ARMITAGE - How many young people do you have at Ashley at this current time and what is their age range?

Mrs PETRUSMA - There are 15 young people in Ashley today.

Ms ARMITAGE - Male and female?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I welcome to the table Ms Ginna Webster, Deputy Secretary, Children and Youth Services.

Ms WEBSTER - We have 15 as of today; three female, 12 male, aged from 14 to 18 years.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Can we break it down into detainees?

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Ms WEBSTER - We have three who are sentenced, and the rest are on remand.

Ms ARMITAGE - For those on remand, do we know for how long are they likely to be on remand?

Ms WEBSTER - I could get that information. There would be various court dates.

Ms ARMITAGE - Right, so it is basically on remand awaiting the court case. It is probably within the weeks.

Ms WEBSTER - It would be weeks but I could not answer that.

Ms ARMITAGE - What would the staff levels be at the current time?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The average FTE profile for Ashley is 67.

Ms ARMITAGE - Three sentenced and the others may or may not be sentenced.

Ms WEBSTER - The three are sentenced. The others are on remand.

Ms ARMITAGE - So the other 12, when they get to court, may be released having served their time or served enough time, which is possible, and we have 67 FTEs. How many actual people is that?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is the head count - 67 FTEs, full time equivalents.

Mr DEAN - Any on sick leave or stress leave?

Mrs PETRUSMA - There are 5.8 on leave at the moment.

Mr DEAN - What sort of leave?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Worker's compensation.

CHAIR - Do we have a break up? Is it stress, or is it physical?

Ms WEBSTER - Sorry, I do not. Not on me.

CHAIR - I believe there was a report. It may have been earlier this year or towards the end of last year. We got down to something like five residents at Ashley. Obviously there has been a significant increase then?

Ms ARMITAGE - We are down to three really. Three that were sentenced.

Mrs PETRUSMA - The daily average is 9.9. It fluctuates. The daily average has fluctuated between 7.9 to like the 15 today. It fluctuates all over the place.

Ms ARMITAGE - Just breaking down the numbers here. The three sentenced are males?

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Ms WEBSTER - I would have to confirm that.

Ms ARMITAGE - I was wondering, so of the 67 FTEs, they all work across the whole area, or some specifically in the female area and some specifically in the male area?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Sometimes we do not have any females at Ashley. It has five wings at Ashley.

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes, I have been out there.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is why the staff do not have to be specialised to the female wing. They can work in other areas.

Ms ARMITAGE - I appreciate that, but if you only have three males in there I was wondering if you would have staff that can work across the other areas when you do have females there.

CHAIR - Thank you. Mr Finch, you want to get a clarification before we move this area on a question already asked.

Mr FINCH - Output group 7, Children's Services, whether I frame my question differently as it might not have been understood, or you had that information you gave to us about the ANF which I have no reference here, so it came as a surprise to me, the \$113.5 million diminished down to \$106.36 million. I will read to you the note I had because you seemed to be surprised when I mentioned the out of home care reference. It came from the note on page 101. It is note 9 which is \$113.5 million down to \$106.36 million:

The decrease in the Children's Services Output, primarily reflects the transfer of the Child Health and Parenting Service to the THS on 1 January 2017, partially offset by additional funding provided for Out of Home Care - Additional Support.

I would like from you some clarification of numbers and how much of that additional funding was provided?

Mrs PETRUSMA - So \$12 million has gone to Child Health and Parenting Services. But if we look at the Out of Home Care additional support, an extra \$6.55 million has gone back in.

CHAIR - That is why the reference there is to Out of Home Care.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right. The decreases are offset by additional funding provided for out of home care.

CHAIR - That is why it is not reduced by \$12 million.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right.

Mr FINCH - It did not mention anything about the ANF, where that transfer occurred and it went to the THS? That was information I did not have.

CHAIR - Before we get to the Children's Commissioner -

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Ms ARMITAGE - I have one supplementary question regarding Ashley and it goes back to last year. I notice that last year it was funded for 66 staff. I wondered what has required that extra staff member when their numbers are so low?

CHAIR - Probably five off on stress leave.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Last year we announced we were putting in \$300 000 to undertake a change management process at Ashley. The new position is the change manager at Ashley, who is doing a wonderful job at making sure that Ashley is a therapeutic environment -

Ms ARMITAGE - What exactly does the change manager do?

CHAIR - That is not the whole salary component?

Mrs PETRUSMA - They are there for programs and they run many things. We would all be putting our hands up to become a change manager otherwise.

The change manager is there to assist staff and residents. Since commencing in the role, he has done ongoing training surrounding risk management. Non-violent crisis intervention training has been provided, as well as training for youth workers and a leadership team across a range of areas; trauma-informed care, resilience through change and safety, as well as enhancing skills in de-escalation. He has been doing an update of the practice manual, more active communication with staff regarding continuous improvement opportunities and resident complaint processes have been strengthened. He is providing supervision of staff who have completed or are completing a University of Tasmania unit entitled Supervision in Practice using professional administrative support education, or PAS. This is to assist staff to develop an integrated practice framework to their work.

He has also put in place a residents' feedback forum to allow young people to put forward ideas on how to improve the environment at Ashley. More therapeutic programs both within and outside the centre and on the farm have been put in place. He has initiated more constructive use of youth leisure time, factored into daily activities to relieve boredom and reduce the potential for confrontation. He has been working extensively with the Commissioner for Children to enhance the complaint investigation process and to gather his feedback on policies and procedures.

Ms ARMITAGE - It is not \$300 000 a year though, is it?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, it is \$300 000 for the change management process.

Mr DEAN - Do we have some figures on complaints made against staff by residents, and how many assaults have been recorded?

CHAIR - Both ways?

Mr DEAN - Yes, both ways.

CHAIR - Can we have those, minister, at a later time?

Mrs PETRUSMA - In regard to the assaults, the data is collected on a yearly basis. I can give you the data for the last few years: 2012-13, resident on resident assaults was 12, and resident on

staff was 10; 2013-14, it was 13 resident on resident assaults, and 10 resident on staff assaults; 2014-15, it was nine resident on resident, and nine assaults on staff assaults; and in 2015-16, it was 13 resident on resident, and 10 resident on staff assaults. So it stays pretty static.

CHAIR - Thank you. We will not have to take that at a later time after all.

Output group 8

Independent children's and young person's review service

8.1 Office of the commissioner for children and young people

Mr WILLIE - Minister, has any member of your staff been given a directive to a statutory office that would be seen to obstruct or hinder their obligations?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I was asked a question on that this morning. We refute the suggestion.

The commissioner made the following statement –

I continue to hold regular discussions with the minister, which includes verbal and written advice where appropriate, including sensitive issues. [TBC]

Mr WILLIE - Would you like to read out the whole statement please?

Mrs PETRUSMA - This is the draft -

It is and has always been my approach that for me to effectively perform my role as Commissioner for Children and Young People, my conversations and discussions with the minister, whoever that minister might be, regardless of who is in government, in performing my functions I am guided by the necessity – [TBC]

Mr WILLIE - Hang on, you missed a few words.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is the trouble. He has missed a couple of words out. That is what I am saying. What he sent -

Mr WILLIE - So, 'who is in government' are confidential?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Sorry?

Mr WILLIE - That phrase -[TBC]

... regardless of who is in government ... are confidential ...

You missed 'are confidential'.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is not in what I have been sent. That is what I am saying. I am missing a few words. He stated that he, '... continues to hold regular discussions with the minister, which includes verbal and written advice where appropriate, including sensitive issues'. [TBC]

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr WILLIE - You have missed another line.

Mrs PETRUSMA - It goes on -

... when performing my functions I am guided by the necessity to act in a way which promotes the well-being and best interest of children and young people in Tasmania.[TBC]

He is confirming that he continues to hold regular discussions with me, which includes verbal and written advice where appropriate, including sensitive issues.

Mr WILLIE - He is not confirming or denying any directive from your office -

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Commissioner for Children and I have regular conversations and meetings, emails, text messages and phone calls. He is in regular communication, including in writing. As far as I can see, I have regular communication with the Commissioner for Children in many different forms.

Mr WILLIE - Yes. That is not my question. Has there been a directive from a member of your staff to the Children's Commissioner's Office, a directive that says, 'do not give advice in writing', presumably so that in a public forum you would not have to acknowledge that advice.

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Commissioner for Children has written to me with advice over the last few years. He details it in his annual report. At no stage have I ever suggested to him that he should not write to me on any matter.

Mr WILLIE - I am not asking you if you have. A member of your staff?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Commissioner for Children stated in his annual report that he writes to me on a regular basis and he is still writing to me on a regular basis.

Mr WILLIE - I am asking you if a member of your staff has given a directive to the Children's Commissioner via email -

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Commissioner has stated himself that he still writes to me and does it in different formats. All of my staff have regular meetings with him as well. We sit down and talk about issues. I am not sure where you are coming at, but I and the Commissioner for Children have regular meetings. He writes to me, emails me, texts me, and we have regular communication in different formats.

Mr WILLIE - I am asking about your staff, minister, not you.

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Commissioner has a meeting.

Mr WILLIE - Has one of your staff members -

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Commissioner has a meeting with all my staff.

Mr WILLIE - No, not at meetings. I am asking if a directive was given via email to the Children's Commissioner's Office -

Mrs PETRUSMA - You are saying an email was sent to the Commissioner for Children?

Mr WILLIE - I am asking you.

Mrs PETRUSMA - No email has been sent to the Commissioner.

Mr WILLIE - No, not an email. I am asking whether a directive in an email was sent to the Children's Commissioner, directing the Children's Commissioner to stop giving advice to you and your office and your members of staff in writing?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I am saying that the Commissioner for Children - there has been no directive from -

Mr WILLIE - Do you deny that? That did not happen?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I am saying the Commissioner for Children still regularly communicates with me in writing, and I expect him to continue writing -

Mr WILLIE - Do you deny that happened?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Commissioner for Children has meetings with my staff. He communicates with my staff in writing and with me in writing, and verbal, all forms of communication.

Mr WILLIE - You are not addressing my question, minister.

CHAIR - Thank you. I do not think this is going anywhere.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I am not sure what you are actually trying to allege.

CHAIR - My question is, where is the Commissioner for Children?

Mr WILLIE - She will not address the question.

CHAIR - Where is he? He does normally come. He did not come last year? Apologies.

Mr WILLIE - I still have further questions.

CHAIR - Yes. I am just saying this particular question is not going anywhere.

Mr WILLIE - I can change the line of questioning.

CHAIR - I know it appears the minister is saying one thing and you are asking the same question. Let us move on.

Mr WILLIE - I will change the line of questioning. In the other place today, you said, 'The Children's Commissioner still contacts me to talk about sensitive issues.' The fact you use 'still', does that acknowledge this directive was given?

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mrs PETRUSMA - Mr Willie, the Commissioner for Children and I have very regular communication and regular meetings. At least on a monthly basis, we meet up and have meetings. In between he writes letters. He has regular conversations with members of my staff. I am not going to let you try to change the words uttered this morning. What I am saying to you is that my office and the Commissioner for Children work very closely together. We are working very closely on implementing the reform in Out-of-Home Care, his seven recommendations.

Mr WILLIE - You categorically ruled it out this morning. Why will you not do it this afternoon?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I have already answered the question this morning, and I am not going to keep on answering the question.

Mr WILLIE - Do you deny that has happened?

Mrs PETRUSMA - This morning I was asked whether anyone in writing said to the Commissioner - but nobody has done that. I am saying to you the Commissioner for Children is still communicating to me in writing. He still communicates with me in a lot of different formats.

Mr WILLIE - Are you aware under section 23 of the act, the Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2016 - section 23 states that, 'A person must not obstruct or hinder a person who is performing a function or exercising a power under this act,' and it carries penalty units?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I have never tried to obstruct or hinder the Commissioner for Children.

Mr WILLIE - I am not suggesting you are. I am asking if a member of your staff gave a directive to the Children's Commissioner?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I have never obstructed or hindered the Commissioner for Children with his work.

Mr WILLIE - I will give some context to this, Chair. The Children's Commissioner is an absolute professional, and he has not raised this concern with me. But there are respected people who have raised this with me. I have no reason to doubt the veracity of the allegations. I have tried to test those allegations. I have been unable to do that. I have referred the matter to the Integrity Commission because it is a very serious matter if proven true. I hope, minister, that it is not true, because there could be serious ramifications.

CHAIR - Is there any reason why the Children's Commissioner is not here? We understand he did not come last year.

Mrs PETRUSMA - He has not come to any Estimates.

CHAIR - We have statutory officers come. I am just surprised he is not here. We could have sorted this out. Anyway, we will do some homework on that, minister and decide as a House of the parliament whether that is appropriate for next year's hearings. Any other questions, Mr Willie, as in in this area?

Mr WILLIE - No.

CHAIR - Members, any other questions? If not, I can move to Women's Policy. For anyone who is leaving, on behalf of the committee I thank everyone for their diligence, their hard work and the fact that you did not get a weekend either last weekend, putting all this together. Thank you very much, it is much appreciated.

Minister for Women

Output group 6

Community, sport and recreation

6.5 Women's policy -

Mrs PETRUSMA - I introduce to the table Kate Kent, Executive Director, Communities, Sport and Recreation; Ann Herbert, Manager Policy, Communities, Sport and Recreation; and Brook Teale, Senior Policy Analyst, Communities, Sport and Recreation.

CHAIR - Thank you very much and welcome. Do you have an overview? Is it reasonably brief?

Mrs PETRUSMA - I can make it shorter. The Tasmanian Government is committed to creating a more inclusive Tasmania that empowers and enables women and girls to fully participate in our economic, social, political and community life. To achieve this objective, the Tasmanian Government's agenda for gender equality is focussing on women's leadership and recognition, economic security, safety, and health and wellbeing.

These core priorities are embedded in the Tasmanian Women's Plan 2013-2018, which aims to ensure that government policies and services are responsive to the needs of women and girls, are representative of their views and reduce barriers to their participation.

Next year we will be releasing a new Tasmanian Government Women's Strategy, so this year we will be focussed on developing that strategy, which will be released in early 2018. The new Women's Strategy will include four key priority areas of economic security; safety; leadership, including participation; and health and wellbeing, including women on sport.

Economic security for women will be a key priority area under the new Women's Strategy.

This year we have launched our new Tasmanian Government's website and Facebook page for women at the International Women's Day Breakfast held in Hobart in March 2017. The Women on Boards strategy is going very well. As at 31 May 2017 women hold 55 per cent of the director positions on government business enterprise boards. From a total of 32 director positions, 17 are now held by women, an increase of 10 per cent from August 2015, when the Women on Boards strategy was released. Women now hold 45 per cent of the director positions on state-owned company boards. From a total of 42 director positions, 19 are held by women. This is an increase of 14 per cent from August 2015. All except one government business enterprise board and every state-owned company board has at least two female directors now. The only board with one female is the Tasmanian Irrigation Board but that female is the Chair.

CHAIR - She is running the show anyway.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is it. Across all government boards as at 30 April, women hold 40.3 per cent of all board positions, which is an increase of 19.5 per cent, or 6.5 percentage points from August 2015.

I acknowledge that Ms Armitage was present at the Honour Roll of Women this year, where I had the privilege of acknowledging the outstanding leadership and achievement of 21 women and one women's organisation. It was also great this year to provide funding for various International Women's Day events around the state.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Obviously, those percentages you read out, I would suggest that has met your target as a Government?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, our target is 50 per cent of women across government boards.

CHAIR - So you have 5 per cent more to go on the state owner companies, is that right?

Mrs PETRUSMA - We have 55 per cent on our Government Business Enterprise boards, we have 45 per cent on state owned company boards, and across all government boards we are at 40.3 per cent. That is an increase of 19.5 per cent or 6.5 percentage points from where we were at the start of the strategy. It was at 33.8 per cent when we first came to government.

CHAIR - You have certainly made some progress there.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I have to give the credit to my fellow cabinet members because I do not actually have any government boards, state owned companies or GBEs I could put women on. My fellow male colleagues have embraced the strategy and have been working hard so we can reach our target of 50 per cent of women on boards by 2020.

CHAIR - Minister, does the funding for organisations Women in Agriculture and Rural Youth Tasmania, come under this Budget?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No

CHAIR - They do not. Okay. So Women in Agriculture does not come under there? The recurrent funding then, could we have some sort of break down about what provides for recurrent services? Obviously the policy we understand, but the recurrent services.

Mrs PETRUSMA - The 2017-18 Budget has a total of \$572 000. Employee cost of \$458 000 of that. Operation costs like supplies and consumables is \$39 000 and grants and subsidies are \$75 000. That \$75 000 includes \$50 000 for the cost of scholarships under the Tasmanian Government Board Diversity Governance Scholarship Program. \$8500 for International Women's Day for events sponsorship. The Hobart event was \$4000, the Big Breakfast, held at Wrest Point. The Launceston event is \$2 500 and the north-west event was \$2000. ANROWS, we are a member of Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety, our Tasmanian membership is \$7500. The Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women has an annual allocation of \$7500 and the Tasmanian Women's Council receives \$1500 which is for reimbursement of travel, catering and occasional room hire.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

CHAIR - So the number of women who have been successful for the Government Board Diversity Governance Scholarship Program, the \$50 000, how many recipients do we have for that program?

Mrs PETRUSMA - To date six women have received scholarships for the Company Director's Course and 32 have received scholarships for the Foundations of Directorship Course.

CHAIR - Do all those recipients have to complete those courses? Is that part of the requirement to be funded is they complete them?

Mrs PETRUSMA - It is what our expectation will be.

CHAIR - Do we follow up to make sure they have?

Mrs PETRUSMA - Yes, I have to say just about every single woman has sent me an email at the end of the course, telling me how grateful they are for the difference it has made in their life. We never have a shortage of applicants or people wanting to do it.

CHAIR - For that program, just go onto the website and google women's initiatives or women's support?

Mrs PETRUSMA - The applications for the third year of the program will open in August 2017. We advertise it on women's DPAC notices. It is on our website. We also advertise in the newspapers. I think last year we had over 100 applicants. It was very well oversubscribed. We never have a shortage.

Mr FINCH - It may fit into this area, but it may be for somewhere else. You were able to support the Tornadoes, our women's basketball team in Launceston. I am not sure if the money came from this women's section. I am pleased to report that not only did we finish last year just not managing to get into the grand final, we are third on the ladder this year and - have you heard the news? Lauren Mansfield is off to the United States in the Opals training team and our manager, Jen Heggarty is going on the medical team to India in support of an Australian team. Just those two players, particularly with our junior program, benefited greatly from the support that you were able to give the Tornadoes to make sure that we had that top-up funding to support the development of the Tornadoes. If we had not received it, we might not have been able to have as fulsome a program as we were able to have, and to have the success that we were able to have. I am just happy to report that.

CHAIR - I do not think it is under this area.

Mr FINCH - I will take it back then.

CHAIR - But obviously Kate is very appreciative of that feedback.

Ms KENT - We'll take that one, thank you.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I will accept that. It is very good.

CHAIR - Are you impressed with that, minister?

Mr FINCH - The question is, can it occur again?

Mr DEAN - I wanted to look at the Tasmanian women's plan, Safe at Home, Safe Families, violence against women and their children and how that is all proceeding. You would have been involved with police, minister, in relation to the three-year trialling of electronic monitoring of serious cases of family violence, so what is your position on that and how are we progressing?

I know I have raised this in parliament, you might recall. I raised this exact issue in parliament 12 months ago, 18 months ago and made a fairly big issue of it.

Mrs PETRUSMA - This initiative comes under the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, the honourable Rene Hidding, but the information I can provide is that the Government is implementing a three-year electronic monitoring trial of high-risk family violence perpetrators. This is a new action under Safe Homes-Safe Families which demonstrates our ongoing commitment to hold perpetrators to account and strengthen our legal responses to family violence. The trial will be used to determine whether technology can prevent or reduce incidence of family violence. Total funding for this initiative is \$2.79 million, including a \$1.395 million contribution from the Tasmanian Government and matched funding through the Australian Government Women's Safety Package. This trial will become action 23 under Safe Homes, Safe Families and will commence during the 2017-18 financial year.

Mr DEAN - It is something we all strongly support. I am confident it will be very successful for the security of victims in particular, and that is what it is all about.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is right. I have spoken with a company that came down and they showed us some of the technology. I do not know if it is the technology that has been finally decided on, but it was good how the victim does have the option of voluntarily carrying this small portable device that -

CHAIR - A taser?

Mrs PETRUSMA - No, it is not a taser. If the perpetrator is within a certain range, it goes off or changes colour or buzzes. It looks like a mobile phone. It was actually very interesting about to have that so that they can detect breaches involving approaches made to them.

Mr DEAN - The matter bringing that to a head here was a case in Launceston that I referred to in parliament, where the perpetrator was released. He has been released for a while now and thank goodness at this stage things have gone okay.

CHAIR - Any other questions, Mr Dean?

Mr DEAN - No.

Ms LOVELL - Minister, whilst we recognise there is investment in the area of family violence by the Government in this Budget and work is being done to educate young people through the respectful relationships programs, there is significant evidence that a peer education program for young people would be effective at addressing attitudes and behaviours that contribute to gender-based violence. The Youth Network of Tasmania consulted with many Tasmanian young people on this issue and as a result recommended a pilot peer education program be developed. Women's organisations have also called for education funding to deal with this behavioural change.

Given young people are disproportionately affected by violence, why have the contributions from young people and evidence around the role of education not been considered by the state Government in this budget to help address family violence?

Mrs PETRUSMA - YNOT comes under the Premier's stakeholders. I am not sure what consultation has occurred in regard to that initiative. In regard to SLs we have supported the national campaign to stop violence against women and their children, which is targeted specifically at young people.

There is also an education as the Respectful Relationships Package which is for delivery in all Tasmanian Government schools from kindergarten to Year 12. It includes an extensive range of resources to support schools, communities and individuals to understand why family violence occurs and how to create a culture that promotes respectful relationships for everyone.

That package has been trialled in selected schools in 2016 with positive feedback from stakeholders including students, teachers and parents. It is openly available to all Tasmanian schools and will be implemented in all 196 Tasmanian schools by the end of term 1 in 2018.

It has been allocated \$355 000 over four years under the Safe Homes-Safe Families.

Mr DEAN - There is a lot being done in AFL football for women today. It is wonderful to see young ladies now making AFL grade. There is one in Rocherlea, Daria Bannister, wonderful young girl and absolute mentor for others, particularly in that area. What is your position in relation to this and the supporting of that long term?

Mrs PETRUSMA - My father used to be the football coach for City South and then South Launceston. I remember my mother playing in AFL and played for Old Scotch and Perth. The women's teams used to get together and play. This is going back 40 something years ago. I grew up thinking it was something that was done. I played, but then you realise that other people did not have the opportunity.

Mr DEAN - This is an equaliser. It is a great move to bring women up to that same level and position and given them the opportunity.

Mrs PETRUSMA - In Tasmania, we have gone from zero junior and youth girls' teams in 2015 to 43 junior and youth teams in 2017. That is phenomenal growth in two years. Gone from zero teams to 43 teams. It shows our young junior girls really want to play AFL.

Four Tasmanians have been selected in the first AFL draft. Jessica Gibson, Emma Humphreys and Alyce Gamble. We are working willing to work with the AFL to have our own team. The Premier is very passionate about doing what he can do to look at what partnerships can be put into play.

The Premier has been in contact with both North Melbourne Football Club and the Hawks in regard to this issue.

Mr DEAN - Thank you.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr FINCH - Apologies if I missed a mention of the Tasmanian Women's Plan. An area of the allocation goes to the Tasmanian Women's Plan. Did you mention it before or would you care to now?

Mrs PETRUSMA - In regard to the Tasmanian Women's Plan, I can table the annual progress report.

CHAIR - Thank you very much.

Mrs PETRUSMA - The Tasmanian Women's Plan contains a number of key initiatives and priorities the Government considers important in helping to encourage Tasmanian women and girls. It ensures our policies and services are responsive to the needs of women and girls. It outlines how we are offering a number of different initiatives across Government. They are: key achievement courses; our \$26 million in funding for actions under Safe Homes, Safe Families, Tasmania's family violence action plan; addressing the gender imbalance of Government board membership; the honour roll of women; International Women's Day; it covers a raft of areas.

Mr FINCH - What is the quantum? Do you know of the allocation to the Women's Plan?

Mrs PETRUSMA - That is a whole-of-government initiative. There are initiatives in there, for example, in my area of affordable housing. As you can see, it is whole-of-government. It talks about economic security in women. It outlines what the Department of Education is doing in their area. It outlines, for example, what my area has been doing in regard to elder abuse, what DPIWE are doing for agriculture.

CHAIR - It talks about funding to the Tasmanian women in agriculture, of which I am a member. Not surprisingly, being a girl from the country. It remains at \$20 000 a year. I would hope, as the Minister for Women, you might have that increased to at least \$25 000.

Mrs PETRUSMA - I will have to ask the Treasurer or Mr Rockliff.

CHAIR - They do an amazing job, particularly for women in rural country areas who are often unable to network as much as they would like to. It is a fantastic organisation and I cannot speak highly enough of the work that they do around the state.

If there are no other questions, members can I, on behalf of the committee, thank you for your efforts this afternoon. Thanks to your team, they been a great support. We wish you all the best.

The committee adjourned at 5.58 p.m.