#### Wednesday 8 June 2016 - Estimates Committee A (Hidding)

#### **LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

#### **ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A**

#### Wednesday 8 June 2016

#### **MEMBERS**

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

#### IN ATTENDANCE

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

#### **Department of Police and Emergency Management**

Darren Hine, Secretary DPEM and Commissioner of Police
Scott Tilyard, Deputy Commissioner of Police
Chris Arnol, Chief Officer, TFS
Gavin Freeman, Deputy Chief Officer, TFS
Glenn Frame, Assistant Commissioner of Police
Richard Cowling, Assistant Commissioner of Police
Donna Adams, Deputy Secretary, Business and Executive Services, DPFEM
Nicholas Wilson, Acting Director, State Emergency Service
Scott Wilson-Haffenden, Director, Information Services and Communications Technology
Marijke Harris, Assistant Manager, Finance and Payroll Services, Business and Executive Services

#### **Tasmania Fire Service**

Chris Arnol, Chief Officer Gavin Freeman, Deputy Chief Officer Sandra Whight, Manager, Fuel Reduction Unit

#### **Department of State Growth**

Kim Evans, Secretary Gary Swain, Deputy Secretary Policy and Strategy Allan Garcia, CEO Infrastructure Tasmania Penny Nicholls, General Manager Road User Services Shane Gregory, General Manager State Road Services Glen Dean, Finance Director Lia Morris, Chief Executive of Marine and Safety Tasmania

**Ministerial Office** 

**Richard Wilson**, Chief of Staff **Randolph Wierenga**, Senior Adviser **Carol Jones**, Adviser

The committee met at 9 a.m.

CHAIR (Mr Hall) - Welcome all.

**Mr HIDDING** - Chair, you might notice our acting director of SES is not present today. Can we take it that we give him a leave pass. He is busy fighting floods.

CHAIR - I understand.

**Mr HIDDING** - This reporting period was the first year that the department has operated as an integrated as an integrated police and emergency management organisation with the TFS. Of course there was the name change that took place through the year. It necessitated resigning from my position, and for about three minutes I was not the minister for Police. Now the word 'fire' has been inserted, there are flood-related things that I have now. The department has a new acronym; none of us can say it but we will find a way I am sure.

Family violence is a high priority for the Tasmanian Government; it has been championed personally by the Commissioner of Police. The department is taking a strong lead in addressing family violence and has established the Safe Families Coordination Unit. The unit will be fully operational by 27 June, in a couple of weeks. It brings together the best available information across government to ensure a collaborative approach that supports identified families at risk as soon as possible and that holds perpetrators to account.

Once again, TFS, Tasmanian Police and a number of partner agencies provided critical response to this year's bushfires, an extraordinary event, particularly for the length it went on for. There has been much said about that and there is still a lot of work going on in the background, understanding all the things that happened during that process and from the point of view of everybody learning from it.

In its second year, the fuel reduction burning program demonstrated again the Government's commitment to significantly increasing fuel reduction burning across the state. This year there is a material change in budgets. The \$18 million will be transferred from DPIPWE over to us to support operation of the program in 2016-17 and 2017-18. That is just a move across agencies. A number

of major initiatives were funded by the Government which have been progressed to support Tas Police and to improve policing emergency services in the Tasmanian community.

In response to the 2013 bushfire inquiry, the department continued to focus on insuring all emergency services, including Ambulance Tasmania, work together as effectively as possible.

We are still completely committed to promoting recruitment to build the police service by employing an additional 108, which actually becomes 118 because of five extra officers to deal with the Family Violence Action Plan. We also make progress towards the enhancement of Tasmania Police marine enforcement work with the acquisition of a new police vessel which will be under construction shortly - *PV Cape Wickham*.

In the ESCAD project, the major project will address the replacement of the three separate CAD systems currently operated by police, TFS and Ambulance Tasmania. Police housing is still a major focus for this Government. Funding of \$14 million for the next four years will see the design, manufacture and procurement of up to 95 light and medium tankers, and new fire trucks will play a crucial role in frontline firefighting. This will provide the community with the highest level of protection through the latest and greatest in this equipment, all being built out at Cambridge. If you have an opportunity sometime we would be really pleased to show you over a very smart inhouse, recognised across the nation, very fine fire-truck-building organisation. A lot of fabrication is going on there.

Tasmania Police continues to actively target serious and organised crime, and in particular outlaw motorcycle gangs. As recently as the end of May a joint operation between Tasmania Police and the Australian Federal Police, NAGS - National Anti-Gang Squad - has targeted searches of premises associated with the outlaw motorcycle gangs across the state. The seizures included nine firearms, \$36 000 worth of ice, kilograms of cannabis - just to name a few. There is a clear demonstration of the commitment by Tasmania Police to interrupt this organised crime activity. I want to acknowledge the contribution of the department's police officers, firefighters and State Service employees and particularly the many TFS and SES volunteers. At the moment we have approximately 550 people in orange uniforms out there doing fabulous work, backed up by boots on the ground with Tasmania Fire Service volunteers. Up the north-west coast there were some fatigue issues creeping in because of the length of the issues that were going on.

We were also able to welcome recently Chris Arnol as the new chief fire officer. He is a former Tasmanian who pursued his career in Western Australia to a high level and has come back to take the role of chief fire officer in Tasmania. The department continues to conduct business appropriately and with the highest level of propriety and I am pleased to have this opportunity today to demonstrate how the department has continued to meet its appropriation in a transparent and accountable manner.

**CHAIR** - It has been a very challenging year for police and emergency services because of the natural catastrophes we have had and are still ongoing. Recently I attended a briefing session in Deloraine, held with the fire service and Parks, and a lot of SES personnel were there. The fires at that time were discussed in some detail and about the same time the AFAC - I don't know whether you have had a chance to read the AFAC report - that came out and the personnel had that report at the time. There was quite a lot of discussion, particularly with members of mine and your community who live underneath the Tiers and have been into the World Heritage Area extensively. A lot of concern was expressed about the fact there was a lot of PR put out by the environment movement at the time and the fact that the priority was on savings lives and property rather than

protecting wilderness values. We have a lot of people who have been up there taking photos and shown that to be totally untrue. Do you have any comment on that? Have you received any other information on that?

**Mr HIDDING** - It is an ongoing process. Let us be gracious about it, for people who are top of mind they were devastated about stands of pencil pines being burnt, the cushion lichen on rocks and things like that that don't come back. We need to understand they would be upset about that but somebody needs to make priority decisions. Within the Tasmania Fire Service the prioritisation of effort is a very structured thing and it should be. It does not mean that just because this is above that that you ignore that. Cabinet had questioned the Tasmania Fire Service about those prioritisations. However, we accept that for many Tasmanians those concerns exist about damage to those high conservation areas. There are two inquiries underway. The first was the AFAC one and that is not finished. The agency is now working with that and the recommendations of it and working through it.

CHAIR - I thought they had completed that one.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is finished, the report is in now, done by the best in Australia. It is a full peer review and the people are very good at this stuff.

The guy that chaired it did the review of the Christchurch disaster. These are very high level people. By and large it was a very good report on the activities of the TFS during that process but as always, you have to look at it positively and see what it is we can change out of that and they are doing that.

Currently there is also an inquiry chaired by Dr Tony Press. He is looking at these issues of, not necessarily privatisation, but how we can better understand the value, to all Tasmanians, of the high conservation areas and whether things could be done better.. That is all currently under consideration there. I am very happy for those inquiries to take place, that's where we learn things, and people get the change to say things as well.

**CHAIR** - I think what people at that meeting were saying we have to have some better mitigation measures. The media will go up there and they will see all the photos that were taken, where low intensity burns were done four or five years ago and there was some low intensity cattle graze, and those areas did not burn. Those matters need to be brought out and whether, by using some of those mechanisms, we can save those values which we need to hold. I have walked it all up there and its important that we do that.

The other matter is to do with the extension to the WHA. Some of those fords and a lot of those access roads aren't accessible at times. Some of them have been closed off, that is also a real issue that need to be taken into account.

Mr HIDDING - Have they been used for firefighting purposes in the past?

**CHAIR** - Yes, because they were old FT roads so it was easy to get equipment and everything else in there. At the moment, you have some areas there that you can't access properly with the right equipment. Once again we go down the track of remote fire fighting teams. You have to start looking at those issues as well.

**Mr HIDDING** - All those issues are under consideration, to have a large group of remote area teams available in Tasmania is going to be very expensive. There are the issues of how much do we expect from volunteers. There are a bunch of issues that the chief fire officer and the deputy chief who fought that particular fire, as the acting chief, can discuss with us about the AFAC report. It could include the use of helicopters and how to get personnel in and out. The overriding issue here is that unless you are deeply involved in whole TFS ethos people don't know how to fight fires. We were being asked in the other place, why didn't we just drop people in amongst the fires and put it out.

Mr MULDER - As if there wasn't enough fuel on the ground.

**Mr HIDDING** - People have no understanding of how fires are fought. When you bring them in and show them they say that makes sense. They had no idea.

**CHAIR** - Through interagency talks you will keep progressing this matter. On another committee I have asked for a briefing, which we will have at some stage, which will probably come through the Premiers.

Regarding the protestor laws, obviously we have had some issues there. What is needed to ensure that people who are going about their lawful work are protected from protest action. The legislation went through, does it need tweaking, what is the issue there?

**Mr HIDDING** - I have characterised that as a teething issue with a new law, first time applied. It has only been applied once and we could well claim, with some justification, that the laws are having their desired effect, an educative effect, that we are determined to protect workers in their workplace. I am advised that there are no changes required to the existing laws but there are new definitional issues. There are policing issues there that need to be addressed by the Commissioner. It came down to, in these cases, the understanding of what a business access area was as opposed to a business area.

What we are talking about is a driveway vent, essentially, into an area and looks terribly like a business access area but, officially, it was a business area. It was completely understandable and, for the record, we as a government have no issues with the quality of policing out there and we back them completely. This is a teething issue which the commissioner is going to address.

**Mr HINE** - In relation to any new legislation there is always interpretation issues and that occurred on these occasions about the business access area. It was compared to a business area and it is the interpretation of those situations so we are working through that to provide additional advice to our people and also training.

It is about the issue of interpretation and new legislation. It hasn't been tested in court as yet so we are working through that with our legal advisers to make sure everyone on the ground has a really good understanding. In no way is that any criticism of the police on the ground who have to deal with the legislation and the protesters as well. They do a fantastic job dealing with these situations and at Lapoinya as well.

It is about further training and further interpretation of the legislation and ensure everyone has a really good understanding of the interpretation of the legislation and how it applies in a practical situation. It is to make sure the people who operate the business can lawfully operate the business

and those who are protesting do so within the law that is provided to Tasmania Police through the Government.

**CHAIR** - Minister, a question I think I asked last year with regard to the matter of ice and mind-altering substances, but particularly ice, and is it beneficial to immediately place somebody arrested into rehab when they probably have a real wish to be rehabilitated. If they go through a court process they go through bail, go back on the streets and they end up in the same old pattern because of that time lag. Do you have any view on that or do other jurisdictions go through that process in a much more timely manner?.

**Mr HIDDING** - I am sure there are jurisdictions around the world that get hold of a drug user and bang them forcibly through a rehab process, whether they like it or not, but this is Australia. We are civilised nation and I guess we are having a philosophical chat here rather than what the laws are but as a government we have no plans to change laws in this area. Education and having good rehab facilities and opportunities available are key. I draw your attention to the mental health arrangements. It is only at a very high bar that you can lock someone up against their will for therapeutical reasons.

Broadly, I understand what you are saying. It seems to me that as police minister my key interest should be in disrupting the importation of ice and the selling of it on the streets. That is what it's about and we have a very strong program in place, including just back in May those NAGS searches. Why on earth are we finding this stuff in motorcycle clubs amazes me but it happens all around Australia. Sadly our outlaw motorcycle gangs appear to be no different. It could be argued that they are citizens of Tasmania and they can do what they want to do, but the fact is illegal firearms, ice, other drugs are found when there is a raid. That clearly is unsafe. This disruption of the movement of the product around the place has to be key.

**CHAIR** - You are aware of the GoPro cameras, I wear one on my pushbike to see if anybody is going to run me down.

Mr HIDDING - You are not filming yourself riding? Is it facing outwards or inwards?

**CHAIR** - I have one on the back and one on the front. I have myself pretty well covered. I think some jurisdictions most of the operational police have a GoPro camera fitted to their bikes.

**Mr HIDDING** - This is called body worn cameras. There are only a couple of jurisdictions where it is at work and it is still being tested. I continue to talk to the commissioner about this and I will ask him to speak on that.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, it is body warn cameras that some other jurisdictions have that has been around for a little while. The take up from other jurisdictions is greater in some rather than others, but the camera itself is the easy bit, the cheaper bit. The storage and retrieval of the product off the video is the most difficult bit. All your back end systems have to be able to restore it, catalogue it and when you need to retrieve it this is where the expense comes along. We continue to monitor it and some jurisdictions have these sorted out. Whether you store it in the cloud or on various databases becomes the issue.

Our special operations group use it for training purposes, but we haven't taken it up as such. We were looking at it for family violence because that has a real benefit to film a family violence

situation as it is happening and getting the witness and victim statements from them there and then. We see a real benefit for it there and then the greater expansion throughout the service.

**CHAIR** - From an operation sense in a high-risk area on a Friday or Saturday night in Salamanca or the Brisbane Street Mall you do not see it as being something that is worn at a particular time, which may be of some benefit?

**Mr HINE** - I think policing is evolving where every jurisdiction at some stage will get a body worn video for police officers. I read one study just recently where the number of assaults of those police officers wearing body worn video didn't decrease the assaults either. There is some various research going on. We have to have that ability to have that interaction with police and the community and that trust as well. I would hate to get to a situation where a police officer can never deal with a member of the public without wearing a video. We know it is coming. We know that technology is changing. We have to make sure that we have all our systems to support body worn video is in place before we move down that track. We are not at that stage as yet. It is going to be an incremental step for Tasmania and we need to put various budget bids and business cases up for it. I can see a real benefit for family violence and then we can probably expand it from there. We are certainly not there yet.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - Minister, with regard to the fires we in Braddon had a lot of feedback from people on the ground as to what they perceived as the right or wrong things that happened. I presume all that stuff has been fed into a debrief. With regard to the Dunalley fires what sort of recommendations are you going to put into place and could any of them have been applied this time?

Mr HIDDING - You mean the Dunalley one?

**Mrs HISCUTT** - Yes, recommendations would have come out of that and that is more around housing. Could any of those have been applied in the north-west fires, or is it a totally different scenario?

**Mr HIDDING** - I am sure they were. There was a major inquiry into the Dunalley fires, and the number of recommendations were 103 or something like that. The great majority of them have been addressed, implemented, so they are already operationally in play. One of them was a rethink of the whole emergency response and emergency management in Tasmania. That is underway. The Secretary of Justice was tasked with that. That report is now at hand. The director of the SES, originally an acting director, is that that director has stepped out of the site to do a legislative project, to bring all that up. There is no question that what was learnt there was available for the recent fires.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - Do you have any recommendations yet from the recent fires, or are you still going through that debrief process?

**Mr HIDDING** - There is a range of that. Do you want to handle that when we get to fires and we have the officers at the table?

Mrs HISCUTT - I am quite happy to wait for that.

The other thing that touched my mind when the Chair was talking was the GoPros on the pushbikes. How is the A Meter Matters educative program working? Does it seem to be going okay, we do not need the legislation?

**Mr HIDDING** - It is currently being evaluated by the Road Safety Advisory Council and the department. The Queensland trial is being evaluated. But since we put it out there as an advisory and also changed the law to allow people to cross double white lines when it is safe to do so, there has been a marked increase of awareness of cyclists on the road, and a much bigger acceptance, which is to do with a couple of amusing kind of campaigns we ran on TV, 'distance matters' and things like that. There is no question now for those in the room who ride bikes. Many of them tell me that they have seen a marked change in attitude and behaviour by motorists now with exaggerated passing actions, which is all good.

Mrs HISCUTT - So would the police have recorded fewer complaints?

**Mr HINE** - We do not keep a record of those complaints, but as you probably realise, the law changed where motorists can cross continuous lines because with those lines some people did not feel comfortable, even though it was in those circumstances safe, so that law has been changed. I think the education process has been really good. Those of us who are cyclists, I think we have seen a difference. But it is like everything, there are bad cyclists and there are bad motorists who do not understand what cycling is about or driving a car is all about. It is a continued education process. A lot of people have cameras on their bikes to record near misses. If that is presented to us we will follow it up.

Again, it is about an education process. There are those who do not obey the law, whether you are driving a car or a pushbike, and that increases the tensions. But it is about the safety of vulnerable road users, and cyclists are vulnerable. I think it has been a positive. If it becomes law, the 'meter matters' or the 1.5 metres, it is always hard to enforce that. Who is a metre away, who has moved into whom and all those things. At the end of the day it is about road safety, it is about getting a better outcome for the motorists and the cyclists who are vulnerable.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - I have had some fairly good feedback on it, especially between Ulverstone and Penguin on the coast road. It is a great cycle track. Perhaps the Chair should have a look at it one day. Good comments that it works well.

**Ms FORREST** - Minister, the recent incident in Cooee that had an unfortunate outcome for the individual there, the question has been raised again about the use of tasers instead of firearms. What is your view on that? Is it going to be looked at?

**Mr HIDDING** - I have been in and around the police force for much of my 20-year career. I have had manufacturers of this policing tool, which is called an ECD, electronic control device, in my office offering to demonstrate it on me. I said I am happy to see it in action, how about I use it on you? He was not keen to do that.

One thing I did learn, before I hand to the experts in this matter, that in the use of it in the field there are a huge number of failures because there has to be two penetrations of clothes both hitting the person otherwise you don't have a circuit. A pair of jeans or whatever, if they are a bit heavy to penetrate and then go through the skin and stay in there. He had to admit that the failure rate was pretty high. If you can get close enough to somebody to jab them with it, I think they call it a dried stun, it is very effective but if the offender has a knife or a weapon, by the time you are that close

to the offender it is all over for you. It is very limited. You asked me for my view, and that is the view, but I will hand over to the Commissioner.

**Mr HINE** - Without talking about the Cooee incident it is difficult because that is before the coroner and there are a number of reviews. To put it into context there have been four police fatal shootings since 1991. We are not talking a large number. Any police shooting is one too many and dramatic as well.

You have to understand when a police officer's life is immediate danger, most of the time the first use of force or weapon is a firearm. It is appropriate because your life is in immediate danger so therefore the first weapon that you will normally use in those circumstances is a firearm to protect your life or the life of someone else.

We are doing an operational review as we do after critical incidents, and we have done it a number of times throughout the history of Tasmania Police, to see when tasers are appropriate, should they be used or implemented. We are doing another review to see if all other jurisdictions have them and you have to look at your own environment to make sure they are appropriate. In many of these circumstances when a police officer's life, and I will just repeat it, is in immediate danger the first weapon they will use is a firearm. Again, just to put it into context, there have been four deaths since 1991.

**Mr HIDDING** - That means there have been four deaths of civilians and that is a tragedy but there have also been four police officers who have been forced to carry out this action and their lives are irrevocably changed as well. We need to place on the record, as members of Parliament, our respect for our police officers at them being in situations where they have to make dreadful decisions.

**Ms FORREST** - I absolutely accept that. The previous three, investigations would have been conducted around those and those police officers who used the firearm were under immediate threat of their lives, so if the other person hadn't died, it could have been the police officer. Ultimately, you would have had one person at least killed as a result of an incident.

Going back to the tasers, I am interested in the Commissioner's view on the failure rate or otherwise because this is a matter that is raised in the community, it is raised in our Chamber at times too. It seems to be the magic solution perhaps for dealing with these sort of circumstances but the minister has already indicated that the failure rate is high. I am interested in your view on that.

**Mr HINE** - Electronic controlled devices, because Tasers is a brand, so overall they are electronic controlled devices. They are evolving. Recently there is the new electronic controlled device which has two probes in it so if one misses you have another chance to use a second one so they are starting to be rolled out.

Ms FORREST - They still require a circuit second time, wouldn't it?

**Mr HINE** -Yes, before it was only a single one so if that didn't work then, especially if no-one was covering off on you, you were in trouble. Also in a colder climate people during winter wear thicker clothing. They have different probes on them but the failure rate can be high because people wear thicker clothing. Again, it is still a use of force and it fits within a use of force continuum when they should be used. It is appropriate we are doing another review to ascertain what other

jurisdictions, what the technology is at the moment, and whether it is a program for Tasmania Police to start looking at it. We know the Police Association has certainly been a supporter of these for a long time but, again, we have to make sure it is appropriate for Tasmania. We do have to see what the most modern technology in relation to ECDs is.

The use of force is continually about de-escalating and that comes from verbal all the way up to the use of the firearm and whether tasers fit in with that. You have your baton and OC spray. As you know we have issued every operational police officer with the new vests which are both stab resistant and ballistic resistant as well. It also carries your gear on it. That was certainly a priority to us to make sure the police officer was safe and they had the best protection they had so therefore they could protect the community.

We are doing another review about tasers or ECDs to see if they are appropriate and what the technology is at the moment. As you probably know they do have cameras on them as well so the technology is getting better as well. It is only recently services are changing from the single shot to the dual shot tasers. We have to put it into context for Tasmania and how many unfortunate deaths we have had where police officers have had to use lethal force again whether it is appropriate for Tasmania. Our last review said no, we will hold off, so we are doing another review to see whether it is appropriate or not.

#### Output Group 1 Public Safety

#### 1.1 Support to the community -

**Mr MULDER** - First of all, minister, I would like to congratulate you and the department on, once again bringing yourself in time on budget. This is an agency I have yet to see in the supplementary appropriation lists especially considering the fact that costs, as we have seen in the last couple of days, for this department are extremely flexible. You can have emergency after emergency yet somehow or other there is not cap in hand back to Treasury saying give me more money. Congratulations to both the minister and departments.

**Mr HIDDING** - I will comment on that briefly. For particular major events there is separate funding, of course, and that is handed through requests for additional funds. As for fire we are talking \$30 million to \$40 million or more. Thank you for those comments because -

Mr MULDER - I am happy for you to qualify the compliments.

**Mr HIDDING** - No, I think across the public sector it is recognised this is an agency that meets its marks on appropriations.

**Mr MULDER** - The other issue is recently we saw the Government's budget strategy about reducing the number of FTEs and sworn FTEs. I am aware the Police Association accepted a pay pause and as a result was quarantined from staff losses. What staff losses were there in the support areas in the public sector within the department?

**Mr HINE** - I will hand over to Donna in a minute. Basically there was, as you know, a number of years ago the operational and we reduced our operational service numbers. We also reduced our support staff as well. Donna will be able to give us a bit of an overview where we are at the moment in relation to our support staff.

**Ms ADAMS** - From last year, Mr Mulder, we have increased our state service numbers by 18 to 31 March. The increase is due to a number of factors. We have a number of major projects on the board at the moment. ESCAD, Safe Families Tasmania and the Endeavour project boat. We also have replaced some police positions who were occupying state service vacancies with state service personnel. That has been a major contributor to the change in increasing state service numbers.

Having said that the integration project has realised five state service positions in management roles. There has been an SES level 1 a band A in finance, two Band 7s and a Band 5 that have been realised savings through the integration process today.

**Mr MULDER** - So that comes in to the question of your sworn staff do we have in the establishment now?

Mr HINE - At 6 April there were 1162 TFE police officers.

Mr MULDER - Is that down on July last year?

**Mr HINE** - No, it should not be. We have increased by 57 since 2014 and we are building up to 1233 by the end of the term of the government. It was 108. We were building up from 2014 but five were added through the family violence unit that has been established. That is 113 we added extra from the number back in 2014. Since 2014 we have added 57 additional police officers.

**Mr MULDER** - From those, are we ever in a position where we can say these sworn officers, other than management, are out there doing policing work? How many of those are in positions such as HR and corporate services and things like that, where perhaps they are not being as operational, where they do not have to go out after dark and face angry people?

**Mr HINE** - There is always going to be a percentage of your workforce that have to do these jobs. When the police officer is in these non-operational jobs, we will term those at the moment, they are available for operational jobs as well which is what is happening in Launceston at the moment, even though we just had a message the thread of flooding for Newstead and Invermay is not going to happen, which is good. That is the initial advice at this stage in Invermay. We are really pleased about that. We know there are a number of people that are doing support roles are out there assisting on the front line.

Those 57 that have been added to the numbers since 2014, we have had seven police officers go the Serious Organisation Crime Unit. We have had two going to the human resources. We have had 12 that go into the southern regional road and operational support area. We have had four go into the northern RPOS area into the SRCTU which is the counterterrorism unit and we had two go into there. That was 27 for the last financial year.

This financial year, there were another six into the serious organised crime employee services there was one inspector added into the Bellerive CIB. Detector dogs; there was a sergeant and a constable go into that. As we build up to the 1233 next financial year and during the term of the government, we will add the additional police officers into various roles.

**Mr MULDER** - I think you said two into HR. What positions inside HR require the extra money you give to policemen because they have powers and skills and operational things that could not be performed by someone on a lower rate but are putting those skills in the field?

**Mr HINE** - When we were down-sizing, recruiting dropped right off. Therefore, if you are going to recruit police officers, you have to put extra people in there to help the recruiting of police officers. We have found it better to have a police officer help recruit police officers. That is where the additional two people went into HR.

I know it was recruiting and I know there were course directors but if you want a further breakdown in relation to various positions, I know there has been some discussion about whether you have a state service person or you have a police officer, do you need some of these positions with people with various powers. We have some people who cannot perform operational roles. It is about getting them back into an operational role so they are available to perform operational duties. If you want a detailed breakdown of some of these positions, I am more than happy to go through that.

**Mr MULDER** - I am happy, as I presume the committee are. It is this issue about repaying people this amount of money. Should they be in back office roles of a permanent nature? I accept intelligence work and things are support to the frontline. They are using their skills and their knowledge as police officers. It is quite possible to train civilians, as many police forces do, to take over the intelligence role as a support function. You do not need the powers. I just wanted to highlight that particular thing.

**Mr HINE** - We are recruiting more police officers and we are putting an extra course through, of a year approximately, to build the numbers up. To run a recruiting course you need police officers to run those courses as well. That is where those additional people have gone in, to help run those recruit courses. It is only appropriate they are police officers.

There is always getting the balance. That is an argument and a discussion going on right across the world about any policing organisation. It is to make sure you maximise your police officers with those sworn powers and also those support personnel.

**Mr MULDER** - Can we go into the public order response team - looking at your last annual report there have been some interesting, shall I say - 2009-2010, 35 000 public order response teams by 2010-2011, 31 000, and then you see 28 000 to year ending 2012, ending 2013 it is 24 000, ending 2014 an increase to 25 000 and then in 2015 a decrease back to 23 000. How much is triggered with use of public order response teams resulting in a decrease or is it not connected?

Mr HINE - Sorry, you lost me when you said 24 000 public order response teams.

Mr MULDER - Incidents.

**Mr HINE** - I was going to say, someone is hiding these people. You are talking about a variation in the number of incidents.

**Mr MULDER** - On page 20 of your last annual report you have them. Number of total public order incidents by year, seems to be steadily falling. When did we bring the public order response teams in? I know they went through a bit of a hiatus.

**Mr HINE** - It is the road and public order teams. As you know we had the public order and traffic teams and we put them together. As with an increase in police officers and extra patrolling you would expect some of these numbers to go down - to make sure their activities are having a positive effect and interaction with the community.

**Mr TILYARD** - We have public order response teams a few years ahead of merging them with our traffic areas to create what we now call the RPOS team. The public order response element does focus primarily on public events and public order incidents, particularly in the major CBD areas. As you can see from the figures, overall the incidents have been reduced. We are not seeing some of the issues we have seen in the past in some of our major centres that are public order related.

The benefit of the new arrangement of having a larger body of people that can be deployed more flexibly - if you take the southern district, for example, particularly the Hobart area which has a significant number of public events - we have the flexibility of directing more people to focus on these events and shift them around as we need to prioritise. It is a far more flexible arrangement serving the needs of the districts much better than what was happening before.

**Mr MULDER** - Is there any correlation between this trend and the introduction and deployment of public order response teams?

**Mr HINE** - We would like to think there is a correlation. If you ask us to put our finger on exactly what the impact, as you know with a lot of policing issues it is not possible to do that. It is our belief they do play a positive role.

**Mr MULDER** - What happens normally when you put police into those particular situations is you end up with a greater level of enforcement of things that would not normally appear in your crime statistics but now you are there they are appearing in the crime statistics. It is interesting to note, what we are looking at is a deterrent effect.

**Mr HINE** - You are quite right about the more police officers you put out in the street, the more detections they will actually detect. Again there is correlation, but it also at some stage will peak and then start to drop off because the community is seeing more police officers out there. By combining these two units, when we did that as part of our restructure to the budget situation, we have a greater number of police officers who actually do either traffic work or public order matters. Hopefully that is a continuation of a decrease, but again if there is an increase in a hot spot, then the commanders of the districts have a greater pool of people to be able to put into it and to combat it.

**Mr MULDER** - All the good news, and then the bad news. Public place assaults increased by 5 per cent in 2014-2015. How are they trending now?

**Mr HINE** - Public place assaults, as in if you take it up until the end of May, it is actually - for the same period of the last financial year, it is the same. There has not been a decrease or increase from the same time last year.

**Mr MULDER** - To be fair, public place assaults increased by 5 per cent in 2014. Decreases in each of the previous five years. We have seen a rise and then a levelling out.

**Mr HINE** - Up until May it is level. This is one of our indicators that we use of total public order incidents, total person offences and operational [inaudible] just to keep a handle on them and

to make sure we are understanding what is going on. That is a state-wide level. Then you would take it down to a district level. Unfortunately some districts have greater increases or bubbles, and is where RPOS can go in and start addressing some of those issues.

**Mr MULDER** - Are these public place assaults including assaults on police or is this just a question of people reporting being assaulted on the street?

Mr HINE - Excluding -

**Mr MULDER** - It excludes the police. Last year we passed the legislation for so-called mandatory sentencing for people assaulting police officers, causing actual bodily harm. How has that translated into the assault rate on police?

Mr HINE - There has not been any -

**Mr HIDDING** - I am very pleased to say there has not been anybody charged under that. We hope the educative deterrent factor is working. We do not want any -

**Mr MULDER** - Just on a point of correction, I think I have got a question on the notice paper relating to a person in Launceston who bit a female police officer and was sentenced to three months suspended. My question is -

Mr HIDDING - He was charged under something else, wasn't he?

**Mr TILYARD** - It is a sentencing provision, not a specific charge as such. There has not been anybody sentenced under the provision at the moment. They may well have received a substantial sentence, but a little bit under the normal range, it is up to the court to apply these sentencing provisions in these cases.

**Mr HINE** - It has got to be serious bodily harm under the Sentencing Act. That is one of the options. No-one has been sentenced under that provision yet.

Mr MULDER - Is biting not serious?

**Mr HIDDING** - The fact is the mandatory sentencing does not allow for suspension. Clearly it did not meet the bar in the court's mind the legislation laid down.

**Mr MULDER** - I would have thought biting someone, especially with things like HIV and all sorts of things, might be considered to be an extremely serious level of assault. I know that the DPP has, for example, launched appeals in respect of people spitting at police officers, and here you have got someone biting. From a policy perspective, are you concerned you get an incident like this where someone gets bitten, and the courts deem it not to be serious?

**Mr HIDDING** - I am the minister for police. I come from the position that - it was not my legislation, it was the attorney's, but I come from the position that anybody who hits a police officer should go to prison. Clearly the bar has got to be higher than that because in arrests there could be a backhander going or whatever. The bar had to be set to a point and was in discussions with the DPP. I recall the bar was set at what was considered a responsible position. I share your concern. I think if we saw much more of that we would probably have to consider lowering the bar. Clearly, in order to be able to achieve passage of that legislation where there are people in this Parliament

who are flatly opposed under any circumstance to mandatory detention, we had to set the bar at an achievable, and we had hoped, good level. I am not calling that into question right now because I do not know the circumstances of the biting and the rest of it, but I will be keeping an eye on that.

**Mr MULDER** - I raise it because in that particular case I think both you and the Attorney are going to have some fun answering that question. That should raise, as it has done now, the question of whether the courts appropriately applying that particular bar. If you produce mandatory sentencing and then give them the flexibility to decide when to apply it, then you do not have mandatory sentencing.

**Mr HIDDING** - The bar had to be set as to what was actually of sufficient gravity of damage to the police.

Mr HINE - Serious bodily harm.

**Mr MULDER** - Serious bodily harm is well below grievous bodily harm, which is probably what you would be charging someone with under those circumstances.

Only last week we passed the knife laws and I notice that in the same week Victoria has moved, particularly in terms of protest activity, a whole range of laws in relation to balaclavas and going disguised at protests and issues like that. Is that an issue and is that something we would look at? It is a lot better to have those things in place before they happen rather than after.

**Mr HIDDING** - Thankfully, we haven't seen the kind of social disturbance from those large rallies as Victoria, New South Wales and other places in Australia have had. Clearly, as I read it, they are concerned with people deliberately wearing balaclavas to avoid detection when they become violent in a demonstration. From my point of view if that became a problem in Tasmania I would be discussing with the commissioner whether he needed better laws. Now that you raise it, I can indicate that I am certainly keen on it. If anybody is thinking that they are going to get involved in public order behaviour such as this and disguise their identity while they do so, ordinarily I would be considering a legislative response to that as well.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - Regarding support for the community, a certain few police used to be tied up with court duties as opposed to being out in the community. Can you give me a bit of a rundown on how that is going in getting those police off that?

**Mr HIDDING** - We are looking at the Launceston situation and what currently happens is that Tasmania Police have historically had that role. It is so that in the public sector in Tasmania if you want another agency to do something that you did before, your funding has to travel with it. That could tend to weaken Tasmania Police. In general, we absolutely accept that it would be better for private security guards, where appropriate, to be doing that work rather than having sworn police officers doing this. We are currently working through the actual cost transfer or the new money required, because at the end of the day if you do not provide new money then you are not doing it right. We are working through that and through the budget arrangements to find what a true figure would be for a new arrangement.

On the north-west coast, it is much more complex because you do not have remand centres. You have police officers driving people from Burnie through to Launceston and back again, and up and down the track. It is stressful and it would be better if all police officers were on the beat, so to speak. However, it is still important work.

[10.00 a.m.]

That is a bigger project to understand and we are basically focusing on Launceston right now, keeping a weather eye on the north-west coast stuff. There are some issues around the magistrates court in Devonport and the supreme courts up the coast. It is a complex issue right now, but naturally our stance would be to let our police officers be on the beat rather than do this work. We are working through those issues.

**CHAIR** - We have the fuel reduction program funding transferred from DPIWE to DPEM for two years and to be reviewed. That covers fuel reduction on public land and public land tenure, but what about the private land issue? Will there be conversations with cooperative burns with private landowners? Because otherwise the whole job does not work properly, one would suggest.

**Mr HIDDING** - With the chief fire officer's permission, if I could ask the chief fire officer to also bring Sandy Whight to the table. He is an expert in this field and the author of a major report on this area, Mr Chris Arnol, and Sandra Whight. Perhaps if I can first ask Sandy to speak about the tenure-blind approach, which is really, in public policy terms, world leading. It is the problem around the world that you can reduce the load on your own land but what about the private land? We have a tenure-blind approach, I will ask Sandy to speak about it.

**Ms WHIGHT -** What we undertook was a whole lot of modelling of the landscape. We treated Tasmania as a whole, risk modelling, looking at fire history, looking at vegetation types, looking at different weather scenarios, and from that modelling we could start to determine the most at-risk parts of Tasmania, particularly associated obviously around towns, but also looking at where strategic fuel reduction can be done further out to reduce the capacity of fire to build up potential and run hard into communities. We were doing it of values at risk. Values are not just houses and property; they can be industry, critical infrastructure, and of course, natural values as well.

Out of that work the approach we take with all our planning is we have fire management area committees. There are 10 fire management area committees that cover the whole state. The fire management area committees have membership from Parks and Wildlife, Forestry Tasmania, the Tasmania Fire Service, local government, utility companies, Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association, and sometimes Forest Industry Association. Depending on the predominant tenure in that area, they might be private land conservation membership, and Aboriginal representation as well.

We take those modellings to those committees. At this stage, it is all very much a desktopmodelled analysis. Those committees can then provide that local input and validation of those models; we do not just say because a computer tells us so, we will do it. We do validation and ground proofing. Out of that work fire protection plans are prepared. Then we have a fire protection plan covering every part of the state. They have been in place now for two years. Priority areas are worked out of those fire protection plans.

Those fire protection plans are for all mitigation activities; they are not just about fuel reduction burning. We are looking a whole suite of different approaches that you can take in reducing risk. When it comes to the actual burning itself, we are conducting it very much in a tenure-blind way. We are working at a whole-of-government level in partnership with Parks and Wildlife as one of the largest land managers, of course, and also with Forestry Tasmania. The burning is undertaken in a tenure-blind way. It might be that there will be multi-tenure burns, where we are looking at parks and private land simultaneously. But also we have started burning exclusively on private land

as well under the program. It is very time consuming, you don't just front up to somebody's door and ask if you can set fire to their property. There is a lot of planning, negotiation and meeting with people as part of that work.

Mr HIDDING - The State Fire Management Council is chaired by Mr Ian Sauer from Pipers River. He has a background in NRM and is a farmer himself. He leads a council that has an important role. In my electorate at St Helens - the Binalong Bay area, Bay of Fires - he called all landowners in with the exception of one who did not want fuel reduced on his property, which is a bit sad. Every other property thought it was a good idea to reduce fuel load in that area. As it happened, that one property stands alone but can't really damage anyone else because they have had their fuel load reduced. To my knowledge that has never been done before. It is very organic. You talk to landowners and get them to participate and say, 'We're going to be burning government land over here in this reserve. You're attached to it, so if there is a fire that fence isn't going to stop anything and finally they come on board. Fuel reduction over the two years has been fantastic, particularly right down into the very targeted areas. Fern Tree is one area where you would think you could not go in there where people live. Your modelling shows the risk to human life to have all that growth there. We cannot do thousands of hectares but the hectares that were burnt has now placed a much lower safety risk on the people in that area. It is a concern for them, too, if they see leaping flames et cetera. We are getting better and we are confident when we go into these areas to burn.

**CHAIR** - I didn't want to queer the pitch with Mr Farrell who has the State Fire Commission coming up. There is a line item down further. It's just the appropriation in this line item has moved across -

**Mr HIDDING** - You raised the matter of tenure-blind, which is a complicated one and why I wanted the experts here. It was a four-year program and we are two years into that program. There will need to be a full review of a quantum of funding going forward. In my mind at least there is not going to be any question the program shouldn't continue because we are delighted with it. The quantum of funding, whether it needs a lot more or less, that is yet to be determined but we will be doing that over the remaining period of this government's term.

**Mr ARNOL** - The quality of this program is unsurpassed in this nation. It is generally administered through the Tasmania Fire Service, so an administrative shift of funding is all we are seeing here. Over the next two years we will administer the funds. All the people are within TFS and Sam is heading that group up.

**Mr FARRELL** - Mr Mulder mentioned before the recent bill that passed through the Legislative Council in regard to new controls on knives. During that debate there were a number of issues of concern raised by members of the Legislative Council. I wonder what measures are in place, seeing that the forest protest laws fell at the first hurdle, to ensure that these fairly important laws, can be implemented.

**Mr HIDDING** - That bit of legislation, when it gets through its final arrangements, goes to a high level of application of discretion by a police officer. In Tasmania I think that is completely appropriate because the discretion of our police officers in Tasmania has been very good. The discretion applies to context. What was the context in which that person, a person might be carrying a knife. From one extreme it could be that, because the law as it currently stands, you could have an estranged husband, standing outside the premises on the footpath of his estranged wife and the police say what is that on your belt. He could say it just happens to be a hunting knife, and right

now, as it stands because of a court finding it requires the police to actually prove that he was going to do something with that hunting knife.

Any reasonable human being would say this is just not safe, standing here with this knife in your possession, it's all about context. I listened to some of the debate in this House and it was good, because so much of it was explored. At the end I think everybody understood that it is police officers discretion on the context. So it could be entirely different for a farmer who always carries a knife in order cut a string on a bail. Having a counter meal at lunch time is entirely different to him being in the pub at 10 o'clock at night with a bunch of mates, having been there for a few hours. Still probably not completely wrong, or probably completely innocent, that he is carrying it but the context is challengeable in a police officer's mind.

Then you still have to make the case on being charged. I think Tasmanian's are going to be safer as a result of that legislation and that is a good thing. We have just seen a rise in the alarming propensity to be using knives in poor situations.

Mr FARRELL - Your hope minister, would be to get it down to zero, but realistically any reduction is -

**Mr HIDDING** - It's like how do you eat an elephant, one bite at a time. The reduction of one is good, two is better, three is better still.

Mr MULDER - It's nice to know your vision and strategy, but eating elephants -

**Mr HIDDING** - There's a current member of parliament, in another place, who admitted he has eaten eight elephants or from eight elephants.

**Mr HINE -** There was a recent horrific example where someone was stabbed with a knife and unfortunately passed away. The initial legislation, a court ruling, found there was an issue with it. That's hence the new amendment, and as the minister said if you have a lawful excuse that is covered. Unfortunately knives are becoming more prolific in our community. There are a lot of people carrying them around without any lawful excuse. When they start to be used in fights, and we have seen the tragic results, that's where we need to have a look at it. During this financial year 66 per cent of our armed robberies have been as a result of knives. You could say that is definitely an unlawful purpose. Again it just gives police officers those powers that they need to be able to try and get knives off the streets.

**Ms FORREST** - It flows into the area of the Family Violence Action Plan and I commend the government for taking this matter very seriously. Knives are obviously an issue that can be used in those situation, but I am interested in how the actions you are taking in the area of family violence are working. Are we seeing an increase in reports? When we first brought in the Safe at Home legislation we saw more reports but that was because people often felt safe to report. What is happening in this area in terms of incidents and outcomes?

**Mr HIDDING** - As I alluded to, the Commissioner is a personal champion in this area of public policy and policing. Yes, there was always a hope with stronger focus on this, there would be more people putting their hand up if it were occurring. What I enjoyed about the internal discussions on where we go with all this, it was quite perpetrator focused. You have a victim focus, but a perpetrator often continues to perpetrate. The good thing is having the champion being a chief law officer. He is very hot on the victim stuff but the perpetrator stuff you have got to deal with.

**Mr HINE** - Family violence is certainly an issue and for many of us around this table that are White Ribbon ambassadors, Mr Gaffney I know, about family violence. We are seeing an increase in reporting of family violence incidents to Tasmania Police. It is a good thing because we want women and children and the victims of family violence to feel comfortable to come to police to make reports. I have also seen figures from 45 per cent to 80 per cent of under reporting about family violence. Just because we are getting an increase we know there is an under reporting and people are still are not coming forward to seek help. Whether it is to police or to some other agency to get help it does not really matter - it is about getting help and getting out of a violent situation. Unfortunately weapons are a feature of family violence. Weapons were present up until the end of May in 181 cases of over 2800 family violence incidents. It is not a huge proportion but there is 181 times where weapons have been present police have recorded.

Ms FORREST - Weapons other than fists you mean.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, an actual weapon. Of course family violence is not one of those where you have to have a weapon, you do not have to physically hurt someone, it is about emotional and financial abuse as well. Of course every time we start this argument and this discussion, people say what about men as victims. Any family violence is wrong. We will continue to make sure we support the victims but, unfortunately, there is 85 per cent of the cases where women are killed or seriously injured, is at the hand of the male. Again hence the White Ribbon movement and also the strong focus is to support women and their children in family violence situations.

Ms FORREST - In terms of men as victims do you have any figures?

**Mr HINE** - It is about 15 per cent. That is in rough figures in relation to it. Again that is unacceptable and we will put all our resources.

Ms FORREST - Are the perpetrators there generally women or other men?

**Mr HINE** - A combination of both. Again, we are about to open at the end of this month our Safe Family coordination units and already starting to work really well and provide greater information for those front line agencies dealing with these situations. We have already had examples where the information has been collected through the various agencies and given back out to support women and their children or the victims. Of course, it is also about holding perpetrators to account for their actions and rehabilitation. The unit is working really well and anyone who wants to have a look, we are happy to show people through. When you look at some of the cases they are dealing with and current information gaps, which this is hopefully filling in relation to the high risk categories, it is really impressive already.

**Ms FORREST** - I know it more a whole of government response to this which is important and necessary, as far as police responding to incidents do police generally have issues in making safe those families that are victims? Are the resources adequate to facilitate the removal of the victim or perpetrator if that is the most appropriate response? Or is it an ongoing challenge in the field?

**Mr HINE** - It is the nature of policing, as in, you never know if you are going to deal with a situation, whether it is a family violence matter, a flood. Policing changes dynamically and family violence is an urgent situation and we will send resources there.

Are we adequately resourced? Yes. Could we do with more resources? Every police commissioner in the world would say 'yes, it would be great to have some'. You have to make sure you maximise the use of the resources and family violence is a high priority. We do have enough resources to deal with it. It comes down to prioritising the situations to make sure we have adequate resources to deal with high risk and any other family violence situation.

This is, as you quite rightly said, is a whole of government and a whole of community approach. We have to have generational change in relation to family violence. It is about respectful relationships as well. I was on Flinders Island the other day and I talked to grade 3 and 4. I have told this story a couple of times. We spoke about family violence to the grade 3 and 4. They had a really good understanding about what a respectful relationship was. They had seen the ads on TV about when the little boy slams the door. They understood that was wrong. We had a really good conversation. Full credit to the teacher and the school about having that conversation with the kids. That is where we have to start to make sure we have those conversations at a really young age.

**Ms FORREST** - Through you, minister. Have you had anything to do with project 'O' up in Wynyard? There is a group of 20 young women who will be 20 in 2020 that are going through this program through Big hART. It is a family violence hot spot. They had a 24 hour colour-a-thon recently. They aimed to raise \$6000 to support children refugees. The average age of children in those refuges is 18 months or two years of age. They raised around \$12 250 and did a fantastic job. A visit from you as a White Lion ambassador to help them, because they are making real differences up there in their own families. A lot of these young women come from families that have experienced it.

**Mr HINE** - Isn't it fantastic the community, recognise the problem and get together. I would love to go and have a chat to them. When you start dealing in these situations and it is becoming more open and spoken about there is a lot of great work being done in the local community. That is where it has to start.

Police can only deal with a certain amount but we all have to work together to make sure there is generational change. When you hear some of these groups doing some fantastic work, I am more than happy to go and do whatever I can to support it.

Mr HIDDING - Contact my office.

**Ms FORREST** - Wynyard High School did a Rewind, Be Kind program last year too. It was about bullying in the community but in the schools particularly.

Output Group 2 Crime

#### 2.1 Investigation of Crime -

**Mr MULDER** - In relation to the domestic violence, we are aware it is more than just the physical violence. Of the 85 per cent which is the female victim rate, is there any break down between the physical and the non-physical violence for that group.

**Mr HINE** - I will have to take that one on notice about the categorisation of injuries received as a result of family violence.

**Mr MULDER** - If there was any physical injury that would be the physical assault group but what is the difference between that and the emotional, financial and other sorts of abuse.

**Mr HINE** - Emotional, financial, we would have those various categories that are reported to police.

**Mr MULDER** - Could we get those on notice and the same for the male, the 15 per cent? It is not crucial to the debate. As you are aware I have an interest in it.

Mr HINE - I would say the vast majority would relate to physical violence.

**Mr MULDER** - Will you be likely to get that in the next day or so then we can leave the item open?

**Mr HINE** - We should be able to get it reasonably quickly.

**Mr MULDER** - If it does require some effort and some work then I will take it off the table here and do it through the normal question process.

Mr HINE - We will certainly have a look at it.

**Mr MULDER** - On to some of your crime rate, which is interesting. Once again, it is something that was going down but had a resurgence last year. How is it tracking at the moment?

**Mr HINE** - As you know crime can be spasmodic and go up and down. If we look at total offences until the end of May compared to the same period last financial year, total offences are down by 9.7 per cent. Serious crime offences are down by 7 per cent. Home burglaries are down by 26.9 per cent. Business burglary offences are down by 27.9 per cent. Property damage offences are down by 0.49 per cent. Car burglary offences are down by 13.3 per cent. Stolen motor vehicles are down by 16.2 per cent. So we are tracking pretty well at the moment, but we know crime is cyclical. I have to say the districts are working really hard to make sure that when a spike occurs, they are putting a lot of resources to make sure they get on top of it.

**Mr MULDER** - That is reported crime and a lot of that relates to deterrence and detention as well as incapacitation of offenders.

With your high-risk crime offenders and groups unit, you mentioned earlier on that you had added some staff to that. What is the structure there? Is it a centralised unit that does big jobs and coordinates support activities by general duties police officers?

**Mr HINE** - As the name says, they deal with serious and organised crime. They are working on a couple of major matters at the moment. They were the ones who worked on the double murder. They are crimes that take a significant amount of work and detective work. They categorise crimes - what they can deal with, what they can take on and what they put out there.

Mr MULDER - How many full-time people have you in that job?

Mr HINE - There are 21 in the serious organised crime unit.

Mr MULDER - Twenty-one full-time detectives, basically?

Mr HINE - Yes.

Mr MULDER - That is virtually a criminal investigation branch in its own right, isn't it?

Mr HINE - They deal with -

Mr MULDER - Is that statewide operations?

**Mr HINE** - It is statewide. They were involved with the national gangs group that came down to help coordinate that. They do some of those cold case reviews to make sure they are categorised as well. There are cyber crime issues and the serious frauds. It is the serious side of the spectrum where local CIBs do not have the resources to do it and it takes significant time. Having said that, if there is a murder, obviously the local CIB are the initial ones who attend to that.

**Mr MULDER** - I am also, as you probably know, a little bit interested in the shift that should be occurring between the focus on property crime and domestic crime. I go back a few years and it would have been in the same when you were a working detective. All the resources seem to be on the burglaries, the business break-ins, the thefts and all those sorts of things. Yet there was a little squad stuck on the side dealing with assaults and things like that. Even in your own definition as a serious crime, I note if you add serious assaults and serious sexual assaults together with robberies, which are also crimes of violence more than property, that constitutes 70 per cent of your serious crime. I am wondering how the resources are now going about the balance of assault versus property crime.

#### [10 30 a.m.]

**Mr TILYARD** - We can talk about things that may have changed since you were a detective, Mr Mulder. One of things that has changed is that within the CIBs we have victim crime units that are specifically focused on those sorts of victim crimes.

As the commissioner said, the serious organised crime unit doesn't replace the work of the district CIBs. They still deal with serious crimes, as in murders, serious sexual assaults and those sorts of things. The CIBs within the districts are specifically set up to ensure there are sufficient resources allocated to be focused on those things as well as the property-type crime, the volume crime, that obviously impacts on a lot of people in the community. That is also a concern as well.

**Mr MULDER** - Now I am switching to the area of the juvenile crime and it was interesting to note the classic areas of juvenile crime. They were residential burglary, motor vehicle and motor vehicle theft. We all know these things are cyclical, but is there any indication of what area it might have spiked? It seems to me that inevitably in youth crime the misbehaving is just displaced into some other area. I am wondering if you have any handle on that.

**Mr HINE** - The nature of crime changes overall from adult offending to juvenile offending. About 61 per cent of our juveniles are diverted away from the court system into the diversionary process. Justice should never been judged on the number of people going to court, it should be judged on the outcomes.

**Mr MULDER** - The absence of crime was the measure of an effective detective force, as the old standing orders used to say. I appreciate that and that was why I asking the question in terms of crime rates or offence rates rather than offending rates.

**Mr HINE** - As you said, it does change from whether it is a car burglary to motor vehicle stealing. A lot of those crimes are dropping but we know that offending rates for juveniles are always over-represented. That is where we need to work with a lot of other agencies to make sure that we have the best support around juveniles. That is why we put a lot of effort into police, schools and our youth action teams as well. We put a lot of effort into these things to make sure that we know -

**Mr MULDER** - My question was about displacement of the behaviours from stuff that is turning up in your crime statistics to potentially stuff that is not. I am asking about increasing graffiti, increasing nuisance behaviours or petty damage.

**Mr HINE** - I can't give you an exact correlation but that sounds as if it would probably be a good research project. I am not sure that we can give you a definitive answer about where it has been displaced from one area into another.

**Mr MULDER** - Going to your Crime Stoppers online reporting project - how does that work? I know there are some difficulties about people reporting crime to Crime Stoppers in various areas. I think that New South Wales - and I am going back a few years - experimented with their police advisory line and decided to abandon it because they were getting lots of crime reports but they were anonymous and there was no detail - all you got was a glitch on your statistics but nothing to look at. How is Crime Stoppers online working? Is the reporting anonymous and what is the level of usage?

**Mr HINE** - I can tell you that it's not online yet. The project hasn't been completed. Crime Stoppers, as you know, is separate to Tasmania Police. I sit on the board of directors but it hasn't been completed as yet. It is not far away. It is still via anonymous reporting through the telephone line.

**Mr MULDER** - So if someone reports quite a serious crime on that, there is no way of getting back to the person to get more details to find out.

**Mr HINE** - It is up-front to say that 'Crime Stoppers is not for' and that is what the operator will tell them. It is not for reporting a crime and expecting a police attendance but with crime stoppers, as you know, they are allocated a code if they wish to remain anonymous and then that code is used back if they want further information or their reward.

**Mr MULDER** - Because if that says 'does' but the question is 'will'. Will a crime that is reported there - for example, someone reports a burglary but they do not follow up with a report to the police. Does that turn up in your crime statistics or is that just an unreported crime?

**Mr HINE** - No, Crime Stoppers is all about receiving information for a crime. It is not about reporting your crime because as you said, it was made quite clear through the website or when reporting, it is not for reporting a crime, it is reporting about information relating to a crime.

**Mr MULDER** - I think that is probably not that important. I read the wording in the annual report and I had the feeling that it will be on an online reporting.

**CHAIR** - Minister and members, and to allow Mr Mulder to get a second wind, we have been sitting here for a while so we might have a 10 minute adjournment and away we will go again.

#### The committee suspended from 10.36 a.m. to 10.55 a.m.

**Mr MULDER** - Where we were talking about whether the Crime Stoppers program relates to reporting crime or not, I will need some clarification. I think I understood what the Commissioner was saying to me but if you go back to last year's annual report, the state Government allocated funding of \$25 000 to Crime Stoppers Tasmania to assist in the preparation of a business case for, underlined, online reporting by the Crime Stoppers website. If we go down a little bit further and it talks about:

The experience of Crime Stoppers has shown that a well-designed and effective online facilities can increase the volume and quality of reports of crime. Several options for online reporting have been identified in a concept proposal ...

Anyone who was reading that would be justified for thinking they could ring up Crime Stoppers when this program comes online and report their crime, whereas I think that is not quite what was said.

**Mr HIDDING** - I think where we are at with that question is: you have the civilian interpretation of reporting a crime as opposed to the in-house, what is actually formally a report. I would have thought that if somebody is concerned, for instance the other day, somebody over the road appears to be a drug dealer because they have people coming in the middle of the night and all the rest of it. They rang Crime Stoppers, they are hardly reporting a crime because they have not seen a crime. They are reporting suspicious behaviour but they would consider they had reported a crime, I suspect. The language in that report may have picked up on that. I will ask the Commissioner to finalise on that.

**Mr HINE** - I understand where you are coming from, but it is quite clear when a Crime Stoppers operator answers the phone that it is not reporting a crime, and it is not used for reporting a crime. It is reporting information relating to a possible crime or a crime that has already happened. Or, once the online reporting is up and running, it will be quite clear when you go into that it is not to be used for reporting a crime. It is similar to our Facebook site, it is quite clear on that it is not to be used to report a crime. The traditional manner about coming into a police station or ringing the 131444 number is how you report the occurrence of a crime.

**Mr MULDER** - That is fine and I guess you will take on board the points that have been made by the committee in relation to the messages you send when you launch this thing and start to encourage people to use it.

**Mr HINE** - I am glad you have read the annual report. We will have a look at those words and maybe the information.

**Mr MULDER** - It is important because this is an annual report to the police, this isn't advice to the Crime Stoppers board. This is the sort of stuff that people read up on. When you launch a program you have to be a little bit careful. For example, New South Wales used the term 'police advice line'. You are advising the police of something rather than reporting a crime, which is clever wording to get around it.

Back onto crime in general, we have been through the statistics and the balance of resources that have contributed to property versus person crime. Moving now onto e-crime, I am aware that the Australian Crime Commission, for example, every year or so do an assessment of the impact of electronic crime or fraud or those sorts of things. I am not sure of the numbers now, but it runs into the billions to the cost to the taxpayer. It is widely accepted, as the banks will say, that this stuff is not reported to the police. It is not ever investigated, yet it has a major impact on the community and that cost is picked up by those who are least able to afford it, namely the holders of credit cards on excessively high interest rates. From a national perspective, around the commissioner's conferences, are we going to try to get things like mandatory reporting so at least we can start to get a handle on the nature and size of the problem, and the way these crimes are being committed? Until we start to do that, we will not have any idea about how to combat it other than the odd report or two we get.

**Mr HINE** - I could not agree with you more. We know there is significant under-reporting of e-crime across the community. As to the argument about mandatory reporting, that is for a community to have those discussions but we know it costs the community a lot of money. If you have been following our latest media strategies and also from the Facebook point of view, about fraud across the internet, we have been warning people of various scams that are happening across the internet. We have, unfortunately, lots of examples where people are being caught in the fraudsters' nets through the internet. Unfortunately, it happens to those people who can least afford it. We know it is billions of dollars. We know there is a huge under-reporting. It is an interesting conversation to get to mandatory reporting because banks and the community only report a low number, I would imagine, to the police. That is a conversation to be had.

We drugs has a significant influence on our community and costs a lot of money. We know certain crimes are not reported for investigation. With that, there is also a resourcing issue. If everything was reported to us, there is a resourcing issue to be investigated. We know the nature of e-crime is right across the globe. Someone sitting on a computer in eastern Europe can commit a crime in Tasmania. We know of many examples of that. There is the national Australian Cybercrime Online Reporting Network - ACORN - system to report and triage crime to say, for information purposes, what is needed to be referred to policing organisations to follow up and investigate.

It is about that community education. If it seems too good, it is going to be too good. If the offer you have been made on the telephone or across the internet seems too good, it is too good. If you are getting emails from someone you do not know in relation to some of these viruses they put on your computer and then ring you up say, if you want it unlocked you need to pay *x* amount of money, if you do not know the original of the email, a lot of the time do not open it unless you have really good, sophisticated software. We have all received, and I would imagine in this room, an email or telephone call from someone you do not know or someone purporting to be from a company that you are a little bit suspicious of. Banks and insurance companies do not ask over the telephone. If you do not know them, it is a matter of hanging up. It is about an education process.

**Mr MULDER** - Minister, from a policy perspective on all that, we all recognise it is all too difficult, it is all too fast-moving and the reality is that we are better off letting the market handle it because the costs to the community are being recovered through bank charges and user charges and those things. If that is okay for e-fraud and property crime, why isn't it the same for ordinary property crime where the insurance aspects cover the market? We can talk about offender rates. That is a cost to the community if you catch someone and put them in jail. It is a cost to the community when the crime occurs because they are all paying their insurance premiums. In

essence, the market is handling that. When you have that situation where the market is handling it, the insurance companies now start to limit the times in which they will complain, which in turn encourages the people to increase their security of preventive measures. That is a policy question.

**Mr HIDDING** - Your opening statement was that it is difficult to police. Where it is policable, it should be policed, from my point of view because in e-crime, so much is jurisdictional. If somebody is operating out of Wollongong preying on vulnerable people around Australia with some scam, that is a matter for the Wollongong CIB but all have to be working together and that is where CrimTrac is involved in this Project ACORN providing information around the nation to all the services. If we have somebody in Tasmania scamming people's credit card details, that is a very serious matter for Tasmania Police and they ought to get the full monty in terms of policing. If that occurs out of Hawaii, you can only do so much. Where it is policeable, it should be policed.

**Mr MULDER** - There is a scamming issue - and I was trying to get up to the policy issue because it happens in a number of ways. Some of the ways are the way you describe it, others are your card is being phished out of a specific geographic location. I don't know whether I explained my experience last year at Montevideo. I paid my hotel bill, not too far away from the Filipino house maid, and lo and behold 20 minutes later there were four transactions in Quezon City in the Philippines. That crime would never be reported. The bank simply corrected the issue and recovered their costs from all the other mug punters who are paying high interest rates on their cards. I think that is reprehensible. There ought to have been a situation where it should have been reported to the local police. This is happening daily around the world millions of times in a specific location yet law enforcement isn't even told about it.

**Mr HIDDING** - We are talking about the Tasmanian police not the Uruguayan police. If it was reversed and a visitor from Uruguay was in Tasmania and purchased something and within 15 minutes there was advice somebody had clipped to take \$5000 off that card and it was reported to Tasmania Police, what would Tasmania Police do?

**Mr HINE** - We would follow it up in the normal course. If it is someone from overseas, we will follow that up from overseas or hand it on to them. The whole nature of the internet and fraud is changing.

**Mr MULDER** - That is the point I am trying to get through. If you reported it to the police, then we have all these processes, but there is no encouragement to report those things to the police. Some of the scams are impossible to do because they are orchestrated out of Zambia and going through a Ukrainian server, say, but there are these other ones where you can get a handle on it. I know for a fact, having been in Quezon City, but not at that time, the Manila banks are all the same. You go to an ATM anywhere in Manila and you are being recorded, yet here they were with specific transactions that could have been investigated, they could have got the identity of people, but nothing happened. As a policy perspective, are we happy with that?

**Mr HIDDING** - No, we're not, but in policing and a public policy stance when a crime becomes apparent to Tasmania Police that it is taking place within our jurisdiction I would expect that to be investigated and whoever it was, whether it was a house maid or a senior person, get them before a court. In Tasmania we are part of a civilised nation and we are a civilised sovereign state and we should do our part in the world as an example to others.

**Mr MULDER** - Given the fact that if we had mandatory reporting, the weak link in your argument is 'if' it comes to the notice of the police. That is my policy question to you: do you think needs looking at?

**Mr HIDDING** - That is a good question for the Law and Justice Council perhaps where in many ways the attorneys and commissioners of police are exercised by how the banks relate to them. They are very protective of their in-house information, where in fact they could be a lot more assistance to policing in Australia. There is an ongoing tension there between that sector of the community and the police around Australia, also fairness of disclosure and all those matters and personal information.

But there could well be a case to pursue nationally that, where there is such a fraud become apparent to police, it ought to be immediately reported to the source if it is in Australia. Why would you report it to the source even if it was in Uruguay? The ANZ Bank in Australia should immediately let somebody know in Uruguay, this is what has happened to one of our citizens in your patch. I think it is a great idea. I am not opposed at all. I think we could advance a discussion with our interstate colleagues.

**Mr MULDER** - That is the point about the mandatory reporting of crime. It should not be on the basis or whether or not you can do something about it. It should be on the basis of, this is a community issue because the ACC is actually doing a lot of estimates because they do not have the real figures. They are doing some guesstimates and it is in the billions. Banks are wearing this cost, and then, as I said, pushing it off to those who can probably least afford to pay. I was asking that question specifically from a policy perspective. Thanks for your response.

**CHAIR** - How are we going there, Tony? We have a lot of outputs to get through. How are you going?

Mr MULDER - I have finished investigation of crime at this point.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - 2.2 poppy security. This output focuses on the protection and security of poppy crops. In the year 2014-15 there were 330 capsules reported stolen, up on 21 from the season before. Do you have a figure of how many for this year, or this year just gone?

**Mr HINE** - Thanks for the question. Capsules stolen in relation to over the number of years, I can go through for a couple of years or are you just after those years?

Mrs HISCUTT - I have it went from 21 capsules in 2013-14 This is what I have.

**Mr HINE** - The capsules stolen during the poppy season and it does vary, from 1 July 2015 to 31 March 2016 was 516. But you go back from  $11\12$  it was 687, then 2900, 3900 capsules recovered. For 1 July 2015, 1500 capsules were recovered. Interferences; from 10 interferences two people have been charged during that time.

Mrs HISCUTT - Where did you find those 1500 capsules?

Mr HINE - I do not have the location, but the two offenders have been charged.

Mrs HISCUTT - In the state?

Mr HINE - Yes.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - Minister, back in 2012 there was a move for the funding of the PACB to move from the state two levies onto the growers. That has happened, has it? It hasn't?

**Mr HIDDING** - That is a matter for the Minister for Primary Industry, but I think you will find no levy was applied.

Mrs HISCUTT - The PACB is part of this output, isn't it, the protection of poppy security?

**Mr HIDDING** - No, it comes under primary industry. But I can indicate to you that I think you will find that no levy was applied. It is part of an ongoing discussion with the industry. The disclaimer; it is not my portfolio. This is a policing, that support is provided to the PACB and there is a senior police officer on the PACB.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - In 2016-17 there was a drop in funding. That was to reflect the alignment and actual expenditure trends. What happened there for that to go down, then to come back up again?

Mr HINE - In relation to the expenditure?

Mrs HISCUTT - 2016-17 it is allocated \$981, which is a decrease.

**Ms HARRIS** - What we found over time is that we often readjust our budgets to reflect actual expenditure. We found that with our poppy security we have been overstating the expenses incurred. It was more of a budget adjustment downwards as opposed to an impact on the operational effect of the policing.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - So I see your forward Estimates even in 2019-2020, have not gone back up to the 2015-2016 level. This is a more accurate reflection of -

Ms HARRIS - Yes, a more accurate estimate of actual expenditure.

Mr HIDDING - The same level of coverage, more accurate expenditure.

Ms HARRIS - Thank you.

**CHAIR** -The contracted area would be about half this coming year. Maybe that might be so for a while. We will have to ask the question why perhaps as much.

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes. I was going to because I thought the levies had been transferred onto the growers.

**Mr HIDDING -** In budgeting terms for policing, you would understand this department is not going to be able to predict the growing levels. We have to have the policing ready, based on what has happened in the past.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - My concern there, Chair, was that with the less acreage being grown and if there was a levy, but there is not, so it does not matter.

Mr HIDDING - I am not sure. I do not think so.

CHAIR - Any more questions on 2.2? If not, we will move to 2.3.

#### 2.3 Fisheries Security -

**Mr GAFFNEY** - This states it is protection of state and Australian marine resources through compliance and enforcement duties. Because it has the Australian marine badge as well, do we get any funding at all from the federal Government to assist with this, or is it just purely state funding? It is \$5 million or thereabouts or just in excess of. Because we have a national responsibility, do you get any funding from the federa?

Mr HINE - Yes, we do. Marijke would be able to give you the exact figure if she -

**Ms HARRIS** - I do not know about the exact figures, but yes, we do receive Commonwealth funding. The name of the organisation escapes me. It used to be DUHA was the acronym, but I think it has a different name now. I might have to find that for you and come back to you. Yes, we do receive commonwealth funding to patrol state and federal waters.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Could you come back the last three years with how much funding was from the federal government? Because over that last three or four-year period so we know. The figure is reflective of \$5 million - whether that is all from the state or whether it is a combination of both. It is a \$120 000 increase from last year. The next projected works are between \$80 000 to \$100 000. That would just be incremental rises to do with a proportion of the activity, or why is that rise of \$120 000? Is that for another person or whatever?

**Ms HARRIS** - We have our wage indexation built into our salaries for those officers. So from 2016-2017 police are starting to get their wage increases again, because they had the pay pause for a period. We are reflecting increase in salaries.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Thank you. Could you provide the numbers of the FTEs and their roles and responsibilities and where they are located as at -May 1 2014, May 1 2015 and May 1 2016 so I can see if there has been an increase in numbers because I know for a while there was a stability period perhaps. Then I would be interested to see what those numbers were. Have you got those on hand?

**Mr HIDDING** - Let us see what we can look at just now. We might need to provide some of them later. So three years, did you say, at the various locations?

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Yes, 2014, 2015, 2016 and how many of those were frontline staff or staff on the background?

Mr HINE - Is that for the entire workforce or just submarine?

Mr GAFFNEY - Just those involved with fishing security.

**Mr HIDDING** - We have got police officers all around Tasmania who are involved in fisheries security, but also marine policing - is that what you are after?

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I think so. I just want to know those you have responsible for this line item, so that is where there are some dedicated FTEs.

**Mr HINE** - We can certainly get that for you, Mr Gaffney. We have those dedicated marine officers, so we should be able hopefully before we finish today we will get those figures.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - If you have dedicated marine officers, and you obviously cannot have them in every port, - if there was an issue where there was not a dedicated marine officer, they would contact the local police enforcement agent and say, 'Look, we have got an issue down here. Go and check it out'?

Mr HINE - Yes.

Mr GAFFNEY - But the responsibility lies with the marine enforcement officer?

**Mr HINE** - Every police officer has the power to enforce the legislation, but if they need assistance, if there is an issue and they have not got the skills or expertise, they call on the marine police. They are around on the east coast, the west, and the central unit down here in Hobart. They deal with the bigger issues they need to deal with including the inspections on the boats and other major investigations. Every police officer has the basic skills to check what should be done and the compliance issue. We have a dedicated marine section as well in St Helen's.

**Mr GAFFNEY -** What I want to know is how many are dedicated at that level, to see whether there is going to be an increase, decrease or whatever.

**Mr HIDDING** - There are arrangements at country stations. One particular station I was at recently where there are two police officers there, one of whom has marine skills but only gets involved as required. When there happens to be a boat there, she would be operating the vessel with the other police officer because she has particular marine skills. At St Helens there are a number of police officers up there who have marine skills. They will be out on the roads doing traffic policing just like everybody else.

Ms FORREST - Multi-skilled.

**Mr HIDDING** - They are. That is what it is about. Every police officer is able to issue tins, mins and fins - traffic infringement, marine infringement and fisheries infringements.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I was surprised at the number of fisheries securities detected. 1250 was for 2013-2014 was the actual. The target is to be decreasing that. Is it possible to get a break down of those offences? Also, it says 'were detected'. What is the break down of those offences? Of those detected, how many were prosecuted? We know in some areas you could detect something but whether there is a prosecution or an infringement notice is a different story.

Do you have the capacity to track repeat offenders? If somebody is doing it and is just getting caught, are the fines severe enough or is it not having any influence on the behaviour? Sometimes within any industry or recreation you have the same people who are repeat offenders willing to risk. Do you have any comments on those?

**Mr HINE** - The repeat offenders right across the spectrum of law enforcement is always going to be an issue. In the marine enforcement area there is intelligence holding. They would certainly keep track of repeat offenders. That can include those who keep offending but have not been prosecuted as yet. Those laws in relation to marine enforcement and legislation are pretty severe.

Mr HIDDING - Including loss of vessel, all that sort of stuff.

Mr GAFFNEY - Equipment and whatever. That is when it starts to hit home.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is because some of the stuff they are involved in, including rock lobster, is literally gold. You poach 10 rock lobster you are sitting on \$1000 cash. They might see that as worthwhile, but the laws are some of the toughest laws in our whole system. You can lose the lot. Even your car towing the vessel.

**Mr MULDER** - How many of those confiscations and what value of assets have been done? We talk about the potential and I am aware of a couple. Does it happen often?

**Mr HIDDING** - Generally, again a matter for Mr Rockliff when he comes in front of you because fisheries enforcement is carried out by Tasmania Police but based in Primary Industries.

**Mr MULDER** - Primary Industries would not have the data of detections. Those would have been collected by police, would they not?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, they would. It goes on their licences, they get demerit points against their licences at which point they could lose their house if they are not careful. When Mr Rockliff is before you, his department will lead you through the statistics of fisheries enforcement which is different to marine enforcement, which are boat infringements.

Mr MULDER - The police commissioner has no data about the number of seizures?

**Mr HINE -** Not to hand, Mr Mulder, but we keep a record of the various seizures. I understand your question, Mr Gaffney; you want the marine offenders detected broken down into various categories?

**Mr GAFFNEY** - It gives the number of total marine offenders affected. It would be good to note the breakdown of those - 25 per cent are major, or whatever. Of those, how many get prosecuted, as well. I know infringement notices would go out, so they obviously get prosecuted. However, sometimes they get detected but they do not always get prosecuted, just because of the nature of the beast. I am just interested in that.

Mr HINE - We will get those figures for you.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - How many inspections of fish processing facilities were conducted in the 2015-16 period and were there any infringement notices given from those inspections?

**Mr HINE** - We do keep a record of facilities that are inspected and we can readily get those for you.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - The last one is about the working status of the vessels used by the fisheries security. I would be interested to know how many of those vessels you have - Government-owned boats or ships - the replacement status of those vessels and how you work that out over a number of years as an asset management plan. We were presented with an asset management plan yesterday but we were not allowed to view it. That was fine but when it is a replacement of a vessel, how do you coordinate that?

**Mr HIDDING-** There is a structured process for that. After the failure of the *Fortescue*, we rethought the whole thing and it was decided then that we would go for another of the very large vessels - the 80-footer type vessels so that we had two of those, and that is in hand. The next replacement will be the 12 to 14-metre *Dauntless* vessel. Another one or two in that fleet are the next replacement but even then the *Van Diemen* - the large one we are currently using, even though it goes into semi-retirement because the new one comes on, it still needs to be replaced itself in about 2021-22. There is structured process for all that and we could probably provide that.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - You provide the information at some stage; that would be fine. I was interested in finding out how it works.

**Mr HINES** - We do have strategic asset management planning including the vessels so it could be a motor refresh rather than the wholes for our vessels.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - When I see the budget line, it is only increasing by \$80 000 or \$100 000 over the next four or five years. Are you expected to have that vessel replacement as part of that budget item when you know that there is a different pool of money available for that replacement?

**Mr HINE** - Normally for general maintenance that is where that money comes from - out of that budget. If there is a major refurbishment of motors or small vessels then we do it as a budget submission, just as our large vessel replacement program goes through the budget process to get our large vessel. That is similar to our smaller vessels as well.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - If that occurs, does that come under your line item or does that go somewhere else? Would it come under your line item?

Mr HINE - Yes, it is embedded in.

Mr GAFFNEY - Thank you.

**Mr HINE -** Mr Gaffney, can I read out the figures in relation to marine enforcement officers, as I have them to hand now? We have one inspector in Hobart, with five sergeants and 18 constables. We have at Strahan one sergeant and one constable; at Stanley we have one sergeant and two constables; at Currie we have one constable; at Georgetown we have two constables; at St Helens we have two constables, and at Orford one constable. They are classed as Marine Police but as the minister quite rightly said, they co-opt others to help them. They also help the general police as well and vice versa.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - That is great and if you could provide those figures for 2014-15 as well and then we can see.

#### 2.4 Support to Judicial Services

#### [11.30 a.m.]

**Mr GAFFNEY** - There has already been some conversation around it but it is quite significant funding. It is \$10 million and it has a lot of different aspects to it, such as the prosecution of offenders, provision of diversionary programs, bail warrant processing, victim support service and investigation, and clerical investigation service on behalf of Coroner. In addition, the department

plays a lead role in reduction and management of family violence. We have had some discussion about that already.

Take, for example, the section that says 'clerical investigation service on behalf of the Coroner'. Do you sanction off a part of your budget of the \$10 million for that or do you keep a record of the hours worked and then charge it against that? How does that work? How do you break it down? If I said to you, 'What amount of money goes towards your diversionary programs?' Would you be able to say that? Or would you say, 'No, it is part of the whole gamut and just the one big line item'.

**Mr HINE** - I think it is a combination of both. In relation to the support to the Coroner's Court, we have dedicated resources funded against that line item. In relation to the other one, it is placed in a large bucket that is charged against that. Ms Harris has probably got a more defined explanation of that, if you would like to hear it.

**Ms HARRIS** - Like all our different areas that are currently providing support to judicial services we have separate budgets set up for each of those in order to capture their cost. So whether they are part of our Safe at Home initiative from 2004, or part of the coronial activities, we have got separate budgets all set up for them.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Say, for example, the diversionary program, was that the U-Turn that wasn't part of this diversionary program funding?

**Mr HINE** - The funding did come to our department as part of the U-Turn. As you know, it was transferred across to the Justice Department.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Rosie Batty - you have got to give her credit as Australian of the Year. She highlighted family violence and it put it right at the forefront of everybody's attention. There have been a lot of good things happen from that. Hopefully, that can be sustained and maintained in the future and we do not just have to wait for the next Australian of the Year in tragic circumstances to be able to do that. I am interested in the diversionary program with domestic violence especially in the issue of boys to men. A lot of young teenagers whom I have taught didn't have a role model at home and didn't have somebody that they could discuss this with and learn that that is not the way you act. So it was part of their environmental make-up more so than what they thought.

With the diversionary program, are there going to be any funds from out of this pool or another pool that will assist in breaking the cycle? Sometimes we are reactive to incidents and after the horse has bolted it is hard to bring it back in. Will any diversionary program on family violence be out of this budget, or is that different?

**Mr HIDDING** - It might well be carried out by this agency but funds come from elsewhere, as we are essentially the lead agency in this. It could well be DPAC funding that comes to us.

**Mr HINE** - Mr Gaffney, you are right on the money about role models and the respectful relationships initiative that is put in through the schools through the Government initiatives. As you know there was \$26 million over four years committed to various programs. \$8 million came to Tasmania Police to set up the new unit and a lot of the other programs that you were describing are through other Government agencies as well. You have hit on a very important point about respectful relationships and diversionary programs; some of those are taken by other agencies. Our portion for the Safe Families initiative is \$8 million for the extra police prosecutors, of whom there were three, and setting up the new unit.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - The officers that you are able to put into, say, colleges and schools, I think is a fantastic program. They are there to be aware of what is happening within colleges. It's a diversion type of thing. Does any of that funding come out of here, or is it out of a different pool?

**Mr HINE -** No, that is out of a different pool and those colleges supply some money to employ the police officer to work in those college. As you said, it's all part of a bigger picture, and whilst they are not there to do some of the diversionary programs or be good role models, it all has an effect. Everyone across the organisation has a role to play in family violence and that's why we are becoming a white ribbon accredited agency.

It has a really positive effect and some of the colleges are coming to us and asking if they can have a police in school. We have the Adopt-a-Cop that adopt other schools as well, and different programs. It all feeds into a larger picture and I am very committed to making sure we all play a role and it's not just one area, but some areas play bigger roles than others. As an organisation, we will become white ribbon accredited so we can all feed into the community picture, as I know you do as well.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Thanks for that. You mentioned that the family violence incidents which are being reported are increasing, which is a good thing. I am wondering if there has been any movement from district to district, whether there has been any change, and you are seeing a proliferation of that activity in one district and not another and whether you have to change your resource to cater for that.

**Mr HINE** - It moves around a bit and it can be broken down into reports from some towns compared to other towns, let alone districts and divisions, and it can move.

We are resourcing on a per head of population basis but we have similar resourcing for our units that is equal across the state. Every police officer responds to family violence matters, it doesn't have to be a specialised unit. We have specialised units that do some follow up work, moving more into the perpetrator management as well as the victim support.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - That program is an interesting one because when we talk about repeat offenders through fisheries or gun or whatever, there are repeat offenders through relationships as well. They would be well known to the police. They tend to go from one violent relationship into potentially another violent relationship. Is that where some of the funding and the support is going to go? I know this sounds not politically correct, but you have to help that person manage their behaviour so they are not going to inflict it on anyone else. It is not only the victims of violence which is an area, it's the perpetrators we need to spend some time with as well.

**Mr HINE** - You have brought up some really important points and that is where the new unit is identifying those who come to any agency, whether it's health and human services, education, police or justice. Repeat offenders, or perpetrators, it is really important to map and identify because they will move on to different partners. Therefore it is a risk factor and we need to put things in place, to manage the perpetrator in relation to that. There is no point not having various programs they can enter into, and as you said, modify their behaviour.

That is the uniqueness of this unit, pulling all the information, to not only manage the perpetrator and the victim but to fill those gaps. We make the offer, and when they have their case management sessions you can see some of these things pull together when they do a session.

We had some real gaps but that is starting to decrease. You could not answer a lot of those questions about repeat perpetrators and identifying the high risk and some of those factors that are high risk, assaults on pregnant women, strangulation. All those things would not be well mapped but now they are getting much better mapped. I am more than happy for anyone to come along, with the minister's agreeance, and watch a mapping session to see some of these things getting pulled together.

Mr GAFFNEY - There are 12 units response units. Do you have the 12 units still?

**Mr HINE** - We have one in each district. So there are three districts and three units. They are now dealing with the victim support and the perpetrator management as well on a more specialised basis. Every police officer they attend the family violence matters when it is first reported.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Due to the federal interest in this area I think Tasmania has led the way a little bit in this because of the Premier's preparedness to put some money into it. Are you able to access funding now from the federal government regarding violence and domestic situations to assist you?

**Mr HINE** - You would have been aware of the \$100 million the federal government put into it. Some of that has come to Tasmania, not to Tasmania Police but also to Tasmania. There are still opportunities for us to tap into and make application for the various funding and initiatives we are looking at.

I want to make sure we do not stop. We have to keep the spotlight on it, we have to keep it in the headlines and we have to keep the journey going because there are a lot of other initiatives we can take to make sure we make women, children and victims of family violence, safer. So there are opportunities, yes.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Minister, with the \$100 million, and Tasmania has a portion, I suppose that would be discussed and decided at Cabinet level. How do you proportion it out to the agencies where you want to have the most impact ?

**Mr HIDDING** - The general comment would be funding like this would normally be accessed by various agencies for various good things. Education would be able to apply to part of that federal funding for programs in schools. DPAC could well go central. The Attorney-General would have access to another part of that. Each agency, individually, would apply for funding for its projects and that is how our funding would come.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - For example, if the education department already had \$2 million of state money sanctioned off to a bullying program are they then able to access \$2 million of federal funding, put that into the education department and take away the \$2 million they had already put aside back into the coffers? What happens there, and I am not saying it does, but I am interested to understand where that money has gone because otherwise you have a transference of funding with no extra funding?

**Mr HIDDING** - My experience with the federal governments are they are much smarter than that. You have to make a case, they will look at your own budget and see what you are doing. Generally it is matching funding. Those kind of protocols exist generally across the board.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I realise they are much smarter than that. I may talk to you because I am not sure who I am going to vote for it so it would be helpful to have some of your insight into the smarter federal politicians.

**Mr HIDDING** - I am not talking politicians I am talking very much the agencies because those dealings are done at agency level.

Mr GAFFNEY - Thank you.

#### Output group 3 Traffic Policing

#### 3.1 Traffic Policing -

**Mr MULDER** - I note on page 29 of the annual report the department has removed camera hours from its targets. It says, 'we removed the target because of the -

**Mr HIDDING** - Perhaps if I start the conversation by saying you will have noticed around Tasmania we do not have trailers being placed there by police officers anymore. We now have fixed speed cameras predominantly and mobile ones as well but not highway side policing, so it would relate to that.

**Mr MULDER** - My question specifically is, you have said because you have taken these mobile cameras from the high-volume areas and dedicated them to the rural roads - where the crash data is or deployment - or was it just a withdrawal?

**Mr HINE** - It is probably the opposite, Mr Mulder. The cameras have been put into various areas on the poles as a result of the Auditor-General's report some years ago about those access areas to various major centres. That is where the cameras have gone, therefore those police officers freed up from looking after speed cameras have been redeployed or they can patrol some of the rural roads and highways.

**Mr MULDER** - So that is a relocation of patrols. We don't measure the targeted hours of deployment?

**Mr HIDDING** - There aren't any of those; however, there are still motorcycle police who have hand-held devices. We have these fixed cameras, one less than we should have because somebody took an axe to it.

**Mr MULDER** - There is a lot of work about enforcement, and this is what I am getting out of the Road Safety Advisory Council and some of your comments last year, minister. The major cause of many of our accidents are things such as low speed rear-enders because people are not alert and keeping decent separation distances as required. Another one is around merges and roundabouts where there are side swipes, bumps, crashes and those sorts of things. What activity goes around these areas that are causing a lot of these minor crashes?

**Mr HIDDING** - I would expect the answer you are about to get from the commissioner would be policing for paying attention on the road. This goes to people using telephones while they are driving and so on. It is an identified high-risk area in crashes that people are not paying enough attention. We still hold that speed, including exceeding the speed limit, excessive speed for the

conditions and circumstances is the number one factor for fatal and serious-injury crashes in Tasmania and therefore it is very worthwhile focusing on.

**Mr MULDER** - I was particularly concerned about the accident rates and the statistics and the fact we have identified several times that these are particular hotspots. These activities, particularly rear-enders and merges on roundabouts, I am fairly sure that if they happen, police might or might not be called - quite often not. If they are called and there is an office, they will issue the appropriate infringement notice. There need to be some programs, surely, about increasing driver awareness of these issues. Many of these accidents could be serious, it just depends on whether the person was wearing a seatbelt, where they have been hit or things like that. They are volume accidents but every accident has the potential of becoming a serious casualty crash irrespective of the circumstances. What activity occurs in community awareness or monitoring?

**Mr HIDDING** - The Road Safety Advisory Council would be the agency that would engage Tasmanian drivers with the need to pay more attention, and also for things such as roundabouts. It is legendary that Tasmanian drivers are not the best in the world at negotiating roundabouts.

Mr MULDER - What enforcement activity occurs around these hotspots?

**Mr HIDDING** - The question you asked me was how we are engaging with people to get them to behave better. There is marketing activity by us and the police sit on that and can raise it, but in terms of enforcement that is the commissioner's call.

**Mr HINE** - Every year we run Operation Zero, which targets those minor crashes. On average there are about 5000 infringement notice cautions issued because it is mainly cautions. We have a couple of weeks' lead-up to raise the awareness of motorists about those very issues you have raised. It is about an education program, with an enforcement aspect to it as well. But the majority of those are cautions to make sure it is raising their awareness of some of those things, as you said, that they are not paying attention to. I am not sure if you are aware, just recently we gave attention to blocking up intersections, those sorts of things, because people get complacent about some of these traffic offences.

You are right, we work with the Road Safety Advisory Council about education programs. We do some ourselves through social media and then enforcement every year in Operation Zero. Also, police officers, as they go about their business, if they see some of these things, obviously they will intercede it. A lot of them are cautions because it is about an education program.

**Mr MULDER** - I note that you have also had some fun with the crossings of cyclists disobeying pedestrian crossings as they are driving through them. It is amazing how these people are victims but they do not see that they can cause damage. I commend you for that.

What objective data exists to suggest that exceeding a posted speed limit is the major contributor to serious-casualty crash data?

**Mr HIDDING** - The Road Safety Advisory Council takes the view that speeding is the number one factor. But it is not always involved in every crash and it is not always the key factor. You might have somebody travelling at the speed limit but way over in alcohol blood reading and could well cause a crash there. Still, as the number one factor appearing in fatal and serious accidents, speeding is still it. I indicate that speeding by 15 kph or more has been identified as a high-risk offence, and it is for that reason Tasmania Police has continued to focus on that. In 2015-16 to 31

March, 35 per cent of all speeding infringements issued were for speeding at 15 kph over the limit or more. This figure increased from 16 per cent in 2009-10, so there has been a marked shift in policing there. It could be a marked shift in driver behaviour as well but I suspect it is a bit of both. Certainly 15 kph over the speed limit is formally identified as a high-risk offence now.

**Mr MULDER** - Formally identified. Does it appear in the crash data? I presume that it does. My question was, is there objective evidence? Is this just an assessment by an attending police officer post the event, or have accident investigators gone into these areas and measured skid marks and done all those other scientific measurements of the speed?

**Mr HIDDING** - In terms of the detail, I will get the commissioner to answer, but there was a Rural Road Policing Strategy developed by Tasmania Police aimed at reducing fatal and serious injury crashes in rural areas because that was an issue presenting itself. In 2014, 63 per cent of fatal and serious accidents occurred on rural roads. In 2015, it was reduced to 57 per cent, which is not that much but it is still a big area of focus for Tasmania Police.

**Mr HINE** - In 2015, from the analysis of the figures, 26 per cent of the serious and fatal accidents had speed as a causal factor in our crash statistics. In 2015, 16 per cent of fatal and serious accidents - again, those are the ones where the true investigation occurs - had the crash factor as alcohol, and 8 per cent had other drugs as a factor. I think that answers the question you are asking.

**Mr MULDER** - Not really, because what I am driving at - and it has been a consistent theme, I might say - is that you look at an accident. The police officer attends and says, 'Yes, travelling too fast for the conditions, speed was a cause of the accident'. Enforcement activity can only really be around posted speed limits. Although we all know speed, must be a contributing factor quite often these things are inattention. You are travelling well below the posted speed limit, but you have drifted onto the verge and things like that. What I am trying to get at is the objective data that suggests enforcing the posted speed limit is having an impact on the crashes.

Mr HIDDING - On driver behaviour generally, I would have thought.

Mr MULDER - This is the problem there are assumptions.

**CHAIR** - Can we try to get to questions, because we are already behind time with our schedule, so if you can focus on questions rather than too much commentary would be helpful. We want answers.

Mr MULDER - These are questions.

CHAIR - They are not framed as a question.

**Mr HIDDING** - One of the issues here is we have quite correctly put fatal and serious crashes together, because with medical advances these days we are able to keep people alive much better than in the past. Every time there is a fatal, a coroner actually determines what the factors were. In the past that is what has been relied on and I would suspect investigation of serious crashes by trained police officers also put in their assessment. I do not know what else you could use as empirical evidence. If you have a better plan for policing of speed limits you should share that with the Commissioner. State Growth looks after crash database, so when they are in shortly, we can ask them.

**Mr MULDER** - With your detections, be they by speed cameras, fixed, mobile or by the handheld devices, could we have a breakdown please of the by penalty category on infringement notices and by fixed, mobile and the hand-helds? Thank you. Also I would probably like to know what your speed enforcement figures are in relation to the Rural Roads where the majority of your problems are.

Mr HIDDING - There are series of tables that we are able to provide.

**CHAIR** - Can they be tabled?

Mr HIDDING - Tables that we can print off and provide to you, yes.

**Mr MULDER** - The other one is the location of your fixed cameras. There are some suggestions I think by Acting Assistant Commissioner Edwards quoted in the *Mercury*: 'Fixed cameras are providing a deterrent to speeding and the locations have been chosen to maximise their impact'. An unfortunate choice of words. The other thing is they were targeting areas where it was suggested that the crash rates were of some major factor. I am pretty familiar with the area of the Tasman Highway between the airport and at Cambridge where you have a fixed camera. I am only really aware of one major crash there.

Mr HIDDING - At that site, you mean.

**Mr MULDER** - At that area. The cause of that crash, was an intoxicated young person crossing a darkened highway. There was no speed as far as I could see and it was the unlit nature of the highway that was the problem.

**Mr HIDDING** - I suspect that Commander Edwards was talking about crashes on the Tasman Highway and in that linear area. Where you actually put the camera - apart from the fact that we don't put a sign up saying camera here - we put signs up to say cameras along this road. We want them to slow down the entire length of the Tasman Highway. On the Brooker, there is a terrible crash history on the Brooker in its linear, so we put it at a place where some people might intuitively know it was there, but the point is generally the travelling public should and does react well in moderating behaviours like, 'I don't know where one of those damn fixed cameras is'. It is not actually aimed at right on the crash site -

**CHAIR** - Are you asking about the rationale behind where they are placed; is that what you are asking?

**Mr HINE** - Donna was actually involved in the entire project. It did stem from an Auditor-General report, so if we can hear from Donna.

**Ms ADAMS** - There were four criteria in terms of where a camera was placed. Traffic flow was one because that was in accordance with the Auditor-General's report. He was of the view they needed to be high traffic flow areas to create a perception that you will get caught if you speed. The second criteria was around crashes within a kilometre of the placement of the camera. The third criteria was in regard to safety of the operators that need to attend to the camera and also motorist safety that someone driving in a reckless way, we did not want them driving into the pole, which has happened in the past. The fourth criteria was in regard to power. We have to have access to power to be able to put the camera in a site. The site you refer to, Tasman Highway, the crash data

is high on the area near the airport, the 80 kilometre zone past the airport and this around creating the perception you will get caught if you speed in that area.

**Mr MULDER** - Thanks and I will save my other questions about what we do not like in this goat track to State Growth.

What objective data exists to suggest breath analysis reading between .05 and .08 are materially great in the serious crash casualty data than in the general population? The answer there would be, you are doing surveys all the time with your random breath and other testing of what the level of 0.05 is in the general motoring public. Is there any correlation between those low level readings and an increased presence in the crash data?

**Mr HINE** - The question is multi-faceted, as in those who drive over 0.05, are they any less safe on the road than those under 0.05. There are many studies in relation to that. Many experts have had their opinion and there is a high correlation between those driving who will have alcohol in their systems above 0.05. In the crash statistics, I could produce to you many research papers.

Mr MULDER - I could produce a few that say the opposite.

Mr HIDDING - You are arguing you would have the same outcome at 0.08 as 0.05.

**Mr MULDER** - I am not arguing anything. I am asking what data you have and what correlation has been done between what the 0.05, 0.08 level is in the population and is that represented or greater in the crash data?

**Mr HIDDING** - I would be somewhat perturbed if Road Safety Advisory Council or police had a policy unit going somewhere, considering the difference between 0.05 and 0.08. The fact is, it is 0.05 now and we have no plans to change it.

**Mr MULDER** - That is fine, but, has our enforcement regime, which involves three months of loss of licence and if you do it twice, you end up in mandatory alcohol program which has an enormous impact on people in our electorates, compared to rural people. 0.05 and 0.08, in most other jurisdictions, does not result in an automatic suspension of licence. Is it a good policy issue based on this data and information for us to be having this penalty regime as a policy issue, rather than a more reasonable approach, with a lower impact upon our constituents than others?

**Mr HIDDING** - It sounds like a fair area of inquiry for individual members of parliament. As a government and Tasmania police, it is not an area of interest for us because it is 0.05 and we intend to police it. If there needs to be a change, it needs to be driven from other members of parliament from the community, up. If there is a strong case for it, the Government will look at it.

**Ms FORREST** - No policy consideration to drop it to 0.02. This is a matter raised by the Road Safety Committee some years ago and strongly supports the evidence the commissioner provided in relation to the difference between 0.05 and 0.08.

**Mr HIDDING** - Our Government has no policy intent to change 0.05. Always happy to listen to recommendations from RSAC - it is a very good body. I am not aware they are working on anything different. We are working on the safe system approach now which is roads and policing supports that. Happy to engage with any member of Parliament or any person who has a view that it ought to be looked at.

**Mr MULDER** - I am just looking at the evidence base to your policies, that is all. That will do me on traffic policing.

**Mr FARRELL** - Minister, in relation to the tables on the fixed speed cameras - will that be able to show the number of infringements since the time they have been in place, which hopefully will be a declining table?

**Mr HIDDING** - I think for instance, the information on the fixed speed cameras go back, the numbers here are from 1 July 2015 to 2016. It was about 2015 they went live. My guess is that is a lifetime. Short lifetime numbers. It shows location, speed zone and how many at each point. We will provide that to the committee.

**Ms FORREST -** I am interested in terms of the random breath tests conducted. The targets dropped away. Is that because it is more targeted, so to speak? Rather than just broad scale.

**Mr HINE** - It is a whole different method of policing and it is intelligence led. It is contextual, people on the road, police officers on the road and on patrols. It is all very well to grab a section of highway and shut everybody down and test them. At a function I was at recently, somebody close to me was pulled up just outside of it.

**Ms FORREST** - We were pulled up on the way back from an east coast gathering the other night. The Tasman Highway but well away from the event. I said to Rob 'there are the police', they turned around and pulled us over. Good on them, I say.

**Mr HIDDING** - All they are doing is assuming there has been a function on there all night and these people are driving home, let us hope they are okay and let's blow it and see. The person was quite shocked. It was the first time he had been pulled up. People might say that was an infringement on his rights or he might have thought that. Afterwards, he expressed to me that is a better way to catch drink drivers.

**Mr HINE** - Our statistics have told us the greater detection rate is through mobile patrols in exactly those circumstances, rather than an RBT site. An RBT site has that reminder effect as well, for people to go through. It is more targeted but we have found that our detection rate is far more through those mobile patrols.

**Ms FORREST** - The number of offenders have gone up but your tests have gone down. It is a bad thing they are going up, that people are still drinking and driving. It is a more effective use of resources, I would have thought.

#### Mr HIDDING - Good policing

**Mr MULDER** - I would imagine the quality of those detections would have risen, too. There are a fair few over the 08s coming up in those issues.

A question I have that flows on from the speed cameras and Craig's question - one of the objectives is the idea to remind people constantly speeding they will get caught. That is a deterrent effect. I suggest the continuing escalation of detections on the bridge when people know they are there and it keeps rising, perhaps it is not quite having the deterrent effect you envisage.

**Mr HIDDING -** That is an interesting area. If people are doing that and not modifying their behaviour then it leads you wondering if they are driving disqualified anyway - that is a huge area - or are the traffic fines not enough? RSAC are looking at that.

**Mr MULDER** - I might suggest the major thing you get - you will get this when we get the statistics from these cameras is the vast majority of these things are what you would mark inadvertent attention and are issues of not necessarily excessively dangerous behaviours. If you can drive at 70 kph you are lucky. If you do and you are only a few kilometres over it it is not necessarily the danger impact. It is the attention.

**Mr HIDDING** - I suspect if we announce tomorrow the camera on the bridge is broken, I suspect the peak hour traffic would be at 100 kph. Whenever I am on that bridge everyone wants to go like crazy; they are holding themselves back.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - On the bridge, for example, the number of motorists travelling over the speed limit by less than 10 kph is hugely more than those going, say, more than 10 kph over, when you can travel over 70 kph on the bridge, which is at certain times of the day, but a lot of times you can't - is it just inattention?

**Mr HINE** - Through the Auditor-General's report, there is a tolerance. No-one will ever be charged for 1 or 2 kilometres over the speed limit. Some of the report on government services surveys, the last one that was done in 2014-15, 56 per cent of those surveyed said they had been travelling at some stage 10 kilometres over the speed limit, and they knew they had. There is still that wanting to go above the speed limit.

**Ms FORREST** - A disregard for the limit, basically, as opposed to an inadvertent couple of kilometres over the limit?

Mr HINE - Yes.

Mr FARRELL - Do you measure the speed of traffic going up the bridge as well as coming down?

**Mr HINE** - The cameras are on each side and there are figures in relation to those detectors. One side is greater than the other. The cameras change lanes and they are changed quite regularly across different lanes. The western side has a greater number of speeders compared to the eastern side, off the top of my head. The western side is about 1000 more compared to the eastern side.

**CHAIR** - Sometimes people make a complaint - and I have been caught myself - coming off a four lane, dual lane highway at perhaps 110 kph and you get into a slip lane where it changes back to 80 kph and suddenly you are caught on a speed camera. Is there some sort of discretionary distance that is given for motorists to slow down a bit or is it right at that point of 80 kph, or whatever it might be?

**Mr HIDDING** - We no longer use the white trailers that might or might not have been in that area. We now have mobile hand-helds which the police might be policing for a very good reason and the other cameras are on poles which are not in those circumstances. They are just in straight drive-through things. There is some discretion and some margin the Auditor-General has talked about. We don't discuss that because it becomes an offer to people to drive over the limit.

**Mr MULDER** - I have seen hand-held radars operating in the transition zones and I think that is what we are talking about here. Do we now enforce the law or are the cameras I am seeing just measuring driver behaviour?

**Mr HINE** - There are guidelines about where they can and can't set up and transition zones, if it is only a short distance, they may be getting them coming out of the 60 kph zone or they are pointing back to the 100 kph zone - how long is the transition zone.

**Mr TILYARD** - There are guidelines in transition zones between different speed zones as to where our people can do speed activities. The issue with overtaking lanes is a problem. We get people who take the opportunity to speed significantly through overtaking lanes to get past as many cars as they can because they like to be the car in front and we will see those sort of people.

We also have the difficulty of people who drive slowly until they get to the overtaking lane and then speed up. Overtaking lanes are a difficult area to police and we rely on our people to exercise appropriate discretion and generally speaking they do. I have not seen any in those locations but I am not saying it doesn't happen occasionally.

**Mr MULDER** - I will give you a specific example. As you are coming out of the Mornington roundabout and you are heading towards the Shoreline, heading up the hill, there is a 60 kilometres around the roundabout then there is the feed in from the Mornington estate, then there is an 80 kilometre zone up the road and there is a lane where you slip into the 80 kilometre zone if you want to turn into the commercial area. Then well up the hill there is a 100 kilometre zone. I am hoping they are only cautions but you have had people sitting 10 metres past the 80 zone, measuring the speed of cars in the 60 zone as they emerge from a 60 zone, approach a transition zone, on a four lane highway that is 100 kilometres just up the road. That seemed to me to be a bit nit picky and I am wondering what the guidelines are around that.

**Mr HIDDING** - It has been explained that there is discretion there. There are guidelines for good reasons. However, it could also be a very good reason that people have written to me who have been very frightened by people going too fast in an area and I might have raised it with the Commissioner of Police and he has said it sounds like we had better pay some attention to that area. Not necessarily from my office but elsewhere. I know there are requests for police with some scary behaviour going on because it does escalate.

**Mr TILYARD** - The other important point to make in relation to Tasmania Police's general approach to traffic reinforcement is about 40 per cent of the people we issue infringement notices to are not prosecuted but are given cautions so it is very much an educative program. It is not a strict enforcement and pay a fine.

Mr HIDDING - It is a road safety stance that we are taking.

#### Output Group 4 Emergency Management

**Mr MULDER** - A couple of questions in relation to state security. I will ask some questions and I am not after intelligence or specific tactics or operations but in general terms. The special operations group. It was for a while a dedicated group and then it became a part time group. What is its current status and are there any plans to adjust it?

Mr HINE - The current status is a part time group and there are no plans to adjust its status.

**Mr MULDER** - In the lessons from the Lindt Cafe siege in Sydney, has there been something? I was thinking about the comment in the press about the lack of experience of the negotiators and I was wondering if there was any commentary on that?

**Mr HINE** - As you know there is a coroner's investigation into the Lindt siege and the coroner has not handed down their findings but there has been various issues discussed through the ANZCTC.

**Mr MULDER** - The current threat level to police officers is higher than the general community, having been raised around the time of the Victorian Anzac Day threat. Is that threat still at that level or has it been downgraded?

**Mr HINE** - The threat is still at that level and as you know the threat levels have changed in relation to what was used back then to what is now, as rapid probable and police officers remain at the higher level.

Mr MULDER - Higher not the highest.

Mr HINE - Yes but it is at the probable level now. Same level as the community.

**Mr MULDER** - You are on to my favourite topic of possible, probable and likely. Thank you for that.

The other area relates to the rescue operations and I am wondering about how the helicopter is tracking in terms of hours, changes, deployment and cost because I know this is a perennial issue.

**Mr HIDDING -** I have asked questions about this as well and the usage over this financial year has been well over the expected usage. There are a number of different reasons for it. One certainly is the number of tourists in Tasmania, those accessing our wilderness areas and carrying personal locator beacons now. Yes, there is a cost but there is also great benefit from our visitor economy. In the community people say 'that has cost so much money' and 'can't the bushwalkers they look after themselves?' but I will gently point out that yesterday we had to have police officers on the water in big seas to rescue six people who went surfing because of the huge surf conditions off the east coast. They had to be pulled off Schouten Island and brought back to Coles Bay by our people. At the end of the day, we do the rescue work we need to do but we do call on people to be as responsible as they can be.

**Mr MULDER** - I am not critical of the excess hours. I am trying to suggest it is the way of the future and we need to start to understand it. Can you give me some idea of the trends last year and this year perhaps, on the numbers of operations it has been used on or flying hours dedicated, broken down possibly by rescue operations versus routine police operations, such as if you get a spike in a particular kind of crime, for aerial surveillance, and also medevac and the way the Tasmanian Ambulance Service use it - or is that a completely separate thing?

Mr HINE - Thirty per cent is now covered by Ambulance through the contract.

**Mr HIDDING** - I think it is working out fairly right. In 2014-15, there were 87 flying hours for Ambulance Tasmania; it was 79 the following year to March so it looks like coming out around

about the same. In Search and Rescue, there were 207 hours to 254. That is the spike I was talking about in Search and Rescue stuff. Police Operations will end up about the same. Flight crew training is quite advanced and I suspect that is simply because the number of hours generally are up. That relates to it in that you have to have a commensurate increase in training.

Mr MULDER - Or in staffing.

Mr HIDDING - Could be.

Mr MULDER - What were the hours for the Police Operations?

**Mr HIDDING** - I am happy to provide you with a table because there are six categories measured over two periods, if you are happy to see that.

**Mr MULDER** - I will take it as a table. It is a bit of information and we have to see it as the way of the future. I know that previous administrations have stood over the top of police commanders such as myself and flogged us mercilessly for using the helicopter because it happened to be the wrong line item. I am pleased to see, judging from your response, that the situation has changed somewhat.

**Mr HIDDING** - I am delighted to see - literally within hours, I would suspect under two hours - after the missing person at Evandale in the floods the other day, the helicopter was in the air and I saw one of our officers leaning out of the open door with binoculars going along the edge. It is as soon as that where it used to be that you would wait for half a day before you could task the helicopter.

**Mr MULDER** - I am wondering about the deployment protocols, which I hope have changed. Once upon a time, you would have to go and wake up an assistant commissioner in the middle of the night to ask permission to launch a helicopter.

Mr HIDDING - This table will show that it is being recognised as a very powerful policing tool.

Mr MULDER - And the deployment protocols?

**Mr HINE** - They are at commander level. They are well developed, through the Inspector, Marine and Rescue. It is well coordinated to make sure we have no delays and people are not getting woken up unnecessarily.

**Mr MULDER** - It is one area, minister, where you will never get criticism from me if you blow your budget in that area.

**Ms FORREST** - Minister, I did ask the Treasurer who provides the money in case you didn't realise that, but from your perspective, where is the whole-of-government radio network at?

**Mr HIDDING** - I am going to hand that to the Deputy Commissioner of Police, who chairs this project. It is a very big project and complex, but going well.

**Mr TILYARD** - We have recently appointed a new project manager for that particular project and we about to shortly announce the consultants we are bringing on board to help us with the next phase which is to work with all the government radio users.

Ms FORREST - Who is the project team?

**Mr TILYARD** - The project team is headed up by our new project manager who reports to our director of information and communication technology, Scott Wilson-Haffenden, and they report through to me. I chair the whole of government Radio Projects Steering Committee. We are about to bring the consultants on board to work with the radio users to identify the business needs. It has been one of the key issues that we have struggled to address in the past. What are the business needs of various users? We need to clarify that before we then look at what is the technical solution to our radio needs here in Tasmania, going forward.

The identification of this may well occur over the next 18 months and then that will get us to a point where we are in a position to put a business case to government with options, including associated funding for decisions around what the new network will look like.

**Ms FORREST** - Eighteen months until you go to the minister with a business case which is not necessarily a solution?

**Mr TILYARD** - It has options as to the various solutions but the decision is to be made about the preferred option and the objective is for us to have a new radio network by 2020. happy That is why it has always been the goal and so it is within that timeframe.

Ms FORREST - You are confident of meeting that timeline now?

Mr TILYARD - Yes.

**Mr MULDER** - I am to continue on with the mobile radio irrespective of what line item in the budget. The issue is with it is that the budget papers suggest to us that there has been a rescheduling of the cash in this particular project so the project is now a \$17.3 million project according to the budget. Last year it was a \$15 million project so is there two extra million dollars being put into it?

**Mr TILYARD -** I think over the forward Estimates period there were \$15 million per annum allocated for this particular item but at this stage, until we know the solution we are going to go with we don't know what the new radio network will cost but it is certainly not anywhere near \$17 million at the moment.

Mr MULDER - The budget cost I think is the .-

**Mr TILYARD** - Are you not talking about the emergency services computer aid despatch system, are you? A different project.

**Mr MULDER** - You may be right. With the mobile radio network and I think the minister would be quite well aware of some of the issues that have cropped up, the fact is that our previous radio network really did not ever get operated because things like terrain and built up areas and the digital thing, but a couple of observations about the last one just to set the questions about the fact is that it was not a whole of government radio network, it became a police and Hydro which left you -

Mr HIDDING - It was Hydro.

**Mr MULDER** - without the critical mass to provide the cover which got you into the mess where you had to buy the radio network you could hardly fix.

**Mr HIDDING** - The outgoing Liberal government planned it to be a whole of government radio network and it would have been developed up into that but as somebody was saying earlier about the capacity needs, that is where it all went wrong because Tas Police got it horribly wrong in terms of how many hits there would be in the system.

**Mr MULDER** - The other thing too, it was not only capacity but in the end the footprint coverage of that radio with the towers that were originally envisaged even as a whole of radio network panned out to be not quite what we expected because of the terrain. Has that sort of stuff been factored in to the next specifications for the project that we will not take a consultant's footprint map for gospel anymore, we have learnt lots of lessons about that.

**Mr HIDDING** - With my personal history of that, I do recall that Eriksson made a judgment as to what the terrain requirements would be. It was found within a matter of months it was probably the most difficult terrain in the world to cover because it had temperature, highs, lows, it had forest, mountains - everything. What they didn't have available to them was, for instance, Tasmania Fire Services dedicated fire towers because the services wouldn't speak to each other. For that reason, that whole of government approach was always needed. When I left government in 1998, I was firmly of the belief that a whole-of-government radio was the only answer. I come back in as minister and we're still not there. My very first meeting with the Commissioner was, there will be a whole of government radio network utilising all of each others equipment but -

**Mr MULDER** - The problem is even with the Hydro towers there still isn't' that penetration for digital signals.

Mr HIDDING - Not everywhere.

**Mr MULDER** - That raises the issue; is part of this project going to maintain VHF back-up capability because those are the sort of questions that I need to ask? It is better that I ask them now. In 10 years time I won't be here -

**Mr HIDDING** - I guess the business cases that come forward will explore those matters. They are certainly aware that the minister is going to be asking those matters. The business case eventually is going to have be pragmatic but so do the service users have to be pragmatic. They're maintaining that their system only works at this frequency because it has got to go through buildings . There's going to have to be a pragmatic resolution of that or a combination of both or something.

**Mr MULDER** - Particularly the trunk mobile and I'm not quite sure if the new mobile radio is going to work on a different system, but that had a real problem in built up areas. I do recall when some advice was being provided at the lower levels of course that there was no advice in relation to - They were identifying, 'this police service uses it, that police service uses' and when you looked at them all they were all in, for example Texas. It was found to be unsuitable for hilly terrain and built up environments. That raises some real alarm bells about objections.

**Mr HIDDING** - It's a pretty old model now. There could still be versions of it. At the end of the day radio comms are radio comms. You're using available bandwidth with the spectrum being set by the federal government for very good reasons and we have to work with those.

**Mr MULDER** - There probably needs to be some testing all the way through. Some of us have kept a pretty good eye on this and I'm not saying it's you, minister, but I'm aware that there were some blockers put in place fairly low down in project level. I'm pleased to see that the Deputy Commissioner has got a handle on it. The other issue that I have some concerns with was yesterday we asked the Ambulance Service who are part of this network and they were moving to a temporary solution which involved transmitting data over the 3G network. I'm not too sure that model works because it actually fails. The first thing that happens when you get a flood or a fire the system falls over.

Mr HIDDING -I'm sure that all will be assessed.

**TILYARD** - Primarily it's a voice network that we're looking at with data carriage capability. Tasmania Police currently uses 3G for its data needs as well and find that that works quite well. There's issues if the network goes down but there's not much you can do about that. We will be looking at all these issues as part of the project.

**Mr MULDER** - It's an issue about redundancy. When Y2K came along what did we do? If the technology failed then we do what we did before we had the technology. As the marine people can tell you, they can have all the fancy GPS, satellite phones and everything else on board, but they keep the VHF handy because it's so easy to get penetration through towers with VHF.

**Ms FORREST** - About the upgrading of police housing on the west coast: how many are we talking about here? Obviously Queenstown.

**HINE** - There's one million dollars each this financial year and million dollars next financial year.

**ADAMS** - There's 36 police residences, there are 53 residences that are actually stand-alone police stations. Over the next two years, with an eye on the third year, we have a program to refurbish and replenish those stocks by purchasing new properties in various locations or doing renovations. The west coast is the first area we are going to focus on and that work has already started.

Ms FORREST - In all west coast towns?

Ms ADAMS - In all west coast towns - Zeehan, Rosebery, Queenstown and Strahan.

Mr HIDDING - I had a look at a couple of them and that's it.

**Ms FORREST** - Good on you, minister. If you want to attract police officers to these areas we have to make it inviting. The same with health workers, but we are in front of the Police minister at the minute. It is good to see.

#### **State Fire Commission**

**Mr FARRELL** - Minister, could you update us on the integration of the State Emergency Service into the Fire Service - any issues?

**Mr HIDDING** - At an operational level, which is the important thing, it has been a really good thing to do. It was demonstrated during the last fires that while in the past the SES were beyond the fringes and being called in to run some feeder stations, we had the SES on Firecom and absolutely imbedded in the TFS. They never saw a flame, which they shouldn't, they didn't want to, but they added so much value to the firefighting effort because they were able to get into rapid impact assessments, which is what they are doing now post-floods. Ducking in, checking on what is going on, doing an assessment and getting it back to headquarters so that that information was always at hand, and all the practical things as well. It brought 550 people extra to allow the firies to do straight firefighting duties. Guess what? In the last day or two the favour has been reversed. We have volunteer firies, boots on the ground, assisting the SES while we have some fatigue issues.

It fits like hand in glove, the SES and the Fire Service. We knew they would because they are both volunteer organisations. It was absolutely the right thing to do. There is no question in any one's mind that we should undo or unwind it. We now need to deal with the practicalities of where we find the funding solution. We have resolved that for the next couple of years by a Consolidated Fund allocation but already there are some integral efficiencies starting to show. I will ask the Chief Fire Officer to speak about that, between the two agencies.

**Mr ARNOL** - There are some very similar characteristics of the two organisations. They both have volunteers, we have the same type of equipment - this is SES and Fire - we use the same communication systems and the command structures are almost identical. There is a similar culture, a volunteer culture supporting the community, training approach and skill sets. There is whole raft of things we are restructuring to integrate right now. Next month, as we do some broader changes in the department, the State Emergency Services will move in with Fire and we will badge that up so we are seen physically together. That will happen.

Right now we have State Emergency Service personnel in our Young Town facility. We have them what we have termed State Fire Operations and that might change its name in the future perhaps. They are using the facilities we have. We have those intrinsic efficiencies. We have training officers to be housed together.

We are seeing no change to front line personnel or badging. We are seeing back of house work where our business systems and the way we do business is trying to seek efficiencies and that is happening as we speak.

I have spoken with all staff in SES and they are very comfortable with what we are doing. I have spoken a lot with fire fighters. They are very comfortable with how this change is progressing as are police, because we have to fit in with the larger business and executive services with police. When we do the AFAC review of this operation, it will be recognised that the integration of the facilities and operations are a resounding success.

**Mr FARRELL** - Minister, is it envisaged, as you move forward, that SES and local fire will share the same facilities?

**Mr HIDDING** - Not necessarily. There are variations everywhere. In a month or so I am going to be opening the new facility at Swansea which is all of them combined, Fire, SES and ambos. Police have their own station but the ambos are in it as well. That is a terrific outcome. It

will not necessarily follow that in each area SES will be together with Fire. However, there is probably is stronger draw to that than before because of the way they now report through Fire.

There are no plans by anyone that there will be one division, called fire and emergency, no such thing. There will always be State Fire and Emergency Service because operationally, beautiful synergies, but it is different in what they provide. A lot of the services they provide to local governments for the protection of their facilities and assets. They are screwing around with people's rooves in the middle of shocking wind storms and that practical prevention type of work, which is not what firies do other than their normal fire protection stuff. They will always be two emergency service units but operating under that one umbrella works a treat.

We have been working with local government and this is probably the only unclear area where we say we are looking for a sustainable business model. We have a complete muddle of arrangements across local government. In one area the local government a lovely facility, like a home for the SES, as a council facility and assistance to the vehicles. The next local government chooses to do absolutely nothing. One council has gone the Monty and has bought a big truck. That council believes that should only be used in that council area. State Emergency Service, how is that going to work? How can that truck not go across the border to help somebody over there? It is a complete muddle. The local government agree it is a muddle and they want to resolve it with us. Wise Lord & Ferguson were doing some work in that space.

We will come to an agreement with local government as to how best to regularise this whole thing. There is no rush to do it because for a couple years there is funding to smooth it out.

**Mr MULDER** - On that question of integrated services. The new Commissioner, congratulations. They would have some experience from the FESA model in Western Australia that would be brought to bear on this, the Fire Emergency Services Authority?

**Mr ARNOL** - The changes and integration of the broader department is about the same size of the fire emergency services in Western Australia, other than we do not have police in it. The framework we are using, where we have a business executive services is pretty well the same. There are some changes in funding arrangements of SES and the like, but very much the model in Western Australia. Almost at the same time, in the same shed you will have dual or even three roles when you have marine. You can have multiple services coming out of the same facility or they might be separate. It just depends on your demographic and community risk. It is a sound model, in my experience, and I have had six years experience with in WA.

**Mr HIDDING** - That is going to be very useful in finding balance without anybody thinking for a moment we are just going to blend them and call it something else.

Mr MULDER - Specifically in road accident rescue, it has always been an SES-firies overlap.

**Mr HIDDING** - There is quite clear delineation there, except for one volunteer station at Triabunna where they still do road rescue. The rest is with Tas Fire, the paid area, retained firefighters.

**Mr ARNOL** - In the higher population areas there is the fire service, other than Triabunna, and in the rural areas it is the SES.

**Mr FARRELL** - In regard to the fuel reduction funding, it has been transferred from DPIPWE to Police and Emergency Management. What is the advantage?

**Mr HIDDING** - None whatsoever, just an operational thing. It was sitting over DPIPWE, they have a lot going on and it was being mostly spent by Tasmania Fire Service and there was a continual drawing-down so we moved it over. It is fuel reduction funding for Fire so it is where it belongs. Nothing changes in Parks and Forestry; the three fire agencies - Forestry Tasmania, Parks and TFS - are working as they did before.

Mr FARRELL - What are the plans over the coming 12 months as far as fuel reduction?

**Ms WHIGHT** - At the moment there are 127 planned burns across all three agencies ready to go. There are 37 burns ready, so when I say there are 127 burns planned and ready to go that is in the planning stages. Of the 37 burns ready to go, that is basically waiting for the right weather opportunity. Planning work is continuing constantly. We have work happening right at the moment in bushfire mitigation planning - cross tenure and private tenured areas. There are seven areas being worked on quite actively around the state and they will generate more burning units. Attached to that bushfire mitigation planning process there is also a large consultation and engagement process.

**Mr FARRELL** - It seems strange to be talking about burn offs at the present time. How are the burns prioritised? What is the methodology?

**Ms WHIGHT** - We use two risk management models. One is a static risk management model where we are lining up likelihood and consequence of fire in the landscape. That is built on fire history, fuel type condition, ignition patterns, response times and those sorts of things. That is a very static spatial array. Then we do dynamic risk modelling over the top where we do multiple ignitions across the landscape using Phoenix RapidFire, the system we are using at the moment. We ignite the whole state and from that we can look at fire-shed areas and at areas around towns where there is going to be the most number of impacts. We can also look at fire pathways and how we can break up fuels in those fire pathways.

**Mr FARRELL** - Are costs allocated to particular areas - looked at as a particular fire reduction program, and then this area costs 'x' amount of dollars and how are the dollars allocated back?

**Ms WHIGHT** - Traditionally, it has been really hard to actually capture the cost of planned burning per hectare, and so one of the things we have established with the start of this program in consultation with Parks and Wildlife Services, is we are now attaching costs to each individual burn, and not just the cost of doing the burn. It is also the costs of planning, consultation, preparation works and things like that. Where we are at now, we only have very rudimentary figures to say what the costs per burn are.

In terms of the actual budget allocation, the program is managed through a steering committee who approve the budget every year. A certain amount of budget goes to the Tas Fire Service for staffing, and some also to Parks and Wildlife, equivalently for staffing and burn crews. Then there is an allocation of funds for operational costs for burning.

We go through the list and have prioritised burns. As we work through the list, we do not actually set aside, 'You will get \$10 000 for this area and \$50 000 for that area'. It is all based on a priority basis and weather conditions. So for example, we would have 12 burns ready to go in the greater suburbs of Hobart. We would do them in priority order, but also in opportunity. There

would be some sites where we would want to get the burning done as a matter of urgency, but because of the nature of the terrain vegetation, there would be a very narrow window, so that burn would be prioritised above others just because of operational practicalities.

**Mr FARRELL** - Are there any major obstacles to the fuel reduction burning such as public relations issues?

**Ms WHIGHT** - We have had very few complaints. There has only been 10 complaints across the program over the last burning season, which is a significant drop-down in complaints. The main issue, particularly in the tenure blind nature of the work, we need to sit down with land owners and explain to them what we are doing, why we are doing it and give them confidence in what we are doing.

It is all well and good for me and my staff. This is our business and we do it all the time, but if you are just out of the blue and someone is coming up and saying, 'Look, we have done a risk analysis. Your property is in an area where we would like to do some burning,' this is their home. They have assets there and things they value about living there. It takes time to build those relationships and trust and to give people confidence in what we are doing. I would have to say overwhelmingly we have been really well supported by the community. Not everybody likes it, but overwhelmingly it has been very positive.

**Mr HIDDING** - A degree is based on the Tasmanian citizens' ability to grab reality, like with the Dunalley fires, it had been claimed there should have been burn-offs down there and then the huge fire. At the time the Government said, correctly, 'It is mostly private land. We were not able to do anything.' That is why we have gone this tenure approach where it does not matter if it is not Government land.

People do not want to see that kind of fire again at Dunalley. We may well get them sadly, but the chances of them occurring lowers greatly every time we do one of these burns. Tasmanians have been terrific in understanding, living in the Tasmanian landscape means you are going to have fire sometime. Do you want a cool, controlled burn, or do you want it in a wildfire? Either way there is smoke.

There was an event last summer where sadly with the wind change etc we had a lot of smoke in Hobart. It plonked itself there fair on Hobart for a day or two. The complaint rate was astonishingly low. People got it. They were told this was a burn-off keeping people safe elsewhere and there had been a wind change and smoke. Then it blew out to sea and everybody forgot about it. A couple of years ago there would have been marching in the streets.

**CHAIR** - There was a Catalyst program about a year or two ago. It highlighted the modelling done. It demonstrated that Hobart was one of the most fire-prone dangerous cities in the world in the wrong conditions.

Mr HIDDING - Yes, studies on this around the world are very interesting.

**Mr FARRELL** - Will there be planning around future burns to remind people? The fire season fades in people's minds, they are going to forget the reasons for burn off. Is any ongoing advertising planned or public education?

**Ms WHIGHT -** We have a community engagement group which has had over 47 events since that group formed, just over 12 months ago. We do a combination of not just engagement around where we are going to do burning, but partnered with Landcare and the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association we run information evenings, where we talk about a burning program, but we also the role of fire in the landscape, the significance of fire ecology.

On the Tasmanian Fire Service website, on the planned burning pages people can look at videos such as what a bushfire would have done without a fuel reduction burn, or what the change in fire behaviour is as a consequence of fuel reduction burning.

**Mr MULDER -** You raised it with Mount Wellington particular, all this stuff around towns everyone thinks it is a good thing. But you still drive up through Fern Tree and you see people who choose to live on the side of a mountain with a gum tree that is underneath their eaves. What are we doing about that?

**Mr HIDDING** - From the Victorian fires, there is now a national approach to the BAL, the bushfire alert system, which is in planning at that level. There is a building envelope on each block. But in terms of existing houses, it is really education. You cannot go up to people and say, we are here to clear your block. People choose to live there knowing it is dangerous. I think there are abatement provisions.

Mr MULDER - It is not unusual for people to go up to a house and say remove this nuisance.

**Mr HIDDING** - Clear your block is one thing, but remove the gum tree is another entirely. There are abatement provisions and everyone is pretty aware of them. The good thing is the way the State Fire Management Council and TFS have implemented this over the last two years. There will be studies done on how good this has gone for Tasmania and how it is the best practice around the world. Tasmanian people have come with us. They are starting to look around themselves now, and wondering how safe am I? What could I do to mitigate risks? Every time they go into a community people are easier and easier to deal with.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Minister. I thank you and your fine staff here. I omitted to thank your police staff. As someone unkindly referred, it is always nice to have the megawalloper, Mr Hine, here at the table.

#### The committee suspended from 12.59 pm to 1.59 p.m.

**DIVISION 9** (Department of State Growth)

#### **Minister for Infrastructure**

CHAIR - Welcome to the next segment - Infrastructure.

**Mr HIDDING** - I have been very pleased to have been the Minister for Infrastructure for the last couple of years and work with my ministerial colleagues elsewhere in State Growth to bring all the economic leaders under one roof. The department strategically pursues investment, facilitates major projects, supports businesses and introduces growth. The infrastructure portfolio, including

a cost effective and accessible transport and logistics system, enables these functions. It is critical to Tasmania's future.

In terms of achievements Infrastructure Tasmania is now fully established, providing a coordinated statewide approach to the planning and delivery of infrastructure in Tasmania. It is the first time in Tasmania's history that we have had such a structure and it is going very well. Its objective is to ensure the right infrastructure is built at the right time and the right place and as efficiently as possible to support productivity and economic growth and community amenity. ITas assesses and prioritises all major publicly funded infrastructure investment proposals and provides independent and objective advice about proposals directly to two ministers - myself and the Treasurer.

The outcomes from the work program included state roads audit 2016 and a draft freight strategy, which is now an integrated freight strategy for Tasmania. There is a review of a proposed light rail system in Hobart, a Bridgewater Bridge review which was a major issue as it had priced itself out of ever being funded so a whole fresh look at that. We are back on track. The freight strategy has underpinned investment decisions by the private sector. We saw this week that *Searoad Mersey II* was floated in its North Germany shipyard. It is going to be one of the cleanest freight ships in the world and will be on the run before Christmas across Bass Strait. Also the other commercial provider for Bass Strait services is looking to re-tonnage their ships as well and we look forward to further advice on that.

There is a \$56 million package allocated to TasRail in the forward Estimates and given the last couple of days that might need to be applied to some remedial work because at this stage TasRail is off the network. It had to be because it is a kind of network with all the ballast and quite a number of bridges are very susceptible to damage from these extreme events. A lot of work has got to be done to assess things but we have already identified a couple of issues that are going to be very challenging. The company has a plan and it is moving forward strongly. It does not intend to lose any business through it and that is by using road freight to stop a migration of their customers.

Our Roads For Our Future program, state roads are some of Tasmania's biggest infrastructure assets and link our major population centres, moves people and freight and underpins growth. There has been some key documents created there for reference. The State Of Our Roads report 2015 and a draft 10-year infrastructure investment plan outlines the strategic investment priorities for the next 10 years.

All members would be aware of the significant work on the Midland Highway. It is going to be going on for some time yet and as the project is maturing and completing people are starting to get the shape of what is going to be a very safe highway compared to what it has been in the past. I want to take the opportunity to commend the civil contracting sector in Tasmania. We have some gun outfits, very good operators doing this work very well.

Road safety is also a large part of my portfolio. We spoke this morning about road safety components in policing so it is a really good fit to have the Minister for Police to be the Minister for Transport as well as infrastructure because there are a lot of synergies. Generally there would be two people as it was in the last parliament and still is this time. It is a good outcome. The Road Safety Advisory Council is developing the next 10-year strategy and it is engaged strongly with the Tasmanian community.

We have a major project underway called Project 2018, which is the recontracting of the private bus sector which is contracted to provide public bus services in Tasmania. It is a major projects and my department is going very well with that process. They are on a strict timeline and the industry is coming with us on it and I trust there will be a very good outcome from that process.

Registration and licensing is a big part in the regulatory side of my portfolio. It is a big part of our efforts and there are a few things we can talk about as we move through them. With that, I am happy to take questions Chair.

**CHAIR** - Before I head into overview I might ask a quick question with regard to TT-Line. Under which line item?

**Mr HIDDING** - That is a GBE and that is where that would ordinarily be discussed. If I was sitting in your place I would be asking me for an overview.

CHAIR - Yes, I know how amenable you are and I am too. One of those items down there.

**Mr HIDDING** - There are not any line items for that really. My department has nothing to do with TT-Line at all. I am the minister for TT-Line but as a shareholder minister.

**CHAIR** - All right. I will get into that in a moment. Minister, you talked about TasRail and the additional state funding, which I understand ends after 2016-17. Is that going to be negotiable?

Mr HIDDING - Yes.

CHAIR - It will be, otherwise it is going to have a pretty fair impact to TasRail.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is the intention of the state Liberal Government and the current federal coalition government the current TasRail IIP be transitioned into a reasonably identical tranche of funding for the next lot. That was necessary because when we came to government, the previous government left zero in the budget to match any federal funds. So in one budget no way in the world would we have found \$60 million so it was stretched over a longer period.

As it happens it is working very well. It is a good time line for the works. The federal government has made a commitment to that next tranche. Essentially it was a political commitment because it was past their out years then. From our point of view we intend to find the capex availability to engage with the federal government for our next round. Then that, in planning terms, would be the end of the major upgrades required for the rail. From thereon it would be maintenance other than what has happened in the last couple of days.

Mr MULDER - Is that funding below rail or a combination of low and above rail?

**Mr HIDDING** - Below. The above rail was resolved by injections from back when Transend purchased all the new rolling stocks. TasRail is going very well and without question there are fewer trucks on the road because of how they are building their freight business. This week was not helpful.

**Mr FARRELL** - In light of the current situation last time, many years ago, there was damage to the rails in the north of the state the railway ran a lot of freight back through Hobart port. Has

that been considered, running from Brighton back into Hobart because it is going to take some time to rebuild the bridges?

**Mr HIDDING** - Not necessarily. I have not said that any bridge needs to be rebuilt. There was a concern on one bridge but it may not need rebuilding, it may only need underpinning.

As for the heavy rail to come back into Hobart. I have explored that but it is in the past for them. Their rail network is Brighton to Burnie with a couple of spurs. To stand up the heavy freight back into Hobart would be seriously expensive on many fronts and would be counter to any notion you would use that thoroughfare for light rail. The councils are going to try to encourage an agenda of urban infill along the route. If there were some concern that TasRail could just jump back on the line whenever it felt like it you would not invest along side it. They see no case for doing that.

**Mr FARRELL** - It is early days with the damage that has been done. I suppose you have not even had a full report at this stage.

**Mr HIDDING** - We have to wait for the water to go down. I discussed yesterday with TasRail multilayered intentions for the next week or two. They have it covered on.

**CHAIR** - With the new Metro buses, at an expense of something like \$100 million. That is welcome news although I do not have many in my electorate. That is beside the point.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is not \$100 million, it is 100 buses. Would you like me to outline the funding package?

CHAIR - Yes, briefly. I have a couple of questions on the strategy.

**Mr HIDDING** - I told the bus conference on Saturday how this works. There is a \$13 million equity injection occurring through finance general. Every year they get around \$40-\$42 million from the state before they commence operations and \$3.5 million of that is for bus replacement and has been for a number of years now. They are going to do a bring forward on that as an injection into the balance sheet, which will support corporate borrowings for these new buses.

On top of that there is \$18 million, four payments of \$4.5 million over four years. That shows in finance general in your budget papers. That is the equity injection into Metro for the 100 new buses. General industry price for a bus, working price, you are looking at about \$500 000. That is \$50 million cost. They have \$18 million injection from their shareholders and they have to find and borrow \$32 million. They have a corporate business plan that shows they can do that.

CHAIR - What is the total capex again?

Mr HIDDING - \$50 million

CHAIR - Okay. The passenger numbers went up 6.8 per cent last year.

Mr HIDDING - No, in April compared to last April.

CHAIR - Just in that last month?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, that is what we are looking at. If that is the first full effect of the Hobart Network Review showed 32 000 extra passenger boardings in one month as a result of the new network. I am about to get a question on that from over here.

Mr FARRELL - Is that individual new passengers?

Mr HIDDING - First boardings.

Mr FARRELL - It could be people transferring buses.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes. It is apples with apples. Compared from last April to this April 6.8 per cent increase. In public transport terms that is astronomical.

Ms FORREST - Without a population increase.

**Mr HIDDING** - No. Whatever it is we will take it. The point is there has been a network review. Buses were running around empty because nobody had changed the network for over 20 years. People had moved out, changed and there was nobody on buses - now there is.

**CHAIR** - That is part of the holistic strategy to try to get more people on public transport, because as Tasmanians we have been averse to using those?

**Mr HIDDING** - There is no question that we need new buses, because our old buses are so old you cannot buy spare parts for the Scanias anymore. You have to do what they do in Cuba and get the lathe and make your own spare parts. For a civilised state like Tasmania to have a fleet that is not disability compliant, the federal law says we will be compliant by 2022 and we now will be. The Disability Discrimination Commissioner is delighted.

Ms FORREST - Can the build the buses where they are building the fire trucks.

**Mr HIDDING** - They could, but they are flat out building fire trucks, but that is a good example of what we could do with our advanced manufacturing capacity. For that reason Metro is going to take its tender process to the market indicating that we would like to build in Tasmania.

**CHAIR** - That was a question I had, whether there was a capacity here. That is a business opportunity.

**Mr HIDDING** - You would be aware up the north-west coast they historically built some of the best machinery, vehicles and ambulances. Tasmanian people are brilliant ambulance manufacturers. We have the capacity in Tasmania to build these. A new bus, for instance, if it comes from a bus manufacturer, they provide the engine, the drive line, the engineering stuff, the chassis and a few other bits and pieces, but then comes the fabrication and the building of it all. We are absolutely capable in Tasmania.

**CHAIR** - This was the model that you talked about with Metro before to be able to help enable all this to happen. Will that require a further public subsidy to Metro?

#### Mr HIDDING - No.

CHAIR - Not at all? Over and above the \$30 million-odd that it is now?

**Mr HIDDING** - The business case shows that with \$18 million of new money, which is four payments at \$4.5 million, that will support a commercial corporate borrowing process. Under the rules in Tasmania you have to start with Tascorp. Generally you would end up there unless you thought you could shave a quarter of a point somewhere else, but you have to start there. It is full corporate borrowing. For that reason they have done a full business case. It is commercial, fundable and a very good outcome.

CHAIR - It will be interesting to see what the public uptake is.

**Mr HIDDING** - We are very confident. We are driving usage up on the old buses, so imagine when there are new buses. It is going to be better.

**CHAIR** - I will talk about TasWater. It is a big challenge as we know. It seems to be beyond the capacity of a lot of our entities without state and/or federal government assistance. Budget paper 1 identifies a future call on the government for support to TasWater as a budget risk. That seems to suggest that government support will be subject to councils increasing their contribution to investment, et cetera. Does that mean that your government is leaving the door ajar for further discussion about financial assistance for water and sewerage infrastructure?

**Mr HIDDING** - Open and honest budgeting means that if you have engaged with an outside entity on a funding request, and we all know there are stresses and pressures on this happening, we should name it up as a budget risk. There is some expectation, it might be unfounded, that we might get involved with the owners of TasWater in some way. Nothing should be read into that other than there is a request on the table. The Treasurer has been clear. I would be reflecting what he said when he says this is a matter for the owners of TasWater for them to figure out a way forward. It needed to be named up in the Budget in that way. It is not quantified, but that is what a budget risk is. We know there is an expectation there.

**CHAIR** - Another one that crosses over portfolio in terms of jobs, infrastructure and economic growth. The Budget talked about a number of initiatives, which have the potential to provide contractual opportunities for businesses and jobs in Tasmania, such as \$60 million for affordable housing. If we start talking about an additional 940 homes over three years - it really falls in another portfolio - are you confident of the building industry's infrastructure capacity to meet that sort of demand?

**Mr HIDDING** - As I am the Minister for Infrastructure and therefore often asked about the entire infrastructure package, I will comment on that. One of the matters you raised belongs to other ministers but in the overall sense Cabinet is aware that in the building industry it is gangbusters in Hobart, particularly in the commercial building area. Housing is going OK but up north is has backed right off. Not only affordable housing, but restoration of the First Home Builders scheme will, without question, re-energise that sector, particularly in the north and north west where the home building sector was experiencing some concern. We have addressed that. The 940 homes are terrific. That is going to be statewide affordable housing and that whole sector will rise to the occasion. That is the development sector, land development as well as home building. It is a lot of activity, a lot of building.

**CHAIR** - Just a final one and it is the one you asked me to ask regarding the TT-Line. We have almost guessed, regarding the TT-Line sponsorship deal with North Melbourne, and it has

concerned a lot of people the Hawthorn deal is out there and transparent, this one is commercial-inconfidence so can you tell this committee what the deal is?

**Mr HIDDING** - One is chalk and one is cheese. The Hawthorn deal is a direct deal with the Government of Tasmania, from the Consolidated fund. Funds come out of the Consolidated Fund to pay Hawthorn for whatever that deal is. In the case of North Melbourne, we have a Government Business Enterprise that makes money, is fully corporate, and operating into the stratosphere in terms of passenger numbers now compared to where it has ever been. Its marketing is focused on the AFL marketing in country and city Victoria. It is going very well. It wanted to go on. It wanted to grow its relationship with North Melbourne because it works. They were encouraged to be absolutely commercial with it. As though you were buying a TV package, as though you were -

**Mr MULDER** - It is a marketing budget that is being spent, isn't it? There is no extra money coming?

**Mr HIDDING** - Nobody is asking me how much they spend on TV advertising. It is because it is a football club and there is a Hawthorn comparison. It is chalk and cheese.

Ms FORREST - North-south thing.

Mr HIDDING - That as well, a bit.

**CHAIR** - I didn't know the TT-Line came south.

**Mr HIDDING** - I am from the electorate of Lyons. We are the peacemakers. Blessed are the peacemakers.

The TT-Line line has entered into a fully corporate arrangement with a provider who doesn't want that deal made public. After all, they may want to do another deal with somebody in Victoria tomorrow and for competitive terms they don't want TT-Line's dealings to be out there which would kill their business off.

It is perfectly normal, perfectly proper, for the TT-Line to not disclose the corporate sponsorship package. Quite separately from that and, as shareholder minister, I instructed it to be fully corporate. If there is any more that is required, talk to us about it. We chose to go down the route of a community service obligation on this business of the Academy which is statewide. It will be operating in Launceston and the north west coast. There is a distinct package of statewide benefits separate from this deal which, for complete honesty and clarity, we named up as a community service obligation. The corporate side of it, any notion that it ought to be made public would mean that no corporation could do business with a Tasmanian Government corporation for fear of their commercial position being put out there because some member of parliament wanted to compare it to a con fund deal, which is entirely different.

**CHAIR** - In the TT-Line annual report, will it be hidden or will it be shown?

**Mr HIDDING** - Why would it be hidden? It would be exactly the same as last year, the year before and the year before. That is what it will say. It will say, 'There's their marketing budget and included in there is the deal with North Melbourne'. Then separately it will say, 'Community Service Obligation, AFL Academy et cetera - that is corporate, that is not. North Melbourne had no issue with that element because it encompasses AFL funding as well, women's football, junior

football - boys and girls - development around the state. It is very positive package. We could not be more up-front and open about this, but if it was felt government business enterprises were forced to disclose every one of their corporate deals, no-one would do business with government business enterprises in Tasmania. Let us pick a car dealer who might sell 20 new vehicles to a company at a very special price. It is implicit in there, one would think, that you would not go out and say, 'I stung them for a really good deal'. That company has no leverage anymore to do any normal dealing. When there is a contract between two parties, you don't disclose those things.

In many other areas the previous government did not demand the public disclosure of the sponsorship deals entered into between Momentum Energy and the Geelong Football Club. The Adelaide Crows Football Club and the St George Illawarra Rugby Club - all Momentum deals and have never been made public. The naming rights by Aurora Energy, which is a publicly owned company, for a council-owned stadium wasn't even disclosed.

I understand the member's interest in it and I can tell him the information is nothing startling, but this government will not be requiring one of our corporations to act in a way that is not good corporate practice.

**Ms FORREST** - You say TT-Line is doing a good job, increasing passenger numbers, operating as the corporate entity you expect it to, but you are not going to trust them to manage their own money to replace their vessels?

**Mr HIDDING** - We trust them implicitly; we don't trust the Labor-Greens government that could get in at the next election and do to that money, held by TT-Line, exactly what they did to the SPA. One would not have dreamt they would get their hands on superannuation funds and run it down to zero, but they did.

**Ms FORREST** - There was never money in that, it was never cash-backed. It was all offset by the temporary debt repayment account.

**Mr HIDDING** - Given our lack of trust over a future Labor-Greens government, because that is all it could ever be for the foreseeable future, we have started an account which is going to have to be much bigger than that - and they are holding very substantial funds still - for a ship replacement fund, which is good governance and good business. We are going to protect it by legislation from future Labor-Greens governments.

**Ms FORREST** - It wasn't the Labor-Greens government, I don't believe; it was the Labor government previous to that. I don't care who it is but the decision was made some time ago that they would have a dividend holiday to enable them to replace the ferries. Everyone knows they have to be replaced at some stage and that was a decision of a former government. You are now saying you don't think anyone can be trusted.

Mr HIDDING - No, not anyone, just Labor. We are entitled to take that position.

**Mr MULDER** - I think we are getting a bit far from what this Estimates committee is here for. There are GBE hearings to pursue these things and we have already had a crack at the Treasurer about them.

**Mr FARRELL** - It is unfortunate that we get into that because we cannot predict what a future government is going to be like. It was a Labor government that purchased the previous two ships and they did that without locking up money from anywhere.

**Mr HIDDING** - Good luck with that but if I get asked questions like that, I am going to answer them for the reasons we did.

Ms FORREST - We are given licence to ask about TT-Line.

**CHAIR -** That is right exactly.

Ms FORREST - The minister raised the issue; that is how it is in a corporate entity.

CHAIR - Any more overview questions, members?

**Ms FORREST** - I want to track how some of the reconciliation of the infrastructure spend goes on roads and those sorts of things. Do you want to do that now or when we get to -?

#### Mr HIDDING - I do not mind.

**Ms FORREST** - One of the hardest tasks with the Budget is to reconcile the amounts in the output groups for the amounts in the financial statements - table 6.4 on page 122, volume 1.

#### Mr HIDDING - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - It shows in that the reconciliation between the spending and output group for the purchase of the non-financial assets in the cash float statement. That's helpful. It reconciles the total infrastructure spending for 2016-17 of \$534.9 million with purchases of non-financial assets of \$524.8 million. I understand some infrastructure spending is Treasurer's repairs rather than capital, so that is excluded, but other amounts such as wages, supplies and consumables are included.

The road infrastructure spending for 2016-17 is \$247 million on page 119-121 of volume 1 and the roads total in table 10.8 volume 2 in State Growth, on page 258. Minister, what I am curious about is the reconciliation in the case of roads, which represents about half of total infrastructure spending. How much of the \$247.7 million is excluded and treated as repairs? How much of employee expenses is included to arrive at the purchase of the non-financial assets that are included in the financial statements?

**Mr HIDDING** - We are comparing tables here. I will ask Mr Gregory to give the background to that. You are right, it is somewhat complex because we are dealing with federal money and state money, some wages are capitalised and some are not. Perhaps if Shane speaks about that and then we might find this other table we are looking for.

**Mr GREGORY -** I think we may need to take it on notice and give you the details you want because it is a little complicated in that elements of what we call the maintenance spend in the papers. It goes into items that we have capitalised, open [inaudible] and some reseals are capitalised; routine maintenance is not capitalised. As to what component of that is salaries, there are a number of line items in the roads program that are there specifically for management - asset management, program management - and they go towards salaries, but there are some salaries in

the delivery of projects that are costed directly to the capitalised project. It is a little bit complicated. I think we would need to go back and prepare a specific explanation for you.

**Ms FORREST** - In the case of an employee expense on salaries, wages or whatever you want to refer to them as, what output groups do they expense from? Or what are they reallocated from? Are they allocated from other output groups? You talked about planning, I assume that would be in another area, would it be traffic management engineering services perhaps?

**Mr GREGORY** - That is the only output group we have, everything else is funded out of the CIP out of the roads program. Within the capital investment program, for example, on page 257 in table 10.8 the very first item, asset management, is an item that funds the cost of managing the asset. It is not in the physical sense but the people and the resources - the people, the vehicles and so on. With the exception of output 2.5, the State Roads Division is funded through the delivery of projects and programs under the Capital Investment Program. With the exception of output 2.5, the State Roads Division is funded through the capital investment programs under the capital investment program.

**Ms FORREST** - Did Gary find the one with the red dot there, about depreciation, which you are looking for?

**Mr SWAIN** - Yes, I was looking at table 10.9 in budget paper 2. I am not sure how relevant this is. I think it is unrelated. It is showing an adjustment to the depreciation and associated increase in maintenance. This is under expenses from transactions, the line items on depreciation and amortisation, then supplies and consumables. It does not really help because there is cost buried in that. What Shane is saying is, all that maintenance program is buried in the CIP and in the maintenance elements there are maintenance staff, and in the balance of the CIP there are the other staff in Shane's division outside of the traffic engineering people in 2.5.

**Ms FORREST -** Can you provide a breakdown of this on notice? On that point of depreciation, I mentioned this in the budget reply speech - I am sure you would have read it, it would have kept you awake at night, I reckon - the depreciation there, it seems that there has been a significant change there which affects the bottom line for the general government sector. The footnote says there that the decrease in depreciation and amortisation in 2016-17 reflects revision of the depreciation methodology required to road infrastructure assets. We could have a problem with that, with some of them being washed away recently.

On what basis was that significant revision made? Are they suddenly being constructed much better, that they will last much longer and you can write them down over a longer period? What accounted for that change in depreciation and the treatment of it?

**Mr SWAIN -** I cannot give a detailed answer to that, but I understand there has been a historical split applied to the maintenance spend. I am trying to work out whether the split was 91. Anyway, there was a historical split and that split has been reviewed. I think this is in the category that it was probably reviewed, it has been warranted for some time. We have used a standard percentage for quite some time in the split between what part of maintenance should probably be expense because it is annual expenditure, and what part contributes to the asset. I do not have the percentage variation.

Ms FORREST - Could the previous, equally bad Labor government - I say that tongue-in-cheek after the minister's last comments - that revised down the value of the roads and

everything significantly. Now we are seeing essentially a revision back up. It seems that we can move these figures really easily. I am interested in the process and methodology behind it. Otherwise it looks like these sorts of things have been reassessed to make the bottom line look better because they all end up there.

**Mr SWAIN -** I cannot add detail to that. I think some of that is an interplay between our finance people and Treasury.

Ms FORREST - Oh, it's Treasury's fault. If you can provide some more detail on that.

**Mr SWAIN** - Certainly, as it goes to the overall accounts for the general government sector, we have no view on that. We are only interested in the elements that relate to road asset directly. We are not looking at the numbers from the point of view of what it means for any broader balance sheet figure for government.

**Ms FORREST** - I think you are right, it does sit with Treasury, I accept that. I am interested in the methodology that is used at your level in Infrastructure, minister.

**CHAIR** - We will move to 2.1, which is Infrastructure Tasmania, minister. In regard to the road audit completed by Infrastructure Tasmania, it has been a fair body of work. Obviously it has the potential to improve the quality and safety of our road network, and value of the network to tourism. I suppose there are some costs for state and local government, as well as to other bodies. Has the cost of implementing this strategy to the state Government been identified? What is the proposed time frame for implementation?

**Mr GARCIA** - When you say there is a range of costs, in reality we are not seeing it as having a need to load costs into the process. There is a range of roads presently under the responsibility and management of Forestry and Parks. The question is, should they all be ongoing roads and should they all remain in their current state? There are issues around whether or not their access should be limited. There are issues around whether they should remain open or some should be closed, if they are not being used for the purposes that were initially intended.

Just because a road exists, it does not necessarily mean it should be brought up to a standard for people to drive on. In that context, there are strategic roads that should be used for ongoing production for forestry. There would be other roads that I would describe as tourism roads or part of tourism infrastructure. In identifying those, we would be looking to establish a mechanism by which some of those roads could possibly be transferred in ownership to another entity. Under those circumstances, it may be they come to a new category and they have to be considered for upgrade to ensure they meet what a normal tourist would expect to drive on.

We have not costed them. In terms of implementation, there is some advice presently being provided to the minister on the implementation. Our anticipation would be that in the coming half of the new financial year, a number of those implementation issues around reviews of ownership, or road trades with local government would be possible, if that is appropriate. We should bear in mind that the road trade mechanism is about cost neutrality. It is not intended to generate more revenue; it is about intending to put the ownership of the road in the best possible place and the best possible jurisdiction.

**CHAIR** - In some cases, you may see current ownership of a state road go to local government with an appropriation for them to take it over? How would you see that happening?

**Mr GARCIA** - Ideally, we would like to see money not necessarily even changing hands. We would like to see the identification of the road. If a council has a road, which has changed in use and now has a high productive value - whether it is economic development, tourism, or potentially servicing a port or whatever it might be - it is a local road. We would like to see is a circumstance where there is a trade-off on that to something else. If that is the local road coming to state, perhaps there are state roads in that same municipal area we could pass over. We are talking about a trade. We are not talking about massive licks of money being transferred between councils and state government.

**CHAIR** - You would be aware, from your time in local government, that local government authorities can be sensitive about suddenly having to take on another asset which they have to maintain for a long time without there being a benefit to that entity.

**Mr GARCIA** - To that end, this is not a unilateral decision. We have developed a suite of principles and a framework in which these trades could occur. We have shared that with the Local Government Association in the last week and we want to get a view from them as to whether this is a fair arrangement before we jump into this process. We do not want to have a situation where councils are inheriting roads that are going to cost them into the future. Equally, we do not want a circumstance where Government is going to take responsibility for roads that are going to cost them a lot of money and cost us a lot of money in the future.

It is about equity and it is a fine line. There might be some circumstances where it is so obvious the state possibly should take on a road because of economic productivity. Some classic examples in the past have been on the west coast with the opening of Macquarie Harbour for aquaculture. The West Coast Council had a particular access to the harbour which, if it had to upgrade, we probably would never have seen the development of the harbour in the state that it is. On that basis, it was a simple decision for the Government to take over that but it passed a few other smaller roads off to the council, and it was happy to that.

**CHAIR** - One obvious target might be some disused or forestry roads where there is a whole network throughout the state. From a strategic point of view and even a tourism point of view, some of those, particularly for fire fighting, as we have seen, need to be kept open. So how are we going to sort that one out?

#### [2.45]

**Mr HIDDING** - We start with road safety principles. The flavour of the entire audit was that whoever owns the road has to act responsibly as a road manager. If you do not have the money to do that road up from its current condition, and its current condition is not good enough for the current speed limit - change the speed limit. You cannot just say, 'Oh well, we do not have the money to do it', and then somebody dies on that road. The road manager has to be responsible. It could well mean that various locally used forestry roads will end up having a boom gate put on them because they should not be inviting people to drive down them if they are highly dangerous - if there is a huge washout and what have you.

We have a situation currently in Tasmania that came from Forestry, essentially. There is a network of Hydro roads but they are all well maintained because they are all current assets. However, with the huge changes that could be made, a lot of roads could never be used by Forestry again. Some of those have already moved over to Parks as land managers but with no plan or clue as to what order to do things. Parks are doing a great job with the little they have. This audit

showed that, at the end of the day, whoever owns the road has to act responsibly with it. If it is better in another ownership, find a way to get it in that ownership. It was a very good report and it has got people thinking now about how to act responsibly.

**CHAIR** - I understand what you are saying about the road safety parts but I might hand over to Mrs Hiscutt for a question. The Mersey forest road is a prime example of this. You know that we have a very good Hydro road going up to Lake Rowallan. Then you have a gravel road which goes on to a major ecotourism start point for the Walls of Jerusalem walking track. Then you have several kilometres of roads and bridges that go right up to the start of Lees Paddocks and a lot of other ecotourism-type things. You get a lot of people who want to go there in terms of tourism but probably not from a wood production point of view any more. That is a road that is strategically important for tourism.

**Mr HIDDING** - We would encourage local councils to look at that. The notion with state roads that someone will come in and take a gravel road off the council does not make sense. A council should be engaging with that to see how it fits into its economic infrastructure and consider talking to us, or the actual owner of those roads, about regularising the outcome. There is a better example than the Mersey Forest Road. The road down to Cockle Creek has five separate owners, in fact, three separate owners in five different connected parcels - and it shows. One minute you are on a perfectly good road and next you are on a really bad road because one does not have the budget. So it is those kinds of things that are a perfect example of this nonsense. It needs to be regularised - figure out who owns it and who is going to maintain it.

**CHAIR** - In some of those cases, a partnership arrangement might be good, rather than making it one new entity with one new owner.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, and I would not mind how we got there but we need to start talking about that. On Bruny Island there is a road down to the lighthouse where, when you come off the council part of road, there is just an imaginary line where their part finishes. They have a sign up that says, 'End of council road', so they do not get blamed for the next bit. Partnership agreements, formal handovers or whatever it takes as a state, we need to regularise that stuff.

Mrs HISCUTT - My question was on exactly on that road you have just taken.

CHAIR - The same road?

**Mrs HISCUTT** -The same road, because a lot of people in the area suddenly take ownership of these roads and complain that the proverbial 'they' should fix it. You have just very well explained who 'they' is.

**Mr HIDDING** - Up Smithton way, I said to the council up there, 'Figure out from the old Forestry network roads which ones are crucial to you'. They said, 'That connected from Edith Creek to wherever it goes; he is part of our network.' I said, 'You need to something about that; you actually need to take it into your network and figure out a way to maintain it'. We have come a long way because of that report and over the next few years we will start making some strides.

Do you mind if I tidy something up? Somebody thought I said that Metro was going to borrow \$32 million. I did not say that. I said Metro after the \$18 million if it is \$50 million to buy, and that is about right, then they have to find and/or borrow. They have their own operating -

Ms FORREST - They have a hollow log somewhere you think?

**Mr HIDDING -** No, they have got to operate. It is a four year bill but it goes out longer than that. From their own operating budget and borrowings which will be somewhere between \$zero and \$32 million.

CHAIR - It still did not quite make \$900 million did it?

Mr HIDDING - No, they would be very good buses.

**CHAIR** - I think there is a typo there or I incorrectly read the press or media release. We got there in the end.

In terms of the light rail business. It has been talked about by some people the decision to rule out the light rail for the northern suburbs corridor was based on a flawed analysis. Some people are saying they had used the triple bottom line approach rather than a cost benefit analysis it might have provided a different result. Hobart probably needs redesigning as a place and then we would not have this issue.

Mr HIDDING - I will ask the chief executive officer of Infrastructure Tasmania to speak.

CHAIR - It is a topical matter.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, it is. The state Government's view is the time for passenger transport along that rail formation its time will come. Before I ask the chief executive officer to answer that there has been a media release today from the Bus Industry Confederation who have had a study done by the Institute of Transport and Logistic Studies at the University of Sydney. They have found a lack of customers and the circuitous nature of the route longer than the most direct way provided a strong case to shelve the project.

What they are saying is either the light rail, its time has not come, or bus rapid transit which is the bus industry saying neither of the options are viable at the moment. and so should be shelved and we should focus on buses which is in fact precisely the finding of Infrastructure Tasmania.

There are proponents out there hoping for a goose to lay a golden egg and just build the thing. This academic study has found the report identified some low hanging fruit that could reduce public transport travel time by 10 minutes if introduced without spending large amounts of money. Clearways, intersection treatments, queue jumps were two options suggested to improve travel time for buses, for our bus network now. In fact on Friday I am meeting with the four Hobart mayors and there is a summit on congestion so we will be talking about that. This study has comprehensively said the time has not come for either of those developments along that route.

**Mr GARCIA** - Whether it is cost benefit., whether it is triple bottom line, whether it is I like myself a light rail because I want a light rail does not really matter. The process we had to engage in was to review the reports that have been undertaken to test their veracity and their integrity.

In doing that what was very clear was in the context of a pure transport solution none of the analysis stacked up to being having that particular service that is on offer or is being proposed adequately meeting the requirements for funding. It is all very well to say there are processes outside which you can get your funding all costed up. In reality the process we would need to go

through would be through the commonwealth process. We anticipate there would be commonwealth funding. I have not heard a lot of other people suggest they are wanting to put their own money in. So we would anticipate it would either be state or federally funded and from that perspective the process we would go through would require a cost benefit. In the cost benefit process that is on the table outside things like your triple bottom line do not come into the fray. They do not get included into the process.

If there was a widening of social benefit may be under those circumstances you could mount an argument. Where Infrastructure Tasmania landed was to say it may be a possibility if we look at this as being more than a transport solution, it being something more akin to an urban renewal and some sort of uplift in terms of commercial and economic activity. There is a possibility, potentially, that that could demonstrate that a public transport solution on its own while it cannot stack up, there may be a broader argument to say with uplift and density and a range of other issues there could be a counter-argument put forward that demonstrated a solution beyond simply a public transport solution. Consequent upon that, Hobart and Glenorchy Councils have commissioned GHD to do a job of work for them looking at this issue of urban renewal, density, what sort of commercial activity there might be. Once we have a handle on that we are then going to be in a position to review where we are at. It may still very well be that it is not a public transport solution. It may demonstrate at a point in time there are significant opportunities for uplift, value capture and a range of other issues.

CHAIR - I suppose I ask more as a devil's advocate. Mr Farrell may have a question.

**Mr FARRELL** - I have a copy of the report. I read through it last night. It is interesting some points in it they agree with Labor's policy of having a Public Transport Commission. The authors of the report that has been commissioned by the Bus Industry Council - one of the authors is John Stanley. He has had a long and wonderful career in the Road Transport Commission. He is also a member of public transport boards and bus companies.

Mr Wong, who is the other author of the report, is the holder of the Busways Group and Sydney Business postgraduate scholarship. He is on a Busways scholarship so I think that is why the reports probably lean that way. It is, as you would expect, something from the Bus Industry Council to be more leaning toward bus transport.

**Mr HIDDING** - In spite of the fact that it is done by Sydney University. Sydney University would be biased?

**Mr FARRELL** - No, I am not saying there is any bias. I am just highlighting the authors of the report and their history. I have their bios here if you want to have a look at them.

**Mr HIDDING** - I am not claiming anything other than to point out there has been an academic study. The findings tend to support our stance and that of the two councils who are doing good work in building up a business case by planning for and encouraging urban development along the route so that its time will come quicker than it otherwise would.

We are not throwing rocks at any proposal. All we are saying is any notion that you would leap in and do it now - \$100 million for 5 per cent of the population as they point out here - would not normally stack up anywhere in Australia.

**Mr GARCIA** - Just to highlight it in case it was not captured before is that corridor remains a public transit corridor. It is not going anywhere.

**Mr HIDDING** - This Government has banked rail, all existing rail formations we have banked it for the future. We are not going to ever build over it anywhere. Sometimes we might let somebody use it for cycling. We have just made an arrangement with Burnie and Wynyard Councils for a linear walking and cycling development. It will be very exciting. They have gone to the federal government to look for some funding but we have given them permission to do so. That will ensure it will always be there, if heavy rail has to come from Wynyard or from Smithton again - or Wiltshire line - that is banked for the future. While we might use it for other things, it will always be available for rail services should Tasmania's economic development need it.

#### [3.00 p.m.]

**Mr FARRELL** - While the local government bodies have some input over this already it has been sealed over in Hobart by the Hobart City Council and there is a proposal from the Glenorchy Council to have access into New Town High.

Mr HIDDING - We have told them to unseal it.

Mr FARRELL - They are a bit slow getting around to it.

**Mr HIDDING** - It was just an error on their behalf. This is why you need to be vigilant otherwise before long you will find somebody has built over it and that is it then. You have to be serious about rail banking.

**Mr MULDER** - On the bus driver's report, are you aware of any similar studies about the freight rail task up the Midland Highway compared to the road? Purely economic studies?

**Mr GARCIA** - We are commissioning some work on the road corridor as part of the Hobart-Burnie road corridor. It will effectively be looking at the economics of road and rail. We have let the contract to ACIL Allen and within the brief there are requirements to look at it. It will be the whole corridor from Hobart to Burnie, not just the Midlands, looking at issues around pure rail versus road. There is some work being undertaken at present or due to be undertaken.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - On the Wiltshire line, can you just tell what the bike people can and cannot do to that corridor?

**Mr HIDDING** - We would never allow anything to be built on it or used in any way so if you had a proposal for rail you would say, 'You couldn't possibly do that, you would have to knock that down'. We would never allow anything to be built over it, any building construction or anything like that. However, facilities for linear recreation, footpaths and fences is perfectly okay.

Mrs HISCUTT - They can lay cement or tarmac?

#### Mr HIDDING - Yes.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - Then coming the other way is the Forth Bridge. Have you given any consideration to it?

**Mr HIDDING** - I have and I have given them the very good news I am prepared to give them the bridge. However, it is not enough, they also want me to spend \$500 000 on it and then give them the bridge.

Ms FORREST - Is it still there?

Mr HIDDING - Yes.

Mrs HISCUTT - That is still to be thought about. So you do not have an answer on that?

Ms FORREST - I thought it may have been one of the ones that might have gone.

**CHAIR** - You mentioned the work being done on the Midland Highway and that is hard to miss at this stage.

Mr HIDDING - Just a bit.

**CHAIR** - Obviously the time of year where we head into winter sealing works cannot be done until we get the right temperature.

Ms FORREST - Long winter.

**CHAIR** - Some people are saying, 'Your government's proposal promised to build a four-lane Midland Highway'. Now you could argue we end up with a hotch-potch. We have four lanes in bits, three, and two lanes. When you think about it from a whole state strategic point of view a four-lane highway would have been fantastic. Up and down the safest and the whole lot.

**Mr HIDDING** - Two elections ago the state Liberals had a policy that we wanted a four-lane divided highway, where there was no possibility of running into each other between Hobart and Launceston. There was some costings thrown around, but I do not know where they came from. Back then they were arguable, but that would now be 10 years ago. We have come to government and the road, frankly, was a disgrace. The toll, the death count and the serious injury count was unacceptable. If we were to take a policy position as a government for a four-lane highway between the two areas over a 10-year period we would get less than half of it done. You would get a third of it done and the rest of it in the middle would still be highly dangerous. We would have the purest policy but probably have 30, 40 deaths on our conscience over the period because it was a bad toll count. We have taken the position using the safe systems approach we want to do the highway and is what you see underway now. If the next generation, would be to go back over and turn it into a four lane separated highway it is not such a dramatic step to take, but we are simply not,

CHAIR - To retrofit what we have done do you mean?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes. There would be some changes ,but the formation is there and you need it a little bit wider in places. I have been encouraged to understand is where we go next after a period of time but in the meantime any equivocation on making this safe will simply be unacceptable in public safety terms. We did not go to the election with that promise at all. Yes, it comes up and of course people say it would be nice to have a four lane highway. Incidentally just in case any farmers think it would be friendlier to them in terms of access and egress from their properties it would be worse. What they are getting with the divided arrangements now is a better outcome than it would be with a four lane highway.

Ms FORREST - Unless you are going to build underpasses everywhere.

**CHAIR** - It is a delight to get on a big four lane on the mainland particularly to go from A to B.

Ms FORREST - Between Burnie and Devonport.

**Mr HIDDING** - Safe systems provides for errors to be made by humans. Before and arguably, even under a four lane highway the verge, the shoulder, was a pretty narrow thing. You have the rumble strip then this much and if you made an error and you have two wheels on the gravel quickly and at is not safe at 110 kph. See what we have got there now. What is the average of verge width on the safe systems?

Mr GREGORY - Two metres on the outside.

**Mr HIDDING** - Two metres. In terms of making a mistake and then the medium is a full metre and a half or something before the wire rope so you can make an error there even before you hit that. It is a very forgiving highway when it all joins up. Where it is there now it flows very well indeed.

**CHAIR** - Mr Gregory might be able to answer this question. From an engineering point of view it seems that some of the people have been struck by the new four lane section on the western side of Westbury. We have already a big, existing separation of lanes, 20 metres or so. The question is why all this capex being spent in addition to putting wire rope barriers in between. It seems to be a bit of over kill. Maybe it has to meet highway standards.

**Mr GREGORY** - There are two aspects to that. One is we had a section where we were going to dual carriageway section of the single carriageway sections.

CHAIR - No. It is in between the dual.

**Mr GREGORY** - I understand but the bit which is done you are talking about. The issue was people were getting very confused that they were thinking they were on a dual carriage way when they weren't and there had been a few near misses and crashes where people were driving in the right hand lane thinking they were on a dual carriage way. That is why we separated the two and we got specific funding from the Commonwealth which was about safety improvements on the national network so we were able to achieve some funding. Our standard approach will be to use wire rope safety barriers because it has been proven they are extremely effective in wiping off energy in crashes and very successfully bringing vehicles to a halt and minimising damage to the occupant and that is the key. The University of New South Wales crash lab has tested a whole range of barriers and demonstrated that the wire rope barrier is by far the safest for the occupants of the vehicle and by far the safest for any type of road user. It is not just occupants of cars but also motor bikes.

**Ms FORREST** - Looking at performance information and getting the prize for the most unhelpful, this would be close to the winner. On page 251 we have got, 'proposals assessed by Infrastructure Tasmania within the required timeframes, 100 per cent target,' and then 'Reviews requested by Government completed by Infrastructure Tasmania within the required timeframes. Targets 100 per cent.' It does not mean anything. When are we going to get outcome-based

performance indicators that tell us something about what is going on and what value the taxpayers are getting for their money?

**Mr HIDDING** - We have just had the first full year of operation. We have got compare apples to something.

Ms FORREST - We need some outcomes. We need to measure outcomes, not just outputs.

**Mr GARCIA** - The member did raise this last year as to what they were going to be. I think it was indicated at the time that probably the work program would reflect what was going to be achieved as outputs. It is fair to say the outputs that were forecast to be delivered were all delivered, they have been all delivered.

Mr HIDDING - He has been on timeframe. He does not get one day past his timeframe.

**Ms FORREST** - That is fine, but what are we getting in terms of value for money? What are the outcomes of your work?

**Mr GARCIA** - I think we have had an indication of a series of reports and implementation around infrastructure and where we are going as to whether or not we quantify it. We are getting some understanding of what a priority is and what a priority is not. The integrated freight strategy for the state, the first one that we have ever had that starts to highlight what the imperatives are to move produce from this island to wherever it needs to go, whether it is by road, rail, sea or air, is probably an important output.

Mr HIDDING - A huge body of work too.

**Mr GARCIA** - And a significant outcome in terms of what it achieves in its own right, but also provides a foundation for further investment and understanding by industry as to where Government's efforts are going to be. It can make investment decisions around production, and growth in terms of whatever it is growing or the like.

**Ms FORREST** - That is a good example of what is being done. The previous Auditor-General commented on this in a number of reports that it is all well and good to have reports produced, they may just sit on shelves. That can be one measure but surely we need measures showing how the implementation and recommendations in their reports or the adoption of those - we are not seeing that. You are talking about here, which is fine -

**Mr HIDDING** - I hear what you are saying. For instance, the integrated freight strategy, an outcome from that would be is there any private investment in new ships for Bass Strait? Yes.

Ms FORREST - That is right, yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - One, and another one coming soon and another two shortly after that. One could argue that is 100 per cent because of four commercial ships, four of them are under advanced planning and one under construction. Of the two Government owned ones, there is a project to replace those as well. Of the six ships on Bass Strait, all six are underway for replacement. The infrastructure freight strategy underpins the thinking, because it is clear there. Volumes are being projected. It helps the business case for these reinvestments in new ships. You could not get much

better than 100 per cent on that because you cannot actually build the ship, but the fact that the intentions are underway-

**Ms FORREST** - But if you read what the performance indicators are here, it is proposals assessed and reviews requested. It does not tell us about what has been achieved by the office.

Mr HIDDING - We will have a look at it, yes.

Ms FORREST - Yes.

**Mr SWAIN** - I might regret this next year because I know you have got a very good memory, but we have had some discussion about the executive of State Growth in the context of the Auditor-General's report. We developed the corporate plan in the last 12 months for State Growth as an agency. There is planned to be an agency-wide review of performance indicators over the next 12 months, recognizing that we have internal inconsistencies across the performance measures across this chapter.

Ms FORREST - Excellent, that is what I have been asking for for a number of years now.

**Mr GARCIA** - In terms of the road audit, the outcome from that should be a better system of road ownership in the state with people who should have responsibility for the road having responsibility. Whether we can line that up as an outcome in advance, we should be able to do that and as Garry says more effort needs to be put into that.

**Mr HIDDING** - We spoke to a major council this week, Mr Gregory and I, and the subject of road swaps and regularisation of who owned front and centre. It has come off these reports. It is good news that the agency is looking at better performance reporting. You can score us out of 10 next year.

**Mr MULDER** - What are the policy parameters around deciding which belong to the councils and which belong to the state Government?

**Mr HIDDING** - None whatsoever. They are on a commonsense basis. Dorset Council for instance, a year ago said we own Waterhouse Road. There is no way in the world we will ever be able to seal it and my first question to the department and to them is why would you want to seal it? Well, because the Government has just constructed a huge wind farm up the end of it which requires trucks and heavy machinery and everything to go up there and working on those things, a very important part of the Hydro network. That should be a state road because it has major infrastructure development on and would be better in our hands. We had two roads, Gladstone Road and Ringarooma, that would happen to be state roads from way back in the day when that was a butter factory area. A swap was done after we spent money on one of the roads and it was found to be an equitable swap. The papers were signed and Waterhouse Road is now a state road and we will, as we can, upgrade and seal it. That is the right outcome for the people of Tasmania.

**Mr MULDER** - If you have some policy parameters and you have given a couple, even though you say there aren't any, but you have already some about the usage of that road. If it is purely a local use and things like that it is fine. You are starting to get across the potential for public owned infrastructure access to a particular thing. You then get into the tourist road areas. Might I suggest a lot of the arterial road that are connecting communities, there is a mish mash of ownership which is causing some of the problems. I take Fulham Road, for example. It was a sensible question and

it would be nice to get those policy parameters up front so when councils approach you there is a basis around which you can negotiate.

**Mr HIDDING** - The present themselves pretty quickly. The first way they present themselves is when the council says to you - 'Minister, you ought to be spending your money on our road', and we say 'why'? They say 'because of this' and if it is a good argument then already we have predetermined it is probably in the wrong ownership. Here is a great example.

**Mr HIDDING** - No deal has been discussed yet but it is going to be on the table. The Devonport City Council owns the East Devonport Road into the ships and ferries. You imagine the heavy truck use from two sea road ferries and two -. How could that ever be a council road? It is a part of our freight network. That ought to be regularised. When the times comes and they are ready to talk to us and say 'how about you take that' and 'we will take those two or three' then we will get that sorted. We are in a better position to fix up that road, rather than give money to local government to do things, because that is not good governance. We would be spending money on our own roads. That is how they generally present themselves. You are right, there should be a suite of parameters.

**Mr GARCIA** - We have sent something off to the Local Government Association with a framework of policy parameters. We are not saying that is what they should be. We have said to local government, how do they look to you?

Mr MULDER - These are the policy parameters which we are discussing, and one of them is obviously commonsense.

Mrs HISCUTT - Who owns Mount Road in Burnie?

**Mr HIDDING** - Here is a perfectly good example. Historically Mount Street used to be the only freight route out of Burnie to the west coast so it was in state government growth. It is now a suburban road to residential areas because further over in Burnie the Massey Greene Drive was constructed and guess who owned most of that? The council.

We own the suburban road and council owns the freight route. This is wrong and that is what has to happen there. In that case, the Burnie Council is saying, 'We'd be happy to take it off you but we want you to spend money on it'. So the only argument now is, 'but how much money?', and they are talking big bucks. The fact is if you can't do a reasonable deal it will stay as it is but it is not ideal. This is poor governance. It is historic governance matters which ought to be cleaned up by people with good intentions to bring that about.

Mr GARCIA - It's inefficient.

Mr HIDDING - That is it, inefficient.

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, and in the meantime the road is falling to pieces.

Mr HIDDING - Yes, that is what happens.

**CHAIR** - Minister, I have been asked by the member for Apsley and this deals with coming over the sidling. I think she has a point in the heavy rain the other day, because we are so reliant on machinery sometimes we forget the simple spade and shovel. The table drains get blocked and

it is an issue that the department ought to take on with a little bit more hack work so some of those issues don't occur.

**Mr HIDDING** - We have maintenance contracts in three parts of Tasmania. As it happens, one company holds all of them, a Tasmanian company, Stornoway. They are on pretty strict guidelines and contract arrangements. I will ask Mr Gregory to talk about that.

**Mr GREGORY** - There are requirements in the contract to keep drains clean. When you get extreme rainfall events you will get debris wash down off the hills and into the drains. It is the same as when you look now at the rivers and there are lots of logs being washed down. I noticed the photo of a beer keg and a whole range of things getting washed down.

When you get extreme events we need to get out and clear them as quickly as possible. We are proactive and we have done a lot of work, for example, on St Marys Pass upgrading the drains so they are less prone to blockage. With an extreme event you are going to get debris that washes down and no amount of pre-emptive maintenance is going to solve that problem.

**Mr SWAIN** - To add to that, I have been involved with the club management in the last couple of days and our contractor had 96 call-outs in 24 hours to put some context around the state of this.

CHAIR - The honourable member will be able to read all that answer on Hansard.

Mr HIDDING - I will report to her that you had me on the ropes.

**CHAIR** - We went through this discussion before on cyclists on the highway where we have a 110 km speed limit. Often it is too dangerous to ride in the vehicle lane so you ride between the white line and the edge. When Mr Todd was here the claim was made the department after road works in particular, there was so much debris it is almost impossible to ride a road bike. Tourists and recreational cyclists are loath to ride between the white line and the edge. If it could be swept once a year it would make a huge difference. I know that is a cost but it is a point which is raised often.

**Mr HIDDING** - I am not claiming credit but the thinking within the public sector and the thinking within the public, amongst motorists and cycle users, has changed. It has improved greatly.

When I speak to my department about cyclist infrastructure they are on board with me and right now we are spending a good deal of money on Bonnet Hill. What cyclists see as the most interesting ride is usually the most dangerous road.

Mr MULDER - That's what makes it interesting.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes. We have a widening project there - widening edges and doing those sorts of things - keep working away to get it right. Things like sweeping or cleaning the verge where people ride, in the past if anybody suggested that they would look at you like you were mad. We have a lot of this input now. We meet with cyclist and bicycle network a lot and they are absolutely at the table in terms of road users.

**CHAIR** - On the Bass and Midland highways you already have built into the existing road infrastructure a cycle lane between the white line and edge of the road. It is already done, you do not have to do anything else, except if it is kept clean it makes it a much better amenity.

**Mr HIDDING** - With the major project we have under way, the Breadalbane to Perth, which is an extension of the Southern Freeway all the way to Perth and it will go around the back of Perth and all the way to Illawarra Road. That has the most extraordinary cyclist facility using the old road. Some new construction for cyclists. We know how many cyclists leave from Kings Meadows, Young Town, to go towards Birralee and Longford to train and they do not need to go on the main road at all with this new section. That is an indication of different thinking with new projects incorporating cyclists.

CHAIR - It is the breeding ground for of the best cyclists in the world.

**Mr MULDER** - Are we going to adopt the freeway standards of places like Victoria where it says, no pedestrians, no cyclist on that new section of road?

**Mr HIDDING** - It is not in our plans to do that because we do not think anybody would cycle on that when they see what we are going to make available for them.

Mr MULDER - That counters your recent argument.

Mr HIDDING - We do not think they would do it.

**Mr MULDER** - I asked the question because they are the freeway standards when you go into major cities because there are alternative paths. The Clarence Council has had this struggle where the biking facility insists on closing down one lane of Clarence Street despite the fact there is a low use road, nice and wide, South Street runs parallel to it, but that is not where they are riding. They want to ride on the dangerous bit and they want a bike lane.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is an interesting discussion in the major metropolitan areas such as Melbourne. The mayor Melbourne, Rob Doyle, announced he agreed to more bicycle infrastructure but on a whole part of the network he would declare no cyclists because that was for cars. That is pretty good public policy. We are nowhere near that space and do not need to be because we do not have anything like the conflict between cyclists and motorists they have over there. The demonstrable behaviour of motorists with cyclists has changed completely through good marketing.

**CHAIR** - I would not say completely, if you talk to user groups. It is improving. I have ridden in a lot of countries in the world and we have the worst interaction here between motorists and cyclists.

Mr HIDDING - I am very please with the gains we have made.

CHAIR - I know it is improving, and that is good.

#### 2.2 Infrastructure strategy -

**CHAIR** - Minster, with the allocation we have a dip from \$2.1 million down to \$1.6 million in 2018-19 so that is a fairly significant decline. Is that because the key strategies will be completed or is there some other explanation?

Mr GARCIA - There were a number of election commitments by the Government for projects that were for relatively small amounts of money but needed to appear somewhere within the

agency's budget and this is where they appear. As a consequence of them being completed, they've gone so the reduction is the projects are actually listed and there were things like - the issue there is that those things have been completed. Thery're not being replaced by other projects hence the reduction.

Mr FARRELL - Just on that what actually did happen with the Derwent Valley marina?

**Mr HIDDING** - Those funds are available to them. Theyre adding that to a broader project called River Bank and I've noticed the federal sitting member made a pledge down there to add to that for that whole waterfront project. I think that they chosen to not just go ahead and do that in isolation.

Mr FARRELL - So those funds just sit there until they -

Mr HIDDING - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Mr Mulder mentioned it before and we were discussing it in the overview and talked about the Burnie Freight Corridor Strategy. The question that we had there and then talked about the work being done on the Midlands Highway at the moment but maybe it seems to be back-to-front a little bit. Why is this strategy being developed after the work that's being done on the highway?

Mr HIDDING - Not really. The work on the highway is for trucks and cars.

**CHAIR** - Yes, but if you are developing a strategy, you would build the road to suit that capacity of what you are going to do.

**SWAIN** - I think it's just a maturity issue. The work that is underway at the moment, there was an obvious and immediate need around safety and as part of the safety issues there's been opportunities taken to improve freight efficiency through over-taking lanes at 3 kilometre intervals. The next question is, as you work through that, what is the next set of priorties for that corridor given it is the main freight corridor off the back of the freight work that Allan's team has done.

**GARCIA** - So one is catch-up and one is looking forward. What's happening at the prensent time is identified need and what will come into play in the future is, what are the big requirements to get those larger efficiencies in that freight movement. They are not in conflict. One has been identified well in advance. This is a road that on the basis of safety we need to work on and what the analysis that we're looking at will do will look at a higher level treatment of - well it won't just be road, it will also be rail the corridor as to what might be required in the future.

**GREGORY** - While we are implementing a strategy that primarily addresses the safety issue we are building a road that will cater for high productivity trucks, bigger than the ones we allow on our network at the moment between Burnie and Hobart. So we're not designing down to the current vehicle. We're designing for larger more productive vehicles under the PBS system if someone chose to want to upgrade those in Tasmania. Between the northern end of the Brighton bypass and Perth, there is no capacity issue on the Midland Highway. We're talking extremely low volumes . So what we're doing now will serve us very well and will allow to carry the freight task and the freight task as it might change in the context of the sort of trucks it runs on.

**Mr HIDDING** - From my point of view, the two freight arrangements either in rail and then the road, they should be provided with the ability to be fully contestable against each other. If you were to limit road by only allowing the current truck arrangements, before long rail could be dominating road because they'd be limited. You want them to be fully contestable. That drives up efficiency and drives down cost and that is a great thing for the economy when you've got contestable freight outcomes.

**Mr MULDER** - I was going to ask this ask this under 2.5 but since we're in the space, the engineering of these particular roads, there's been a lot of discussion about the impact it would bring if you brought quad-axle trucks into Tasmania rather than the current B-doubles. I am wondering from an engineering perspective does that mean because they have four axles and therefore they can take more because of the load on the axles is more efficient? When you talked about designing it for future truckloads I am wondering whether this is part of the head towards quad axles.

**Mr HIDDING** - To be clear we have no plans to change the current freight profile and no necessity to. The road design is for high-productivity vehicles, which includes a whole raft of things, not just quad axle but other rigs as well. Either way the road has been designed for that. There are discussions nationally about road pricing issues, which would tend to have an affect on the kinds of outcome of various rigs. Right now the road pricing structure costs the same to register a prime mover and a trailer that only does 20 000 kilometres per year as it does for a road prime mover and trailer that does a million. It is the same price. One does huge damage to the road and the other doesn't. One never switches off. They change drivers and just keep going. The other one has very light usage. There are road-pricing issues that tend to drive what possible rigs might be available. Either way it is our job to have the strategy right so that can be contemplated so that road and rail can be contestable.

**Mr MULDER** - We need to future-proof for a 25- or 50-year horizon. Although there is no commitment to allow this, that or the other at the moment you can't because your road isn't up to the standard for that discussion to occur.

Mr HIDDING - The overtaking lanes to be long enough to be able to pass a longer rig.

**Ms FORREST** - I am happy to do it here or in shipping in regard to freight to and from King Island. I assume similarly the issues probably exist on Flinders. I just want to read you a little bit from a farmer over on King Island. He said:

As little as three years ago the cost of transporting cattle to Greenham at Smithton was \$60 to \$65 per head. The day the \$30 a head freight subsidy came under the Target 120 program to enable producers to transition to an off-island processing was announced by the previous Labor government, the freight price charged by Greenham using Les Dick's boat went to \$95.

Who got the Target 120 subsidy? It goes on:

When the requirement under the Target 120 program and spending an amount equal to the subsidy on farm improvements was taken into account the Target 120 Scheme actually cost beef producers \$60 a head if they honoured the contract.

He is saying the thing is a disaster in his view. The \$1.5 million spent on this program paid public servants, is his view, and flowed through producers pockets to ship operators. He is raising

the issue that the freight prices to and from the island obviously affect their freight cost going off island, but also the cost of produce on the island. He has given a few examples of different costs from King Island, Mildura and Bacchus Marsh. They are all regional areas. For example, a 2 kilogram pack of Black and Gold plain flour costs 216 per cent more on King Island than in Mildura. It goes on. It is just significant differences when it should not really be that way. Whether there is price gouging going on, I am not suggesting that, I am just saying this has been an ongoing challenge. I know the new boat is allegedly not too far away, but what is your view on this issue with the freight here, minister?

**Mr HIDDING** - What that story shows philosophically is a reflection on what happens when you apply subsidies. It distorts the market and ends up in the wrong people's pockets. Therefore the previous government said that \$30 subsidy would come off at a certain date and we didn't change it. They are absolutely understood. One thing they do understand in King Island is the distortion of things by subsidies can be very material. The Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme arrangements for King Island are fair and they reflect the same arrangements for people who live on mainland Tasmania. It is still not as good; they are still on an island. They do not have volume and they do not have scale to argue. It could be argued that they do not have the scale to drive prices down such as you might on mainland Tasmania.

In terms of where we are - you did not ask me that directly, but I will go to it - we are reasonably close to introducing the island's economy, the shippers, the producers, to somebody that we and King Island Council think would be the best. There is a joint arrangement where we sought the expressions of interest and worked through a lot of things. Essentially, what we will be doing is introducing them to the island to say, 'Here is somebody with a vessel. We have checked a lot of it out and we think this is the right way to go, but it is up to you.' The government is not going to get in there and mandate that this must be the ship and it has to carry that stuff.

In the past, 20 years ago I think, before national competition policy came in, a government would just regulate the route and say, 'Righto, you are running it and no one else is allowed to use the port.' National competition policy proved that that was seriously bad governance and bad for the economy. That does not happen any more. We will be introducing them to these people. If these people of King Island sign up most of the freight volumes of that company, that is what they will end up with. However, they have to have commercial discussions on where the service goes and what it is going to cost. That is all the government can do. If they do not do that, they will then just leave themselves to the market. There will be smaller freight companies who would come in and service the market; it is not all bad, though it would be a pretty poor outcome compared to a company that has invested millions in a new ship for a dedicated service on King Island.

**Ms FORREST** - Last year you said the cost of getting a 20-foot container with 23 tonnes of fertiliser from Geelong to Grassy was \$3227. The cost from Geelong to Devonport was \$1380. That is \$1847 less for each container landed in Devonport and trucked by road to Smithton - same fertiliser, same container, same ship, same route.

Mr HIDDING - How much to Tasmania?

Ms FORREST - \$1380.

**Mr HIDDING** - So that same container going out of Tasmania to Dubai is about \$1200. That tells us it is all about scale. The bigger the ship, the more boxes you can put in there; it just plummets.

Ms FORREST - This is the same ship though. It is all about scale.

**Mr HIDDING** - I cannot comment on that; it is an existing shipper. That service, by all accounts, is going to come to an end because he has a new ship coming and that new ship cannot fit in the port.

**Mr GARCIA** - The minister has alluded to a new provider. This is a provider that is not going in there to gouge; they are looking at a margin to establish. They are looking at a fair margin, not a massive one. They see, from the island's perspective, lots of opportunity for efficiency in supply chains, some of which they can influence.

Ms FORREST - Perhaps not going in on a Sunday.

**Mr GARCIA** - It will not be a Sunday service. They see other possibilities in there as well that can assist the island. If it comes to pass, and if the island gets behind this group, they will find that they will work with the island to address exactly the types of issues you are talking about. If the island turns their back on them, it could be problematic.

**Mr HIDDING** - They have to work with them. They have to join up and act; they have one shot at this. If it goes by, they end up with a bits-and-pieces kind of service. It is a very interesting point that you put and well researched. What I found, as I got my mind into this market, is that the producer seems to be paying big bucks, while the shipper seems to only make so much.

**Ms FORREST -** Where is the money? Is it falling out of a hole in the bottom of the boat or something?

**Mr HIDDING** - It is the arrangers. I have asked around the shipping industry to say, 'How do you deal with that?' They said, 'It was ever thus, Minister.' That is who makes the dough.

Mr MULDER - The classic middle-man syndrome.

**Mr HIDDING** - We have explored all of this. Possibly the only way out of it would be a cooperative.

Ms FORREST - The costs associated with a Sunday add to that.

#### 2.3 Land Transport Safety -

**Ms FORREST** - We dealt with some of this previously with the Road Safety Advisory Council. With regard to the novice driver licensing program, the graduated licensing system, that has been in place now for a number of years. How do you feel that is going? Are you looking at making any changes to it such as the hours required for different stages? There have been some significant issues over the past few years with the time taken to get tests done, the perceived failure rates, and not having instructors undertake the L2 test, which you have addressed and I commend you for that because it was a very positive change. In general terms, are there any other likely changes to this?

**Mr HIDDING** - With L2 going to the private sector, that took a lot of the sting out of the long time frame. The age somebody gets a licence in Tasmania is still surprisingly high and has become

somewhat cultural. It is no longer that people say, 'I've turned 17; I am going to get my licence at 17 and one day'. That does not occur much these days. That might have to do with the issues of the 50 hours and so on to get the hours up. However our project for the learner driver mentoring project is an outstanding success, particularly for families in lower socioeconomic circumstances where the notion is that a novice driver is going to get 50 hours up or cheat on their log book - and we don't want any of that because it is a serious danger. We provide these volunteers and we pay for coordinators and the structured things.

**Ms FORREST** - I declare an interest. I am the chair of the steering committee and the advisory committee in Burnie. That funding is secure?

**Mr HIDDING** - Absolutely. I am committed to it and it is in the out years. This process involves so many volunteers but it is an important point that there should be no paid persons with the novice driver because there is a commercial sector that is somewhat sensitive about this. This isn't driver instruction; this is experienced people so the novice driver can get their hours up.

We are committed to removing unnecessary barriers for young people to get a driver's licence. An online booking and payment system for driver assessment has been developed by the Tasmanian Government which will allow novice driver applicants to book online via the Department of State Growth website. This new system is a particular benefit to people living in remote areas who cannot readily access a Service Tasmania shop to book and pay. The online booking system will allow applicants to choose a suitable time and location for their assessment from the list of all available time slots. It will also allow applicants to change or cancel a driving assessment within 24 hours of their assessment.

**Ms FORREST** - Is that live yet?

Mr HIDDING - The Government has developed it and it goes live in a couple of weeks.

Ms FORREST - Great, that will help people on the west coast particularly.

**Mr HIDDING** - It certainly will. That is the matter you spoke about last year. The booking system is in the final stage of testing and it is anticipated it should be implemented in the next few weeks. The online booking system will be compatible with a number of digital platforms including Smart phones, tablet devices and desktop computers. Clients can still book and pay for driver assessment at any of the Service Tasmania shops around Tasmania. Another thing we did was the current mandatory 28-day waiting time after a person fails at P1. If you fail on the small thing and then there is a month in there, and young people just throw their hands up and go -

Ms FORREST - Their confidence goes out the window.

**Mr HIDDING** - 'I have had it with this stuff, I do not want to go back for 6 months'. We have abolished that so you book at your first available opportunity to resit your test. They are all positive matters to get novice drivers into the system in a timely fashion so they can go about their work opportunities and their social opportunities. We continue to work on the whole thing and since last year you can see from that there have been some good changes.

**Ms FORREST** - It was interesting watching, I think it was a 7.30 *Report*, last night and they had that simulated hazard identification thing. When I went to the ACT and did one of their programs with mostly young people in that group, I identified with how the supervising driver does

not see things in the same way as the supervisor driver. There is probably some more work to do with supervising drivers, to help them realise that the young person they are with does not see it the same. They do not see the same things on the road.

**Mr HIDDING** - I like that idea. This could be something we can develop in terms of more safety. I did much the same - I did a hazard perception test in Victoria some time ago and I said I was shadow minister for Road Safety and they said 'great job, you have only killed three people'.

**Mr SWAIN -** Just for clarity, the LDMP program is funded out of the road safety levy and it is on its third and final year funding. That will be considered as part of the development of the broader strategy for road safety.

Ms FORREST - Is there going to be a reapplication for that funding?

**Mr HIDDING** - The need for it is established, the outcomes are there, so now the RSAC will consider the project is not only worthwhile but they should fund it.

**Mr SWAIN** - We have also been looking across our program delivery in the agencies. You can have a look at what is working across different brand programs and change the program reporting. Since that, we have seen a doubling of the on-road hours provided under the program. Effectively we were reviewing the best outcomes from the best providers and you are using that to set bench marks. The process of putting those bench marks in place is lifting the value from this program we are getting. It is something we are looking at to use in other programs.

**Mr MULDER** - There are a couple of observations you might like to think about. First of all, the Learner Driver Mentor Program, and I think this was what the member for Murchison was coming at, it is done by experienced drivers with no special tutoring skills.

Ms FORREST - They have a training thing.

**Mr MULDER** - What you are looking at is people who are supervising practice and it is different from instruction. What the purpose of practice is, isn't someone instructing or who knows what they were taught the week before in the driving lesson. The other issue is about this rocking up to the test. I know a couple of people who have been through the program, they are comfortable with their driving instructor, their driving instructor has about 10 times the qualifications of the transport department assessor but the kid freaks out in that one session and does not do it. It is all right to say, we have waived the waiting period for them to have a go again but the last time I checked, even if you did sign up to the program the next day, there is still a two, three month waiting list.

Maybe the mentoring driving program is not the only way and maybe some thought needs to be given to like you do with most other skill sets, you outsourced it to the private sector to run people through training programs and then accreditation in the workplace skill is issued by the service provider.

**Mr SWAIN -** I guess on the program we are targeting people who would not come through another route, being on the road, because of their personal circumstances. Going back to the booking system, we can do some fancy things through that so we can reserve a percentage of bookings for people who are on that immediate failure so we can trial different approaches to maximise the efficiency. At the same time, in the background we will be managing the utilisation

of our own staff and we can track how we are setting the parameters in that booking system to the utilisation of our staff to get maximum result.

**Mr MULDER** - I take it on board. We are not asking for some media headline now but we need to think about whether you have to go through that program whereas most other skills courses, the instructor does the courses and then they run them through the programs. They supervise the practices and at the end of that program, they certify that this person has the skills and knowledge -

**Mr HIDDING** - I acknowledge the testing arrangements for P1 is long-standing and pretty brutal. I spoke to a 21 year-old last night, a young lady who said she is very grumpy. She did not have a license because she was 'dry steering'. I had to figure out what that might have been. She was turning the wheel while the car was standing still. I would have said, 'that is not good for power steering'. There might have been something else she was not disclosing but it is pretty brutal. You go in and one little thing and you do not get it. We have an educator down here, the form of education where you do it in components and you get signed off as competent, competency based learning.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - It is not a bad thing to fail. If they do not pass it, go back in and do better. As simple as that.

**Mr MULDER** - I am all for that but that is great for knowledge base stuff. You either know it or you do not but what we are talking about here is degrees of skill. The story I got was the young bloke who was driving down the highway, travelling at 80 kph, but he was in a dual lane highway and he thought he was doing the right thing. Instead of the instructor saying that it was not a good idea, he failed the test on the fact he was doing the right thing, driving within his speed limit, he was just in the wrong lane. There was no obstruction with traffic but it is almost like this draconian reaching over. Some people can handle that and move on, other people stress out and walk away.

Mr HIDDING - We do not want that so we will keep talking about it.

**Ms FORREST** - The tracking of the registration of vehicles - police can look it up now and see if the vehicle is unregistered. Is that managed through here, or is that more a police matter?

Ms NICHOLLS - They have access to motor registry system information.

**Ms FORREST** - Is that creating a greater capacity? We are identifying more on the road, there is a number on the road that are unregistered, are we seeing greater detection of those as a result of this work?

**Mr HIDDING** - That would either come through the automatic number plate recognition system or through policing on the road or they pull them up for general tests, like we were talking earlier today about pulling them up for a random breath test.

**Ms NICHOLLS** - That capacity for the police, with compliance activity, to match a driver or a person with registration or ownership of the vehicle.

Ms FORREST - Have you the figures on how many detections there have been?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, it is in the police corporate report and if you go to that you should find it. If not give my office a call and we will get that for you.

**Ms NICHOLLS -** We have some information, performance table 10.4, on page 251, in relation to vehicles found to be unregistered at those checks so 2014-15 0.65, total 0.70.

Ms FORREST - That is the percentage of all vehicles checked and found to be unregistered?

Ms NICHOLLS - Yes, based on the ANPR camera recognition.

**Mr FARRELL** - From cars to buses, minister. I think bus inspections are done exceptionally by the industry. Has there been a notable improvement in the standard of bus safety because of the regular inspection regime?

**Ms NICHOLLS** - I do not have any specific information with me. The data we monitor from time to time shows there is improvement.

**Mr FARRELL** - It seems to work well from this side. With operators who are not accredited, go with the smaller buses that take tourists around, there has always been some concern from the industry about that. I have noticed in other states bus registration plates have been reissued with the same numbers but on the bottom it has their accreditation number on the number plates. I do not know if that is something that is worth considering or whether that would -

Ms NICHOLLS - I am not aware of that and I thank you for letting us know.

Mr FARRELL - I thought it was probably a way to recognise -

**Mr SWAIN** - I have briefed the honourable member in another context around right sourcing. We have the wider review of small vehicle passenger transport regulation coming up and that is an opportunity to look at that issue.

**Mr HIDDING** - Four bits of legislation are going to be committed to a major review. It will take some time as you would imagine but that is going to be the existing taxi industry who are going to participate in that. The wheelchair accessible taxis. The luxury car hire and those small buses in that whole market. We want the regulatory environment to be positive, to grow, but it is all about safety for the people using it.

Included in that will be any right-sourcing company that chooses to set up in Tasmania. They will be reassessed pretty soon under that whole thing. Taxis are looking forward to that process. Taxis are not keen to give up what some of us might call red tape because it is the difference between them and the right-sourcing outfit.

**Mr FARRELL** - That is not always a bad thing.

Mr HIDDING - No, exactly.

**CHAIR** - I do not want to open up another board but I presume under this output we are only talking about on-road vehicles; we are not talking about off-road vehicles, off road four wheel quad bikes for example? Where does that fall under?

**Mr HIDDING** - They can be registered as a farm vehicle so they can cross roads and all that. There is a registration slot for them. There are a couple of different ones they may or may not take

but it brings them into the regulatory environment. It is not particularly expensive but it does allow them to be on the road.

**CHAIR** - That is right, yes.

Mr HIDDING - It works pretty well, doesn't it?

**CHAIR** - That is fine. There are broader safety issues, roll bars, and all that sort of thing has become a nightmare throughout Australia of where you go with regulations. We have three of those and park them side by side. I am told by our dealer you can buy them but they are not compliant. There are all sorts of issues so we had better not go down that track at this stage.

We will wait and see. I think there will compliance and regulations coming up in other states. The problem is Australia is a small market but the big manufacturers are out of Taiwan and are they really interested in doing things for a small market like Australia. Even though we think it is big but it is not. That is another question.

#### The committee suspended from 4.04 p.m. to 4.19 p.m.

#### 2.4 Passenger Transport -

**CHAIR** - We will resume with 2.4, Passenger Transport. There is no better person to do it than the driver of the big red Labor bus, which I think is registered, isn't it?

**Mr FARRELL** - Yes, my word. This is an area of great interest and I want to be constructive. I would like to know though, and we did have part of this hijacked in our general overview by the chairman, with the new timetable changes and the interchange of the bus services, has that contributed to the passenger count? If someone is on a bus and they get to the bus stop and they transfer, is that counted as a new passenger? Is that how the system works?

**Mr HIDDING** - This relates to the media release we put out last week about the April to previous April boarding. Firstly, it is apples with apples, regardless, but let's talk about what the apple is.

Ms MOATE - My understanding is it excludes transfer so it is first boardings.

**Mr FARRELL** - First boardings - okay. Are we able to get any of that information in more detail, just with the numbers and where they are getting on and off? Is that available?

**Mr HIDDING** - It is a matter for Metro. It would be commercial material. The key point is this is about Hobart alone. There is some very good news about passenger transport uptake in Tasmania. For that month of April it is in the region of a 4 per cent increase. This is going against trends for public transport around the place generally. It is very good. In Hobart alone, and I thought I would highlight that because it was 6.8 per cent. e have just had a network review. It must have contributed because you don't get that kind of uplift in one month's full operations.

**Mr FARRELL** - With that sort of good news story it would be nice to have some of the details behind it.

**Mr MULDER** - A point of clarification. The first boardings - how do you distinguish between someone getting on a bus and travelling to a bus station and then transferring onto another? When you say 'first boardings', it means every time someone gets on a bus, whether they are transferring or not transferring?

**Ms MOATE -** Metro's Greencard ticketing system enables passengers to make a free transfer if they do that within 90 minutes of the first boarding. The second time is recorded differently in their system. That might mean using two separate buses to make one connected journey. Only the first one has been counted in those statistics and the second one is recorded as a transfer.

Mr MULDER - Even though you are paying two fares?

Ms MOATE - If you make that 90-minute transfer the second boarding is free.

Mr MULDER - And that is automatic on the ticket?

**Mr HIDDING** - We are now getting that with much greater uptake of the Greencard and good marketing of that - it has all contributed. We have an aggressive public transport company called Metro and they have done a great job. We can get you some information on passenger transport uptake generally, separated from the Hobart figures, and get you some statewide stuff as well.

Mr MULDER - I will declare an interest - I actually have one.

**Mr FARRELL** - This goes into 6.2 and that is General Access Services. There is a drop in funding; it falls by \$9.75 million over the four-year period. Is that where the funding for the new buses is coming from?

**Mr SWAIN -** A component is the \$3.25 million which is being paid to Metro for several years is coming out of and been turned into an equity transfer.

**Mr HIDDING** - The bringing forward of what they would get anyway. We have structured in a way so they get it early and is a better benefit to them but certainly is a balance sheet scheme.

**Mr FARRELL** - Will that affect any general access services, hiring them out? I know this is sort of going over too I would link one with the other.

**Mr SWAIN** - No, the money was generally expected to be used for capital purposes, primarily for VDA bus purposes. It is still being used for the same thing it is just as equity on the balance sheet presumably will be more use to Metro because it will allow them to borrow.

**Mr FARRELL** - More modern buses will be more appealing for people to catch. There is also the issue of, and it comes up time and time again in my area, the quality of the bus shelters. While it is nice to sit in a warm air conditioned bus, sometimes you have to wait - particularly in weather like we have had lately - in sub-standard bus shelters, if there is a bus shelter at all. Is there any plan to improve this type of passenger accommodation? There can be argument between local government, bus operators and state government about whose responsibility it is.

**Mr HIDDING** - There are a number of local government entities who have engaged Metro on this. That is the right way to go about it. They would like better facilities for their residents and in

a shared way in a couple of circumstances. I know of at least two southern councils who have interacted with Metro.

There is also disability discrimination applying to bus stops. That can be challenging, sometimes you have a bus stop on an unformed footbath or have beautifully paved little patch in the middle of an unformed path. It gets a bit awkward and local government has a role to play.

**Mr SWAIN** - Part of project 2018 we are in the process of putting together a purchase request for services the minister will get advice on shortly - he has not seen it. It started off with a better network coming out of a model which predicts sources of demand and then been moderated through interactions with the industry and other ways. That sort of phase 1 approach for 2018.

At the end of that phase, toward the end of this year, we will have a clearer picture of the extent of changes to bus routes. This will give us a better feel for the immediate challenge around bus shelters coming out of project 2018, which will need to feed into discussions with local government.

**Mr FARRELL** - There has been a statement made in the papers local business will be given the opportunity to bid for the new bus build. Sometimes that has a happy ending and sometimes it does not, as far as local production goes. The state government helped establish the Ansair bus factory at Kingston in 1987 which operated until 1996. They built somewhere around 200 buses, not only for Metro but also for other states in Australia. There are still people around who worked there. It employed a number of people, particularly in the Kingston area. At the time it was closed down they made statements they could get by producing 8 buses a year, to keep them viable. Has there been any thought about looking at reintroducing that?

**Mr HIDDING** - It has been quite some time since Ansair were there. They pulled out because they could not get by on eight buses a year. I know because I was a board member on the MTT. We were going through purchasing things then. In announcing this the other day I did have some deja vu. The stance that the government and Metro are taking is that Tasmania has a wonderful advanced manufacturing capacity, all around Tasmania. We spoke earlier about the ambulance they provide ambulances nationally. There is the production of huge mining equipment, trucks and vehicles, which are not entirely different to buses. There is a major defence contract currently under advanced consideration for a consortium of Tasmanian operators.

Down here in Hobart a company refitted a number of second-hand buses bought from the airport. They were very lightly used buses and they did a great job. There is capacity on the island. How do we work with that? I am meeting next week with the Minister for State Growth, Matthew Groom, who is in the area of manufacturing and business development. With a view to discussing with his department what the potential requirements might be of a build such as this.

It is more than likely the buses to be acquired by Metro will be a popularly-branded bus with the full warranties, tried and true technology. There will be no home-made bus arrangement. It will be a properly-branded bus Metro can trust. The construction of it could happen here in Tasmania. We have free trade between states, but Metro is a corporation and it can manage its affairs where they know their shareholders would be delighted if there was a very substantial component of Tasmanian build.

My discussion with the Minister for State Growth will be to provide to the capable industry, a one-stop shop, 'Go to see those people there. They will tell you about what is likely to happen.' Aggregate up and make a bit of a consortium with others. Get in and then this is how you go about

it. These would be the contacts in the bus companies most likely to bid - so everybody gets a fair crack. It is not for Metro to be hunting around looking for Tasmanian builders, because that gets into probity areas. This is something, at arm's length the Department of State Growth can do well in terms of just job development in Tasmania.

**Mr FARRELL** - Just putting a hypothetical, if Metro found they could get buses from China for half the price, get twice the number of buses, what would the state Government's view be?

**Mr HIDDING** - We would take advice from Metro, but I do know Metro are looking for very high quality buses. I also have been on buses from overseas, on a South Pacific Island, a fairly new bus; frankly it was rubbish. The price was rubbish as well. It was rubbish for a reason, because you get what you pay for. There will be none in a Metro fleet; incidentally all technologies are welcome to be within the bid. Given where development currently is, it is more likely in the earlier part of the contract, at least a Euro 6 standard diesel, which is a very high standard diesel, great environmental credentials. You do not get that in these other buses, you get their own brand of a diesel engine.

**Mr FARRELL** - When you look at different chassis, and over the years Metro have standardised on a Scania chassis because there is an economy of buying spares and keeping maintenance. Would it be likely you would be changing brands?

**Mr HIDDING** - I think they will go out to the market in July, seeking expressions of interest. That will fine down to a group of preferred bidders, I would have thought. I cannot speak for Metro here, they are their own corporation, but this would be the shareholder expectations after discussions with them. I have been in discussions with them now for 12 months planning a business case for these 100 new buses, and the funding through Cabinet and through the budget process. So I am pretty clear as to what they have in mind. The only way you would land this is to win it with one brand. The 100 buses would be one brand with one standard and one platform. If you wanted to change motor technologies, if something became available better than another, then you would be able to tweak the contract.

Ms FORREST - Does that mean they are all the same size too?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes. The economies - imagine that. They are not custom-built; they are not 100 different buses. They will be 100 world class passenger buses.

Mr FARRELL - How many per year?

**Mr HIDDING** - It is over a four-year rollout. I think it is two per month - 24 or 25 a year with that kind of rollout. It is a fair old production to produce two buses and it depends on how evolved your kit is that you are starting with. I would want that to be as small as possible. I would wish it to be that. It is up to Metro to get the best deal here.

**CHAIR** - You might recall, minister, that a few years ago we had an Environment Resource and Development committee report. One of the main recommendations was that our Metro fleet should be CNG, as are Sydney, Adelaide, and a lot of other metropolitan areas. Has that been considered in this case?

**Mr HIDDING** - All technologies are welcome to be discussed. Bear in mind that with CNG we pay a lot more for gas in Tasmania than in Melbourne because we have got to bring it from

Melbourne. You are already behind the eight ball with that, but under no circumstances is that out of the question. It is very much in the question. So are hybrid technologies and - we talked about this in our debate in the lower House the other day - full electric. It would be lovely to have all our buses powered by Great Lake. We would be delighted if there was a full plug-in electric bus. There is no such thing in Australia yet that would go even remotely near it. Some people from the private bus industry were up there last week and drove this thing. They drove the number one prototype. It was interesting but even the builder of it - and I spoke to him on Saturday night - said, 'It is a bit like light rail. Its time will come but particularly for Tasmania with the hilly terrain that is a little way away'. We are not opposed in terms of political parties as to who is saying what, we have just got to be practical and get buses at the best outcome.

Mr FARRELL - With the new buses you will be looking at wi-fi and those sorts of things?

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes. I would imagine they are going to be the latest and greatest, best-in-theworld buses. That is what we are looking for from a highly reputable builder of buses and producer of this technology. I would be really keen to understand what add-on benefits are available from each of them. A competitive tender is going to bring that stuff out. I think it is four or five major bus companies and they have all got cracker products. So we are in a really good competitive environment to extract a good deal.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - After having lived in Melbourne for a long time I know the value of a regular bus service and being able to regularly swap and get from one place to another on time. Are our standards up to that?

**Mr HIDDING** - The bus fleet as we speak is up to it but it struggles and it is certainly not disability discrimination act compliant. On the current profile, it will be just as uncompliant in 2022 when the law says we have got to be. Under this program, we will be 2022-compliant. We will also be able to look at the latest and greatest in bus technology on the road and all sorts of other opportunities with those buses.

This gives me an opportunity to say that today I am going to launch the Government's draft Transport Access Strategy. It is now available for viewing and public comment. The strategy sets out the Government's approach to providing better coordinated passenger transport services for Tasmania, particularly those disadvantaged through economic circumstances, age and disability. The strategy identifies the need for government to work with local government and form alliances between private, public and not-for-profit transport providers - that includes things such as community cars - to provide a range of innovative passenger transport solutions to ensure people can get to jobs, training and access services. We are already working on a lot of this but this strategy puts this whole thing together.

One of the first opportunities, I suspect, will be to investigate the development of a one-stop, web-based resource that people can use to access information about commercial, public and not-for-profit public transport services. We have a whole range of things available but this joins opportunities up. It is a draft strategy and I will be looking for feedback from all of you as to how we might develop this further.

Mr SWAIN - It is out for public consultation for three months.

**Mr MULDER** - What are the criteria for determining when outlying regions such as Sorell or Kingston switch from being a service by a metropolitan service provider? We recognise that the

model changes dramatically from servicing from a private outsourcer who isn't simply stepping up to the plate with the capacity or frequency of services required to provide a reasonable public service. What are the criteria for stepping up to those sorts of areas? I know it has happened with Kingston at some stage and now we have Sorell that is growing very large. There are all those issues such as congestion, frequency and population. There is an awful frequency of service coming out of Dodges Ferry, which is a low socioeconomic area and requires public transport.

**Mr HIDDING** - As I represent that area, I am very aware of all the nuances around that issue. When people say, 'We want Metro for Sorell because Kingston has it'. As it happens, Kingston is serviced by Metro on an outer urban contract. It is not Metro-style services at all, if you take Metrostyle services to be running around the suburbs empty. They don't have that kind of service; it is an outer urban contract. For instance, at New Norfolk, there is the O'Driscoll service and generally when I ask people they reckon it is a very good service.

**Mr FARRELL** - It is. We were told for years people in New Norfolk wouldn't catch buses and that is why Metro never went up there. I catch O'Driscoll's bus in.

**Mr HIDDING** - Let us get to the Sorell story. Project 2018 has looked at that whole area. I am going to ask Mr Swain to talk about where that goes because it is all coming up in the next 12-18 months.

**Mr SWAIN** - We have this model we developed collaboratively with Metro and others, called the Swiss model. It looks at demand predictors - population growth, schools, hospitals, and what is happening over time in an area - and comes up with a basic view of what level of service should be provided in an area. With Project 2018, we are starting with general access services. As part of the work that has been going on over the last six months, there have been different levels of service frequency - a matrix worked out about when you get a trigger from one level to another - and we will end up with an initial proposal for services for each area. Then there will have to be an engagement process with the industry and the community which will bring back those three things to the minister and say, now we need to finalise the services that are going to be purchased in 2018. In somewhere like Sorell, you will have factors that will push the service level, like the population.

**Mr HIDDING** - I cannot insert myself into a very structured and very high-level process but I asked the question: if there has been genuine growth at Sorell and the southern beaches, will that be reflected in this model? The answer was : 'It must do, minister, that is what the model is designed to capture.' Let us wait and see, and it will not be so long before that shows itself.

Mr MULDER - Is it possible to have a look at that model?

**Mr HIDDING** - At the modelling you can, but not the outcomes of the work because that is ongoing. The outcome of the work is part of a structured process that has the trust of all the players. I am not looking at it. I will get the report in due course, at which point -

**Mr MULDER** - My initial question was about the criteria and you have those in a model, and I am asking, can we have a look at the model, not the data that populates it?

Mr HIDDING - We can provide you a briefing on it. It is a good story.

**Mr SWAIN** - It is not in a form that you can hand over, it has a whole lot of factors built into Excel spreadsheets. It is not user friendly in the sense that we can give you a copy of the assumption sheet.

Mr MULDER - There is weighting of those criteria?

**Mr HIDDING** - Testing, ground-proofing with the operators who would look at that and say that will not work but it you join that up to that, it will work a treat. It is all very organic. We would like to arrange a briefing for you because it is a good briefing.

**Mr SWAIN** - We have tested it quite a bit with the Bus Association and we need to engage with education, private and otherwise. It is not the answer, it is a starting point. It will be 80 per cent of the answer and then it will be moderated because there will be other inputs that come into play.

**Mr MULDER** - Minister, I probably do not need something on the criteria. I am just trying to get a feel of where the trigger points are as to what it is going to do. Like you, I am not all that keen in injecting myself into all the subjective issues and potential linkages. If we could just go to the criteria you are assessing.

**Mr HIDDING** - We will provide you with a briefing note of the structure of it so you will have that right in your mind. If there are any more questions after that, we are very happy to do so.

CHAIR - Do you want that on notice, Tony?

Mr MULDER - No, I don't, you are not going to be able to get to me within a week.

Mr SWAIN - It would help us if we didn't need to.

**Mr MULDER** - We'll take it off here and take it as a private arrangement. If the committee is of a view, I can table that in the House if you are interested.

#### 2.5 Traffic Management and Engineering Services -

Mrs HISCUTT - How many engineers do we have working for us, in FTEs, as opposed to consultants?

**Mr HIDDING** - This department operates these days as a very modern governance model, which is that we are informed client and road manager. There is a high level of capacity amongst Tasmanian engineering companies in this road space and has been for many years. They are worldclass engineers. It has come up from time to time that we do not have any engineers left. That is not true and I will ask Mr Gregory to address that.

**Mr GREGORY** - In traffic engineering, we have four officers in Hobart and three in Launceston who practise traffic engineering. I would stress that they are not all traffic engineers and you do not need to be a traffic engineer to practise in traffic engineering. One of our most experienced people who would have come across before, Peter Hubble, is not a traffic engineer; he is technical officer. We have seven people operating in that space. In the broader context, we have 29 qualified engineers within our division working in different areas - pavements, bridges, project

delivery, traffic engineering. We probably have something in the order of 45 technical or other qualified people who work in different spaces.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - The 2016-17 and 2017-18 budget figures are up \$400 000 this time and \$500 000 next time. That is attributed to the Greater Hobart Initiative and the traffic problems there. You have had to employ extra consultants. Is that what that money goes towards?

**Mr GREGORY** - That money will go to a range of initiatives, including some bus priority measures on Main Road and through -

**Mr HIDDING** - The Main Road to Glenorchy. Down here they call it the Main Road and up north we have no idea what that means.

Ms FORREST - There are main roads in most towns.

**Mr GREGORY** - In the area of the Springfield bus depot for some bus priority improvements there. There will be some money going into upgrading our traffic control system so we can get some greater flexibility and greater management of that. Then there will be some other practical on-the-ground measures. We are not intending that money go into specifically consultants. Some will be around modelling and data collection but it generally won't be used to engage consultants to do work.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - The extra funds in 2017-18 is for addressing the congestion in Greater Hobart?

Mr GREGORY - Yes, the issue and responses to that issue.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - Do you reckon that is enough money and enough time allocation to address that?

**Mr GREGORY** - That is an immediate response. That is trying to get an immediate response. If you look at the Nixon Report, it made a series of recommendations, some of which included looking at how we operate the traffic signal management system and what we can do to enhance that to get greater control. There will be that piece of work, which is an immediate response. Parallel to that we are doing other words through our network planning area, bigger picture, longerterm outlook work.

Mrs HISCUTT - So you are on top of the Hobart transport problems.

**Mr SWAIN** - Following on from what Shane said, we need to work with councils. This is a shared responsibility. There are a number of councils and us. Part of the conversation we want to have is about how we proficiently inform our ability to understand and manage traffic around Greater Hobart, and how we don't do it separately but do it together. We want to talk to councils about things like joint traffic modelling.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - When I drive into Hobart, most of it is happening out there at Elwick and coming in. Is this what we are talking about or are you addressing the Greater Hobart, the whole?

**Mr SWAIN** - Greater Hobart. It's Sorell, Kingston, Glenorchy and out to Brighton, the greater area and looking out a bit further as well. Not the next five minutes but as far out as we can go.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - When you get on towards 2018-19 the funds go back again, so then is it just business as normal after that? Are there no other big projects in the pipeline, special projects, specific projects you have in mind?

**Mr SWAIN** - Some of the work that we will be doing under the minister's sponsorship with councils may well bring proposals back to the budget process.

Mr HIDDING - I am meeting in a forum of four mayors this Friday on the Hobart congestion.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - One of the other key projects here is the Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy. This is included in the funding as it is. Would you like to give me an update on how that is going and I presume this includes the Towards Zero project?

Mr HIDDING - That is an element of RSAC stuff. We will bring Penny back to the table.

Ms NICHOLLS - Can I ask you to repeat the question, please?

**Mrs HISCUTT** - This funding, one of the key projects delivering specific projects is the Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy. I was wondering how that strategy is going and whether it includes Towards Zero and how that is going.

**Ms NICHOLLS** - What we have at the moment is a current draft strategy that covers 2007 to 2016, which is going to finish at the end of the current financial year. We have a third action plan that will conclude at the end of the financial year. We have a range of projects that are funded through the road safety levy that will be reflected in our allocation in 10.2 land transport safety and also in the CIP allocation for best practice.

Work is well advanced now on the development of the next 10 year strategy which is called Towards Zero Tasmanian Road Safety strategy and it is covering the period 2017-2026. That looks at the strategic direction for the next 10 years for road safety. The new strategy will continue to be based on the best practice safe systems principles that the Minister referred to earlier and the long term vision of zero fatalities and serious injuries on Tasmanian roads.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - I attended one of the forums in Burnie when it was going and there were good ideas that came through. Were there any startling ideas you were able to grab from those forums and implement in here?

**Ms NICHOLLS** - No, we are still going through a development process at the moment. As a result of the first round of public consultation which may have been what you were involved in, you will find on State Growth's website, a consultation report that came out of that first round of consultation. We have also had CASR, the Centre for Automotive Safety Research tied to the University of Adelaide, which has done this research work and modelling for us around what are key road safety issues and they have analysed our crush data. You will find that report on State Growth's website. We currently have out for public consultation and report which is a discussion paper which is also on State Growth's website which has been out for public consultation. It represents what has come out of the first round of stakeholder of community consultation and also what the research says from the body depth of work that CASR has done for us.

The next step is for us to analyse what comes out of that stage two community consultation. I believe we have had around 1500 people participating in that, either through completion of surveys on line, some phone surveys and also attending some drop in sessions we have run. We are now just in that stage of analysing that second round of public consultation and looking at what initiatives go forward.

Mrs HISCUTT - All this is coming out of this funding here?

**Ms NICHOLLS** - Yes, coming out of the fund for the road safety levy. The actual development of the next strategy is against 2.3 allocation for road safety on the amount that is against transport safety there, in 10.2.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - I have seen the ads on the road of course for the speeding shatters lives, the ones on television. Are you having any good responses from that? It does not seem to be with ads for road safety.

Mr HIDDING - You mean with the cracking bones?

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, the one with the spine, a very good advertisement.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - The reason it has been good is that some people say that cannot look at it. This is the point of it. We actually want to shock people but for some reason, 'it happens to other people', and when it happens to you, generally you are okay. This is life and death stuff.

Mrs HISCUTT - Have you seen any results, minister, with less crash numbers?

**Mr HIDDING** - I would be astonished if we were able to link one advertisement with up or down crash numbers but it is a holistic approach.

Mrs HISCUTT - Since Towards Zero started.

**Mrs HIDDING** - There were 332 serious casualties, that is fatality and serious on Tasmanian roads in 2015, a 9.9 per cent increase from 2014 and 11.1 per cent increase on the five year average. That is not a good outcome and that is why we are on television doing the stuff. Excessive speed, alcohol and drugs, inattentiveness and inexperience are continually major contributing factors to serious casualty crashes. Single vehicle run off road crashes continue to be the major crash data accounting for 47 per cent of serious casualty crashes in 2015. Head on crashes account for 13 per cent of serious casualty crashes.

So far this year, for the period 1 January to 5 June there has been 156 per cent, up 2.6 on the same figure in 2015, so not as remarkable a lift. So far this year motor cyclists and pillion passengers have accounted for 33 per cent of all serious casualties. 44 per cent of all serious casualties occurred in 100 and 110 kilometre speed zones. Clearly completely unacceptable.

**Ms FORREST -** Minister, on that point, to perhaps highlight the greater calamity of that, what percentage of vehicles on the road are motor cycles because it is that percentage of crashes, if motor cycles only form 10 per cent of traffic on the road then it makes it even worse?

**Mr SWAIN -** Penny might correct me but I have a feeling it was something like 1.2 per cent of kilometres travelled on motor cycles.

**Ms FORREST -** It is kilometres travelled you need to look at. And they form - was it 33 per cent, minister, you said?

**Mr HIDDING -** Yes, 33 per cent of all serious casualties; that is fatals and serious. 44 per cent of all serious casualties incurred in 100 and 110 kilometre speed zones so it is at the higher end of the thing. Could I point to an initiative of mine personally that I brought into this job because of a constituent of mine who lost his 16 year old son, who went down. This is what happens currently in Tasmania. We are reviewing the whole thing and a new system is not far away from being done. We found Victoria was on the same thing.

This is what happens currently. A 16 year old goes down and he goes to the local high school where there are some witches hats. He gets on his postie bike that dad bought for him and he goes round the witches hats successfully. He goes out on the road. He comes back in 12 months of that L plate time and he gets some training after being out on the road for 12 months with no training.

Ms FORREST - On his own?

**Mr HIDDING -** On his own. Then he gets to go on the Sunday rides, you see eight or 10 of them with an instructor. It is compulsory to do that training. How is that even half logical? It is a nonsense. Young motor cyclists are well represented in these stats. We are changing it around. They will get that training before they are cut loose on the road on their own. This tragic case of this kid, after having successfully negotiated that, a couple of days later a strong puff of wind blew him onto the road in front of a line of traffic and he lost his life. His dad said to me, "Rene, he could not ride a motor bike and the system put him out there completely untrained.'

Ms FORREST - Minister, why couldn't we do this with car drivers as well - give them training?

Mr HIDDING - We do though.

**Ms FORREST -** To the same extent as what they do in the ACT? It is only answering questions.

Mr HIDDING - I see what you mean, yes.

**Ms FORREST -** Some sort of controlled experiential experience. Whether it is in a simulator even. Maybe that is the first step perhaps.

**Mr HIDDING** - The professional driving instructors have a very structured arrangement for somebody on L1, because, particularly with refugees, for instance who have come from another country and never sat behind the wheel in their lives and they have to teach them some pretty basic skills.

Mr MULDER - You see that with motor cars, it is not unsupervised like it is with motor bikes.

Mr HIDDING - That is it. There is the point You have someone sitting next to you.

Ms FORREST - Learner drivers are the safest on the road, the stats all show that, because there is someone else there.

**Mr SWAIN** - Linking a couple of those things as well and coming back to the outcomes that the member for Murchison raised before, that is why we are putting so much work into the engagement part of this. We are really happy with the 1500 people who have been involved in discussions. RSAC is starting to have a conversation about coming out of the expert research the effectiveness of different measures that can be applied. Then we are also trying to get some handle through the community consultation on the likelihood of acceptance and success in terms of community embracing of the ideas, so that RSAC can consider those two factors in recommending to the minister a set of measures. That is a pragmatic way of developing policy that is looking at whether the approach is likely to be successful in terms of outcomes. The statistics the minister was talking about, where it is challenging or they might be creeping back up in the wrong direction, it is happening across Australia. It is not just Tasmania, everybody has made some gains in road safety and it is now levelling out a little bit, but we are still at a level that is very high in some segments.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - You mentioned attentiveness and I am not sure of the rules - and you may have to follow this up with the police - I am likening mobile attentiveness as I did to knives and weapons. If that is where the mobile factor comes into people texting or speaking on their handheld in a car it is so prevalent there would rarely be a day on the road where we would not see someone inappropriately using a device. Where does that fall in policing?

**Mr HIDDING** - Inattentiveness is up there with speed, alcohol and drugs. They get these young drivers who can drive and take them around witches hats paying attention, then they give them a phone to chat on and take them around the witches hats and it scares the hell out of them. They are shocked at how different they are when they are chatting on the phone.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I have not witnessed more young drivers doing that than older drivers either. I would not like to put it into an age group. It might be worth looking at a higher penalty. The person who is driving and has 50 metres to go to his home might say he has less risk than a person on a highway, but he has not. If we change the rules for weapons and knives, which we should, maybe with what is happening now in our society it has become a real issue.

**Mr HIDDING** - You have raised a very good point. The \$300 fine came in at least six or seven years ago and it is still a \$300 fine and we are still seeing them. That says it has to be looked at.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - If it is a fine and a loss of licence for a certain time to make it hit home, bad luck. My second question, I don't know what the statistics are but I have had quite a few people talk to me about foreign drivers coming off the boats in Devonport and not being aware of the road rules. The TT-Line has now, after a suggestion, put a symbol for where they collect their gas bottle. They stop in the middle of a highway and check their GPS or phone to find out where they are going.

**Mr HIDDING** - There has been quite a deal of work done on this. They are not TT-Line customers because they fly in and rent a car. There is a whole body of work with the rent-a-car companies because they are trying to protect their insurance premiums. There are now substantial materials available in their own language that they are requested to read before they drive off. There is an international protocol around the world that says if you have a licence from that country you are welcome here. It should not be assumed they are not experienced enough to be here. I see many international tourists who are very competent but that is not to say we are not aware of some scary

drivers, particularly this business of just stopping on a road to have a look at something or take a photo. Where they come from either they are in a city of 2 million where you couldn't possibly do that and they get here and think it is so quiet they can stop and do that. As of 5 June 2016 we have a strategy underway using Bobbie the Bear. In Asia he is hugely popular. Bridestowe has done a partnership with Bobbie the Bear owners. There is a short video aimed at interstate motorcyclists. This online video blog creates awareness of Tasmania's unique riding conditions and provides practical advice to riders as they explore Tasmania safely. With the recent visit by Ulysses, they all watched that and we lost two of them while they were here.

**Mr SWAIN** - I think there was one. It was a heart attack or something like that while driving so it was an unavoidable event.

**Mr HIDDING** - So State Growth partnered with the network of self drive hire car companies to distribute information on Tasmania's road rules and safe driving practices. As of 5 June 2016 the number of serious casualties who were not Tasmanian residents is 32. This compares with 18 at the same time in 2015 and a five year average of 16.6. So it is a job worth doing. We need to get in there. That is a reflection of the numbers on the ground, which adds to congestion in Hobart and all these things. We have had a booming visitor economy for the last 12 months so it is not surprising it has gone like that. The department, the Road Safety Advisory Council and my office are working very hard on that area.

**Mr MULDER** - I am looking for the crash data, which you have previously said is available but I am interested in the crash data that justified the location of the fixed speed cameras and also on the approaches to the Tasman Bridge, which was a question I asked you last year.

**Mr HIDDING** - It was explained this morning that there were four criteria for the positioning of those cameras. Assistant Commissioner Donna Adams had charge of that. She spoke about crash data within a number of kilometres of the placement of those cameras. Perhaps if you were to provide that later to the member but talk to Donna Adams, because she had the criteria we talked about this morning.

Mr MULDER - And the approaches to the Tasman Bridge where you have those staged speeding signs.

Mr HIDDING - Also the crash history date on the variable speed limit.

#### Output group 6 Subsidies and Concessions

#### 6.1 Shipping and Ferry Subsidies -

**Mr FARRELL** - This is the money that is used to subsidise the non metropolitan general access services, \$7 626 000 is that correct?

**Mr HIDDING** - These are the open access ones operating 52 weeks of the year and designed to meet the needs of the broader community. They are generally operated on the basis where operators retain fare revenue and receive top up payments for concessions for eligible passengers. Your question is?

**Mr FARRELL** - How is this whole system managed as far as fare taking and reporting back to the department?

**Ms MOATE** - Operators submit returns on a monthly basis of patronage of the different kinds and recording the amount of travel - the number of zones a passenger has travelled in. That is how the top up funding is calculated.

**Mr FARRELL** - With student travel, they get a student ticket, put that through and the subsidy is paid on the extra amount to cover the bus fare?

**Ms MOATE** - Yes. The amount of top up funding takes the total amount the operator receives up to a notional base fare amount.

**Mr FARRELL** - Are these figures or passenger numbers audited in any way? Is there a system in place?

**Ms MOATE** - We have some internal checking mechanisms. We previously had the student green card system that was intended to give us more checking around the fare paying student on the census. We wound that back.

**Mr SWAIN** - We are having a lot of discussions internally about audit functions, particularly as over time the department has moved to a purchasing entity and an entity that is trying to promote outcomes from service delivery. Perhaps our audit processes could be better. We are going to have a look at that again in connection to the second half of Project 2018 informed by the expertise and the best branch that deals that deals with the challenges of this every day.

**Mr FARRELL -** I know it is probably quite a costly thing to implement. Something like a full tap-on tap-off card system would give you very accurate data. I do not know if it is something the Government is looking towards.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, it is. It is already in your strategy and it is an aspiration we share. Not the bureaucracy you are talking about but we could argue to that. The fact is, a centralised ticketing system that would by definition require protection for intellectual property, commercial property, between bus companies. In a state like Tasmania that could be done by the Transport Commission or a new structure. We do not take exception to any of that. However, Project 2018 has to be landed first. From there on, we start the fine tuning.

**Mr SWAIN** - Obviously, from when we purchased the contracts 10 years ago the technological options have moved on quite a way.

#### 6.3 Rural and special needs school bus services -

**CHAIR** - I understand there is a review of bus contracts underway at the moment. The expiration date of most of the contracts is 2018.

Mr SWAIN - They start expiring then and expire over an 18-month period.

**CHAIR** - The new contracts are for a 10-year period, is that right? You could argue that seems to be quite a long contract. I understand that bus operators have a fair bit of capital or investment

tied up. How do we ensure that operators continue to provide quality and compliant services over that 10 year period? Are there assessments taken throughout that time?

**Mr HIDDING** - If there was one sitting here now they would probably say 'way too much assessment of that stuff'. It is pretty tough on them to maintain standards. You have a complaint mechanism where something was occurring. The department holds that company accountable in a fairly strict fashion. That could be a breach of contract and they could lose the contract. Five plus five is not that unique. We are coming to the end of a 10-year period. We have also taken the view that all of our current operators are good and honourable people and good operators so we have offered to re-contract them to those people but subject to the need of that service and the price. We hold all the levers. With the current holder of our service between there and there, we are happy to deem that person to be the continuing operator but we hold the key levers. They are very happy with that and we have no reason not to do that because they are good operators.

**CHAIR** - Obviously, you don't want to be overbearing but it is a safety issue for our students. Is their accreditation looked at every 12 months? How does that work?

**Ms MOATE** - The operators of these contracts are required to be accredited. That is a separate process from the contract itself. Their accreditation comes with required operating standards of safety and having safety and security systems in place to ensure the service they deliver is a safe one. Through the contract we then back that up with contractual performance standards that require them to observe all of those obligations as a condition of their contract. A failure in one space would have consequences in the other.

**CHAIR** - With the old school buses that I used to travel on, some of them seem to linger on for many decades. Now they seem to be small and more compact. Do those buses generally become more modern?

**Ms MOATE -** The age has come down considerably under the current suite of contracts. There is specific capital incentives in the way the contracts are funded to encourage operators to upgrade their buses and newer buses attract more capital than older buses.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is anticipated that will continue into this new contract because it is demonstrably successful. They are investing those top ups into new buses.

#### 6.4 Non-metropolitan general access regular passenger transport services -

**Mrs HISCUTT** - The new bus service that started up from Queenstown to Burnie has been in operation for two months so how is it going for numbers? Is it a success? Is it worth continuing?

**Mr HIDDING** - Any analysis of the success would happen towards the end of the service. You would need to give it a genuine opportunity to market itself and people to transition to it and to compete against other opportunities.

**Ms NICHOLLS** - It started on 12 April and under the arrangements we get quarterly reports. At this stage it is too early.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - The only other question was, in *Hansard* last year, the year before there had been \$200 000 set aside for a north-west commuter bus pilot trial and nothing had happened as of then. I know now there were buses run for hospitals.

**Mr HIDDING** - As a result of the health white paper, it was identified that access for people between the Latrobe Hospital and the Burnie Hospital was a key issue along that whole linear corridor. With the health requirements and the commitment we made we put that together in a process. It is out in the market place now and I expect the new service would start about September, which will be a very good day.

Mrs HISCUTT - Is it available for general commuters? It is not just patients?

**Mr HIDDING** - Absolutely. It will be almost direct. They will be stopping in at Devonport and Ulverstone briefly, other than that it will be straight through. It is the first time it has ever been considered and delivered. This is also part of the transport access strategy arrangements where we are looking at where people need to travel and step in there.

Mrs HISCUTT - I will put that bug to bed.

CHAIR - Grants and subsidies.

**Ms FORREST** - West Coast Wilderness Railway has funding up to 2017-18 and it is an important asset in my electorate. It supports capital works and the maintenance of the railway's operations. I assume that means the operating costs that the Government provided. I know you have been looking for an operator, and to date I do not think there has been one to come forward. What is the plan in the future here?

**Mr HIDDING** - We have a look at that. We talk to everybody around Australia that could fit possibly in that space - a lot of amateurs who would like to play trains with that nice little train set. However, we have taken the stance that it is a crucial asset to the west coast as a package to attract businesses. There has been so much money expended on it already - federal and state money. I have seen a recent rail report from an expert that said the rail is currently in the best condition it has ever been in with welded rail and the rest of it. It is a one-man ministerial corporation, a bit of an odd-bod thing, but it is my absolute wish to see that still operating there in 10 years' time. The way to do that is to address the losses that it currently makes. 'Losses' is the wrong word. The cost of operation, to be frank about it, is the losses. I have asked for a tougher corporate plan. The corporate plan they have delivered shows a substantial reduction in the need to be supported by the general budget. To get there it is going to require some strong general management and some strong guidance and input from each shareholder. We have gone to the marketplace for a new CEO. That is not to say the current CEO has not been very good - in fact, he has reapplied. I am not sure where it is all at, but it is not far away from finding the right sort of person.

We not only need the business to do substantially better than it is doing, but we need the right person to maintain the below-rail and those lovely little locos in the terrific condition they are in now. That is a tough ask, but it is doable in a management sense. We have just got to find the right person and have the right commitment behind it. With that circumstance it could be defendable against all comers. No-one can or should question our commitment to the West Coast Wilderness Railway, but the numbers that you see there post-2017-18 I expect will be substantially less, and that is what we are working on right now.

Ms FORREST - It does not mean there will not be any in those years.

**Mr HIDDING** - No, absolutely not. In fact, I would be astonished. The corporate plan that I have signed off on shows that by that year, it could not possibly get down to zero. The commitment will be there. We just need to know what the quantum is before we address that. The issue of the funding in future budget years will be a matter for future budget considerations, but no-one should question this Government's commitment to the Abt railway.

**Mr FARRELL** - Just a couple of questions. What work is being done on the Lake Highway? With the unsealed road on the western side, there will still be a section -

**Mr HIDDING** - The funding in there does not seal the lot. We have got the same issue as you had. It is expensive, but while it is a low traffic zone, it is worth doing. The two years we have got funded here will deliver.

Mr GREGORY - There are about nine additional kilometres sealed, so that will leave about -

**CHAIR** - Down to Liawenee from the northern end, are you going south with that nine kilometres? Is that your understanding?

**Mr GREGORY** - We are just continuing our way through, so heading north basically. It will get us up to -

CHAIR - You are starting from the Miena end.

**Mr GREGORY** - We are just continuing up. We have got some gaps to join on the way up. If we get good tender pricing, we will do as much as we can with the money we have available. We will not pull up short -

#### [5.30 p.m.]

**Mr FARRELL** - It has been a good project and it was smart of the Government to give the old road a new name and put some money into it. With the Great Eastern Drive, the work doesn't commenced until 2017-18 - and I am sure that is not tied to any state election. We just had an unfortunate briefing from Ms Rattray in the Chamber where she had stated she had been on a tour with you, minister, and you went into parking areas.

**Mr HIDDING** - When she was before the lower House for the last Estimates she said, 'I've seen them from the back seat of the ministerial limousine and I pointed out to the minister such and such'. I had to declare I was not in the back seat. It was a commitment at the time. We wanted more visitation into the regions of Tasmania and that has been an unqualified success. It is the locals who say, 'That is lovely, but it is harder to get home now'. There is a commitment to do it but there is a fair deal of work to understand where we might do that. They are also expensive jobs and we want to get that right, so there is going to be a fair bit of linear study work done in consultation with the local tourism group as to how we might do that.

**Mr MULDER** - Picking up from last year where we were talking about the eastern side of the Tasman Bridge and some suggestion the works going on there were stage 1 and that stage 2 was to follow. I noticed there wasn't any funding for stage 2; yet I look at this year's roads program and the Tasman Highway-Tasman Bridge interchange doesn't even get a mention. What was stage 2 of the eastern side of the Tasman Bridge? We are talking here about the northbound traffic flowing onto the East Derwent Highway.

**Mr GREGORY** - The project, 100 per cent funded by the Commonwealth, was to address the traffic movement out of East Derwent Highway to the airport; that's what was funded. In looking at that, we looked at a much longer-term view and that identified stage 2, which was improving the movement coming from the airport and turning right and going onto the East Derwent Highway. That is a longer-term proposition.

**Mr MULDER** - But it is not in the forward Estimates, that is a future project that we will wonder about one day in the future?

Mr GREGORY - I would call the forward Estimates fairly short-term.

#### Marine and Safety Tasmania

**Mr GAFFNEY** - First question, an update on the progress of the Prosser River project. Is it completed and are you satisfied with it? Because it is finished the budget. What are the results?

**Ms MORRIS** - The Prosser River project has been delayed. Yet to go through a series of approval processes. One of which was a development application through the Glamorgan Spring Bay Council which received a representation from Birdlife Tasmania. The development application was then approved subject to the proposal being referred to the federal Department of Environment and that is where the process is at the moment. An appeal was lodged and we have mediated a situation whereby the hearing has been delayed until such time as we have a decision from the federal Department of Environment, relative to the potential impact the proposal may have threatened species.

**Mr HIDDING** - So it is likely to be next Autumn start-up if it gets up because it has to be after bird breeding season.

Mr GAFFNEY - So funding allocated is set aside in quarantine?

**Ms MORRIS** - Yes, it is quarantined. We have used about \$130 000 to date and it will be rolled over into the next financial year.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - The second area is current assessments of St Helen's barway stabilisation project. It is always difficult to say an expected completion date but is it coming under budget? Are you expected to finish by the end of 2017?

**Mr HIDDING** - The project is in two stages; stage 1 has not started. It ran into some permit arrangements. The extraction of rock from a quarry was used before for the same thing, relatively simple, but it triggered bits and pieces that needed approvals. We are nearly there.

**Ms MORRIS** - Yes so we have had to seek Environment Protection Authority approval for the quarry application and seek approval from Mineral Resources Tasmania for the mining lease. We have had to go to Parks on two occasions for reserve activity assessment on applications.

Mr HIDDING - We had to change the planning scheme.

Ms MORRIS - We had to change the planning scheme. There are two development applications.

**Mr HIDDING** - Everyone is being wonderful but ordinarily this is a five-year project and it has been amazing what we have had to do to cut this through.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - If you know that, then I would have thought there would be a footnote associated with this in the line item, so it would have said, 'this project is on hold because of this and the funding is quarantined. If you were picking these up, the lay person would think that is going to be finished and they are starting stage 2 - just an idea there.

Number three, the recreational boating fund, funding focus on the recreational boat fund will continue, \$1.6 million which is great. How are projects identified and which projects were undertaken in 2015-2016 and are they identified for the next two years because as w have just heard, some of the projects are not 12 month time frames are they? I am wondering how you do that?

**Ms MORRIS** - In terms of the recreational boating fund, applications are open all year round from councils, individuals, local groups, anybody who would like to put in an application. We close off every year around March and then we go on a series of road shows around the state to discuss the applications that have been received. There is some criteria on our website in terms of how the board look at and assesses those applications every year.

**Mr HIDDING** - One of the features of the applications have is an agreement the local government body takes it over after construction. Quite unique and sharpens up the focus of the local council. If you can not extract that your project is not going to get funded. There is one particular one somewhere in Tasmania where a big group have done a power of work on it but the local government is saying, no, we are not taking that. Frankly it is likely to go nowhere until they sort it out.

**Ms MORRIS** - We have worked very constructively with local councils and a lot of them are very proactively managing their maritime facilities and use the Recreational Boating Fund to make everybody's money go a lot further.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - The issue with that situation might be the funds from boating registrations go to the State Government or to the body and people from other municipalities may use or access that structure do not pay rates or anything out there. One of the issues could be councils who have said this is not just our municipality. How do you proportion that?

**Mr HIDDING** - For instance in Swansea where you can only go fishing in the mornings every second week because of the nature of the boat ramp. They need a big new boat ramp. If that can be provided to them it will transform the visitor economy in the area. There is an extraordinary number of boats in Tasmania and people are looking for opportunities to use.

Mr MULDER - And we spend an awful lot of money.

**Mr HIDDING** - Exactly. There are a few of us around this table that do. Generally I think the stance of local government is they see it as an attracter for visitation. People staying at the local pubs and eating at restaurants.

**Ms MORRIS** - Glamorgan Spring Bay is a really good example where they have proactively got very involved in the recreational boating side and have strategically looked at areas where development can take place. Triabunna boat ramp is a really good example.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I know that this is far too soon, but with current conditions around the state with the impact on structures and assets, how is the Government able to fund obvious dangerous or safety requirements? Will this fund have to be put on hold for the money to be transferred to assist with the repair of the Stanley Wharf or whatever? I know it is a bit early.

**Mr HIDDING** - Shortly after we have dealt with the immediate issues as the waters subside, as soon as tomorrow basically, we move into recovery phase. We will be working very closely with the federal government where there is a process for disaster relief type funding. You would not ordinarily expect people's recreation boating funds be applied for recovery from a disaster. They ought to do what they have got to do but from this one event. The sunken boats, I probably shouldn't go to a particular example, but is something that needs to be resolved for local shipping I would argue as their minister you cannot hit the MAST budget, those funds have got to come from somewhere else.

**Ms MORRIS** - If you would like to know, there has not been a huge amount of damage to our knowledge at this point in time. I think the hardest hit was the Inglis River and the council there had lost two pontoons. They have been able to salvage bits of them so I think we can work constructively with them to get those back and operational as soon as possible.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I am aware that there were 20 FTEs in 2015-2016, how many FTEs for 2016-2017 noticing that notes 3 and 4 in variation in payables and variations in employee benefits, the last line there does say 'changing staff levels due to its transition out of commercial vessel service delivery'. How many FTEs have you and what is the impact of the commercial vessel service delivery out of that transition?

**Mr HIDDING** - One way of looking at that question would be, post the implementation of the new AMSA arrangements around Australia, what would the MAST FTE holding look like? You have worked that out, haven't you?

**Ms MORRIS** - Yes. It isn't finalised at this point because AMSA is still working on the service delivery model under which they want to operate and some of that may involve some surface level agreements with the maritime safety agencies across the nation.

**Mr HIDDING** - It is an extraordinary thing for Tasmania. We'd signed up to it because it is a national model and you have to do it but Tasmania, demonstrably - and AMSA agrees - had almost the perfect model and didn't need the federal arrangement.

We have fully cost-recovered and had a contemporary model which the commercial boat user market was happy with - they wanted to pay those sort of rates and they wanted that sort of service but they have been swallowed up with a broader national conglomerate so the transition is challenging but we will get there.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - So that won't impact the Budget item this year and it won't impact on the FTEs. It is still 20 FTEs as it was last year?

Ms MORRIS - We have lost one since last year which was a direct result of the reform process.

Mr GAFFNEY - Minister, I am pleased you mentioned the AMSA because your last comment at the end of last year was -

It's been very messy and that is because AMSA had not quite known how to deal with a state that does it better than they do and that is what it comes down to. MAST is a very good operator and is the envy of all other states. We have full cost recovery. No other states do. They are quite happy to give something over to MAST. We do not want to be penalised. We want to be part of the solution not the problem [inaudible] on us but it is going well.

Has there been any movement?

**Mr HIDDING** - From our point of view, at that point AMSA was demonstrably unfocused on a few matters or not able to focus on a few matters. I have engaged with them personally, as has the deputy secretary of the department, in the national consultation on all this. They have landed on a lot of stuff but from MAST's point of view, operationally, there is still a lot of stuff unresolved and I am very aware of the concerns of Ms Morris.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - My last question, minister, is there a question I should have asked you that I haven't?

Mr HIDDING - Yes, but I am not going to tell what it is.

Mr GAFFNEY - I will leave that up to other honourable members. Thanks.

**Mr HIDDING** - With the indulgence of the committee, we have an answer to a previous question from Ms Forrest.

**Mr SWAIN** - I have some advice in front of me. In relation to maintenance funding, whilst this was largely expense rather than capitalised, a review in 2015-16 identified that long-term trend figures of the [inaudible] needed adjusting. The result is an increase in expense and a decrease in asset purchase. It is the same total cost so I suppose, interpreting that, because the asset base is so big that won't have a practical effect for quite some time because we took that \$30 million asset base to even that split. It will eventually lead to a reduction in the asset growth and therefore reduce the depreciation figure and that will change the global figures of the adequacy that spend is relative to the needs in the assets but it is a very long term effect because of the asset safety.

The second point I have is a bit cryptic so it may not answer your question but I will see. Roads are depreciated using formula outlined and detailed in the annual report. Each year this is updated into the budget papers but due to timing there is a substantial lag. The budget papers are printed in May, the annual report is in October.

During this year we took the opportunity to review it and the depreciations early. The intent of the change is to better reflect the actual in the annual report for 2015-16. So interpreting that, I think what it's saying is the annual report picks up the amount from the budget papers even though there may have been work done in between, using the methodology in the annual report, which may produce a different number which isn't then reflected until the following year.

What they have been trying to do this year is to get the two things to align. I am not sure if that answers your question but that is the advice.

**CHAIR** - Thanks very much, Minister, and thanks to all your staff members who have turned up today with all the different portfolios.

#### The committee adjourned at 5.50 p.m.