**Monday 25 June 2018 - Estimates Committee B (Rockliff)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B**

**Monday 25 June 2018**

**MEMBERS**

Mr Armstrong

Ms Armitage

Mr Dean

Mr Farrell

Ms Howlett

Ms Rattray (Chair)

Ms Siejka

**IN ATTENDANCE**

**Hon. Jeremy Rockliff MP**, Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries, Minister for Infrastructure

**Department of Education**

**Tim Bullard**, Secretary

**Robert Williams**, Deputy Secretary, Corporate and Business Services

**Jodee Wilson**, Deputy Secretary, Support and Development

**Jenny Burgess,** Deputy Secretary, Strategy and Performance

**Trudy Pearce**,  Deputy Secretary, Learning

**Kane Salter**, Director, Finance and Business Services

**Liz Jack**, Director (LINC Tasmania)

***Office of Education Registrar***

**Katharine O'Donnell**, Registrar

***Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards & Certification (TASC)***

**Katrina Beams**, Executive Officer

**TasTAFE**

**Jenny Dodd**, Chief Executive Officer

**Scott Adams**, Chief Financial Officer

**Department of State Growth**

***Infrastructure***

**Kim Evans,** Secretary

**Gary Swain,** Deputy Secretary, Transport Services

**Alan Garcia**, Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure Tasmania

**Shane Gregory**, General Manager, State Roads

**James Verrier**, Director, Infrastructure Policy

**Penny Nicholls**, General Manager, Road User Services

**Babette Moate,** Manager, Passenger Transport

***Advanced Manufacturing and Defence***

**Kim Evans**, Secretary

**Bob Rutherford**,Deputy Secretary, Industry and Business Development

**Mark Bowles**,General Manager, Business and Trade Tasmania

***Skills***

**Kim Evans,** Secretary

**Bob Rutherford**, Deputy Secretary, Industry and Business Development

**Angela Conway**, General Manager, Workforce Development and Training

***Business Services***

**Amanda Russell,** Deputy Secretary, Business Services

**Glen Dean,** Director, Finance

**Ministerial Staff**

**Leanne McLean**, Chief of Staff

**Vince Taskunas,** Principal Adviser

**Anna Jones,** Senior Adviser

**Adam Foster,** Adviser

**Rosita Gallasch,** Adviser

**Geoff Logan,** Adviser

**The Committee met at 9.00 a.m**.

**CHAIR** (Ms Rattray) **-** Welcome, minister, to Estimates 2018.  Would you like to make an opening statement?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Thank you very much, Chair, and thank you to the committee for their interest and scrutiny.  At the table I have with me the Secretary of the Department of Education, Mr Tim Bullard, and the Deputy Secretary, Strategy and Performance, Jenny Burgess.

**CHAIR -** Thank you both.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** And others will arrive as need be.  I have an opening statement which will take three minutes.

Education is the single most powerful driver for improving economic and social outcomes in Tasmania, and the 2018-19 budget reflects the Tasmanian Government's commitment to providing the highest quality education in Australia for Tasmanian learners through its investment in teachers and facilities.

Now in its second consecutive term, the government is in a prime position to be able to significantly build on and continue the work of the past four years and drive improvements in educational outcomes in Tasmania.  Evidence shows that student attendance, engagement and performance and well-being are intrinsically linked.  It follows that quality teaching and improvements to access, participation and engagement in education empowers all learners to succeed and contribute fully to the community and the economy.

Through delivering on our election commitments and working collaboratively across the education sector, this government will invest a record $324m over six years into education.  This includes $145 million in recurrent funding, including funding for an additional 358 new staff and $179 million for education infrastructure, including TAFE facilities.  A total of $96.1 million will be spent across the next four years to invest in new schools, school rebuilds, new learning hubs and school farm redevelopments in close partnership with local and school communities.

As part of our workforce development strategy within four years, 277 new staff will have been employed in the government school system, including 192 teachers and 80 teacher assistants.  This investment will grow to 358 more staff, including 250 additional teachers, within six years and the plan is about quality not just quantity, and to ensure that we are well-placed to attract, educate, train and support our teaching professionals to deliver high quality teaching into the future.

We are working closely through the Education Workforce Round Table, including representatives from UTAS, the Australian Education Union, the Teachers' Registration Board and the Principals' Association to achieve this outcome.  Investment in additional staff will be targeted to gain improvements in key areas of literacy and numeracy, early years' education, school farms and increase specialist expertise in hard to staff locations.

The government is also committed to making education accessible to all Tasmanians.  We are spending another $3.25 million in addition to the $12 million allocated in last year's budget to support students with a disability engage and participate fully in the education system.  Importantly, this will include the design and testing of a new needs based funding model for students with disability, delivering resources on the basis of the educational adjustment required to give students with a disability the best opportunity to thrive at school, and extending autism specific classroom support across the state, with more classes for high school students in the north and the north-west.  We are committed to education and supporting our child and family centres as well, schools, colleges and libraries, to improve outcomes for Tasmania's learners and that is why we have invested so heavily in education.

Learning is a continuous, cumulative, life-long process and investment in education is one of the most important ways this government can build a strong future for the state.  We are proud of this government's strong investment in education and training in Tasmania, and this budget leaves no doubt that our commitment to improving education outcomes in Tasmania now and into the future.  My opening statement included some improvements in educational outcomes and we will get to that at a later time.

**CHAIR -** A good note to conclude on, minister.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Thank you.

**Output group 1**

**Education**

**1.1 in School Education**

**CHAIR -** I'm now going to invite, Ms Jo Siejka, to commence the questioning on output for Group 1, Education 1.1, in School Education -

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Everything.

**CHAIR -** Yes, everything.  So thank you, Jo.

**Ms SIEJKA** - Minister, we're interested in assisting the committee so that the committee's time's not taken up with questions that can be answered perhaps in some reviews and reports.  So I'm hoping that you can table a number of reports for us - the Department of Education Key Data Reports to March 18; the review of school fees; and the review of the provision of specialist teaching such as science and maths which you undertook to identify how many specialist teachers were teaching in this area.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Sure.  The review of school fees, that's still ongoing.  It hasn't yet been completed.  Department of Education Key Data Reports to March 18 is due later this week as I understand it; and the -

**Ms SIEJKA -** Is that to be presented in the lower House?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Yes.

**Ms SIEJKA -** Is it not possible to have that today or not?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Not to my knowledge, but I'm - and the specialist teacher, is it the -

**Ms SIEJKA -** Yes, specialist teaching.  Review of the provision of specialist teaching.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** And that is still underway as I understand it.

**Ms SIEJKA -** Underway.  And these two which are underway, when will they be finalised?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** There's an expectation there first on the reviews - so this is on the workforce scan, first teacher specialisation, and - is this the workforce scan you're referring to?

**Ms SIEJKA -** Yes.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** That would be part of the round table discussion as well with a particular focus on quality teaching to be evidence based so that our investment is in the areas that need it most such as, literacy and numeracy student engagement in the early years.  The department of Education is currently working with an external provider to develop an interim tool to improve our access and ability to report against the qualifications held by teachers.   This is part of the broader project related to a repository for data about the qualifications and skills of department of Education's employees.

Work has commenced to support and improve strategic workforce planning capability, which includes improved access to data across systems.  Information from the workforce scan will help to identify areas of targeted development to ensure appropriately qualified teachers.  Currently over 100 teachers have commenced and/or completed a postgraduate qualification with the University of Tasmania as part of our developing our workforce strategy, and these qualifications are in priority areas identified by the department, including early childhood specialisation, inclusive education, mathematics, science and technologies.  The work that's been undertaken in respect to -

**Ms SIEJKA -** Sorry, and when would that one be finished?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** The end of the year.

The 2018 school levy review which is a further review for the school levy policy to be undertaken in 2018, and the principle underpinning the review is that all students should be able to make subject choices based on their needs, interests and aspirations for work and life, rather than the cost of the course regardless of their location.

The review will also look at ways to lower the costs of education for families and ensure that it is not a barrier to course access for students in years 9 to 12 across Tasmania, including those from regional and remote areas.  Extensive consultation will be undertaken throughout the review.  Consultation with key stakeholders has commenced and will continue over the coming months.  This is in line with the commitments to undertake consultation on school levies in quarter two between July and September 2018 as detailed in the government's first year agenda.  A revised policy with changes informed by the review will be released in 2019, so that schools can implement that policy in 2020.

**Ms SIEJKA** - Just before I open it up to other people, the key data report, is there a reason why we can't have it tabled today.  Is it because it's not finalised, or is there some other reason why it's not available today?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - We haven't with us today printed.

**Ms SIEJKA** - Is it something you could perhaps have - if it's just a matter of it not being available at this minute, we could perhaps have it tabled on notice.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - It's not ready.

**Ms SIEJKA** - It's not ready.  Okay.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.  I will move now, to Ms Armitage.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** If no one has any follow on questions for what Jo was talking about, I'd like to ask about extending the Tasmanian high schools to year 12.  One of the questions regards the teaching staff.  I know in the past we've been told that it's very hard getting specialised teachers in science and maths.  You've already 38 schools extended to year 12 -

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - That's correct.   Participating in year 12.  They're not all direct extensions - Alverston and New Norfolk High School as a direct extension is the example.  Whereas the school surrounding Rosny and the tegana Collective are an example of schools that are participating in the years 11 and 12 extension without being a direct extension school.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** So when you do a direct extension and these schools actually do take year 11 and 12 and even currently, do you have specialised teachers for, particularly maths and science in these classes?  We've heard in the past that it's very difficult - often someone will be trained in maybe sport and that then are expected to teach in science and maths.  With the current shortage of specialised teachers we have already, do you anticipate there will be enough specialised teachers to actually – when you haven't got them, for example in Launceston in LC and Newstead College - go across the high schools and how do you plan and manage that?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - It's my anticipation we will have the teachers in place and for the required specialities.  I am confident of this especially with our funding investment and bringing on line more teachers over the course of the next six years, so 192 in the next four, 250 in the next six.  It's a good question because one of the reasons why we have developed a collaborative arrangement with our round table and with it comes workforce development, over the next six years.  This is a challenge but a good challenge to have.  We have the Peter Underwood Centre for Educational Attainment.  We had the University of Tasmania.  We had the Australian Education Union.  The Tasmanian Principals Association and the Teachers Registration Board and the Department of Education, all around the one table identifying training needs, focus on quality, but also focus of where we need to develop the skills.  Whether there are skill gaps, in maths and science.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** So you will have but you don't have now?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - We have now, yes.  There's no one doing a subject in years 11 and 12 that is not being –

**Mr BULLARD** - There are a couple of mechanisms that the extension schools always use traditional mechanisms in colleges.  So, in order to ensure that there is specialism, as the minister said, we have arranged the workforce round table for this purpose.  That's obviously a longer lead time there because the university has said to us that they will recruit to our requirements.  This is fantastic for initial teacher education, but we're also relying on having specialists who are teaching out of college by using IT and then they'll have a teacher who's actually placed at the extension school.  It may not be in that specialism but able to support students.

The other thing that we're doing is based around the Teach for Australia initiative whereby people who are already have a qualification in things such as science or engineering can come back into our system and train to be teachers, on a fast-track two year program through the Teach for Australia program.  We'd just employ those people into extensions schools.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** So you believe that extending these schools, and I use the Launceston example which I know the best, but their education standard in year 11 and 12 at some of these extension schools will be as good as they can be with a specialised teacher.  However, for a number of years already in our colleges such as LC and Newstead, a number of whom, particularly in Newstead I believe, have gone down substantially.  So what will you do to address the numbers shortage at some of the colleges when, if children are staying on, at the school, rather than go on, for example, LC and Newstead -

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - The number of students?

**Ms ARMITAGE -** The number of students, but I also wonder do the students in these extended colleges have the same advantages as they would have had if they'd gone to something like LC and Newstead where they have specialised teachers who have been there a long time, that are specialised in those subjects and not doing different type of teaching, because they're specialised year 11 and 12 students.  They're college teachers.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Of course, the original intent of and the continuing intent of high school extensions to years 11 and 12 is to make sure there's more participation in years 11 and 12.  So we're not taking students from colleges and putting them in high schools.  What we are doing is providing the opportunity for students to continue to use 11 and 12 from grade 10 who otherwise might not have gone onto college for a variety of reasons.  There are a number of barriers to prevent students or depending on the student and the student's situation as to why they would not go into one of the eight colleges around Tasmania.  We do have 56 high schools so I suggest that it is good policy to ensure that the 56 high schools work with the eight colleges to reduce those student barriers to years 11 and 12.  The idea is to maximise the number of students to further their education, not taking students away from colleges.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** But in a built up area such as Launceston or Hobart, where perhaps a student would have to relocate from their home to the city, you already have a number of high schools in the city and you have two very good colleges, so most of the students if they want to go on, would likely go on.  It's not an impediment to them going on.  They might have to travel five minutes on a bus when we talk about the city.  You don't see that you're actually watering down the system there for those students?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - No, it's about providing students more opportunity.  Now, all the courses across our extended high schools, and of course our colleges are TAS accredited and they have to be accredited and they have to be audited, and –

**Ms ARMITAGE  -** With respect, minister –

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Vocational education and training is also certified.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** More opportunities?  I would have seen it as fewer opportunities because the teaching staff at the high schools, as we were just saying, are not necessarily going to be the specialised teachers we have already at the colleges.  So the colleges would have more opportunities for these students rather than less.  So what will you do, particularly in the case of the Newstead College when numbers are sufficiently or significantly down, to ensure that that school remains viable?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - We want all colleges and all high schools to be viable.  Now, Newstead College had a –

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Significant drop.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - It had a dip in numbers.  It's not because of the high school extension policy.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** We know that.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF -** It may well be for other reasons.  Remember in 2020 that the Education Act Leaving Age commences.  In 2020 students, and these students are now in grade 9, will have to engage in years 11 and 12 education or a Certificate III in Vocational Education and Training or be full-time employed or turn 18.  So therefore they have four choices effectively and will increase the opportunity for colleges and indeed high schools for that participation.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - You said it is not because of the high school extensions.  So what was it because of?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It might be enrolments, it might be - just thinking off the top of my head here - a lower grade teen cohort at a particular time.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - So you know that it's not because of the extension?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, it wouldn't be because of the extension.  I am happy to be advised otherwise.  I have also had a conversation with the principal of Don College as well and the forward projections for Don College, irrespective of years 11 and 12 because of enrolments.  It might pick up again of course, but if there's a low grade 10 cohort number of students that will reflect 11 and 12 figures.

**Mr DEAN** - Newstead College is in my area and I have a very big interest in it and where it's going.  What is the current enrolment and what is its capacity enrolment?  What is its enrolment now and what has its enrolment been over the past three years?  Is it increasing or decreasing.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We can get that information for you, Mr Dean.  Newstead College in 2015 had 761 students.

**Mr DEAN** - Are these full-time enrolments?  I think you have some sort of part-time enrolments here and there, but I want to know the full-time enrolments at the college, over the past three years and what is its full time enrolment capacity.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Okay, this is a head count.  So 761 in 2016, 644 in 2017, and this year 561.

**Mr DEAN** - And its capacity enrolment is?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Capacity enrolment - I don't know.  I will have to get that information for you.  I am advised about 750.

**Mr DEAN** - So those figures identify that there has been a fall in attendance by about 200 from the year 2015-16 I think to now?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That's correct.

**Mr DEAN** - What is the estimated fall in enrolment at that school when Queechey, when Brookes, when Kings Meadows come online with years 11 and 12?  Surely the Education department would have a rough idea as to what the enrolment would be for Newstead College when that happens?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Of course it all depends - it would vary because the schools engaging in years 11 and 12 and those schools you have mentioned might not be direct extension schools.  They might have a collective arrangement such as the tegana Collective around Rosny College, for example.

**Mr DEAN** - Meaning exactly what?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - In terms of college enrolments, more generally enrolments in 2018 the first term census show that colleges continue to have a substantial majority of senior secondary students.  There is not a percentage figure here, but I think it's around 91 per cent.  That's 7409.9 FTE at colleges versus 689.8 FTE enrolled in years 11 and 12 at the 38 extension high schools around the state.  I think that's 91 per cent for colleges still.

**Mr DEAN** - I don't want to seem too negative about years 11 and 12, but I have a concern about schools in the built-up areas.  So it's reasonable to assume, would it not be, that Newstead College enrolment is likely to drop when we see those schools come online to probably even half capacity.  It's not going to increase.  I think it's pretty certain that is not going to happen.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That's not necessarily the case depending on the cohort.

**Mr DEAN** - The question I want to ask you is, what is this other position that you're talking about, that they're not direct enrolments, but it's a part-time with the colleges or something, working with the college.  How does that operate?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It depends on the school at the time.  I am aware of a student in Ulverstone High School who was doing subjects, and I believe it was in psychology, I stand to be corrected, with Newstead, and Don College as well.  It's all about not focusing on individual high schools or individual colleges, but rather how can the colleges and the high schools work together to support the students.

**Mr DEAN** - Maybe I could ask the question here then:  what was the staffing levels at Newstead College in 2015-16, and what are they when it was 761 students attending that college?  What is the staffing level at Newstead College now with only 561 students?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We will get that information for you.  I am also advised that Newstead is currently also supporting learning at Campbelltown, Lilydale, Scottsdale, Winnaleah, and will do so for Prospect and also Kings Meadows.

**Mr DEAN** - So I can get those figures on the staffing levels?

**CHAIR** - We have a request for the staffing numbers for Newstead.  Ms Siejka, and then I will go to Mr Farrell.

**Ms SIEJKA** - In regard to the extension schools - where there's blended learning with students studying from schools and also attending colleges or other schools with their enrolment - how many students in extension schools travel to attend classes in a college, how many travel to attend subjects in other schools, and how many study online?  Not off the top of your head I realise.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I reckon I can, but I will probably have to take that on notice to get –

**Ms SIEJKA** - I am also interested in what subjects are online.  Could have a list of them?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Okay.  I'm not sure what your process is, Chair, but –

**CHAIR** - We will send that information at the end of the day.  Then your department will –

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Right.

**Ms SIEJKA** - By school if possible.  That may answer the Newstead question and where those enrolments across the schools are sitting.  In Pembroke we have the tegana Collective.  That would be an interesting comparison to see how that compares with the other areas.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Sure, I will get as much information as I can for you.  It might be difficult to get all that information.

**Ms SIEJKA** - The extension schools across a number of areas are quite a concern for the committee and we all operate differently in our different areas.  Answers to those questions would inform us as to the veracity of the concerns we have.

**Mr DEAN** - Staffing levels are coming, I take it.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Staffing levels are, but all staffing levels really are dependent on student enrolments at the time.

**Mr DEAN** - That's right.  That's why I am asking what the difference is.

**Ms SIEJKA** - It would help to understand if you have some students that are at a local school but still going to colleges as well.  We would get that picture if we had that data.

**Mr BULLARD** - I don't know that we can provide that data.

**Ms SIEJKA** - Today, or –

**Mr BULLARD** - Students are enrolled in a home school or college, and then they have courses from other places which is kept in our timetabling system.  I don't know that we can do a dump to show every single student enrolled who is doing something elsewhere.  I don't know that we can extract that at the moment out of the system.

**Ms SIEJKA** - So just not for the extension school students.  I think that's what we are particularly interested in.

**Mr BULLARD** -  But that would be the main place you would see a mix, so you would refer to the tegana Collective which is a really good example where a student might be enrolled at Sorell but they might be taking some Rosny courses.  They would belong to Sorell in our system and they're accounted for at Sorell, even though they might do a course or two.  The point of mixing it up like this is actually really centering on the learner and understanding what their needs and aspirations are, and then building the course around that person.  Traditionally you'd get what you get at a particular location.

**Ms SIEJKA -** So with that data the reason why that would be so valuable to have is because it's clear in some areas there might be some students who perhaps go to an extension school where there's not a lot on offer, and go to the college still.  If it was possible to have, in an overview of what is occurring that would help us to understand.

**Mr BULLARD -** If they went to the college for –

**Ms SIEJKA -** The success or not.

**Mr BULLARD -** A majority of the time they would be counted as a college enrolment.

**Ms SIEJKA -** But there's part-time enrolments as well.  There's obviously a difference between attendance, engagement and attainment.  So, if it's in any way possible to have that data I'm sure the committee would appreciate it.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** The intent of the policy is to maximise its flexibility and give our students the opportunity to further their education.  I'm often asked about how many students of extension schools, you know, get 8 Rs.  Well, that's a very elitist question –

**Ms SIEJKA -** I do understand that.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** It's about students engaged in education for their benefit and so they can gain confidence, further their education and be productive members of our community.

**Ms SIEJKA -** Perhaps even the subjects that are available at the extension schools would be useful.  That might be easier.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Yes.

**Mr BULLARD -** Just to show how that's worked up.  This is worked up by looking at the student cohort that wants to stay until year 11 as well.  It's a balance between, this is coming back to Ms Armitage's point, the specialisation in the school that teachers have to teach, but also the desire of the students and what they see as being their pathway.

**CHAIR -** Okay, we seem to be having some trouble hearing from one end of the table to the other.

**Mr BULLARD -** No, that's all recording.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Only recording.

**CHAIR -** This won't actually help hearing.  So then I suggest we raise our voices then.

**Ms SIEJKA -** Just talk louder.  Certainly.  Apologies down that end.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Can I just making the point, that we are more than open to answer every question any detail that we get because data and evidence in data is so important and it drives future policy.  We have been enormously transparent in the data we have produced over the last four years, a very honest and warts and all data collection for the community and the high schools and their communities to look at and to learn from and to continuously improve.

**Mr FARRELL -** That's good to hear.  That's certainly been the case.  I'm just following on from Ms Armitage's question around the colleges.  There is some genuine concern in different areas, particularly around Newstead, Claremont, and other colleges that there may be a lowering of attendances at the college.  It's a pretty monumental change to put 11 and 12 into high schools, so people are naturally concerned.  Do we have any figures to date from maybe the census period last year to this year looking at the number of students that go either into the high school extensions or the college extensions to see if there is a trend?  I know that if there was a trend then the department will probably be right on top of that.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** We would have that data, yes, and so I guess what you're asking is, what is the net effect?

**Mr FARRELL -** Yes.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Effectively of any impact on collegesas a result of the extensions?

**Mr FARRELL -** Yes.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Bear with me.  So we have to break all these down and do individual scores.  Is that what you want, Mr Farrell?  I've spoken about the 7409.9 FTE and colleges and the 689.8 FTE enrolled in years 11 and 12 in the current 38 extension high schools.  The total figure is 8099.7 FTE in terms of the overall students.  I understand what you're getting at, and I've got no reason why I would not want to get that information for you.  I want to provide it for you if I can look at it and break it all down.

**Mr BULLARD -** I seek a point of clarification.  Are you looking at ups and downs?

**Mr FARRELL -** Yes, just the movement to see if there is any movement away from the college system into the high school extension system.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** The high school numbers have increased and I mention this round about 690 figure, there were about 550 a couple of years ago, around about, as I understand it.  So in government schools the year 10 to 12 apparent retention - the tracking of direct retention of individual students in the government schools demonstrates that 62.6 per cent of year 10 students in 2015 were retained to year 12 in the mid-year 2017 census.  Figures from the 2018 first term census show that 71.6 per cent of the 2016 year 10 students have been retained to year 12 which is the highest it's been on record.  Would you like to put the question on notice about every high school enrolment?

**Mr FARRELL -** Yes, certainly.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** At the current point in time.

**Mr BULLARD -** There are a number of things happening all at the same time.  The numbers being retained from year 10 to 12 are going up.  At the same time the extension school initiative is rolling out and there's numbers going into the extension school initiative as well as colleges still retaining the lion's share.  So it's a bit of a moving feast, but it can certainly provide some information about –

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** The colleges still have over 90 per cent of senior secondary students.

**Mr FARRELL -** It would be.  I know in my area there's a lot of travelling between high schools and college campuses.  The numbers would –

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** In terms of from your point to Claremont, do you mean?

**Mr FARRELL -** Yes.  Likewise you've mentioned earlier with Newstead College, and it would be interesting for our deliberations to know what sort of numbers are travelling and that would probably also help illustrate that the college system is still being utilised by the 11 and 12 students.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Right, drilling down on students that are doing subjects at both campuses?

**Mr FARRELL -** Yes, because I understand there's quite a bit of that movement.  It's all fairly new, but it's just interesting for us to see the dynamics of how that's actually operating.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Yes.  I've mentioned the Education Act in terms of the leaving age already, but I want to really understand some of the concerns that might still be held in colleges, and I'm a realist, I get it, naturally.  If you were to design a system of senior secondary starting from scratch, would you just have that opportunity in eight locations around Tasmania rather than utilising 56 other high schools is the point.  Colleges play a key role and have done for 40 years plus.  Don College celebrated its 40 year anniversary in 2016 as an example.

So I've met with all the college principals recently in Claremont so we could understand and look to the future to see what colleges will look like in a decade or so.  It was a very good discussion and we also talked the day-to-day issues that are challenging.  The timetabling and all those sorts of things.  I've agreed to meet again with the colleges to look at all the issues they raised at that meeting and work in with the college principals later on this year.

I've repeated ad nauseum the fact that we want colleges to be a very important part of our senior secondary education in Tasmania.  I don't hold the view of some that we shouldn't have colleges because it's about providing choice and that flexibility.  Colleges will need to become and will become system leaders when it comes to assisting and sharing with high schools around the state.  So every high school can deliver a senior secondary education in some form, and there is no need to close colleges, but education's been evolving, you know, forever and a day.

The data that was presented to me in 2014 was the same data roughly that was presented to David Bartlett in 2008 or 2009.  They came to those Tas Tomorrow reforms to improve our educational outcomes for retention and attainment.  That's history.  We have the same data presented to us, and we just can't keep doing the same old things and expect the data to improve.  We've chosen the high school extension way as a very collaborative model and I recognise the concerns in colleges because you've demonstrated that in your community.

My job as Education minister is to improve our educational outcomes and create an environment where everyone is working together.  Not about colleges or about high schools, it's about the student.  But I'll get that data for you.

**CHAIR -** Thank you.

**Ms ARMITAGE**:  One last question on this.  Could you provide the student capacity at Launceston College?

**CHAIR -** Seven hundred and fifty.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** No, Launceston.  That was -

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Launceston, yes.

**CHAIR -** Sorry, that was Newstead.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** In 2015 there was 1370.5 head count FTEs; 2016, 1462.3 FTEs; 2017 there was 1 504.5 FTEs; and 2018, 1480.4.  And that was due –

**Ms ARMITAGE -** So what's their capacity at LC?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Well, 1550, so they were 46 students off that in 2017.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Should their numbers drop a little with the high schools when they actually come on board a little more, and Newstead College go down.  Can you guarantee, minister, that you won't combine the colleges and have one college in Launceston?  That Newstead won't close?  If the student numbers continue to drop, and perhaps LC's students go down when the other colleges come on board such as Prospect, Queechy, Kings Meadows, Brooks, what number do you have at Newstead that won't be sufficient for you to continue that school and you to have one college in Launceston that we actually lose one college and go to just one - one college.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** So similar to Alanvale College which was closed in the last -

**Ms ARMITAGE -** I'm not worrying about Alanvale.  I'm thinking about Newstead College.  Can you guarantee that that won't happen, that your Government won't close one of our colleges –

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Our Government policy is not to close schools, full stop.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Right, so what number does Newstead College not have to fall below to remain viable?  Is there a number?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** No, there's not a number.  I don't have a number for it to remain viable.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** But if student numbers continue to drop –

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** It's my anticipation that it won't continue to drop.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** But the other high schools haven't come on properly yet, have they?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** But other high schools are now consulting with their community in what year 11 and 12 extension might look like and how that might give a benefit to their students.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** And I'm thinking of benefits to our students too in that they get the best courses they possibly can have and the best opportunities.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** See, the real opportunity for Newstead is to create that blended learning environment.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** To change their system.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** If I can put it that way and I've mentioned a number of schools already that they're involved in a really good collaborative year, or senior secondary model, so in many respects Newstead will play a crucial role in working with high schools.  I've mentioned a number of them including Lilydale and Scottsdale and coming on line Kings Meadows and Prospect.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** So you can guarantee that we won't lose a college; that Newstead and Launceston will both remain viable and will both continue to operate?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I have no anticipation that we'll lose a college simply because the pie's going to get bigger in 2020, so the changes to the Education Act increases the size of the pie, and so more students - well, students just can't leave grade 10.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** I understand that -

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Or turn 17 and leave.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** But if they stay within their high school cohort –

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** In terms of the Guaranteeing Futures Act I've no intention of undermining colleges.  I see this as an opportunity and the 2020 changes to the leaving age I believe is growing that opportunity for students and colleges.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Thank you.

**CHAIR -** Thank you, minister.  You've already touched on the staff and skills shortage around staffing.  Does the department have statistics on the unmet demand in the areas?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** In maths and science?

**CHAIR -** And also the STEM teachers.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Yes.

**CHAIR -** Speech pathologists and psychologists.  Do you have some data that you can share with the committee around the unmet needs?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** We may have some data from a few years ago because part of the Peter Underwood Centre for Educational Attainment and the Workforce Development Plan was where we signed a program to fast-track, if I can use that terminology, teachers gaining and being skilled in the areas of maths and science.  My basic understanding is that we had an imbalance of teaching workforce with PE teachers.  We had a lot of PE teachers.

**CHAIR -** Everyone wants to teach human movement.  Is that still the case?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Exactly.  I wanted to be a PE teacher.

**CHAIR -** Is that for a reason?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I was going to be a PE teacher until halfway through grade 12 and I decided I'd become a farmer instead, but that was my focus.  Maybe it was my year 11-12 results that chose that for me.

But there was an imbalance, and we're trying to correct that imbalance, important as human movement is, and increase the skills capacity in other areas of need such as maths and science.  We've had a number of very good examples of where that's worked.  This is a national issue in terms of a shortage of science and mathematics teachers.  Tasmania has the same issue.  The Peter Underwood Centre for Educational Attainment, I think we launched that workforce development initiative towards the end of 2015 or early 2016 from memory.

**CHAIR -** Do we have any statistics or do we just know that that's the case and that's it?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Tim might talk about the workforce scan being completed now, so we've looked at where there are skills shortages, if I can put it that way, and that's nearly completed.

**Mr BULLARD -** Yes, that was what Ms Siejka asked at around the workforce specialisation, and that's what we're doing at the moment.  The minister said we're fast-tracking that work.  That work will look at the qualifications that the staff hold.  Also you need to bear in mind that you might not have been qualified in that area but you might have 20 years' experience teaching it, so really you are teaching within specialisation.

Through the workforce strategy as well we have had a number of teacher development initiatives to assist teachers to gain those specialisations.  We've worked with UTAS around mathematics specialisation, so teachers who are teaching in maths but haven't got a maths qualification go back and do that training.  We've had 22 teachers successfully complete that.  We've also done science specialisation with seven teachers and an early childhood specialisation with 12 teachers and 32 are currently undertaking it, and also one around increase of education which 23 teachers have successfully completed and 22 teachers are currently undertaking.  So we're making moves working with UTAS closely to fill those gaps.  The question's a good one, though, how do you know what the gaps are.  We should have by the end of this year a really good understanding of our workforce attributes.

**CHAIR -** Does the department have any information around how many teachers are teaching out of their area of expertise, if you like, or what they've been trained in?  I can name a couple but I won't right here and now that they cannot get a job in their area of expertise.  I know one of them is in science but for love nor money isn't able to teach in their skill area that they would like to.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** In the government sector?

**CHAIR -** Yes, I'm just interested in what incentives the department is looking for to perhaps encourage some of those to perhaps move out of where they are to somewhere else where there may be a shortage.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** The Peter Underwood Centre Workforce Development Initiative did provide those incentives.

**Mr BULLARD -** I missed the start of that question.  You're asking how we could incentivise teachers.

**CHAIR -** Yes, teachers who are teaching out of their area of expertise because there's no role at the school that they're teaching at.

**Mr BULLARD -** That's what we will have a much better understanding of.  So once we understand not only the qualifications but the experience of every teaching member, then we'll be able to better match the need within particular schools with the expertise of the teaching workforce.  To do that we have to actually build our understanding of the teacher specialisations.

**CHAIR -** Thank you.

**Mr FARRELL -** Just based on that too -

**CHAIR -** Good question.

**Mr FARRELL -** Yes, great question.  It could be handy for the committee just to have the detail on staff numbers and - and qualifications and pay rates at schools.  I know you probably try to keep that fairly balanced across a lot of schools, but it might just help us with our deliberation to have that - that type of detail.

**Mr BULLARD -** So we wouldn't have the information about the specialisations of the teachers at the school –

**CHAIR -** But you will next year.

**Mr BULLARD -** But we will next year.

**Mr FARRELL -** In terms of pay rates, is that something that's consistent over schools, just generally?

**Mr BULLARD -** There's a funding formula which attributes positions to schools, and it's the same formula that has been in for a number of years.  That came in after we did the first round of Gonski negotiations, so the fairer funding model.  That looks at things like SES status, number of young people with additional needs; English as an additional language; rural and remote; and it then provides a staff formula for the school.

**Mr FARRELL -** Right.  Just so I'm clear, if a teacher trains and becomes qualified in a different area, then their pay rate reflects that?  Is that how that would work?

**Mr BULLARD -** No.

**CHAIR** - I'm getting a lot of noes from everywhere else.

**Mr BULLARD -** So like the whole public service, to get a greater pay rate you'd have to seek a promotion and be assessed on merit.  So there is a high level position with a specialisation in another school, then you will be well placed to win it if you were trained in that specialisation.

**CHAIR -** Thank you.  I'll go down to the end of the table.  Before I invite Ms Howlett to ask her first question, I acknowledge that it's her first time at Estimates and we're very pleased to have the honourable member for Prosser on Committee B.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** It's your first time, isn't it?

**Mr SIEJKA -** It is indeed, but I diddo GBEs.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Okay.  So it isn't.

**Ms SIEJKA -** Yes, I'm a pro now.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Seasoned campaigner.

**Ms SIEJKA -** Yes.

**CHAIR -** She's not the newbie any more.

**Ms SIEJKA -** No, I'm a P-plater.  Jane's the L-plater.

**Ms HOWLETT -** Thank you, Chair.  Could the minister please provide an update on how the Government is working to support principals' leadership in schools?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Thank you, I can –

**CHAIR -** Got it at your fingertips, minister.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I have it here somewhere.

**Mr FARRELL -** Surprising, isn't it.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Thank you for the question.

**CHAIR -** Good question.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** It is a good question, and it's important.

**Ms SIEJKA -** We'll have to get Jane to ask more for us.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** It's important that we invest to ensure our principals also have the right support to enable them to focus on leadership.  We're committed to an additional 250 teaching full-time equivalents.  That's being progressively rolled out over the next six years.  This includes an additional 90 teaching staff to remove principals from the teaching allocation and support them to focus more on leading quality teaching in their schools; supporting principals to focus on instructional leadership to drive quality education supported by the future educational workforce round table which I spoke about before.  The round table will meet again in coming weeks and continue to support the developmental workforce strategy for the future of our educational workforce, and also that includes supporting principals to focus more on leadership by working to improve principal wellbeing.

In mid-2017 an experienced principal was assigned to undertake a project to further examine issues relating to principal wellbeing.  Over 115 principals have been consulted with a focus across five areas identified as impacting on principal wellbeing.  So general principal wellbeing; principal preparation and development; support structures and practices; work practices; and offensive behaviour; and recommendations and strategies in response to this consultation are being developed.

A joint working group has been established to support this work.  Membership includes senior officers from the department including current principals, the Tasmanian Principals' Association and the Australian Education Union.  The department also continues to support principals through the professional learning opportunities including a principal induction program; synergy program; and Hardie fellowship, and shortly the department will commence a pilot to support principals to put the Australian Principal Standard into action.  The pilot provides experienced principals with an opportunity to develop their educational leadership and improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

And on that note, honourable member, I thank very much the head of the Principals' Association of Tasmania, Malcolm Elliott, for the good work that he has done in developing ideas and policy within the Tasmanian Principals' Association and discussing them with myself as Minister for Education, and part of Malcolm's initiative is contained within my answer.

**CHAIR -** Any follow up question, in regard to that?

**Ms HOWLETT -** No.

**CHAIR -** In the past there's been a significant churn of acting in the role of principal and assistant principal.  Has that process improved in the last few years?  It took a long time to actually appoint somebody.  It was - we had more actings than we had principals at one stage, so just interested in how that process looks today in the Education Department.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Yes, now, you've presented a good question.  It's been a real challenge for some time, and there's one consistent amount of feedback I get from school communities, whether it is the teaching workforce, or indeed the Association and Parents and Friends, is that the community likes stability when it comes to principals, and there are some examples around Tasmania where there's been quite a lot of change in a short amount of time that's disruptive for our school communities.  So it's been fairly consistent feedback depending on the school, but we have identified it as an issue.  Thus we have moved to only advertise principal positions twice per year.  That does provide more certainty, but we do have some measures in place - other measures, haven't we, to stop this problem?

**CHAIR** - Are we going to invite Trudy to come to the table?  Does that look like what we are going to do?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you.  Trudy Pearce is Deputy Secretary of Learning.

**Ms PEARCE** - Sorry, I missed that question -

**CHAIR** - It's incentives or strategies.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The problem is that churn, if I can use that word, in leadership and positions in schools and what we are doing to address that particular concern.  I have mentioned the advertising twice per year to provide more certainty, but of course you can't help personal circumstances of –

**CHAIR** - I understand that, but from my perspective where I see it's often those teachers who are looking to get to the top of the tree, spend a short time in more outlying areas and then they're going to another school to be acting in a higher position, and then somebody else is acting - pardon?

**Ms SIEJKA** - May I give an example within my own electorate.  There are three principals that are acting and they have all switched schools, the same three schools, and it's within the same area.

**CHAIR** - It is obviously to do with promotion which is all well and good but it does leave communities very unstable when they just don't know from one term to the other who might be the principal.  Some initiative, I would suggest, would be good to address that situation from more outlying schools.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, and there has been some work that's been undertaken around the west coast in attracting staff in a more collaborative.  That's been worked through Learning Services North and people within Learning Services North in consultation with the community in the west coast to address that particular problem.  More generally I know it's an issue, it's been pretty consistent feedback.  What can we do to minimise the disruption as the member's question indicates?

**Mr BULLARD** - The tension is that like the rest of the public service we run a mirror-faced process.  We don't constrain people in positions for applying for other positions.  So because we are in that world people are making personal choices, sometimes it's financial, sometimes it's for other reasons.  We do know that that's disruptive.  As the minister said we have cut down now to only advertising those positions twice per year, so at least there are only two points in the year.  We know that we need to build the capacity of our workforce to be strong principals when they come into the positions.  The minister mentioned earlier that we have the aspiring principals' course.  We also have principal induction for people coming into those positions to ensure they have the capacity and capability.  We are very open at looking at other ways that we can stop the movement quite so quickly.  There is always a flow‑on effect if someone moves to another job that opens up a job.  Getting a very strong group of aspiring principals who are ready with the skills, knowledge and capabilities they need is one way we can stop that because it will be assistant principals who can then move into those roles.

**Ms PEARCE** - Through the department of Education's current strategic plan all schools are aligned with their recruitment plan, being that whilst a leader is different they should have consistency and they can easily expect to go into a school and be able to pick up from the improvement plan, meaning there is less disruption and lag time.  So that alignment to the department of Education strategic plan is possible with our schools and colleges.

**CHAIR** - Mr Dean, same area, and then I will go to Mr Farrell at the other end, the same area.

**Mr DEAN** - Just on the principals, what's the ratio female/male position on principals in the school system in Tasmania?  Also, what is the position of principals that are on long term leave and those on stress leave, principals that might be on stress leave, et cetera, at the present time?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I can probably get you more immediately, Mr Dean, the percentage of male/female.  So principals and assistant principals –

**Mr DEAN** - This is stress leave?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - This is the gender.

**Mr DEAN** - Sorry, gender.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Principals and assistant principals in March 2017, 374 females, 2018, 384; males in 2017 is 179.

**Mr DEAN** - And in 2018?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - And 2018, 194.

**CHAIR** - Encourage men not to go farming I would suggest.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - What a good idea.  Advanced school teachers out of interest, 393 female in 2017, 405 in 2018, and male 180 in 2017 and 182 in 2018.  So we have those total there.  In 2017 a total of advanced school teachers and principals and assistant principals for female is 767, male is 359, and for 2018 of both those positions 789, which is an increase, for female, and male is 376.

**CHAIR** - It's a nation-wide issue, minister, fewer males teaching.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes.  We have seen an increase though, which is in the right direction, based on those numbers.  I recognise there would have been quite a bit written about that.

**Mr DEAN** - Thank you for that.  If I can just have the stress leave for principals and assistant principals, and stress leave across the whole spectrum of the Education department.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Many of the issues around stress and safety of principals - we have been working with the Tasmanian Principals Association and there was a national report called the Riley Report, which focused on this particular area.  There have been some professional developments, including Mr Riley came down, didn't he, to the Professional Learning Institute, and spoke about this issue.  This is why we have been focusing on health and wellbeing for our principals in general.

**Mr DEAN** - I asked the question because there has been quite a bit in the press about the stress and pressure on the principals and assistant principals.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I have the more detailed answer than the one in my head for you.  The Australian Principal Occupational Health and Safety and Wellbeing survey conducted by Phillip Riley over the past six years has raised concerns about the wellbeing of principals.  The department of Education, the Tasmanian Principals Association, and the Australian Education Union recognised that a strategic and systematic approach was required to effectively address this critical issue of wellbeing.  A joint working group has been established which includes the TPA, AEU and two principal representatives.  A budget initiative was implemented last year.  That's $70 000 per annum for each of the next four years commencing with the appointment of the current principal as a project officer.  The project officer has undertaken research and engaged directly with 115 principals across the state to seek feedback and to discuss wellbeing improvements, and I have mentioned that before.

**CHAIR** - Numbers, minister?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I can give you some numbers before we get to the actual.

**Mr BULLARD** - We only have workers comp claims because if staff are off on stress or ill they just have to say that they're ill.

**CHAIR** - They don't identify that it is stress related?

**Mr BULLARD** - No.  If you get a medical certificate a medical certificate only certifies that you are unfit for work, but the minister can provide some information.

**Ms SIEJKA** - On that, there is a report or data around staffing - I can't think what it is - but where staff go to seek help through the government.

**CHAIR** - The EAP.

**Ms SIEJKA** - I think that's it, yes.  Is that something that might be available?

**Mr BURGESS** - That only tells us staff who have made an approach to EAP, not reason.

**Ms SIEJKA** - Okay.

**Mr DEAN** - So can we have the figures then on principals and assistant principals on workers compensation.  That's the only way we can go.  I am not quite sure how long they would be on sick leave before they would go on to workers comp.  That's the issue.

**Mr BULLARD** - There is no correlation necessarily between the sick leave and workers comp.  It's whether it's believed that it was in the course of their duty.  Some staff would choose to take sick leave for an extended period of time and not bring a workers comp claim.

**Mr DEAN** - So my question is, and it's a fair question:  how many are on workers comp at the present time?  How is that going over, say, the previous three year period?  Has there been an increase or decrease?  And principals and assistant principals who have been on extended sick leave.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - In terms of stress leave for principals and assistant principals, for the year ending 31 March 2016 there were four.  There were four again over the next 12 months, so still four, and –

**CHAIR** - Are they the same four?

**Mr DEAN** - This is workers comp.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - For the year ending 31 March 2018 there are still four.

**CHAIR** - It could be the same four.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It might be, but I haven't got that information.

**Mr DEAN** - So that on workers comp only.  That's principals and assistant principals.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, that's correct.

**Mr DEAN** - Those who are on longer term sick leave?

**Mr BULLARD** - We could get that information for you, Mr Dean.  You just have to be aware that it wouldn't show the reason.

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, sure.

**Mr BULLARD** - For example a staff member who has cancer, or it could be a staff member who's unwell because of stress.

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, sure.  And workers comp across the whole spectrum of the Education department, and also long term sick leave across the whole of the Education department?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - For stress?

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, for stress.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - So workers compensation claims received for stress in the department the year ending 31 March 2018 is 54.

**CHAIR** - A point of clarification in regard to that –

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - So they're claims received.

**Mr DEAN** - Have we got long term sick leave across the whole spectrum of the Education department data for that?

**Mr BULLARD** - Long term?  What would you call long term?

**Mr DEAN** - I would call long term in excess of I suppose - what would you say –

**Ms ARMITAGE** - In excess of four weeks?

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, in excess of four weeks.  I am not talking about annual leave.  I am talking about where it has been extended over four weeks.

**Mr BULLARD** - We can provide that for you.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - While you're looking for that, a point of clarification on the sick leave and extended sick leave:  is there a limit to the amount of sick leave per annum?  How much sick leave; would it be two weeks and is it cumulative?  I am wondering how people have extended sick leave.  In the private sector most people have a period of sick leave and once your sick leave is exhausted then you take leave without pay.  I am questioning extended sick leave.

**Mr BULLARD** - On average - is it 20 days?

**CHAIR** - We need to come to the table if we are going to provide an answer from out of the gallery.  Thank you, Mr Williams, lovely to see you again.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - I understand workers comp is pretty well open‑ended.  I am wondering when you're using the term 'extended' sick leave, I would have thought that there would be a limit on sick leave and then either to go to workers comp or leave without pay.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We have Rob Williams, Deputy Secretary, Corporate and Business Services.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Thank you, minister.  It depends on the individual circumstances.  You get 20 days from the start and 10 days thereafter and I can't tell you, there's a complex formula that rolls over after three years – not for teachers, sorry, that's for the states.  So it's 20 and then 10.  So if you have been employed and haven't had any sick leave you will have a greater amount.

**CHAIR** - So it's cumulative?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - It's cumulative.  It depends on the individual circumstances.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - I was wondering, following on from the member for Windermere's question about stress leave, obviously that might extend past a period of the sick leave that was allowable and then perhaps they might come across to workers comp.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - No, if they claim workers compensation then it's clear.  They wouldn't claim sick leave if they were entitled to workers compensation, unless they don't want to.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - They might if they don't want it to be tagged as stress.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We would encourage them - if they tell us it was caused from work we encourage them to put in a workers compensation claim.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - So it's cumulative but there is an end date to sick leave.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Yes, it will run out, in which case they go onto leave without pay if they don't have any sick leave left.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Thank you.

**Mr FARRELL** - Thank you, Chair.  Getting back to the point that you raised earlier in regard to the management of principals and assistant principals moving on, it's not an easy thing to manage.  When you get a circumstance where you have a really good principal who has fitted in well with the school and the area and is generally perceived as doing a good job.  So, for example, is there an incentive for that principal to move to a bigger school because there is a greater amount in the pay packet?  Is that one of the incentives for principals to move to other schools?  Do you get paid more per student population in high schools?  Is that how it works?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - To your first question, my understanding is yes, or both questions, yes.

**Mr FARRELL** - Yes, so obviously there comes a time when for the principal's sake, or the school's sake, a principal may need to look at greener pastures.  I wondered what tools the Education department has because you must monitor this pretty closely I would say, where you have a principal who is part way through a school improvement process.  How do you encourage them to stay in these schools?  It might have challenges where there's opportunity for them to improve their career?  No names, no identifiers; it's just a general question.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - You've raised a good point.  A valid question.

**Mr FARRELL** - It seems to have improved over the past few years.  There does seem to have been stability in schools, having children that have gone through the system, it's a key thing in a school.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - It certainly is.

**CHAIR** - In another area, another new member to the committee, minister, is Mr Armstrong.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - Thanks Chair.  I'm not too sure whether I'm in the right area.

**CHAIR** - We will let you know if you're not.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - You will soon let me know I'm sure.  In regard to bullying in schools, does the Education department monitor if it's on the incline or behind, and do you record all those incidents and what processes do you have in place for teachings for bullying?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - It's a very good question.  One of the focuses in the last few years has been cyber-bullying.  We have an arrangement with Alannah and Madeline Foundation over three or four years for $650 000, something around that figure, to work with our schools, in the area of cyber-bullying.  Bullying takes all forms, I know.  That is a particular focus in recent years given the access to devices that our students have.  We have an overarching combating bullying initiative and that was announced in the 2016-17 state budget.  It is an investment of some $3 million over four years, so we can support our schools to build safer and more inclusive environments for students.  The safer the environment the more inclusive the environment and the greater the wellbeing of a student, the greater their ability to learn.

This is why the area is so important.  In 2018-19 a total funding of $530 000 is allocated to continue the program.  This is an additional $30 000 provided by the department for countering the violent extremism project.  Our Government remains committed to supporting Tasmanian schools.  I am giving an overarching thing, Mr Armstrong, so I will get that detail for you, it's coming shortly.

It is to combat bullying, particularly cyber-bullying, because all learners have the right to be free from discrimination, harassment and bullying, and to enjoy a safe and inclusive and supporting learning environment.  We have resources in our schools ranging from supports for individual learners in classrooms right through to informing school policy and planning.  Support includes valuing diversity, community organisation partnership, school grants, and a suite of resources, professional learning and a project officer to oversee the implementation of the initiative.  The initiative is supported at schools to address the growing challenges associated with cyber-bullying by giving all kindergarten to grade 10 government schools access to the Alannah and Madeline Foundation's e-Smart program.

One school in the south of the state has achieved e-Smart status and has taken a whole school approach to supporting school community development as responsible digital citizens.  This initiative is complemented by the respectful relationship education package which is a response to the Safe Homes and Safe Families Action plan.  School communities are accessing the combating bullying initiative, resources and supports, as well as drawing on complementary resources, strategies and approaches such as the respectful relationship education package to develop approaches appropriate to their context.

Tasmanian schools, are further supported through the national Safe Schools Framework which assists school communities to develop positive and practical student safety and wellbeing policies.  It includes access to the student wellbeing hub that provides school communities including teachers, school learners, parents and specialist professionals with a range of safe school strategies and resources.

So rather than have a figure for you about individual students that have been bullied, we have a figure contained in a suspensions figure with a category behaviour likely to be detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of the staff or other students.  So that category makes up 48 per cent of all suspensions which is, if you like, skewed towards the bullying area.

**Mr DEAN -** Looking at suspensions, you are saying 48 per cent makes up the number of suspensions?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Yes.

**Mr DEAN -** So it would be helpful to get the number of suspensions.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - So for that particular category, the 48 per cent, and 3362 students suspended.

**Mr DEAN -** Suspended.  Three thousand three hundred and –

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Sixty-two.  Suspensions.

**Mr DEAN -** And 48 per cent.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Not students, suspensions.

**Mr DEAN -** Suspensions.

**CHAIR** - Could be a student resuspended multiple times.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - That's 48 per cent.

**Mr DEAN -** Forty-eight per cent of that are for bullying?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - For behaviour likely to be detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of the staff or other students.

**Mr DEAN -** So it's about 1700 all up.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - No, that's 48 per cent of the total.  If you look at the overall categories together, and the number of suspensions, it could be a number of reasons.  Last year there were 7000.

**Mr DEAN -** Sorry?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Seven thousand suspensions.

**Mr DEAN -** Suspensions last year and 3000 this year so far.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - No, 7000 over all in 2017 I'm advised, but of the category I mentioned relating to Mr Armstrong's question, 48 per cent of the 7000 which is the 3362.

**Mr DEAN -** Right.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - This is why we're investing a lot of resources into this particular area.  Suspensions, not number of students, but suspensions, so a student could be suspended multiple times.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - Yes, I know of incidents where that is.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - And I have some further information here.

**CHAIR** - Does it say how many of those - we wouldn't have the issue with if we took phones of them.

**Mr ARMSTRONG -** That was going to be my next question.

**CHAIR** - Sorry, I didn't mean to jump the question.  That would get rid of a lot of the cyber-bullying.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - The issue with cyber-bullying is that it can happen 24 hours a day.  So yes, it might limit it at school, if the students didn't have access to any phones for example, or devices, but the unfortunate thing about cyber-bullying is that a student might get a message or - what's it called, what's that Snapchat thing - I don't understand it, all my girls are unfortunately on it.

**CHAIR** - Neither do your team in the back.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I saw a few nods there.  That could happen 24 hours a day and that's why it's so destructive.

**Ms SIEJKA** - I'm particularly interested in disadvantaged young people and disengaged young people, and knowing the complex issues related to young people that are suspended or expelled or all of those sorts of matters, what percentage of these students gives us a bit more of a picture because we get an idea of how many overall.  At the higher numbers of how many are not attending, so whether it's explained or unexplained.  I know there's some young people that aren't attending school in the 20 per cent, 30 per cent, 40 per cent numbers each year.  Is it improving with the extension schools?  Is that addressing some of the issues with non-attendance or not?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - With respect to the non-attendance, the office of the Education Registrar is responsible for registration of home education and non-government schools.  It is an independent authority which offices are located in north and south of the State, and the Office of Education registrar is responsible for managing the compulsory consolidation conference process for non-attendance at school.

**Ms SIEJKA** - Is that through the Education Act?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - That's part of the 2016 Education Act that area was created.  These conferences are open to all sectors.  I've been informed that both government and non-government schools have been successfully engaging with this process and the conciliation process about improving outcomes for Tasmanian students not currently attending school by providing them with a way to participate in a process and to voice their needs to enable and support them to return to school.  I've now been advised that the Office of Education Registrar are now up to a 70 per cent re-engagement rate of students who had previously disengaged.  I will ask Katharine, who is the Education Registrar, to come to the table.

**Ms SIEJKA** - Obviously the students, say, in grade 7, or much earlier even, we can identify those children and young people that are disengaging at that point.  So are we having an increased success in those earlier ones to prevent it later on with those higher numbers that we've seen in the past?

**CHAIR** - Thank you.  We have Katharine O'Donnell at the table.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - We do.  Katharine might provide some examples of success stories.  The change in the act was all about ensuring we didn't go down this prosecution path immediately which wasn't very successful and it was a very aggressive environment if you could appreciate, with the families, and given the particular circumstances.  This is a way where everyone gets around the table and if appropriate, the student as well, to look at what is, I guess, the deeper meaning behind non-attendance in a safe environment.  And we also have overarching - this is our software, I call it software EDI which records all student information and flags up some concerns and also that data can be shared with the parents as well.  Katharine, would you like to talk about your positon on this.

**Ms O'DONNELL** - In relation to your question, we've certainly had a focus on the younger age groups because it's similar to the department's focus on increasing participation in early years.  We can get them younger, and we have a much better chance of not having to deal with them at the other end.  So we have had a real focus on primary and upper primary age groups.  We don't want to restrict schools from also sending high school students, so we have had a portion of them as well come through for conferences.

I would say that our greatest success is with the younger students.  The issues that we are seeing tend to be around parents having difficulty in separating from their children, and in understanding how to encourage their children to go to school and to pick up those skills.  So we see in those age groups, it tends to be about supporting the parent to get the child to school, and we work a lot with community groups and non-government organisations as well to support them and to provide them with that support and with the school, and we are seeing good success with that.  Obviously, the further up we get and the closer into high school we get, the more the student has a say in what they want to do and we're working really closely with the department on the nine to 12 engagement policies and I'm working with the learning services on understanding how the different year 2 to year 4 programs work.  I'm trying to adapt with schools, programs that best suit children.

We find with the older age groups, it's more about giving the student a voice and a lot of them do come to conferences.  I've actually just had a message, we've got one on now, and we weren't sure the boy was going to turn up, but he has.  He is a year 10 student, and it's really important for him to come along and have a voice in that and talk about why he's having issues, and then work out what we can put around him to try and resolve those.

**Ms SIEJKA** - So 70 per cent success over all, but with the older age group they are engaged in the process.  The more engaged they are, it shows that there's a willingness to participate perhaps.  I know there is a cohort there that just aren't going to engage no matter what you do.

**Ms O'DONNELL** - Yes.

**Ms SIEJKA** - But with the ones that are engaging, are you seeing improvement in their attendance ultimately?

**Ms O'DONNELL** - We are.  It is more gradual and so what we're seeing is they start with re‑engaging and they start with a conversation about where do you want to go from here?  What do you want to do?  And they may engage in different ways.  We've been working with the part of the department that's managing school‑based apprenticeships, so we're looking at that pathway for young people who really are struggling to engage with a full-time school program.  Our re‑engagement is not necessarily that you're back sitting behind a desk.  It might be that you're taking steps towards a different training program or a different way of learning.  It might be part-time, some kind of tier four program and school, so that they're working their way back into a school environment again.  It depends how long they've been out for.

**Ms SIEJKA** - I just have one last question.  Through the minister, on the community conferences.  I imagine there would be some schools where there would be a lot of demand for those community conferences.  There's no cap on the number that they conduct or anything like that?

**Ms O'DONNELL** - No, not at all.

**Mr ARMSTRONG -** I'm just wondering if there is a policy in the Education department regarding mobile phones in classrooms for students.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Yes, there is.  This has generated some national discussion in recent times.  I'm aware that my colleague, minister Stokes in New South Wales, is ordering a review of Smartphone use in classrooms.  I'll watch that review with great interest.  I note that in our schools that you just bring your own device, they are effectively used to engage students in their learning.  I also believe that Smart devices are now - of course, they are part of our culture.  They are accepted as tools of work and leisure in society.  Rather than banning them in schools, as minister Stokes is looking at, our emphasis is on increasing digital citizenships, if I can put it that way, and providing students with the tools to use the technology appropriately.

For example, in partnership with Aurora and the Alannah and Madeline Foundation, we are supporting every grade 6 student in Tasmanian government schools to access the e-Smart digital licence.  The e-Smart digital licence is an online program that teaches children the critical digital skills of using online technologies such as Smart phones in a way that is smart, that is safe and that is responsible.

So we're not proceeding down the banning of phones path yet.  I will be informed by the New South Wales information and study though, which may bring further light on the subject, but it's about really teaching the students, given this is a 24-hour issues, not just in the say nine to three classroom environment, how to be respectful and how to use digital devices appropriately and respectfully and in a smart and responsible way.

**Mr FARRELL** - Minister, related to that, and it related to the cyber-bullying comment, in schools now there is a lot more available online.  Are there many subjects studied online and how do you manage the bullying issues with the increase of online teaching and the cyber-bullying issue?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I refer to my previous answer with the Alannah and Madeline Foundation, et cetera.

**Mr FARRELL** - Yes.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - But there may well be an operational answer we can provide in terms of operation of schools.

**Mr BULLARD** - In schools online there's no interactive opportunities to be accessing tools that might be used for cyber-bullying.  I think experience would suggest that it's what goes on outside the classroom which probably causes us more issues.

**Mr FARRELL** - So what type of lessons are being done online.  Are they ones that can't be handled in the school?  You don't have expertise.  I just wondered where they come in ‑

**Mr BULLARD** - There's an online element to quite a lot of our courses.  It's not totally online bit I mean, IT is now an accepted support in a classroom for teaching and learning, and so you'd see elements of online activity across the span of subjects and cross a span of years.

**Mr FARRELL** - Right.

**Mr BULLARD** - Certainly totally online, where, for example, students are identified as gifted and talented, then there's additional provision online that helps to extend them, and as the minister referred to previously, blended learning whereby you have an element of online or video and you still have a teacher in class is becoming increasingly popular.

**CHAIR -** Thank you.  Ms Armitage and then I'm going to Mr Dean.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** I'm going on to a different subject and I have to ask you some questions in here probably what's happening in capital investments, so I might just do it all in this area, if that's all right.  Can you give me the number of primary school students currently at Summerdale Primary and also at Hagley Farm School, how many have enrolled and what's the capacity of those two schools?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - If you can just bear with us, Ms Armitage.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Yes, that's fine.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - We'll try get those figures for you.  If this is a capital expenditure related, I might -

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Well, it isn't yet.

**CHAIR -** No, we're not there yet.  We're building up to it, yes.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** While you're looking for that, I'll explain.  In October 2011, the Meander Valley Council had an outline development plan for Hadspen and it indicated that in the future, probably the next five to 10 years there would be enough primary school students within the Hadspen area to justify primary school.  I think the numbers at the time – well, you needed 350 for a primary school – that may have changed.  But in 2011, it was identified there were 230 primary school children with Hadspen.  My understanding is that Summerdale Primary probably is fairly high capacity.  I'm not sure whether it is still now, and that's a question for the figures.  I'm wondering, in the future, is there a projection or has any staging been done looking towards a primary school at Hadspen in view of the outline development plan from back in 2011?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I'll take that question on notice.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Yes, but I wondered whether the figures, just to see how Summerdale and Hagley Farm because they would be the feeders – they would receive the feed from Hadspen currently.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Yes.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** But it was identified that a school at Hadspen – because Hadspenhas grown significantly and since 2011 there have been a significant number of houses built and I'm quite sure that there will be a lot more primary school children there.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I am aware of the Meander Valley Council's views on this.  I met with Meander Valley representatives a few years ago about the potential for Hadspen and planning.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Yes, and that was probably around the time they did that long term outline development plan.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Yes, long term planning.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** But a school was mentioned.  It was saying a centrepiece of the Hadspen ODP is the development of a primary school, 3.5 hectares to 4 hectares adjacent to the redeveloped town centre.  That was part of that ODP.  I'm wondering whether the figures identify a current need.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - If the population figures of Hadspen support that, you mean and/or -

**Ms ARMITAGE -** And/or both.  The figures currently at Summerdale whether that's at capacity.  I am happy to take it on notice to get the figures.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Okay.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** And I can always ask follow-up questions in the House.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - You can.  So Mr Bullard might talk about the work that's being going across government.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Yes, if he could.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - For example, there's work being done with the Department of Primary Industry, Parks, Water and Environment on geospatial modelling on population where we can properly - well, more effectively plan for future infrastructure needs within the Department of Education.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** I notice Legana, of course, is now getting a primary school and Hadspen is a growing area in the other directions.

**CHAIR -** You'd only have to ask minister for the Electoral Commission, the redistribution committee, about what's happening in the future.  They'll set you right.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I will be mindful of the need to be brief.  Here we have the 2017-18 budget provided $300 000 to engage an external consultant to work with the department of Education to develop a new education infrastructure planning framework and this has been developed and the department has developed an education and infrastructure planning framework to support future decision making about what educational infrastructure is needed and where.  The framework is currently being used and analysed, school supply, projected enrolment demand across the state including the demand for a new inner-city high school in Hobart, and that's –

**CHAIR -** We will get the numbers of Summerdale.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Yes.

**Mr BULLARD** - We just don't seem to have those numbers.  We can get those - we can indicate Summerdale's not full.

**CHAIR -** Not at capacity yet.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - So as I said before, the department has engaged a specialist geospatial analyst to support the development and application of the framework.  This geospatial work is being undertaken in collaboration with, as I say, the Department of Primary Industry, Parks, Water and Environment and the framework will enable the Department of Education to test scenarios related to enrolment demand, based on enrolment projections up to 2036.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** So we would be looking at places like Hadspen considering the redevelopment that's going on and the continued development and the fact that in 2011 they had 230 primary school students.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Yes.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Obviously some of those would have gone up to high school now.  But with the more homes being built.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Yes.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** You do keep figures on ‑

**Mr BULLARD** - The system allows you to put a number of variables in, so if you knew that there were *x* number of residences being built, you can put that in to see what that means for projected enrolments.

**Mr DEAN -** On that line at this present time.  Is there a current study, minister, being undertaken in relation to school zoning?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Yes, there is.  Part of the new Education Act around the area of zoning for schools, has changed from the previous act where the minister determined the zoning - and I'll be corrected if I'm not quite right - but the new act, there is a requirement to rezone or do the rezoning every five years.  My understanding was there was a big gap between rezoning prior to the new Education Act coming in, so that in terms of the maps being updated, and the secretary has that responsibility in actual fact for zoning, so it is not the minister of the day, it is the secretary of the day, and under the act, the secretary is required to review intake areas at least once every five years.

In July 2017, the secretary published an instructing on enrolment from outside intake area which sets out criteria that must be used by the Tasmanian government schools to prioritise out of area enrolments.  These criteria acknowledged that there are a variety of reasons why parents and guardians choose to send their children to particular schools including a schools proximity to work, their work or childcare.  Students who have a sibling attending an out of area school, are also able to enrol at that school.

The department has consulted closely with government schools to develop consistent out of area enrolment procedures that are apply across all government schools and as part of the intake area review, the department will consult with school communities and other stakeholders on proposed changes to intake area boundaries.  It will also allow a long lead in time before any changes to intake area boundaries are implemented to enable families and schools to plan for the changes.

The review is expected to take part in the second half of 2018.  So enrolments for 2018 and 2019 will take place using current maps and new intake area maps are expected to apply from, I'm assuming Term 1 2020, and all other states and territories allow out of intake area enrolments if school capacity permits.  That's an updated version of where we are at there.

**Mr DEAN -** My question was on drugs and weapons in schools and lockdowns in school, minister.  What's the position there?

**CHAIR -** We're not at the prison yet.  We're still in education.

**Mr DEAN -** Yes, I know we are.  Sadly there are lockdowns at schools. So what's the position on drugs into schools and weapons in schools?  Is there any ‑

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I can provide an answer for you, Mr Dean, but I want to provide the committee with a couple of pieces of information and in fact, it's one of your questions around workers' compensation for principals.

So I refer to four, that's claims received as I said before.  There are now only three principals on workers' compensation, but none of those are for stress leave.

Ms Armitage, the capacity of Summerdale Primary School is 675.  Currently they have 571 students at Summerdale.  That's a 77 per cent capacity.  Hagley has a capacity of 575, that's current at 346, so 61 per cent.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Thank you.  We might not need a new school yet.

**CHAIR -** Back to drugs and weapons.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Okay.  So let's look at weapons.  And this is suspensions involving weapons and other dangerous objects.  The number of suspensions – so the reason and this is possession of a dangerous knife.  In 2017 there were 16 suspensions for possession of a dangerous knife.  In 2014 there were 24.  Possession of a firearm, zero last year.  Possession of explosives including fireworks, four suspensions.  Detonation of explosives including fireworks, eight.  Possession of other dangerous weapons or objects, 28 last year, suspensions, not people.  And suspensions involving a drug related reason - this is 2017 figures - alcohol 53.  Illegal drugs - 132.  Other, such as petrol, et cetera - one.  Over the counter medications - zero.  Prescription drugs – one; and tobacco - 151.  That's actually come down a lot.  It was 231 in 2014.  That's come down a fair bit.

**CHAIR -** The member for Launceston had a question in regard to this area.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Yes, a follow-up to Mr Dean's question.  Last year you mentioned the critical incident in the emergency procedure phone app.  I thought that would actually help with regard to the drug problem and other problems in the schools.  Have you had any feedback from the teachers and principals as to how that's assisted them or whether it's been useful?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Anecdotal feedback but I might get Robert Williams ‑ and we did launch it, I think 12 months ago in fact.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Yes, it was mentioned last year in Estimates.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - With Malcolm Elliott again.  So Rob, yes.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We've had only positive feedback on it.  It's on people's Smartphones and so it does what they call caching so that if the system's down, as long as your phone is powered up, it's still there.  We're about to review it because you need the telephone numbers to be up to date and those sorts of things, and we're even looking at maybe extending it to other actions around emergency management than just the critical incidents, but how we might manage emergencies more broadly.  So you've got a ready checklist.  So yes, it's been very useful.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** And it's been used quite a bit?

**Mr WILLLIAMS -** It's been used quite a bit.  There are some people who haven't put it on their private phones, but in that case it would be expected to have a hard copy available for them, but look it was innovative.  It won a prize, the Prime Minister's awards for public excellence last year for Australia‑wide.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** I noticed it was launched last year and wondered how it was going.  Thankyou.

**Mr WILLLIAMS -** Thank you.

**CHAIR -** I have a question in regard to the speech pathologists and psychologists.  I asked it when we talked about staffing but I didn't get any answers in regard to pathologists and psychologists.  Speech pathologists, so can I have some figures on how many we have and their areas.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Generally, there are over 60 more speech pathologists, school psychologists, and social workers now than there were in 2014.  In addition to that, we have around 30 of FTE school nurses to support that school environment.  One of the first meetings I had with the Tasmanian Principals' Association, the north-west branch at Penton High School back in 2014, the issue was raised about the importance of support staff and people outside of the principal teachers and support staff in school more directly, supporting the school environment.  Our school nurses have been part of that, but also I understand and recognise the importance of speech pathologists and social workers as well.  I have some figures here for you about ‑

**CHAIR -** Is it allocation per cluster?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I have regional breakdown, north and south.  So the professional support staff headcount, speech and language pathologists in March 2018 is 61.  That's the same as last year.  Social workers - there are 94 in 2018, an increase of 12 on the previous 12 months.  School psychologists, there are 85 in 2018, there were 87 in 2017, so two less, but my understanding is they are hard to fill those positions, we are struggling to fill those which would be the reason.  The funding would be there I don't doubt, but getting the people to fill the positions has been a challenge, as I understand it.

**CHAIR -** I think the department increased their requirement of attainment.  You might find that that's why you haven't got very many available.  Again, from personal experience.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I will have that clarified.  So in March 2017 our professional support staff headcount was 230; 122 in the north, 118 in the south.  In March 2018 there were 240, an increase in 10.

**CHAIR -** So is there any unmet demand in our public school system for those positions, for that area of expertise?  Are there students waiting for a speech pathologist and can't access one?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I'll wait to be informed of that.  Not to my knowledge.  It is difficult to ascertain a wait time list for those areas.

**CHAIR** - Wouldn't that information be available per cluster?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Many adolescents self-refer to social work or school psychology and do not require referral but are prioritised.  Social workers try to refer students out of other services if they cannot be seen at school or if there is a better fit.  In contrast school psychologists and speech pathologists don't have that capacity to refer students to other agencies.

**Ms SIEJKA** - Under the youth suicide prevention strategy which is related to education I understood there was data that was collected to do –

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - In terms of wait times?

**Ms SIEJKA** - No, students that were in need of assistance to do with mental health -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - There may well be.

**Ms SIEJKA** - that were referred from schools and a young person needing help from the service.  I thought that was one of the key items in that strategy.

**CHAIR** - We have a lot of expertise at this table, minister.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Absolutely, yes.  So in terms of your question first in terms of wait -

**CHAIR** - Of unmet -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Unmet demands -

**CHAIR** - Yes, unmet demands.

**Ms PEARCE** - It's very difficult to collectively place the three professions together, so speech referrals, speech pathology aren't related to mental health, and –

**Ms SIEJKA** - No, it's some of the other items though.

**Ms PEARCE** - And some schools individually prioritise students in a different - they have their own ways of priorities on the student.  We have the data on how our numbers of students will have been seen by us, the school psychologist and our social workers in relation to mental health, but not necessarily the wait time because some of them are referred on to CAM's as the minister indicated or other services if they are the better fit for them at that time.

**Ms SIEJKA** - The question then if they are not able to - if their needs are not able to be met is there a policy or is there provision that they do get referred on if there is a wait time?

**Ms PEARCE** - Yes, there is.  Each school has their own self-referral and management process, but we do have the data which indicates how many active files we have with our school psychologists and active files we have with our social -

**Ms SIEJKA** - So the student is not left -

**Ms PEARCE** - And speech and language pathologists.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - I would just like to touch on truancy.

**CHAIR** - We have actually had that mentioned, have we?

**Ms ARMITAGE** - How we're tracking with truancy.  Perhaps you have a breakdown across primary and high school, and of course with the changes to the school detention do you expect that will go up when people are having to stay at school longer, particularly year 11 and 12, that may not wish to be there.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - There are options, of course.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Any plans to address possible changes?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The change to the Education Act will help address absenteeism.  I know it has been a longstanding issue in Tasmania.  We know that attending school every day has a positive impact on students learning.  This aligns clearly with the department's goal of access participation and also engagement.  Under the new act there are changes to encourage regular attendance and to ensure there's a consistent state-wide approach to absences.

There are a range of reasons when a child can be authorised to be absent.  We have gone through with Ms O'Donnell the compulsory conciliation conferences which are working, which is good.  Of course parents and guardians have a legal obligation to ensure a child is enrolled in and attending school, or is registered for home education.  In a national context, the Tasmania Government score attendance rates for students in years 1 to 6, attendance rates are 93 per cent.  That matched the national rate in 2017.  Attendance rates for terms 1, 2 and 4 in 2017 remain similar to those in 2014 to 2016 for prep to year 10 students in government schools.  Due to increased sickness the attendance rate for term 3 2017 was lower than 2016, and this increase related to an increase in the number of influenza notifications from the Department of Health and Human Services for the same period.

For years 11 and 12 students, the 2017 annual attendance rate was unchanged from 2016 but slightly higher than 2015, despite the higher sickness rates observed in 2017.  The introduction of the Education Act in 2016 in term 3 2017 resulted in an increase of 0.17 of a percentage point.  Regarding the unauthorised absent rate, and the departmental strategy is to follow up and explain the absences with parents who are working the proportion of total absences and it's dropped from 35 per cent in 2012 to just 21 per cent in 2017.  The department is working with the Tasmanian Audit Office throughout this financial year on an audit titled 'Student attendance and engagement Year 7 to 10'.  That's planned to be tabled by the end of August this year.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - How many truancy officers do you have across the state or personnel that are authorised to act as truancy officers.  Do you have a number?  I wonder how many people they have $538 000 for the four year period.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We have retention and engagement officers as part of the 2017-18 budget.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - That's $538 000 over four years.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The 2017-18 budget provided $5 million over four years from 2017 to 2021 to implement a consistent and effective strategy for the provision of engagement and re‑engagement programs for students across the state.  We want to build upon and extend successful re-engagement programs being delivered by the department.  These include Radar, Space, EDZone and ESOL, and all schools share a common language describing disengagement along a continuum and increased recognition of the importance of early intervention with flexible options at tier 1 and tier 2.

In 2017 the allocation of $720 000 saw the employment of a tier 4 program managers, senior staff and teaching staff and a student engagement project officer and three part-time attendants and retention officers.  In 2018-19 an allocation of $1.435 million will include the employment of two senior social workers, one in each learning service, to become a new department of Education attendants and retention officers.  These positions will further support the key priority of attendance, engagement and participation.  There will also be the inclusion of an experienced school principal to lead and facilitate evidence informed strategies for alternative education provision.

One of the changes we have made in schools over the last four years is the engagement of other programs such as Radar.  There was a move away from those previously, but we are re‑engaging organisations such as Radar and ESOL to support the school again.  So more resources supporting schools, particularly the students that are vulnerable to disengagement.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - To keep them at school.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Or engaged in a learning activity.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - One of my interests, minister, and the Government shares that interest, an additional $800 000 over four years for school farm resourcing.  I note that there's a redevelopment at the Jordan River Learning Federation Farm at Brighton at a cost of $4.3 million.  So is the development at Sheffield School Farm the following year, is that the same sort of thing, science specific development?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It will be different.  The Sheffield School Farm investment will be more focused on dairy; Brighton will have a different focus, but generally there needs to be major upgrades at both centres.  The $800 000 is for other school farms around Tasmania to apply for grants of a particular need.  I was at Oatlands the other day and they clearly need a new set of stockyards as an example, but also not only is it going to be physical infrastructure, but 10 of the new teachers we are rolling out this year will be allocated to school farms.  So that resource, and that builds on the agriculture curriculum framework that's been developed over a number of years and now is being implemented in schools.  We launched that about 18 or so months ago.

**CHAIR** - The curriculum is in place to support the investment in school farms?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The curriculum is in place and the investment, the infrastructure and resources will support the curriculum and the students in learning in a modern environment.  It's not unlike the pre‑farm at TAFE in Burnie where there's a $5 million investment to ensure that the vocational education and training students are learning with up to date modern and safe equipment and have a good training facility when they're not outside learning more practical skills.

**CHAIR** - In regard to the school farm boards, my understanding is that the particular schools are pulling the school boards into the school association or the school environment.  They have sat outside the school association and the school previously.  Is that something that is being rolled out right across this -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That's my understanding and it's largely due to changes to the Education Act and the school association rules, and there is a move in that respect.  Was it Scottsdale we were referring to –

**CHAIR** - I didn't mention any schools in particular, minister.  You may assume that.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It may well be Scottsdale you were referring to, but that's my understanding, yes.

**CHAIR** - So do you think that will be detrimental to the expertise that's been on school boards in the past?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - No, I don't anticipate that will be the case at all, particularly with more resources in terms of teaching resource.  The curriculum which has been developed and the improved infrastructure will only be enhanced in the various school farms.

**Mr BULLARD** - When the Education Act came in, school associations don't have to be incorporated any more but they're actually taken to be managed under the act which provides them with basically the indemnity of the Tasmanian Government for their activity, which is a great way to get parents to participate and community members.  We have done a scan across the state and there's a wide variety of arrangements that schools have in the way they managed parent and community engagement.  We employ people in the department who, as a major part of their job, now work with those school associations, collaborate, communicate and support for that transition to occur in a way that's going to ensure that they're keeping the best of everything.

**CHAIR** - I hope it works as it was planned, but I am not necessarily hearing that on the ground.  That's not a question, it's a comment, and we don't have comments, we have questions.

**Mr DEAN** - I wanted to concentrate on the teacher issues and so on.  Do we have the statistics on the assaults or actions taken against teachers in schools, and I guess assaults of student on student as well; do we have those figures at hand?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I can provide those figures.

**Mr DEAN** - I take it that would include acts of aggression against teachers as well, would it?  I suppose that would be in a similar area.

**Ms SIEJKA** - And occasionally staff on students too.

**Mr DEAN** - Students on students and students on staff.

**Ms SIEJKA** - Staff on students occasionally.

**Mr DEAN** - That never happens, so I don't need those details.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I only have the figures which I have already presented in terms of suspensions by reason, that being behaviour likely to be detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of the staff or other students.  So it's lumped into those figures.  I have discussed your question with the Tasmanian Principals Association of some of the areas of the Riley Report because I understand it covers the health and wellbeing of principals as well, and I know this is an issue.

**Mr DEAN** - I asked the question because it has been brought to my attention that it is on the rise and I just wanted to confirm that.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - No, I wouldn't necessarily say students against teachers or principals, because also I get feedback about some of the parents or guardians as well, more predominantly anecdotally to me as it relates to principals.  We don't have the figures that quite answer your question.

I have been presented with some workers compensation figures, numbers of incidents reported.

**CHAIR** - That you have already read out?

**Mr DEAN** - Do we need to take it on notice?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The number of incidents reported, but it could be any sort of incidents in the last 12 months, a combination of school-based and non-school-based to March 2017, there are 1461 and to March 2018, 1385.

**Mr DEAN** - What was that.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The number of incidents reported.  But that could be across the whole span of –

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, can you take it on notice to give those details?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I can try.

**Mr DEAN** - It's fairly important.  I would have thought they would have been –

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I can take that on notice, Mr Dean, if you like.  I can try to get those figures for you.

**Mr DEAN** - Sure.  That's assaults or acts of aggression against teachers by students.  That is the main question in relation to that because it has been raised with me.  It's an issue, so I wanted to see whether it is.  I had a question on TASSO if I could.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That's the Australian Association of State Schools Organisation.

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, that's right.  Does TASSO currently attract the participation levels from school parent bodies that the government is satisfied with?  I will quickly read the questions.  Is the Government committed to TASSO being affiliated with the national body, ACSO?  Is the Government fully confident that TASSO is in a position to build on the current density of actual parent representation, for example, that the Government expects at the upcoming AGM?  Will there will be sufficient nominations so at least all office bearer positions will be filled by qualified candidates?  Does the Government have any concerns with the current operations and leadership of TASSO?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Some of those questions are just objective.

**CHAIR** - Obviously someone involved in TASSO.

**Mr DEAN** - You're right, it is.  It is, very well, spot on.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Many of those questions are really questions for TASSO.  I encourage any Tasmanian body to be affiliated with an Australian body.  I believe that's very important so Tasmania has a voice in the national context.  We always want to encourage school associations and parents to be involved in their school association and then more broadly with TASSO.  In fact we have a commitment to do just that.

**Mr DEAN** - The government funds TASSO.  That's what I want to know.  Do you have an involvement or commitment to it?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We do provide some funding for TASSO, that's correct.  I want state schools and public schools to have a very strong parent voice.  I have engaged with TASSO a lot over the course of the last four years and attended all their conferences and spoken at all their conferences, attend executive meetings regularly.  In fact the last executive meeting we attended Mr Bullard spoke about the department and what's happening within the department at a more operational level.  So while those questions are more for TASSO themselves I want to do all we can to encourage a very strong voice for public education.  I want to see more schools represented at state conferences.  I am not saying there hasn't been many; I am just saying I would like to see to maximise that opportunity.

**Mr DEAN** - Is the Education department satisfied with the functioning and what TASSO is currently doing?  You fund it.  Are they operating as they are required to operate and do they have the right affiliation?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - My understanding of how they're operating within their grant of deed as I understand it, but we have some initiatives.  We place particular importance in this area and families and communities are being invited to engage in the re-building education sites and other major infrastructure projects through the 'Have your say' campaign, which will enable the sharing of ideas, insights and feedback on major infrastructure projects such as Cosgrove High School and the new schools at Brighton and Legana.

Committed engagement will be essential for the success of the early learning hubs at Sorell, Glenorchy, East Tamar, West Tamar and Waratah-Wynyard, and a detailed community engagement process will be undertaken for the development of each of the new hubs at an individual level.  The department engages with families as agents in the context of learner education and where parents and caregivers are engaged in supporting learners in the classroom, at home or in educational activities and experienced.

The department has delivered a family partnership model training to schools over the last two years.  A model is evidence-based and internationally recognised approach to partnership practice to achieve better outcomes for children and families.  A model supports those people working with families to build genuine and respectful relationships, with research from schools and families indicating improved communication.  Implementation of the Education Act and ongoing requirement of school associations across all state schools facilitates the participation of parents and members of the community in school-based policies, school improvement plans, school objectives, priorities, strategic directions and values, and selection of a permanent principal.

To inform policy and decision-making the department regularly engages peak bodies such as the Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations, and the Tasmanian Council of Social Services, TasCOSS or the Commissioner for Children and Young People.  They represent families, communities and children and young people.  An example of that would include the partnership between the department and TasCOSS to support family engagement for working together for 3 year olds initiative, and aligning with my previous comments it's important we have the best parental representation possible.

I have asked the department to undertake a review of parental engagement in school decision-making including the costs involved.  I want to make sure all our public schools have the best possible representation on the ground and report, to me as minister, to the department, and our regular meetings with me as minister and the department separately together with attendance at state executive meetings at TASSO and the regular state conference which is around August normally.  To one of your questions about TASSO being involved with the national organisation - yes, I would strongly encourage that involvement to make sure that Tasmanian public schools have a voice around that national body.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much.  In light of the time I am going to suspend.  We will be back ready to recommence at 11.40 a.m.

**The committee suspended from 11.24 a.m. to 11.41 a.m**.

**CHAIR -** Members, TasTAFE will be after lunch, so if anyone needs to go away and do something or find out some more information we're not going to get completed by 1 o'clock in this particular area.  We're still effectively on 1.1, so we're going to turn into the House of Assembly, minister, and never move out of 1.1.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Heaven forbid.  So are we going to 1 o'clock now?

**CHAIR -** We'll go to 1 o'clock.Welcome back.  I thank everyone for getting back here three minutes late.  It's good of you.

We'll move back to, effectively it is 1.1, but we have wandered a bit but we have indicated that TasTAFE will be after lunch.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** On students with disability, could you provide us with how many students there are currently on the severe disability register?

**Ms ROCKLIFF -** The total special needs budget is $88.85 million in 2018 compared to $82.06 million in 2017; that's an increase of $6.79 million.  Students supported through a severe disability registrar are allocated $48.2 million from the total special needs budget.  Additionally there are 1517.78 full-time equivalent students in 2018 with cognitive capacity between 55 and 70 full-scale IQ receiving up to $5000 each to their school with a total budget of $7.58 million, and as of March 2018, there were 1041.02 full-time equivalent students from severe disabilities registrar.

**CHAIR -** I think 55 to 70.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Yes, the 55 to 70 full scale IQ, that was the 1517.78 figure and the 1041.02 FTE figure goes to the severe disabilities register.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Thank you.  And the $6.79 million the extra funding, can you identify where that's going?  On the figures I think you said it was $82 million, previously was up to $88.85 million?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Yes, of $6.79 million additional this financial year.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** I wonder if you could identify the area that that's actually going across.  Is that for the autism specific classrooms?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Autism specific classrooms is separate as I understand it.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** That's a separate funding?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** If I give the key factors for the funding increase, so the $6.79 million includes an increase of 13.8 full-time equivalent, then specialist staff in 2018.  The implementation of a new formula to determine special schoolteacher allocations amounting to an increase of approximately $0.99 million, so almost $1 million; an increase of 10.62 full-time equivalent students with severe disabilities from the 1030.4 full-time equivalent funded in 2017.  That brings it up to the figure I just provided you, Ms Armitage.

So there is a $1 million allocation for autism classrooms, and the usual indexation of 2 per cent for other salary costs and 2.5 per cent for non-salaries.  So those areas contribute to the $6.79 million, and of the $88.85 million, the same figure this year as last year is the $3 million allocated for the ministerial task force recommendations and reforms.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Thank you.  I believe the member from Prosser has some questions on the autism questions.

**Ms HOWLETT -** Yes.  During the election campaign I had a lot of concerned families talking to me about autism and the increase.  Can you could update the committee on the rollout of autism classes in high schools?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I can.  The government is committed to best practice.  Autism care for students with autism in our schools:  we have established primary classes at Lindisfarne North Primary, Romaine Primary, and Summerdale Primary, and a secondary school class at Rose Bay High School.  Support for this program continues through the election commitment to establish two more secondary school sites in the northern learning region.  These classes will be at Parklands High School in Burnie, and Prospect High School in Launceston.

Students from feeder schools at Romaine and Summerdale will be able to transition to a grade 7 class at these locations if their families wish, and students with autism spectrum disorders at high schools in these areas will also be able to enrol if they meet eligibility and their families choose this particular option both at Parklands and Prospect.  We are in the process of establishing these classes, with recruitment of suitable staff and the building modifications that have been required.  Both of these schools will be visiting the Rose Bay class before the end of term 2, to see the program in operation and to engage in discussions about all facets of the program, together with the principal and the teacher.

Prospect High will have two students transitioning from Summerdale Primary in term 3 in readiness for their full transition in the 2018 calendar year.  Parklands is undergoing some modifications to buildings in order to accommodate the program with the expectation that the program will be open for enrolments before the end of this year.  All staff will be undertaking training with Dr Amanda Webster from the University of Wollongong early in term 3 focusing on best practice in autism spectrum disorder.  This commitment now sees six full-time equivalent advanced schools teachers in this program; a full-time teacher assistant for each class; and where needed $50 000 per site for building modifications for development of the autism support class.

I personally am very pleased to see the expansion of this program to support both primary and secondary age students in each region of the state to ensure students with autism have the best possible access and engagement with high quality autism support programs state-wide.  The initial pilot was done in around 2015, it expanded to the schools that I've just mentioned, where it appears to be a very successful and welcome investment.

**CHAIR -** Any other questions in regard to the disability services?  If not, I'll go back to Ms Siejka.  Thank you.

**Ms SIEJKA -** I'm interested in what occurred last year with some of the students in their HSC exams and not getting the right exam papers in that particular instance.  I know there was a review undertaken by TASC.  Is it possible to have a copy of that review?  Can you give a bit of an overview of what's occurred to date to prevent that from happening again?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Thank you, Ms Siejka.  I ask Katrina Beams, the Executive Officer of TAS to the table.  Thank you, Katrina.

**Ms BEAMS -** I'm sorry, the question was a bit quiet.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** It's about the operations of TASC, the review undertaken, and some of the things experienced last year in exam timetabling, et cetera.

**Ms SIEJKA -** Wanting to obviously prevent it from happening again.

**Ms BEAMS -** One of the things which I made a commitment to do was to undertake an independent review of the external assessment process and we worked really closely with a number of stakeholders regarding the terms of reference for that review.  We worked with the AU and the IEU, TASO.  I have a principals' reference group which I meet with, so that group of 12 principals as well as the Framework Advisory Council to determine the terms of reference.  There are four particular areas which were relevant and that warranted a review.

One was around employment - the employment of particularly our markers and exam supervisors.  One was around their payment rates and what determines a marking load.  One was around timely communication and other operational logistics.  They were the four key areas that formed the terms of reference for that review.  We went out to a request for quote process, and appointed John Firth, the former Chief Executive of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment - VCAA - Authority who's is well-regarded, esteemed and experienced educationalist with a sound knowledge of senior secondary.  He has held a number of consultation forums around the state and also conducted an on-line survey where he's sought feedback from our markers and our exam supervisors, and also our marking coordinators, and is currently preparing that report for me.

**Ms SIEJKA -** And when will that be available?

**Ms BEAMS -** He currently has it as a draft report which he's hoping to have available to me some time later this week or early next week.  We're very conscious that there will be a number of recommendations that we will need to make and implement in a timely manner to avoid those circumstances arising again.

**CHAIR -** Thank you.  I would like now to move to 1.2, school support services.  Do you have a question, Mr Dean, before I go there?

**Mr DEAN -** I did.  I want to know what the minister's position is on NAPLAN.  There's a lot in the press about it.  Is it of value and working in the right way and getting the results we need?  So where do we sit in relation to that?

**CHAIR -** It's actually 1.2, but that's fine.

**Mr DEAN -** Oh, it's in 1.2, is it?  I'm sorry.  I'll wait.

**CHAIR -** That's fine.  No, we're there, so I don't want to re-ask the question.

**Mr DEAN -** I haven't got lead on it though, so -

**CHAIR -** No, that's fine.  The question needs to be asked.  It doesn't matter who asks it.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** As minister I support NAPLAN.  I also support its evaluation based on continuous improvement.  I believe we need a national benchmark exercise, if I could put it that way, so our jurisdiction can compare with other states.  I believe that is important.  I believe there is a focus on literacy and numeracy in NAPLAN.  There may well be other areas that you could measure as a result of an evaluation, and some sort of formative assessment.  I am not in favour of dumping NAPLAN at all.  I believe it is a very good tool, albeit evaluation and continuous improvement would be of value.

**Mr DEAN -** Of what, of that program you're talking about?  Of NAPLAN?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Of NAPLAN.  That may well lead down the track to some other formative assessment, that's some way down the track potentially.  What I'm interested in is the roll-out of Gonski 2 where we measure the growth of students in over a 12-month period.  So while students might receive their traditional A, B, C, D or E in their school reports, that is a measure at a point in time.  What I'm interested in is students that might be, for want of a better word, D students throughout their school life.  What I'm interested in, where I believe David Gonski was going in his report, was measuring the growth of the student over the 12 months.  So it's not just about getting a D one year and a D the next year.  It's about what has the student learnt and how has their learning evolved or improved in the last 12 months.  Measuring that also important because of the need for students to be more confident in their learning to gain personal growth and to have a system where we can have more opportunities to support the students' self-worth and self-esteem so they are more confident in the learning environment.  That's what I'm interested in.

**CHAIR -** Are you saying to the committee that it's not necessarily about the reading rates for a year 7 and year 9, and I take you to the table on p.71, the budget paper No.2, where year 3 and year 5 are actually increasing - slightly, but increasing which is good, but yet the reading rates of year 7 and the reading rates of year 9 have actually decreased.  Are you saying it's more about their growth and their confidence than actually being able to meet the NAPLAN testing requirements?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I'm not saying it's more about that.  I'm saying that it's important to measure the growth irrespective of whether a student's A, B, C, D or E, let's categorise them in that way for the purposes of this.  Clearly the Government has a strategy towards literacy and numeracy and that must continue.  I'm aware of the marginal improvement in NAPLAN overall in Tasmania over the last 10 years, which is good.  The discussion has really been generated because NAPLAN's now 10 years old, as I understand it.

**CHAIR -** So is it out-of-date?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I don't really think it is.

**CHAIR -** It's not, in your view, but we're not actually getting the gains at the bottom end or the higher age group?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I wouldn't say it's out-of-date, but what we might see in future years is an improvement in the years 7 and 9 NAPLAN results because the focus and resources have been in the early years it's more work being done in the early years.  Now, that's been going on for some time.  The previous government had the initiative for child and family centres which were excellent.  Launching into Learning was another previous government initiative which was excellent.  We've built on Launching into Learning with our Learning and Families Together Program which is the kindergarten to grade 2 literacy and numeracy initiative and bringing in parental engagement as well, which is important.

Our other literacy strategies we're developing which I'm wanting to see improvement in is the years 7 to 9 area which was a particular focus of ours four or so years ago.  This is why we had the literacy and numeracy specialists in our schools, some 25 focusing on those grades to try to lift those results overall.

**CHAIR -** But sadly it hasn't lifted them.  They've dropped back.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** In individual circumstances, yes.  I know it has been really valued, but I'm mindful of the results and we have some way to go.  I will never be an Education minister that says we've solved all the problems.  We do have some way to go in this area, but in terms of NAPLAN it's a measurement.

**CHAIR -** So there is a review of the NAPLAN?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** The ministerial council did support a limited review.  It wasn't a full-blown review and it wasn't supporting a scrapping of NAPLAN either.  My understanding is that it was a more limited review supported based on continuous improvement.  To see how NAPLAN might be improved but what can be more useful in terms of the formative assessment tool, and that's that, to support teachers in real time to understand where students are, and where they need to go next within a particular student's ability.  I guess the criticisms of NAPLAN have been that the results are received - people undertake their NAPLAN in May.  I know I present certificates to the 1 per cent who are top of the school.

**CHAIR -** Been there and been part of that.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Which I really enjoy doing.  It's fantastic to see parents being enthusiastic, and guardians proud of their children and the children proud of themselves.  The schools can be proud of their students as well, but it is six months after the actual test, and so one could argue that if it was a real time, some sort formative test in real time, then the teacher has a greater ability at that time to support the student in the classroom when areas of need are identified.

**CHAIR -** They've gone to another class by then.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** And that's some of the issue, NAPLAN's a tool.  It's not the be‑all and end-all, but it's useful to know where we sit in the national context.  If there are better ways down the track that's fine.  It is 10 years of NAPLAN.  It was a Gillard government initiative and it's interesting that people such as me supporting NAPLAN and other states, Labor states around Australia are not supporting NAPLAN.  So it's interesting from that point of view but I am supporter of a national benchmark so that we know where students are at, notwithstanding I fully appreciate that for some students it can be a demanding and stressful exercise.

**CHAIR -** Right.  So if that's a half-baked review –

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I didn't say half-baked.

**CHAIR -** Well, I've used those words.  It's not a full review, so in the 1.2 school support services, there's the service that Tasmania has for the Learning Services and Education Performance and Review, so is that a full review of all schools or is that something that we're only doing, you know, just slightly?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** No, we would never do anything slightly.  We do reviews to do it properly.

**CHAIR -** Right.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I can say that.

**CHAIR -** Well, on a national -

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Well, no, -

**CHAIR -** Not a full review.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Not really, no, we're focusing on particular areas of NAPLAN.  Oh, Education Performance Review is the name of the branch we have in the department of Education.

**CHAIR -** Right, but would that be undertaking a full review of schools and the outcomes for students?  Is that what that area does?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** To do with NAPLAN?

**CHAIR -** To do with their achievements, really.  It's all about their growth, as you said, and it's all about their attainment, and their level that they are working at.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** So the school review is a very important part of a system-wide school improvement strategy that is committed to improving student outcomes.  A 2018-21 model differentiates the type of review a school participates in based on the level of support it needs.  The new model has an explicit strategy for ensuring schools that need extra assistance receive it as a priority.  A score review process will determine scores for the different review types every year by considering the performance data contained in the school improvement report in consultation with relevant learning services, staff and the executive.  This process is called the Annual Improvement Assessment and is inclusive of all school and child and family centres.

The school improvement report will include a comprehensive data set showing school data across time with key measures on how a school is performing both individually and indeed against similar schools.  The report will also include a broad range of metrics including NAPLAN; NAPLAN gain scores; performance indicators in primary schools, that's PIPS; kinder development check; satisfaction surveys; attendance; direct continuation, retention and attainment rates.  These reviews are undertaken by a review team over a two to four day site visit, depending on the size of the school; the score on the chair of the panel will establish three enquiry questions at a pre‑review meeting that they will focus on.  This will be the focus of the review and a panel will engage all relevant stakeholders to provide two to four key improvement strategies for the school to incorporate into individual planning.  Where applicable, a system support will be provided to implement the strategies.

2018 is a pilot year with a small number of approximately 20 schools trialling the new review process.  The new model includes two full-time equivalent new school review principal positions, a fixed-term for four years and funding for the two positions in 2018 and 2019 and will be just over $300 000.  The guiding principles of the review is to support improvement in schools.  Now, there's a differentiated enquiry-focused, evidence-based data and research, and aligned and connected, so partnership learning services, for example, and quality assured.

**CHAIR -** So is that process different to the service quality assessment visits - there were 84 undertaken in 2015-16, and 67 in 2016-17 - is that a different process again?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** That's the Education and Care Sector.  I will get Ms Burgess to talk about that.

**Ms BURGESS -** That's the assessment and rating process that's undertaken by the Education and Care Unit within the department using the national quality framework and the national law.

**CHAIR -** This is another process on top of –

**Ms BURGESS** - This is a process specifically for schools to provide the support required to ensure that all of our schools are in a position to improve their performance.

**CHAIR -** Is that a duplication of some of those areas, minister?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** No, I don't because one is specifically to the Education and Care Sector, so child care, and the other is within schools.

**Ms SIEJKA -** My question is about the educational outcome gap for students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.  I notice that you've recorded some data from years 5 to 7.  Is the data available from other years to give a bit of a comparison?  Is it possible to have a look at that or have some explanation?  We have this year's students from year 5 to 7 available, but is it possible to get the other years or to have a discussion about some information about what the trend is with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander outcomes?

**CHAIR -** Are you referring to the one in the performance information table?

**Ms SIEJKA -** Yes.

**Ms BURGESS** - You will see the actual change in rolled out figures.  The reason the department has gone that way is because of the size of the student cohort and the fluctuation.  It is probably unreliable to disaggregate it into the year 3, year 5, year 7 and year 9.  This is a more robust measure, but we certainly at an agency level we do have that information.

**Ms SIEJKA -** Okay.

**CHAIR -** Thank you.  Mr Dean?

**Mr DEAN –** Nothing, thank you.

**Ms HOWLETT** - In relation to disability services, I know there's an increase in students with disability.  Can you tell me what the Government is going to do to support students with disability?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Thank you for the question.  Before I answer that, just to Ms Siejka's last question, and I'm assuming you might be reading from –

**CHAIR -** Table 3, p.71.  You know we read these inside out.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - That's correct.  So just to clarify:  that's the education outcome gap across years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for reading and numeracy for Aboriginal students.

**Ms SIEJKA** - Yes, Aboriginal students.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Yes, I thought you just mentioned year 5.

**Ms SIEJKA** - I did mention year 5, you are right.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I wanted to clarify.  No worries, thank you.

**CHAIR -** This is not the same question that we've already asked around disability services, is it?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - No.

**CHAIR -** Okay, thank you.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Supporting students with disability is a key priority for our Government.  Since we came into office in 2014 funding specifically located to support students with disabilities has risen from $69.4 million to the $88.85 million in this financial year and that's an increase of $20 million.  In 2018 all schools received support teacher allocations to build the capacity of school staff to maximise educational outcomes for students.  Additional funding of $3.25 million has been provided in the 2018-19 budget to progress the design of the needs based funding model and to continue with implementation of the ministerial taskforce recommendations.

So an investment of $250 000 will be made this financial year for the design and testing the new disability funding model.  The purpose of the new needs based funding model will be to allocate funding and resources to the levels and types of educational adjustments required to implement appropriate teaching and learning programs for students with disabilities across Tasmanian government schools.

The new funding model will support all schools to ensure students with disabilities can access, participate and engage in education in safe and inclusive learning environments.  This approach will be a further extension of the department's commitment to needs based funding to schools which has already been implemented through the application of the fairer funding model in both school resource package and teacher staffing formula and revised support school teacher allocations.

The new model will align Tasmania towards a nationally consistent approach to funding students with disability in line with the nationally consistent collection of data.  Levels of educational adjustment and the Department of Education's currently undertaking work with KPMG to develop this new needs based funding model for students with disability across Tasmanian government schools during March and April of this year.  KPMG conducted 11 consultation forums across Tasmania with department of Education principals and school based staff, professional support staff, parents' representatives from key disability groups, disability services, internal working group, and the inclusion advisory panel.  The purpose of these consultations was to brief key stakeholders on the proposed methodology for the funding model including funding model design principles and model structure and draw on sector reviews and expertise to understand key issues and considerations for the funding model design and implementation.

The next steps of the work will involve refinement of the model based on feedback from the consultations and quantitative analysis, further testing of the proposed allocation methodologies and a final refinement of funding allocations implementation plans.  The new needs based special education funding model will commence once we are confident we have it right.  That is the best possible way forward to support teaching and learning for students with disability.  There is a keen interest from other jurisdictions on the work we are undertaking, and we are sharing information with others on this.  In addition to the implementation of the new needs based funding model, we will also be dedicating funding to support a nurse in each support school and provide speech pathologist resource support of 0.2 full-time equivalent in each child and family centre.  This recognises the importance of the services and guarantees that their provision will be ongoing.

We are committed to providing high quality inclusive education for students with disability and of course continue to work with and listen to the families of students with disability to ensure our schools are disability ready and responsive to meet the needs of individual students.

**Ms HOWLETT -** Are those funds available this financial year?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Yes.

**Ms SIEJKA** - Excellent, thank you.

**CHAIR -** Comprehensive answer there, minister.

**1.3  Early Learning**

**CHAIR -** Mr Dean and then I am going to go to Ms Armitage.

**Mr DEAN -** How certain are we that we are targeting those children in those early years which are really disadvantaged and need to go to these early learning schools.  I take some of my areas, the Ravenswood for example and so on.  So how can we be assured that we are getting to those kids and we're getting those kids at three years of age and into these early learning programs?  So what are we actually doing –

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - There's a number of initiatives we have in place, and I mentioned, of course, our Child and Family Centre at Ravenswood I've visited.

**Mr DEAN -** It's a great centre.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - It's a great centre.  They are Launching into Learning program, families together, literacy and numeracy initiative.  You'd also be aware of our new targeted initiative for three year olds initiative that will join what is quite a suite of quality early learning programs provided to Tasmanian children and will be a great start with their lifelong education, and to help improve social health and wellbeing and economic outcomes for the state.

Our plan to take education to the next level is to enable greater access to early learning and support and strengthen our early child education care sector in Tasmania and to do this from 2020.  This will provide the opportunity of an additional year of pre-school to Tasmanian children who are experiencing vulnerability.

This will be offered when children are three in partnership with the early child education and care sector and will provide free access to quality pre-school programs for eligible three year old children and the working together for three year olds initiative is around $10.5 million each year.  Additional funding will also be provided on an ongoing basis for administration of the initiative.

The funding is there to provide subsidised access for eligible children in quality early learning through a service endorsed to deliver this initiative and primarily in the ECEC sector or in a school in some specific circumstances.  The initiative will continue to be co-designed with the early child education care sector and other key stakeholders.  A first round of co-designed workshops were held in November last year in Launceston, Davenport and Hobart with key stakeholders and feedback received through these workshops which has been invaluable in forming the approach to design and develop the initiative.

We also have our B4 Coalition and our 8‑year‑old strategy as well, and also our hubs and our CFCs also working at outreach in Burnie.  We trialled an additional teacher full-time equivalent to fund and work with families that still were not accessing government early childhood services and we found that over 50 families and have worked with them to connect them to services.

Your question was also about the gap.  We've trialled a gap analysis, would you call it that, or not quite?

**Mr BULLARD** - Basically it is a different approach - rather than say who's coming through the door at Burnie CFC, say who isn't it.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - So we've gone out and tried to find who isn't, and for whatever reasons they aren't accessing and –

**Mr DEAN -** Sorry, minister, the other part of that question is the Education department should know the number of kids say in Ravenswood, Rocherlea that are three years and four years.  They should have those statistics available to them through all the systems they have, so they ought to have a good idea.  They then ought to have a good idea of how many of those children are, in fact, accessing the early learning services that we have in grade 3.

So my question is, how many are?  How many are not getting there because it's those children that are not getting it that ought to be there.  We know that we have dysfunctional families sadly, and that some of those children are missing out on the opportunities that others get.  So that's my concern.  This was raised in the select committee inquiry we did into child and family centres.  These figures kept coming up all the time, and a lot of these kids were missing out and not getting there.  So what has been done and what impact has that inquiry had in relation to the Education department?

**CHAIR -** The data being brought together from the Health department into the Education department to understand the numbers of children that are in every area and who's coming to the early education centres and who's potentially not.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I'll write an answer in terms of Burnie trial, but I seek advice from the secretary in this matter.

**Mr BULLARD** - There are a number of things that we're actively working on.  At a state level and local government level we mainly have ABS data so we know the number of 3‑year‑olds that exist and we know the number of 3-year-olds that are accessing our program, but we don't necessarily know who it is that aren't accessing our program.  We only get the identity for a child once they start in our program.

**Mr DEAN -** That's the important issue, isn't it?

**CHAIR -** It used to be Kids Come First.

**Mr BULLARD** - Kids Come First still didn't track the individuals, so that gave us population level and local government data.  There's a number of activities that are going on.  One is actually trialling different ways to find those families.  As part of the Working Together for Three Year Olds initiate, we're working with TasCOSS because we know that they have very close relationships to families that aren't accessing any of our services and our question to them is how can we encourage and support those families to access the Working Together for Three Year Olds initiative when it's up and running.

**Mr DEAN -** This is a great program, but those kids will make it anyway.  Most of the kids that are going to these programs will make it anyway.  They'll do quite well.  It's that other group that -

**Mr BULLARD** - The difference, Mr Dean, with Working Together with Three Year Olds is that the minister announced it would be for the most vulnerable, so in fact we assume that it's for the 40 per cent that we know aren't currently in long day care or in education and care.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - One area of responsibility being involved in is to identify barriers as to why and how to ensure that there are no people missing out on this initiative and that's where we're playing a key role, among other things, as I understand it.

**CHAIR -** We will go to Ms Siejka and then I'm coming to Ms Armitage because yours is a follow on question in this, is that correct?

**Ms SIEJKA** - Yes, it is in a broad sense.  It is to do with the child and family centres, some of the things that are offered there for early learning sounds quite similar to the early learning hub.  Is there an explanation of how they distinctly differ or overlap?  An explanation will do.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - With respect to the early learning hubs, it's about, where possible, to have child care provision and kindergarten to grade 2 all on the one site in collaboration with the early child and education and care sector to maximise the early learning environment for families.  We've mentioned child and family centres and the support and services available to young children through child and family centres.  The latest child and family centre census snapshot showed there were 21 759 visits made to CFCs in one month and you've identified the report of the legislative council and confirmed the excellent work that has been done by CFCs.  It also indicates there is room to improve service delivery to empower and engage families to give children the best start in life, and as part of our focus on that in the early years, we've increased support to CFCs and we're committed to six new early learning hubs.

The hubs will provide greater access for families to relevant early years services with a strong focus on improving place spaced service delivery to communities around Tasmania.  Services would include health, support and outreach, similar to those found in CFCs, plus they will include early child education and care facilities through partnerships with the ECEC sector and birth to year 2, educational facilities.  All to be located on a school site, and the hubs model will build on the learning from 12 CFCs and increase access to early learning through the provision of onsite early childhood education and care facilities.

They will also build on the relationships already established through CFCs and other early learning programs, early years programs including with the child health and parenting service and a number of non-government organisations.  The exact location of early learning hubs has not been decided yet, we do know that they'll be established in the Sorell, Kingborough, Glenorchy, East Tamar, West Ulverstone and Waratah-Wynyardcommunities and following the CFC model.  Extensive community consultation will be undertaken prior to construction to develop the best location of each hub and leaders from both the hubs and the CFCs will be supported to work with an evidenced informed framework to ensure best practice.

**Ms SIEJKA** - They sound quite similar in their approach.  Is it where they're located because the services sound very similar?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - The difference is the partnership with education and care sector is the key difference and on school sites would be a key difference.  The research that was undertaken probably in 2008 and 2009 around the placement of child and family centres around Tasmania was terrifically well done and identified key areas around Tasmania that would benefit the most from child and family centres. We've supported this by the allocation of the six new early learning hubs in areas, but also we value such an early learning environment.

**CHAIR -** Will any of them be built this year or are they all in the future?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Well, not this year as I understand it.

**CHAIR -** There's $2.3 million in 2018-19 but that seems to co-design the initiative in partnership with the ECEC sector.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - That's correct.

**CHAIR -** So it's just working where –

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I would like to have six early learning hubs completed over six years and we'll commence construction as soon as the consolidation and design has been undertaken.

**CHAIR -** So does the $2.3 million, is that to identify the site for the six that have been earmarked, six areas that have been earmarked or is that just for one?

**Mr BULLARD** - No, there's a range of activities to start the project.  For those of us who were around when we did the child and family centres, they will recall that there was a lot of local community engagement and working with local service providers to design how they were going to look but what was actually going to be in those child and family centres to ensure that they were meeting the needs of the community.  So we'd be looking at replicating that process.  That gives us a longer lead time to ensure that we're doing an appropriate level of engagement.  Part of it will be geospatial analysis to identify the best site that's got a number of factors to it, quantity of analysis but also what the community says they need and what works for them, and then working with the local service providers to design what is required.

**Ms HOWLETT** - You mentioned previously the B4 Early Learning Years Coalition.  Could you give us an update of that, please?

[12.29 p.m.]

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I've mentioned the B4 Coalition, and thank you for your interest.  It's a collective impact initiative that supports and connects individuals, organisations, and communities to ensure every child in Tasmania pre-birth to four years is cared for and nurtured through the early years, no matter what.  The early years initiatives such as the B4 Early Years Coalition build on the Department's commitment that together we inspire and support all learners to succeed as connected, resilient, and creative and curious thinkers.  B4 Coalition also supports the visions of the Tasmania's Strategy for Children, as I mentioned before, Pregnancy to Eight Years 2018-2021, and for children to be thriving and strong and connected to communities.  Using the collective impact approach, B4 Coalition supports and connects individuals, organisation, and, communities to take action to ensure every child gets the best start and a great start.

By now, over 185 organisations and individuals have joined B4, and it continues to be guided by our co-chairs, Elizabeth Daly and David Clements, the interim Commissioner for Children and Young People.  And, of course, 13 leaders all work across diverse sectors to raise the importance of early years, and to work together to ensure every child in Tasmania gets the great start, pregnancy to four – and their family and community.  Earlier this year, Dr Laura Garner, a paediatrician and international speaker, presented at the inaugural B4 Tasmanian business and early years luncheon.  The event was well attended by a number of Tasmanian business leaders who focused on the importance of early years and the role that business can take in supporting children through that pregnancy to four years.

B4 offers a unique opportunity to build happier, healthier lives for young children.  I thank the 13 lead members of B4 for their contribution and commitment to support young children from pregnancy to four years of age, and their families:  Elizabeth Daly, Tracey Bradley, Kristen Desmond, Kim McVeity, Dr Becky Shelley, Bronwyn Tamplin, Michael White, David Clements, Ros Cornish, Lea Lawson, Di Nailon, Simon Spain, and Dr Fiona Wagg.  So, they've all produced - ensuring everyone is working together.

Question - the $2.3 million in 2018-19 is for the design of -

**CHAIR** - You've just answered that.  I asked that question.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, but it's got here 'final question'.  Working together with three-year-olds, preschool initiative, the three and a half million in 2019-20 is for the first hub.

**Mr DEAN** - Where's that?

**CHAIR** - We don't know where it is yet.

**Mr DEAN** - They have the money set aside; you'd think they would know what it wanted.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, we're consulting.

**CHAIR** - One of the six that have been identified.  So, whichever community gets themselves together fairly quickly and gets themselves on the right side of the page will be in for it, I should imagine.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - My questions might be a little bit more difficult.  I have had a lot of concern raised by the early education and care sector.  Is it a coincidence that the government is spending millions upgrading kindergartens with apparently no plans to reduce the school age or compete with the E and C services?  So, they are really concerned that -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - About investing in the early years?

**Ms ARMITAGE** - They're concerned that while it didn't get through this parliament, the early starting age, that the Government, in a different direction, is trying to achieve the same goal in a lot of areas and they have heard that the Government is employing people on a three-year contract, and - you might tell me whether this is true - that the department of Education is employing people on three-year contracts to progress early entry to school.  They are concerned that the Government may be still going along with their agenda of early entry, but in a different way.  That you're actually going to be competing with some of these sectors.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - No, that's not true.  As I recall, of course, the EC sector – and this is why consultation is so important with the sector, and involving the early hub model and, indeed, the target initiative for three-year-olds, is because we want a very collaborative approach.  My understanding is the sector also expressed some concerns with the establishment of the child and family centres, originally, as well.  It is important to consult and work together.  There is no plans at all, and we will not be re‑visiting the earlier starting age at all.  We have found a different way and a new way, and that's the targeted issue for three-year olds - for vulnerable three-year-olds - and we can go back to the KPMG reports which identified the financial vulnerability of some centres within the early childhood and education care sector.  As part of the initiative for the earlier voluntary starting age - was to ensure that we had the facilities in our kindergartens that were up to the appropriate standard.  That involved an audit.  As a result of the audit we gained from that that some facilities needed upgrading or re‑modelling or new facilities all together.  And that's continuing.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - You can reassure the sector that it is not the Government's intention to build E and C services on school grounds?  I understood some of their services would be extended, but I didn't think you were going to build new services on school grounds, if there was an early childhood centre nearby.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Are you talking about hubs?

**Ms ARMITAGE** - No, I'm talking about the actual services after school that you actually have on some of the schools grounds.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I was at Forth Primary School the other day, in the north-west, and there is a $900 000 commitment to build a brand new kindergarten at Forth Primary School.  The department coordinated and completed audits on 151 kindergartens and compiled a list of common issues, and communications have been sent to schools outlining the initial audit findings and proposed next steps.  Of the 151 identified kindergarten facilities, the following actions were identified:  follow-up assessments were conducted at 43 kindergartens, 10 kindergartens requiring replacement; refurbishment of 18 kindergartens; minor works to 79 kindergartens; and 44 kindergartens were assessed as requiring no work at all.  So, minor works across 79 kindergartens is under way, and we'll progress through 2018-19.

This is a $15 million funding package which will support our commitment to assess the compliance of kindergartens across the state by 2020 to meet the requirements of the early childhood centres and school-aged care facilities national code.  Hubs will have some education and care provision, but it will be designed in consultation with the local providers and families.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - I've had quite a few questions from people in the early childhood sector with regards to the people being employed on the three-year contracts.  Can you confirm that you are employing people on three-year contracts to progress the early entry to school?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - But we're not.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - You're not?  Okay.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - There's not - it's been decided.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - No, I know that.  That's come through in a question to say that they had information that that -

**Mr BULLARD** - It may be that they're thinking of the eight early years' network leaders.  You remember under the Education Act that an amendment was passed to ensure that there was 'age appropriate pedagogies' from kindergarten to grade 2.  I think it was an amendment moved by Ms Forrest.  What that means is the early years learning framework needs to sit alongside the Australian Curriculum in delivery from kindergarten to year 2.  So, there are eight early years' network leaders which are working with early childhood educators in our kinders, grade 1s, and grade 2s across the state.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - And they'd be on the three-year contracts?

**Mr BULLARD** - They are on a three-year contract, yes.  But that's nothing to do with earlier school starting age; it is actually implementing the intent of the Act to ensure that there's play-based, enquiry-led learning from kindergarten to Year 2.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - The concern that the early childhood sector had and continues to have.  It's their livelihood and they have questions they feel they need to ask.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I can understand the opportunity that a ten and a half million dollar investment into their sector will bring to their sector.  There is an opportunity for the sector to have that ten and a half million dollars every year to their sector.  I would be embracing that opportunity if I was in the sector and being able to utilise Tasmanian taxpayer funds in such an important way.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Thank you.  I shall pass the information back.

**CHAIR** - One more question before we go to 1.4.

**Mr DEAN** - I'll throw in with two or three questions.  In the table on page 71 of document 2 it refers to the percentage of children meeting the kindergarten development check.  This year we have 15, 16, 17, 2.6; actual was 71.4; target 17 and 18 and 75.  What does that all really mean, and will you meet that target?  And then two lines below, there are expected literacy outcomes of prep students and what they're achieving.  How does that compare nationally at this age group?  Where does it compare?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Good question.  I will probably have to seek clarification.  In relation to national figures, I am informed there is no national consistency.

**CHAIR** - Is that because every state does it differently?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I think we're the only state – yes, probably.

**CHAIR** - We're not the only state.

**Mr BULLARD** - We're not the only state, but not all states do prep assessment.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Some of the starting ages are different in other states, as you know.

**CHAIR** - Yes, we know.  It's all over the shop.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Tim, perhaps I can get you to speak to this.

**Mr BULLARD** - So, the kindergarten development check is just an assessment of a range of measures in early childhood development of a child when they come into kinder.  So, really what that is showing is the effectiveness, I suppose, of early childhood programs.  That really is not showing the influence of things pre‑school.

**CHAIR** - Like the B4 and those programs.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Before they go to school.

**Mr DEAN** - Is the enrolment in this area then in year 3 - age three - stagnating or is it increasing or decreasing?  Are numbers actually coming in to that area?

**Mr BULLARD** - Into kindergarten, do you mean?

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, into kindergarten.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We have about a 98 per cent plus attendance rate at kindergarten, and kindergarten is non-compulsory, so it is an indication of the level of parental engagement and community engagement in kindergarten.  That is probably the best measure I can provide you.  It is higher than 98, I think.

**Ms BURGESS** - Nationally, the highest.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Nationally, the highest.

**Ms BURGESS** - But we've got population coverage data, so therefore there is some inaccuracies in the data and counting at that age.  But we're very strong.

**Mr DEAN** - So, that means that all children falling into that age group, there is 98 per cent attendance of those children into kindergarten?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Correct.

**Ms BURGESS** - Four-year-olds.

**Mr DEAN** - Four-year-olds.  And the three-year-olds?  What is happening in that area?  That was really what my first question was about.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That commences in 2020.  We're designing it now with the ECEC sector now with other key stakeholders.  That won't have those 98 per cent attendance rates more like 40 per cent because that is the cohort of students within that key criteria of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, health care, and other measures of disadvantage – for those children to be able to access that initiative.  All the while, there is Launching into Learning in every primary school as well, which is highly valued pre-kinder.

**CHAIR** - Very social, I believe, from what I hear from my family.  Now we will move to 1.4, statutory officers.

**Output 1.4 - Statutory Officers**

**Ms HOWLETT** - Minister, you mentioned earlier that the quality of delivery in our extension schools, including those in my electorate of Prosser, is ensured through TASC.  Can you provide the committee with the information on how that will occur?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I might have some opening comments, but I will ask Katrina Beams, Executive Officer of TASC, to talk about some figures here.

**CHAIR** - We probably just need answers to questions at this time.  We're not going to have as much talk, if that's all right with you, minister.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Okay, yes.  So, the work of the Office of Tasmanian Assessment Standards and Certification is critical to ensuring that Tasmanian students in all school sectors are empowered to achieve the best outcomes in their senior secondary years of schooling, including the attainment of premium qualifications and our certificate of education, TCE, and certificate of educational achievement, as well as qualifications certificates.  TASC do this through quality assuring courses and qualifications.

I am delighted to advise that in 2016, not only did we see the largest increase in TCE in achievement in history, but in 2017 we have continued to build on that success, and our TCE attainment figures have again increased with 58.9 per cent of the potential Year 12 and 13 cohort achieving the TCE, compared with 56.4 per cent in 2016.  So, an increase of some 2.5 per cent.  And prior to that - the 2015-2016 figures, if I remember correctly - was an increase of around 6 per cent.  But in terms of quality assuring courses, Katrina, could you give some more information?

**Ms BEAMS** - TASC have a quite extensive audit program, and through the audit program as well as a number of other mechanisms is the way in which we quality assure not only the delivery of courses in schools, but also the assessment of those courses.  So, we have a range of tools that we use, including face-to-face audits where we go into schools and audit their planning for teaching of the TASC accredited course, their assessment tasks, their records of assessment etc.

We have piloted last year, particularly with the extension schools in mind, a regional network model where we bring schools together and ask them to focus on - we might choose four specific TASC accredited courses - and ask them to bring along their planning resources and their assessment tasks, so they can learn from each other and we also model best practice.

Last year we implemented a desktop audit as well, where we asked schools - select schools - to send us in particular artefacts that we want to ensure that we are confident in the quality of delivery of assessment of TASC accredited courses.  Then we also have face-to-face meetings where teachers come together in September and mark students' work to ensure that - and bring along samples of work that have been marked from their schools - the appropriate standards are being met.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Katrina.

**Ms SIEJKA** - In regards to the extension school model, on the TASC website it doesn't have the levels of detail that would probably be useful.  I'm hoping that you can provide some here.  The completion data for years 11 and 12; are they available by school site?  Particularly the TCE attainment and ATAR for each of those facilities, and maybe how many students attain scores in the subjects.  The ones that are enrolled in the extension schools and also at a college to give us an understanding of the model a little bit better.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - My understanding is that that data can be made available.

**Ms** **BEAMS** - It is publicly available through the TASC website.

**Ms SIEJKA** - I couldn't find it on the TASC website.

**Ms BEAMS** - We hold direct continuation data as well as attainment data for each school, and publish it usually at the end of May, beginning of June.  It is all publicly available.

**Ms SIEJKA** - Is it by school site, as well?

**Ms BEAMS** - By school site, so you can go onto Sheffield and look at their information there.  It is, yes, publically available on the TASC website.  It doesn't have that specific course level information, but it has the aggregated attainment.

**CHAIR** - Okay, thank you.  If there are no other questions in this area we'll move to 2.1 which is information services and community learning which used to be called LINC, now it's back to Libraries.

**Output group 2.1**

**Information Services and Community Learning**

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Welcome, Ms Jack, Director of LINC Tasmania.

**Ms JACK** - Thank you.

**Mr ARMSTRONG -** Yes, that was what my question is.  I think the LINC building in Huonville was one of the first ones which came on line.  I'm wondering why now you're going away from the LINC Building to Libraries Tasmania because LINC is known throughout Tasmania as not just having library services but a lot of other services to it.  Why are we moving away from it?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Before I ask Liz to say a few words in this area, LINCs will become libraries.  They will provide the same services and more so there will be no change in terms of service delivery of what's on offer except we want to obviously enhance that service delivery over time, but we've chosen to rename.

**CHAIR -** The question is why?

**Mr DEAN -** There's a lot of criticism.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** A lot of criticism of LINCs, and there were some branding issues as well because there were other LINC services in Tasmania as I understand it, but perhaps Liz might want to speak to that.

**Ms JACK** - About 12 months ago we did a survey with clients and non-clients right around the state.  It was not a survey about the name.  It was more about understanding what people knew of LINC Tasmania, what they understood of the services and programs we offer and what they thought we could do.  We know we have a significant gap of people that come into our libraries between about the age of 18, 19, up to mid to late 20s.  The overwhelming information that came back or response that came back was, 'We don't know what you are.  We don't know what you do.  We don't understand what LINC stands for'.  I could give you numerous examples of what actually was said around that, but that was overwhelming.

There is another organisation called LINK Tasmania that's now started in Hobart.  You may have seen it advertised in television or heard it on the radio.  They are a business brokerage.

There is a young person's health service in Macquarie Street.  It's also known as The Link.  When we spoke to those people that weren't coming into our buildings, the ones from Hobart said they understood LINC Tasmania gave away free condoms and they were talking about The Link in Macquarie Street that is actually a young people's health service.

Everywhere else around the world libraries offer contemporary services which include literacy services, which include the Rock and Rhyme Story Time.  It's not just about lending books.  It's about teaching people how to use their digital devices properly.  We have the highest - the lowest digital inclusion index figures of every state and territory in the country so that's something that we do as well.  We're not doing anything different from any other contemporary library around the country but we're the only ones that have been called LINCS or LINC Tasmania.

Unfortunately when it was named there was not a lot of promotion of the change in name and I think that caused a lot of confusion in the community.  In Huonville I know there's probably more of a connection to the word LINC than anywhere else, but in most other places people ask, 'What does it stand for and why do you call yourself that?'

**CHAIR -** My follow up question is, how on earth is it going to cost $3.3 million to change the name?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Well, it's not.

**CHAIR** - It says here, 'Funding of $1 million for 2018-19 over a four-year 3.3 allocation to provide additional resources and to facilitate the name change'.  I trust what I get told here.

**Mr DEAN -** How much is in the name change though?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** My understanding is it's $250 000 for the name change and the additional funding is for more resources going into the LINC itself such as the number of books going into the library.

**Ms JACK -** Books is one side of it.   Even the $250 000 is not simply for changing signs and the name change.  From the information we achieved from the survey and through EMRS we knew we had to do more to get out to the community.  Especially to those people that are disadvantaged, at risk, face issues such as low levels of literacy and numeracy or digital literacy, so we had already planned a promotional campaign.  Changing the name happens to coincide with that, so that $250 000 is for signage and collateral but also promotion purposes which we had planned to do anyway.  The $750 000 per annum over the next four years is for a range of resources that will be aimed at getting more people through our doors and giving them a better experience.

Books is one part of it.  I've actually gone to put books on hold where I'm No.32 in the queue, so to get more books of the ones that are really popular or contemporary is one thing, but there's also resources around the whole digital space where we know that there's a gap.  If we put too many books on shelves we're not even going to have enough shelves to put them on, so you need more shelving.  You might need more staff to move the books around because we have a floating collection.  So what we're doing right now is scanning and assessing what we have and what's out there and what we need, and we will actually have a strategic means of determining or advising the minister how we think that money should be spent.

Do we have a legislative responsibility for this?  Is it part of the overall department's strategic plan?  Is it increasing access, participation and engagement?  Is it just nice to have it as an add-on or is it actually going to really enhance what we're offering and make a difference.  So they're all the things that we'll go through with every single resource that we look at to determine how much of what we should be using for that $750 000.

**CHAIR -** Is any of the staffing component increase?  Any of that funding?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** In terms of resources?

**Ms JACK -** We can't say at this stage.  It shouldn't be, but you have to understand that our staffing numbers are limited, so if we just bring in a bunch of resources and no one can, say, use the iPads to show people how to use them, for instance, they're going to sit on a shelf.  So what we want to do is actually go through and say, 'What are the implications?  What do we need?', then we would go back to the minister with that to make sure he's comfortable we're using the money strategically.  We want to be able to say at the end of four years we have - four years, we've made a massive difference.

**CHAIR -** And on the website –

**Ms JACK -** That was a promise.

**CHAIR -** It was a promise.  It was an election promise, talks about new contemporary resources.  So books I wouldn't consider a contemporary resource.

**Ms JACK** -Well, if they're up-to-date, I would say they are.  That's where the digital, the on-line comes into the equation of services.  We have make-a-spaces where people come in and design robots and understand how to code, and these are the things that we're looking at but we don't want to make some judgment without actually understanding strategically how it will impact the community, but they're all possibilities.

**CHAIR -** Any other questions around LINC centres?

**Mr DEAN -** The issue around inappropriate accessing of material and so on, I think the libraries are pretty much on top of that now, are they?  Is that the way it is, minister?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** My understanding is that's the case, yes.

**Mr DEAN -** So there's no transgressions, say, in the last 12 months?

**Ms JACK -** We're part of the department of Education's filtering system, so it runs exactly the same for us as it would through the rest of the department.  We actually educate our visitors and members on safe use of the internet and all of our libraries are called eSmart libraries because they provide that advice and guidance.  That said, we have collections that we're all about free access to information, so there will be some material on the shelves that you might call it explicit and others might not, *Fifty Shades of Grey*, for instance, but in terms of on‑line access we are covered under the department's policies and filtering system.

**CHAIR -** Mr Farrell, quick question and a quick answer because we've got to go off in two minutes.

**Mr FARRELL -** Libraries of old used to be very good at servicing fairly remote regional areas through the bookmobile service, even though there's probably not a great demand for books in regional areas any more.  Some of the services that you're providing, or planning to provide, would be very welcome in regional areas.  Has any thought ever been put towards how you get into those regional areas away from the larger library buildings?

**Ms JACK -** Are you happy for me to answer?  It's always been a challenge and we've spoken briefly with the minister about how we do that.  Some of it is, if they've got their own computer at home they can digitally access services.  If they're ill or unwell or have a disability we still do our home delivery service, but we have looked at other ways that we can engage with or reach more people.  It's still in the early days.  We are doing that through the community managed OAC so we don't run the service, but we have $450 000, I think, that's spread out across on-line access and is around the state so people can come in and access those services.

We have one book kiosk that we're about to trial which is something where, with the new membership cards that we have, if you remember, you can come and swipe at the kiosk, take your book out and return it to that kiosk.  That's one of those contemporary services.  We've only got the one kiosk, and in the last storm the power actually mucked up the electronics, but that's something that we are looking at because we think that's an easy way where we're not increasing staff numbers.  We have a kiosk there.  You still need someone to deliver the books and pick them up, but it might be something that works.

**CHAIR -** Thank you very much.  Minister, we have to call it quits because Telstra have some work to do.  I'll suspend until 2 o'clock, so thank you, and then we'll complete Education at 2 p.m.

**The committee suspended from 1.00 p.m. to 2 p.m.**

**CHAIR -** Welcome back everyone.  We are ready to commence our afternoon session.  Thank you very much.  We didn't quite finish off the education section, such a big part of the Tasmanian Government's budget.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Yes, it is.

**CHAIR -** And so we don't apologise for taking extra time to scrutinise this area.

**1.3 Skills Development**

**CHAIR -** I invite Ms Armitage.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I invite Angela Conway to the table.

**CHAIR -** Welcome to the table, Angela.  Thank you for your patience.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Minister, it has been recognised that Tasmania will need 5000 more tourist workers by the end of the decade including up to 800 to service Hobart's new hotels.  Do you believe enough training's been provided for services growth industry and what actually are we doing to provide these extra staff that will be needed?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - In terms of hospitality, yes, that is a very good challenge to have in terms of the grown in hospitality and tourism in recent years.  I know we are not on TAFE specifically, but we have some investment in that area.  We have also closely aligned industry with Drysdale as well, but also when it comes to tourism and hospitality, the sector is receiving support, $5.9 million has been allocated to support 2000 training places and 606 apprentices and trainees were in training or in training as at 31 December 2017.  So my view is that we have the resources but will be demand driven in many respects and we'll keep in very close contact.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Are we assisting small businesses to train new workers as well?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Yes.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Is that to do with TAFE or is there more funding for those for the small businesses?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - We've got grants - both TAFE together and small business grant as I've said to encourage trainees apprentices or encourage businesses to take on trainees and apprentices.  So for the 2017-18 year, the results of the pilot program which is a $5 million small business grant pilot program, and when I look at how that's broken down into industry sector, first the pilot program has supported over 1300 Tasmanians in new apprenticeships and traineeships for small businesses, and while the pilot program is not restricted to priority or targeted industries, the table that I'm just about to highlight to you, shows that industry areas – they were supported through the pilot program.  That includes tourism and hospitality, 215 apprentices; building and construction, 504; agriculture, 48; engineering, 30; automotive, 52; children services, 25; and hairdressing and beauty services, 79 apprentices.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Are the education systems involved as well?  I can remember when my boys were at school, we had the work experience‑type thing.  Do we still have the schools participating?  What is it called now when they can actually be involved in work‑related training?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - We have a career education program called My Education from kindergarten to grade 12.  Schools are encouraged to closely work with industry to provide students with industry experience, as I understand it.  We also have a very good partnership with the Beacon Foundation in a number of schools as well.  Of course, the Beacon Foundation is - I won't say in the middle necessarily - probably at the early beginnings of the particular program supported by the Paul Ramsay Foundation.  That support is targeted towards schools in need as well.  I launched one of the programs in George Town or one of the schools, George Town, in the last 12 months or so.

Collective education program with the Beacon Foundation is what I was referring to, so that's a five year co-investment partnership and it's about exploring and doing something different.  That something is determined in partnership with the school, community organisations, business philanthropy and government to achieve shared goals for young Tasmanians and the collective impact approach that's been rolled out.  There's a $10 million commitment from the Paul Ramsay Foundation and a $5 million co-contribution from the Tasmanian Government, and indeed State Growth over five years.

**CHAIR -** How much does the Beacon Foundation gain in support from the state government, the quantum?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - There is $250 000 each year over four years for the Beacon Foundation but there are the broader commitments.  Paul Ramsay are supporting Beacon to the tune of $10 million.

**CHAIR -** So the Paul Ramsay Foundation gains $10 million and out of that $10 million, $250 000 per annum is specifically to the Beacon Foundation?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - No, in addition.

**CHAIR -** In addition?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - The state government contribution was five between State Growth and department of Education concerning that particular program.  In addition to that, there is $250 000 each year over four years, so $1 million, that comes from Skills TAS budget.  As I understand it.

**CHAIR -** All right.

**Mr DEAN -** One question of this if I could, thanks.  A student works, say, at Rocherlea.  Where does that work in with skills development here because they are getting a certain understanding of a number of skills.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - As I understand it, Ed Zone and Space are supported by the department of Education as opposed to Skills TAS.

**Mr DEAN -** A great organisation.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - It is.  I visited there earlier on in my tenure as Education minister because there was some feeling that that might well be under threat, which it wasn't.

**Mr DEAN -** Should I support them financially and –

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - It certainly wasn't after I visited and got the understanding that you would have in your local patch of the value.  I think Cheryl Thomas –

**Mr DEAN -** Cheryl Thomas been there as the chair for quite a long time.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - That's right.

**Mr DEAN -** She is doing a wonderful job but they're getting a lot of skills in hospitality.  The skills in a lot of areas as well.  I am wondering where that fits in with this.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I thought they'd built a construction focus as well.

**Mr DEAN -** All of that as well, but hospitality as well, in cooking, they do a lot of that.  Quite a big involvement in it so.

**CHAIR -** So one more question in this area.  Ms Howlett, thank you.

**Ms HOWLETT** - Minister, representing Prosser which is predominantly a large rural area, can you provide me with any information on rural and regional skills initiatives?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I thank the member for her question.  As you'd appreciate particularly with Prosser, Tasmania's regions are unique and have a different industry demographic and business mixes which means one size fits all approach doesn't work.  So the government though the Department of State Growth is supporting regional development through a range of initiatives including recent workforce planning reports with South East Regional Development Association, Southern Central sub-region around the Brighton area and the Break O'Day council and we'll continue to work closely with identified growth sectors in our regions to maximise job creation and economic growth, in particular the business economy and Agribusiness.

In July, the government launched a $4.1 million jobs action package in employment partnership with TasCOSS and the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.  This partnership has recently been embodied in a memorandum of understanding between TasCOSS and the TWCCO and outlines a commitment to work in four regional communities with businesses and local people who are looking for work to build capacity to take advantage of employment opportunities and job seekers in rural and regional Tasmania of course are a priority.  With 60 per cent of projects funded under the Training and Work Pathways Program being delivered outside the city local government areas, the recent round of skills funds will provide training opportunities in regional communities including close to 100 places to be delivered out of the trade training centres in regions such as Dorset.

At the same time, TasTAFE continues to progress its TasTAFE Education architecture project focusing on increasing access to its products and services, regardless of physical location or learning style and capacity and this includes updating resources to meet student and industry needs such as welders and nursing equipment for example, and these are significant investments that target our rural and regional community as per question and pave the way for helping support individual's access for education.  So I thank you for your question.

**Capital Investment**

**CHAIR -** Moving on now to capital investment.  If there are no questions on grants and subsidies, and I might add, that the budget papers this year very clearly outline the grants and subsidies and they're allocation of funds.  So we won't be asking questions for the sake of asking them, but I would like to invite Mr Dean to opening the question on capital investment.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I will invite back to the table, Mr Rob Williams.  Thank you to Angela Conway.  And Jenny Burgess come back to the table –

**CHAIR -** Minister, we have noted that next year we'll move skills and development closer to TasTAFE.  It just was in that order on our sheet.  So we will amend that for next year.

**Mr DEAN -** A question on the Queechy funding and I think there is, in this budget, another $2.5 million but that was identified in the previous budget so it's just a continuation.  There's nothing in the forward budget so I take it that's the end – I think it was $5 million originally provided, so that's the completion, is it?  That's it, the $2.5 million and if that is so, minister, will that bring Queechy up to a reasonable standard, if that's a word I can use.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - It will go a long way, $2.5 million.  The school community always has the opportunity to speak with the department and the facilities team to identify any other needed projects to ensure they do have contemporary learning facilities.  I will just clarify that cash flowing for you in the $2.5 million.

**Mr WILLLIAMS -** Yes, it is half of $5 million.

**Mr DEAN -** So the other half was used previously, is that what you're saying?

**Mr WILLLIAMS -** It's underway.

**Mr DEAN -** That's underway now?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Yes, $2 450 000 I have here in this budget, Mr Dean.

**Mr DEAN** - Can I just ask, the further part of that question is, will that take care of the gymnasium, the change rooms and the facilities and the showers in that area?  The people who use the gym and so on refuse point blank to use them because they're dirty.  They would be an Occ Health issue I would think.  Will this money be fixing that as well?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Todd Limbs of our facilities team would know the answer to that question.

**Mr WILLLIAMS -** I don't think it is, but I will check.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Mr Williams doesn't believe it is, but we will check.

**Mr DEAN** - If you would.  So he might come back today or notice.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I would like to put it on notice.  I am happy to give you a more itemised account of what the $2.45 million would entail.

**Mr DEAN** - What does it entail in this current $2.5 million that's there that you know of?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I can detail that for you on a question on notice.

**Mr FARRELL** - Just expanding on from that, being on the Public Works Committee previously, and there's been quite a lot of work done through many of the schools, is there a priority infrastructure list that the department works through that may be that might give us some idea of –

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - There is a priority works, yes.  The name of it escapes me for some reason.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Capital Investment Program.  There's an internal one and then there's the SIRP as well.

**Mr FARRELL** - Yes, it might just help because every school you go to seems to have urgent infrastructure needs.  It would be a very interesting exercise to see how –

**Mr DEAN** - This has been on the books for five years.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - There is a process and how that might happen and you visit schools and it was great to go to Norfolk for the day and see the outcome of the redevelopment there which was much needed when I first visited there in 2014.  Rob can talk about the process if you would like.

**Mr WILLLIAMS -** There is an annual process where we ask schools to identify their needs and there's an assessment that's done of each sort of submission that comes in and we ask for major ones and minor ones.  What happens after that is Learning Services people help us with our facilities people, sit down and assess the needs.  We use a set of criteria and they're all about learning.  There's a series, capacity of the school is one of the high priority ones, safety and then it goes down a list of criteria.  We reassess those each year so some schools that might be lower down the list, move up each year and then I guess, it's a matter of what funding's provided.  What the minister talked about the SIRP, the strategic infrastructure process through Treasury where we put in the broad list of all the things that we know are things that need to be done at some point.

**Mr FARRELL** - That comes out of an audit process done by the department?

**Mr WILLLIAMS -** Yes.  The process we use for assessing each year –

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - The kindergartens as we spoke about before, as a result of an audit process.

**Mr WILLLIAMS -** I can confirm that the gym isn't included in the $5 million that's being spent at the moment.  The priority was making sure the classrooms were fit.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Mr Dean, the gym is not part of the $2.45 million.  That would be an additional request needed from Queechy.

**Mr DEAN** - That was a part of the original request.  Minister, if you go back through the documentation, I was involved in that at the instigation of parents asking me to have a look at it, which I did, and I think there was contact through your office on that.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I visited the school myself in about 2014-15 and I've been back a few times over the last four years for various reasons but not to look at the infrastructure per se.

**Mr DEAN** - It has been there a long time now so this is where the issues arise.  I have difficulty talking - I need to get your authority obviously to do that, I suppose, to go to the principal at least.  I can talk to parents and friends.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Whenever I get an email from any staff or any member of either party or individuals and they want to visit schools, that's an automatic yes from me.  I encourage people to go to schools to look at their various needs.  To Mr Farrell's point before, there is a lot of need in terms of infrastructure improvements around the state and there is prioritising that goes on.  I can go into most schools probably and they will point to a need.  As such, the gymnasium no doubt is a need, but it might be more pressing to invest in Tasman District School, for example.

**Mr WILLLIAMS -** Certainly Queechy gymnasium is on our list, but as we prioritise things on the basis of safety and learning, those things have come first across the state, with a fixed budget that we've got for maintenance.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - But we're working our way around the state.  For example, Smithton High School received a new gymnasium about two and a half years ago and then a redevelopment of about $7 million and that's Smithton, for intents and purposes, completed.  Parklands all seem to be completed, and so as we get through all the schools then other areas sort of come to priority.

**Mr DEAN** - Brookes would be in that category as well.  They're well and truly satisfied, I think.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I don't want students to be in second class facilities, if I can put it that way, with gymnasiums.  I am not sure where it is on the list, but I will take an active interest in it.

**Mr DEAN** - Thank you.

**CHAIR -** On the list of capital investment programs, there's six of them that have been announced that don't have any funding - some of them 2020 others, 2021 and others 2022.  What are you going to announce next year if you've already announced all these but there's no funding?  I mean obviously its forward Estimates, I understand that, but actually announcing them when there isn't any budgetary money for them quite a way out -

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - In the forward Estimates it's budgeted for and it's a matter of when we can cash flow that to be commenced in that sense.  So some schools may start later in the forward Estimates and in some cases may be completed outside the forward Estimates and will come into the forward Estimates say next year, but it's a matter of cashing flowing and prioritising.

**CHAIR -** I know every government wants a lot of good news stories when they announce their budget and I've been here long enough now, but the Legana Primary School, there's no money until 2021-22.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - That requires some planning and I've sat down with the general manager of West Tamar and the mayor and we had a discussion about Legana Primary School, talking about its location and community consultation and so we make sure we get it right.  Brighton is a similar example to that.  We want to make sure we consult with the community about the Brighton High School as well.  I am loath to build and develop infrastructure that doesn't have strong community support, given that a lot of the schools that we've renovated in recent times, Parklands, Kings Meadows, Riverside, all built in the early 1960s and not much has been done since, and I am not saying we're not going to redevelop Brighton High School in 50 years' time, she's all over red rover when it's completed, but we do have to work with our communities to make sure we consult, on location and all these type things.

**CHAIR -** The revitalising of the Cosgrove High:  that money is not in the budget until again 2021-22.  So you won't have to consult with the community about revitalising anything.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Yes, in six months' time it's 2019.  So not too far out.  I accept it is 2021-22, but there's a lot of work to be done in preparation.

**Mr BULLARD** - We're taking quite a different approach to the major redevelopments such as Brighton and Legana and Cosgrove as well.  It's no use just building facilities that are the facilities of old fashion education, so part of the work that we're going to be doing as a department is working ‑

**CHAIR -** I don't know, a bit of that worked okay.

**Mr BULLARD** - It worked all right for me, but anyway.  But we really want to engage communities about what modern education looks like.  So part of it is about doing the work about what we're going to deliver as well as doing the work about how the buildings are actually going to be configured and look.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - And it's a commitment to education in terms of resourcing for infrastructure and people, is over six years, so I accept that, and that we were very upfront about that at the – prior to the last election when we made the commitment and that's why we have a commitment of 250 teacher over six years and 192 teachers will be delivered in our schools over the next four.  And capital is not too dissimilar in that sense.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** I'd just like to ask you about East Launceston Primary School.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Yes.  It has been a long drawn out –

**Ms ARMITAGE -** We're aware of the serious overcrowding at the school.  But I'm wondering what the Government is actually doing to alleviate the concern of the neighbours, particularly with regard to traffic and other issues.  I am sure you're aware that there are several groups involved with concerns to do with the school.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - That's a good question we say about traffic –

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Traffic has been a major – even as it was, traffic was a major issue before in development.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - That's right, and it is important to get the right learning facility, but it's also the impact on traffic.  This is one of the discussions I had, even at Brighton, just a few weeks ago, with Mayor Tony Foster and the general manager, Ron Sanderson about where we place the school and the impact on traffic flow and safety of students and everything else.  So it is important, but it's a $4.5 million commitment.  It was made in the 2016-17 state budget for the provision of new kindergarten facilities, general learning area, staff and support facilities and a multi-purpose facility at East Launceston Primary due to complexities at the site and the need for extensive consultation and there has been extensive consultation and indeed, a lot of opinions with respect to this matter.

There has been a delay in commencing the project.  Funding of $4.3 million is now budgeted to be expended in 2018-19.  The Launceston City Council planning process included a thorough traffic impact assessment from both council officers and an independent traffic engineer, and council has agreed to include some short‑term drop off parking as part of the proposal, and in January 2018 the Launceston City Council approved a planning application for the proposed development on part of the East Launceston oval owned by the department of Education.  Some local residents appealed this decision.  The Resource Management of Planning and Appeals, RMPAT, however the planning approval was upheld, following an agreed settlement through RMPAT mediation which included the provision of safety barrier fencing, seating and a playground to replace what is to be lost through the kindergarten construction.  Detailed design work is now underway with a view to release a tender to secure a construction contractor in the coming months, so that is the information that I have to date, and when I say to date, the beginning of May this year, I am so hoping for some progress soon, but certainly when it comes to traffic –

**Ms ARMITAGE -** I know people who live nearby who have actually sold their house because of the traffic, the current traffic issues and the perceived traffic issues that are going to occur with the rebuild.  Was any consideration given by the Government for purchasing some of these houses when they came up for sale to actually to do the development because the houses are obviously on the same side as the school?  Has the Government considered at any time buying some of these houses and perhaps using that land rather than across the road?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Mr Williams.

**Mr WILLLIAMS -** Look, it was one of the number of options that were put forward during the process.  One of them is there's a church hall up the road that was becoming available.  But on both accounts the school association and the school decided that that was not an optimal outcome to split the school.  Certainly the funding that was provided didn't provide for the purchase of the land, and that would also have been a demolition and things like that.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Some of the houses were actually adjoining the school on Oxford Street.

**Mr WILLLIAMS -** And out of the four and a bit million dollar budget, if we had to pay a significant portion for a house in that area, which is a high price sort of area, it would have diminished the education facilities we could have provided.  So the hall was out because it split the school.  The houses because they didn't really suit how we wanted to develop it, but also we didn't have the money, so we would have actually had a much lesser outcome for the kids of the school if we had to buy the land.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Is something happening across the road with the current building that's there?  Is that being demolished or changed or altered, the red brick building that's across the road from the school?

**Mr WILLLIAMS -** Part of the deal is that we'll actually enhance those facilities so that they'll become available for the community to use as part of use of the oval which we encourage, but also enhance because, if you've been into them, they're pretty –

**Ms ARMITAGE -** I have, at their fair.  They always use it for the fair.

**Mr WILLLIAMS -** They need a bit of attention, so part of this process, we're going to commit to upgrading those over time.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Will there be an overpass from the school?  I was just thinking of the children crossing that really bad road, narrow, small, busy with cars.  Has any consideration been given go an overpass for the children going across.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Not that I'm aware of, Ms Armitage.  I can look at that.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Just think for safety reasons for the children crossing that road which is pretty awful.  Any time you happen to drive up there it's really single lane by the time you get around parked vehicles and the narrowness of it.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I understand.  I will follow that up.

**CHAIR -** I know that East Launceston is a school that is desirable to attend.  That would be fair to say.  When the out‑of‑area policy is in place, will that mean that the numbers might pull back a little bit on the East Launceston –

**Mr DEAN** - Punchbowl's down, so that could take a lot of these students.

**CHAIR -** So is that happening?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - We're not having strict zoning policy.  The maps are produced as an indication and people are encouraged to go to their school they're zoned in.  But as I said this morning, that can change a bit depending on the work –

**CHAIR -** If they have a sibling there, or work.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Work of the parents and guardians, et cetera.

**CHAIR -** So effectively the zoning system will mean not very much at all.

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - No, it means a fair bit.

**Mr BULLARD** - We do have a policy in place, we are not changing the policy.  We will review the boundaries so the catchment area, and there is a balance in the policy that's in place at the moment between facilitating the needs and desires of parents but also looking at capacity.  So we're much stronger where schools are at capacity that they can't take children from out of area.  In the past, that's been approached differently depending on the school.  That's something we have actually looked at in the new policy recognising that it just leads to capacity issues and therefore infrastructure issues in the school.  The boundary review gives us another opportunity to look at the mapping and modelling in the ABS data to make predictions about future demographic growth and by changing boundaries for schools we think that we can also influence the movement of children and young people between schools.

**Mr DEAN** - My question is on the East Launceston Primary School as well.  Minister, you would be aware that there's been a lot of conjecture about where the new development is going to take place and as to who is the real owners of that land that the school is going to be built on.  Please detail the process undertaken to ensure that due diligence was observed when investigating the land parcel proposed for development and which makes a part of the East Launceston Parents and Friends Reserve?  Is the land available for constructing school buildings, given that in 1932 the minister passed it over the Parents' Association to be used as an integral part of the recreational ground for all time?

So there are questions about the ownership and I can inform you, minister, that there is currently some work being done through the Lands and Titles and other offices and through the library, I think, to get all of the data in relation to this land to identify whether or not it is available to the Education department for the building of a school.  Are you able to answer those questions?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I can explain that when it comes to the department, it has been very thorough in assessing all options before deciding on the preferred option.  This has included consultation with the school itself, the school association and Parents and Friends, and listening to feedback and suggestions provided by the community members.  So people have been well consulted.  The proposed new kindergarten is to be constructed on land owned by the department of Education where an existing playground is located on the edge of the oval and next to the pavilion facility.  A new playground will be provided as part of the facility, and the remainder of the oval property is owned by the Parents and Friends Association who I understand support the development.

**Mr DEAN** - Is there any part of the oval currently that's being taken for this development?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Taken?

**Mr DEAN** -I mean, is any part being used for the development as a change in –

**Mr WILLLIAMS -** That was one of the considerations early on as to how land swap might occur between the department and the Parents and Friends.  They were very positive about that, and in fact, intend to go through with a swap which means that the P&F will end up with the actual oval in their full ownership, whereas at the moment, a quarter of that oval belongs to the department.  So we'll actually re-align and that change rooms along the side, will transfer to the Education department so that we can upgrade it, because we wouldn't normally upgrade something that was not our property.  So there's a re-alignment and the Parents and Friends Association is 100 per cent supportive of that and have been all the way through and they're very supportive of the way we've planned to put the kindergarten in the corner and not disrupt the oval itself.

**Mr DEAN** - I've got other questions.  I will put them on notice.

**CHAIR -** I know East Launceston is important but it can't take up all of our time.

**Mr DEAN** - But if I just get some clarification on that point.  So it is accepted, is it, minister that the owners of some of the property that this new development is to take place on, was, in fact, in the ownership of the Parents and Friends?

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - I've stated here, the remainder of the oval property is owned by the Parents and Friends Association who support the development.  That's what I'm advised.

**Mr WILLLIAMS -** Minister, where the kindergarten is being built is on department of Education land.

**Mr DEAN** - Totally?

**Mr WILLLIAMS -** Totally.  Yes.

**Mr DEAN** - So I will put them on notice.

**CHAIR -** Thank you.  We have one more question in this area and then we're going to TasTAFE.  The most anticipated.

**Mr DEAN** – I don't have anything further.  Only on East Launceston, that's all.

**CHAIR -** Thank you very much.  We're going to move to TasTAFE so if you need to change any of your team.

**TasTAFE**

**Mr ROCKCLIFF** - Everyone will change and I thank the Education team for their diligence.

**CHAIR -** Thank you very much for everyone who has been in attendance for the best part of the day.  Minister, before we start on TasTAFE, Ms Siejka would just like to make an announcement.

**Ms SIEJKA** – Because I was on the Board of TasTAFE in the last financial year, I thought it would be best to exclude myself from this session to protect the integrity of the committee so they can ask freely.  I will remove from this particular session and come back.

**CHAIR -** Thank you very much, Ms Siejka and Mr Dean.  Minister, will you introduce your team?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I'll introduce Jenny Dodd, our new CEO of TasTAFE, and Scott Adams who is the chief financial officer for TasTAFE as well, and welcome to both.  Chair, thank you.  TasTAFE remains Tasmania's largest registered training organisation and the state's only public provider for vocational education and training and remains an integral part of our education and training landscape.

TasTAFE has a statutory authority set up under the Training and Workforce Development Act of 2013 and as Minister for Education and Training I have responsibility for TasTAFE along with a broader training and workforce development system including the purchase of training.  As members of the committee may be aware, the last 12 months have been intense, formative and a regenerative period for TasTAFE.  At the outset I would like to thank TasTAFE staff who have helped implement significant changes in the organisation and continued to deliver outstanding training to students across Tasmania and it has not been an easy time, but I acknowledge their hard work and commitment across that period.

TasTAFE remains on a continuous improvement journey, and in turn we should all continue to support them.  I feel positive about TasTAFE and its future.  The depth of commitment the staff feel towards the organisation does give me great comfort.  They see firsthand the value of their work in the Tasmanian community and how education attainment can motivate and lift individual self-worth and value.  Right now in Tasmania there's never been a better time for individuals to upskill, to gain meaningful employment and become an active participant in the workforce or in their community, and TasTAFE remains perfectly placed to make that happen.

The improvements at TasTAFE across the last 12 months have been very important, and have included senior staffing and structure changes, upgraded its business service operations, revised risk management strategies and governance arrangements, and an improved focus on academic delivery standards.  We have seen an organisation start a transformation.  I acknowledge the work of Mr Mark Sayer as interim CEO, Mr Nick Burrowes as outgoing chair, and Ms Nicola Morris as interim chair who helped guide TasTAFE through those initial changes.

The transformation has not been without disruption however.  However, we are now in a much stronger position, and I'm confident about the fresh start for TasTAFE.  For example, our significant investment in new infrastructure will help guide the supply of apprentices and trainees in key training industries.  We are providing TasTAFE financial security through our minimum funding guarantee of 70 per cent of the state training fund allocation.  We have made two outstanding appointments with ex-auditor general Mike Blake joining as chair of the board and Ms Jenny Dodd as chief executive.  Our agenda for accountability and governance is clearly being guided by Mr Blake and Ms Dodd who bring us a wealth of vocational education and training experience to shape the academic oversight required which his critical as the organisation heads towards re-registration this year - later this year.

There has been positive news on apprentice and trainees, not least of which includes fantastic success at the recent World Skills Event held in Sydney.  We've also continued to see great results in the student outcome surveys and in 2017 results showed, for example, that 81 per cent of TasTAFE students are employed after training compared to 77 per cent nationally; 93 per cent of students would recommend their training compared to 91 per cent nationally; and 86 per cent achieved their main reason for undertaking the training compared to 84 per cent nationally.  As noteworthy is the fact that all indicators measured by the employers surveys have increased from 2016 to 2017, including satisfaction with TasTAFE's customer service believe that training will improve business productivity and recommending TasTAFE to others.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, feedback indicates that staff are very keen to move on from the negative publicity of last year, and they want to embed the recommendations of the internal audit.  They want to see the organisation become the best it can, and whilst the cultural legacy of Tasmania Tomorrow forms it is not something we can brush aside, it is important to acknowledge the motivation of the majority of the TasTAFE workforce remains true and committed.  I see a much brighter future for TasTAFE.  Our agenda will allow teaching teams to deliver the best training possible for their students in Tasmania and I look forward to a positive 12 months ahead.

**CHAIR -** Thank you, minister.

**Mr DEAN -** Obviously there was an immense amount of damage done to TAFE.  Public confidence is still not satisfied that things are right, and if you talk to people out there they'll say the microscope is still on TAFE, TasTAFE, to get it right and get it moving in the right direction.  So my first question comes from that independent audit where it recommended a whole host of changes be made within TAFE.  So what changes have been made in accordance with those recommendations, will they all be implemented or are there reasons why some won't.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** My expectation is that all recommendations will be addressed and adhered to and acted upon, and my expectation is that all recommendations will be completed by December 2018, and I understand your question about brand, and I'm very mindful of that.

My view is that Tasmanians really want TasTAFE to succeed and they value their public training provider.  A public training provider is probably more important in a place like Tasmania than any other state, given a lack of decentralisation outside our capital city and the fact that in some areas of Tasmania without a public training provider there's probably very limited training given to a limited number of people.  So some recommendations have been acted upon already.  I can, Mr Dean, throw to our CEO, Jenny Dodd, for further explanation in that area.

**Mr DEAN -** Could we be told of the recommendations that are now in place?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** There were nine areas, wasn't there?

**Ms DODD** - Correct.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Nine key areas –

**Mr DEAN -** Different key areas, right.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Of the audit report from WLF Accounting, and so each is a very important section.  Ms Dodd will have an update on how we're going with each section.

**Mr DEAN -** With each one, if you could, thanks.

**Ms DODD** - Thank you.  So there were nine specific areas, so if the committee's happy I'll work through them.

**Mr DEAN -** As long as it's not expansive.

**CHAIR -** Yes, I was going to say, we need them fairly succinctly.

**Ms DODD** - So the first is recruitment and selection and there's been substantial changes made to the recruitment and selection process.

**Mr DEAN -** That's to staff, of the staff within TAFE?

**Ms DODD** - Yes.  Recruitment and selection of staff which includes salaries.

**Mr DEAN -** Is it?

**Ms DODD** - It includes a review - yes, it includes where people start on the salary rung, and one of the most significant changes to recruitment and selection is the quality checking process that is now in place in terms of selection reports.  That is well underway.  There are other components as well that we are reviewing and putting in place, but that I think is one of the most important.

The second is around use of government credit cards.  We've now launched a significant piece of training, plus changed process, internal process about how internal process works, and all senior staff and those who use credit cards are now required to go through some training.  That was launched last week and is now underway.

**Mr DEAN -** Can we just stop, if you don't mind.  I want to ask a question on credit cards.  You have about 200 credit cards and I'm going by what you said yesterday in the *Sunday Examiner*.  So far you've taken away 30 and there's more on the list which will probably be taken away.  It seems to me to be a very basic thing, how to use a credit card and what you can use a credit card on.  I think that TAFE is now just now going through that process, so how many credit cards are likely to remain in TAFE?  Do we have any idea at this stage?  That's a very important part of that audit.

**Ms DODD** - I can pick that up, minister.  The number of credit cards is large and it needs to come down, so we're aiming to reduce it down to about 100.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Just under 100.

**Ms DODD** - Just under 100.

**Mr DEAN -** So basically half.

**Ms DODD** - Half, so we have 30 gone and we're now reviewing that.  What's important about your question in many ways is the need to be some renewal for how procurement occurs.  That's what we're have under way and streamlining some of the procurement.  How it's paid then is through a credit card process and that doesn't need a zillion people holding credit cards to do that, and that's the piece of work which is currently underway.  At the moment credit cards holders have been required to undergo the training.  So that's the second.

The next one is around travel and entertainment.  Similarly we've just released some training and what's appropriate and what's not appropriate in terms of entertainment.  Entertainment was one that perhaps people just lost sight of what was appropriate on that one.

The third one is around personal benefits and this is a big area for TasTAFE in moving forward in what is okay use of TAFE equipment.  We've been very specific about TAFE equipment - nothing goes off-site.  Everything must be on-site.  If there are some reasons why some equipment is used for a training purpose, that's being examined very closely with an approval process in place.

The next one is around conflicts of interests.  In January when I arrived we had five conflicts of interest.  We now have 115 declarations of conflict of interest.  That's really important in people understanding the importance of declaring the conflict of interest and then we work through that conflict and put in place an appropriate mitigation processes.

The next area is around procurement, and I mentioned that a little bit in the credit card process, how goods and services are being procured, and this core piece of work that Scott is doing under his role as our new chief financial officer.

Remuneration, you did ask the question prior around remuneration, it too is being - we're well under way with the recommendations around remuneration in terms of salary progress.  We've got some work to do, in particular, on our teaching enterprise agreement component.  That is a key project that will take place in the next few months, but more generally across the service remuneration is now adhered to under the State Service principles of where people start and how they progress through the progression.

**CHAIR -** If somebody's already being paid over and above what they should have been previously, is there any way of pulling that back or is it once somebody has that salary that you can't pull it back?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** That's a good question.

**Ms DODD** - I can answer that.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** And Ms Dodd can answer that.

**Ms DODD** - There was evidence that there had been an overpayment.

**CHAIR -** Substantially I'd suggest.

**Ms DODD -** I'll just phrase that.  I can't discuss complete individual areas and so there are –

**CHAIR -** Generally.

**Ms DODD -** Generally.  There are a couple in the public record that were at a senior level and most people within Tasmania are aware of those, but of those who are in our workforce, where we've examined if there was an overpayment there has been some move to recover some of that.

**CHAIR -** Okay.  There wouldn't be any paying back of those though.  It would just be as from that date there's a new salary in place.  Is that correct?

**Ms DODD -** There is a very small number, indeed only one, and then we have asked for some repayment.  It is not a large sum of money.  The large sums of money have been exited from the organisation.

**Mr DEAN** - Have you covered all the recommendations now or not?

**CHAIR -** No, sorry, I interjected.

**Mr DEAN** - No, you're right.  No, it's good to ask on the way through.  Saves coming back to them.

**Ms DODD -** That's all right.  And then the last one is around misconduct.  We've only just received that so not many of those recommendations have yet to be implemented but they are well underway as well as what needs to happen in government and policy frameworks.  We have a couple of new positions in place.  We have put in place a new position that will look after policy and procedures and general resource management because that clearly was an absence of support for our people.  The other position that is in place that Scott is currently recruiting for is a whole of organisation policy and procedure framework position.

**Mr DEAN** - One more question if I can before you go.  Minister, where does the board fit into all of this?  I was of the view, with information that had been received, that the board probably didn't fully understand its responsibilities, what it should be doing and not doing, so where does the board fit in now?  Do we have we the right board in place?  What is the position of a board in really knowing what it should be doing?  We have people stuck in board positions and you ask some of them and they really can't tell you what their real roles are.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Governance is extremely important.  I cannot think of a better person to be the chair of a board at this present time than Mike Blake, the former auditor-general, to ensure recommendations are thoroughly acted upon.  I did give a date of December 2018.  We have a number of new faces on the board.  The board has certainly learnt a lot as a collective about their experience over the last 12 to 18 months and in governance and making sure that these recommendations are delivered in an appropriate and timely manner.  A thorough manner is I know very important to the TasTAFE Board, as is the re-accreditation of TasTAFE as well.  So there's a lot of work to be done, and in that sense now, are we shedding light on the board's governance arrangements.

**Ms DODD -** Would you like me to give some details on the board?  Our chair is Mike Blake who has been fantastic –

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Mike Blake, Nicola Morris, Michelle Swallow has been there a little while, Aaron Devine, Ray Mostogl.

**Ms DODD -** Janelle Alison.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Janelle Alison, from the University of Tasmania, ex.

**Ms DODD -** And a current vacancy that is being recruited for, specifically looking for financial skills to support the process.

**CHAIR -** Do we have a quantum, a figure, on what the TasTAFE debacle, if you like, cost the Tasmanian community?  Did we have some payouts, did we have redundancies, did we have moneys that were owed through that process?  Do we have an amount?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I'll take that on notice.  There is a cost to the audit which we can provide as well, and that includes what ongoing audits are going to happen or take place over a period of time.  I can take on notice - would you like to be a bit more specific?

**CHAIR -** The former CEO, and then a number of other positions that have now moved on, was there any financial cost to the Tasmanian community in their roles following what was exposed as being –

**Mr DEAN** - The misuse of the credit cards was one where there was a cost to the public.

**CHAIR -** That's right, so there were a number of issues that were brought out through a very public process.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Yes.

**CHAIR -** I'm just interested in what that quantum has been aside of the audit process.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Yes, okay, would –

**Ms DODD -** So the audit process is here.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Yes.  I can get that detail for you if you would request that on notice.  The possible completion of the audit is expected to be approximately $250 000.  That includes an annual allocation as I said of $90 000, and equipment, expenditure commitment of approximately $160 000 for the additional services required from the audit.

**CHAIR -** Right, but there were no moneys paid to those people that were part of higher management, if you like, of TasTAFE.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** In case of the former CEO which has been well publicised, the payout there, which was in line with the CEO's contract, was signed as I understand in 2013 –

**CHAIR -** I'm asking what was the quantum.

**Mr DEAN -** Even with proven misconduct - I think that's the question people have asked, the payout, with mismanagement or whatever it was.

**CHAIR -** So is there a quantum available?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I haven't got a quantum of that today but I can provide that on notice.

**Ms DODD -** I can make a comment about the credit card usage in that, while there was some misunderstanding, when the audits were looked at there wasn't significant misuse, if you like.  Misunderstanding, so if we use, for example, the number which has been quoted in the media around fuel usage, that was a misunderstanding largely that credit cards weren't to be used.  My observation of some of what happened within TasTAFE as some one relatively new is, many of the staff didn't know the correct policy and procedure.  That's what had to be really tightened up so that we're driving real clarity of education of our employees so we look after them in a way they don't get it wrong and we don't have misuse, which was not really any way that has been –

**CHAIR -** Not intentional.

**Ms DODD -** Not intentional.

**CHAIR -** So in other words, because somebody else was doing it, then it was just the culture that everyone else would do the same thing.

**Ms DODD -** A degree of misunderstanding and lack of education about what was appropriate and what was acceptable.

**CHAIR -** Okay.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Which is part of the recommendations to address to make sure that all staff are fully informed.  We have 800 employees at TasTAFE or thereabouts as I understand it.

**Ms DODD -** That's correct.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** And so we need to make sure that everyone is fully aware of their responsibilities and what is in and what is out in terms of appropriate expenditure and credit card usage.

**CHAIR -** Still appreciate that quantum that was actually attributed to those who have departed following the TasTAFE matter.

**Mr DEAN -** And when you talk about lack of education, though, somebody's got to be responsible for that.  Somebody must have been responsible within the organisation for not having delivered the proper education in the use of the credit cards.  It's all very well to say that they weren't educated, so someone's got to be responsible for that, surely to goodness.

**CHAIR -** You wouldn't receive it without obviously –

**Mr DEAN** - That's right.

**CHAIR -** No one's going to hand you a credit card without a list of something that –

**Mr DEAN** - That's right.  There's got to be some checklist though.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** There were a number of gaps, Mr Dean, which are now being –

**Mr DEAN** - I had one in the Police department and I know what I had to go through when I got minute in the Police department, you know, to sign documents to say you used it and all the rest of that, for goodness sake.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Yes.

**Mr DEAN** - It's a basic thing.  It's nothing complicated.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - I notice *The Examiner* newspaper did a pick up the tools campaign earlier and one of the issues that came out was the public perception and understanding of VET and TasTAFE pathways.  One of the north-west employers said while he believed TasTAFE did a good job with what they had, more support was needed.  I think TasTAFE does a great job, but people don't seem to rate the trades very much and we need to change the conversations we've having in the community.  I appreciate that we're talking about universities and we're talking about courses, but often we don't talk about trades.

So what actually are we doing.  What are the governments doing, and TAFE doing particularly, to let people know that, yes, you can go to university and you can do your courses, and yes, you can stay to year 12 and that's fabulous, but many of these young people say, 'Hey, you know, I'm starting in year 12.  I could have started' - and I appreciate if they get a job they don't have to stay to year 12.  They can do an apprenticeship, but what are we doing to tell people out there that it's great to go to university but it's also very good to get a trade.  Even Tas Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Michael Bailey said he believed there's a lack of understanding in the community about what a TasTAFE qualification could offer.  So what are we going to do?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I take those criticisms on board and in the focus of our 11-12 high school extension program there's been - the discussions that I made a comment this morning about elitism effectively is that, it's all about ATARs and going to university and those types of things, and it's actually not.  It's about people being engaged in education beyond year 10 and yes, some people will have years 11 and 12 and move on to university.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - And some people will have 11 and 12 and go into a trade.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Absolutely, and I'd encourage that.  In my Infrastructure budget alone, we need people in both to be trained by vocational education training, and I'm very mindful that emphasis needs to be readjusted.  It is absolutely a legitimate and worthy career.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - So are we looking to put that out there.  I know for my own sons, I made my boys stay to year 12 even though two of them have trades which they felt was a terrible waste of time, but from my perspective doing year 12 was important in case you changed your mind later on.  But what is the Government doing?  Are we doing something to put out there.  We spend money on all sorts of areas putting messages out.  Are we putting a message out that a trade is very important?  At the end of the day if we don't have tradesmen, we're bringing them in from other countries.  We need to grow our own tradesmen as well.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I totally agree, Ms Armitage.  You've identified what the changes of the Education Act coming in 2020 will deliver in Certificate III Vocation and Training.  Now, TasTAFE hosted around 500 students at its campus in May this year for creating My Career it was called.  The event is a partnership between TasTAFE, the University of Tasmania and the Department of Education to give students a chance to explore clear options, and they hear from industry and take part in practical activities.

I believe that the work we're doing in reinvesting in capital infrastructure firstly in the Agricultural Centre of Excellent in Burnie and the Trades Water Centre of Excellence in Clarence Campus is an example of the government's commitment, and indeed TasTAFE's commitment to recognising vocational education and training and how important it is.  It is important.  We cannot have everyone going to university and expect $2.6 billion worth of infrastructure to be built over the next four years, totally agree with you, and I'm very mindful of speaking of vocational education and training in a very positive way because it is a very positive career that you can have.

As to the TasTAFE in terms of its own promotion more directly, Jenny, do you have anything further?

**Ms DODD -** It's been a national problem for some time.  It's not exclusive to Tasmania by any stretch of the imagination.  With the uncapping of the university places, so came aspirational desires and opened access for people to go on to higher education qualifications.  One of the really good news stories in Tasmania is the growth in apprenticeships.  That is evidence that people are actually making a positive decision into the trades.  I absolutely support your comment that in the world that we now live in the advantage of year 12 with a trade is really very important for life-long opportunities to be able to grow and have the education you need for the future, not just for the present.  I think the apprenticeship numbers are very strong.  That's a good thing.  We've got a lot more to do as you so rightly say to grow those numbers adequately to service the economic arena.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Are we putting money into the promotion of the trades as we are in other areas?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** The Department of Education and Training's very aware of this and you'll recall the 9 to 12 review was all about multiple pathways to year 12 which include vocation and training as well as more traditional pathways.  The department of Education clearly strongly supports vocational education and training pathways as being legitimate options for many of our learners.  I've also mentioned our My Education Program as way of developing career and industry engagement within our K to 12 school system.  I don't doubt we can do more, Ms Armitage, and I'm very mindful of that, and we are doing a lot.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - It's just all about balance, that's all.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Yes, it is, and that's what we're about.

**Ms DODD -** Can I make another comment?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Yes.

**Ms DODD** - We have a new executive director, Business Growth and Major Projects.  He started today.  His role will be to build a marketing campaign appropriate to the various market segments that we need.  This, since I've been here, has been some areas that we need to be putting a lot more energy in, so we're looking forward to working in a new way to engage across the segments that we need to be engaging in and you're so right, Ms Armitage, we need to be growing.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Thank you.

**Ms DODD** - Trades is a really viable career option.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - I know chefs in the state are very short on.  Thank you.

**Mr ROCKLIFF-** Ms Armitage, we have given ourselves a clear target and commitment in this area so you and others can keep us accountable to this.  We're committed to increasing the number of apprentices and trainees by 40 per cent by 2025.  This will take obviously a concerted effort by government, industry and employers as well.  Ms Dodd mentioned the national trend which saw declining apprentice and trainee numbers since 2013.  This hasn't been as pronounced in Tasmania as Ms Dodd indicated which is good because our decline in Tasmania in percentage terms has been a lot less than the national trend.  In fact in 2017 Tasmania recorded a significant increase in trade apprenticeship commencements.  The investment in capital in the Trades and Water Centre of Excellence in Agriculture will - and our guaranteed funding commitment to TasTAFE of 70 per cent of their training budget - be more than that at the present time.  The nine to 12 review and the recommendations there will address concerns that you legitimately have.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Thank you, minister.

**Mr FARRELL** - Yes, you mentioned Burnie before, and I wondered if TasTAFE was still part of the memorandum of understanding with the UTAS Transformation Projects in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie.  Does it have any implications for TasTAFE and has its relocation of current campuses been considered?

**Ms DODD** - Thank you for the question.  The transformation project is exciting and a great opportunity.  The more UTAS and TasTAFE are working together will be to the benefit of our students.  One of the pieces of conversation we have initiated, not in Burnie at this point of time but in Launceston, is around the importance of nursing facilities.  So that we're building state of the art facilities.  Building them once but utilised in multi-purpose environments.  So we put that on the table with UTAS as one of our principle needs in terms of Launceston.  That's a really important beginning of some of those conversations of how we maximise the investment infrastructure.

The second one which I would like to highlight is around water and trades.  We have invited the university to be part of our thinking around what the development of that water and trade facility looks like, particularly their dean who is overseas at the moment.  We have that started that new conversation with their new provost just working with us in some of that development work.

Yes, the skills of the future will require less perhaps segmentation of what is vocational education and what's higher education and much more ability to be more fluid across those various opportunities for tertiary education.

**Mr FARRELL** - Thank you.  I had a second question but it's answered on the water and trades.  So thank you.

**Mr DEAN** - A recent media statement in *The Examiner* of 20 June 2018, asserts that the Australian Education Union was saying that TAFEs are under threat because of funding, that there's not sufficient funding really, government and federal government funding, to keep them afloat.  They say government funding cuts have left the TAFE sector perilously close to collapse.  Minister, what do you say in relation to that?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I disagree that TasTAFE is in that category.  I wonder where the union was in 2012 when there were significant changes under the Labor federal government, and indeed state government when they brought in contestable funding in VET loans, VET fee loans and all these sorts of things.  Notwithstanding that, they're passionate about TasTAFE as am I in terms of the Australian Education Union.  We have guaranteed funding in Tasmania of 70 per cent minimum of our training budget.  If I could put it that way, and with significant capital funding increases we have signed the Skills national partnership with the federal government which will deliver almost $32 million over the next five years into vocational education and training in Tasmanian.  I think it is $31.5 million, close to $32 million.

So I will disagree – there might be a national context to this given where the declines of apprentices and trainees demonstrates since 2013.  We're sort of bucking that trend a bit in Tasmania, which is good, but there's no time to rest on anyone's laurels here.  We would welcome any support from the federal government.  Nationally, as I say, there has been some changes and not without turmoil in the VET sector of which I believe TasTAFE is well positioned to not only ride through but keep going and building on the existing good work they're doing.

**CHAIR** - Last question?

**Mr DEAN** - I think you've partly answered it now but is getting the right numbers of people out there, that we're getting the right numbers of apprentices trained in the right areas.  As to how close we're working with businesses, TAFE at this present time, I am sure that you're able to entice those people into those areas of where there's a shortage.

**CHAIR** - A new position started today.

**Mr DEAN** - Yes.  A lot of people don't want to do some of these jobs, so I'm not quite sure how you do it really to be frank with you.

**CHAIR** - Incentives.

**Mr DEAN** - You're right, incentives is one way to do it, and to start at an earlier stage, probably through the school process somewhere to get people thinking in that right direction.  So what's happening to get the people into those areas where we've got all of these shortages?  I've got a plumber here and he made that statement only recently that he had to look at going to the mainland to get a job in the apprenticeship that he took up, that he wanted, because there was no work here in Tasmania.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Plumbing is a very good example, because the Master Plumbers Association came to me as a group about 12 or so months ago and talked about the need for better training facilities in Tasmania, so it would encourage new apprentices.  So I visited the existing training site at Claremont and realised that it could be improved, which is why we've got the Trades and Training Centre of Excellence underway now and a bit of consultation to go there.  That will be a very good position for it because of the accommodation facilities to account for north and north-west students as well.  Accommodation is a very important part of encouraging people to take up a traineeship.  They're away from home, so it's important they have a secure accommodation environment to be at when they're training.

In terms of someone having to leave to the mainland - given where building and construction is at this time in terms of the growth, the need for skills such as these, the capital expenditure for TasWater - I don't see a problem in people wanting to stay in Tasmania in a particular trade such as plumbing into the future as per your example.

**Mr DEAN** - I took that from the paper; it was in the paper.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, and everyone has their various reasons, but suffice to say they will have the best of work and training environment in the new Trades Centre of Excellence.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - You will remember this when you were talking to one of the plumbing groups last year when many of the plumbers that were doing their courses had to go to Devonport of a night to do it, and then it was changed that they could come back to Launceston, because they were heading to Devonport after they finished work at 4 o'clock or 4.30, doing their course and then later that night having to drive back to Launceston.  So it was appreciated by the group that it was sorted out that they could do these courses in Launceston.  Will that continue or will it revert to how it was?  There was a particular group of plumbers that were actually doing it and it was getting very difficult for them to move up to their next level because they just couldn't manage to be going a couple of nights a week to Devonport, coming back finishing late, getting up the next morning, doing their course and going off to Devonport.  I want to make sure that what's in place now, what was put in place last year to help these plumbers move up to the next level, is still going to be in place.  Is it going to revert to them having to go to Devonport to do their course?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I remember the example.  It probably took a little longer than I would have hoped to sort that out.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - There were about 18 or 20 of them from memory.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It's being sorted out.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - I think our friend Andrew Foley may have been involved in helping to rectify the issue.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Mr Foley was and he was part of the discussion as well in terms of the need.  I hope I've got the person right.  I'm not aware of any change in policy.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - I would just hate to see it go back to what it was and that it does continue how it is now.

**Ms DODD** - There's been significant investment in technology support, in particular for plumbing.  There is some ability to put Prowise machines and they're able to be accessed across the state, which is a really good development.  My other understanding on a particular example, is about post apprenticeship training as well.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Yes, it was, it was moving to the next level so that they could become employers, a lot of them, and move on.  What was being offered at that stage was practically dangerous for them to have to travel after work to Devonport, and come back late at night in winter.  I wanted to make sure to check with you that it will continue that they don't have to do that course.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We'll check to make sure that.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - What's in place then stays.  Yes.  Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.  Mr Farrell, second last question.

**Mr FARRELL** - Just a general one, following the substantial disruption through the TAFE debacle.  I was wondering how the staff and the student population are coping with it now.  Has it settled down and started to move on?  It must have been a fairly difficult place to be in.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, I spoke to a number of individuals as I saw them on trade stands or the people that I knew in the TAFE system and the audit process and the events run in the Integrity Commission were very unsettling for the staff.  As you would appreciate they take a lot of pride in what they do, and Mr Dean's point, first no one likes to see the TasTAFE brand suffer.  My understanding is that some of the staff surveys are positive in this area and perhaps I can go to Jenny now to shed some more light on it.

**Ms DODD** - I think people are ready to move on.  They want to invest the learnings and get it right.  There is a real commitment within the organisation.  We're focused on working through what's a critical piece of work for us at the moment, just preparing for our re-registration as a registered training organisation.  We've established an academic port that didn't exist before.  We have a new learning and teaching committee that begins on Friday.  So some of these change processes are really engaging our people in how we are developing as a learning and teaching organisation that is focused on vocational education and training to deliver for Tasmania.  Our people are right behind that.  Yes, some people certainly were hurt by what happened, but that was then, we've got to move on.

**CHAIR** - Mr Dean on a very important area for anybody who is taking up a trade.

**Mr DEAN** - Apprenticeship fees.  If we look to New South Wales and what they are currently doing there where thousands of aspiring tradies will be able to sign up for free apprenticeships under a New South Wales government plan.  That will apply to any apprenticeship and the courses are taken at TAFE and in that state non‑TAFE courses as well.  Do we see there's a place for that here, minister?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - So free to the students?

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, absolutely free to the students.  What is the cost of a student undertaking a TAFE course?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I imagine it's dependent on the trade itself.  There might be some variability there, but –

**Ms DODD** - The majority of the students at TasTAFE who undertake an apprenticeship are sponsored by their employer.  So while that policy initiative is to be commended the impact on the student is actually quite marginal really.  It's really an impact on their boss.

**Mr DEAN** - So can we have the cost to the employer?  What's the cost to an employer for a plumber or a electrician?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We'll take that on notice.  We might also overlay the grant the employer would also receive and highlight the net effect of that.  How is that?  If that's possible to do that, yes.

**Mr DEAN** - Fine.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much.  If there are no other questions in regard to TasTAFE then we shall suspend for an afternoon tea break and come back for infrastructure.  We have 15 minutes.  So that makes us about 3.40 p.m.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Chair.

**CHAIR -** Thanks very much, and all the best with it, because it's a very important area.

**The committee suspended from 3.23 p.m. to 3.40 p.m**.

**DIVISION 10**

(Department of Infrastructure)

**1.1 Infrastructure Tasmania**

**CHAIR -** Minister would you to introduce your team at the table.  We have moved on now to your role as Minister for Infastructure, and you might have a suitably brief statement to share with the committee.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Yes, I'll make sure it's brief.  On the table with me I have Mr Gary Swain, the Deputy Secretary Transport, and CEO of Infastructure Tasmania, Mr Allan Garcia.

**CHAIR -** Who we all know very well.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Our 2018 budget delivers an unprecedented $2.6 billion infrastructure investment.  But not only our roads and rail, but also health, education, housing, and law and order.  This will create more than 9000 jobs as projects roll out around the state over the next four years and beyond.  The budget includes a significant $1.1 billion for road and rail upgrade to deliver a better, safe and more productive transport system for Tasmanians, including $121 million for the Bridgewater bridge, to start the development of this $576 million project which we expect to complete by 2024; our funding to match the federal government's $59.8 million commitment to tranche 2 of the freight rail revitalisation program; $53 million for the Launceston and Tamar Valley traffic vision, which includes funding to make the Mowbray connector safer and to start the West Tamar highway upgrades; $50 million towards our south-east traffic solution program; and $51.7 million in the budget for our roads package support for the visitor economy.

We continue to work towards the vision of driving on our roads - driving down our road toll towards zero deaths and injuries on Tasmanian roads by 2050.  This is by implementing actions under the zero Tasmanian road safety strategy 2017-2026 across our licencing system, road design, public information and education campaigns and through initiatives for vulnerable road users.

Increasingly Tasmania has been recognised as a fantastic place to live, and to work, to study, to do business and of course to visit, such as Dark Mofo.  As a result we are experiencing unprecedented growth and must ensure our infrastructure in particular, our transport networks are able to provide for our future needs.  We are currently investing in our infrastructure at record levels to ensure that Tasmanians can get to and from work around our state as safely and efficiently as possible.  That our businesses can get there products to market domestically, and overseas and our visitors enjoy high quality experience and inspires them.  By providing infrastructure at the right time and at the right place at the right scale requires a strategic long term approach.  To this end Infrastructure Tasmania is preparing the 30 years infrastructure strategy, informed by emerging demographics, social and technological trends, as the treasurer indeed announced during his budget speech.  The strategy will be delivered by the end of this year, 2018.

We must also deliver improvements in a coherent and sequential way, such as the approach we are taking to operate the strategic freight network between Hobart and Burnie.  Trying to find some -

**CHAIR -** Is it really important, key parts of that large breadth?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** It's pretty important.  When it comes to the Midland Highway, we're continuing our funding commitment $500 million Midland Highway interaction plan in partnership with the federal coalition government to bring the whole highway up to a minimum of 3 star AusRAP safety standard, and we're almost halfway there, and we've already seen significant improvements for road users.  We are working together with industry to respond to the challenge to the construction boom, and to ensure that industry has capacity to deliver the ambitious works program.  We're responding to this challenge by establishing a construction industry round table, the first of which will be held in the coming weeks.  We will outline a clear pipeline of planned infrastructure activity over the next 10 years to provide a level of certainty and surety to aid investment and employment decisions by industry.

This year our department has delivered a roads and bridges capital program of approximately $140 million, this is excluding routine maintenance expenditure.  This is set to increase over the full parliamentary term to an average of $200 million each year, as we work towards delivering on our long term infrastructure vision.  The ambitious program will bring challenges, but I am confident that we will have short and long term strategies to address these challenges.  Infrastructure projects require very considered consultation, planning and design and they cannot be delivered over night.  There must be a strategic approach, we will deliver the infrastructure to the next generation of Tasmanians.  To ensure we keep pace with our growing economy, rising population and increased visitor numbers, we must provide significant investment in Tasmania's infrastructure and that's what our 2018 budget does deliver, and I look forward to the committee's questions.

**CHAIR -** Thank you very much, minister.  I take you to 2.1, which is infrastructure Tasmania.

**2.1 infrastructure Tasmania**

**CHAIR -** It's a relative new organisation for the state, so I am just interested in some of the outcomes that have been achieved, and it's only at $800 000 in the line item itself.  So can we have the number of those in the department?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** The number in ITAS?

**CHAIR -** Yes.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** We have three full time staff as I understand it in Infrastructure Tasmania.  Infrastructure Tasmania through Allan does report to the infrastructure minister of the day and indeed the treasurer of the day.  It provides expert advice to the government on infrastructure priorities and issues, ITAS was central to putting forward the case for a new Bridgewater bridge and has done so successfully.  Which has recently been funded by the Australian government, and as you've said Chair, ITAS has a funding allocation of $800 000 per year across the full estimates period.

A key role for Infrastructure Tasmania is to ensure the effective coordination, planning and assessment of major infrastructure proposals.  ITAS works closely with Infrastructure Australia to promote initiatives onto Infrastructure Australia priority lists of nationally significant infrastructure projects that warrant further investigation or delivery.  The government has also asked Infrastructure Tasmania to be involved in a number of other infrastructure issues over the past year and includes; chairing the Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce, taking a lead role in the development of components of a Hobart infrastructure plan, assessing the proposal for a heritage tourist rail service in the dis-used north-east line.  Also drafting a business case to go to Infrastructure Australia for a new Bridgewater bridge, co-ordinating a replacement shipping service for King Island, and water and sewerage capital program acceleration.  So, Mr Garcia and his team have been very busy in the last 12 months.

**CHAIR -** I'll take you to table 11.4 on page 307 of the budget paper – I think it's one.  In regard to the performance measures, the proposals assessed by Infrastructure Tasmania within the required time frames, it's 100 per cent.  So it's 100 per cent; 100 per cent of what?  What's the number there?  I'm just interested in the number.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Proposals?

**CHAIR -** Of proposals assessed in the time frame.

**Mr GARCIA -** Proposals per se, we have a range of activities we are undertaking, as the minister outlined.  The only real proposal that we've had to assess this year has been the Bridgewater bridge exercise, which, for us, is about the development of a business case.  So as proposals go, we don't have a series of proposals actually presented to us in voluminous numbers at all.  More related to that is the fact that we have a work program we have actually completed within the time frame that has been provided to us.

**CHAIR -** Is that the same for the reviews requested by government?

**Mr GARCIA -** Indeed.

**CHAIR -** So probably the percentage measures are not extremely useful for us in scrutinising.  We'd rather know the number, but that will be for something that we will take up.

**Mr GARCIA -** The issue is providing some quantitative measure against some of our work problems, it's difficult.  I think we have been here before with qualitative measures which have not been acceptable, so we're trying to move towards a more quantitative model.  Point taken that perhaps some understanding of the numeric against the percentage would be useful.

**CHAIR -** Some of the members of this committee haven't had infrastructure for scrutiny, but we do have some very good expertise with us that have come over from the other committees, so we'll be able to use that.  Can I have some understanding if there's any consultancy work involved in this area?  Would this area buy in any consultancy expertise?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** ITas buy in consultancy?

**CHAIR -** Yes.

**Mr GARCIA -** Indeed we do.

**CHAIR -** So can we have that quantum for the last financial year?

**Mr GARCIA -** I don't know that we have that off the top of our head.

**CHAIR -** We're always happy to take that on notice.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Chair, we will take that question on notice.

**CHAIR -** That's fine.  In regard to the prioritisation of major publicly-funded infrastructure, you have already touched on the Bridgewater bridge, which is significantly major, and the Midland Highway upgrade.  Are there any other major projects that are being prioritised?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** In terms of Infrastructure Australia?  The Hobart City deal is ongoing as an example of work between state and federal governments; irrigation tranche 3 would be an example of a priority project.  We have committed $70 million to tranche 3 irrigation and, of course, requires, if the existing model is going to continue, a commitment the federal government supports as well as the farmers.  So an important area for ITas to be engaged in.

**Mr GARCIA -** We have nominated up a second interconnector and the Battery of the Nation projects as a priority within the Infrastructure Australia priority list as well and also the Hobart-Burnie Corridor is within our framework of priority projects which we see on the national agenda as being a project that was of significance nationally and that we actually seek to get funding for.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** As Allan has already mentioned, the energy connector, University of Tasmania STEM Precinct, in Hobart, the Burnie to Hobart Freight Corridors.  Allan has already mentioned the Bridgewater bridge.  The Tasmanian Government submission to Infrastructure Australia also proposed a Hobart light rail.  Tranche 3 irrigation schemes will be added to the priority list, as I have said.

**CHAIR -** Thank you.  Now I would like to share the questions around.  Mr Farrell.

**Mr FARRELL** - Thank you.  While you are mentioning the priority list, minister, is there a formalised priority list with items like the Northern Suburbs Rail, I think the second Tamar River Bridge, items like that?  How far into the future is that going to be?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Work will commence on the Tamar River Bridge, for example, during this term.  That is a longer term project clearly.  This will be part of our 30-year infrastructure plan, so the type of project such as the Tamar River Bridge.  This is why we are doing a more immediate pipeline of works with respect to a 10-year pipeline and then looking more broadly over the next 30 years to identify key areas of infrastructure need.  I have some more information here for you.  You mentioned the light rail corridor and the government is committed to improving public transport in a manner that recognises both Hobart's fundamental transport challenges and, indeed, recognises the state's capacity to fund it as well.  We have identified light rail as a key project as part of the Hobart transport vision.  I am informed that the cost of developing a light rail service together with adjacent land development has been estimated at around $200 million and the development of a light rail service through Hobart's northern suburbs naturally continues to attract significant interest.

Past evaluations of a northern suburbs light rail, together with advice received from ITas in 2016, highlighted the importance of land use change to the viability of the rail service, in particular the need to increase residential densities along the existing rail corridor to support the mass transit light rail service.  Higher residential densities will also help deliver broader urban policy objectives related to housing affordability and supply and improved transport accessibility.  The government recently released the Hobart Transport Vision providing a long-term framework to deliver an integrated and efficient system for moving people around Greater Hobart and light rail forms a key component of that vision.

The government continues to discuss light rail with the Australian Government and metropolitan councils as part of developing the Hobart City deal, and we have presented a Hobart light rail concept to Infrastructure Australia for consideration for future inclusion in a national infrastructure priority list and the costs identified with developing a light rail service, as I say, together with adjacent land development, have been estimated at around $200 million, as an estimate.  The final project cost is reliant on the identification of a final route and service model.

**Mr FARRELL -** Thank you.  Moving to other currently disused railway lines, there's one in my electorate, the Valley line, and there is also the North-East rail line.  I wondered what the government's position is on the use of those two particular lines.

**CHAIR -** Yes, because the election is over now, so we can get off the fence, with all due respect.  That's what had been happening.

**Mr FARRELL -** Really?

**CHAIR -** That is exactly what had been happening.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Both those lines are in various stages, I suppose.  Of course, we can add the Don River Railway to that as well.  What has been pleasing, and I will get to your question, is when it comes to the West Coast Wilderness Railway, we now have a self-sustaining model, if all continues well there which is really good news and highlights the attraction of rail as well.  I have recently met with the Derwent Valley Railway to discuss how we can provide an opportunity for heritage rail in that area and I am interested in it.  Naturally, like your community, Mr Farrell, they won't let you go until something is there.  The Don River Railway is in my community as well.

Now we've introduced the new rail access framework, which will make the process for such services to access the operational parts of the Tasmanian rail network more transparent and clear.  The Strategic Infrastructure Corridors (Strategic and Recreational Use) Act 2016 was introduced to enable non-operational lines to be used for recreational purposes or for tourist and heritage rail services while banking the corridor for the community should it be required again for railway operations or other strategic purposes.

I have discussed this topic with a number of local people in each area as well and on the North-East line, for example, Dorset Council propose the use of the corridor for a rail trail.  An alternative use of the corridor for a tourist and heritage rail service was subsequently proposed.  Following the independent review of the viability of the tourist and heritage rail service, the Tasmanian Government requested Treasury to undertake an economic analysis of the viability of the two proposals prior to a final decision being made on the future use of the corridor.  We are continuing discussions with the Derwent Valley Railway and the Tasmanian Transport Museum Society to access the non-operational railway lines for tourist and heritage passenger services.  We have committed $25 000 to the Tasmanian Transport Museum Society to finalise its accreditation process with the National Rail Safety Regulator and commence planning works, and we have also committed $25 000 to the Derwent Valley Railway for planning work to enable the rail reconstruction.  I have mentioned Don River Railway, which intends to seek access to the operational line to run services between Devonport and Penguin and the government has committed $50 000 for that purpose as well.

I have had discussions with TasRail on this and I encourage open dialogue and more open and supportive dialogue around heritage rail.  As you would appreciate, there's some hurdles around public liability and complying with National Standards and the like.  I am open to some suggestions on how we might, first, have all the public liability cover required at a cost that the heritage rail can sustain, if I can put it that way, because it's very expensive and I'm investigating how that might happen at this present time.  There is a slight difference, as I understand it, between Don River Railway and the railway you mentioned because it's more a disused line, as I understand it, than Derwent Valley.

**Mr FARRELL -** Yes, I think Don have always had their own very small section of line.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** They have, in a volunteer sense and, you know, they've got something to work with, if I can put it that way, but I'd like to see more heritage rail and we encourage that and the government has a role to play, as does TasRail, to ensure its success and viability.  With some investment, such as the West Coast, which is now a sustainable operation and is performing above expectations with passenger numbers continuing to approach the break-even estimate of 50 000 per year.  The latest figures year to date, and it is May 2018, show the operation's bottom line is almost up 20 per cent on this time last year, which is very pleasing indeed.  As I say, a self-sustaining model, we're getting there.  The West Coast Wilderness Railway, and the financial contributions starting in 2014-15 and ending in 2017-18 have a total of $18.5 million, $5 million in the first year and then $4.5 million the year after that, but it appears that contribution might not be needed in a few years, albeit we are ready to assist in any case, but I am pleased with it.  That is progressing and, indeed, the government's commitment to that heritage rail more generally in specific areas.

**Mr FARRELL -** Just to expand it out, with the Wilderness Railway now, they are covering their operational, their insurance, their maintenance, all based on - their only income, I would imagine, would be from ticket sales.  Is that correct?

**Mr SWAIN** - My understanding is they got the earlier payments that the minister has discussed for three years.  They haven't drawn all that down.  Not quite paying for themselves yet.  They are getting very close as they approach the 50 000 customer marker, but they have significant funds in the bank and I think the hope at the moment is that the numbers will come up before the money in the bank is drawn down, so that the government won't have to put additional funds in, but obviously it can if it needs to in a future budget.

**Mr FARRELL -** It was, I think, mentioned in one of the weekend newspapers that there may be a need for some funding in a year or two's time, I think the general manager stated.  I was just wondering what that would be for.  The other issue would be in the case of land slips, that type of thing.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** So capital upgrades.

**Mr FARRELL -** Capital upgrades?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -**  I stand to be corrected on that, but I want to make sure it's above all else safe for passengers, so there is some work to be done, naturally.

**Mr SWAIN -** I am not sure if this was discussed last year in this place, but the National Rail Regulator has actually held up, in this case Wilderness Railway, as the sort of showcase for heritage railway in Australia and says it's best of breed for heritage rail, but, yes, you're quite right, if there were an unexpected major event like a slip, they wouldn't have funding for that.  I would expect that would need to be dealt with as a special budgetary item.

**Mr FARRELL -** As a comment before I go on to the next question, that is a good thing because the Wilderness Railway was held up as an example as to why you wouldn't encourage any other tourism railway in the state because of the cost of running it, so that's a nice turn around to hopefully encourage the other groups to look at their operations.  I am happy to leave rail for a little while, but I can always come back.

**CHAIR -** Minister, given what you have just indicated in your response to the member for Derwent around heritage rail, can I take it that there's been a shift in attitude by TasRail to supporting heritage rail?  That hasn't happened very much in my understanding in the past.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I am sensing a shift in that, Chair, definitely.

**CHAIR -** I'm sure that's very welcome from a number of organisations that have been keen enthusiasts of heritage rails.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** When I have met with TasRail, heritage rail has always been on the agenda and they are enthusiastic about supporting our election commitment and I do sense a shift.

**CHAIR -** That's very encouraging.

**Mr FARRELL -** Can I -

**CHAIR -** I know that you will want to make some comment, so can you make it a question?

**Mr FARRELL -** Looking at the turn around in the West Coast Wilderness Railway, which is a passenger-carrying railway in a remote location compared to TasRail, which is a freight-carrying railway on, you know, a reasonably easy bit of infrastructure, is there some sort of model that TasRail may adapt about their management because I think the West Coast Railway is essentially run by a general manager where TasRail is run by quite a large organisation?  Is there something that the government might take from that moving forward about the costs of running trains?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I will take that as a combination of a comment and a question.

**CHAIR -** That's probably wise.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Clearly they are two different beasts, if I can put it that way, but whatever we can learn to be efficient providers of a freight service while maintaining the highest of safety standards, then we will be open to any ideas, suggestions or model that allow us to continue to do that.

**Mr FARRELL -** Lovely.  I'll rest for a while.

**CHAIR -** Ms Armitage, did you want to ask your question around that fast train from Launceston to Hobart and vice versa?

**Ms ARMITAGE -** The costing?  I'm not sure that it's on the agenda.  We were just saying wouldn't it be lovely to have a fast train, but we don't think the government can probably afford a fast train between Launceston and Hobart.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** No.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Think of the money you could save on the roads.

**CHAIR -** So the answer is 'No'?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** No, not on our agenda unless I don't know.

**Mr DEAN -** The inland rail that is being looked at from Melbourne to Brisbane is $14 billion, so in terms of context.

**CHAIR -** $14 billion?

**Mr DEAN -** It can be very expensive.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** I was just thinking of all the money that we could save in parliament by being able to go home each night.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Our terrain might inhibit that somewhat.  It is my understanding, and we went through all this when we had the need for the rail upgrades a decade or so ago.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** No, it was more a comment to the Chair.

**CHAIR -** If we are not able to secure that as a good media story for today, can we get a Tamar River Bridge?

**Mr DEAN -** One of the core responsibilities is the completion of reviews and investigations at the request of the government, so I take it, minister, that that is currently a duty that is being undertaken by State Growth?  How far have we progressed with it?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Are you talking about the Tamar River Bridge specifically?

**Mr DEAN -** The Tamar River Bridge, the new one.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** The new one?

**Mr DEAN -** The new one.  It's gone past a thought bubble, I think, and it's gone past an election statement.  So where are we with that right at the present time?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** It's an election statement and commitment.  I will invite Mr Shane Gregory to the table, the general manager of State Roads, to provide some insights into your question.

**Mr DEAN -** I have addressed it to the right area, haven't I?

**CHAIR -** Welcome, Mr Gregory, it is a pleasure to have you for committee B's estimates this year.

**Mr GREGORY** - Absolutely, it's well past a thought bubble.  It's an election commitment.

**Mr DEAN -** My question is time frames and so on, that's what people are asking.

**Mr GREGORY** - Essentially, the Government has provided funding to undertake a feasibility study and planning work.  It's at the very early stages.  If we could draw a comparison, we are at a similar stage to what the Bridgewater bridge was a number of years ago.  There's a lot of work to be done in terms of understanding exactly what it looks like, exactly where it crosses the river, the ground conditions and how we work through those.  We are in the very early stages of that.

**Mr DEAN -** But it is being done - that's the question - and things will move over a period of time.  I understand that.  Minister, with the Bridgewater bridge the time frame was given at some previous time.  Is there a time frame on the new Tamar bridge - a five-year program, a 10-year program, 15 years?  Is there some idea?

**MR ROCKLIFF** - I believe the Bridgewater bridge is around that 15-year period, and while there is a comparison in the planning and design, et cetera, my expectation is that if it all proceeds and designs and geotechnical issues and all these  types of things, that wouldn't take as long as 15 years.  I wouldn't like to give a date on it, as you would appreciate, Mr Dean.

**Mr DEAN -** Yes, I understand that.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** We will be far more informed as a result of the work that we now have commenced doing.

**CHAIR -** Thank you.  Is there anything else that you would like to add before we move into 2.2, Infrastructure strategy?  Please stay with us, Mr Gregory, I am sure this will be in your bailiwick as well.  We may have wandered slightly into that, but I will ask Mr Armstrong to open the questioning on 2.2.

**2.2 Infrastructure strategy**

**Mr ARMSTRONG -** I noticed the line item, we are over $2 million this year and go down to $220 000 in year 2021-22.  I take it that a lot of that is because of the Kings Meadow flood protection and the forward planning for the Launceston traffic planning has been completed or will be completed by then?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I will verify that for you, Mr Armstrong.

**Mr SWAIN -** This is quite a complex set of changes around this output.  We've got a number of things coming on and off, but you're right, the biggest change is the flood protection Kings Meadow.  That's the single biggest change.  There was some forward planning money that was in that item last year that is coming out and there's also a redistribution of corporate overhead, which is allocated across all outputs differently in different years, there's some adjustments that is also driving that.

**Mr ARMSTRONG -** So would the money for the Southern Outlet - I notice the planning for the traffic congestion in Hobart.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Is that the additional bus lane?

**Mr ARMSTRONG -** It says a fifth lane.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Fifth lane, yes, which we are currently consulting on.

**Mr ARMSTRONG -** Is that for traffic or is it buses?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** That consultation is being undertaken now.  Perhaps Mr Gregory can explain where that's at as well.

**CHAIR -** I had a fair idea that you would need his expertise, minister.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Absolutely.  No greater expert.

**Mr GREGORY** - The proposal is for a fifth lane to improve public transport movement, so it would be a contraflow lane for buses and for emergency services, so if we had an issue, we could –

**Mr ARMSTRONG -** Like this morning.

**Mr GREGORY** - Like this morning.  We could have police, fire, and ambulance use the lane as well, so it would include some intelligent transport system so we could, if need be, hold buses and send emergency services along.  The intention is that it's about improving the movement of public transport.

**Mr ARMSTRONG -** The general public, when they say 'fifth lane', they are thinking it's another vehicle lane.  I noticed in the budget paper it said money was allocated for Macquarie Street.  Is that a part of this?

**Mr GREGORY** - Macquarie andDavey.  It's part of the broader package of traffic congestion.

**Mr SWAIN -** Both those items are in the capital program, but we're not quite there yet.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - So the fifth lane, the election commitment did not say just buses in isolation, it was other vehicles as well, including emergency vehicles.

**Mr DEAN -** Would it include taxis?

**Mr GREGORY** - We haven't worked through exactly what it looks like.

**Mr DEAN -** On the mainland, I think New South Wales, most of them include taxis, or some of them do.

**Mr GREGORY** - Transit lanes, two or three lanes, or high occupancy vehicle lanes do in some places.  Generally that's a transit lane, a T2 or T3, but we're really just starting the process.  We're about to start consultation and what we have at the moment is a feasibility study, so there's several years of consultation and scoping work to be done.

**Ms SIEJKA -** In my electorate, the Mornington roundabout is one of the things I get the most questions about.  People are concerned, they find it quite dangerous, even if they are very familiar with that kind of thing.  Daily it's something they are worried about, and also traffic is quite slow going through it as well.  I understood there was some work proposed to it, some sort of superficial work to upgrade it.  Would you give us an overview of what that would involve and where that's at and to what degree it will actually improve the roundabout.

**CHAIR -** The Mornington roundabout.

**Ms SIEJKA -** It's horrible.

**CHAIR -** The East Tamar people might like to swap for the roundabout thing.

**Ms SIEJKA -** I don't know that you would.

**Mr GREGORY** - We don't have any work planned for the roundabout itself.  We recently completed the project for the slip lane off the highway.

**Ms SIEJKA -** So that's completed now, yes.

**Mr GREGORY** - There are projects in the looking forward program.

**Ms SIEJKA -** I wasn't sure if there was more to happen yet.

**Mr GREGORY** - No.

**Ms SIEJKA -** Or if it's completed.  So it was the slip lane coming in and I think it looked like some of the lines had been re-marked.  Is that part of it?

**Mr GREGORY** - The slip lane was addressing the issue of queuing back onto the highway, so providing more capacity and, as part of that work, we had to change the line markings slightly, but we also have a program of line-marking renewal around the state on a sort of three-year cycle.

**Ms SIEJKA -** So that's all completed now and nothing more.  We may need to talk further later.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Are there still issues?

**Ms SIEJKA -** There are.  Every time you go to drive round it, it feels like you take your life into your own hands, but I am sure you have heard those issues.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I will note that.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Just a clarification here.  Launceston traffic planning, it's not the often referred to bypass, is it, the Eastern Bypass that we've never quite seen that's been discussed many times and dropped out?  I was just looking at 2.2 Infrastructure where we've seen the variations that goes on, including Launceston traffic planning.  I wondered exactly what that encompassed.  I'm sure the member for Windermere remembers many years –

**Mr DEAN -** I raised it in the budget and the answer in the budget was, 'No, it's off the agenda.'

**Ms ARMITAGE -** I wondered whether that included the Eastern Bypass that has often been referred to that's never gotten anywhere in Launceston.  Can you tell me what the Launceston traffic planning was all about?

**Mr GREGORY** - The Launceston traffic planning was the department working closely with Launceston City Council and modelling the impacts of developments in Invermay, UTAS, and so it's really looking at how all of that comes together and taking a broader view of traffic planning in Launceston.  So there'd been some work done previously in 2012, that considered the bypass and a whole range of options and this was -

**Ms ARMITAGE -** The bypass is gone.

**Mr GREGORY** - The bypass was identified as being of a lower priority need.  There are more localised responses.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Not for a lot of people.  It's just that it has been there for a long time, the Eastern Bypass, in my time, and I am sure the member for Windermere's time on council, and it was a very high priority for many of the people that lived along that route and it is a bit sad to see that it has gone.

**Mr GARCIA -** It is fair to say that council was heavily involved in the prioritisation of that project and it was deemed by council that it was not a priority given the nature of which Launceston was expanding and the way it was developing particularly around Ingress and the university and what was happening in the city.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I've recently met with the general managers of the northern councils.  Mr Gregory was present as well and to look at a more regional approach to this and starting a conversation about prioritising projects and those present were the GMs from the Northern Midlands, Dorset, George Town up to the West Tamar and Launceston City Councils.  Meander as well.  We all sat around a table in Launceston and talked about future planning and working out key priority projects and where they best are placed to ensure that when the infrastructure is developed and built, that it is done in a coordinated way so as you'd appreciate, if we develop some infrastructure it has an impact elsewhere, so to make sure that when it is planned, that it is done in a least disruptive way as possible, if I can put it that way.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** No, I appreciate that.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Same as in the room as well there and provided it's a very good -

**Ms ARMITAGE -** I can recall from my time on council and also living in the area and being the member for Launceston, that many people have great concerns about the number of trucks that are in the city.  On occasion trucks have been caught on our roundabouts right in the city itself.  I know of a night you often hear trucks coming along Brisbane Street.  They do a lot of damage to the roads.  We also had complaints from many people on Elphin Road and in Cimitiere Street where some of the really old homes are about heavy vehicles.  The amount of money that has just been spent on Cimitiere Street would confirm this.  That's been closed now, only it's not quite finished yet, but it has been several months because of damage done to it, so it would be appreciated if the Government could consider some strategy of keeping trucks out of the city, some sort of bypass, when you next have your meeting with the mayors.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That meeting was with the GMs.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Sorry, all the GMs.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I understand where you're coming from.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** I will certainly write to him in my electorate.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Very good, I appreciate that.

**CHAIR -** Member for Windermere, freight equalisation.  Are we in the right area, minister?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, I understand we are.

**Mr DEAN** - This refers to people and freight.  The Freight Equalisation Scheme, where are we with that?  There's been a lot of talk.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It's just been extended.

**Mr DEAN** - Exactly what does it mean?  Transporting across the strait just to the mainland is horrendous but if it's going on internationally and so on, there's all of that relief and benefits and so on.  Where are we with it and are those people using it for freighting across the strait happy with the situation?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - My understanding is that they are and by the very nature of your question the scheme is important to continue Tasmania's growth and Tasmanian businesses.  We have welcomed as a Government the extension of the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme for transhipped international export goods which commenced in January 2016.  That was announced earlier on during Tony Abbott's time as prime minister.  That came to fruition in January 2016, and support of the continuation of the extended scheme when it was reviewed in December 2017.

The extension represents additional assistance for Tasmanian exporters estimated to be worth $203 million over four years.  Tasmanian exporters shipping eligible goods by the mainland are able to claim assistance of $700 per 24 foot equivalent unit and in recognition of greater shipping costs, the scheme also provides an additional 15 per cent for exporters, shipping eligible goods from King Island and the Furneaux Islands.  In total, the scheme provided $146.6 million in assistance to Tasmanian businesses in the 2016-17 financial year in recognition of the costs of shipping goods from Tasmania.

In its 18 months to 30 June 2017, the extended scheme provided $30.2 million to Tasmanian exporters for 43 200 transhipped 20 foot equivalent units.  The Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, undertook a review of the first 18 months of the extended scheme in 2017 and the Bureau's report makes no recommendations but focuses on the volume and value of eligible claims for goods transhipped to international destinations.  The Tasmanian Government and Regional Development Australia provided submissions to this review, supporting the retention of the expanded scheme, and noting the positive benefits for the Tasmanian community. The recent Federal budget continued that scheme and it is not capped.  It's a demand led scheme.

**Mr DEAN** - Minister, absolutely open?  So it doesn't matter how much freight we move across it's covered?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Correct, that's my understanding, absolutely not capped.

**Mr DEAN** - What's the increase in the use of this scheme, freight movements across the strait that's involved with the Freight Equalisation Scheme?  What's the increase over the last say two, three year period?  I take it that it is increasing.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That's a good question and we might be able to obtain those figures for you.  I have mentioned some figures here.  So Mr Swain's pointed out correctly that the extended scheme, which has cost $32.2 million, the first 18 months for 43 200 transhipped 20 foot equivalent units, that's an example of the extended investment.  Previously that wasn't provided for Tasmanian exporters.  So you can argue that figure of $30.2 million is an example of the uptake.

**Mr DEAN** - Or an increase.

**Mr GARCIA -** What the minister is saying is, by virtue of the fact that we have extended the scheme, there's been a natural increase.  In order to be able to break up - we haven't got the details of what the domestic element would look like on an uptake.  It's a Commonwealth run program so we don't actually have access to all of the detail.  We have a maximum, we have a global number at the end of the year, but as the minister has indicated, our freight numbers across Bass Strait are ever increasing, so on that basis you'd say significantly there's an increased uptake.

The scheme is administered by the federal department and so those figures could be obtained by the federal department if you wanted to write.

**CHAIR -** Write to your local member.

**Ms SIEJKA** - Estimating that the Rosny on‑ramps have been funded in this budget.  Just wanting an overview of what that process is going to be and timeframe for completion?

**CHAIR -** Rosny over ramps?

**Ms SIEJKA** - I don't know if they're on‑ramps or off‑ramps.  They're one of the two.

**Mr GREGORY** - It relates to some additional ramps at Gordons Hill Road which actually links back to your –

**Ms SIEJKA** - Mornington roundabout.  That's what I thought.

**Mr GREGORY** - Which provides an alternative –

**Ms SIEJKA** - I'm helping you out here.

**Mr GREGORY** - An alternative way to exit Rosny to the east and people going through the Mornington roundabout.

**Ms SIEJKA** - Is it to do with visiting that same area where there's that nursing home development, is it to assist that traffic as well or not really?

**Mr GREGORY** - Not specifically.

**Ms SIEJKA** - But it's within that area.

**Mr GREGORY** - It's in that area, yes.

**Ms SIEJKA** - And the time frame?

**Mr GREGORY** - The normal project runs through a series of phases, so we have a scoping phase where we decide what the project looks like.  We do consultation with the community.  We iron out any wrinkles in the project.  So we have a phase that runs typically for 18 months to two years.  At the end of that you've decided what it is you're going to build and then you run into detailed design phase which will run for six months or thereabouts, and the tender process.  So typically, you would see a project of that nature from start to finish, would be four or five years, depending on the complexity.

**Ms SIEJKA** - So the theory behind it is that it will divert people from that roundabout.  Or is it from that Mornington roundabout area, is that the theory of the on and off ramp if they've got the other option to go through the Rosny on/off ramp?  Fewer people will be reliant on that roundabout?

**Mr GREGORY** - The key relief is that people who are in the Rosny, the Eastland's area, when they're leaving, instead of having go Cambridge Road into the roundabout to head east, will actually be able to get back on the highway and head east.

**Ms SIEJKA** - In a quicker manner.  Okay.  But four to five years.

**Mr GREGORY** - That's a typical project time frame.

**Ms SIEJKA** - Thank you.

**2.3 Land Transport Safety.**

**CHAIR -** We are now moving to 2.3 Land transport, and this is where the bulk of the money is on $14.145 million.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - The member for Prosser had to leave and she has asked what the Government is doing to reduce the motorcycle accidents on our roads today with more cyclists on our roads probably than we've had for a long time.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It is a very good question, and there's no denying that fact unfortunately, Mr Armstrong.  Motorcyclists are significantly over-represented in the crash statistics in Tasmania.

**CHAIR -** In saying that, has the number of motorcycle riders increased considerably over the last 10 to 15 years?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I will find an answer to that question if it is possible on notice, on that period of time, which might be difficult.  In 2017, motorcyclists made up almost 30 per cent of the state's serious casualty crashes, while motorcyclists represent only 4 per cent of the vehicle fleet.  Of the 18 fatalities on our roads so far this year, tragically six of them have been motorcyclists.  As part of our Towards Zero Road Safety Strategy the Government is committed to progressing safety initiatives to reduce motorcycle serious casualties over the life of the strategy.  This includes providing improved training opportunities, improving infrastructure, and continuing with our important public education campaigns.

In 2017, we introduced a new motorcycle training and assessment program as a pre-requisite to obtaining a motorcycle licence which consists of a two day pre-learner course, a check ride and a new pre-provisional test.  In consultation with the Tasmanian Motorcycle Council in 2014-15 and 2015-16, a targeted motorcycle safety program such as warning signs and the sealing of gravel shoulders on curves, were installed on the Great Eastern Drive and in the Sheffield area.  State Roads continues to provide motorcycle infrastructure safety treatments as opportunities do arise.

It is important to highlight visiting motorcycles are particularly vulnerable and the Government has ensured that those arriving on the *Spirit of Tasmania* are provided with a travel guide to riding safely in the state.  In 2017, December, a new website was also launched to provide safety information to visitors, including motorcycle riders and last year we saw the launch of a motorcycle protective clothing campaign to encourage riders to wear full motorcycle protective clothing and buy the safest standard available.

**Mr ARMSTRONG -** We will take that question on notice, minister.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Sure.

**CHAIR -** We don't know if there's been an increase in motorcycle registrations or licences?

**Mr SWAIN -** No, we haven't got that.  The other factor in play here is tourists.  Visitors would be a significant factor, I should think.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The telling figure for me is that in 2017 motorcyclists made up almost 30 per cent of the state's serious casualty crashes while only representing 4 per cent of the vehicle fleet, so a massive over representation.  There's a lot more that we need to do to educate and indeed, where possible, as I've mentioned a couple of examples, including Sheffield infrastructure improvements as well on the key areas.

**Mr SWAIN** - One of the alarming things is that three-quarters of the incidents are single vehicle incidents where there's no other factor other than the motorbike running off the road.  This is why I raised the tourists' issue because one of the concerns is kind of the middle aged driver coming back to work, you know, excess income –

**CHAIR -** Wanting to live out their dream of owning a motorcycle.  So supplementary, Ms Armitage.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Yes, you have the figures to show how motorcyclists are represented in accidents, but do you have any figures to show how a learner motorcyclist might be represented in those accidents?  Perhaps you could take it on notice.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We will take that on notice.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** For example, in Western Australia, a learner motorcyclist cannot ride alone.  They have to have another motorcyclist riding with them.  That is interesting.

**CHAIR -** Beside or as a pillion?

**Ms ARMITAGE -** No, definitely not a pillion.  They have to have another motorcyclist actually riding.  They can't go out on their own without another motorcyclist while they're a learner.  I think it's interesting and wonder whether the Government is looking at further measures like that, considering the over-representation of motorcyclists in accidents.  That's why I wondered how the learner motorcyclists are represented, whether they're higher or not.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Any changes we make would be evidence and data driven, so I take that point.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** That is why I am wondering about those figures.  They may not be, but it is interesting in Western Australia, for example, that that is the case.

**Mr SWAIN** - I have been advised that the new training program, which is believed to be the best –

**Ms ARMITAGE -** I am familiar with that, yes.

**Mr SWAIN** - Does an on‑road training component which is a new addition to the previous.  It doesn't go as far as you're saying, but it does go further than before.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** I'm aware of the new training process, but it's still quite minor compared to the fact that in another state the whole time that you're a learner you have to go out with someone else.

**Mr FARRELL** - I noticed most of the bus stops on that particular stretch of road are on one side or the other depending on pick-up or departure and most of the ones I looked at from there on were all on double lined parts of the highway.  Most people would either be breaking the law when they drop off or pick up at them, depending on which way they were going.

**Mr SWAIN** - Which particular road?

**Mr FARRELL** - This is between Norfolk and Granton.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I am less familiar with that section of road.

**Mr FARRELL** - Yes, but there might be other roads around the state where there have been traditional bus pull-over bays.  There might be other parts in the state where this has happened where there have been traditional bus stops and then the roads have been modified.  They're now on double side of the lanes.  So if someone lives up that way and they've got to drop off to go that way, then technically they have to break the law to cross over the road.  I wondered if it was somewhere in the Government's planning to do a safety audit of these types of issues.  It's only when something happens you think –

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - You have raised it so I will now investigate that exact question.

**CHAIR -** Safety audits underway.

**Mr SWAIN** - I was going to jump in and say as part of Project 2018, which is the procurement for all bus services, as you know we're reviewing all the routes but we're also reviewing bus stops.  They will be at least 50 new bus stops that are required and we expect a similar number of bus stops to be de-commissioned.  As we go through that process, we're going to have a look at the DDA compliance and the general safety of the bus stops and then look at some risk space upgrades in our recommendations to Government.

**Mr FARRELL** - No doubt it will be quite challenging because some of the areas are very restricted.  That is good.  I am pleased.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - Has the Government or department looked at line marking in particular?  When I was in New Zealand a while back, in areas where there's a really foggy area, they have arrows on the road telling you that you are going that way.  Particularly down the Huonville area, probably Launceston and Norfolk way where they have the arrows telling you you're on the right side of the road.  It might sound very simple, but it was very effective in New Zealand.  I was starting to think to myself, 'Am I on the right side of the road?'  So I was wondering if there been anything put in place to look at -

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Okay, Mr Gregory would probably be able to provide some insight into –

**Mr ARMSTRONG -** Thank you.

**CHAIR -** I thought he might have left a bit early.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Line markings and Australian standards and those types of things.

**Mr GREGORY -** In Australia there is an Australian standard for raise pavement markers, or commonly referred to as cat's eyes; on one side of the road they're red, and on the other side of the road they're white.  When you have traffic flowing in opposite directions, there is a new standard now that there's a yellow raised pavement marker that goes through the flow, and opposing flows of traffic.  So in a low light environment or in a fog you'll see those, and we're progressively rolling out the yellow cat's eyes.  They're different, those markers are different on opposite sides of the lane.

**Mr ARMSTRONG -** A lot of people don't know that, I didn't.  That you have different coloured - you were saying that on one side of the road you'll have yellow -

**Mr GREGORY -** Yellow goes between the opposing traffic flow, and on the left you've got red, and on the right-side you've got white.

**Mr ARMSTRONG -** I'm with you now.  It was interesting over there, because they have the arrow painted on the road.

**CHAIR -** Asupplementary in regard to that, because I wasn't aware of that either.  They absolutely drive me mad, because they're too far on to your road pavement in most cases, but occasionally you'll come across a stretch of road where they're in the middle, they're on the white line.  How does that work, minister?  How are some of them on either side of your white line, and then others are dead on in the middle?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** In terms of the reflectors?

**CHAIR -** The reflectors.  The cat's eyes, the reflectors.  On a very narrow road pavement, and I've got most of them in my electorate, when you have to drive over them, or otherwise you're in the gutter, it's 'bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang', all the way home.  Occasionally you'll find a stretch of road where they're sitting on white line in the middle.  How does that work if they're different colours?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I will refer to the expertise of Mr Gregory for that question.

**Mr GREGORY -** The preferred position when you've got a newer road with enough width is to have them right with the lines, you will notice that when you go from a single centre line to a double barrier line, they do move out.  So they do change.  So generally you shouldn't have a problem, except where we've got quite narrow lanes.

**CHAIR -** That's what I said, I've got most of those in my patch, and so you actually run over the reflector for kilometres at a time because there is not enough road pavement to put yourself over on the left-hand side.

**Mr GREGORY -** So you're hitting the ones in the centre?

**CHAIR -** Well they're not in the centre; they're actually off-centre.

**Mr GREGORY -** But they're marking the centre.

**CHAIR -** But if they're different colours, yellow one way and red the other way.  How come you've got some down the middle?

**Mr GREGORY -** No, they do go down the middle as well.  We've got a coloured one, the yellow one that is in the centre separating the two lanes, that's how that one works.

**CHAIR -** I think the minister needs to do an actual drive-thru from Launceston to Scottsdale.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I've done that a number of times, but -

**CHAIR -** But you probably weren't driving, with all due respect, you were probably being driven.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I was probably working.

**CHAIR -** I understand that, and appreciate that.  To me it just doesn’t make sense.  And from Scottsdale to Pyengana, exactly the same.  It's just exactly the same, you just constantly hit the reflector.  So it just can't be actually very good for the reflectors either, when car tyres are constantly running over them, they'd have to be replaced regularly I'd expect.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I'm not sure about the wear and tear, but they'd have to be responsibly hardy.

**Mr ARMSTRONG -** On the Huon Highway, up around Sandfly, last year or the year before, they put in the cat's eyes that when the temperature gets to 3 degrees, I think it was, they started flashing.  It was going to be a trial.  I think some of them were taken by different people, but I feel like they're really good because you do know that the temperature is getting cold out there.  Can you tell me what's happened as far as that trial?  Are they going to be replaced, or was it just a trial and it's not going ahead any further?

**Mr GREGORY -** We will replace them.  They actually measure temperature at 2 degree or less, and moisture.  So they're really measuring connections that are suitable for the formation of ice and then they flash blue.  So one of the things we wanted to test was their effectiveness.  We've had some good feedback and that people appreciate them and understand what they're about.  The other thing we did want to test as well was durability, because they are solar powered.  We wanted to test how long they would last, how often would they need to replace them, so we're getting some good information around that.  We think they are worth pursuing, they work quite well.  They're much more cost effective than some of the other ways of warning people about the potential for ice.  So we would be looking to replace the ones that have failed, and then look at opportunities to expand that coverage at other places around the state.

**Mr ARMSTRONG -** I don't know if they're failed or if they've been taken by somebody.

**Mr GREGORY -** We had that problem in the very early stages, I think we lost about one in four in the first few months that were stolen.

**CHAIR -** So they were popular?

**Mr GREGORY -** I think they were a bit of a novelty, and so they were stolen.  When we replaced them they then seem to disappear.

**Mr ARMSTRONG -** I find them very good.

**Mr DEAN -** Didn't we ask a question on the tourists?

**CHAIR -** We referred to tourists on motorcycles, that's all.

**Mr DEAN -** Right, yes.  With our increased visitation state, and tourism to the state and a lot of drivers coming here that are used to driving on the right-hand side of the road, what programs have we got in place to support and assist these people?  I would be interested to know the crash statistics in relation to the tourists in the state.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Good question –

**Mr ARMSTRONG -** Can I just butt in there?  That's where I was coming with the arrows on the road.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Thanks Mr Armstrong, thanks Mr Dean.  The tourist road safety strategy was developed to improve road safety for visiting road users.  I have some statistics incidentally on motorcycle casualties and those concern visitors.  The strategy identifies and targets three distinct groups that are higher crash risk, or low awareness of driving conditions and road rules when visiting Tasmania.  That is interstate motorcyclists, international tourists, and seasonal workers, international students and new Tasmanians.  The strategy is available on the Road Safety Advisory Council website, and is funded from the road safety levy of some $650 000 allocated to a second phase to activities over three years from 2017 to 2020.  Activity delivery through the strategy also supports and contributes to the long term goal for road safety in Tasmania, to have a safe system of zero injuries and deaths on the roads, and strengthening Tasmania's position as visitor economy, as outlined in the T-21 the Tasmanian Visitor Economy Strategy of 2015-2020.

The delivery of a road safety website for visiting drivers has been committed to in the Government's plan for road safety rules in 2017.  So while focusing on visiting drivers, the strategy more broadly promotes the safety of all road users in Tasmania.  It is based on a safe system approach to road safety with targeted activity reaches and identified audiences with engaging content through targeted innovative commercial and stakeholder communication channels.  The initiatives delivered through the strategy are designed to capitalise on the existing tourist networks and gateway entry points into Tasmania with a focus on peak visitation periods.

The strategy has continued to evolve with information on road rules and safe driving in Tasmania, and material produced which includes:  steering wheel hangers in hire cars, brochures and posters targeting international tourists.  Three short films targeting visiting motorcyclists have been produced and are being promoted online and through social media and at key gateway locations, and the films include interviews with world renowned motorcycle enthusiast Charlie Baldwin.  The film promoting riding Tasmania's west coast with a local rider and a v-log promoting riding safely on Tasmanian roads.  Six short films have been produced to promote road safety messages to visiting drivers and these are available on all screens at the Hobart airport, and businesses with a tourism focus and the key messages are promoted using electronic billboards in the Hobart airport terminal, and a large billboard at the Launceston airport.

Non-Tasmanian residents account for approximately 6 per cent of serious casualties to date in 2018 down on the five-year average of 14 per cent, only one of the fatalities to-date in 2018 has involved a non-Tasmanian resident.  If I read the motorcycle statistics in casualties and fatalities of non-Tasmanian residents they also appear, in terms of motorcycles to be all down, if I am reading that correctly.

**Mr DEAN -** All users?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Yes, that's right.  In terms of the overall users of motorcycles and motorcycle fatalities and serious casualties, the proportion of non-Tasmanian residents has reduced, if I am reading that correctly.

**Mr DEAN -** Right.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Supplementary, minister, I did get a copy of the letter that you forwarded to Mr Sheriff with regard to –

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Oh good, I'm pleased.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Which included the Road Safety Advisory Council's Towards Zero target - the video you are speaking about.  I'm assuming you can tell me how many hits we've had to that site?

**CHAIR -** And she means hits to the actual site, not hits on the road.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Yes, I know.  Hits to the site.  So how many people are actually seeing it, and the videos?  Can you do that?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Website traffic, if that's the right word to use there.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Yes, and I do appreciate the fact - I notice it has about 20 different languages which is really good for people –

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Multilingual.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Yes, multilingual.  So very impressive, minister.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Yes, I thought so.

**CHAIR -** Before we leave this area, can I have some indication of when the line marking contract is up for tender or renewal?  I am always interested in how regularly the line markings are updated around the state.  I don't need to look at it, I know it's thick.  I just need to know when it's up for re-negotiation for tender.

**Mr GREGORY -** We have a multi-panel contract, so I think we're in year 2 with one more to go.  A multi-party contract means we have multiple suppliers on that contract.  On the state network we aim for complete remarking of all lines on the state road on a three-year cycle.  Essentially we do a third of the line marking on the state road network every year.

**CHAIR -** But there would be some parts of the road network that would potentially need re‑doing more often than that.  So how –

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Heavy traffic areas?

**CHAIR -** How is that undertaken, and assessed?

**Mr GREGORY -** It's all delivered through the same contract, so the way the contract is structured is that we have a number of suppliers and they supply a schedule of rates and then we give them work orders to work.  We have a planned program, then we'll have sites we would identify where somethings happened, the lines have worn out more quickly, or if we have a particular issue where we would like to change the line marking for safety reason, we would bring that in.  It's not a matter anymore of coming up with a program and putting it out to the market and saying 'that's it', we actually run with a number of suppliers, and we can call up the work as and when we need it.  But we do give both of those suppliers a package of work to get into the season with, and then we make adjustments as we go.

**CHAIR -** Given that some of these areas are probably not frequented very often by people from the department, how does the department find out where those key areas are that need the replacing of the lines other than my email?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I wouldn't say the department is infrequently looking at areas, they would be particularised into responsibilities, and providing some insight into how the department would access that information including your emails.

**Mr GREGORY -** Throughout maintenance arrangements in each of the regions, category 1 roads are inspected twice weekly for a range of items.  There is the routine maintenance activities like potholes, worn away shoulders, guide posts, leaning signs, and all that routine stuff.  The contractors are also picking up those items which are referred to as minor works which aren't part of their base service, but they're identifying things that need a larger scope of work.  So that happens twice a week on category 1, and all other roads get a weekly inspection.  So anything that the contractor finds is logged into out maintenance logging system and then we work through that and identify what packages of work we want to do with it.

**CHAIR -** So a category 1 would be the highways, is that correct?

**Mr SWAIN -** If you're interested in local government roads we have a process of interaction with our community, where they identify a number of priorities for line work.

**CHAIR -** No, these are actually state highways.  This is particularly the state highway, the Tasman Highway that I frequent more than anything.  I find it interesting that they are looked at twice a week, because it's weeks, and weeks, and weeks between when some of the line markings are picked up.  This is not something new for me to bring to the attention of the minister.  Anyone who has been in the department for a while will know that I'm known as the line queen in our Chamber.  I personally don't feel like it's hitting the mark, so that was why my question was around when the contract will be re-issued.  Obviously it's not something that's going to be an opportunity for someone new to come in and do the work.  So how can a member of this parliament ensure that the safety of those roads is paramount, if I don't feel like they're being addressed?  Is there anyway?  Do I just keep barraging the department with emails?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Or you could bombard me with emails.  I don't mind how you go about it, if you send me an email it's acted on very quickly.

**CHAIR -** Thank you.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I am happy to take feedback from yourself, or indeed the community.  I'm happy to have specific examples that you might have.  I only mention the Tasman Highway where Mr Gregory said they were inspected reasonably regularly.

**CHAIR -** It is interesting that they are inspected twice a week, and yet I'm not seeing any improvement in what I'm driving on.  The member for Huon's suggestion where the arrows are actually painted on the roads in fog prone areas might be good.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I recognise it's important, and I've noticed on the Midland Highway upgrades as well, where they're doing one side of the road, they take a yellow line up the middle - I find the yellow line very good.

**CHAIR -** They're usually only used in snow areas, it's been told to me.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** That's what I've been informed prior to me taking on this role.  I'm not sure if that's right but it stands to reason.  I am happy to investigate the idea of the arrows to take up Mr Armstrong's example from New Zealand.

**CHAIR -**Any other questions in land transport safety?  So we'll move now to 2.4 passenger transport.

**2.4 Passenger Transport**

**Mr FARRELL -** Just an update for the bus contract.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Project 2018?

**Mr FARRELL -** Yes, if you could.  I know there are a few contractors eagerly awaiting to buy new buses, and they're just waiting for the finalisation of their contract so they can go to the bank and borrow lots of money and buy buses.  I am just asking on their behalf how it's tracking.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It is tracking reasonably well to date, and in the process of being finalised at the present time.  There were some issues to work through between the Department and the major stakeholder representing the bus group, that being the TasBus Association.  I attended their State conference recently.  At that State conference, there was a presentation from Jonathan Dawson to update where it is all at.  There has been considerable progress since that point in time, which is good.  And we're not far away from finalising what's been quite an extensive process, but an important one, of course.  We have to ensure that we get – or Tasmanian taxpayers get value for money, clearly.  Also that we can provide some certainty and security for those investing, and bus operators, of course, and safety as well.  Gary might be able to provide some more up-to-date information for you.

**Mr SWAIN** - It is a significant project because the services haven't been fully reviewed for really up to 20 years.  At the last review point there was the general belief that every one of our contracts should be given that contract again.  So, there's obviously been very significant changes in services, and we're also looking at a different contracting model this time around.  So, previously we've had 470 odd contracts where operators have had many contracts, in some cases, to manage.  So, the initial focus was on the general access network going back to sort of the first half of last year, and the idea was that we would build the service offering off the GeoNetwork.

That got to a certain point and then was put on hold for a while, and there had been a lot of consultation with operators and councils and community groups and so on.  Then we moved over to the school bus services, and there's been a great deal of work done on that over the last 12 months.  And all the way through, as the minister has said, we've been working very closely with the bus association who, I've got to say, have played a very constructive role all the way through this, representing their members.  In terms of the contract, we've tried to collapse what was six or seven contracts down into a single set of terms and conditions, where some of the terms and conditions will come on and off, depending on the nature of the service.

Also, in doing that review, [inaudible]around Australia.  So, that is another big change for operators.  The contracts now are out with operators.  The bit that had fallen a little behind through that process was the development of the bus costs model.  The student-only bus costs model has been out for a couple of months, and now we've just actually got out the GA costs model; which is, if you like, the missing piece of the jigsaw for operators.  They really need to see the terms and conditions and the bus costs model hand in hand.  Now that is there.  In addition to all that, the minister has now signed off on the GeoNetwork, which, as I said before, we had got to a certain point then parts of it so we could get to the school service.  That means that we can commence that matching process for services against GAs.  There has been information out for a while about, you know, what the GeoNetwork is likely to look like, but this is taking that to the next level.

That will complement the work that is being done on school services where we've already done about 50 per cent of the matching.  So, quite a lot is happening through this process.  So, we are working to try and now finalise the contract terms and the bus costs model over the next couple of months.  We are very conscious that bus operators need to make decisions and need to be able to finance their buses so they can keep providing services to the community.  It is really progressing at speed, but I do want to acknowledge this is a very significant change for the community and bus operators.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I was looking for the contracting principles, and had a reasonable stab at it, I must say.  But I am going to reiterate them here.  These are the three contracting principles being used for Project 2018:  the contract should provide a fair and reasonable return to the contractor and value for money to the government.  So, I've mentioned that.  Ongoing administration of contracts, including compliance and monitoring activities, should be manageable for bus operators, reflect allocated departmental resources, and be appropriate to the contract value and nature.  Service specification and contract design should provide flexibility to meet the changing passenger needs, and include appropriate incentives to encourage operators to pursue efficiencies, as well.  So, they are the guiding principles, which is nearing completing.

**Mr FARRELL** - The second question was in regard to SkyBus coming to Hobart and doing the airport runs.  Was that the selling of an existing contract, or did they win the contract over somebody else?

**Mr SWAIN** - It is a private arrangement between the existing operator and the incoming provider.  So, there is authorisation and accreditation roles for the department in relation to the new operator; but, if you like, it was worked out between the outgoing and incoming operators as a commercial proposition.

**Mr FARRELL** - Right.  Was there much consultation done with the department, or was it just -

**Mr SWAIN** - We became aware, I think, towards the end - quite recently, towards the end of those discussions.  We've asked some questions on the way through:  'Have you been communicating with the people who you provide services to?'  Those sort of questions.  But it really has been a commercially driven thing, first and foremost.

**Mr FARRELL** - And my third one.  In relation to the interregional bus service, it states there is $100 000 that has been provided for the establishment of an interregional bus service connecting Queenstown, Strahan, Rosebery, and Zeehan.  Can you provide some detail about that:  is that something that will be picked up by an existing contractor, or is that going to be tendered out?  There is also the Strahan to Burnie bus service going from the current two days to seven days.  I imagine that would be with the existing operator?

**Mr SWAIN** - We are still working through that, and are yet to give the Government advice on that issue.  Our early thinking had been a contribution to council.  But we haven't provided advice to the minister formally on it.

**Mr FARRELL** - Right, okay.

**CHAIR** - So, he is just learning about it right now.

**Mr FARRELL** - Well, that's good.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for asking that question.

**Mr FARRELL** - Happy to help.

**CHAIR** - Is this where we talk about seatbelts for school buses, if we're talking about the upgrade or the new compliance for both student and general passenger transport?  What is planned for school buses in regard to providing seatbelts for all students?  Or if it is not a seatbelt, the appropriate holding device that you see when you go to the big smoke; you can actually hold on to something up above.  I'm interested in how that might unfold for our students in Tasmania.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Seatbelts on buses is an area that is often questioned.  The community, of course, has had 50 years of experience of road safety campaigns that emphasise the important life-saving effectiveness of seatbelts in cars.  What is not widely understood is that buses are equipped with alternative safety features.  Studies have shown that school bus transport is up to seven times safer than travelling to school in the family vehicle, and 31 times safer than walking.  Catching a bus remains the safest way for children to travel to and from school.  The on-bus component of a journey between home and school is when children are at least risk of injury, and accident histories and crash statistics demonstrate that when children are in the proximity of a bus, prior to boarding or after alighting from the bus, is when the risk is greatest.

Our focus has been on efforts to increase safety awareness in this area as students embark and disembark from buses.  Back to School is an ongoing public education campaign to promote safe road behaviour around buses and the school environment.  Research has shown that the safety benefits of having seatbelts decreases as bus size increases.  The size and construction of larger buses is very effective in protecting passengers, regardless of seat belt installation or use.  However, notwithstanding the statistics, I have a natural interest in this matter; I wear two hats.

**CHAIR** - You're a dad.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'm a dad; three hats.

**Mr FARRELL** - Three hats?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I, as minister for Education and Minister for Infrastructure, have asked the Department of State Growth – the secretaries of the Department of State Growth and Education – to jointly review current seatbelt and standing passenger standards as they apply to school transport, and to consider how government can build on the existing public education effort to promote safe behaviour around buses.  In fact, I have written to Mr Bullard and Mr Evans and I've stated that given I am now both the Minister for Education and Training and the Minister for Infrastructure, I consider it timely to review the safety standards regarding the carriage of children on buses taking them to and from school.  Noting that the safety of children remains, of course, mine and, no doubt, your top priority.  In particular, I request your advice – this is to the secretaries – as to whether allowing children to travel without seatbelts and standing passengers on buses carrying school children remain appropriate, especially in the light of the fact that these practices have been called into question by some school communities; most notably –

**Mr FARRELL** – North-west coast.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - North-west coast and Boat Harbour.  In making this request, I am noting previous advice that the incident histories and crash statistics in Tasmania demonstrate that the on-bus component of school bus transport is the safest way for children to travel to and from school, and that the risk to injury is greatest prior to boarding and after alighting from school buses.  In addition to reviewing the current seatbelt and standing passenger standards, I would also appreciate advice on how the Tasmania government can build ongoing public education efforts, such as State Growth's Back to School campaign that promotes safe road behaviour around buses in the school environment.  I understand that the review of the bus services under State Growth's Project 2018 – bus re‑contracting will provide some additional bus capacity in some areas of the State.  Therefore, after the new services are introduced from early 2019, I would appreciate further analysis of the safety priorities at that time.

So, I am aware of concerns.  There is often a discussion in the community every so often about these matters, and so with wearing two hats, I thought that it was timely to review.

**CHAIR** - We heard an example last week in the parliament from one of our colleagues that a bus that was licensed to seat 53 adults, I believe, was carrying up to 91 school students.  That was shared with us.  So, obviously it is a concern.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - There is a three for two rule.  So, three students under the age of 12, as I understand - I stand to be corrected - can accommodate a seat that can hold two adults.  I'm interested in examples where transport is not compliant with the regulations.  I haven't been provided with anything directly to say that they're not compliant, but the three for two rule is a longstanding arrangement.  Smaller buses with a seating capacity of 25 or less – I stand to be corrected – are required to have seatbelts.  Larger buses, as I've said, have other safety features which don't require -

**CHAIR** - Anyway, we are pleased that you have taken that proactive approach.  Given that there is so much work being done in the space of renewing for passenger and student bus services, then this would be a perfect time to address some of those issues of what is perceived in the community as 'overcrowding' on our school buses.  I'm sure you will agree to make that a question.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Regarding the specific example, which I have highlighted myself in terms of Boat Harbour, which I think some of the discussion in the parliament generated from, I am actively investigating a solution to that issue.

**CHAIR** - At various times, minister, we've all had those situations brought to our attention.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I am interested to know.

**CHAIR** - The Boat Harbour situation was shared on the floor of the House last week.  I've also, at different times, contacted the department in regard to the service that comes from Ringarooma/Branxholme to Scottsdale with what is perceived by the community as overcrowding.  If you are a parent of a child who never gets a seat - and with all due respect, that can happen; if you're not in the clique, you never get a seat.  You stand, morning and night.  That is one of the issues.

**Mr DEAN** - On that point, where a bus is licensed to carry *x* number of passengers, obviously an exemption applies into school buses.  Is that the situation, minister?

**Mr SWAIN** - Well, no, the service is authorised for a maximum number of people in all cases.  The number will vary depending on the bus and the circumstances, but it is part of the authorisation.

**Mr DEAN** - Right, okay.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Chair, I cannot recall now which member asked this question about learner motorcyclists represented in crashes.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - I did.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Okay, I have an answer for you now, Ms Armitage.  For the period of 1 January 2013 to 25 June 2018, as a percentage of all motorcyclist casualties, learner motorcyclists accounted for the following:  14 per cent of fatalities; 15 per cent of serious injuries; 23 per cent of minor injuries; and 26 per cent of first aid injuries.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Thank you.

**Mr DEAN** - I think the department is working with some operators in my area, in the north of the state, with some concerns about the contracts in the school.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Project 2018.

**Mr DEAN** - Yes.  One of the questions that's been asked regularly - and not just by these two operators, it is asked by others - is the 18-month advanced notice prior to service rationalisation and expiry date of the contracts.  It is not being provided, is what operators are saying.  I think the contracts expire in December 2018.  Or there's a contract expiry date then.  That's been identified in documentation that the operator has been provided, that 18 months' notice would be given.  That was a statement made, I think, in August 2016.  So, what they're saying is it's not happening.  Are there some issues around this?

**CHAIR** - They haven't been provided with written notice?

**Mr DEAN** - No, they haven't been providing the notice as was identified that would happen.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the question.  Mr Swain can probably answer.

**Mr SWAIN** - We have lost some time in that application process.  The reason that it has been lost is because there's been very extensive consultation around both the routes, the services, and the contracts.  So, I think the GeoNetwork – the essence of that has been known for, you know, a long time, since the middle of last year.  The schools buses has been more recent, but I acknowledge that we would like to be further ahead than we are in that process.

**CHAIR** - Will that date be firm then, the December 2018, given that you've lost some time?

**Mr SWAIN** - The legislation actually doesn't allow us to extend contracts.  We can issue new contracts but not extend contracts.  So, yes.

**CHAIR** - You just bring in an amendment to the parliament.

**Mr SWAIN** - You could do that.  If we weren't able to resolve the issues over the next couple of months, we might have to look at that in advice to the minister.  But at this stage, also the majority of operators want to move into the new world with certainty as soon as possible.  So, we are trying to work through the matching process now as quickly as we can.

**Mr DEAN** - There is some very expensive infrastructure involved here with buses and so on, so you're right.  That's good to hear that.  The other question I asked, is there a different rate applying to the carriage of students and passenger on buses of a certain age?  Does the age of the bus have an impact on the return to the operators?

**Mr SWAIN** - That will be taken into account in the capital allowance if they get through, yes, if necessary.

**Mr DEAN** - The reason I ask that question is it's been suggested to me, is that there's no incentive in owning a new bus.  It's the new bus that doesn't get as much as the person who owns the older bus as I understand it.  The department is saying that it is cheaper to run a new bus than what it is to run an older bus, and hence the reason there's this difference in allowances provided.  So I'm not sure if I've got that right.

**Mr SWAIN** - That is correct because our capital allowance would be based on the value of the assets.  It's basically a depreciation charge, so when the bus is worth more that allowance will be higher.  I 'm just sort of hesitant because there will be fuel efficiency changes between old and new buses, so you may have - you may have a number of different capital and operating cost allowances, some of which will be higher and some of that should be lower depending on the age of the bus.  So the totality of the payment I would expect to be higher for a new bus, if that makes sense.

**Mr DEAN** - I asked a question for the purposes of ensuring our buses are reasonably new and updated.  Wouldn't it be a better course to either provide all with a similar return rate rather than decrease those with the newer services, minister, because they're obviously going to have a lower fuel efficiency I would think, a much better fuel efficiency than the older buses, but I can't quite see why.

**Mr SWAIN** - The problem with that is then you would effectively have to pay everybody at the highest possible cost base, because you'd have to make sure that everyone could make a living based on what you're giving them.  So you'd have to provide for the costs required for the most expensive service and most expensive bus, which means that a bunch of other operators would be getting an excessive payment.

I just had some advice in relation to the 18 months issue that you raised before.  I'm advised that those particular operators had declined to sign the negotiation deed which was the mechanism through which they got advice.

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, I won't ask any questions on that because it will defeat the reasons for briefing I think and I don't want to create an argument here because of certain things around that as well.  So I want to leave that to the briefing I think is the best way to answer that.

**CHAIR** - Anything else to add, minister?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Just to be very clear in respect to school buses and passenger capacity.  School buses are not exempt from passenger capacity requirements.  I want to make that very clear.  Rather as I mentioned our students - passengers are counted, so if under 12, with respect to three for two rule then applies compared to adult passengers.

**CHAIR** - So in regard to that then should there be a review of the age, because a 12‑year‑old can be quite a large child in various circumstances.  So should there possibly be a review of that age and perhaps claw that back and take a couple of years off the age and then that might be more reflective of our students, and I'm showing no disrespect here to our kids, but a 12‑year‑old can sometimes be quite grown up if you like.  So should there be a review of that age?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I can talk to the secretaries of both Education and Infrastructure -State Growth, apologies.

**CHAIR** - That might assist.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - They may well be part of the review.  But you've raised it now, Chair, so we will see how we go.

**2.5 traffic management and engineering services**

**CHAIR** - We will move to 2.5 which is Traffic management and engineering services.

**Mr DEAN** - I think this is the right area to mention the Mowbray Connector.  The Mowbray Connector, as I understand it, has been identified for lights.  Back at the time of the Dilston Bypass a roundabout had been planned for that same connector, and I was told it was done in the time of the Labor Government.  I'm told that the funding to move ahead with it was withdrawn at the time and moved into the Dilston Bypass, for whatever reason.

It has been stated to me by a number of frequent users of this road and truckies that a roundabout is a much better option.  I understand that is a dearer option than traffic lights.  Traffic lights are not ideal in my view.  They are probably the next best option to an uncontrolled intersection, or junction - it's a junction, that one.  After traffic lights you have a roundabout and then you have the bypass.  They are the ultimate option.  So the roundabout, and why can't we proceed with a roundabout at that intersection, a large roundabout.  There is one here in Cambridge, the Cambridge Airport roundabout.

**CHAIR** - And the Longford one.

**Mr DEAN** - The Longford one, which are large roundabouts on major roads.  So the question being asked is – and motorists, these truck drivers that use that road, and it's a heavily used truck area, have already passed through, if they're going north, about 14 sets of traffic lights - 13 sets over about a 2.5 kilometre area.  Going the other way they will have to pass back through another 13 or 14 sets of traffic lights.  Is the department aware of a plan for a roundabout for that area previously?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - My understanding is the design is out for discussion.  It doesn't involve a roundabout, as you say.  My understanding is that when it comes to traffic flow that roundabouts have to have an even traffic flow coming in at each point to make sure that it is effective.  In the case where you have a lot of traffic coming from - would it be the east from George Town way? - is that the lights can regulate that heavy volume of traffic, though the traffic coming off that Mowbray turning left into Invermay Road is less at the present time, or is that –

**Mr DEAN** - No.  The traffic turning off into Mowbray is fairly heavy.  The traffic moving north and south is fairly heavy.  The lightest traffic is traffic turning from Mowbray Connector going right up to George Town.  That's the lightest traffic and that's the same at Cambridge I suggest.  I suggest the traffic coming out of the old Cambridge Road into the roundabout would not be as heavy as that going north and south and that coming out of the airport.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Okay, I take your point.  My understanding is for roundabouts to work effectively there has to be an evenness of traffic flow at each point, which might be part of the reason why the design as included lights, et cetera.  I'm not aware on the difference of costs in terms of roundabouts versus traffic signals and lights.  You've stated that roundabouts are more expensive, but I'm happy to take some advice from Mr Gregory on that particular matter.  I'm aware of the feedback in the community of paying some attention to social media in recent times and everyone has got an opinion on traffic flows.

**Mr DEAN** - I did consult with the council on this and I haven't got any feedback from them as yet.  I approached them the other day because it was suggested the council is very strongly supportive of traffic lights.  Well, I can't say they're not.  I know I've spoken to one alderman who's not, I can say that, but I'm not sure whether council is on it because I didn't get anything back from the general manager.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The question is a very good one and I'm aware of the various feedback on it.  Shane might be able to provide some more light on this in terms of the technical -

**Mr GREGORY** - So there is a range of ways you can treat an intersection or a junction.  You can have an uncontrolled junction, traffic signals, roundabouts, or overpasses.  It really is a matter of looking at each individual circumstance and considering the traffic flows and what you're really trying to manage.  So we started with a roundabout, we were analysing that junction.

**Mr DEAN** - So there is a plan - was a plan in place are you aware of?

**Mr GREGORY** - No, with this latest funding we actually sat down and started looking at the traffic volumes.  One of the problems is if you go back 10 or 15 years and say this is what we modelled at the time traffic volumes move on and things change, traffic flows change so you need to start again and you do your best projection forward.  What we found when we looked at that particular junction is we have a very strong city bound movement in the morning, and when we modelled a roundabout we found that the right turn movement into the Mowbray Connector caused extensive queuing on the East Tamar Highway coming from the north.

One of the challenges with the roundabout, as the minister said we really want, particularly when you have heavier traffic flows you want them balanced and then the roundabout works smoothly.  When you have much lower traffic flows, some of the examples that we quoted, Longford and so on, it's not as important, but in that case we ended up with traffic queues coming into the city from the north that were three times as long as the queues running traffic signals.  That's because with the traffic signals we can actually prioritise and give the time to the traffic that we need to give it to.  In that particular case traffic signals provide the best option, a better option than a roundabout.  In other cases, in other circumstances that's not necessarily the case, but here it is.

In answer to your question about council we presented on a number of occasions to council, we talked through all of the modelling, explained the results and their engineering team had a look.  There were a couple of aldermen who didn't support it, but I think there was only two out of the entire council that didn't support those traffic signals.

**Mr DEAN** - Because traffic lights are not the be all and end all and contrary to what my member here on the left said a while ago roundabouts are a very safe option because all crashes as police will tell you are very low impact crashes.  So there's very seldom any injury with a roundabout crash.  That's what they are.  So is it in concrete, minister, that the lights will go in or is there further discussion that can be had in relation to that?

**Mr GREGORY** - The committee is saying this is what we're planning to do.  We would still end up with a situation if we said, well let's not do the traffic signals, let's go to a roundabout, we would end up with a situation where in just a few years time we would have very long queues on the East Tamar Highway coming in the morning peak in particular.  The roundabout as you say you get lower severity crashes.  You get a lot more crashes, they tend to be probably crashes, minor injury crashes, there are a lot more of them than other intersection controlled measures.  They tend to be less severe.  We are dealing with the crash issue at that site.  A fair part of that is related to people making poor judgment decisions coming out of a T‑junction, but the traffic signal will resolve that problem.  In essence you're taking away that decision-making point for the motorist, but the traffic signal will give us the ongoing transport efficiency that we would lose within three or four years by putting in a roundabout.

**Mr DEAN** - I am not arguing there shouldn't be an action taken.  There has to be an action taken, there's no doubt about that.  Thank you.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Chair, I have some information regarding motorcycle registrations, and the numbers over the last three years.

So June 2015 there was in total, and there's four different categories as I understand it, reading correctly, 16 531 registrations of motorcycles.  That was an increase of 2.7 per cent on the previous year.  June 2016 16 978, so 3.77 per cent increase on 2015 figures.  June 2017, 17 618, so again increasing, and June 2018, 18 004 registrations.  So it appears there's –

**CHAIR** - As I suspected, increased number of motorcycles on the road.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Registrations, and it's about between - well, let's just say between 2 per cent and 4 per cent increase year on year.

**CHAIR** - So with the member for Windermere now owning a bike he's just added to that increased number on the road, and his wife is very nervous I can assure you.

**Mr DEAN** - What is the plan for traffic management through Wellington Street and Bathurst Street in Launceston?  What about the management plan in Macquarie Street and Davey Street, Hobart?  There's some negotiation for a change, or has that happened?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - No.

**Mr DEAN** - Not yet, so it's still local council.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The process is happening with Davey and Macquarie in Hobart in terms of local government ownership to state.  In terms of Wellington, and did you say Bathurst?

**Mr DEAN** - Bathurst Street.

**Mr GREGORY** - We had a representation last year from council to do a road exchange. That was Wellington in exchange for John Lees Drive, which is still a state road.  So we will be progressing that road exchange but it hasn't happened yet.

**Mr DEAN** - It's being discussed now.  Has that not been resolved?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I plan probably as soon as the end of this week or within seven days to send a letter to the mayor of the Launceston City Council to progress those discussions.

**Mr DEAN** - Thanks, minister.

**CHAIR** - Before we leave this area I just have a question in regard to engineering services.  We know that in the past and more recently some of the road works that have been undertaken by various contractors - I name up the Breadalbane works, significant works - they didn't last five minutes and we had potholes as big as craters.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Road surfacing.

**CHAIR** - Yes.  We had potholes as big as craters in those roads.  Is there anything being done in the way of engineering services so that that type of works doesn't happen again?  It's not a good look that we pay a lot of money for contractors who do, in the community's eyes, second rate jobs.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I have had discussions with Mr Gregory on this particular matter and reflecting some of the concern that you have, and there are standards of course that every contractor should adhere to.

**CHAIR** - Obviously it's the base work that's critical.  That's what the old timers tell me.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - They tell me the same.  It's not always exactly right, but –

**Mr GREGORY** - What we've seen in a number of instances is not actually the foundations or the road base itself.  What we've seen is a failure of the seal.  The final layer, the chip seal, is a critical part of the road.  It keeps the moisture out and that's what protects the material underneath.  If you take any crushed rock and you put it down as a road base and you don't seal it off you will get failure of the pavement.  That's not a reflection of the quality of the base, it's just that moisture has gotten in.  That is what has happened at Firth/Breadalbane that the seal wasn't delivered, put down effectively and that allowed moisture in which caused the potholes.  That was repaired at no cost to the community, and we even got a more expensive final treatment than we would have originally got at the contractor's expense.

We have done quite a bit of work with that part of the industry and which included bringing in the national peak body, the Australian National Paving Association, which covers all bituminous surfacing.  We started a couple of years ago and we had them coming in to do a complete review of surfacing in our part of the market.  They identified a range of things starting with what we were doing through to what the contractors were doing in their designs and in the field.  We've been working through a process over the last couple of years, with additional training.  We're putting some more controls in place and we're moving to some technical solutions so we're getting field information immediately which will then – and the Australian Road Research Board is doing this for us – immediately highlight to the crews in the field when they're doing the works whether they have a problem with the application on the day so that they can correct it there and then.  So we are doing quite a bit of work, but it's not a general across the board poor contracting, we've had some issues in surfacing in particular.

**CHAIR -** It seems to be quite regular when new works are undertaken, minister, but if there's a new process in place, looking at how those roadworks are delivered, then I'm feeling a bit more confident about the future.

**Mr SWAIN** - Just one thing if I could add.  The member for Murchison has raised with us last year the issue of performance standards generally, and in this case one of the things that we've been talking about quite a lot is what benchmark is reasonable for seal failure across a large volume of work, especially with an increased capital program.  So one of the things we are doing in addition to everything that Mr Gregory said, is just trying to get a handle nationally on, if you're doing a 100 kilometres of road, what is a reasonable level of problem to have in terms of re-work.  We want to end up in a place where we have a best agreed outcome across the nation for this.

**Mr DEAN** - The Public Accounts Committee looked at that, and there were a number of recommendations coming out of the Public Accounts Committee inquiry in relation to roads seals and failure.  That all came out of the failed works just outside of Bagdad.

**Mr GREGORY** - Constitution Hill.

**Mr DEAN** - Constitution Hill.  There were a number of recommendations coming out about that and hopefully they'll be taken on board.

**Mr GREGORY** - If I might add, minister, we seal either through new work or re-seals, over 200 kilometres a year, 208 kilometres, so while there are some seal failures that are very prominent and everyone sees those, the seal failure rate is actually pretty low.  There's a lot of work goes on that people really probably don't even notice is happening.  We do a lot of work every year.

**Mr DEAN** - I have a question.  It raises the issue of the East Tamar Highway and what he says is pretty right.  It's a pretty good highway and he raises the question about why that is 100 kilometres per hour when we have roads that are much worse than what it is, the surface, that are 110 kilometres per hour.  Why isn't the East Tamar Highway 110 kilometres an hour?

**Mr SWAIN** - I might take this.  As the Transport Commissioner, I usually take recommendations from council or State Roads about speeds.  I can't talk to the history of that one but we are happy to have that speed in review.

**Mr DEAN** - Thanks very much.

**CHAIR -** A letter might do the trick there.

**Grants and Subsidies.**

**CHAIR -** Members, can we move to grants and subsidies now.  It covers construction of streets in towns; shipping and ferry subsidies; and obviously the King Island shipping.  Is that encompassed in this one, minister?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Bass Islands would be part of –

**CHAIR -** So has that subsidy increased with the new shipping online?

**Mr GARCIA** - The contingency's there in case there's something required on the island.  In Bass Island, certainly there's not a direct payment to Bass Island line from this arrangement at all.

**CHAIR -** What about Bruny Island ferry?  This is covered under this as well.  Is that the same?  It is only a contingency if something goes wrong.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - I was going to ask where we are with the Bruny Island ferry.

**CHAIR -** There we are.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The update on the Bruny Island ferry situation, thank you, very much, Mr Armstrong.  The Transport Commission contracts ferry services for Bruny Island which, of course is a crucial transport link for residents, businesses and visitors alike.  The process to procure a new ferry service contract commenced in late 2016, as you'd be aware, Mr Armstrong, and involved an initial expression of interest and subsequent request for proposal stage for invited proponents and the duration of the new contract will be, as I understand it, at least 10 years.

The process was designed to be fair and equitable for proponents and to deliver the best possible outcomes for all, including minimising fare impacts on Bruny Island residents, in particular.  The process was extremely competitive and proposals received were detailed and of a high quality.  A detailed evaluation of all proposals has been completed and included input from independent maritime and shipping experts and probity oversight.

Given the obvious importance of the service to Bruny Island residents, businesses and visitors, the Transport Commission is focused on delivering a seamless transition to the new contract model.  I did have a visit to Bruny Island about four or five weeks ago and visited the school and some businesses and residents to gauge their opinion on what the new contract might look like and any concerns that they may all have or desire for a new service.

The current contract has been extended for 12 weeks to ensure sufficient time for a seamless transition to a new contract and the process is ongoing.  I will be making a statement in the near future at the completion of the process.

**Mr ARMSTRONG -** Thank you.

**CHAIR -** The hits on the tourism website around driving on our roads?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The website has been designed to be a repository for messaging material, so film clips have been designed to be promoted on digital screens located in Hobart airport.  The clips currently appear approximately 250 000 times per month at Hobart airport.  The films are actively being promoted by stakeholders on screens and in their electronic communications.  For these reasons we do not anticipate a high visitation rate to our website given the rotation.  We don't have the website analytics at hand, but given the amount of time the film clips have been promoted on digital screens at the airport and elsewhere, we anticipate that would have a high impact in terms of people absorbing those messages.

**CHAIR -** There's been an additional three hits today because the member for Launceston hit it three times.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** No, I'm actually just reading the minister's letter whereby he says, 'Important road safety messages, road rules and differences in Tasmanian driving conditions are reinforced in all activity along with directions to a visiting drivers' webpage', and that's why I wondered how many people have gone to the visiting drivers' webpage.  If we're actually asking people to go to that webpage my question was, how many hits has that webpage had.  Apart from the fact that people might stand and look a little bit at it?  You'd hope that they'd go back to their hotel room and go onto that webpage and look at it more thoroughly.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I just said we haven't had analytics at hand, but I am sure we might be able to obtain those for you.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** I notice we do have several languages there and obviously the languages at the airport would all be in English one would think.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Not necessarily.  I can't be certain.  I know the biosecurity information is multilingual now but I am not sure about the films.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** There's about 15 languages here so I would have thought that that wouldn't run through 15 different languages at the airport.

**Mr GREGORY** - It may run through the top two or three but we'll get an answer.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Ilook forward to the answer about the hits on the website.  Thank you.

**CHAIR -** If there's nothing else in grants and subsidies, minister, the Capital Investment Program.  We've talked about quite a bit of that already.  The truck wash facilities, the announcement for those, is that coming to this area or is that with the minister for agriculture?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - My understanding is it's the Minister for Primary Industries and Water.

**CHAIR -** I will leave that until Thursday.  Thank you.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Just one quick question with regard to that, and I have written to the minister about some of these issues.  I have now taken over a new area with the electoral changes to boundaries.  I now have a section of the Midland Highway which I didn't have before.  Accordingly I have spoken with several land owners involved in the compulsory acquisition, and I think that land owner was recently satisfied with the response you gave.  Will the department continue to work with the landowners, some of whom are quite unhappy, particularly in instances where their properties are cut in half or sections are cut off and the department basically says to them, 'Well, that's okay, you can develop that in the future'.  If they're not going to develop that land, it's of no benefit to them, and in fact, it's an actual loss of the land that they have.  If someone's dissatisfied with the response, will the Government continue to work with landowners to try to get a satisfactory outcome?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We have a process to always work with landowners and pay fair and reasonable - is compensation the right word - for land owners.  We don't always get entirely satisfied land owners.  Some of the issues have been where the properties are on two sides or both sides of the road, and –

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Of the new road.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes.  And gateways change and things like that.  It has been an issue, is my basic understanding, but Mr Gregory might want to outline the process.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Before you do, I think part of the problem I am seeing, and this is a question, is that whereby the government, or whoever is doing the negotiating, determines that you are now about to subdivide that land and they put a higher value on it because they consider because it can be subdivided it's worth more, and the landowner has no intention of ever subdividing that land and all that's happened is they've lost that off their property, I ask that that should be taken into consideration as opposed to the negotiator saying, 'Well, this is worth so much more now to you if you subdivide it', and you have no intention of ever subdividing.

**Mr GREGORY** - Can I just firstly, the only locations where we are severing land –

**Ms ARMITAGE -** I'm just giving you just vague, I'm not mentioning any properties.

**Mr GREGORY** - I appreciate that.  But the only location where that is happening is actually on the Perth Links.  So there is no other location on the Midland Highway investment where we are severing land because generally we are in the road reserve.  We are taking a widening.  The valuation process and negotiations on the acquisition value is all done by the Office of the Valuer-General and that's done in accordance with the provisions of the Land Act Acquisition Act.  My understanding of that is that the value of the land is determined on best use at the time that the notice to treat is issued.  My understanding of that is, if we were severing farmland, the Valuer-General takes into account the best uses of that land at the time of the notice to treat which would mean that if its zoned rural, it could only be valued as zoned rural.  That's my understanding of that.  When considering betterment, they wouldn't necessarily consider, 'Well, that land that sits between the new Perth Link Road and the old highway is automatically residential land'.  That's my understanding, that they take into account a whole range of factors.

The discussions that we have as a department with the property owner is about talking to them about if we have some flexibility to move the alignment around, to give them a better outcome we do, but that flexibility is a bit limited because essentially we're trying to get the right alignment to achieve the transport outcomes.  But if we can move the road 20 metres this way, often it is that way.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** So we are fairly flexible as we can be in our negotiations with landowners.  That is all I'm asking.  We have had some others, as the minister knows, further up the street.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, that's right, Ms Armitage.  Mr Gregory mentioned the Perth Links.  I have just announced that the Vexsure joint venture is the preferred contractor for the Perth Link Roads project.  That's scheduled to commence construction in late 2018 at $93 million in total.  The Perth Links Road project has been brought forward by two years from the original 2020 commencement date, and I have some detail here around an update for the Midland Highway if anyone would like it.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Yes, definitely.  It would be good to know when the Midland Highway is going to being 80.

**CHAIR -** And 60 and 40.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - This is a $500 million commitment over 10 years and it's the largest single investment in the Midland Highway and will result in a much safer highway for all users, notwithstanding the efficiency that one gains as well.  Using the Ozwraps methodology, which is the International Road Safety Audit approach adopted by the Combined National Automobile Association to underpin our investment strategy.  Our objective is to raise the standard of the Midland Highway to a minimum of three star Ozwrap rating.  The roadworks required to raise the Midland Highway to a three start Ozwrap rating primarily include central flexible safety barrier and safe turning facilities, alignment improvements and additional overtaking facilities.

As of today, the following projects have been completed.  South of Kempton, $6 million.  North and south of Spring Hill, $8 million.  Mud Moores Road, junction upgrade at $0.7 million.  South of Tunbridge, Stages 1 and 2, $5.8 million.  Esk Main Road junction, $2.3 million.  Kings Meadows connector roundabout, $1.3 million.  Mangalore to Bagdad, Stage 1, $10 million.  Kempton to Melton Mowbray Stage 1 and 2, $24 million.  White Lagoon, Tunbridge to Mona Vale, $23 million.  Perth to Breadalbane duplication, $43 million; and Symmons Plains to South Perth $16 million.

The following projects are currently under construction:  Epping Forest to Powranna, $33 million.  Mangalore to Bagdad Stage 2, $24 million.  St Peters Pass to south of Tunbridge, $25 million and York Plains to St Peters Pass, $15 million.  I've mentioned the Perth Links project.  A total of 47 kilometres or 31 per cent of the 150 kilometres of the Midland Highway has now been completed with 35 kilometres currently under construction.  By June 2019, 75 kilometres or 50 per cent of the works will either be complete or under construction and the remaining sections of the Midland Highway yet to be upgraded are scoped for delivery as part of the second five year agreement within the ten year action plan and that is an update there.  Thank you, Ms Armitage.

**Mr DEAN** - Mangalore to Bagdad is an interesting one.  When the bypass of Brighton was put in, the highway as I understand it, and there was a lot of publicity about it, was to extend from where the Commonwealth Refugee Centre was, straight through and come out, I think, at the other side of Bagdad at the bottom of Constitution Hill there somewhere.  With the new update of the Mangalore to Bagdad Highway you've just referred to, does that mean that the other connection that was going to go in is off the agenda?  Is it because you couldn't negotiate with the farmers and properties that the highway would have had to go through?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That's some history that I'm not aware of, but Mr Gregory can respond to that.

**Mr GREGORY** - We completed the planning for what became known as the Bagdad Bypass in about 2010 or 2011.  The plan was to continue exactly as you're saying, continue straight off the end of the –

**Mr DEAN** - Commonwealth property there.

**Mr GREGORY** - It doesn't run straight through, it veers to the east and goes around the back of Shene.  So there are a number of significant heritage properties.  There's essentially the heritage precinct in that area.  Its high quality farmland, so we ended up having to push out to the east and we get into the foothills, and those foothills and the ridges that come down are extremely hard rock, and just because of the geometry and the grades you need for trucks, we ended up with some very big cuts, so the long and the short of it is that project became the $400 million construction project and because of the need to deviate and go around and climbing up, it comes out the other side of Dysart.  It comes around the back and that was constrained because of the nature of Constitution Hill which has a lot of slip faces and while you leave them alone, they're fine, but when you disturb them they become quite active.

In essence, we ended up with a $400 million project that on the current volumes and projected volume, wasn't going to provide a level of improvement, particularly north bound, and transport efficiency that warranted spending that amount of money and we're thinking yearly with 80 per cent of the total investment in the current Midland Highway.  For the moment it's not a viable project and sometime in the future it will be, but bear in mind that the traffic volumes through that sections are not particularly high at the moment, about 20 000 vehicles a day on the Brighton bypass and heading into Brighton, but it drops off quite quickly.

**Mr DEAN** - So the access will be around the roundabout that's currently there and through the Mangalor/Bagdad where the highway –

**Mr GREGORY** - For the moment we have a corridor, we've identified a corridor and that's in the planning scheme, so there is an identified corridor.

**Mr DEAN -** It is there a corridor.

**Mr GREGORY -** We took the opportunity at the time, there were a couple of properties that came on the market and we took the opportunity to purchase those for future alignment.  So it hasn't been an issue of not being able to negotiate with anyone.  We had quite a long planning process and we worked with all of the property owners to come up with an alignment that worked for everyone.  It's just that at the moment it's not a viable project.

**Mr DEAN -** Thanks for the explanation.

**CHAIR -** Thank you very much.  We now come to the very interesting area of you being the Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence industries.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I thank the State Growth team and Mr Gregory who's been up and down.

**CHAIR -** Yes, so thank you very much.  Gary, nice to see you.

**Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence**

**CHAIR -** Minister, do you have a brief overview in regard to this new area?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I have a very brief overview.

**CHAIR -** And you might introduce your team at the table.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I have Kim Evans, the secretary of State Growth, and Mark Bowles, the General Manager, Business and Trade.

**CHAIR -** Thank you very much.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Chair, I will be brief, but as you would appreciate, Tasmania has a long history of manufacturing innovation and our advanced manufacturing sector has an international reputation for excellence.  In recognition of this, the Premier has created a new portfolio for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries, and I'm delighted to have this ministry among my portfolio responsibilities.

While many of our advanced manufacture mining equipment, maritime [inaudible] metals engineering by definition, advanced manufacturing is not sector specific and rather, what is produced.  Advanced manufacturers are defined by how they are creating.  Our advanced manufacturing sector also underpins our capability in defence industries where there is significant potential for growth over the next decade.

Several of our advanced manufacturing businesses are already leading the nation in their area of expertise, with niche land and maritime manufacturing as well as research and education.  This includes business like PFG AquaTruck, a global leader in agricultural industry, Penguin Composites which recently won an important contract to supply components of the Australian Army Hawkei Protected Vehicles, as well as the University of Tasmania, of course familiar with and the Australian Maritime College.

With the Australian Government's commitment to invest significantly in defence over the coming years, Tasmania is well positioned to pursue new opportunities in the advanced manufacturing and defence industries sector.  The Government is working collaboratively with industry to increase opportunities for Tasmanian companies to access new global markets.  Around 30 Tasmanian businesses in manufacturing and services already possess the skills and knowledge to participate in bids for defence projects, and we are working side by side with local industry to grow our presence across Australia and internationally.

Over the past 12 months we have appointed Tasmania's first defence advocate, a retired rear admiral, Steve Gilmore, to work with industry to identify opportunities and advocate for Tasmania's capability in the defence space.

**CHAIR -** Is that called a lobbyist, effectively?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Well, an advocate.

**CHAIR -** Okay.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** We supported a Tasmanian delegation of six Tasmanian businesses to attend the Pacific 2017 Naval Expo in Sydney and hosted the First Defence Futures forum to provide the local industry with insight into key defence initiatives and build a connection between local businesses and the key contacts in the defence industry.  Earlier this year I accompanied the Tasmanian delegation to the Sea Air Space exposition in Washington USA on one of the largest maritime expositions in the world.  Led by the defence advocate, seven Tasmanian businesses participated as part of the broader Australian presence at the Air Sea Space.

In 2017 we also supported the establishment of the Advanced Manufacturing Advisory Committee through the Tasmanian Minerals and Energy Council, which has resulted in a number of initiatives to support the industry.  Through the Department of State Growth, we've also introduced programs to support business growth such as the advanced manufacturing market extension program to help grow interstate and overseas markets and the Advanced Manufacturing, Innovation and Growth Voucher System to support business improvements that will help our manufacturers to be nationally and internationally competitive over the long term.

While our advanced manufacturing and defence sectors are relatively small, our niche specialist knowledge and capability in particular in maritime specialisations is increasingly recognised on the world stage.  I look forward to continuing to work with our local advanced manufacturing companies to grow their access to both defence and indeed civilian markets.

**CHAIR -** Thank you.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** I think all of it has been covered.  I note the lucrative contract already secured as part of the $195 billion Australian defence integrated investment program.  I'm not sure that there's much more you'd like to add, because there's very little data which is in the books.  So is there anything else that you'd like to add that the output will deliver, or have you pretty well covered over all of it in your overview?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I can talk a lot if you would like me to, about this.  I'm excited about it.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Yes, if you could expand a little bit on what the output will deliver, that would be good.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Okay, so in some of the budget initiatives, advanced manufacturing and defence for example to set the scene, Tasmania's manufacturing industry plays a significant role in the state's economy as an important player.  In 2016-17, Tasmania's manufacturing gross sector state product was $1.73 billion, which is 6.4 per cent of the state's total.  I've mentioned the importance of the manufacturing sector and in recognition of that, we've developed a five‑year Tasmanian advanced manufacturing action plan to identify and support growth opportunities in the sector.

This is complemented by the defence strategy which has outlined an extensive range of initiatives that support industry in its bid to pursue defence contracts.  Now in the budget to support these industries the initiatives that will benefit the advanced manufacturing and defence industries sector includes support for premises and trainees, the payroll tax rebate scheme extension, the Trades and Water Centre of Excellence, $7.5 million, that's $2.5 million annually, has been allocated over three years for a target of small business grants for an apprentices and trainees program.  This will provide a grant of up to $5000 for each new apprentice or trainee.

There are some other initiatives here as well.  I developed a passion for the advanced manufacturing sector when I was chair of the Tasmanian – or Caterpillar Transition Task Force.  You might recall that when Caterpillar centralised their operations to Rayong in Thailand, that was announced in around 2015.  A loss of 280 direct jobs and a loss of, if you like, jobs and activity in the small and medium sized businesses supporting caterpillar.

The task force was very effective, in fact I believe that the jobs lost have been as a result of the centraliser or Caterpillar's decision, notwithstanding the fact that Caterpillar have kept their research and development home in Burnie, which is around 120 jobs as I understand it, or it was around 2015.  The grants that were provided were effective in replacing those jobs in many respects.  All the jobs may well have potentially been replaced that were displaced as a result of Caterpillar's decision.  I'm getting some nods to the left of me here.

What I did appreciate, and it includes businesses in northern Tasmania, we travelled to Thailand to look at the Rayon facility as part of the Caterpillar transition taskforce, including businesses from your area, Ms Armitage.  We have highly skilled people, highly innovated businesses, that can compete on the world stage in key niche markets and what we realised was that we weren't selling our advanced manufacturing sector enough.  As part of that, some of the recommendations from the Caterpillar Transition Taskforce, was to not only produce a promotional video about our capability in Tasmania in a lot of different sectors, but also to highlight our expertise.  As a result of that we've supported the establishment of the Manufacturing Centre of Excellence in Burnie.

That then flows onto the defence industry space.  There is billions of dollars being spent over the next ten years and some $195 billion worth of Australian government expenditure.  We've developed our defence industry strategy, that's being updated now by our defence advocate, Steve Gilmore.  When you look at our capability in the advanced manufacturing and the defence industry space, it is really quite outstanding especially our niche capability.  When we visited Washington DC in April of this year, we took along around seven or eight business leaders in the defence industry space to the Air Sea Space expo.  We were one third of the Australian stand.  I was the only minister present of any other state of Australia, of which other businesses from other states were admittedly going back to their ministers and saying, 'Where are you?'  But of course that is up to them.

**CHAIR -** Who did you meet with as part of that?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** As part of that we visited the Under Secretary of the Navy.  He was a guest speaker at one of the major functions we attended, invited Thomas Modley to Tasmania to see our capability.  We've visited a number of what's called primes, so major defence industry companies that were there at the expo to ensure that Tasmania sold the opportunities that we can present to the primes, for example.  Mr Modley accepted a personal invitation from me to visit Tasmania later in 2018, I understand, which is good.

**Ms SIEJKA -** And that's going to happen presumably at some point?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I'm expecting it to happen.

**Ms SIEJKA -** Well he agreed to.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Potentially.  He agreed to visit.  So we're following that up in writing, and have written to Mr Modley.  We had private meetings with US defence representatives and defence businesses which provided invaluable networking opportunities and helped build global relationships for our Tasmanian companies.  The delegates participated in a full program of meeting and activities, including opportunities to build relationships with many different businesses including large primes such as Northrop Grumman, BAE and Navantia.  One of those companies was successful in some multimillion dollar contracts, a company, Pipet Maritime International?

**Mr BOWLES -** Yes.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Based in northern Tasmania and was successful as I understand it to date, a multimillion dollar contract as a result of that business.  So we have a lot of capability in this space and we need to make sure that the world understand and know about it, which is one of the reasons why there has been a Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industry appointed in the new government.  This aligns with the federal government with Christopher Pyne being the Minister for Defence Industries as well.  Part of the visit was part of the G'Day USA, where that had a particular focus on defence industries which Mr Pyne presented at and was facilitated and hosted by Joe Hockey.  This gave us a greater knowledge about our potentially opportunities in this sector.

**CHAIR -** Thank you.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Thank you for the comprehensive answer, minister.

**Mr FARRELL -** What will your tactics be as far as dealing with the federal government goes.  You mentioned your relationship with Christopher Pyne.  I imagine there'll be competition from other states.  Are we directly competing with other states or are we looking at offering products which are specialised in different areas?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** We're offering products that are specialised and niche products.  I wouldn't say that we're not competing with other states and other companies.  We most likely probably are.  We launched our defence industry strategy back in 2016.  That's being looked at again in light of the fact that we need to amplify the knowledge of that expertise in Tasmania.  We won't be going to the federal government as saying, look, you know, we're 2 per cent of the population, we get 0.03 per cent of the defence spend.  We deserve more, a greater look-in here.

Rather the approach will be, look, yes we are 2 per cent of the population.  Look, we do have the capability in Tasmania and while we do have that percentage of overall spend, our companies in Tasmania are good enough and capable enough to win these key contracts nationally.  So it's an approach to say, 'Here we are, here's the examples of our capability, and you know what, we're bloody good at what we do and this is what our companies in Tasmania have to offer and we've got Tasmanian government backing to do it and their support'.

**CHAIR -** Is that the end of your questioning, Mr Farrell?

**Mr FARRELL -** Yes, it was mainly about the -

**CHAIR -** Fine.  The contracts that come up, is there a central point that anyone who's in this space can go to to see what contracts are coming up?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Yes, that's a very good question.  Mark, would you like to -

**Mr BOWLES -** There's a defence industry capability organisation that provides its own direct engagement, particularly with SMEs, and we work very closely with defence and their industry organisations to help match the new opportunities including new procurement opportunities as well as national innovation grants.  We provide that matching between those defence initiatives and SMEs already working in defence, or SMEs in Tasmania that could potentially work in defence.

**Ms ARMITAGE -** Right, so we have a list of all those companies that are in Tasmania that have expertise in that space that would be matched to some of the requirements through that portal.  Would that be right?

**Mr EVANS -** We've currently got about 30 Tasmanian businesses directly doing work as part of the defence spend.  But there are other potential companies too that we are in touch with who could also contribute in the future.  One of the key things we've done is to develop relationships with what we call the primes, the lead contractors for large procurements that the commonwealth undertake, for example, a submarine or a destroyer.

Now a prime that has the lead contractor doesn't provide all of the bits for a submarine; it has a whole range of supplies in the supply chain.  We've very much got onto the radar of those primes because we can supply specialised parts or services into the supply chains.  So it's a multi-pronged strategy.  We look at directly for procurement opportunities as they come along, because the Commonwealth have a pretty good forward program that's very transparent, we know what's coming up, and then we have relationships with primes who are likely to be the lead bidder for the larger contracts.

**Mr ARMSTRONG -** What is the capabilities of the defence advocate and what he can bring to the position.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Steve Gilmore is actually posted in Washington for three years which was very helpful in making further contacts in Washington DC.  Steve was appointed in August 2017 as Tasmania's first defence advocate to promote Tasmania defence industry capability, and incidentally the federal government have just appointed their first defence advocate.

**Ms SIEJKA -** Defence export advocate.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Defence export advocate recently as well.  Rear Admiral Gilmore has enjoyed a distinguished 40‑year career in the Australian Defence Force, reaching very senior levels in both the ADF and the Royal Australian Navy, operating in both Australia and abroad.  This included serving as head of Australian Defence Staff and Australian Defence Attaché at the Australian embassy in Washington from 2014 until last year.  He is held in tremendously high regard, both in Australia and internationally.  Most recently awarded the Legion of Merit, the United States military's highest honour for a non-US citizen.

While the rear admiral is on a well-earned break, I take the opportunity to acknowledge his hard work on behalf of our state and his appointment.  He's been working to support Tasmanian industry develop relationships with key decision makers and to promote our niche capabilities.  It included the forum in November 2017 and the Pacific 2017 International Maritime Expo in Sydney, and of course the recent Sea Air Space expo in the United States with Tasmanian companies.

He has extensive knowledge of defence and defence industry and has helped open the doors for Tasmanian companies, as well as improving the reputation of the state as a defence supplier nationally and overseas.  Working closely with the Department of State Growth to refresh the Tasmanian government's defence industry strategy and to ensure that Tasmania is best placed to thrive in the defence market.  This refreshed strategy will be released in the coming months and I'm confident they will benefit from the defence advocate's insights in that particular matter.  The feedback I've received so far on his employment has been very positive.  I've seen Steve in action in Washington DC a few months ago.  Very highly regarded, an enormous amount of knowledge and we're very fortunate to be able to secure his services.

**CHAIR -** Is it a full time position, minister?  You said he's on well-earned leave.  Is that a four week leave?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** I'm not sure –

**CHAIR -** Is it a full time position?

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** He's a contractor, yes.

**Mr EVANS -** He's a contractor as opposed to an employee.  So we contract him for a certain number of days, and it's already become apparent that we need to buy more of his services so we are talking to him about the future moving forward, trying to secure him for a longer term.  And under a different arrangement which would see him contributing more work.

**CHAIR -** So it's not a full time position.

**Mr DEAN -** What's the cost of the contract?

**Mr EVANS -** The cost of the contract, we budgeted $120 000 per year which is dirt cheap.  We've utilised the 50 days that we had under that contract and we've just allocated some more money for some funding from next financial year to top up his contract for this current financial year, and now we're renegotiating for the future.  He's based in Canberra at the moment but he is contemplating a move to Hobart.

**CHAIR -** Thank you.  Any other questions, members?

Minister, on behalf of Committee B I thank you for your generous time today.  I particularly thank all those who have supported you.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Yes, as I would like to thank them fervently.

**CHAIR -** We know how much effort goes into compiling those briefing notes around everything that you think possibly might be asked by the committee, so we thank you.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Thanks so much for acknowledging the hard work of my team, and the departments which I represent, and thank you to.

**CHAIR -** Thank you, and all the best for the next time that you come before the committee.

**Mr ROCKLIFF -** Thank you.  Thank you very much.

**CHAIR -** Thank you, Lynne, that will be us for today.

**The committee adjourned at 6.25 p.m.**