

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 21 May 1997

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

The meeting commenced at 9.00 am.

The CHAIRMAN (Ms McHale): The Estimates Committee will be reported by Hansard and a proof document will be made available to the committee clerk progressively throughout the day. The daily *Hansard* will be available the following morning. I caution members that if a Minister asks that a matter be put on notice it is up to members to lodge the question on notice with the Clerk's office. Only supplementary information which the Minister agrees to provide will be sought within one week. It will also greatly assist Hansard if when referring to the Budget Statements volumes or the Consolidated Fund Estimates, members give the page number, item, program, and amount in preface to their question.

As has been the practice of previous Estimates Committees, members should not raise questions about matters of general concern which do not have an item of expenditure in the consolidated fund. The Estimates Committee's consideration of the Consolidated Fund's Estimates of Expenditure will be restricted to discussion of those items for which a vote of money is proposed. We are dealing with estimates of expenditure and that should be the prime focus of this committee. While there is scope for members to examine many matters, they need to be clearly related to matters of expenditure. For example, members are free to pursue performance indicators which are included in the Budget Statements while there remains a clear link between the questions and the estimates. It would assist in the committee's examination if questions and answers can be kept brief, without unnecessarily omitting material information. It is the intention of the Chairman to ensure that as many questions as possible can be asked and answered and that questions and answers are short and to the point.

The Minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee, rather than ask that the question be put on notice for the next sitting week. For the purpose of following up the provision of this information, would the Minister clearly indicate to the committee which supplementary information he or she agrees to provide. Details in relation to supplementary information have been provided to members and advisers and, accordingly, I ask the Minister to cooperate with those requirements.

Division 70: Family and Children's Services, \$141 863 000 -

[Ms McHale, Chairman.]

[Mrs Parker, Minister for Family and Children's Services.]

[Mr R. Fisher, Director General.]

[Mr S. La Piana, Manager, Financial Planning and Budgeting.]

[Ms P. Bagdonavicius, Acting Executive Director, Strategy and Funding Management.]

[Mr P.M.A. Birchall, Assistant Director, Family and Community Support.]

[Mr G. Bowler, Executive Director.]

Ms ANWYL: I refer to the forward estimates at page 356. The only item for which there will be a decrease in funding in future estimates is capital services. How firm are those figures, and why will there be a decrease in funding for capital services?

Mr La PIANA: There will be an increase in capital services from 1997-98 to 1998-99 of \$500 000.

Ms ANWYL: How firm are those figures, and what is the reason for the variation?

Mr La PIANA: This is the draft capital works program and it has been lodged with Treasury, so those figures are firm at this time.

Ms ANWYL: Is there a reason for the reduction over that period of four years of almost \$7m?

Mr La PIANA: These are forward estimates. Every year there is an opportunity to look at proposals for new works, which are submitted at budget time. In 1998-99, we will have an opportunity to submit new proposals, which will go into the forward estimates for the next four year period. Every year we put in estimates for the following year, plus three years after that.

Ms ANWYL: What is the rationale for the change in funding arrangements so that the Right to Buy scheme will fall within the budget of this department to the amount of \$3m? Will that funding be administered by this department or by another department?

Mr La PIANA: The Right to Buy scheme was included in our department's budget statements. A document that was sent to us from Treasury indicates why the Right to Buy scheme was included within the budget of our department. It states -

This advice is to confirm that at the meeting of 29 January 1997, a Cabinet Budget Standing Committee approved the transfer of funding responsibility for the miscellaneous services division items to budget sector agencies from 1 July 1997. The Right to Buy scheme is administered by Homeswest, a non-budget sector agency, and therefore it is not possible to transfer the Right to Buy scheme to that agency. Accordingly, and as part of its deliberations, the Cabinet Budget Standing Committee considered that Family and Children's Services was the most appropriate budget sector agency to be responsible for the Right to Buy scheme.

Ms ANWYL: Will it create any administrative burdens for the department?

Mr La PIANA: No.

[9.10 am]

Ms ANWYL: It is effectively a change of responsibility for the funding?

Mr La PIANA: That is right, and it is only for the 1996-97 financial year.

Ms ANWYL: What will happen after that time?

Mr La PIANA: No estimate has been given.

Ms ANWYL: Is it a one-off?

Mr FISHER: Yes. It was done for administrative and Treasury convenience. Treasury looked for a vehicle in which it could place this money for this year, because Homeswest is not a consolidated fund agency. It selected us. It is a one-off; it will not occur again.

Mr KOBELKE: Who will accept responsibility under the Financial Administration and Audit Act for this \$3m, and what requirements will be placed on the Minister and the department to ensure they meet those responsibilities? It is your budget item, yet you do not seem to have anything to do with it.

Mr FISHER: When this issue first came up, obviously the department asked some questions of Treasury. We sought, in a sense, absolution from Treasury with regard to our responsibilities, and that was granted to us in the form of this correspondence that we received. It has been done for administrative convenience. It is tied up with two issues: The relationship between the Commonwealth and State Governments with regard to housing finance, and the fact that the State Government wanted to ensure that this funding was placed with a CRF agency. Homeswest is not a CRF agency, but this department is. The funding has been placed with us, but we believe it will not be an ongoing concern for us, and we do not think we will have any problems, in the sense that Treasury has indicated that this will be a one-off situation. I understand what you are saying, and I am happy to give you some confirmation in writing of that.

The CHAIRMAN: Can you clarify what supplementary information you will provide?

Mr FISHER: I will provide a copy of the letter which outlines the reasons for this occurrence and the impact that it will have on our responsibilities under the FAA Act, which is what the member asked for.

Ms ANWYL: I refer to expenditure at page 356. It appears that there has been little increase in the number of FTEs overall. Is that deliberate, because the department believes there is no need for further employees, or is it a reflection of the funding which has been allocated? I ask that question in the light of the release of the joint report from the Australian Law Reform Commission and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission about the real needs of children in care and protection.

Mrs PARKER: There has been a change of one FTE. We have significantly increased the funding allocation to non-government agencies for the delivery of many of the services. Forty per cent of our funding for the delivery of services goes to non-government agencies. We had a general increase in our budget this year. The budget allocation to non-government agencies actually increased by more than 8 per cent. Although there has been no increase in the number of FTEs, there has been a significant increase in the amount of money that is spent on the delivery of services. These figures in no way indicate that the level of services provided for the protection and care of children is stable. The increase in funding is reflected in the funding for non-government agencies, rather than in these figures, and in

the funding that we give to agencies that are in partnership with us to deliver the services that we identify through our planning processes as being required.

Mr FISHER: There has been a trend over recent years for government departments to reduce their FTE levels. Family and Children's Services is an exception. We have not reduced FTEs over the last three or four years. In fact, we have increased our FTEs. In 1996, our base level was 1 088 FTEs; we now have 1 123 FTEs, which is an increase of 35. The Police Service has also increased FTE numbers. I think we are the only two CRF departments that have increased FTE numbers. Over the past three or four years, we have put a tremendous amount of effort into identifying FTE numbers that we can take out of administrative areas and place into service delivery. As a result of the improvements that we have made to our head office systems, we have been able to free up between 60 and 80 FTE numbers that were previously allocated to corporate services and transfer those to field positions. We are in the process of reviewing the whole organisation, not just corporate services, to see where we can make more effective use of our FTEs. The aim is to identify additional resources that can be used to meet the increased demand for our services, particularly in the growth areas north and south of the metropolitan area. Much of the increased FTE allocation that we have been given by the Government in the past three or four years has been used for early intervention and preventative work with regard to the Parenting Plus program, the parent information centres, the parent link home visiting service, the Best Start program, family group conferencing, and so on. The FTE numbers that have been freed up within head office have been allocated to that service delivery.

Ms ANWYL: Can you identify the non-government agencies that have received increased funding? Does that mean that the department regards it as very important to provide non-government agencies with increased resources but not important that the department also be provided with increased resources?

[9.20 am]

Mrs PARKER: Our budget has been increased, which I rigorously recommended. This is a demand driven sector, particularly in the care of children. It is important that although the budget was difficult to frame for the Government overall because of a lack of increase in revenue despite an increase in state economic activity, we were able to maintain and increase our budget allocation. We were significantly successful compared with other departments.

It is important we have a strong partnership with non-government and community based organisations. We are committed to ensuring that funding levels for those organisations are strong so that they can continue to be active in the community in the delivery of their services. We have a strong partnership with the non-government sector. For example the parent information centres are all government run and staffed by departmental people. The parent home link visiting service is being trialled in three community based organisations: Clan, Merrilinga and CentreCare.

At Mirrabooka the parent information centre is funded and run by the Department of Family and Children's Services. The parent link service run from that office is funded by a non-government organisation. That is an example of a close partnership between community groups and the department. It is proving to be very effective. While giving much support to those community based organisations the department continues to provide its own range of services.

Mr FISHER: The department is not capable of providing those services to the community by itself. I like to think it has a strong, healthy relationship with the non-government sector. Approximately 40 per cent of our budget is allocated to non-government organisations. The department received an increase in budget in 1997-98. The increase in budget for the non-government sector was more than 8 per cent.

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: The 8 per cent increase to non-government services includes assistance to the Foster Care Association to establish a presence on the Internet and expand services to support contact for children in care and their families. With the continuing government commitment to the CPI, a 2.8 per cent increase is projected for state funded services of \$549 000 for this coming year.

A number of initiatives have been made in relation to domestic violence in accordance with the state domestic violence plan which include additional safety accommodation in regional areas amounting to approximately \$300 000; child-care and counselling services for children in refuges, \$250 000; and women's refuges and outreach support services, \$500 000.

The supported accommodation assistance program will receive an indexation increase. The amount of \$150 000 was allocated for the transfer of the Jardine Women's refuge in Wyndham from the Ministry of Justice to this department. A new metropolitan Aboriginal family support service will be established. As part of commonwealth-state funded children's services the State and Commonwealth meet the supplementation costs of vacation care, occasional care, long day care and out of school hours care.

Dr CONSTABLE: I note the Minister's comments on the Government's commitment to NGOs. I also note from an answer to a question on notice recently in respect of employees who commit crimes of child abuse your stringent policy on employment in the government sector. Do you demand the same procedures for the NGOs?

Mr FISHER: Obviously the question of screening people engaged in the employment or in dealings with young children is an Australia-wide issue. It is an issue on which Western Australia has taken a national lead. The Department of Family and Children's Services is chairing a working party which reports to the Ministers. The Ministers will meet in July to consider the recommendations of that working party. We are saying there must be in place national screening procedures and sharing of information on all people who deal with young children whether that be child-care, preschool activities, school activities or foster care.

The department is working through a range of occupations. Our policy is stringent and we have been collaborating for some months with private sector organisations on foster care where the department has statutory responsibility for its wards. We have done a lot of positive work with non-government organisations in establishing a centralised register for foster carers, in the screening procedures we are putting in place and in the exchange of information.

Screening procedures are in place for registered child-care organisations. We are working cooperatively with that sector in examining how we might also screen people involved in family care centres. Members will imagine the difficulty we face, particularly with family care in determining where we draw the line. Do we screen just the primary care-giver, the people who live in the home or the people who visit the home? We are working our way through that now. We want to establish a situation where young people are protected, where screening is in place and information is exchanged on people who are found not to be suitable, not only within agencies of government in WA but also between government agencies and non-government agencies, and where that information is available to other jurisdictions throughout Australia. It is a long overdue process.

At their last meeting the Ministers strongly emphasised to officials that they did not want to hear excuses for why this could not be done. They did not want to hear about difficulties associated with it. They want in place a system where information throughout Australia can be interchanged, firstly, on people who have been convicted of offences against children. The Ministers also said they wanted the officials to tell them how that could be done without legally prejudicing jurisdictions in the exchange of information on substantiated abuse. In other words organisations such as ours substantiate abuse, but sometimes people are not convicted. The Ministers have asked us to devise a way of exchanging that information without legally jeopardising organisations as a result of natural justice issues.

Dr CONSTABLE: I appreciate everything you said; all those procedures are very commendable. More money is going to NGOs as government policy. At present do the same stringent procedures apply to NGOs to which you allocate funding? I want a yes or a no.

[9.30 am]

Mr FISHER: In relation to foster care, yes. In relation to organisations in some of the child care areas, probably not all, but we are working on that.

Dr CONSTABLE: I appreciate that. I have been critical of it, but I want to know because, as you say, the more money given to the non-government organisations, the more you need to be careful that you give it to people who employ people who abide by the same stringent rules that you abide by.

Mrs PARKER: The Ministers agreed that the same procedures should cover employees, volunteers and students of organisations funded by the department. There are some difficult legal considerations. As Mr Fisher said, with family day care it is a matter of how many people in the family day care -

Dr CONSTABLE: I understand all of this!

Mrs PARKER: It is a matter of issue to us, and one that we discuss regularly.

Dr CONSTABLE: I understand that. I want to know the situation currently, so that if we ask the same question next year we will see that you have moved further down the path to ensuring that government funded NGOs apply the same rules as government agencies.

Mr FISHER: This is a national move. All Ministers have committed themselves. To be perfectly honest, it is not easy. It will take some time to work our way through it. A commitment has been made, and in attending these meetings for four years I have never seen the Ministers so strong on an issue. I remember originally that the officials said that they would report back in 12 months on progress but the Ministers said no. They said that in six months they wanted a report; they did not want to hear the reason it could not be done. The officials met separately on a number of occasions, and returned in six months with a report. We have a framework which we are pushing at the

moment. It is not only Western Australia, but we have taken the lead. We hope that the meeting in July will report some real progress.

Ms ANWYL: With the changes in the Federal Government's child care funding arrangements, the subsidies scheme will cease. Regulations were attached to that process to set up the rules associated with the child care centres and child care service providers. Given your comments, is it not imperative to have some regulation of child care at a state level on an urgent basis, because of the concerns that have been expressed about sexual abuse? Do you have a plan in process for that?

Mr BIRCHALL: The link between funding and regulation applies only to outside school hours care. The other forms of child care are regulated through the child care regulations. Outside school hours care is governed by standards of operation which are required to be adhered to by the service receiving government subsidies. The announcement last week that the Commonwealth Government would be removing the subsidies from outside school hours care has affected that relationship. We have started to examine how we can consult with the industry regarding how we can replace that arrangement. That is already under way, but we have been aware of the change only in the last few days so it has not progressed very far at this stage.

Mr KOBELKE: I refer to page 356 of the Budget Statements. Under "Expenditure", recurrent services has an estimated actual for 1996-97 of \$130.5m. Can the Minister provide the actuals at the start of the 1996-97 budget?

Mr La PIANA: I do not have that figure with me.

Mr KOBELKE: I would like to have that figure.

Mrs PARKER: Can we take that on notice?

Mr KOBELKE: It will not help because I want to know how the figure varies. Perhaps I will leave the committee and get last year's document.

Ms ANWYL: I refer to page 358 of the Budget Statements. Under categories of expenditure I note an increase in services and contracts of about \$2m. Can the Minister explain that expenditure? Is it partly a reflection of a trend towards funding non-government agencies and the complicated tender arrangements? Is that sort of increase expected to continue in the future?

Mr La PIANA: A range of increases occurred in that category of expenditure. I will go through some of them: One increase of about \$174 000 was the flow on effect of the parenting program. There was also another increase in funding made available to the Warrnam-ua group home in Carnarvon and the Birch Street Community Centre in Geraldton.

Ms ANWYL: You have named three or four specific services. What do the contracts relate to? I am trying to get an indication of what that component of the budget relates to.

Mr La PIANA: It is not related to non-government services. It is a category of expenditure that we use. It is related to anything for which we pay professional service fees to outside groups. That could be for computing resources and requirements -

Mr FISHER: Or it could be in relation to the facilities in Carnarvon and Geraldton. We do not buy the houses. We lease them, so that is the reason for that terminology.

The member mentioned the complicated process for contracts. In the department we think that the request for proposal system in our dealings with non-government organisations is a positive initiative for that sector. Perhaps Ms Bagdonavicius might explain what we are doing in that area, because we do not think it is a complicated process. We see it as advantaging the non-government sector.

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: With the introduction of the funding of services model we have worked with the Department of Contract and Management Services and the State Supply Commission to introduce the request for proposal model and to develop that further. Our current approval with them is for us to contract out up to \$1m on non-government services which is a very good reflection of the standing we have with the State Supply Commission and Contract and Management Services.

The process we have introduced is to ensure a fair and equitable process for all people interested in providing services for the Government. We have developed service specifications which clearly identify what is required, the funding level, and the term of the funding. That is then advertised. We routinely hold briefings for non-government agencies which are interested in providing such services, and non-government agencies then submit their tenders to us. That is considered in a very accountable selection process in which we give very good justification for selecting

the successful applicants. Part of that is also a very good feedback system which we have developed with non-government agencies in providing the reason they have or have not been successful.

Ms ANWYL: I have been involved in that system, as a member of management committees. In the categories of expenditure can you point to the cost of the whole process? Is there an item? How is the expenditure absorbed in the categories of expenditure? Obviously a lot of time is involved in the perusal of those submissions. Is the process widely spread across the Budget? Is there one category of expenditure that can be pointed to for what I assume would be large administrative costs?

[9.40 am]

Mr FISHER: The cost basically relates to wages and salaries. It is the cost of people's time in the organisation. It is not something we tender out to other people to make determinations on.

Mr La PIANA: It comes within the salaries, wages and allowance expenditure category.

Mrs PARKER: It is important to recall the comments the director general made previously that in the restructure of the department we have been able to get more staff into district offices over the past few years. While using this process we are still managing to reduce the amount of staff time involved in simple administrative process delivery and increase the number of staff providing the services to the people in the community. That model is preceded by a mapping process which determines which services are in place and what the needs are in the community, and what services are advertised. It is a great model that allows for an equitable process across the board. It gives an opportunity across the community for people to participate in the delivery of services. As Minister I appreciate the model and the process. It has good support from the non-government sector. That is significant.

Mr FISHER: The significant factor in this area is that over the past two years a number of reforms have taken place in the organisation. The area of funding has reflected well on the organisation, from the mapping exercise - getting local districts to identify needs at a local level and involving local people in those decisions - through to the argument we originally had with the tender process. Calling tenders and issuing contracts in this sector were perceived as hard words. People in the non-government sector who traditionally had not had to tender for work were frightened by that. We did a lot of work with the Western Australian Council of Social Service and the Department of Contract and Management Services to come up with a process which has been accepted and which has been inclusive rather than driven by a business or corporate philosophy.

Another factor to note is the work we have done in developing the service provider management system within the department, which operates our funding to non-government agencies. That system was developed in-house. We have sold that system interstate and other government agencies in Western Australia have purchased it from us. We have made tremendous improvements in this area. As I said before, we work in partnership with non-government people. We do not want to have a master-servant relationship with them. The only way the system will work is for it to be a genuine partnership. As the Minister said, I think that after original suspicions by people, the way we are processing proposals is being accepted by that sector. It is hoped that as a result of this we are providing better services to our clients.

Mrs HOLMES: I refer to the allocation for crisis management and intervention on page 359 of the Budget Statements. How does this budget reflect a commitment to proactive and early intervention rather than to only crisis driven management?

Mrs PARKER: There has been an increase in all the output groups - prevention and development; crisis management and support; protective intervention and treatment; and particularly supported care. The member must go back to the fundamental position we took with the development of the New Directions program. We are committed to the protection of children at risk and the care they require. However, we are also committed to supporting children in their families where that is possible and helping families through that difficult time. That is embraced in the New Directions policy. There is a commitment to each of those aspects because we recognise that families are not always - mostly never - perfect and that families have times of difficulty. If we can put the supports in place in the home where the child is not deemed to be at risk and help that child and family survive that time of pressure, we will be able to keep that group intact. At the same time we have changed the system of identifying which children are at risk when a report about them is received. We have been far better able to identify genuine cases of children who are at risk. There has been a significant improvement in substantiating claims of children being at risk and our ability to act on that. Children at risk are now responded to more effectively. We are able to prioritise them in the system.

Mr FISHER: Early intervention preventive services is one of the issues that has been raised in previous estimates debates. From the department's point of view it is good there has always been a bipartisan approach in this area. People involved in this area realise that money must be put into early intervention and prevention. The budget for early intervention and prevention services provided by the department increased from \$278 000 in 1994-95 to \$6.7m

this year. Forward estimates show that by 2000 the department will spend in excess of \$8m on early intervention. Some people may think we spend too much in that area and are downgrading child protection, but we are not; we are increasing our funding also in child protection. We have introduced a range of new services in early intervention, apart from the parenting program, with which I presume members are familiar from the work we have done on television and the publications we produced, such as the "Living With" series.

We also introduced parent information centres, which are getting a huge positive response from the public. Through a volunteer network in the parent link home visiting service we are getting into homes to help people who are having difficulties with young children. The Best Start program is specifically targeted at Aboriginal children in remote communities to ensure that by the time they start school at the age of five, they are on par with their non-Aboriginal peers. Family group conferencing for children under 10 who are involved in antisocial behaviour aims to get their families to work with the department and other agencies to support those kids so that once they get past the age of 10 they do not end up in the juvenile justice system. The parent help centre has been operating for some time and the Family Helpline and the Parenting Line are getting a huge response from the community. Through time the department has put more effort into early intervention. We strongly believe that if we as an organisation deal just with crises, we will never have enough resources. We are appreciative of the fact that over the years we have been given increases in the budget for early intervention and prevention.

[9.50 am]

Ms ANWYL: Madam Chair, you have read very strict procedural advice about what is to be answered. While I appreciate that these are extremely important areas, I am concerned that we have severe time constraints. Can there be a direction?

The CHAIRMAN: I intended to remind the committee that I want the questions to be short and I need the answers to be to the point and relatively short. With respect, some of the answers are rather long.

Mr FISHER: We are enthusiastic.

The CHAIRMAN: You can assume that the members have digested a lot of material, and if they have not, they will. You might get an opportunity during the morning to tell us how wonderful you are. I will now take another question.

Dr CONSTABLE: How much has the department spent on advertising in the current financial year and how much does it intend to spend next financial year?

Mr FISHER: In 1996-97 the department spent \$556 627 and the estimate for 1997-98 is \$400 000.

Dr CONSTABLE: There is quite a gap. Why?

Mr FISHER: Advertising for the department includes all staff vacancies and many other things that it does in -

Dr CONSTABLE: Perhaps this detail can be provided as supplementary information.

Mr FISHER: The member wants to know why the department is reducing -

Dr CONSTABLE: I would like a breakdown of the expenditure in the current year and the anticipated expenditure for next year.

Mrs PARKER: The advertising supports the Parenting Plus program. It is important to understand why the advertising is undertaken.

Dr CONSTABLE: Mr Fisher answered that; that prompted my question.

Mrs PARKER: People are now accessing the department for early intervention and support services, whereas research indicated that in the past people identified the department with crisis care only. It was important to support that campaign and to get people to come to the parent information centres and also to raise the status of the family and parenting. The commitment was therefore made to that program and we are seeing a significant change in the proportion of the community that identifies the department as a support agency and not just a crisis management agency. We have also seen an increase in the number of people accessing its services. We are very pleased with the response we have had. However, we will provide the other detail as supplementary information.

Mr FISHER: I can provide it now.

The CHAIRMAN: The committee wants as many questions and answers as possible.

Mr KOBELKE: I return to the question I asked earlier. My understanding is that the estimate for this financial year is expenditure of \$1.128m, whereas if one deducts the \$3m spent on the Right to Buy scheme, on recurrent

expenditure the department anticipates underspending in the current year by approximately \$1.2m. Is that true? If so, are these savings across all areas or are there major areas in which those savings have been made?

Mr La PIANA: Those figures are accurate. We do not have a full breakdown. There are many different areas of increases and decreases and that detail can be provided as supplementary information.

Mr KOBELKE: On the variations and the estimated actuals?

Dr TURNBULL: I refer again to the issue of who is now accessing the services offered by the department. My question follows that asked by the member for Churchlands. Does the department have statistics or does it record how it gets its referrals? Are referrals from schools, police, other social workers, hospitals, doctors and so on? Are people who approach the department themselves most likely to do so in response to departmental advertising campaigns? Again, that is divided between crisis care cases and the responses to the parenting programs.

Mr FISHER: I missed the first part of the question. We have very clear information on who is making referrals in relation to child protection; we have that data broken down very clearly. We also have a very detailed breakdown of the people accessing our parenting or family help lines. Was that the question?

Dr TURNBULL: Yes. Does the department have those statistics and do they show a different type of referral pattern in that crisis cases are referred by agencies and are not self-referrals, and that parenting cases are self-referrals?

Mr FISHER: That would definitely be the pattern and we can provide that breakdown.

Ms ANWYL: I refer again to page 358. Capital services have increased by about \$4m. On what will that be spent?

Mr La PIANA: We have a number of areas of increase in the capital works program; for example, the expansion of the community centres program. A number of our district offices require some refurbishment and so on. Construction of child care centres is also increasing. Therefore, a range of areas are represented by the increase from \$5m to \$9m.

Ms ANWYL: A number of child care centres are closing, including a number of state owned centres. Given that assets from centres would be coming back to the department, is there any reflection of that in the capital budget? For example, furniture and goods would be returned by the centres.

Mrs PARKER: The member would be aware that we have only just received the detail of the federal Budget. I will have an officer add that detail in a moment. However, it was important for us to find out what the Federal Government would maintain in terms of its commitment, particularly where there are insufficient child care facilities. The other issue is that we have had agreement from the federal Minister to renegotiate our state agreement regarding the construction of new centres. I had that agreement from the Minister earlier this year, and the discussions have been proceeding at officer level. However, it was very difficult until we saw the federal Budget last week and worked out where the goal posts would be. Now that we have that information at federal level we will proceed.

[10.00 am]

Mr BIRCHALL: The closed community centres are not necessarily our assets, depending on who owns the land on which they are built. In some cases the property is owned by the local government authority. We have access to it for a period of, say, 21 years. We still have use of the centre but it may not be reflected as a departmental asset. Often the equipment is a mixture, some of which we provided initially from the department. Technically it should be returned to us, if it was donated several years ago. Then there is equipment provided through grants from the Lotteries Commission, which is required to be used for a similar purpose or by a similar community group. Where community based centres have closed, those arrangements are followed and equipment is used by other groups. We do not expect to have any particular flow back of assets to us. The equipment will be passed on to another similar group and the centre may or may not be ours. If we have a long term lease on the centre, it will be used in another way.

Dr CONSTABLE: The first dot point on page 362 refers to parent information centres. How many parent information centres operate in the current financial year? How many will operate by the next financial year? Where will the new centres be set up? How many people in the current financial year have been serviced by those parent information centres? How many additional parents does the department expect to have used them by the end of the next financial year? What is the funding for 1996-97 and for 1997-98 for those centres?

Mrs PARKER: The present services are in Mandurah, Rockingham, Midland, Joondalup, Mirrabooka and South Hedland. Mobile services operate out of Northam and Albany. Services are proposed for the Carousel shopping centre and Armadale. Metropolitan mobile services are at Geraldton, Kalgoorlie and Bunbury. There is a mobile centre in the Pilbara and the Kimberley regions. I have a breakdown of the number of customers. From January 1996

to the end of March 1997 there were 3 192 at Mandurah. At Mirrabooka from 12 August 1996 to end of March 1997 there were 4 375. At Midland from 12 August 1996 to end of March 1997 there were 3 021. At Rockingham from 12 August to end of March 1997 there were 4 894. At Joondalup from 12 August 1996 to the end of March 1997 there were 6 380.

Dr CONSTABLE: Are they different people or some people visiting a number of times?

Mrs PARKER: They could be both.

Dr CONSTABLE: We do not know how many individuals?

Mrs PARKER: It is a fairly recent program. We have some initial assessment data which indicate that a lot of parents were not repeat customers. A lot of people felt quite satisfied and came in for a specific request. They were able to be helped by the staff who were there or provided with equipment or whatever. That does not include repeat customers. We are assessing the parent information centres in the same way as the home link service. We are continuing to have assessment times in order to look at what the services are doing, how effective they are and how they might be changed and so on. The parent information centres have certainly been through that process. With the home link service we still have not got quite to that point where we have been able to make assessments.

Mr FISHER: The figures do include repeats, and it would be very difficult for us -

Dr CONSTABLE: Are we talking about people with young children or people of any age?

Mr FISHER: Most of the people going there have young children.

Dr CONSTABLE: I also asked about the funding for last year, the funding for next year and the number of FTEs. When does a pilot program stop being a pilot program and become a program?

Mr FISHER: When it has been properly evaluated.

Dr CONSTABLE: How long does that take?

Mr FISHER: It depends on the program. In the program for the parent information centres, we have finished the pilot programs and evaluated them. We will expand them. An interim evaluation has been carried out for the parent link home visiting service. On the basis of the information we have at present, we are not prepared to introduce that service statewide. We are undertaking more evaluation of it. During the evaluations we get information. If we feel that we have to change the service in some way, we modify it and evaluate it again. We do not intend to enter any program involving taxpayers' money where we are not convinced that we will get a worthwhile result.

Dr CONSTABLE: It was a serious question.

Mr FISHER: It was a serious answer.

The CHAIRMAN: Could the members direct questions to the Minister. The adviser will speak only with the Minister's approval.

Dr CONSTABLE: The use of the word "pilot" is very important. The first pilot parent centre was set up in 1976 in Fremantle. When it was closed by the Labor Government in 1992 it said that it was always a pilot program, so it had obviously been a pilot program for 16 years.

Mrs PARKER: We started five parent information centres as pilots. They were assessed. Based on that assessment we decided to proceed with the planning for the remainder. The names of the first six centres I read out are not pilot centres.

Dr CONSTABLE: At the same dot point on page 362 reference is made to the opening of the pilot parent information centre in 1995 and seven pilot centres. The numbers the Minister is giving do not add up to the numbers on that page.

Mrs PARKER: We commenced the pilots but we have now assessed them and established that it is a highly valued service.

Dr CONSTABLE: The page refers to seven and the Minister has referred to five.

Mr FISHER: There are six shop front services and two mobiles, which makes eight, one of which was Mandurah, which was the first. The other services were all piloted and now they are existing services. That is a total of eight, so the numbers do add up.

Dr CONSTABLE: So from now on they are not pilots but are part of the system?

Mr FISHER: Yes.

Mrs PARKER: The assessment has been made. Research has come in that the parents accessing the service value it highly. We have seen the assessments and the rate of access. A parent accesses one of the parent information centres on average every 18 minutes. We have a planned process in place to develop other services throughout the State on the strength of that.

Mr FISHER: We still want to pilot the direct service for Aboriginal people. We have to develop that in conjunction with Aboriginal communities in the north of the State. That will again be a pilot until we are satisfied that we have got it right.

Dr CONSTABLE: Is that in the next budget?

Mr FISHER: We are looking at doing that this financial year.

Dr TURNBULL: I have been trying to find a dot point relating to the youth and community program, so I am focusing on page 358 which has \$2m in the categories of expenditure. The department is changing the amount of allocated money, which is not very large. Does the department have any opinion on how the functions of the juvenile justice program are dealing with the young people in the community, because the youth and community program operated by Family and Children's Services was reduced so markedly? Family and Children's Services once had a large grant for youth and community programs. However, when juvenile justice issues were transferred to the Ministry of Justice the budget allocation was reduced. Because the youth and community program allocation has been reduced and not as many people are dealing with the juvenile justice issue, is there a demand on the department which it cannot meet and which it must refer elsewhere?

[10.10 am]

Mrs PARKER: Juvenile justice was transferred out of the department to the Ministry of Justice, so part of the member's question should be referred to the Attorney General.

Dr TURNBULL: Is the department receiving inquiries that it cannot meet because of its reduced funding?

Mrs PARKER: The funding allocation and the responsibility for delivery of service to those people is the responsibility of MOJ.

Dr TURNBULL: Is the Minister saying that the focus of Family and Children's Services has changed so completely that people are not even coming to Family and Children's Services for that sort of help?

Mrs PARKER: We are involved with family support, counselling, finding suitable placements and developing options for those young people at risk. The delivery of service for children in the justice system is the responsibility of MOJ. Our responsibility is with issues of placement, family support, etc. We meet that responsibility.

Dr TURNBULL: Does the department have sufficient funding to deal with that, or is it finding that the demands are greater than the funding?

Mr FISHER: We never have enough money. When juvenile justice was transferred to MOJ in 1993 about 393 FTEs and a budget amount of \$14.2m plus \$6m for contingencies were transferred to MOJ. That included all the staff in institutions that were dealing with children in the justice system. One cannot draw a line on a piece of paper and say that one child belongs to the justice system and another to Family and Children's Services. There will be children who are exclusively in the justice system because they are not at risk or in harm; however, there will be many cases where a child is involved in the justice system and is also a client of ours. In a budgetary sense everyone would like more money. We have protocols in place to work with the Ministry of Justice. They were developed at the time of the split. We work cooperatively with MOJ reviewing the protocols. In some cases it is not just the department and MOJ dealing with these children, it is the Education Department, the Health Department, the Disability Services Commission and the Police Department - in some cases they are all dealing with the same child. To a greater or lesser extent we all have some obligation, either statutory or departmental. We would like more resources to deal with these children in some areas. We would like to see MOJ perhaps doing more in the preventive area. However, the bottom line is that we must work together with these organisations to deal with these children, particularly those children who are at risk of harm.

Mr KOBELKE: Previously the supported assistance accommodation program had a recurrent aspect, and a capital aspect, which came under the crisis accommodation program. Is CAP still in existence or is it all rolled into one program?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: CAP is with the Minister for Housing.

Mr KOBELKE: Do any capital budgets relate to SAAP?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: No.

Mr KOBELKE: Is the program still a dollar for dollar matching program between the Commonwealth and the State?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: It is fairly even, though the latest ratio is 57 per cent from the Commonwealth and 43 per cent from the State. It is around 50:50, but it does vary.

Mr KOBELKE: What was the total expenditure in 1996-97 and what is the estimate for the 1997-98 budget? I can find no mention of that here.

Mr La PIANA: The grants, subsidies and transfer payments area on page 358 has two components: Supported accommodation for families and individuals and supported care and accommodation for children. There is a budget increase.

Mr KOBELKE: Is that supported care and accommodation for children item all SAAP, or does SAAP form only a part of that?

Mr La PIANA: It is totally SAAP.

Mr KOBELKE: Is the total expenditure on SAAP just over \$19m, or are there parts under other items?

Mr La PIANA: They are the only areas.

Mr KOBELKE: On page 373 the revenue is estimated at \$10.5m. Does that give us the 43 per cent figure to which you referred?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: No, that amount is the estimated commonwealth revenue and represents 57 per cent of the total.

Mr KOBELKE: The estimated income from revenue is fairly stable for the 1997-98 financial year. Is the State's commitment about the same for both years, or is there a variation in what the State must put into the SAAP program?

Mr La PIANA: The total budget allocation for SAAP for the next year has increased. That has been marginally met from revenue. The actual amounts on page 358 are: Supported accommodation for families and individuals, \$13 354 000; and supported care and accommodation for children, \$5 994 000.

Mr KOBELKE: What is the cost to the non-government sector, which is predominantly involved in running these programs? Is any allowance for salary increase factored into that?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: Yes, there is a SAAP indexation figure, which is in accordance with the commonwealth-state agreement. From memory we are currently paying 1.6 per cent for 1996-97.

Mr KOBELKE: Is there an industrial award for workers in that sector?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: We have the crisis assistance housing award; however, it does not have a monetary impact at this point.

Mr KOBELKE: Is that anticipated, and if so, when?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: It is difficult to say because the matter has been before the Australian Industrial Relations Commission in Melbourne for some time.

Mr KOBELKE: For about six years.

Ms ANWYL: What is the total figure for money spent on market research in the last year and estimated for the forthcoming year and, similarly, for consultancy fees, especially with the many references to review and evaluation?

Mrs PARKER: Those figures are not here. Can we take them as a question on notice?

Ms ANWYL: I would like them as supplementary information.

[10.20 am]

The CHAIRMAN: For the record, will the member for Kalgoorlie clarify what information she is seeking?

Ms ANWYL: I would like to know what has been spent on market research and outside consultants this financial year and last financial year.

The CHAIRMAN: The information will be provided by way of supplementary information.

Dr CONSTABLE: I previously asked for the number of full time equivalents involved in the parent information centres.

Mr FISHER: Does the member require that information now?

Dr CONSTABLE: If it is not available now, I would like it provided by way of supplementary information.

Mrs PARKER: The information will be provided in supplementary information.

Dr CONSTABLE: What was the total funding for the parent link home visiting service for the current financial year and what is the estimated expenditure for the next financial year? How many FTEs provide that service? I understand from the last dot point on page 362 that the service is provided by both government and non-government agencies. What are the savings when the services are contracted out to a non-government agency?

Mr BIRCHALL: I do not think we have with us a specific split on how much of the funding for the parent link home visiting service was spent this year or what is anticipated to be spent next financial year.

Dr CONSTABLE: Is it possible to obtain that information?

Mr BIRCHALL: Yes.

Dr CONSTABLE: Is it possible to obtain the number of FTEs?

Mr BIRCHALL: Yes.

Dr CONSTABLE: Is it possible to get a figure on whether there is a saving by contracting out the service?

Mr BIRCHALL: The amount of money provided to non-government agencies to run the program is similar to that provided to a district office to run the program.

Dr CONSTABLE: Does "similar" mean the same?

Mr BIRCHALL: No, it is near that amount.

Dr CONSTABLE: I would like to know whether it is more or less. I would appreciate the figures on that.

Mr BIRCHALL: It would be within \$5 000, from memory.

Mrs PARKER: The parent information centres, apart from the one which specifically targets Aboriginal families, are no longer pilots. They have been assessed and it has been determined they will be established services we provide. It is not quite the same situation with the parent link services. We have not gone through the assessment process to ascertain how the service is progressing and whether it is achieving what it set out to achieve. We do not have the number of parents accessing that service. It is fair to say that the service is still in the pilot phase.

The object of contracting out three of those services to community organisations is not for the purpose of saving money, but to have a look at how it affects the delivery of the service and whether it is able to link in with and use the community based groups in the delivery of that service. The primary task was not to find a way of saving money.

Dr CONSTABLE: My question was not suggesting that and I accept what the Minister said. I am still interested to know the relative costs.

Mrs PARKER: We will provide the information, but I wanted to point out that it was not a cost measure; it was a matter of partnership and how it affected the delivery of the service.

Dr CONSTABLE: I was in no way implying any criticism of that.

The last dash point on page 362 refers to further planning which will lead to the establishment of a number of other services throughout the State in the first half of 1997. Where will those services be established?

Mrs PARKER: They will be established in Midland, Bunbury, the goldfields, Karratha and the Kimberley.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Churchlands asked a series of questions and the adviser indicated that he would provide the answers in supplementary information.

Mrs PARKER: The answer we have not been able to provide to the member for Nedlands is the cost differential between the department running the parent link service -

Dr CONSTABLE: Other information was not provided. There were actually three questions which referred to FTEs, funding and the difference between contracting out and the Government providing the service.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the Minister confirm that the information will be provided in supplementary information?

Mrs PARKER: Yes.

Dr TURNBULL: I refer the Minister to page 360 of the Budget Statements, which refers to children in need of care. The last dot point states that there continues to be an increase in the number of care and protection applications lodged with the Children's Court and the number of children placed in the care of the department. The second dot point refers to a shortage of appropriate placements for children. How many children in Western Australia are under care and protection applications? How much funding is allocated to the care and protection of children?

Mr BOWLER: As at June 1996 the number of children committed to the care of the department was 711. I think that number has increased to 780. The number of children actually in placements is 1 156 and it includes children who are wards of the State and children who are placed but the department has a responsibility for their care.

Dr TURNBULL: How many people are providing that care?

Mr BOWLER: Sixty per cent of the 1 156 children in care are in foster care. The actual break down is 54 in departmental residential group care; one in detention; 99 in external foster care; 116 in external residential care; 704 in departmental foster care; two in hospital; 12 living independently; 164 in the care of a friend or family member; and four, whereabouts unknown.

Dr TURNBULL: What is the cost for the care of those children?

Mr BOWLER: We will have to obtain that information for the member.

Mrs PARKER: The cost runs across different expenditure items.

[10.30 am]

Dr TURNBULL: Do you have any idea of the yearly or weekly cost of caring for those children?

Mr FISHER: We could provide that information. The cost varies according to the care the child is in.

Dr TURNBULL: I am interested in the foster care cost.

Mr FISHER: I think it is \$128 a week. We will provide the figure to the member.

Mr KOBELKE: The figures given with regard to the number of young people involved is a snapshot of a point in time and will always be changing. To what date do those figures apply?

Mr FISHER: 20 May 1997. Members may be interested to know that the number of wards in 1972 was about 5 000. We went down to 711 in June 1996 and we are now up to about the 800-850 mark. It seems to have plateaued out at that level.

Dr TURNBULL: In other words, the definition of who is a ward has changed quite markedly in the past 10 years?

Mr FISHER: Yes. There have been all sorts of reasons for the reduction - partly because of definition and partly because in those earlier years, we had huge numbers of Aboriginal children who were deemed to be wards.

Ms ANWYL: I refer to the recent contracting out to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia to provide a service to community groups. That involved a fairly substantial amount. Where is that reflected in this Budget? Does the Minister consider it appropriate that the Chamber of Commerce and Industry provide that advice to essentially non-government organisations?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: We funded it through non-government funding. Santo will be able to advise which area it came through. It totalled \$614 946 with provision for variation.

Ms ANWYL: I am curious which category of expenditure that would -

Mr La PIANA: That would show up in the category under grants, subsidies and transfer payments.

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: I think it would be grants to services and organisations and we would locate the service.

Mr La PIANA: It would come under other grants on page 358.

Ms ANWYL: There has been an increase of about \$1.6m. What does that relate to? However, first, could I have some detail of the variations?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: The original request for the proposal went out on the basis that we have 350 funded services for which the industrial information and advisory service could be providing a service. Within that request for proposal we identified certain activities that it would be expected that they provide for each funded service. With our request for proposal system we have a number of new services coming on line, so the arrangement is that there is a variation in price with every new 20 services to come on line.

Ms ANWYL: Is that ongoing?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: That is ongoing. We agreed in writing before the contract was finalised. That was requested by the Department of Contract and Management Services which was overseeing the contract.

Mrs PARKER: The contract was done through the tender process. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry won that contract. I have received written and verbal expressions of appreciation for that service being provided as groups go through the change.

Ms ANWYL: So you consider it to be appropriate?

Mrs PARKER: Yes.

Ms ANWYL: Do you have any difficulties philosophically with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry providing that advice to community groups?

Mrs PARKER: There was a request for the proposal to go out.

Ms ANWYL: I understand that. I am familiar with all that detail, Minister.

Mrs PARKER: The details were set out and it needs to provide the service as set out in the contract. We are confident that it will.

Ms ANWYL: Do you have any details on the increase in the category "other grants and subsidies" totalling \$1.6m?

Mr La PIANA: We do not have that detail.

Ms ANWYL: Could that be provided by way of supplementary information?

Dr CONSTABLE: My questions refer to dot point 4 and are about domestic violence, victim support, and advocacy services. What was the total funding for the current financial year and what is the proposed funding in the next financial year and the FTEs for those services? Could I be given a breakdown of the number of people accessing each of the services in each of the locations for the current year and the one before?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: The answer lies with the services that have gone to the new requests for proposals. We do not contract on the basis of the number of people that services will employ. That decision is made by the organisation.

Dr CONSTABLE: Could I be given figures for the amount of money spent on the total services for the domestic violence, victim support and advocacy services? What was the funding in the current year?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: An amount of \$250 000.

Dr CONSTABLE: That is the current year. What is proposed to be spent next financial year?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: There will be four new services next year, of which there will be two for \$60 000 and two for \$70 000 in country areas.

Dr CONSTABLE: Is that in addition to the \$250 000 already being spent?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: That is in addition to that amount.

Mr FISHER: It involves an extra \$260 000. It totals \$510 000.

Dr CONSTABLE: How many different locations are there within this service?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: Altogether there will be nine.

Dr CONSTABLE: Is any data kept of the number of people accessing those services?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: Data is kept. That is collected through the data collection that we collect with our non-government funded services.

Dr CONSTABLE: Are you able to provide that data for the current locations for the current financial year and also, if there were any in existence, for the previous financial year? Is there any data showing the number of people accessing these services?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: We could not provide that information at this stage because they have come on board relatively recently in this current financial year. We would be in a position to provide that information in a year. Services are required to report to us at specific points within their service agreements on a six-monthly basis.

Dr CONSTABLE: So, the data is being kept and it will be provided at another time?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: Yes.

Dr CONSTABLE: When did the current service come on stream?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: I cannot answer that off the top of my head.

Dr CONSTABLE: Has it been recently?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: Yes.

Dr CONSTABLE: Can we get that information in supplementary information?

Mr FISHER: They have not been operating for a full financial year.

Dr CONSTABLE: I would like as supplementary information the date that each one came on stream

The CHAIRMAN (Ms Warnock): You have agreed to produce that information as supplementary information.

[10.40 am]

Ms ANWYL: I refer to the four new Aboriginal family violence support and development services referred to at page 363. I understand that within the last Budget an allocation of \$250 000 was made to the domestic violence prevention unit for those services, and management of the funds was passed to Family and Children's Services. However, it appears from this document that those moneys have become part of the budget of Family and Children's Services. I seek some clarification. Although it is stated that one of these services has been located in the goldfields, the funding was announced only last week and I very much doubt that it will be up and running this week. Are the funds for these centres provided from the budget of Family and Children's Services or the budget of the Office of Women's Interests?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: They come from this budget, and the Office of Women's Interests has used the money in relation to other Aboriginal initiatives.

Ms ANWYL: This allocation can be identified in the 1996-97 Budget?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: No, in the 1997-98 Budget.

Ms ANWYL: It is listed as a major achievement for 1996-97 so presumably it could be identified in last year's Budget.

Mr LA PIANA: I am not clear what the member is referring to.

Ms ANWYL: At page 363 mention is made of the four new Aboriginal family violence support and development services. I understand that in 1996-97 an allocation of \$250 000 was made to the domestic violence prevention unit, which comes within the budget of the Office of Women's Interests. These four services are listed under the major achievements for 1996-97 for Family and Children's Services, although I know that the goldfields centre is not up and running as claimed in the statements. I seek clarification as to which budget the \$250 000 came from, because I understand it did not form part of this department's budget for last year. Where is it in last year's Budget?

Mr LA PIANA: We will provide complete details as supplementary information.

Mr KOBELKE: The Budget Statements are in a different format from previous years, and there is no list of major proposals for the allocations in the current Budget. I assume there must be some. Will the Minister provide a written document outlining the anticipated major achievements in the forthcoming year?

Mrs PARKER: Yes, we will provide as supplementary information an outline of the proposals for the coming year.

Mr KOBELKE: At page 372 is a list of works in progress, one of which is the construction of adolescent and child support centres. I would like some detail of this item. Does it apply to one centre or more than one centre, and does it relate to the centre that was to be built at Forrestfield some years ago?

Mrs PARKER: It relates to the centre at Forrestfield, which has become a source of great frustration because the site is subject to environmental impact review. An endangered species has been found on the site, and that has frustrated the process.

Mr KOBELKE: Has the original concept put forward two or three years ago been proceeded with or has a change been made in its direction?

Mrs PARKER: We are waiting for the environmental assessment to be completed and that will be some months away.

Mr KOBELKE: Given the long time delay, is the proposal for which funds are being allocated the same as the proposal at the start of the project two or three years ago? Have the needs changed and has that affected the use to which the building will be put?

Mrs PARKER: At the moment the plans are the same.

Dr CONSTABLE: I refer to page 363 of the Budget Statements and reference to funding for a new service in the metropolitan area for children traumatised by witnessing domestic violence. Where is that service located, what is the budget this year, and is it intended to expand that service next year? Also, how many children access that service?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: The service has been established relatively recently. It is located in the metropolitan area. From memory, it also has some points of outreach across the metropolitan area. The allocated budget is \$80 000 on a per annum basis. I will provide further information about the actual cost.

Dr CONSTABLE: Will the service be expanded?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: At this point there is no intention of expanding the service. The \$80 000 is for the service in the coming financial year.

Dr CONSTABLE: Will you provide information on when it was started and how many children have accessed it?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: I can supply information about when it was started but I doubt that I can provide information on the number of children accessing it because it is a relatively recent service. Further information can be provided later on.

Dr CONSTABLE: Will a record be kept of that information?

Ms BAGDONAVICIUS: Yes.

Ms ANWYL: I refer to page 363 and the reference to Aboriginal matters. It is stated that a major achievement for the last financial year was an increase in the number of Aboriginal people employed within the department. How many were employed, how many are employed now, and what is the increase?

Mr FISHER: That will be provided as supplementary information.

Ms ANWYL: Can information also be provided on where those officers are based?

Mrs PARKER: We will provide that as supplementary information.

Mrs HOLMES: My question relates to the capital works program listed at page 372. I am interested to know the value of the role information technology plays in Family and Children's Services in supporting and delivering the outputs under each program.

Mr FISHER: I cannot think of any other department in government that depends so much on information systems in the delivery of services and not only from the point of view of running the organisation. There are more than 80 work units scattered throughout the State, from Wyndham to Esperance. The department is completely dependent on information technology for running its business, its finance systems and its human resources system. More importantly, the client system enables the department to have data on children and on families that is accessible across the State. Information technology is one of the big areas of increased expenditure in recent years. The department has a permanent work force of approximately 1 200, and practically everyone in the organisation has access to a computer. The rate of computer usage in the organisation per head of staff is probably the highest of any government department. Without information systems, the organisation would not be able to operate. The department is dependent on them and it is continually upgrading its systems. The increases in the budget each year reflect that, and we appreciate the fact that each year Treasury fortunately recognises our needs and generally supports them. It is probably one of the key factors in enabling the organisation to be successful.

[10.50 am]

Dr CONSTABLE: Point 2 on page 366 of the Budget Statements refers to the child protection service register. What information is included on that register, and when do you expect the relevant legislation to be before the House?

Mr BOWLER: The child protection service register was introduced in July 1996, and the information recorded on the register is the name of the child who has been the victim of an assault or substantiated maltreatment. The government agencies are required to record the name of the child placed on the register, and information is provided regarding the type of service provided to the child or the child's family. The custodian, as the position is currently termed - the plan is to change the name to registrar - has the responsibility to notify more than one agency if more than one agency registers the name of the child. Other agencies are able to communicate with each other and coordinate their services.

The registrar is also responsible for ensuring that the agencies determine which agency has prime responsibility for service provision. The registrar will also follow up with the agency if services are not recorded to ensure that services are provided and recorded on the register. The other information recorded is the name of people convicted of offences against those registered children.

A proposed amendment to the Child Welfare Act to enable the provision of the register and prescribe the responsibilities of the government agencies has been prepared and is with parliamentary counsel at the moment. It is hoped that the amendment will be introduced as soon as possible this year.

Dr CONSTABLE: How many children are on that register now?

Mr BOWLER: Since July 1996 to the present time, a total of 656 children have been registered.

Dr CONSTABLE: Are you going back beyond that date to register children's names, or are you starting from July?

Mr BOWLER: It commenced from July 1996.

Dr CONSTABLE: These are new cases you have put on there?

Mr FISHER: Substantiated cases.

Dr CONSTABLE: I understand that. When are you proposing to establish the office, how independent will it be and how many people will run it?

Mr BOWLER: The aim is for an independent register so all government agencies with responsibility for protecting children are able to input information and work within the goals of that register. For administrative purposes, it has been established that the register will be associated with Family and Children's Services. Three staff are involved; namely, a custodian, an assistant custodian and an administrative assistant.

Dr CONSTABLE: What controls do you have on the privacy and protection of those children's names, and what sort of penalties do you envisage in the legislation?

Mr BOWLER: We envisage very strong penalties indeed. The confidentiality aspects of the register are to be built in strenuously. The names are recorded on a computer in an encrypted system by which the information cannot be retrieved without authority. There is a backup system - I do not know the technicalities - which is very high on security. The only person who can release information is the custodian of the register. The legislation when passed will provide severe penalties to anybody misusing information from the register.

Dr CONSTABLE: Is the intention to go back historically to add to the register; if not, why not?

Mr BOWLER: There is not. The appropriate date to go back to cannot be determined, therefore it was decided to establish the register from July 1996 on a trial basis subject to the legislative base being established. Information prior to that date will still be available upon the information system of Family and Children's Services and other agencies involved. The register will start afresh from July 1996.

Dr CONSTABLE: Does that historical information have the same stringent confidentiality attached to it?

Mr BOWLER: That is each agency's information. Strict confidentiality is involved as far as Family and Children's Services is concerned.

Mrs PARKER: The legislation has the highest priority on my list, and I anticipate it will be introduced during the spring session of Parliament. Currently it is operating by protocols, but the legislation will provide necessary support. The inter-agencies support is going very well.

Mr FISHER: For Dr Constable's benefit, the key to the system is that many deaths around the world have occurred despite a group of agencies being involved. Eighteen arms of government were involved in the Daniel Blair Velario

case, yet the young boy was still murdered. The key to this issue is that the custodian will designate an agency with key responsibility. At the end of the process someone always will have ultimate responsibility, and that person will know the other agencies involved.

Ms ANWYL: The first point on page 364 relates to child care facilities. It states that 87 places will be achieved by the end of this financial year. I would like to know where they are, and to which budget item does this refer - is it Family and Children's Services?

Mr FISHER: Yes.

Ms ANWYL: In terms of the desire to increase the number of places, given that the planning framework is not in place, what is projected for the future? One of the features of the Budget papers is that, although achievements for the financial year are outlined, we have nothing about projections for the next year. What is intended with respect to the children's service and the \$7m as it relates to child care places? Given that amount, will some consideration be given to providing some short term assistance to the community based child care centres which are struggling and closing at the moment?

Mrs PARKER: We have provided management support to those centres.

Ms ANWYL: I am talking about cash assistance; I am fully aware of the support provided by seminars and so on.

Mrs PARKER: It was a wait-and-see attitude regarding the federal Budget, which was not as harsh as some people expected.

Mr BIRCHALL: When these papers were produced, we estimated 87 places, not 61, would be operational this year. The current estimate is 61 places with 24 at Mt Barker and 37 at Australind. In regard to the future and the national planning framework, it will have its main effect on private operators in the metropolitan area where, in many cases, there is an oversupply. It will restrict that.

The child care strategy allows the Commonwealth and State Governments to provide new places where no service is available - in effect, that means country areas. The national framework is not needed to act on those as, by definition, they will be only in places without services.

Ms ANWYL: So you say you have no plans to supplement places in the metropolitan area?

Mr BIRCHALL: Correct.

Ms ANWYL: No mention is made of what is planned next year. What is the plan for future places?

Mr BIRCHALL: At this stage, we predict we will be able to provide 183 places.

[11.00 am]

Ms ANWYL: Is it possible to identify that portion of the budget that relates to those places?

Mr BIRCHALL: Under our arrangement with the Commonwealth, our contribution is to the capital side.

Ms ANWYL: That entire amount would relate to capital expenditure?

Mr FISHER: Yes.

Dr CONSTABLE: I am concerned about outside school hours care. Is the department involved, does it regard it as a major issue, and does it have any understanding of the problems that schools experience in providing that care, particularly with regard to cost and compliance? What plans does the department have with regard to outside school hours care, because it is a major problem in schools in my electorate, and I suspect it is an even bigger problem in other areas?

Mrs PARKER: That item was dealt with in the federal Budget, which included significant changes to funding arrangements for that sector. Those changes are probably more complicated than any of the other funding arrangements that came out of that Budget.

Dr CONSTABLE: Will there be less or more funding?

Mr BIRCHALL: In the past, the Commonwealth funded outside school hours care, in conjunction with this department, by providing an operational subsidy. Our contribution was in the region of \$450 000. Those places are part of our agreement with the Commonwealth. The plan is to provide in the 1992-96 agreement 2 850 places. In addition, the Commonwealth provides child care assistance to a small number of parents at a rate that is much lower than the rate for long day care.

The changes in the Budget will replace the operational subsidy with an increased level of child care assistance, not only by increasing the amount from 73¢ an hour to \$1.95 an hour, but also by broadening the eligibility for child care assistance, which will increase the number of families eligible by around 51 000 Australia wide.

Mrs PARKER: The Federal Government has piloted the new structure in a number of locations - I am not sure where, and I do not know that one is in Western Australia - to try to increase the number of children who can access that service by broadening the eligibility criteria.

Dr CONSTABLE: Will that make it easier for schools or groups of schools to provide outside school hours care, because the schools to which I have been talking are throwing up their hands and saying they cannot do this any more?

Mr BIRCHALL: The majority of services are provided not on school sites but in nearby community facilities.

Dr CONSTABLE: I am talking about those on school sites. Will this change make it easier for schools or groups of schools that believe they need to provide this service to continue to provide it?

Mr BIRCHALL: If they provide the service already - in other words, they have gone through the developmental stage and are operating financially efficiently - it will not make a significant difference. In fact, it may encourage more parents to leave their children in outside school hours care because more parents will be eligible to access that service; and if numbers are a problem, that will assist. I do not think it will make a great deal of difference to outside school hours care that is provided on school sites.

Dr CONSTABLE: Has anything been written on this that would help both members and schools?

Mr BIRCHALL: There is a federal Budget fact sheet on it - fact sheet No 13 - which I can leave with you.

Dr CONSTABLE: I would like a copy of that, please.

Mrs PARKER: According to the federal Minister, the new funding arrangement to replace the operational subsidy and broaden the eligibility criteria will make the service more viable. That is the focus. I am not sure how that will affect school based programs. We had difficulty last week in getting the detail from Canberra, but I will give you the information as we receive it.

Mrs HOLMES: I refer to program 2.0, protection and care of children. Page 367 refers to a "Guide to Searching". What success has been achieved from this initiative, and if it has had a good result, is it intended that it continue?

Mr FISHER: This guide has just been published, so we cannot provide you with any feedback. The guide consolidates a lot of information that we have available, and we have published it so that people who are searching back through time will have a step by step process they can follow. We have not had enough time to identify how well received the publication is.

Mrs HOLMES: This is a new initiative?

Mr FISHER: Yes.

Ms ANWYL: I refer to the Western Australian family foundation trust account at page 374. Are there guidelines for the use of those funds? What is the reason for the decrease in the funds by about \$1.1m by the end of next financial year? Is that a deliberate downgrading of the value of the trust? What is the source of the revenue?

Mr FISHER: Treasury hates government departments having trust funds, but it has agreed to our having this family foundation trust account. The deeds of the trust are such that money can be spent only if it relates directly to family issues. All expenditure out of the trust fund must be approved by the Minister. I could, if you were interested, outline the things on which the department has spent money. We never go to the Minister with requests for recurrent funding from this trust fund, because that would defeat the whole purpose of having a trust. If the funding were recurrent, we should get it through the budget. It is one-off expenditure. The reason we have what appears to be a huge reduction in expenditure is that we never know at the beginning of the year what requests we will have. We anticipate that we will spend almost all of that amount. In some years, however, we do not do that.

[11.10 am]

Ms ANWYL: May I have information on the money that has been spent by supplementary information? This \$1.6m refers to a broad category. I presume there would be no specific breakdown at this stage.

Mr FISHER: I will just give some flavour of the sorts of things that amount is spent on. Before we started on the pilot project of family group conferencing, we had no funding in our budget for it. The Minister was very keen for us to do something in that area. We spent \$40 000 on that. We had nothing in the budget for the Family Helpline

promotion, but we were very keen to promote that, and we spent \$69 000 on it. We spent \$26 000 on Family Week and children's activities. We had funding for the Livingstone Foundation which came out of the family trust account, and had initial expenditure of \$8 000 or \$9 000 on the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. They are all one-off expenditures. It is not recurrent funding; it is related to families. It conforms to the deed of the trust. Every cent that is spent must be approved by the Minister.

Ms ANWYL: Perhaps those child care centres that are under incredible pressure could make some application to the trust.

Mr FISHER: The only problem with that is that funding would almost certainly be required on a recurrent basis.

Ms ANWYL: I do not think it would. The point is that it will be able to work itself out of the crisis with which it is currently faced if it can get funding.

Mr FISHER: That is something for the Government to consider.

Mrs PARKER: Generally the funding from the trust account is for new initiatives and pilot programs.

Ms ANWYL: And promotions?

Mrs PARKER: Some of the promotions have been part of the funding initiatives.

Mr FISHER: This account was set up under the previous Government.

Division 72: Women's Policy Development Office, \$4 290 000 -

[Mr Ainsworth, Chairman.]

[Mrs Parker, Minister for Women's Interests.]

[Ms A. Norgard, Executive Director.]

[Ms M. Robinson, Manager, Corporate Services.]

Ms WARNOCK: Ms WARNOCK: I want to address two or three important issues. Page 1064 mentions increased government commitment to community consultation through the Women's Advisory Council and the Rural, Remote and Regional Women's Network and improved representation levels of women on boards and committees which will impact on government decision making. Recently I got a letter from the Federal Government telling me that its women's register was being disbanded. That was a pity, it said. I wonder how the Minister plans to achieve these improvements; that is, representation of women on boards and committees? Does she have annual targets, and what emphasis is being planned to get the message to women that the Government wants to improve their representation on boards and committees?

[11.20 am]

Mrs PARKER: I thank the member for asking me one of my favourite questions. I am very committed to this issue and I have worked with Ms Norgard and the staff at the office in progressing this issue. The representation of women on boards and committees in Western Australia is unacceptably low. It is very difficult to give a figure. When I was appointed as the Minister we started to look at the figures and how up to date they were. I found the figures were not as current as I would like. The register is presently still held with Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet.

A full assessment and update is being undertaken to provide me with benchmark figures from which I can set targets. I am working with my other ministerial colleagues to raise awareness of the need to increase the representation of women on committees. It is a commitment of the Premier and of government. We have a gender analysis of appointments to boards and committees in Cabinet as they arise. I am working to increase the number of women on the interested persons' register, which is kept at the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet. I have no intention of disbanding that register. In fact, as I move around the city and the State in my role as Minister for Women's Interests I take with me a bundle of applications to place on the register. I take the opportunity everywhere I go whether in the private or public sector when I open conferences and forums where women are present - which is virtually everywhere - to present those applications and explain to women that they often undervalue their capacity to be included on those boards and committees.

A process is also being established to enable the Office of Women's Interests and me as Minister to be advised ahead of time of appointments to boards and committees. We will assist with suggestions and develop a far more cooperative protocol with other Ministers so that as they appoint boards and committees they will see the need to address gender. In some industries there is a very poor gender representation. I have a good gender balance on the boards and committees in my portfolio. Some are more easy to address than others. A forward notice process is in

place. In the public arena women's participation on boards is being promoted weekly. It has been engendering great enthusiasm among women. For the first time women feel that they are being invited and encouraged to participate.

Through the Office of Women's Interests and with my ministerial contact and communication, women's representation on boards is being promoted. Once the audit of the present status is complete - over 6 000 members of boards and committees in the State - we will have benchmark figures. From there I will set targets. I can advise the member of them if she wishes. It is an area in which we can get our act together. I am happy for the member to share that message with her network contacts. I have met with senior women chief executive officers on a regular, but not frequent, basis and encouraged them to use their networks. I am trying to use the stone in the pond principle to send the message.

New registrations are being listed. On my last count about 163 women were on the register of interested persons. Even if I were able to place all of them on boards and committees I would not make a big enough difference to achieve my aim. Of the 163 some will not be appropriately experienced or qualified to contribute at board level in some instances. However, we must increase the number of women on that register and increase awareness of it. By setting targets we can make significant progress.

Ms ANWYL: I refer to the third last paragraph at page 1066 regarding the centenary of suffrage planned for 1999. I understand that about \$100 000 has been allocated for community grants. I would like some details of that. I understand that South Australia allocated \$5m for that purpose. What are the prospects, if not in this budget, for future money being made available for this celebration?

Mrs PARKER: The \$5m allocated in South Australia came about when the Government determined there was plenty of money, but experience showed there was not. Nowhere near that allocation will be made in our budget. The amount of \$100 000 has been made available for grants. We have made some allocation from the women's policy development office budget for administrative support for the project.

The suffrage committee, of which Astrid Norgard is an ex-officio member, is now in place and meets regularly in my boardroom. I am delighted with its progress. People on the committee have expertise and networks in the corporate sector. It has established subcommittees to seek corporate sponsorship.

Ms NORGARD: The \$100 000 a year will be distributed according to a formula that a subcommittee of the main suffrage committee will be developing. The maximum grant will be \$10 000, with the aim of spreading it as far and equitably as possible throughout the State. There is a definite emphasis on rural and regional WA being involved. The suffrage committee is progressing well in seeking sponsorship. Our first private sponsorship has been offered. The aim of that is to involve the whole community in the celebration of the centenary of women's suffrage.

Mrs HOLMES: I refer to page 1067, regarding the Government's two year plan to increase economic independence. Which are the eight government agencies and what specific role do they play in this achievement?

Mrs PARKER: The two-year plan encompasses more than eight agencies.

Ms NORGARD: I will provide the names of the eight agencies by supplementary information.

Ms WARNOCK: I refer to page 1068. I see that the FTEs for the domestic violence prevention unit will increase from six in 1996-97 to 10 in 1997-98. At what level will these new workers be employed? What will be their role?

Ms NORGARD: They are not necessarily dedicated bodies. In the way of output based management, they are resources from within the women's policy development office that are attributed to achieving outcomes for the domestic violence prevention unit. Five dedicated staff originally went with the prevention unit when it was located with the women's policy development office. I am spending much more of my time, and the corporate services area is spending more of its time, in support. We have permission to engage a contracts officer as a large part of the domestic violence program will be achieved through contracting services into the private and non-government sector. Of course, the process is involved and we do not have the expertise in the office. We have six FTEs plus considerable additional resources in corporate support, my executive director time plus policy officers. These are not necessarily dedicated bodies.

[11.30 am]

Ms WARNOCK: I refer to page 1068, the summary of key program level outputs. The programs include key outputs, integrated response to domestic violence and policy advice, analysis and information on domestic violence and women's personal safety. Can you explain that further? I am interested in resource allocation. Like everyone else who has been concerned about domestic violence for years, I am keen to see something happen. I do not doubt the sincerity of everyone involved. It is a huge community problem and people are now beginning to do practical and good things in the area.

Mrs PARKER: It is important to acknowledge the Government's response to domestic violence. I agree that it is a problem that affects too many women and families in the community. The task force report made certain recommendations. We have in place 16 regional committees which assess applications, and resourcing decisions have been made. We are at a very interesting time. We will now implement the activities that we have been assessing, in consultation with the 16 regional committees which comprise community people working in partnership with government departments, such as the Police Department, the Health Department and local government authorities. The planning is in place, as is the finance. A significant allocation has been made in the budget, not only in the Women's Policy Development Office but also across other agencies. It is important to ensure that the planning, the preparation and the finance allocations allow us to deliver the services appropriately.

Ms NORGARD: We are at the point of implementing the plan. A lot of activity will happen now.

Ms ANWYL: As supplementary information can you provide further detail on how the \$2.6m will be spent?

Ms NORGARD: That may take some time because the submissions by the regional committees and the priorities that have been developed are very rough. We must refine them and negotiate with other government agencies which may have responsibility as well. As soon as possible we will place that information in the public arena.

Mrs PARKER: We can provide that as supplementary information, but the member must recognise that we are engaged in a process of development.

Ms ANWYL: I understand that. I am the chairperson of a regional committee. I would like some information on advertising budgets, and on other matters. There should be some finite information. I understand the state of flux -

Ms NORGARD: I would like to clarify a point that arose earlier about funding for domestic violence programs and the relationship with Family and Children's Services. Just before I took up my position with the Women's Policy Development Office in November last year, an agreement within this portfolio was that there would be underspending by the Domestic Violence Prevention Unit and overspending by Family and Children's Services, with the view of setting up as quickly as possible some programs for the Aboriginal community in the area of domestic and family violence. It has not been possible for Family and Children's Services to use all that money. I am determining now exactly how much the department was able to use. However, we have negotiated with Treasury to carry over the funds to 1997-98 so that there is no funding loss. The Domestic Violence Prevention Unit is now in a better position to know either where to put the funds immediately or how to develop in conjunction with the community.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr Ainsworth): I take it that the information on funding requested by the member for Kalgoorlie will be provided by way of supplementary information.

Mrs PARKER: We will provide by way of supplementary information details of amounts that are presently available. The member has acknowledged that because of the current stage in the delivery of planning, etc, all the information she seeks is not yet available because certain decisions have not been made.

Mrs HOLMES: At page 1069 the second major achievement for 1996-97 was the establishment of a comprehensive data collection process. It states that agreements have been obtained from three government agencies to provide quarterly domestic violence data, and that the first batch of data covering the first quarter of 1997 was collected in April 1997. How long will it be before the collection of the data can be used efficiently and effectively in the achievement of that goal?

Ms NORGARD: To be useful, the development of the data collection and analysis process will take a little more time. The agencies collect information on different bases. We are not in the business of trying to compare apples with oranges - which is possibly where we are at currently. We will need to develop some more consistent criteria. Within the Domestic Violence Prevention Unit we are considering engaging a consultant to help us work with the Police Department, the Ministry of Justice and Family and Children's Services. The Health Department will also be involved in order to arrive at a consistent data collection and analysis process.

I can now provide the names of the agencies concerned with economic independence. They are the Education Department, the Department of Training, the Government Employees' Superannuation Board, the Department of Commerce and Trade, the Small Business Development Corporation, the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations, Family and Children's Services and Agriculture Western Australia.

Division 71: Office of Seniors' Interests, \$3 045 000 -

[Mr Ainsworth, Chairman.]

[Mrs D.P. Moran, Executive Director.]

[Mrs E. Nattress, Manager, Corporate Development.]

[Mr M. Brown, Finance and Budgeting Officer.]

[11.40 am]

Ms WARNOCK: The Health Department which funds the home and community care program, which is accessed by many frail, aged seniors, has embarked on a campaign aimed at the implementation of a national fees policy. The talk that I hear suggests that the move for the State to take over that funding will not occur by 1 July, as originally proposed, but will occur by July next year.

The fees being canvassed with home and community care agencies suggest that a safety net will be implemented of \$30 a week for full pensioners and a graduated fee for service upwards for part-pensioners who have some other income. For frail aged seniors who are full pensioners and who are still to be consulted, this may have some of the following consequences - an additional impost on HACC clients, of whom over 90 per cent are pensioners; an inequity of one fee system for seniors whose financial circumstances, geographical location and background vary significantly; the risk that some seniors will simply refuse services rather than pay, which concerns me greatly; and an admission by seniors that they cannot pay, thus increasing the likelihood of premature admission to institutional care. Is the Minister aware of the aforementioned matters? If so, what budget allocation has been set aside to ensure seniors are consulted about the implementation of a compulsory fee for service, given that any current payment for service is by donation or by a modest fee of about \$25 a month?

Mrs PARKER: We are aware of the proposals. There is ongoing dialogue, particularly at a departmental level between the Office of Seniors Interests and the Health Department. We continue to advocate on behalf of seniors, and pensioners in particular. Responsibility for the decision lies with the Health Department. I trust the member for Perth will attend the Estimates Committee hearing for Health and ask the same question of the Minister for Health. I will read *Hansard* to see the Minister's response.

We are committed to consultation for seniors. The "Time on Our Side" document is part of a consultation process in which we seek a wide range of input from seniors across the State. Some consultation was completed in regional areas in the past few weeks, and we have a couple of centres to go. I attended the annual general meeting of a seniors organisation yesterday and urged people to make recommendations on the issues that are raised in the discussion document or on any other issues. They can make oral submissions at the meetings or written submissions as individuals or organisations. The Office of Seniors Interests, in concert with the seniors ministerial advisory council, is overseeing that consultation, and those bodies will report back to me. That feedback and information will be considered by me to put together a five year plan for seniors.

The two fundamental things to have in place for seniors is appropriate accommodation and health. We cannot talk about a quality of life for our seniors without mentioning those two considerations. I do not have responsibility for the budgetary allocation for Health.

Mrs MORAN: I have regular meetings with the Commissioner of Health. I am pressing the Health Department to consider a series of ongoing matters to improve the policy focus on what we call whole of ageing issues, and not just on the traditional health issues, including hospital care and such programs. One of the issues we are trying to press in our state plan on ageing is a health and older person's policy that sits within the Health portfolio. Many issues are involved in that, such as preventive health and health care for seniors with disabilities and their carers. I have continuing discussions with the Health Department and the negotiations are going well. I am pleased with the response of the Health Department.

The member is right in noting the context in which we are working in aged care reform at a federal level. There are some uncertainties. Strongly felt criticisms have been made by seniors organisations and industry groups about the speed of that reform. These matters are all under discussion with the State. No plan has been set in motion for where this jurisdiction will head with aged care reform. We are most concerned about the 1 July date for implementation. The Minister for Family and Children's Services has made representations to the federal Minister about a number of aspects coming through that aged persons reform process. The Office of Seniors Interests and the Minister will continue to play their part in advocating and trying to make representations to the departments concerned.

Ms WARNOCK: Is there a specific budget for consultations on the Time on Our Side five year plan?

Mrs MORAN: Yes. The Government has committed \$450 000 over the next two years to the implementation of the five year plan on ageing. The office budgeted in the current financial year for about \$58 000, which has gone towards the preparation, printing and dissemination of the discussion paper and to a wide range of community consultations on the plan. As the Minister pointed out, we are in the midst of conducting consultations in rural areas in Western Australia. We have chosen to go to the country first because of the importance of people living in country regions

having an input on this five year plan on ageing. The total package of \$450 000 over two years is a substantial amount of money to implement the strategy.

Mrs PARKER: The one thing that undergirds my advocacy for seniors and the budget allocation for this activity is that the change in the seniors population is probably the most significant demographic change to affect our community in 50 years. Fourteen per cent of the population are seniors. It is estimated that 22 to 24 per cent of the population will be seniors by 2020; that is, one in four people will be a senior. Not only will the numbers change, but expectations will change. The standard of health and life expectancy will increase. We have a significant challenge before us to plan appropriately to exercise a political will. The Time on Our Side consultation is part of that. We must address those needs before that change hits us and presents us with a difficulty.

Dr TURNBULL: I am glad you mentioned country areas. Are you going to Bunbury?

Mrs PARKER: The time frame for the consultations is limited. We have tried not only to get a spread across the geographic region, but also to take samplings of communities. We have been to Bunbury.

Dr TURNBULL: I received notice of the meetings at Bridgetown and Manjimup. I was not able to attend the Bunbury meeting. One of the big problems is that Dardanup, Burekup, Boyanup and Capel do not have well coordinated services. I know that is not the fault of the Office of Seniors Interests. However, does the office look at the distribution of the services? That outer ridge around Bunbury is still being left out.

[11.50 am]

Mrs PARKER: As I said, there is no commitment to statewide consultation; that is, that we will get to every regional centre. We had to take samples. That discussion document has been distributed to different seniors' organisations through local government. The primary avenue for comment will be written submissions. We trust that, with that distribution and the consultation, we will get those sorts of comments. The same approach is being taken to that implemented for the two-year plan for women, which was distributed to agencies which then made contributions about what they could do to contribute to the status and quality of life of women in Western Australia. We hope that similar suggestions will be forwarded as a result of the consultation. Perhaps the member can make a submission.

Dr TURNBULL: What is the submission closing date?

Ms MORAN: The closing date is 31 July.

Mrs HOLMES: I refer to page 861 and the capital works. I would like a breakdown of the budget item in relation to the office equipment and IT components.

Mrs PARKER: The office has expanded its activities and it has received a significant increase in its budget. It now has national leadership in some seniors' issues. For example, the office has taken on carriage of the healthy ageing task force. This State was the first to adopt that as a programming policy and it has now been adopted at the national level. I will take carriage of the discussion of that issue at the ministerial council and Ms Moran will take carriage of the meetings at the national level. Because the office's role has expanded, it requires more space and staff. Officers will provide further detail as supplementary information.

Ms WARNOCK: I refer to page 856 and the appropriation and forward estimates. We have all been talking about the importance of issues relating to seniors' interests. We have also all seen information about the ageing population. As an immediate pre-baby boomer, I am as aware of the issue as anyone else. As someone who is looking after an ageing parent, I am interested to note that in 1997-98 the budget allocation to the office is \$3.045m, but in 1999-2000 and 2000-01 the allocation will decrease. Why is that happening when we know there will be even more concern in the future about looking after our ageing population? It is a fact of life throughout the world. A larger budget would have been more appropriate.

Mrs PARKER: My task is to ensure that my budget matches what is there or that it is increased. This year I have been successful in achieving that.

Ms MORAN: The role of the Office of Seniors Interests is to provide leadership in planning for ageing in the community and to look to improving the quality of life of our seniors. The office is the focal point in government for that objective. The office has seen a significant increase in its budget and that is primarily as a result of policy commitments by the Government. Significant recent initiatives have been introduced and the office has the carriage of those issues, including the implementation of the state plan on ageing; the multi-generational grants program, which will continue into the future; and the international year of older persons, which will be celebrated in 1999. Some of these projects are finite in nature. For example, the international year is a period of focus and importance to the office and, of course, it does not carry forward into the following years.

Ms WARNOCK: Planning for that year will be done largely the year before, so the major spending is then?

Ms MORAN: We find this hiccup in the planning. The office currently has a budget of \$2.384m, which is an increase.

Ms WARNOCK: That is so for the next couple of years, but it goes backwards after that. The number of seniors will not decrease; it will increase dramatically.

Mrs PARKER: The office exists to provide policy, advice, planning, initiatives and lobbying on behalf of seniors. It is not involved in the provision of services.

Ms WARNOCK: I understand that very well.

Mrs PARKER: It will be interesting to keep a watch on the process as we receive the material from the "Time On Our Side" consultations and the development of the five year plan. That could impact on what the Government's response should be. It then becomes an extra task for me as Minister to ensure the office is funded accordingly. The office has certainly been given funding for those initiatives that have been planned and for the 1999 international year. We hope that the response from the "Time On Our Side" document will have an impact as well.

Ms ANWYL: Page 860 refers to the bid to host the global conference on ageing. Does that have anything to do with the Global Dance Foundation?

Mrs PARKER: No.

Ms ANWYL: Is there any likelihood of this State's hosting that event?

Mrs PARKER: Since coming into the portfolio I have quickly acknowledged the leadership the office is providing in a national and regional sense. It is important for Western Australia's isolation to ensure we are in contact with what is happening. The idea to pursue hosting a regional conference had an impact for those people involved in raising the awareness of the needs of seniors. It would have been very good for Western Australia. Because it is an interagency response - the office does not deliver a service, unlike the Health Department - it is very important to have the opportunity to raise that awareness. The 1999 international year of seniors will be very important in raising the profile of this demographic change. It will also be important in changing attitudes to stereotypes in the community. The conference does not have anything to do with the Global Dance Foundation.

Ms WARNOCK: Page 861 contains reference to an evaluation of the use of the seniors' card. I am pleased about that. Is the Minister aware that some concessions for seniors' card holders are as little as \$1? I instance the concession for Perth Concert Hall tickets, which ensures that access is still prohibited for seniors. Will the Minister or the Office of Seniors Interests investigate how such concessions can be made more attractive to seniors?

Mrs PARKER: The office has just sent out a new range of the concessions available. Ours was the first State to introduce a seniors' card, and it is another area in which we have displayed national leadership. The office is looking at reciprocal arrangements being formalised.

[12 noon]

Ms MORAN: The concert hall concessions are an ongoing matter. The office has tried to take up the issue, particularly in relation to the ABC symphony orchestra concerts. We are well aware of the issue and the inadequacy of concessions for seniors' card holders. There is no concession for those card holders but there is for pension card holders. There are discrepancies in the system. Our seniors do not feel that they are different; they all want to be recognised as older people who have made a contribution to this community.

This is an ongoing matter which I can take up with the ABC. I have taken it up at officer level and of course through our Minister and former Minister, who have both taken this issue up with their federal counterpart, the Minister for Communications and the Arts. It is becoming more apparent that the seniors market is valuable. Our other strategy is to start looking at how important it is to get seniors involved in tailoring goods and services to seniors. That is the current approach.

Mrs PARKER: The member for Perth might be able to assist and use her network to raise the issue of that concession for seniors. Hopefully, we will then be able to get a better result.

[M[S][N][D:1]Division 80: **Contract and Management Services, \$48 217 000 -**

[Mr Ainsworth, Chairman.]

[Mr Board, Minister for Works.]

[Mr A. Piper, Executive Director, Contract and Management Services.]

[Mr P. Stafford, Manager, Financial Services, Contract and Management Services.]

[Mr R. Harvey, Director - State Contracts, Contract and Management Services.]

[Mr J. Tondut, Director - Maintenance Services, Contract and Management Services.]

[Mr G.L. Duffield, Chief Executive Office, State Supply Commission.]

[Mr C. Vinci, Director - Policy, State Supply Commission.]

[Mr M.K. Braganza, Acting Director - Corporate Services, State Supply Commission.]

[Mr J.V. Eftos, Acting Executive Director, Office of Youth Affairs.]

[Dr L. Bungey, Chief of Staff, Policy Officer, Office of Mr Board.]

[Mr T. DeBarro, Policy Officer, Office of Mr Board.]

[Mr P. Harris, Media Secretary, Office of Mr Board.]

The CHAIRMAN: Before we start, I emphasise the need to keep questions and answers short. In previous Estimates Committees we have had some fairly lengthy questions and answers. They do shorten our time. As we have an hour for each division, I call on members to keep questions short.

Mr KOBELKE: Will the Minister give us some understanding of the major reduction in the allocations in this Budget for 1997-98 over 1996-97? Budget estimates in the past have been incredibly difficult to follow because of the way money is brought in and out of this budget from other departments and the way that legal entities have been set up and money transferred backwards and forwards. At the bottom of page 197 we see that the actuals of \$76m will fall to an estimated \$48m. Does that accurately reflect the drop in the amount of work being done by the Department of Contract and Management Services and does it also pick up changes in accounting procedures which would reflect such a major change?

Mr BOARD: It generally reflects the changing nature of the Department of Contract and Management Services. The member will be aware that the department is relatively new. It came into operation in only the middle of last year as a result of the amalgamation of the Building Management Authority and the Department of State Services. Prior to that amalgamation the building management authority was outsourcing some of its functions. Since then Contract and Management Services has operated as an expert in the contract management area for other agencies. It will scale down its own activities and outsource some of those areas. That is reflected in the budget.

[12.10 pm]

Mr KOBELKE: The Government has declared in other parts of the budget papers that part of its financial structure is to draw back on capital expenditure. By how much has the consolidated fund budget contracted this year as part of that policy, and how much of the change in this division reflects that capital expenditure appears in other budgets and CAMS may have an administrative role that does not show up in this budget? If the Minister cannot answer that now I would like detailed figures on capital expenditure of consolidated fund departments.

Mr PIPER: The recurrent services on page 197 shows an estimated actual in 1996-97 of \$67 419 000 and estimated expenditure for 1997-98 of \$45 947 000. The biggest single change in funding arrangements for Contract and Management Services is because the previous Department of State Services component that was brought in this year was not net appropriated. Therefore, nearly \$19m of revenue was not retained.

In addition there are changes in the use of internal funds through cash, which account for another couple of million dollars, and asset sales of \$4.5m. The major changes in the apparent underlying budget position are due to accounting adjustments of one form or another plus asset sales. They are not due to a change in underlying capital expenditure associated with Contract and Management Services.

Mr KOBELKE: Can we have the figures for those major items, so we might be able to make a bottom line comparison between the actual recurrent figure, taking account of the change with State Supply Commission, and the other changes mentioned?

Mr BOARD: We will provide that as supplementary information.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not know whether members realise it, but the acoustics in here are appalling. Hansard is having troubling hearing some Ministers answer questions. If the Minister could raise his voice it would assist Hansard.

Mr WIESE: The item for commercialised services indicates a cut in expenditure and substantial cut in FTEs for computing and network services. As I am sure that the Government has not cut its dependency on and usage of computing services, what is the explanation?

Mr BOARD: The decrease of 43 FTEs and \$4m in 1997 is due to the planned contracting out of bureau services during the first quarter of 1997-98. That includes a provision of \$1m for employee transition payment to staff transferring to the private sector.

Mr WIESE: How many of those staff who are moving out will come back in as employees of the contract agency or entity?

Mr BOARD: That is currently being negotiated. My advice is that nearly all of those employees will be employed by private sector companies that will provide the service for the Government.

Mr PIPER: At the moment the process is not complete. All the employees involved have put in an expression of interest for transition and they will be interviewed. We would expect a substantial percentage take-up in the number of employees employed by the preferred contractor.

Mr KOBELKE: The first point on page 201 refers to increased accountability for contracting decisions across government. I will relate that to the change in tender procedures that took place from 1 July 1996 with the management of tenders going into a tender box. Prior to that tenderers who were present when the tender box was opened could get some idea of what other tenderers had quoted. How has that change increased accountability with tendering?

Mr BOARD: The process is evolving. The member must appreciate the number of contracts that are put out to the private sector across government and the way in which all agencies are being involved in contracting at all levels. We are trying to make the process as open and as accountable as physically possible. There were some concerns that the initial tendering process was not as accountable as we expected. That process is continually evolving. That change was brought about for a number of reasons.

Mr PIPER: In most of the goods and services contracts prices are not declared on opening. It is not common practice in most tendering situations to declare prices. We have not resiled from publishing the successful tender and price, so it is clear who gets the work and at what price. It was the practice with building contracts to declare the bid list at the point of opening tenders. We found we were getting some dysfunctional behaviour from tenderers - not always - who were measuring the gap and moving to close it prior to the contract being awarded. That was affecting the value on some of those bids. We changed the process. Industry has made some comments on that change, and we shall work with it to look at the different categories of building contracts and implement some changes. That has not yet been finalised. I do not believe there has been a decrease in accountability, just in timing of the information. It is clear to everyone who won the job and at what price. People who bid are able to compare their bids with that price and get a sense of the fairness of the process.

[12.20 pm]

Mr KOBELKE: The criticism that was alluded to is one I hear loud and clear. I do not see how it can be taken under this dot point that there is increased accountability for contractors when it relates to standard contracts of construction and the department is not looking at a range of different approaches. It is a straightforward contractual arrangement. I have heard the complaint from builders and they believe it is more accountable if the tenderers are present at the opening of the tenders and do not have to go to a notice board some days later to find out who won the tender. I understand that with complex contracts the department would be looking at a range of different approaches and the price is not a determining factor. I can understand that the department does not want people running around because they have looked at the price and not at what is offered in the tender.

Mr BOARD: I agree with the member for Nollamara. When the Government did the majority of work in this area people expected that to happen. However, whether one likes it or not, in the tendering and contracting area there are winners and losers. Someone will win a contract in competition with eight people and seven of those people may be concerned about the process because they lost the contract. The Government is constantly looking at ways to make sure that the process is open and accountable. I assure the member that if there is a way to improve the process, it will be implemented. I will look at any concerns across government. The Building and Construction Advisory Committee meets in my office once a month and it advises me of the concerns the building industry has about the process and suggests how to address those concerns. At this stage, the question raised by the member has not been put to me. If it is a problem, we will address it.

Mr KOBELKE: Will the Minister provide the names of the people who are on the Building and Construction Advisory Committee?

Mr BOARD: I will provide that in supplementary information.

Ms ANWYL: I refer to the summary of major agency level outcomes and outputs on page 200 of the Budget Statements, particularly to item 1 under "Output Groups". Reference is made to "Government and agencies". Will the Minister clarify that it refers to government departments and not non-government departments?

Mr BOARD: The member is right.

Ms ANWYL: Will the Minister advise the range of government agencies which have been assisted? The estimated expenditure for the 1997-98 financial year for revenue and other funding sources indicates an increase, compared with the last financial year, of approximately \$4.5m. What are the other funding sources, what is the source of that revenue and why is there a large increase compared with the previous financial year?

Mr BOARD: The activities which provide an increase in revenue and other funding sources in 1997-98 are asset sales, \$4.5m, and the use of existing funds - bank balance - \$5.6m. These revenues have been allocated on a pro rata basis for all relevant subprograms. The variation in revenue between the 1996-97 and 1997-98 financial years arises from the fact that the 1996-97 figure does not include collections from the former Department of State Services' business units for the major part of that financial year. That is due to these business units not having the authority to retain the revenues they collected. This reflects the change in the accounting procedures referred to earlier. Since the production of the budget this arrangement has changed, effective from 28 March, and Contract and Management Services is able to retain revenues from the former DOSS business units.

Ms ANWYL: Do the asset sales involve a couple of assets?

Mr PIPER: We have two sites in Welshpool - the previous Welshpool depot and the state disposal site - which will become surplus to requirements this year. It is proposed that they be sold this financial year. The proceeds from the sales will be reapplied to the budget.

Ms ANWYL: When the Minister referred to the allocation, was he talking about the output groups?

Mr BOARD: Yes.

Ms ANWYL: It is all fairly arbitrary. It is extremely confusing. How is the formula for the distribution of assets worked out?

Mr STAFFORD: To some extent it is arbitrary. It is really a financing decision which was agreed with Treasury as part of the development of our 1997-98 budget; that is, that CAMS retains the proceeds from the sale of those two sites and utilises built up cash reserves. There is no scientific way of attributing those moneys to the program. It is a financing arrangement. I appreciate it is difficult to make comparisons across the two years.

Dr TURNBULL: The first dot point on page 207 refers to a more effective contract management framework which has been developed for major goods and service contracts. Obviously, the Minister's department is giving advice on goods and services contracts to other departments. Do you monitor other departments' goods and services contracts to ensure they conform to the requirements as per your best practice advice and support?

Mr BOARD: It is a good question because it is exactly what we are doing. We are trying to make sure we have consistency and expertise across government. The department is primarily involved in the upfront area of contract arrangement. A number of departments have a responsibility, which has been given to them by the State Supply Commission, to organise their contract arrangements. It is the responsibility of each chief executive officer to maintain the performance of a particular contract. However, in seeking assistance they can call in an organisation like CAMS or outside help to monitor the organisation. When we debate the division on the State Supply Commission the member will see that it also has a role as, I guess, an auditor of policy. It must determine whether the policy is being complied with across government. The actual performance of the contract is the responsibility of the CEO. We are developing a stronger framework which will provide some comfort to agencies and the community because the performance of the contracts will become far more transparent.

Mr WIESE: My first question follows on from the question by the member for Nollamara on accountability. I was surprised to find that recently a contract was let to a firm that was not quality assured. What is the department's attitude towards quality assurance? Is it a major requirement of firms that they must be quality assured to perform work for the Government?

[12.30 pm]

Mr BOARD: There are various ways of answering that. The general principle is that we give some support credence to quality assurance. However, there are various levels of quality assurance and various levels that are required for particular jobs and functions. This area is constantly under review.

Mr PIPER: The view of quality assurance does not apply uniformly to all contracts, as the Minister indicated. A judgment is made and usually stated with the tenderers as to the importance and the level of quality assurance that is required. It is also fair to say that different industry groupings have different standards of readiness for quality assurance. It is usually part of the weighted evaluation in a value for money sense. Therefore, it does not override all other criteria, including price or quality of proposal or whatever. However, it is a significant evaluation issue depending on the category of contract. We would need more detail to be able to answer the question more specifically as it appears to relate to a specific contract.

Mr WIESE: I have had the answers to the specific. I was looking more at the generality. I was surprised that it was not the case.

Prior to my being Minister, virtually every firefighting vehicle used in this State came from outside Western Australia. Over that four years we reached a stage where virtually all bushfire brigade equipment is being manufactured in Western Australia and we have begun a process of manufacturing fire and rescue service vehicles in Western Australia, which is a major breakthrough. I was concerned when a contract was let on some bushfire and CALM equipment. Previously, equipment for CALM had been developed and manufactured by a manufacturer in Collie and the equipment for bushfires had been developed and manufactured by a manufacturer in Narrogin. When the contracts were let there was a total reversal of that situation, which seemed to be absurd. The manufacturer in Narrogin had to completely retool and develop these models and everything else to manufacture vehicles for CALM and the manufacturer in Collie won the contract to manufacture the vehicles which had been developed and manufactured in Narrogin. Therefore he had to retool and rejig to manufacture. It was absurd to create that situation. It put one or both of those manufacturers at risk of dropping out of the system and there would have been no competition between the two manufacturers, which we had developed. One of CAMS' major role should be to ensure that we encourage manufacturers in Western Australia and that we let contracts on a term sufficient to ensure they are viable contracts and the manufacturers are able to continue manufacturing. Has the department addressed that problem and tried to ensure that those sorts of situations do not arise in the future?

Mr BOARD: We all want to see Western Australian companies come to the fore. We want to give them every opportunity to qualify and win contracts. We also have a duty of care to the taxpayer. It is constantly a matter of getting those in balance. I am not aware of, nor would I want at this point to talk about, individual contracts. However, there are many vagaries in contracting in that a lot more comes into the equation. CAMS has tried to weight local companies as it does with small companies against large companies. That relates to the question asked earlier about quality assurance, because the cost of getting high levels of quality assurance prevents some small operators from entering the system. They would complain they have been shut out of the process because they do not have the time or resources to reach that level of quality assurance, which may not be required for some of the jobs for which they contract. It is a matter of trying to get the balance right all the time and trying to make sure that we get the best use of our funds. Within the propriety of maintaining information which stays with certain employers, I am happy to provide whatever information the member requires on that contract and the process by which it was arrived at.

Mr WIESE: I have the information; I was Minister at the time. I am trying to ensure there are processes. The Program Statements refer to more innovation in whole of government contracts. If it requires a three-year contract for a company to be able to cover the costs of tooling up and setting up the jigs to manufacture, CAMS should give a three-year contract rather than a one-year contract.

Mr BOARD: Certainly. There is also a question of competitiveness and not picking winners at the expense of other companies to which we would have to justify why we have singled out a company. It is a matter of getting all of these things in balance. It is a competitive marketplace. The Government is trying to get the best goods and services with the best use of taxpayers' dollars and make it open and transparent. We do not succeed every time. However, a lot of effort is put into trying to get to that point. There are lessons along the way for us to learn. This is a relatively new process and we can all learn from contracts that have been issued which may not have been as successful as others.

Mr KOBELKE: I refer to the second dot point on page 201 of the Program Statements. What is the intention for establishing an electronic marketplace and how far has the department gone in establishing that?

Mr BOARD: As I speak much of our contract information is on the Internet. In the four months that I have been Minister for Works and Services there has been a dramatic increase in the number of people who are accessing information on contracting through the Internet. The number of hits is now something of the order of 1 000 a month. Nearly one-third of the contract information is obtained via the Internet. We are very interested in the area of electronic marketing across government. The Government believes the future for many government services will be delivered electronically, through multimedia processes and the transfer of information directly into homes and

businesses. The Government needs to get ahead in this area. From that point of view, the department is examining ways to develop our processes and to try to encourage other government departments to do the same thing. I think the Government is getting into that area right now.

Mr KOBELKE: I commend the Minister for that. He should talk to the Premier and ask him whether he will allow members of the Opposition to go onto it, because he has not answered a question I asked some months ago about when members of Parliament will get access to the system. To what extent do you have an integrated electronic system so you can manage all the various contracts, in terms of not only being able to put up a prospectus or the general tendering conditions, but also to follow through from the awarding of contracts to checking on the cost factors involved and signing off at the completion of a contract and being able to make comparisons between different tenderers and different kinds of jobs? How developed is the total system to allow that overview?

[12.40 pm]

Mr PIPER: It has a very strong thrust and in some contract areas we are doing it particularly well. With the building facilities management contracts, for example, the contractors use a common information system which is an open book to Contract and Management Services. We use that actively to benchmark their performance, outcomes, work volumes and the key issues of their contract. We run regular benchmarking forums between the contractors, and ensure we keep it up to the prescribed contract performance. That has been very successful. In a number of other larger contracts under development, we are building the contracts with an online management component as part of the contract.

It is under development in some other areas; for example, in the projects area we are looking for an initiative to do online contract management involving contract architectural services. We intend to follow up this initiative through the Internet to allow online reporting on contract status. Contract and Management Services has positioned itself so that it can do cross-organisational systems of this type for contract architecture. It can be seen from the department's capital expenditure that money is being spent in that area. They are not fully developed but we have some good examples of how successful that can be within the organisation.

Mr KOBELKE: I refer to more specific facilities management contracts. Is there a system for making judgments about any savings to government through individual contracts being let? Obviously, that flows on to an aggregate of the contracting out of the facilities management.

Mr BOARD: The facilities management contract across government for 2 000 public buildings has been very successful overall. I have had a close look at it, and have visited most of the facility managers. I was concerned initially about client acceptance of the process, particularly in schools where there is a great variety of constant work but also in the community. I wanted to know whether they accepted the process and were happy with it. I was concerned about the amount small business was getting as a flow on. In the order of 80 per cent of the work is transferred to small businesses across the FM contracts, and the majority is done by local businessmen. From that point of view I am extremely happy, and the number of FM contractors in the maintenance cake has increased considerably. I made a statement about it in Parliament some weeks ago. It is much higher, between \$45m and \$50m, and the majority of that work is going to small businessmen who are fulfilling that role. The State Supply Commission will shortly review FM contractors as part of its monitoring process.

Mr PIPER: The services provided by contractors can be broken into a number of groups. The area in which we have best information is breakdown repairs, which is a high volume, small value area. At the moment our benchmark indicates that the breakdown cost has reduced by about 5 per cent on a turnover of \$17m, providing savings to government of \$850 000. We are projecting a savings target of 10 per cent and the trends in that direction indicate those savings will be doubled. In order to confirm the structure of the contract an independent study was carried out by Ernst and Young. Based on what it believes are realistic contract assumptions, there will be a 20 per cent saving to government if the contracts run for seven years. We are able to do that because in many of these areas the BMA kept good data, and we benchmark against past performance and between contractors. We are pretty confident of those numbers.

Ms ANWYL: At page 205 reference is made to work done by CAMS and private sector consultants. Is the cost of that work and the amount paid to the consultants available? More generally, across the entire department, are figures available of moneys paid to consultants in the current financial year and the anticipated figure for the forthcoming year?

Mr BOARD: I have some notes on the strategic asset management plans, but I do not have any figures on them. I will provide that as supplementary information.

Ms ANWYL: And more generally across the ministry?

Mr BOARD: I will give the member whatever information we have on the consultancy fees.

Mr KOBELKE: I refer to page 204 and the major achievement for 1996-97 that the department has progressed the Government's building and construction reform agenda. Will the Minister explain that?

Mr BOARD: The building and construction industry task force continued to work with industry to promote the objectives of the building and construction industry code of practice. The code is an important initiative of the Government to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of the Western Australian building and construction industry. The task force has been active in investigating complaints, reporting breaches of the code, and initiating legal action when required.

Mr KOBELKE: How many FTEs are involved and how much is allocated to the task force?

Mr BOARD: As indicated at the bottom of page 196 of the Budget Statements, five FTEs are allocated to the task force.

Mr KOBELKE: To whom do those people report? Are they still responsible to someone within Contract and Management Services, or are they directly under the building and construction industry task force which is the responsibility of the Minister for Labour Relations?

Mr BOARD: This area has been developed between both departments on a day-to-day basis.

Mr PIPER: The building and construction industry task force administratively sits within Contract and Management Services which retains the funding, but there is a direct operating relationship with the Minister for Labour Relations in the activities of the task force.

Mr KOBELKE: How much is allocated?

Mr PIPER: The details are provided at the bottom of page 196. The number of FTEs listed includes overheads, and only three FTEs are operating in the task force. The other area is administrative and clerical support.

[12.50 pm]

Mr KOBELKE: Have any companies been barred from entering into contracts because action was taken against them for running foul of the Building Industry Task Force and the building code of conduct?

Mr BOARD: Not to my knowledge.

Mr PIPER: I would prefer to provide a supplementary answer on that matter. Generally, the task force investigates all types of complaints, and investigations have been conducted into companies in breach of the code. As to the extent of the action, and whether they have been barred, I would rather provide that as supplementary information.

Mr KOBELKE: Is the task force headquartered in your office space?

Mr PIPER: Yes.

Mr KOBELKE: Are other government agencies from the Minister's office or the Police Service located in the accommodation you are providing?

Mr PIPER: Not at present, no.

Mr KOBELKE: Have they been?

Mr PIPER: There was vacant space on the same floor as the Department for Contract and Management Services which was not allocated to us; it was used for a short time by the police.

The CHAIRMAN: Are you happy, Minister, to provide that as supplementary information?

Mr BOARD: Yes.

Mr WIESE: The second point on page 209 indicates that the department endeavoured unsuccessfully to contract out services provided by Supply West and furniture services. A new strategy is being looked at. Can the Minister give a guarantee that in letting a tender for the services provided by Supply West and furniture services the successful tenderer will be required, where possible, to purchase in regional centres rather than totally from a centralised Perth agency or even from an interstate agency? I have a strong belief that we need to encourage local suppliers wherever possible. I would hate to see a tender let which did not ensure such a policy.

Mr BOARD: It is not an issue at which I am specifically looking, but I share the member's concern. It was raised by a number of people with me very early when I took on this portfolio. We are looking at electronic means of dealing with the Supply West issue. Regarding warehousing and furniture, I seek advice.

Mr PIPER: The total issue is that the market has changed and on-line solutions for those sorts of commodity supplies are very much the trend. However, it will advantage regional suppliers as it gives them an equal market presence. We will be looking to solutions which actually achieve that result. It is an arrangement which is still being looked at in some detail, and we are very mindful of the need to ensure that regional suppliers are able to work in the framework. It is unlikely that it will be single contract; it will be a buying framework approach using electronic means which should create significant advantage to people around the State.

Mr BOARD: The member is suggesting that local suppliers may be able to supply local buyers. From that point of view, that is the type of framework I will be encouraging provided it is within the umbrella of being competitive and does not penalise country buyers. Such goods and service are in a very competitive marketplace anyway, so that intention could be achieved.

Mr WIESE: My concern is exactly what the Minister said; that is, if a tender is let to somebody outside government, one could lose the possibility for local people to work as supplier to the tenderer. It is essential we do not do that. The Government is a big purchaser in rural and regional Western Australia, and local suppliers need access to the market.

Ms ANWYL: I refer to program 3.0 on page 206, contracting services, as well as the expenditure set out on page 197. What is the reason for the overall drop of \$23.5m in that allocation between the financial years? Does it reflect the refinement of the process we are seeing in those areas? More specifically, how much of the cost of legal advice, which I assume is substantial, relates to Crown Law, and where is that reflected in the overall budget? Also, are private legal people involved?

Mr BOARD: To which line does the member refer on page 206?

Ms ANWYL: I become a little confused with these papers. The summary of program 3.0 appears on page 197. Contracting services indicates a reduction from \$253m to \$230m in cost. Is that right?

Mr BOARD: Yes.

Ms ANWYL: More detail is given on pages 206 or 207, although I cannot tally up the figures, try as I may. Why the \$23.5m decrease in cost? In reference to the detail on page 207, where are the legal expenses reflected within these figures, if at all?

Mr BOARD: The decrease of \$23m primarily results from a reduced capital works program to \$150m compared with \$180m. The \$30m decrease in capital works program is countered with an increase in maintenance of \$5m.

Ms ANWYL: Can the Minister point to where that is specifically shown in the estimates in program 3.0?

Mr BOARD: The very first item on page 206.

Ms ANWYL: That is recurrent services. Are you saying that recurrent services relate to capital works?

Mr STAFFORD: No. The capital works of agencies that the Department of Contract and Management Services has as clients come through our financial framework as recurrent expenditure. We have offsetting recurrent revenue. It refers to an issue raised earlier about money coming through our accounts. It may confuse matters a little in looking at the overall capital works program, but that is how capital works is represented in our accounting framework.

Mr PIPER: That represents the proportion of the non-residential building programs going through the Department for Contract and Management Services' books. It is not the total non-residential building program. It is a change in turnover.

Ms ANWYL: The second part of my questions related to legal fees.

Mr BOARD: We have not separately listed that aspect at all. We basically use the Crown Solicitor's office to obtain that advice. We can provide that for the member as supplementary information.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm

Mr KOBELKE: The second dot point at page 209 states that "A contract was tendered for the services provided by Supply West and Furniture Services, however there were no successful tenders". Was there a successful tenderer

who was not able to carry through the tender and to that extent the tender was unsuccessful? If so, what was the reason for the failure to proceed?

Mr BOARD: There was only one proposal, which was from Serco Australia Pty Ltd, but the negotiations did not eventuate, so there was no successful tenderer. We are re-evaluating the need for that service with regard to how we might put it out for a tender which would produce the results for which we are looking. Tenders for the provision of the services provided by Supply West closed on 27 June 1996. Serco Australia Pty Ltd submitted the only conforming bid. Extensive negotiations were held between Contract Management Services' negotiation team and Serco representatives. The negotiations and the associated re-evaluation of Serco's amended offer failed to demonstrate a sound business case for awarding a contract. Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu supported this view, and a decision was made to decline Serco's offer.

Mr KOBELKE: Does that amount to saying it is more efficient and cost effective to run it under the current manager?

Mr BOARD: What it says to me, and from my knowledge of it, is that Serco could not deliver what we required with regard to that service.

Mr PIPER: The business case did not stack up in two directions: The market direction for the provision of those services is shifting to a much more on-line supply; and it did not demonstrate the level of savings that we wished to achieve with the continued operation.

Mr KOBELKE: Does the revised strategy which the Minister said he is developing leave open the possibility of maintaining those services as in-house operations; that is, within a government department?

Mr BOARD: I have no preconceived position, other than the stated government policy. We felt that the service might be delivered better by the private sector. If that were found not to be the case, we would maintain the service. We are endeavouring to provide a cost effective and better service. If we were unable to do that through the private sector, we would maintain the service as it is until such time as we could do that.

Ms WARNOCK: I refer also to page 209, but to a different subject - the youth coordination and consultation area. With my philosophical position, I am always glad to see Governments spend more on useful things. There is an increase in expenditure in this area, but the same number of FTEs. How will that money be spent?

Mr BOARD: I am delighted that we have had virtually a 100 per cent increase in the budget for youth development, both on the ground and in the policy development area. We can look at it in two ways. We are trying to look at youth overall; that is, all youth in Western Australia. The member will be aware that this Government - it was the same with certainly the previous Government and Governments before that - has developed strong initiatives and policies for young people, particularly young people who have had a problem with the system, whether that be juvenile justice, drug addiction, or whatever. However, in many ways we have left the majority of youth alone. From that point of view, when we reintroduced the cadet program as a state initiative rather than a federal initiative and looked at expanding that into high schools, we looked at where we could house that program, which resulted in the establishment of the Office of Youth. Since that time, which was early 1996, we have been trying to develop policies and programs to encourage all young people in Western Australia to participate in a range of initiatives, including communication initiatives. We are looking at expanding the cadet program, and \$11.6m has been committed to that program over the next four years. Our goal is to offer a cadet program to every high school in the State, whether it be an independent school or a state school. Some of those programs are moving into their second year, hence the expansion.

We are looking also at the leadership program, which the Governor has been talking about to some extent, and we are widening the scope of that program to bring existing programs under its umbrella to try to motivate those young people who want to accept roles in which they might influence other young people.

We are certainly expanding the area of coordination across government departments. One of the difficulties is that many departments are involved in youth activities and there is some duplication and difficulty in ensuring that everyone plays a coordinated role and we put our dollars into the best place. That is the reason that the Youth Advisory Council was established. We will also create elected youth councils throughout Western Australia, with one representative from every high school, state school and major youth group, to have input into policy and direction. Within the umbrella of our achievements, I hope we might be able to use our funds. Young people can give us a sense of direction there. We will produce a grant scheme, which is very similar to that which operates within the Office of Multicultural Interests, for community groups that come up with an initiative to provide services to young people. All in all the money is for policy initiatives as well as increased services on the ground.

[2.10 pm]

Ms WARNOCK: The independent valuation found that goals and objectives had been met or exceeded. I assume that is referring to the number of people who are in these programs. What has been the aim of the program? I know what I think it should be about, but I am not sure what is the Government's intention or what is meant by the fact that the role has been exceeded? What does the Government want as an outcome?

Mr BOARD: It is basically for young people to be able to access and participate in an activity which they enjoy and which produces a range of outcomes relating to improved communication skills; the development of leadership skills; the fostering of improved self-esteem; and the ability to relate to peers. I know early in the piece there was a thought that the Government was trying to produce a paramilitary youth program. That is not the way it is. We try to give young people a choice of activities and cadet programs across several disciplines that will produce something they can progress through to achievement.

We did not want to bring every terrific youth training program that was already in existence, such as the scouts and so forth, into schools and compete against them. We looked for something that had been successful. At one time there were over 100 000 cadets. Since the movement away from cadet programs in schools, the number of cadets in Western Australia has fallen to 2 100 or 2 200 in total. Because there had been a shift away from the community's understanding of military cadets, we introduced emergency services cadets, police rangers and St John Ambulance cadets. There may be other cadet programs for those who want to be involved in voluntary activities, working within the community, whether it be with the elderly or other young people. Victoria has introduced life saving as a cadet program. It is a matter of introducing practical skills at a suitable time and place, so that young people participate in a range of activities while at the same time relating to one another and gaining skills that will benefit them in life, either in employment or in social areas.

Mr WIESE: The Government is looking at increasing the number of units to over 40 in the coming 12 months. How many units will concentrate on emergency services activities, as opposed to other activities? Can the Minister give an indication of the availability of instructors for those units.

Mr BOARD: The majority of the expansion is in emergency services cadets or police rangers. They have been the big movers where the schools have come forward. Because of our present commonwealth-state relationship, we have not been able to provide as many army, navy and air cadets as some of the schools would have liked. There are some difficulties within the federal arena. Where schools have existing cadets an inequity would occur between the existing and new cadets. At the moment we are trying to establish a commonwealth-state relationship.

The big question relates to trainers. It is a community based program in that we invite the community to play a role. We are only the facilitator. The program is run by the community and volunteers. From that point of view the success of the program depends on the quality and number of instructors. For the first time we introduced an instructors' course this year, which was advertised over the Christmas period. We selected 18 people for the first course who became instructors. We will continue with the instructors' courses each year. As the program progresses from one year to another, a number of young people who come out of the program as seniors will come back into it as volunteers. At this early critical stage, it is very important that we get instructors in place. We are putting a good deal of our resources into that.

Mr EFTOS: There are 33 units operating on the ground at the moment. We are negotiating with another eight or so. I hope they will be in place before the end of this year. Approximately 75 to 80 per cent are either police rangers or emergency services cadets. It is fair to say that the number of units does not reflect the number of cadets participating in either the police rangers or emergency services cadets. In some units the number is between 130 and 140 for emergency services or police rangers. Although the number of units may be relatively small, the number of cadets involved in those units is fairly large.

Mr BOARD: The emergency services cadet program has either started or is in the second year at the following schools: Belmont Senior High School; Beverley District High School; Clarkson Community High School; Collie Senior High School; Exmouth District High School; John Septimus Roe Anglican School; Katanning Senior High School, which the member for Wagin will know about; Maddington Senior High School; Mandurah Senior High School; Mt Magnet District High School; Northam Senior High School; Ravensthorpe District High School and Swan View Senior High School. Kalamunda Senior High School is currently involved in negotiations.

Mr KOBELKE: I return to the issue of contracts referred to on page 209. This indicates the tendering process for computing and network services is progressing according to schedule. What is the extent of that process? Can the Minister provide a report on where that is at?

[2.20 pm]

MR BOARD: The Department of Contract and Management Services has been working with a consortium of the 11 agencies which use this service and has reached the point where a preferred supplier for the service has been

selected. The process of due diligence and contract negotiation is now in progress. All existing staff have expressed an interest in moving with the contract and a high level of transition is likely.

Mr KOBELKE: What service are we talking about and what is the extent of it?

Mr BOARD: We are talking about the Government's computing service, which is quite extensive.

Mr PIPER: It is founded around the so-called Bureau of Services facility at Royal Street. It involves a number of other agencies the key agencies of which are the Ministry of Energy, Homeswest and others.

Mr KOBELKE: I want a broad view of how wide ranging it is and whether it will be a monolithic contract or whether it will be split up.

Mr HARVEY: Eleven partners are involved. A service is provided under the contract for mainframe services, mid-range computing services, desk top services and some wide area network rationalisation services. Agencies are free to choose the menu of services at the level of involvement they wish.

Mr KOBELKE: Will they be separate contracts?

Mr HARVEY: There will be one head contract, beneath which will be service agreements between the contractor and each of the government departments which choose to join. Contractual flexibility will allow the departments to come and go and choose the services they wish to buy under the contracts.

Ms ANWYL: I refer to page 784 of volume 2. I understand that up to 19 January the moneys formed part of Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet budget papers. There seems to be a change in the breakdown of the three subgroups for the funding. After 9 January there will be two subgroups. The one that seems to have gone is communication and coordination. An amount of \$136 000 was allocated.

Mr BOARD: That is fair comment. Two of those areas have been compressed into one. The office indicated it wanted to handle one side as policy development and the other side as programs and activities on the ground.

Ms ANWYL: Will policy development become youth promotion?

Mr EFTOS: It appears it may be a transcription issue. It is referred to as youth development in some papers and youth promotion in another.

Ms ANWYL: The current description refers to youth promotion and youth development, so they are clearly two separate items. I am really looking for a breakdown of how those moneys are to be spent. I refer to page 210 and seek some detail of those aspects. Perhaps the Minister could provide by supplementary information what planning has taken place for discrete items.

Mr BOARD: You are right. I would prefer to see some additional breakdown of the figures. However, there are probably two reasons; one is that much of that final work on the number of programs and the specific amounts is still being worked up as I speak. The reality is that the Office of Youth is very new. We expanded the cadet base quickly and we are putting together a youth strategy in our own committee based on consultation with youth groups. As a result we got in early and convinced the Treasurer that we needed additional funds to expand programs that we are currently working up, such as the leadership program, development of youth facilities on the ground, training of youth development officers, the consultation process and the youth councils.

I probably will not be in a position to give specific line amounts against each of those within the next week or two, but I will be more than happy to provide them within the foreseeable future.

Ms ANWYL: I accept that; I am not seeking to bind the Minister to specific amounts. I refer again to page 197 which has the most detail. There must be some planning for how the \$2.2m and \$3.1m will be spent. I am seeking a rough idea of the various areas in which they will be spent. For example, in the major achievements at page 210, \$700 000 will be spent on a range of community based organisations. As far as it is available it is reasonable to seek further detail on those matters.

Mr BOARD: Approximately \$1m will be spent on the expansion of the cadet program.

Ms ANWYL: I am happy to receive the answer by supplementary information.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister will provide by supplementary information a breakdown of the \$5.3m allocated to the youth coordination consultation program.

Mr KOBELKE: Am I right in seeing this as a reduction in expenditure on youth programs? If we add what was available under the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet to what is available in your budget for 1996-97 the total is \$5.475m; whereas the estimate for 1997-98 is \$5.338m so the expenditure overall will be reduced.

Mr BOARD: That is not the case. I understood our total budget for 1996-97 was \$2.5m which has been increased to \$5.3m.

Mr KOBELKE: The member for Kalgoorlie drew your attention to page 785 which shows that the money available for youth has been split because of the change in responsibilities between the Department of Contract and Management Services and the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet. The total allocation for 1996-97 was \$5.47m; so the \$5.378m is a reduction in total expenditure.

[2.30 pm]

Mr BOARD: I cannot explain the reason those figures appear at page 785. The Office of Youth Affairs received an increase of \$3.85m. The figure appearing under the portfolio of the Premier and Cabinet may relate to youth activities. Perhaps we could ask the Premier about that.

Mr KOBELKE: If you accept responsibility for the area you should be aware of all activities of government relating to youth. You should not be so compartmentalised that you do not wish to discuss this because it falls within a different part of the Budget.

Mr BOARD: The drug task force and the graffiti task force also fall within the responsibility of the Premier. They moved from Family and Children's Services and the Office of Youth Affairs. That could explain it. I will seek the information from the Premier and, if I can, I will provide it.

Mr KOBELKE: Can the Minister explain the legal and administrative arrangements that apply to the Office of Youth Affairs? Will a separate office be established within Contract and Management Services?

Mr BOARD: It is a separate office, but it reports directly to me.

Mr PIPER: The Office of Youth Affairs has not been established as a separate entity under the Public Sector Management Act. Therefore, it falls administratively within Contract and Management Services for its financial and human resources support. However, we are setting up appropriate delegations to ensure that the office operates autonomously. The net effect is that it will have corporate services support from CAMS to avoid duplication. As to the policy and operation of that office, CAMS operates as a host. The office has full carriage of its part of the program and has a direct relationship with the Minister.

Ms ANWYL: At page 210 reference is made to a survey of funding and services. Is the survey complete?

Mr BOARD: It is.

Ms ANWYL: What is its name?

Mr BOARD: It is part of a link strategy discussion paper that we are putting together. Some 460 state, commonwealth, local and non-government agencies were surveyed. The response rate from the state government agencies was 90 per cent; from commonwealth agencies, 50 per cent; from local government agencies, 64 per cent; and from non-government organisations, 53 per cent. Unfortunately, only 19 per cent of sporting clubs and associations responded. We sought information on funding arrangements, the purpose of the organisation, and in many cases the anticipated outcomes. Part of the role of the Office of Youth Affairs is the coordination of youth activities, so we wanted to find out what was available. The information is being processed, and we will produce a strategy discussion paper as part of the consultation process with young people and the Youth Advisory Council. When we have completed the process I will provide the results.

Ms ANWYL: The Minister is discussing the following point on that page. I assume that the survey is part of the discussion paper. Therefore, the results will not be available independently of the discussion paper.

Mr BOARD: The results have helped formulate the discussion paper. It has enabled us to identify gaps and duplication, and areas for improvement. The information is being utilised as a guideline for many programs and activities.

Ms ANWYL: The second last point at the bottom of the page refers to the establishment of a mechanism to enable a coordinated and strategic approach to youth service delivery by state government agencies through joint working groups. Have the groups been established, and if so, how many exist and what are they called?

Mr BOARD: The joint working groups are entitled youth suicide prevention, Aboriginal child health survey, road safety, provision and use of statistical information, poverty, young people in physical activity, grants allocation and multicultural and ethnic affairs, health and arts, 1997 youth expo, and working with local government. The office will perform two tasks: It will bring together all agencies involved - some government and some non-government - to coordinate programs. The other task is to provide input to the agencies. Through the Youth Advisory Council we have targeted specific areas of priority where we can add to the outcome, particularly in road safety, youth suicide, and employment and training. Our focus will be primarily on the communication area. We want to be an advocate and a voice for youth directly to Cabinet, and for that reason we need to obtain as much information as we can.

Ms ANWYL: In this area, a number of non-government agencies are providing a service. Some of those organisations are funded from this budget. What steps have been taken to ensure that those agencies - for example, the Youth Legal Service - are financially able to continue to deliver those services?

[2.40 pm]

Mr BOARD: The grants inherited from the Family and Children's Services are provided for three years. We are presently in the second year of this cycle. At the end of the cycle we will review the funding levels to the community group recipients. The Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia is part of our major advisory group. I meet with it regularly. I have met with it three times already about non-government activity. Many of these programs have been transferred from Family and Children's Services and 1997-98 will be the first time they have been funded through the Office of Youth Affairs. Because of our size compared with that of Family and Children's Services, we will be in a much better position to monitor the performance and achievements of the council.

Some of the groups, particularly those that receive larger amounts of funding - the Girl Guides Association, the Scout Association of Australia, the Girls Brigade, the Boys Brigade, the YMCA, the Duke of Edinburgh Award, and the Youth Affairs Council - are outstanding organisations and many have a long and traditional history of success. If anything, I would like to see them expand. I see that as our mission. They will be monitored and accountable, as is every other organisation that receives funding.

Ms ANWYL: The drug task force is now under Family and Children's Services and the Health Department has some responsibility in this area with the Alcohol and Drug Authority. What specific coordinating mechanism is in place for the range of government agencies that currently have responsibility for drugs? I direct you specifically to the fact that there is no methadone program for people under 18. Is any funding made available in this Budget specifically for drug control?

Mr BOARD: No, because it is not the responsibility of the Office of Youth Affairs. Because of the number of players in this issue and the expertise that is already available through the Health Department and the drug task force, we have stayed out of the area. With our limited resources and manpower we would be better to look at mainstream youth and those sorts of programs. It would be easy to spend all our budget on drug control, as it would be to spend it in the juvenile justice area. We do not want to duplicate programs, committees and services that are already in place in this area. In the four months I have been Minister for Youth, the Office of Youth Affairs has been asked to join groups that are involved in those areas. We have had to make tough decisions about what we can achieve through the Office of Youth Affairs and we have had to maintain parameters; that is, to look at mainstream youth in toto and to concentrate on programs to stop people falling into that category by another mechanism.

There is no funding to our office for drug control. We happen to share an executive director, Mike Daube, who heads the drug task force. From that point of view information on such matters comes to the Office of Youth Affairs.

Mr EFTOS: Although the two organisations are separate in their administration and entity, one cannot fail to recognise that there is a common CEO and we physically operate from the same floor in the same building. By osmosis, more than anything else, officers cannot avoid having contact on policy development in both areas.

Ms ANWYL: The Minister may be aware that a gay and lesbian representative group has concerns about suicide among gay and lesbian youth. Is any funding set aside for that group and was it considered as an initiative in the youth suicide area?

Mr BOARD: I have received correspondence about that. The Office of Youth Affairs targeted youth suicide as an area in which we hope we can play a role. Young people have told us that it is of concern to them and they want to play a role. Responsibilities in the Youth Minister's Advisory Council were split and a subgroup looks after the youth suicide area. In the Office of Youth Affairs a youth suicide prevention group, headed by Sven Silburn, has been operating extremely well for a number of years. We are trying to develop programs on the ground that will assist existing programs. We do not want to interfere with what the council is doing and we do not want to get outside our area of expertise, but we may have resources that can assist. Many young people want to become involved. We have the addition of carer cadets who may be able to assist and there is a buddy system for young people to play a role in

intervention, as long as it is within their expertise. Without taking over a program, we are offering a way to coordinate forces on the ground and to communicate with youth to achieve a better outcome.

Ms ANWYL: Although program 5 provides a summary of major achievements, nothing is set out about what is proposed. Do you think that is desirable? Can we expect a repeat of that format next year? What is in place for the evaluation of the ongoing work of the office?

Mr BOARD: No, there will not be a repeat of what is seen here. More detailed programs and more analysis of particular activities will be provided in next year's budget statements because they will have been developed and they will be implemented by this time next year. There will be far more accurate information. I indicate to the member for Kalgoorlie, who is the shadow spokesperson on youth matters, that the Office of Youth Affairs and my office are open at any time for communication about how we are developing these programs. There are no secrets; we are trying to obtain the best outcomes we can for the dollars that are given to us.

I seek the member's assistance and advice, as the office is seeking the assistance and advice of young people. We hope to have a transparent office. We are not hiding anything in this Budget. It is just that we are in the development stage and there is not a lot of flesh in the budget document. I assure the member there will be a lot more detail about the Office of Youth Affairs in the next Budget.

The office has already evaluated the cadet program. I am delighted with the outcome of that. Consultants looked at corporate logos for the cadet program. Has the member received her badge?

Ms ANWYL: No.

Mr BOARD: A badge is on the way to her. The office has developed posters and promotional material for instructors and people involved in the management of the program and to encourage young people to join it.

[2.50 pm]

Mr EFTOS: All the programs we have either running now or in future will have evaluation components.

Ms ANWYL: In-house or outside?

Mr EFTOS: It could be either. However, we are ensuring that part of the design of the programs incorporates a significant evaluation component.

The CHAIRMAN: Has the subcommittee made contact with the gay and lesbian council in regard to the disproportionately high rate of attempted suicides in that community?

Mr BOARD: I am not sure of the status of correspondence with the Office of Youth Affairs. I have not written to the council directly, other than to indicate my knowledge of the problem. However, the council did ask for specific representation on the Youth Advisory Council. From that point of view I had a problem, not because it represented gay and lesbians but because no-one on the council, other than YACWA, represents any specific group. I have had letters from Rotary and other service providers requesting representation. The council would grow to 50 or 60 strong.

We have selected people on the basis of their involvement with and knowledge of youth rather than whom they represent. We included YACWA to represent the non-government side and because it was a flow through mechanism to many people we might not have reached otherwise. We have denied the gay and lesbian council a separate place, but we have invited it to address the committee.

Mr KOBELKE: Will the Minister accept a supplementary question? The layout of this year's budget papers is a problem. We have previously had an introduction, a description, and an indication of major issues and major achievements for the year. We also then had major initiatives to be taken in the next financial year in terms of the budget allocations. No such undertakings have been given in this document. Will the Minister provide a brief summary for each program of the major achievements anticipated as a result of this budget?

Mr BOARD: I will be delighted to do so.

The CHAIRMAN: The public sector is moving towards an output and outcome based system, but not all departments have implemented that system. The Minister will be expected to do so by the end of this financial year.

Mr BOARD: The member's question is similar to that asked previously; that is, members are looking for specific programs and allocations. I might not be able to provide all of the information nor as quickly as the responses to other supplementary questions because some issues are still being developed.

In terms of the Department of Contract and Management Services, the Supply Commission and the Office of Multicultural Interests, which is more finely developed, we can do that. Information about the Office of Youth Affairs will be provided as soon as the information is available.

Division 81: State Supply Commission, \$6 601 000 -

[Ms McHale, Chairman.]

[Mr Board, Minister for Services.]

[Mr G.L. Duffield, Chief Executive Officer.]

[Mr C. Vinci, Director, Policy.]

[Mr M.K. Braganza, Acting Director, Corporate Services.]

[Mr T. DeBarro, Policy Officer.]

Mr KOBELKE: Page 923 contains reference to an amount of \$115 000 allocated from the Salaries and Allowance Act 1975. Does that apply only to the commissioner or are other people included in that figure?

Mr BOARD: That is solely the CEO's salary.

Mr KOBELKE: Who is the CEO?

Mr BOARD: Mr Duffield.

Mr KOBELKE: What is the \$3m payment of government charges associated with the sale of FleetWest?

Mr BOARD: It is a transfer from miscellaneous revenue due to the payment of government charges; that is, payment of stamp duty as a result of the sale of FleetWest vehicles to Matrix as part of the fleet funding facility. This payment reflects the payment of stamp duty on the sale of the whole fleet.

Mr KOBELKE: Is this simply a department to department transfer or is it to Matrix, which then pays it back to the state revenue fund?

Mr BRAGANZA: That payment was made by Treasury to Matrix, which paid it out and it came back in the form of stamp duty.

Mr KOBELKE: It was a means of exempting Matrix from having to meet the stamp duty on the transfer?

Mr BRAGANZA: That is correct.

Mr KOBELKE: I assume the \$200 000 has been allocated because the process is almost complete and that amount will transpire through the coming process.

Mr BRAGANZA: That is additional stamp duty in case we are required to meet the payment this financial year.

Mr KOBELKE: Is that after the process is complete, or is it an ongoing matter with all purchases or leased vehicles that Matrix obviously must acquire?

Mr BRAGANZA: This was a major component paid with the take up of the FleetWest vehicles. Subsequently, every time Matrix takes up new vehicles there will be a small amount of stamp duty to be paid, and the \$200 000 covers that.

Mr KOBELKE: It is ongoing but it relates only to new acquisitions?

Mr BRAGANZA: That is correct.

Mr KOBELKE: Page 924 refers to the number of FTEs remaining at 30, but the amount of recurrent expenditure for salaries, wages, allowances and leave entitlements increases by 30 per cent. What are the components that cause such a large increase when there is no increase in FTEs?

[3.00 pm]

Mr BOARD: In December 1995 the commission was established as a separate agency responsible for the policy and regulatory role in government purchasing and contracting. The approved establishment was 30 FTEs. In the 1995-96 financial year the commission commenced staff recruitment. The increase of \$460 000 reflects the full complement of commission staff resources.

Mr DUFFIELD: The \$460 000 in the budget for 1997-98 reflects the full complement of 30 FTEs.

Mr KOBELKE: I assume that the 1996-97 and 1997-98 figures are based as far as possible on the same criteria. Therefore, if the number of FTEs in 1996-97 is now 30 but was not 30 for the full year, a pro rata figure should be shown. What is being said is that, if there were not 30 FTEs for the full year, there are now 30 FTEs and therefore a lower amount is shown. If that is the case, why are the 30 FTEs not reflected on a partial basis? In other parts of the statements we find that the number of FTEs are apportioned, not as the actual number present, but as the number that are required to be paid out of the estimated and actual figures.

Mr DUFFIELD: We had not reached a full complement until the end of 1996-97. We will maintain it through 1997-98.

Mr BRAGANZA: Basically in 1995-96 the funding was, as it were, pseudo between the Department of State Services and the commission. Some of the costs could have been absorbed by the Department of State Services. Staff would be paid by the Department of State Services and then used by the commission. This is the first year in which we can account for the true figures for the 30 FTEs, because we have a full complement. In the past we had seconded staff that were still being paid by the Department of State Services. This is the first year in which we can account for the full costing.

Mr KOBELKE: On what date did the old State Supply Commission become effective in its current form?

Mr BRAGANZA: In December or January. We have recently finished filling the majority of the positions.

Mr KOBELKE: When was the change to the legal entity?

Mr DUFFIELD: It was 1 July 1996. It was agreed to split service delivery from policy. The service delivery component responsibilities for contracting were transferred to the Department of Contract and Management Services.

Mr KOBELKE: It has been in place legally for the full financial year. It is just a matter of the administration?

Mr DUFFIELD: In accordance with transition arrangements.

Mr KOBELKE: Further down in that same column of figures, services and contracts are referred to as being reduced by approximately 40 per cent from \$7.9m to \$4.2m. Will the Minister explain that?

Mr BOARD: The decrease from 1996-97 of \$2.896m is attributed to the following factors: \$3m was transferred from miscellaneous revenue to the payment of government charges, as we indicated before, from Fleetwest Vehicles to Matrix; \$1.97m represented an adjustment for cashbook balances - does the member want me to go through them all?

Mr KOBELKE: There are no other major items as far as miscellaneous services are concerned?

Mr BOARD: That is again the \$3m showing through.

Mr KOBELKE: A major evaluation referred to on page 927 was deferred. Does the Minister wish to give any explanation or an undertaking that evaluation will not appear next year?

Mr BOARD: It will not.

Mr VINCI: The State Supply Commission Act is now five years old. As part of the process we have reviewed the Act. Part of it was the separation of CAMS and the old Department of State Services and the State Supply Commission. We have to look at that Act and the Public Works Act in tandem, as it were, and examine issues like competition policy which affect both sets of legislation. I think the Minister has in mind to do that review.

Mr BOARD: We are currently looking at how to conduct the review. That issue is before me at the moment. We also have amendments to the Public Works Act. We will bring those forward as legislative support for CAMS. The review the member is talking about is the mechanism for reviewing those quite comprehensive Acts. The member would know that they have built in review periods. We are already at the tail end of them and so I need to expedite the review and bring it to fruition this year.

Mr WIESE: Will the Minister conduct that review in-house or through an external agency? It seems that sort of review needs to be done externally.

Mr BOARD: One of the options before me is an external option. I am not in a position to discuss the detail of it at the moment. However, my preferred option at this stage would be for an external review.

Mr WIESE: The third dot point on page 927 refers to increasing the level of access for regional and remote clients to the delivery of these services. Will the Minister give an indication of what he is trying to do there or what he is doing?

Mr BOARD: We are currently undertaking a number of things. As the member would be aware, the State Supply Commission has a primary role in the development and implementation of policy. We brought along "Buying Wisely", which was introduced last year. It is a tremendous guideline for government agencies in their purchasing and contracting areas. Some \$6b a year right throughout Western Australia is involved in goods and services procurement and construction. Only yesterday I launched a new ethics programs policy which was produced by the State Supply Commission. Many government employees are now involved for the first time in tendering and contracting areas. This applies particularly to our expansion into regional areas and the contracting of services to the private sector from government agencies in regional areas. Specific training and online services will be required. A fair amount of coordinated policy development is required. Once those guidelines are in place, of course, the State Supply Commission will have an auditing and monitoring role to see whether people are meeting those guidelines.

[3.10 pm]

Mr VINCI: Over the last six months we have conducted a major study in the mid west area to ascertain how well the regional purchasing and buying locally policy was being applied and accessed by the local businesses. We found the policy was quite sound but inconsistencies occur in the way that agencies adopt it. We are looking at broadening the scope of how it is applied and how we can improve knowledge. We also found that in some cases it excluded local people. We would like to take those things to Cabinet. We want to make the policy much easier to operate and to look at the overall scope of the policy and where it applies. There has been some confusion about goods and services contracts. We should look at how to better use the policy to enhance business.

Mr WIESE: Is there a need to educate the suppliers as much as the agencies?

Mr BOARD: One of the things I have found since coming into the area is the incredible lack of awareness of the operations of the Works and Services portfolios, and of the roles of Contract and Management Services as a new agency and the State Supply Commission. In the past four months we have brought together agencies such as the Public Sector Management Office, Treasury, State Supply Commission and CAMS to put in place a better framework. We will have achieved that by the end of June. When that is in place we will undertake a marketing exercise on what constitutes contracting, who has responsibility for that role, who has the monitoring role, the up-front role in putting the contract together and where everybody sits in this reform process. It is an evolving area about which many people are confused.

Mr VINCI: We found that the suppliers were well aware of the policy. We needed to do more work with government agencies, because of the changing nature of offices and decentralisation. I found that suppliers knew the policy well; it was the other side that was not doing the right thing. We would like to do more work with agencies. We ran some breakfast forums and they worked quite well.

Division 82: Office of Multicultural Interests, \$1 016 000 -

[Ms McHale, Chairman.]

[Mr Board, Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs.]

[Ms B. Robbins, Acting Director.]

Ms WARNOCK: I am glad to see that the FTEs are being maintained; however, I see that the small budget has been nibbled off slightly. I would like to know what that nibbling off is before I get into other issues.

Mr BOARD: There has been no nibbling off of services or programs; in fact, they have been increased. It reflects a payment to the ex-director who took a redundancy package of some \$140 000. At that time we were paying two directors simultaneously.

Ms ROBBINS: For a period of time the previous director was on long service leave and being paid and an acting director was being paid. The severance package was paid out of the budget.

Ms WARNOCK: I see that the same number of people are employed, and I am glad to hear that the programs are being maintained. I wish there were more of them, and perhaps that is for the future. A key issue in the portfolio is racial harmony and how to promote it. I know that the portfolio covers other issues; however, in view of the climate that has developed in Australia over the past several months it is a key issue. Is that the Minister's view and if he does agree with me, how will he promote racial harmony?

Mr BOARD: It is the big ask. We have allocated additional resources of \$150 000 towards a community harmony strategy. It is probably the tip of the iceberg of what we would like to do. I would like to think that through OMI's innovative programs and lateral work on my behalf we will attract additional support for community relations work both from local government and the private sector. I hope that will see some vision in regard to this. The Federal Government has earmarked \$10m over two years for community relations, what it calls an anti-racism campaign. We are yet to see any details of that and whether that campaign will be run out of Canberra or whether funds will be allocated to each State to initiate its own program. OMI will put together some strategies to try to attract a good proportion of those funds to Western Australia.

The member asked how this budget prioritises existing resources and the work that we have been doing to focus on the area of racial harmony, because that is the biggest issue before us. We need many programs. Some programs that we have been involved with for some time are coming together. I am about to take the "Living in Harmony, A Community Relations Strategy for Western Australia" proposal to Cabinet. That will have two parts. We believe that our programs over the past 12 months, and the new initiatives to bring in other bodies to assist, will have a major impact over the next 12 months on community relations and racial harmony. Many ethnic groups and the ethnic community councils will play a role in that strategy. Until now their role has been to provide advice to us and to their communities. We need to unite all forces and make sure there is a concentrated attack on that area.

[3.20 pm]

Ms WARNOCK: On page 649 of the Budget Statements reference is made in the first dot point to the Western Australia Police Service and non-government agencies organising a two day residential seminar to foster better relations between ethnic youth and the police. What was the outcome of that seminar? I am interested in the major achievements, but I am also interested in what will happen in the future. Is there a plan to follow up that seminar?

Mr BOARD: There has been follow up to it. It will form part of the strategy I will take to Cabinet. The Police Service is a tremendous organisation and it is doing great things in the area of multicultural interests. It not only has its own unit, but also has played a tremendous part in fostering young ethnic people. The Police Service played a major role in the camp which was conducted. The member is aware of the concern in the Northbridge area which has been highlighted.

Ms WARNOCK: That is one of the reasons I asked the question.

Ms ROBBINS: The Office of Multicultural Interests has been working with the Police Service to consider some of the ongoing proposals that came out of the camp. We are hoping to attract an organisation like Life Be In It or another private or non-public sector group which can apply to the Lotteries Commission for funds to run some ongoing activities, concentrating on sport and recreation. It is felt that it is an area which brings people together and an area from which ethnic youth feel excluded.

Mr WIESE: Can the Minister provide an indication of what ethnic groups were represented at the residential seminar? How were the participants selected?

Mr BOARD: The Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia selected the participants. In all, there were 50 participants from various ethnic groups.

Ms ANWYL: One of the significant issues and trends on page 647 of the Budget Statements refers to developing strategies relating to family and domestic violence. I cannot find further reference to that issue. Will the Minister explain what the office is doing in that regard?

Ms ROBBINS: We are conscious of the issue and we are working with the ECC's women's officer to ensure that the specific ethnic issue is considered by the Domestic Violence Taskforce. OMI does not have the resources to implement a program. Therefore, we are acting as a catalyst to ensure that a program is incorporated and dealt with in the existing government programs. I have arranged for the ECC to meet with the head of the Women's Policy Office and the Domestic Violence Task Force and to put forward a paper on the issues of concern to ethnic women.

Ms ANWYL: I think it is represented on the implementation committee.

Ms ROBBINS: It was only recently offered a position on that.

Ms WARNOCK: On page 647 of the Budget Statements the first dot point states that there is considerable scope for using the language and cultural skills of our immigrant population. It is an idea which has been discussed for a number of years and I am certainly supportive of it. What is the Government doing about it? It is an obvious issue and we should have been doing something about it for some time.

Mr BOARD: It is an obvious area and over the years there seems to have been a gap between the ethnic chambers of commerce - the Chinese chamber of commerce and the Chung Wah Association Inc - and government departments, such as the Department of Commerce and Trade and the Department of Resource Development and the overseas trade missions. It appears that OMI and the ethnic communities have not played a great role in bridging the gap.

Within a few weeks of my taking up responsibility for this portfolio I met with a number of the interest groups to try to build a more formal relationship. It is my intention to establish an advisory group to the Minister other than the ECC. I will explain my rationale for that. The ECC has given tremendous advice and represents the majority of ethnic communities. One of the member for Perth's questions was what has happened in relation to the rest of the community and racial harmony. I want an advisory group which will comprise a number of people who can influence the whole of the community through the media and the larger employer organisations, including people involved in overseas trade. I want that group to develop policy. Government departments are not fully utilised in connecting with overseas trade departments. It is an area which must be developed and it is part of the strategy the department is developing. I hope that if I am sitting here next year I will be able to advise the member of the Government's achievements in that area.

Ms WARNOCK: The final dot point on page 647 is part of the harmonious thing I was referring to earlier. The value of migration to the community in an economic sense is not well understood because generations of people in authority have not got around to telling people about it. The Minister spoke about the need to promote the advantages and dispel the misconceptions of migration. What does the Government propose to do about that?

Mr BOARD: It will be one of the strongest areas of the racial harmony strategy. We are looking at selling our achievements as a community by explaining that migrants add value to Western Australian society in both social and economic terms. We will demonstrate how people from other countries, particularly non-English speaking countries, have established small businesses in this State. In many cases, those businesses have developed into large businesses which employ several people. We have already received figures from the Federal Government which indicate that the business migration program is running at about six employees per migrant. We will put together a range of statistics and as part of the advertising campaign and racial harmony program we will push the economic side of the argument. It is the one thing which has been lost. Those people who are not bigots or racists but find strength in attacking what we have achieved have done that because they believe that migration is costing people jobs in this country. We will demonstrate that the reverse is happening; that is, that jobs are being created as a result of that.

[3.30 pm]

Mr WIESE: My question relates to a similar area; that is, the economic benefits from multiculturalism. Does the Office of Multicultural Interests get involved in the tourism area? Huge numbers of people of all ethnic varieties are coming into Australia and making a very substantial contribution to our economy. Does the office have any role to play in that area of educating people about the economic value of that and how to handle and relate to and provide for the needs and requirements of these visitors to our country?

Mr BOARD: No, for two reasons. The first is the size of the office. The reality is this: 53 per cent of our population was either born overseas or one parent was. We can claim, therefore, that the office is in many ways representing that percentage of the community. As the member knows, the Federal Government looks after immigration. The federal Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs has some 200 people in Western Australia to look after immigration and citizenship issues. Our eight people are responsible for everything that happens after that, including equity, access, government programs, understanding of what happens, language - all of those things.

The office has been set up traditionally as a facilitator, not a doer. Its job is to facilitate other departments and agencies to examine specifically the needs of those areas. As has been demonstrated by the questions that have been asked already, we have to do a much better selling job on what people have contributed, what the economics are and the benefits of people coming from overseas. The Tourism Commission plays a role in that. However, I do not think anyone has worn the hat well enough to get those messages across. We are not able to take on all of the issues within the parameters of what is available to us. For example, we would like to play a much stronger role in overseas missions and when people come to visit this State. The office would like to be the facilitator and bridge the gap. Why do trade missions that come from various countries not meet their own ethnic communities who live here? There are many areas missing in that regard.

Ms ROBBINS: We are about to complete and launch the guidelines mentioned in this document. They deal with the terminology called productive diversity. It picks up the issue to which the member referred. It assists government agencies to manage their work forces more effectively by taking advantage of employees who have language or cultural skills and ensures they are treated in a way that is sensitive to their cultural background. However, it is also about a customer focus. They have to look at their customers - in the tourist industry it would be the tourists - and ensure that the way the services and policies are provided is cognisant of those cultural differences. If they put into

effect the guidelines with the strategies and the hints that we are giving them to use their multicultural community more effectively, they would take up the things to which the member referred; in other words, ensure we use the people who are already here with language and cultural skills to deal with our tourists.

Mr BOARD: We talked earlier about electronic marketing and multimedia and the Internet. My kids sit on the computer and chat away with people from various countries on the Internet. The reality is the globe is shrinking. The Western Australian Tourism Commission says that by 2015, one-third of all new jobs will be home-based and people will be sitting at a computer selling their services into a global network. We believe our cultural diversity will help us to connect into many of these countries early and we will be able to sell not only because we have advanced technology, but also because our young people are very familiar with other countries. We are doing that successfully already. It is not well recognised that that is a direct result of the number of people who have come here from other countries. It is part of our strategy to increase people's awareness that the globe is shrinking and we are in an advantageous position to pick up on that economically.

Mr WIESE: I am involved in a very small way with Farmstay. Probably 50 per cent of people who come and live on our farms are people from Asia. The best possible way of getting a relationship going between people from different countries is the one-to-one contact in the tourism area. There are openings in that area to reinforce what the office is doing. Only in that way will we build and repair some of the bridges that have been broken down by people in other States. Does the Minister realise how important tourism is to Western Australia? It is one of our major earners of overseas income. Perhaps he should put a proposition to Cabinet which emphasises the vast yawning gap in the tourism industry that needs help.

Mr BOARD: I agree with the member. There is a gap; it is an area which we are aware of and concerned about. However, it does not exist only in tourism. It exists also in the business area. It even exists in the gambling industry. People are failing to realise in this current debate that we are no longer the isolated country that we were a hundred years ago. We live in a global community. Our citizens are travelling extensively around the world and the tyranny of distance is no longer a problem. We need to think on a global basis. We need to define what the word "multiculturalism" means because in some people's minds its focus has been narrowed to such an extent that they still believe we are isolated and the people coming into this country are costing us jobs and our young people's future.

As I said, there are eight people in the Office of Multicultural Interests. We would like to motivate other agencies and departments, as we have already with Commerce and Trade, Health, Police, to examine specific interests and develop resources. We have a big job; we are aware of it but we have not got there yet.

Ms WARNOCK: Dot point 3 on page 647 of the Program Statements refers to some groups in the immigrant population being over-represented among seniors and refers to "appropriate planning of service delivery to meet their special needs is required." What is the Government doing about that or what does it propose to do?

[3.40 pm]

Ms ROBBINS: The Office of Multicultural Interests is working closely with the Office of Seniors Interests, and we thought we could have some influence in providing ethnic volunteers. The Office of Seniors Interests has a strong volunteers program, and people within that office are trained to give talks about healthy ageing, and to help ageing people understand what services and facilities are available in the community and how to access them. We have commenced working with the first group of seniors from ethnic backgrounds to train them in volunteer programs. They are bilingual and, having received the training, they can work with their own community groups giving information on healthy ageing and the services and facilities available. It is a first step and we are working with the Office of Seniors Interests to target that need.

Ms WARNOCK: I understood the state settlement plan applied to most government departments, but I have discovered from asking questions of various Ministers that it applies to only a select few. What is the Minister's understanding of the purpose of the state settlement plan and how widespread it should be?

Mr BOARD: It is a very good question because it is an area which occupies a fair amount of the time of the Office of Multicultural Interests, which has a relationship with the Federal Government and key stakeholders. I have had some discussions with the Office of Multicultural Interests and queried whether it was getting outcomes proportional to the amount of work and activity that went into it. For example, I recently attended a state and federal Ministers' meeting in Darwin - my first ministerial council in this portfolio - and I was surprised to learn that the States never played a strong role in determining their needs for regional migration and the skills required in certain areas. In many ways there is no bidding process. At that conference discussions were held about some States offering incentives to particular migrants for regional migration. Tasmania and South Australia have negative migration - they are losing people and cannot attract new migrants - and they voted against the incentive package because they felt it did not go far enough. Much work seems to go into these settlement schemes, particularly in regional areas. From where I sit,

we do not appear to achieve the results on the ground relative to the work that goes into it. Of course, it might be early days for me.

Ms ROBBINS: The Minister is correct. I have been involved in this portfolio area for not much longer than the Minister, but it seems the size and composition of migration is determined by Canberra. The States are consulted retrospectively on this matter. There is diversity of opinion across the States. New South Wales does not want migrants because Sydney is already too big, and there is an ecological issue associated with the size of migration. It is quite controversial. There is debate about who should foot the bill for settlement schemes and the State would be reluctant to pick up the settlement costs which are more appropriately covered by the Commonwealth.

The CHAIRMAN: Which groups in the immigrant population are over represented among seniors?

Mr BOARD: I understand the Italians are over represented, although I think different wording could have been used in the statement. It does not clearly express the view to be promoted. I suspect a number of seniors feel some isolation or need additional skills and support because they have not picked up language skills for one reason or another. That may be a result of the traditional sense of family, which may have broken down and can no longer support those migrants. Additional help is needed because people in that group who have not gained language skills because of their traditional sense of family may now find themselves isolated.

Ms ROBBINS: Seniors in Western Australia represent approximately 12 per cent of the population, but in some of the older migrant groups that do not have new migrants, such as the Greek and Italian communities, the population is ageing relative to the total number of people from that ethnic background. For example, 45 per cent of the Italian community are seniors, and that is a disproportionately high number of older people.

Ms WARNOCK: That creates problems because people may know only their own language.

Ms ROBBINS: Particularly those who came to Western Australia in the 1950s when there were no English language programs.

Sitting suspended from 3.48 to 4.00 pm

Division 46: Western Australian Department of Training , \$319 722 000 -

[Mr Baker, Chairman.]

[Mrs Edwardes, Minister for Employment and Training.]

[Mr L. Davies, Director, Employment Initiatives.]

[Mr I.C. Hill, Chief Executive.]

[Dr S.E. King, Director, Training Resources.]

[Mr M. Sykes, Manager, Financial Management and Analysis.]

Mr KOBELKE: I refer to page 952. I am concerned that the forward estimates show no increase in funding for training; in real terms, there is a decrease. There is also a decrease in the allocation to capital services. Are there other sources of funding, or what other explanation can be given for there being no growth in this important area?

Mrs EDWARDES: The member is correct; the budget papers do indicate a 1.6 per cent reduction in recurrent funding for the department.

Mr HILL: The reduction reflects the comparison in the level of funding between 1996-97 and 1997-98. The funding is as follows: New initiative funding of \$1.8m; additional funding of \$1.1m to meet the State's obligation under maintenance of effort; \$3m for Australian National Training Authority growth funds for the second half of 1997; and additional funding of \$2m to enable the colleges to meet their increased payroll tax liability for 1997-98. While the above comparison does indicate a reduction to the department, it does not include, for the first time this year, revenue generated by colleges in accordance with the revised VET legislation. The colleges will retain that revenue to further training programs. For example, in 1997-98 that will amount to \$10.5m in revenue. Previously, that was returned to the consolidated fund. Taking into account funds available from all sources, omitting one-off expenditures, and discounting the additional funds made available to meet increased payroll tax, we have had a real increase of 2.7 per cent in our budget between 1996-97 and 1997-98.

Mr KOBELKE: That is predicated on the \$10.5m of retained funds; and obviously you have made assumptions about the level of fees, which the Government has not yet announced?

Mr HILL: That is on existing fees.

Mr KOBELKE: With increased enrolments?

Mr HILL: Yes.

Mr KOBELKE: Is the 1.6 per cent drop in recurrent expenditure, which in real terms is a drop of about 4 per cent, offset by a \$10.5m increase in revenue to the independent colleges?

Mr HILL: To the autonomous colleges. That is only one aspect of it. I can give you a range of other adjustments, which are as follows: We have additional resourcing of \$1m for LandCare traineeships.

Mr KOBELKE: That is not in this budget?

Mr HILL: Yes it is.

Mrs EDWARDES: It is a new funding initiative. Because the new vocational education and training colleges are autonomous, the revenue does not show up in this budget. That \$10.5m is for 1997-98 and for the six months of 1996-97 it is estimated at \$3m. Although there is a perception of a deduction, there is actually an increase in the funding of approximately 2.7 per cent. The new initiative funding of \$1.8m is in the additional funding. The 1997 growth funding which is provided by the Australian National Training Authority is included, as well as additional funding of \$2m to enable the colleges to meet their increased payroll tax.

Mr KOBELKE: They are components of the aggregated total for recurrent services.

Mrs EDWARDES: Yes.

Mr KOBELKE: I just wanted to get the bottom line correct, and I understand the Minister is elaborating a little on some of these components. The only figure additional to the aggregated recurrent figure is \$10.5m which is retained fees by the autonomous colleges.

Mr HILL: There has been a reduced level of support for redundancies - last year it was a one-off adjustment of \$3.2m - and also salary payments for lecturers under the enterprise bargaining agreement of \$1.4m.

[4.10 pm]

Mr KOBELKE: Is there anything in the federal Budget allowing those same items?

Dr KING: There are some minor amounts in the state budget, but I think Mr Hill is referring to the difference between the two years. In 1996-97 there was about \$4.6m in the budget for the lecturer award increase plus redundancies. They are one-off payments and they have fallen away because they were not needed. Lecturers are coming up with more efficient hours of operation and many redundancies have occurred. If we factor in those one-off payments, the lecturer award and the \$2.6m of commonwealth specific purpose programs that were shown in last year's budget, but will be a reduction this year; and if we also take into account that more has been put in for payroll tax, we will find colleges have more than is in the printed estimates that they can keep. If we make some adjustments on 1996-97 figures compared with 1997-98 figures the bottom line ends up at about a 2.7 per cent increase. Some one-off items in last year's figures are no longer provided for this year.

We will not have to deal with those again. The fact that the funds are not provided will not affect the training effort. Figures are not in the printed estimates because of the changed revenue arrangements. If we factor in that colleges will still have access to that revenue and can spend it on training, and if like to like comparisons are made, the decrease turns into a relatively slight increase.

Mr KOBELKE: A matter relating to that is the number of students - or student hours depending on the measure that is used of productivity - in the training programs. The document indicates that in 1995 we had 21 million student hours and the estimate for 1996 is 21.3 million. Is there an estimate for 1997?

Dr KING: Our planned delivery effort on mainstream programs for 1997 - we deal with calendar years because of the academic year nature of training - is approximately 22.5 million student hours. We expect to be delivering more and a little more efficiently. That can be from class size increases, etc. Of course, we have a little ANTA growth money which will come into the new budget year and will help fund some of the increase in the delivery of hours.

Mr KOBELKE: The Premier indicated there would be an increase in fees for students. As the colleges are autonomous, to what extent can they set their own course fees; or will they be given the same strict guidelines laid down by the Department of Training? When is this decision likely to be finalised and an announcement made about any change in course fee structures?

Mrs EDWARDES: As to the second part of the question, I was not happy with the proposals that initially came forward. I am addressing that issue at the moment and those proposals have not come back to me with any changes.

Those figures have not been factored in at all. The timing is absolutely crucial in terms of students. I am not expecting to bring in an increase prior to next year.

Mr KOBELKE: How much say will the autonomous colleges have in that?

Mr HILL: All fees are set centrally for all publicly funded courses run through autonomous colleges and must be approved by the Minister. The colleges are not autonomous in setting their fees. One fee applies across the State.

Mr KOBELKE: How would courses be designated which may originate at a local college -

Mr HILL: The fee for service ones.

Mr KOBELKE: Is it only fee for service or are there other opportunities?

Mr HILL: They could be fee for service courses where the fees are set either with private enterprise or the industry sector. The fees for award courses are set centrally. The department sets those fees in line with the Minister.

Mr KOBELKE: The Minister picked up the detail with respect to 1996-97 and 1997-98. My first question related to page 952 which shows forward estimates for the next four years. The numbers are very flat. I was working on the assumption that we were having continuing growth in the need for training. Those figures do not make any allowance for that. Why are we not showing any growth in those figures?

Mr HILL: The EBA which we struck last year with the AEU was very significant in terms of efficiencies we expected to get for the next three years. The capacity of the system to generate more student contact hours as a result of the much greater availability of lecturer time has not been factored in to future year funding projections making it impossible to show it.

Dr KING: On the recurrent side in the out years, especially 1998-99, the figure dips substantially. It is based on projections and the main factor coming in is anticipated - that is a fairly liberal use of the word - commonwealth revenue. For example, page 972 sets out forward estimates for the out years for the department, the Commonwealth, and total recurrent expenditure. Under the total commonwealth recurrent figure for 1998-99, the figure is \$78.8m and in 1997-98 it is approximately \$82m. Most of the flatness, or apparent decrease, is largely due to a guesstimate to look at possible commonwealth sourced revenue. They are very much forward estimates because we have only just recently had a commonwealth Budget and we will have to wait and see what will happen in 1998-99 and the next year. On the recurrent side, the dip is mainly a rough estimate of commonwealth funding.

Mr KOBELKE: Where does the funding for the technical and further education colleges come from within these items on page 954? The figure for services and contracts goes from \$128m to \$218m. I am not sure why there is an increase. It may just be part of the accounting process. Why is there a large increase? Is that the major funding for TAFE colleges, or is it much wider than that?

[4.20 pm]

Dr KING: It is largely an accounting change, again, due to the autonomous colleges. In 1996-97, and on instruction from Treasury, the large bulk of funding in our second program - for example, the delivery that goes to colleges - would have been shown as salaries or other costs. Because of the new autonomous arrangements for those colleges as statutory authorities to report in their own annual reports, Treasury asked us to show in 1997-98 the funding which goes to colleges as services and contracts. The difference between \$128.5m for 1996-97 and \$218m for 1997-98 is largely because of a half year - that is, the first part of 1997 - being treated that way in colleges as services and contracts, whereas previously it was salaries, and so on, as per any agency, going up to the full year of that funding being treated as services and contracts in 1997-98. Largely it is an accounting practice.

Mr KOBELKE: Does that mean that for the full year the 1996-97 figure would be \$256m, which does not equate with \$218m? Factors other than the half-year effect must be responsible?

Dr KING: They are the main factors.

Mr SYKES: The \$128.6m for 1996-97 excludes, for example, communications and staff related expenses, all of which are shown separately. Within each of those individual components is an element relating to college expenditure. Under Treasury instruction they have been collapsed down in 1997-98 into the one line. You will notice that each one of those components has reduced; indeed, the other has gone from \$27m down to \$15m. The balance of most of the \$12m would have been collapsed into the \$218m as college expenditure, and as such is a service and contract. It is not as simple as looking at one figure and transposing it against the other.

Mr KOBELKE: Thank you for that explanation. Will you explain whether the last two items, grants relating to the purchase of training places from training providers and employment and job creation grants, relate to programs

largely separate from the autonomous colleges or are the autonomous colleges also in some way funded through those items?

Mr SYKES: It is probably easiest to answer the question based on the second item. The reduction in the grants relating to the purchase of training places is due largely to the demise of the former prevocational program, which was commonwealth funded. It was replaced by a lesser funded program in 1997-98, and that is primarily what causes the major reduction. At the time the budget was put together, and even today, there was a drop in the funding to replace the prevocational training program. Outside that the variances are minor. That is the major reason for that.

The increase in the traineeship grants relates largely to the increase in the numbers taking up the grants. Mr Davies may better explain that.

Mr DAVIES: We have seen a rapid increase in the number of traineeships, and additional funding is needed. Traineeship numbers have increased by 50 per cent this year.

Mr KOBELKE: Do all those items come under the \$14.6m for 1997-98?

Mr SYKES: The traineeships Mr Davies has just alluded to come under the \$7m just above. The grants are the one below.

Mr KOBELKE: The \$14.4m is for prevocational training, but what are the other major programs?

Mr SYKES: A number of programs are included, many of which are state and a number of which are commonwealth, including the commonwealth Aboriginal program and a number of adult migrant programs. Other fully commonwealth funded programs are also embedded.

Mr KOBELKE: Would the Minister provide a full list of those programs?

Mrs EDWARDES: Yes.

Mr KOBELKE: Does the \$8.9m in employment and job creation grants include such things as Joblink and other associated programs in the actual estimate for 1996-97 and the estimate for 1997-98?

Mr SYKES: Yes, it does.

Mr KOBELKE: The second dot point from the bottom on page 955 states there is a continuing requirement to identify future high demand skill areas to enable effective VET system response. I appreciate that that always involves some crystal ball gazing, but in the last couple of years we have not got it right. Is the department using the Worley report or is it using other means to assess likely future demand?

Mrs EDWARDES: The member would be aware of the establishment of the State Training Board on 1 January; it was formerly an interim board. It was through the board that the Worley report was commissioned, but the board does not receive information from only that source when responding to industry needs. Although that was its unique experience in that case, because that information was obtained from the boardroom and the chief executive officers, information is also obtained through industry training councils and a large number of other sources.

Mr HILL: In essence that is a good summary. The ITCs are funded by the state training agency to provide industry training needs from this year for the next two years. They are assisted by our industry analysis and advice branch, which uses SYNTEC and Monash University. We do not deal solely with Worley. Although Worley has had a lot of publicity, it specifically targeted the resource development area and identified what is not just a Western Australian phenomenon but an Australian problem; that is, a shortage of skilled labour in the engineering and metals area. What that means is that in the high demand skill areas we work, through a lot of projections, with regional development commissions; a lot of regional economic development officers are out on the ground. I am sure you have met some of them. That all feeds into the industry analysis and advice branch, which identifies trends in those areas identified by industry and the State Government that will create a strategic priority area both for internal and export consumption. We also work with the Department of Commerce and Trade. We started to shift resources in those directions last year for the first time because we felt things were sophisticated enough to make those predictions. We actually show a trend until the year 2005 and the state training program is starting to move those resources across. That is what is intended.

Mr KOBELKE: I now follow on from something Mr Hill said about the level of funding to the ITCs. Is that what is included on page 957? Is there any indication in these papers of the exact amounts available for the ITCs for both 1996-97 and 1997-98?

Mr HILL: It is \$2.8m.

Mr KOBELKE: Is that for 1997-98?

Mr HILL: Yes.

Mr KOBELKE: What was it in 1996-97?

Mr HILL: The same amount was available.

Mr KOBELKE: There was no growth?

Mr HILL: No. We also have a sum of \$400 000, which is known as our strategic initiative fund. The State Training Board chairs a committee which determines how that allocation is made. It is based on the submissions we receive from the ITCs for specific steps they wish to target.

Mr WIESE: The second dot point on page 956 concerns educational training in schools. How many students are now receiving that vocational education and training in schools? How many schools are offering it, or is it available in all high schools?

Mr HILL: At this time it will be difficult to identify the number of students involved. We can provide a picture between 1996 and 1997 of the pickup by high schools in Western Australia of VET programs. The increase has been dramatic. We began with three or four high schools, three years ago, and that has become 100.

Mr WIESE: That must be virtually all of them.

[4.30 pm]

Mr HILL: Most of the private schools entered; it is not only public schools.

Dr KING: I cannot present precise numbers because most of that activity is under the auspices of the Secondary Education Authority. We are increasingly working with the school sectors, and the Australian National Training Authority. We have entered business plans with the three school sectors. As part of that exercise we have some benchmark initial data so that we can monitor what is happening. We can provide that as a reference point.

Mr WIESE: I request that that be provided as supplementary information.

Mr KOBELKE: I seek information on the funding for the VET program for schools. Is any assistance provided by subsidy to help schools meet the cost or must they rely on their own funds perhaps supplemented by commonwealth funding? If commonwealth funding is involved does that come through the Western Australian Department of Training or directly to the Education Department?

Mr HILL: Last year a decision was made by ministerial council for this year and the next four years. An amount of \$20m a year has been apportioned across the nation. WA's share runs to about \$2.1m, which comes from ANTA to the state training agency. We issue that funding on the basis of a business plan which the three sectors provide; that is, EDWA, Catholic Education, and the independent schools. They have been signed up and we have issued the first cheques. It is very much a commonwealth driven program at this stage. A program is running with Geraldton TAFE. It costs \$58 per admin hour to provide VET modules at the schools. The schools are resourced to provide that education. We are still to determine the differential cost. On Friday the Minister will attend the ministerial council meeting at which a number of these issues will be debated at the policy level.

Mr KOBELKE: Therefore, the funds will not go to the local autonomous TAFE college.

Mr HILL: It will go directly to the school.

Dr KING: The \$2.1m of ANTA funding is not yet reflected in these estimates. Treasury is always fairly cautious about putting them in the printed estimates. We have only recently received the money from ANTA for the first part of 1997. Therefore, it would be an additional part in 1996-97 and in 1997-98. That will come through. We then forward the funds to the three peak school agencies to pass on to schools engaged in the program. We have been examining the 1995 funding guidelines that were in existence before the new VET in schools program. We are about to put those out in revised form. The proposal is that perhaps in high priority areas we may be able to provide some top up funding. I understand that the Education Department has some augmenting funding in its new budget this year as well.

Mr KOBELKE: Am I correct in understanding that the funding mechanism was always in place, and that the \$2.1m will go into a bucket of funds for the VET programs in schools? If so, how much is there in the current budget without the \$2.1m?

Mr HILL: The \$2.1m is specifically for the "VET in schools" initiative. It will not go into an additional bucket -

Mr KOBELKE: The VET program is already running in a large number of schools. Clearly the existing program is being funded, and I am asking how it is being funded.

Mr HILL: It is being sourced from EDWA.

Mr KOBELKE: Are you suggesting that the \$2.1m would go into the same program as additional money by the Department of Training?

Mr HILL: The program is being defined under the new apprenticeship scheme. I do not mean to confuse the issue, but the new apprenticeships which have been announced - and which the Commonwealth and the States will be debating on Friday - are to extend to a full apprenticeship program being implemented in schools. The current program looks at vocational education and training modules of subjects which could give a student advance standing if she or he decided to go into the TAFE system. The current debate goes beyond that; the Federal Minister views it as being possible for schools at year 9 onwards to implement a full apprenticeship system so that on graduation at year 12 the students will be fully job qualified. That matter will be debated this Friday at the ministerial council.

Mr KOBELKE: I understand that major changes will be made. I did not want to buy into those changes. As I understand it, currently there is funding only from EDWA for VET programs in schools.

Mr HILL: Yes.

Mr KOBELKE: However, you are looking at a range of possibilities.

Mr WIESE: I am not sure whether this falls within this category, but I wish to comment on shearer training. Are such programs funded by ANTA? I understand there are some problems with training at agricultural colleges because the funding is provided within a calendar year. That is, the funding is available in April and must be spent by December. The problem for a couple of agricultural colleges is that they run their shearer training programs in the early part of the year, in February-March, and therefore are not able to access the funds. Is it possible for the funding to be provided on a 12 month basis, say, from April to April, rather than their needing to spend the funding by December? Currently, 120 or 130 students at the Narrogin Agricultural College miss out.

Dr KING: I do not have the details of agricultural colleges' shearer training. We provide about \$300 000 for shedhand and shearer training programs. Delays have occurred in the startup as the program was put out to tender through the South Metropolitan College. In 1996, when the program was first run, there were lengthy delays getting the tendering arrangements together, and in tendering out for a coordinator. All that took time. I think there have been some delays but fewer at the beginning of this year. We have signalled our intention to South Metropolitan College and to the relevant industry group that we may not proceed through the South Metropolitan College in future; we will try to move ahead of time so that it can begin more quickly.

Also in our tendering program we are increasingly looking at a longer term commitment of not just a one year, but a three year contract. That will solve some of those problems. As long as the performance and delivery are there, and the monitoring says everything is okay, an undertaking might be given to deliver perhaps the same training, but over a period; for example, to repeat the course. There might be a three year commitment subject to performance and budget availability.

[4.40 pm]

Mr WIESE: Will the Minister investigate that case? There are 120 kids who are paying \$100 each to access a course. They are exactly the people the Government is trying to get into the industry as young trainees. Because of that window under the current system, they are not able to access that. That is what that money is provided for.

Mrs EDWARDES: I will follow that up.

Mr KOBELKE: The fourth dot point on page 956 of the Budget Statements relates to the reduction in commonwealth funding, which impacts on both the department and Joblink projects. Will the Minister provide as supplementary information details of all the programs that have been reduced - technical and further education programs and the Network and Joblink projects - and by how much that reduction has been due to the reduction in commonwealth funding?

Mrs EDWARDES: I will provide that by supplementary information.

Mr KOBELKE: Is the Training Accreditation Council fully operational?

Mrs EDWARDES: Yes. It has presented me with a couple of reports that will come out publicly in the not too distant future to assist organisations with training accreditation and how they should go about competency based assessment.

Mr KOBELKE: How successful has the implementation of the competency based assessment framework been? I get the impression there is a mixed reaction across the training industry.

Mrs EDWARDES: That is the document I indicated has just come to me. It is the set of principles and guidelines to help organisations that will be accredited on how they should proceed with competency based assessment.

Mr HILL: As the Minister indicated, the framework has only just been launched. The member for Nollamara commented on the mixed views about the effectiveness or otherwise. Depending on whom one speaks to, anecdotal evidence in industry is that people are either satisfied or not satisfied. This framework provides for the Training Accreditation Council to provide in a valid form information about whether the system is working and, if it is not, what must be done to remedy that.

Mr KOBELKE: I take it that the paper the Minister just signed off on indicates a full commitment to the competency based assessment framework.

Mrs EDWARDES: That is for all those who will be accredited. The Training Accreditation Council wants to encourage more and more organisations to undertake the accreditation process. That is something I have stressed is particularly important. If we are to ensure that the community has confidence in the system, competency based assessment must be monitored closely in the first couple of years to ensure there is full compliance with it. The monitoring could perhaps taper off after that.

Mr HILL: All national training packages are written in competency terms only.

Mr KOBELKE: Page 961 mentions the delivery processes through Westlink and the Golden West Television Network. It indicates there was a problem in meeting the objective of delivering the number of hours intended. What number of hours is committed to in the forthcoming financial year? Will any factors impinge on the fulfilment of such goals?

Mrs EDWARDES: We will provide that by supplementary information.

Mr KOBELKE: Have the training administration bodies referred to on page 963 been established?

Mr DAVIES: Thirteen are fully operational. Five have been operating for a number of months and the rest were established recently. We are nearing the completion of negotiations on the bodies in the Kimberley and Pilbara. We have had to negotiate special arrangements there because of the remoteness and the limited number of clients we deal with.

Mr KOBELKE: Are group training bodies classified as training administration bodies?

Mr DAVIES: No, not specifically, although a couple of group training companies won contracts to be training administration bodies and had to separate their two activities and keep them independent. The training administration bodies were put out to tender for industry or other organisations to administer traineeships and apprenticeships.

Mr KOBELKE: In all the budget papers we find an introduction, major issues, and major achievements in 1996-97. In past years the papers included also the major initiatives to be undertaken in the year of the budget. That is not provided in any of the portfolios I have gone through. Will the Minister undertake to provide as supplementary information, even if it is in only dot point form, the major initiatives to be undertaken from the funding in the 1997-98 Budget in the subprograms of the Western Australian Department of Training?

Mrs EDWARDES: We can provide that fairly easily.

Dr KING: The reason for the format is a foreshadowed change in Treasury's approach. Treasury outlined recently in significant documents a move to an outputs based management approach. Embryonically, that is embedded in this document by flagging key outputs. We were asked by Treasury when we were given the format for these papers to address only the 1996-97 achievements, because the outputs based management approach would kick in and outputs would be foreshadowed and later on reported on. I can see it leaves the Committee a little in between the old and the new processes. We have given the format required by Treasury. However, we can highlight key achievements planned for 1997-98.

Mrs EDWARDES: I will provide that by supplementary information.

Mr WIESE: Pages 959 and 961 refer to training for Aboriginal people and Aboriginal communities. I have a strong belief that the only way we will prepare young Aboriginal people to take their place in the community is through the training we can give them while they are still either at school or in those Aboriginal communities. What strategies are being used to get to those Aboriginal people and, particularly, the Aboriginal communities? On what basis is the department able to judge whether those strategies are effective? What sort of expansion does the department envisage in the future? They are critical areas in which the department must work.

Mrs EDWARDES: We agree.

[4.50 pm]

Mr DAVIES: As the papers indicate, we have run a number of programs, and a number of others are ongoing. Under the Aboriginal economic and employment development officer program, which has been running for 10 or 12 years, people in Aboriginal communities are attracting training programs into those communities. We have also been running a program for the Commonwealth that has been highly successful. Unfortunately, the Commonwealth has ceased funding it. However, we have learnt from that and have been able to establish a group training company specifically for Aboriginal people. This program builds on the lessons learnt and uses CDEP as a base to put people into mainstream employment and training programs, particularly traineeships and apprenticeships, instead of into the traditional activities of cleaning and so on. We have just started an Aboriginal group training company, which has already put 109 Aboriginal people into traineeships and some into apprenticeships. That is starting to roll and the group is projecting that about 500 people will be involved in two years. That is one of the key places where programs, instead of being separate from the mainstream, are in mainstream employment undertaking activities that attract a recognised certificate.

Mr WIESE: I asked how the department was monitoring the effectiveness of the programs. The CDEP is a classic example of a program that provides money but nothing else. Work is not done; it is a joke. Any program in those communities must be very closely monitored to see that it happens and is effective. Can the department put those safeguards in place to ensure that the programs are effective?

Mr DAVIES: We learnt from the In Work program, where we were able to achieve a very good placement rate. So far, of the people who have graduated, within three months 70 per cent have been placed in jobs. We are monitoring that very closely. That same approach will be put in place for the group training company. Before we would consider continuing negotiations, we insisted on a business plan, including all financial and valuation details, and we insist on regular quarterly or half yearly reports. One of our officers will also be on the board of the program keeping a very close eye on it over the next six months. The board has agreed to those requirements.

Mr WIESE: There is a whole industry based on drawing up programs and business plans. That does not mean a thing. Even the job placement possibly does not mean a great deal. The real test is to go back in six or 12 months to see whether those people are still in the jobs and whether their training was effective in helping them to get the job in the first place. Is there any of that long term follow up?

Mr DAVIES: The group training company and the In Work program that is currently running have involved Aboriginal mentors from the community working with young people to try to maximise the support base. If there are problems, they are addressed, not just left. I understand the issues. We have seen many CDEP projects that do not work. If we can build on them and use them as a base to get into the mainstream, there is a good chance of achieving a high success rate.

Mrs EDWARDES: I will ensure that I take up that concern and follow it through.

The CHAIRMAN: I refer to page 961 and stage 2.2 of the Joondalup flexible learning centre. Is the \$9.6m figure a state contribution or is there a commonwealth contribution?

Dr KING: I would have to confirm that. I believe it is largely Australian National Training Authority funded.

Mrs EDWARDES: I will provide that detail as supplementary information.

Mr KOBELKE: I refer to pages 970 and 971. Reference is made to "Other projects - Equipment" and a \$10m allocation with only \$1m to be spent this financial year. If that is to be spread over 10 years, it will be slow. Is it expected to accelerate in 1998-99? Similarly, in relation to minor works, there is a \$4m requirement but only \$1.4m has been allocated in this budget.

Dr KING: The total cost column is somewhat misleading when it refers to equipment and minor work, which are virtually ongoing. The \$1.08m allocated for equipment is only the state funding component. I will need to check how the figures are calculated. There is another reference to equipment funding on page 968 - works in progress - but that has a different total. We would have to double check that.

Mr KOBELKE: I would like that explanation as supplementary information.

Dr KING: The combined equipment allocation for 1997-98 scattered throughout this document is \$4.7m; that is a substantial amount of equipment. The allocation for minor works has been at \$1.4m for some years. We will check those figures.

Mrs EDWARDES: I will provide that additional information.

Mr KOBELKE: The total government recurrent expenditure is \$12.55m. Is that calculated on a half yearly basis or does it cover the full year?

Mr SYKES: That would be calculated for the full 12 months, bearing in mind that all revenue generated through colleges ceases to be paid to the department from 31 December. It is for the full 12 months, but the bulk of it ceases to apply from 1 January.

Mr KOBELKE: On an equivalent basis, the revenue coming to government and the autonomous colleges is more like \$24m.

Mr SYKES: It is a little less than that. Until 31 December the amount coming in was a little more than half. As previously stated, it is not appropriate simply to multiply the figure by two. It is about \$18m.

Mr WIESE: I refer the Minister to the Landcare and Environment Action program on page 963. The allocation for 1996-97 was \$1.1m and in 1997-98 it is \$500 000. Can the department tap into any of the funding supposedly coming from the Commonwealth in this land care area as part of the education program and the LEAP program?

Mr DAVIES: The LEAP funding has finished and what is there is residual funds we are paying to finalise the last accounts and projects. The Commonwealth has closed that program completely. In the recent Budget it launched the Natural Heritage Trust, which we do not know a lot about, and the Green Corps. We are accessing some Green Corps funding already and expect to get more. The budget papers also refer to a land care traineeship funded from state sources. Once we know more about the commonwealth program, we will customise that to fill some of the gaps and maximise our use of the commonwealth programs. We are trying to attract as much funding as possible.

Mrs EDWARDES: In respect of the Natural Heritage Trust, a Cabinet subcommittee has been formed under the chairmanship of the Deputy Premier and comprising several Ministers and the respective CEOs of the various departments. That subcommittee will work up programs to access those funds as well. This funding will be signed off by the federal Minister for the Environment as well as the federal Minister for Primary Industries and Energy.

[5.00 pm]

Mr WIESE: There has been no clear indication yet as to what funding will be coming through, and hence, whether we will get funding in that area. Is that a fair comment?

Mrs EDWARDES: There is no clear direction yet as to what programs will be funded and what percentage the States will receive and in which direction those funds will be approved. We are working with two federal Ministers and the Federal Government to ensure that Western Australia has a very firm stake in what we regard as a reasonable proportion of those funds, given Western Australia's size and some of the complex issues.

Mr WIESE: We have more problems with land care, certainly with salinity, than any other State in the Commonwealth.

Mrs EDWARDES: We have identified the salinity action plan as being the key plan we want funded jointly with the State. That comes under another portfolio.

Division 44: Kings Park Board, \$8 936 000 -

[Mr Baker, Chairman.]

[Mrs Edwardes, Minister for the Environment.]

[Dr S.D. Hopper, Director.]

[Mr N. Power, Manager Finance.]

Dr EDWARDS: What is the status of the Kings Park Board's management of Bold Regional Park?

Mrs EDWARDES: Those negotiations have been ongoing, as the member would be aware. A meeting was held prior to Christmas, attended by the former Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Local Government and the local member, Mr Barnett. The arrangements were finalised. Those matters have gone back to the Kings Park Board.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Kings Park Board has been working with the executive officer of the Town of Cambridge in order to work out some of the fine details. We are working through the financial allocation with the Treasurer.

Dr EDWARDS: What work has been done physically in Bold Park?

Mrs EDWARDES: We have not taken over the management of Bold Park. It is still within the Town of Cambridge. The CEO of the board has been working with the executive officer. We have been providing advice and assistance in some of the key areas.

Dr HOPPER: We are unable to expend government funds on Bold Regional Park management until such time as it comes over to the State Government and is ceded by the town. We have been in the process of negotiation with the town. That is the limit of our involvement at this stage.

Ms WARNOCK: I am interested in the Government's large and ambitious program for Kings Park, which was announced a couple of years ago and upon which I, like many other people, made a submission. I spent some time talking to Dr Hopper. What is the status of that grand plan? I am a regular visitor and I have noticed many of the changes that have taken place. I am referring to the more controversial aspects of that grand plan, which caused a stir among my constituents and, indeed, constituents throughout Western Australia. What is the Government planning to do about those major changes? Will they go ahead or have they all been rejected and, if not, which ones will go ahead?

Mrs EDWARDES: When I took over the portfolio one of the opportunities that was presented was to be able to release the final Kings Park plan. It is being printed. The resolution of some of the more controversial issues, particularly those like Fraser Avenue, will delight everybody in Western Australia. What was put forward has not been accepted. The plan will be released in the next couple of weeks.

Ms WARNOCK: I am relieved to hear that, having run a vigorous campaign on the matter. One of the matters discussed when the grand plan was being mooted was the issue of vandalism and whether the park should be closed at night. Has the problem of vandalism which existed at that time and, for the want of a better phrase, the hoonish behaviour that was causing worry to people running Kings Park, been dealt with?

Dr HOPPER: The problem has been dealt with through the appointment of contract security staff. The member might recall that the biggest problem, which was around the Pioneer Women's Memorial, was drag racing and that sort of thing. That has been fairly well capped. A park that is open 24 hours a day has a certain amount of vandalism, as the member would appreciate. That major issue has been resolved. It has been improved even more because we have introduced arts and drama in the pioneer women's botanic garden area. We very much hope that will become an outdoor evening venue in the park.

Ms WARNOCK: Dr Hopper mentioned entertainments. I congratulate the park board on the entertainment during the summer, which was brilliantly staged. I was very pleased to see that over 14 000 people attended. What other entertainment is planned so far?

Dr HOPPER: We have at present a regular Australia day concert; one is scheduled for next year. I understand that the Western Australian Symphony Orchestra will deliver another concert, which we are in the process of negotiating. That is not yet finalised. We have an arrangement with the production company that staged *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to stage *Romeo and Juliet* and *Wind in the Willows*, the latter of which will coincide with our wildflower festival and offer something to the school children to enjoy. In addition, we have recently established Aboriginal Western Australia in the look out complex overlooking the city. This involves a group of Nyoongah people with support from the State Government. The Nyoongah people have an artist in residence, Aboriginal artefacts and dance opportunities. We hope that will start on a trial basis in spring.

[5.10 pm]

Dr EDWARDS: In light of that, why is revenue from operations down?

Mr POWER: A number of initiatives in this financial year will not be repeated: Motor vehicle asset sales and bank account transfers to correct posting errors which are once off revenue streams will not reoccur in 1997-98.

Dr EDWARDS: Why are the number of scientific papers referred to on page 544 so low?

Dr HOPPER: As the member is aware, our research group is quite dynamic. We have three scientists on the payroll, 15 PhDs and four post-doctoral fellows in the laboratory doing some exciting research on native flora and bushland restoration. To get a normal scientific project published in international literature takes about one year or two years, with writing up as part of that process. With the size of our group, five papers a year is quite good, when compared

with comparable sized groups in universities, for example. It is a modest estimate and sometimes we exceed that estimate. However, we can reliably contribute five scientific papers a year.

Dr EDWARDS: The annual report shows a loan from O'Brien Pty Ltd.

Dr HOPPER: That relates to the restaurant in Kings Park. The arrangement that was struck some years ago was that money for the construction of the complex would come through an advancement of rent arrangement. The deal is over 10 years, and \$592 487 is paid annually by the O'Brien company as rent and it is immediately paid back by the board to the O'Brien company for the construction costs of the restaurant.

Mr WIESE: Page 545 refers to the introduced weed control management program. To the best of my knowledge that has been ongoing for at least four or five years. I thought there was an indication some years ago that the veldt grass problem was under control. Does that refer to veldt grass, and how is the introduced weed control program progressing?

Dr HOPPER: Kings Park has 450 species of plant in the bush, 150 of which are weeds. The major weed at the ground layer is veldt grass. It has taken 10 years to reduce the abundance of veldt grass by half. We estimate it will take another 10 years before it is virtually eliminated. The member may have noticed in walking through the park that bridal creeper is a major problem. We do not have an effective control for that. In the over-storey Sydney kurrajongs and Eastern States' eucalypts are replacing the native banksias, tuarts and jarrahs. At the current level of management we are a few decades away from effective weed management of Kings Park and obtaining a full native cover.

Dr EDWARDS: What is the index seminum that you said you ceased?

Dr HOPPER: Index seminum is the Latin name for a seed list. Traditionally botanic gardens have exchanged seeds freely throughout the world and been a prime source of innoculum of major agriculture crops and environmental weeds. With the focus on conservation that Kings Park has developed we believe it is irresponsible to freely distribute seeds of Western Australian wildflowers throughout the world. For example, if one visits South Africa the common wattles that grow in my garden at Mullaloo are major invasive weeds throughout the heath lands. We have ceased the index seminum; it is no longer a free exchange. We ask people who request seeds to demonstrate a positive conservation benefit either through research on the seeds or through some application that will improve the conservation of Western Australian flora before we will give them seeds.

Dr EDWARDS: What supplementary funding is provided in mid-1996 as mentioned in your annual report?

Dr HOPPER: The supplementary funding related to a number of initiatives we put forward in a business plan to the Government, one of which related to offering voluntary severance package to staff. As part of the planning for Kings Park it became evident that some of our aims in delivering world class facilities would require new skills among staff members. We were keen to offer some staff the opportunity to apply for voluntary severance and we could not afford to pay that out of the operational budget. In addition some capital works that were also covered by supplementary funding were brought forward in the planning sense.

Mr POWER: That is correct. The loans were provided by Treasury on a loan borrowing arrangement. The voluntary severance scheme was for about 15 people. They have since left the organisation. The capital works related to various planning issues. We needed these funds in advance to establish the proposal fully for the next financial year.

Dr EDWARDS: Has money been carried over that was allocated for Bold Regional Park?

Mr POWER: The current estimate of what we will roll over from this current financial year to the next financial year is \$530 000. It relates mainly to the vesting of Bold Regional Park. We can do some preliminary planning work, but we cannot do any detailed infrastructure work until the vesting is with the park.

Dr EDWARDS: Have the firefighting vehicles been purchased?

Mr POWER: One firefighting vehicle has been purchased and it is stationed at Kings Park; it will be available to Bold Park should it be required.

Mrs EDWARDES: Some of the things that we are planning for Bold Park for 1997-98 include the firefighting water points, revegetation, weed and feral animal control, fencing and security, tree management, an integrated management information system, as well as various visitor service facilities. Funds have been provided for that.

Dr EDWARDS: How many of the capital works projects on page 547 will be completed by 30 June?

Mrs EDWARDES: They will be carried over.

Mr WIESE: Does the board have firefighting vehicles and firefighting capabilities for both Kings Park and Bold Regional Park? How many watering points are there and what is being provided in Kings Park with that \$500 000? Will the board ever adopt preventive burning in Kings Park rather than total reliance on putting fires out after they start?

[5.20 pm]

Dr HOPPER: The first step with Bold Regional Park, as soon as the land is vested in the board, is to establish a management planning process. I cannot answer the detail of the watering points that will be established in Bold Park. Kings Park is serviced by two large, antiquated trucks from the 1960s which have a 3 000 litre capacity. A new truck at Bold Regional Park has the same capacity. At Kings Park there are also at least three tray-back Toyotas with a smaller capacity and as soon as the land is vested at Bold Regional Park we will buy additional tray-back Toyotas.

The fire strategy in Kings Park is of considerable concern to the board. One of the advantages in determining a fire strategy for Kings Park has been the excellent history and record of past management approaches and the outcome of those processes. For example, the 50 year record notes every fire that has occurred in Kings Park. We also have a very clear record of management approaches. In the 1920s to the 1930s there was a three year rotational burning approach. In the 1950s and 1960s there was a buffer strip burning approach for approximately 15 years. From the middle of the 1960s there was a no burn policy. A range of other strategies were introduced including an extensive firebreak system, a watering system and a reduction of fuel program, not by burning but by using herbicides and physically removing woody trees. Last year roughly 50 000 peppermint trees were removed from Kings Park physically rather than by burning. There is also an early detection rapid suppression strategy.

I have already mentioned that the veldt grass has decreased by half over the last 10 years. Irrespective of which management approach has been in place, the park has averaged 10 ignitions every summer. I am sure the member would appreciate that it is a high incidence for any patch of bush in the State. In every 10 or 15 years there is a fire which burns more than 20 hectares in Kings Park. The community must weigh up a series of values. If they wish to have bushland in Western Australia, and Kings Park is no different, there is a fire risk. Every now and then there will be unfortunate circumstances where there is a high fire danger and risk element. In Kings Park there is a high risk of arson. The two biggest fires in recent years have been deliberately lit and an arsonist has been working ahead of the fire crews. I can assure the member that our staff get to almost all fires within 10 minutes. We have an excellent rapport with the fire and rescue services and we have adopted a coordinated approach. In the case of big fires the Bush Fires Board and the Department of Conservation and Land Management also offer assistance. We do have an integrated strategy which is appropriate for Kings Park. I do not wish to generalise beyond the borders of Kings Park.

Dr EDWARDS: I noticed an audit qualification in the annual report. Will you advise of the progress in resolving that problem?

Dr HOPPER: The audit qualification related to the agency's ability to report on the status of the living collection in the botanic garden. We have converted to a database system called BG BASE, which is used by botanic gardens throughout the world. It is sold by a company in Edinburgh. Due to an unfortunate coincidence of events we converted to that system about three months prior to the end of the last financial year. Prior to that we would have done a manual check of every plant and every bed to be able to report at the end of the financial year on how many plants were in the collection, how many had died and how many had been added. Because of the changeover we could not report on the total collection and for that reason the auditor was unable to assess whether we were meeting our performance criteria of minimal deaths in the collection. I can report that we are on track this year to report fully on the living collection and our success in maintaining it.

Dr EDWARDS: In the annual report reference is made to a survey in which only 40 per cent of the people surveyed believed that the toilets at Kings Park were well maintained. I find the toilets at Kings Park to be spotless.

Dr HOPPER: Ever since I have been associated with the institution, the toilets at Kings Park have been a perennial source of complaint. It is an interesting area. We have contract toilet cleaners. Daily checks are carried out by our staff who monitor the toilet cleaners. On some days at the Ivey Watson playground there is a demand which is very difficult to keep up with. The toilets at that playground are on a septic system. One of the reasons we are moving the Ivey Watson playground to the new development at Hale Oval is that the toilets will be connected to the sewerage system. Hopefully, the demand on the existing facility will be reduced. We are mindful of the public's concerns about toilets and we are doing everything we can to meet the concern. As part of the capital works program for the next 10 years we will upgrade the toilets. The Hale Oval area, where the new family playground will be developed, is the first cab off the rank for a new toilet facility.

Division 45: Zoological Gardens Board, \$3 789 000 -

[Mr Baker, Chairman.]

[Mrs Edwardes, Minister for the Environment.]

[Ms R. Burges, Chief Executive Officer.]

[Mr P. Mountford, Acting Director, Corporate Services.]

Dr EDWARDS: Page 1085 of the Budget Statements indicate that debt servicing costs and borrowings have increased. Are they linked and what is the reason for the increase?

Mr MOUNTFORD: The debt servicing costs are the costs associated with the capital works program, which is very active at the moment. We are going through the first of a five year capital works program associated with the Zoo's business plan. The increase in costs is directly in proportion with the capital works program.

Dr EDWARDS: Does the same apply to borrowings?

Mr MOUNTFORD: Yes.

Ms WARNOCK: The third dot point on page 1086 refers to increased competition for people's leisure time. It is a problem experienced by a number of institutions. I am also interested in the last dot point on page 1086 which states that a focus on customer service and yield as opposed to purely visitor numbers has provided an improved focus to the Zoo's business plan. I am interested in what the Zoo is doing to keep the visitor numbers up and to shift its focus on that. I know the Zoo is very big on conservation and teaching about the conservation of animals.

Mrs EDWARDES: Since my time as the Minister responsible for the Zoological Gardens Board, I have noted that it has a very strong marketing and public affairs approach in getting its message out to the community.

[5.30 pm]

Ms BURGES: We realised with the increased competition that we had to have some really good research. We rely on that heavily and make sure that we have good information to start with. We then spend a lot of time on good strategic plans. Our marketing plan is well placed to cover the peaks and troughs. We make sure that we have enough exhibits and openings of special events timed over the year to pick up the periods when we will obtain maximum advantage from them. It is that sort of planning that has made a difference for us. We noticed, particularly in January when we had the dinosaurs exhibit, that when everyone else was having a down time, we were doing extremely well.

The focus for us is not so much on making sure we have the numbers, although the numbers are important. In fact, this year we will probably break our record attendance of 633 000. If we do not break it we will come very close to it. That is fantastic. We also make sure that not only do we get the numbers but also, for instance, when we open an exhibit such as the butterfly house or the dinosaur exhibit, we put in a retail shop so that we maximise the amounts that visitors spend.

Ms WARNOCK: Therefore, you are managing not only to keep the numbers up but also to obtain further income from the promotions that you are putting on and the shop and various other retail activities inside the reserve.

Ms BURGES: Absolutely.

Mrs EDWARDES: Can you compare the proportion of local visitors with interstate and overseas visitors?

Ms BURGES: I do not know whether I have the exact numbers. We have not targeted the tourist market as strongly as we could. We believe that before we do that our product must be better than good; it must be excellent. In November we will open our Australian bushwalk which has an Aboriginal cultural centre attached to it opening around January/February 1998. That is when we will heavily target the tourist market. We have a lot of return visitors.

Mr MOUNTFORD: I do not have the details, but we survey twice a year, in summer and in winter. The numbers of international tourists vary. A good yardstick would be that around seven per cent are overseas tourists and 10 per cent interstate at that time of the year.

Ms BURGES: About 83 per cent of visitors are local visitors.

Mrs EDWARDES: Which is very high when compared with other zoos around Australia.

Dr EDWARDS: Are "customers" the same as visitors, because if they are, the Budget Statements suggest you will exceed what is in the Budget.

Ms BURGES: That is right.

Ms WARNOCK: I do not know whether I paid my bill this year, but I have been supporting a chuditch for some time, which is a source of amusement to people in my office! Is that program ongoing? Are you continuing with those kinds of programs? It is clear that it has a financial base and I applaud that. However, it also has a teaching effect.

Ms BURGES: Yes. With the development of our research program, which also involves the Department of Conservation and Land Management and the University of Western Australia and Murdoch University, we have been able to establish the native species breeding program. We have chuditch, numbats, dibblers, stick-nest rats, western swamp tortoises etc. That has exceeded all our expectations. Babies are arriving all over the place. For the first time dibblers have been bred in captivity; they have had 12 babies. That program is doing exceptionally well. The member referred to the education side of it. That is a very strong component of what we are doing.

Dr EDWARDS: Is it fair to say that people do not mind the extra cost of going to things like Zoorassic Park, given the numbers were better than anywhere else?

Ms BURGES: Proportionally, it was very well attended. Perhaps two or three people were concerned about having to pay the extra \$2 entry fee. However, overwhelmingly, the people thought it was excellent value for money.

Dr EDWARDS: The last time I was there was late in the day. The African savannah did not look as good as it did. Is that continuing or are there plans for something different?

Ms BURGES: That has been upgraded recently. I think all of the exhibits are full now. That was a problem we had some nine or 12 months ago. There was a concerted effort to get all those exhibits finished.

Ms WARNOCK: I took an adult overseas visitor to the Zoo late in the day and saw the elephants doing their performance. That was a huge hit. I applaud the Zoo for organising that for people to see. This is a cheeky question: Is there any plan in the future for the Zoo to acquire that bowling green next door? It would seem logical for it to be swept into the Zoo's gardens.

Ms BURGES: It has been a topic of conversation since I arrived at the Zoo. I know it has been a very sore point with the South Perth City Council. Our biggest concern is car parking. We have been able to establish a new car park. While it does not meet our needs at the moment, the council is aware of our need and is working with us to try to help us overcome that problem. We have no plans for the bowling green.

Dr EDWARDS: I notice you have published 27 papers and 36 have been predicted for next year. Do they come from the Cooperative Research Centre?

Ms BURGES: They come from the research program, which is the Marsupial Cooperative Research Centre, and also our director of research is involved with the vertebrate bio-control CRC. They are mostly from there and I think there are one or two from members of the Zoo.

Dr EDWARDS: It is a very high number.

Ms BURGES: Yes. He is a prolific producer of papers. People are also working with him. Mr Mountford has just reminded me that at the Zoo conference, papers from others including me were presented.

Mr TUBBY: What is the Zoo's intention for Quo Vadis?

Ms BURGES: Currently we are maintaining it and using it for animal fodder. A review committee is looking at it. Frankly, we are looking for the best outcome for it. We do not have any plans other than reviewing and evaluating it and taking that recommendation to the Minister.

Mr TUBBY: There were some earlier plans for undertaking research for the CRC out there. Has that gone by the board?

[5.40 pm]

Ms BURGES: Yes, we definitely made a decision about 18 months ago that the native species breeding program and research program should be based at the Perth Zoo. It is much more effective and efficient.

Mr TUBBY: What is happening to the facilities at Quo Vadis? Are they being looked after?

Ms BURGES: A caretaker lives there and staff go there each week to maintain the fences and continue the renovations. It is being maintained and we are running through an evaluation program.

Division42 : Conservation and Land Management, \$41 095 000 -

[Mr Baker, Chairman.]

[Mrs Edwardes, Minister for the Environment.]

[Mr J.R. Sharp, Acting Executive Director.]

[Dr J. Byrne, Director of Corporate Services.]

[Mr D.J. Keene, Director of Forests.]

[Mr K.J. McNamara, Director of Nature Conservation.]

Dr EDWARDS: At page 179 reference is made to the State's salinity action plan. How much will be spent on salinity and how much of that will be new money?

Dr BYRNE: An additional \$5m has been provided by Cabinet on a government-wide basis of which CALM has received \$2.435m, included in the estimates. In addition, funds have been reallocated from other activities from other consolidated fund sources. Over the years a total of \$18m per annum will be reallocated as we gradually retire debt. This year \$3.3m has been allocated to that.

Dr EDWARDS: What salinity activities will it be used for?

Mr McNAMARA: The additional \$3.3m that will come from the restructuring of debt and interest will be spent on commercial afforestation programs, primarily oriented to maritime pine. The additional \$2.435m as part of the Government's decision to provide an extra \$5m across agencies will be spent on five projects. One is improved management of crown remnants, including conservation reserves. The second is the land for wildlife program launched by the Minister in February this year. The third is the program of identifying and targeting action to key recovery catchments, selected on nature conservation grounds. The fourth is commencement of an extensive biological survey of the agricultural landscape to identify the values and the areas that should be prioritised for action. The fifth is the commencement of a long term monitoring program to measure over time the results of the salinity action program.

Dr EDWARDS: Where will the maritime pines be planted?

Mr KEENE: In the rainfall isohyet less than 600 mm and down to approximately 400 mm, in an arc stretching from north of Perth around as far as Esperance. In the south west land division we will start in the wheatbelt on private land.

Mr McGINTY: I refer to the question answered by Dr Byrne. Three figures were mentioned: First, \$3.3m this year which I understand is not new money but is restructuring of debt within CALM; second, an additional \$2.435m and I did not understand where it was coming from; and third, a figure of \$18m. Will Dr Byrne explain each of these figures?

Dr BYRNE: The \$2.435m is from the consolidated fund. It is part of central money distributed to the agencies from the consolidated fund. The \$3.3m is the first part of the \$18m eventually to be provided as we retire debt and save on interest. From asset sales we are funding \$18m for retirement of debt and savings on interest. The first tranche of that is \$3.3m this year and it will gradually rise to \$18m per year.

Mr McGINTY: The total will be \$18m a year within the CALM budget?

Dr BYRNE: Yes, plus the \$2.435m in addition to the \$18m. The \$18m comes from restructuring the CALM budget as we retire debt and save on interest. That money will go to the salinity program. As well the Government will provide \$2.435m this year and that will continue into the future.

Dr EDWARDS: Is the \$18m over one year?

Dr BYRNE: No, over a number of years. It will take a number of years to retire debt and save interest; the amount will increase from \$3.3m to \$18m.

Mr McGINTY: There are two amounts. The first is the \$18m over a number of years, of which \$3.3m is available this year. Secondly, there is an additional allocation from the consolidated fund which this year totalled \$2.435m. All up this year \$5m in the CALM budget has been allocated to the salinity package.

Dr BYRNE: Yes.

Dr EDWARDS: Can I have an explanation of the independent fundraising body referred to at page 184?

[5.50 pm]

Mr McNAMARA: The Conservation and Land Management Act was amended some years ago to create a nature conservation trust, whose functions included raising funds for purchase of additions to the conservation estate and other purposes such as research on endangered species. Those amendments to the CALM Act were not proclaimed because the advice from the Commonwealth Government was that they did not meet the requirements of the tax legislation used to provide tax deductions to donors. We have been working on a proposal for a trust which has similar purposes to the ones enacted by the previous amendments to the CALM Act but meet the requirement of the Commonwealth so the trust is not under the control of, or a mere conduit to, the Government. Those are the words of the tax advice we received. That proposal will be in amendments to the CALM Act.

Dr EDWARDS: When will that happen and when will it be set up?

Mrs EDWARDES: Along with the voluntary covenants, it is still in its early stages.

Mr McNAMARA: A proposal is in the advanced stage to be presented for the Minister's and Cabinet's consideration before presenting the necessary legislation.

Dr EDWARDS: Will it need a grant to start it?

Mr McNAMARA: That is something yet to be fully determined.

Mrs EDWARDES: Not necessarily, but it is one matter to be considered.

Mr McGINTY: Does a Minister have overall responsibility for that salinity strategy?

Mrs EDWARDES: The Deputy Premier.

Mr McGINTY: Which other departments are contributing, and how much, to the implementation of that strategy?

Mrs EDWARDES: The Ministers represented on that committee are me, the Minister for Primary Industry and the Minister for Water Resources. The "Salinity Action Plan" document before me contains a summary at the back of the costs involved. It advises additional recurrent funding for Agriculture WA. Are these the relevant figures?

Mr McNAMARA: The additional funding by way of redistribution of existing agencies' resources involves commitments from three agencies to be phased in. These are Agriculture WA, \$5.5m; the Water and Rivers Commission, \$200 000; and CALM, \$18.1m. They add to \$23.8m to be provided by the agencies through reallocation of existing resources, as Dr Byrne explained regarding the CALM contribution. In addition, the Government is phasing in through the consolidated fund an additional \$10m, \$5m of which is provided in 1997-98. The distribution of that \$10m is \$2m to Agriculture Western Australia; \$3.15m to the Water and Rivers Commission; \$4.65m to CALM; and \$200 000 to the Department of Environmental Protection. It makes the total \$10m from CF to be phased in over three years.

Mr McGINTY: When the program was launched, people spoke about a \$3b salinity strategy. So far you have outlined \$33m. From where do we get the additional almost \$3b?

Mr McNAMARA: The program also seeks funding assistance from the Natural Heritage Trust. The document identifies a request in the order of \$30m per annum from the Natural Heritage Trust matching the additional state spending of \$33.8m.

Mr McGINTY: What has happened to that request?

Mrs EDWARDES: It is part of the Natural Heritage Trust program. We have made representations stating that we consider that a large part of Western Australia's allocation should go towards the salinity action plan. Other proposals will be put forward as well.

Mr McGINTY: How far has that been progressed?

Mrs EDWARDES: It is at an early stage with the Commonwealth. Many meetings have been held with federal and state officers, as well as at ministerial level. It is still at an early stage.

Mr McGINTY: I understand that these things take time, but has the Commonwealth agreed with the funding of this project, or when do you expect the Commonwealth to agree? Has the Minister run into difficulties?

Mrs EDWARDES: We have not had any difficulties about the level of funding. We are identifying the program to the Commonwealth, which has received details through documentation. Letters have been exchanged between the Premier and the Prime Minister, and further letters have been sent. It is now being dealt with at ministerial and officer level as well as by the Ministerial Council on Salinity.

Mr McGINTY: To give a sense of how far it is progressing, is the Minister confident she will achieve \$30m a year from those sources?

Mrs EDWARDES: It is regarded as a very serious request. Victoria was recently given an indication that its salinity program would be considered seriously. Those issues are being worked through. Because it is dealing with the whole of Australia, the Federal Government has not indicated how much Western Australia will receive of the pie, given that other issues are proposed which meet the guidelines under the Natural Heritage Trust.

Mr McGINTY: What is the size of the pie?

Mr McNAMARA: The Natural Heritage Trust is \$1.249b to be spent over five or six years across a range of component programs, some of which are clearly orientated to activities which complement our salinity action plan. Primarily, these are the national river care, land care and national vegetation initiatives. A range of other programs are involved with the endangered species program, World Heritage, national reserves systems, clean seas and others.

I found the relevant part on page 7 of the salinity action plan. The \$3b has been identified as a figure needed over 30 years. That is \$100m per annum. The figures I gave earlier add to \$63.8m of government funding by the State and Commonwealth. The plan recognises that much of this investment will have to come from landowners and private industry. In other words, farmers will, as they are currently doing, contribute to the planting on their land.

Mr McGINTY: I can see the third-third-third arrangement in round figures in the amounts given to us. I understand Dr Byrne to say that the \$23.8m from state sources is to apply over a number of years, not just this year. For instance, CALM's contribution of \$18.1m will involve only \$5m, including CF funding, this year. Therefore, it is not quite right to say that you will have \$100m a year, because even if the Commonwealth came to the party in total, you still would not have \$63.8m this year, would you?

Mr McNAMARA: Not this year, no, because we are phasing it in to achieve the \$33.8m state money, and the request is for \$30m of federal money.

Mr McGINTY: Is the idea that in future years you will have to find \$18m out of CALM funds each year?

Mr McNAMARA: Yes, and, as Dr Byrne explained, that \$18m would be phased in as reallocation of CALM resources, and there is also our share of the additional consolidated funding - that is, the \$4.65m share of the \$10m extra that the consolidated fund is providing across the agencies.

[6.00 pm]

Mr McGINTY: So this year it is only \$3.3m? When do you expect to reach the full \$18m per year?

Dr BYRNE: Our current level of debt is about \$90m and it is costing us about \$4m in principal repayments and about \$12m in interest this year. We hope to reduce the debt by asset sales to about \$20m within 10 years and throughout that period we will increasingly put more money in. It might take up to 10 years to build up to the \$18m, though hopefully it would be earlier. That would be about the timescale to reduce the debt to allow the full \$18m to come in.

Mr McGINTY: Can you identify what assets would be sold to raise that amount of money?

Mrs EDWARDES: I am happy to provide that as supplementary information.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm

Mrs EDWARDES: Dr Byrne wishes to clarify some comments that he made before the dinner suspension in response to the member for Fremantle's question about the 10 year period.

Dr BYRNE: The 10 year period that I mentioned is the period in which we hope to retire CALM debt. We hope to fund the \$18m commitment faster than in 10 years. The money received from asset sales will be used partly to retire debt and partly to fund the salinity action plan.

Dr EDWARDS: An amount of \$18m has been allocated to farm forestry in the form of the salinity action plan. Can you comment on that? Is it just coincidental that it is \$18m, given that Dr Byrne has been talking about \$18m?

Mr McNAMARA: That \$18m is the amount from the reallocation by CALM. It is essentially oriented towards commercial farm forestry, because the main thing that must be done to address and reverse salinity is the planting of deep rooted perennials. Other sources of money are aimed primarily at delivering a range of other measures, including protection of existing vegetation and various revegetation programs. There is a range of components.

Dr EDWARDS: With regard to farm forestry, what proportion will be maritime pine and what proportion will be other hardwoods and softwoods?

Mr KEENE: The majority will be maritime pine. We are saying that in order to fully implement this major tree planting initiative, it must have some commercial benefit. However, at the same time we recognise that a range of species should be planted to address biodiversity. We are aiming to get species that may not be fully commercial at this time but will have some future commercial benefit.

Dr EDWARDS: Will maritime pine be commercially viable?

Mr KEENE: The specific name of maritime pine is *pinus pinaster*; they are the trees that are in the Gnangara area at the moment, and we also have some in the Harvey coastal area. In addition, over the past several years a number of government agencies have put in private plots, and some private farmers have also put in plots. We are confident that the trees will grow there. With regard to its commercial viability, that is the major species that is used in the medium density fibreboard factory at Welshpool.

Ms WARNOCK: I refer to the dash point at page 179 that states, "Encouragement of the provision of forest resources by the private sector through investment in planting activities on cleared land". How long will that process take? Like many extreme conservationists, I wonder how long it will be before we do not need to cut native forest at all. I have had this argument with Dr Shea for the past 10 to 15 years. What headway will we make with this encouragement of the provision of forest resources by the private sector? How far will it go? Are we talking about a few trees or about eventually taking the business away from native forests altogether?

Mr KEENE: Before you came in, I was asked where would these trees be planted, and I replied that it was in the isohyet of between 600 and 400 millimetres annual rainfall, on private property. We have already started this project. Two years ago, we planted about 300 hectares, last year about 700 ha, and this year almost 2 000 ha in crop share joint ventures with farmers on a proportion of their land. We anticipate that for the first few years that will be necessary to get this project under way, we will be using the finance that my colleagues have been talking about. However, we confidently expect private investment to take over a significant - we hope a major - proportion over the ongoing years. If we go back in history, the same principle was used to establish blue gums in the higher rainfall areas. There was an initial injection of government funds, but our department was able to demonstrate to the wider community and investors that system would work, and the blue gum project is now funded almost entirely by the private sector. I am not saying it will be the same as that, but we expect that the same principle will apply.

Ms WARNOCK: The next dash point states, "Expanding and consolidating agreements to manage extensive tree farming ventures with Japanese and Korean investors". Is that the same type of venture?

[7.10 pm]

Mr KEENE: The people involved in the blue gum project wanted to invest in commercial tree planting activities in Western Australia, and CALM ended up as the manager of that project for those people. I am not saying anything like that is on the horizon. Although that first injection of private capital came from overseas, it encouraged a lot of private investment from Australia both from Bunnings tree farms and a number of other prospectus companies. The majority of investment is now coming from within Australia.

Ms WARNOCK: That is good news.

Mr KEENE: That is what we are talking about. We are not proposing there will be a large new planting by these people.

Mr McGINTY: As I understand it, this financial year \$5m will be spent from the consolidated fund, \$3.3m by the Department of Conservation and Land Management and other amounts from water and agriculture to address salinity. What are those two amounts from water and agriculture?

Mrs EDWARDES: We do not have that information.

Mr McGINTY: We have been given a figure for when it is phased in. It is something significantly less than that this year?

Mrs EDWARDES: No, we cannot give that figure.

Mr McGINTY: Can that be provided by way of supplementary information? I know it is not the Minister's department.

Mrs EDWARDES: I am not sure I can provide that; however, I will obtain the information. If I cannot provide it by way of supplementary information, I will make sure the member gets the information in any event.

Ms WARNOCK: I refer to another of the matters on page 179. It talks about the management and protection of forests for all values, including protection of streams from sedimentation and salinity; protection of forests from fire and disease; and protection of the community and its assets from fire. The fire strategy of CALM has always been rather controversial. Can someone tell me what is the burn-off strategy of CALM? There has been controversy about how much has been burned off, when the burning should be done and so on. Can someone outline that strategy?

Mr KEENE: In general terms that is talking about the forest management plan which was approved by the Government in 1994; that is, the overall way in which CALM will manage the forests on behalf of the Government. It talks about values and protection from streams, etc. Our prime responsibility under the fire management policy is to ensure life and property are protected, to use a cliché.

We do all that by various means. Over the years our fire policy has changed from burning most of the jarrah forests on five year rotations to far more complicated ways of doing that. We leave some areas unburned to start with; then we have a mosaic of various seasons and times and sizes of prescribed burns, depending on the overall hazard evaluation scheme that is in place. Obviously the very fact that we have had no large scale fires for a number of years has shown the benefits of carrying out the high fuel reduction burns.

Mrs EDWARDES: I will give an example I saw yesterday when I was in Collie. On one side of the road CALM had implemented its eight year burn program, and on the other side its four year program. A fire started on 2 January this year. It ravaged at a great level of intensity and continued to move towards the power station and mines at a very fast rate. It was catastrophic. When the fire jumped the road to the area that had been burned four years ago it travelled 100 metres and stopped. The inability for it to maintain the level of intensity was quite marked. It showed quite clearly the fuel reduction program did work in that instance and saved the State in economic terms because it did not get anywhere near the power station.

Dr EDWARDS: In 1995-96, 195 000 hectares of forest was burned. How much was burned last financial year and how much will be burnt in this financial year?

Mrs EDWARDES: I will provide that answer by way of supplementary information.

Mr KEENE: It is of the same order, but I do not have that figure available this evening.

Dr EDWARDS: Is there any reason for its not being in this year's papers when it was in last year's?

Mr SHARP: Not that I understand. The figures are presented in the annual report, so we can provide them.

Dr BYRNE: There has been some change in the setting out of the budget statements. It has gone from being program statements to budget statements. In future, achievements will be replaced by key outputs. Instead of major achievements and planned achievements, we see only major achievements. Because of the change in presentation, no planned achievements for the following year are shown in the 1996-97 budget papers. The change will go from text information to a table of key performance indicators. That will occur across the entire consolidated fund area.

Dr EDWARDS: Can we be provided with a table of CALM's future achievements?

Mrs EDWARDES: Would the member like a list of planned achievements for 1997-98?

Dr EDWARDS: Yes.

Mrs EDWARDES: I can provide that by way of supplementary information. If any issue arises out of the planned achievements about which the member wishes to have more information, she should merely tell me and I can arrange a briefing for her.

Dr EDWARDS: It is a little hard to work out exactly what will happen, but it is not the fault of CALM.

Mrs EDWARDES: The reason for the change is to provide a greater level of accountability in outcomes for the community by CALM and Parliament. We will be able to assess that 12 months further down the track. It will come into play in the next budgetary process.

Ms WARNOCK: I refer to page 180. It talks about growing pressure from conservation groups to restrict tourism and recreation access from areas that have conservation values, and to justify sustainable levels of tourism and recreation development. How well does CALM believe it is combining those two areas? Like all other members of Parliament, from time to time I get a burst of publicity and letters from people who are concerned about the forest and who feel there is too much pressure from tourism and the forest industry and not enough concern with the conservation value. What is CALM's opinion about how well it is combining those two things?

[7.20 pm]

Mr SHARP: Management of tourism and recreation achieves a balance between use and preservation. That is our challenge. That is why so much effort is invested in management and site planning. We believe we are doing well by Australian standards and by comparison with other western countries. It is about removing pressures and impacts directly on the environment and ensuring that through the provision of information services and interpretation programs direct behaviour is modified. There are two approaches to the site: Either harden it or remove people from it.

A classic example of that is the treetop walk near Walpole. Before it was built the area had approximately 80 000 visitors a year. Visitors were compacting the roots, wearing the soil down and eroding the site. More people can visit the site now because it has been designed to lessen that impact. The ground walks have been removed. Board walks and other facilities including the overhead walk, can sustain a much higher level of usage without any physical contact with the ground itself. That is the challenge of putting in place necessary facilities. But it is not just about hardware; it is also about providing people information so they can interpret signs. Pre-visit brochures are part of that strategy.

We are doing it well. Sites are not being degraded but are sustaining a high level of use. The community expects a greater level of scrutiny to ensure that visitors to an area do not have a negative impact on the environment. More people want to visit these areas. There were five million visitors to various parts of the estates we managed last year, so there is a growth in the level of interest and visitation. There is a growing expectation in the community that these sites will not be degraded. We have won a number of awards, which is recognition that we are managing to balance everything well.

Mrs EDWARDES: Would the member for Perth like some information on the management plans?

Ms WARNOCK: Yes.

Mrs EDWARDES: I will provide that, because it is important the member know the extent of consultation.

Mr McGINTY: The first dot point on page 184 refers to the salinity action plan. I am interested in voluntary nature conservation covenants on private land. The National Trust has proposed a system of convenience over land to preserve the natural heritage value of land. What is the attitude of the department to the National Trust's proposal?

Mrs EDWARDES: I met with the trust a couple of weeks ago and I will be meeting with it again next week or the week after that to work out how its proposal can complement the Government's proposal. Some people will be happy and will prefer to deal with the Government because of the nature of the covenant, while others will prefer not to have anything to do with the Government. Therefore, we want to provide opportunities for those who want nothing to do with the Government, and the National Trust proposal is in that category. We are meeting with the National Trust in the next couple of weeks to work out how those two things can be worked out.

Mr McGINTY: Are you saying that you are not opposed to the National Trust's concept, but that it is a matter of the two running side by side?

Mrs EDWARDES: Yes. We are not opposed to its proposal at all.

Mr WIESE: The fifth dot point from the top on page 180 refers to the uncertainty associated with native title. Will the Minister explain CALM's attitude to native title and whether CALM will endeavour to ensure that all sections of the community continue to have access to all those CALM lands and developments that CALM has put in place?

Mr SHARP: That comment relates to the expectations of both the Aboriginal community and the wider community. The Aboriginal community aspires to be involved in a reserved area either through expressing their culture or, in some cases, deriving an economic benefit from a park or reserve. There is a lack of clarity in the Native Title Act about the rights to negotiate and to be involved in management. The management planning process deals with that by setting forward the roles necessary for establishing park councils which represent Aboriginal interests on a park or reserve, but it also provides for an advisory committee for the wider community on those parks and reserves.

Mr McGINTY: How has that changed from pre-native title days? The statement in the papers seems to be simply political rhetoric rather than anything of substance. Exactly the same proposals were made during the establishment of the Karijini and Bungle Bungle National Parks, before the High Court decision on Mabo.

Mr SHARP: As an example, in the Purnululu National Park, where that process has been put in place, native title has meant a lack of clarity about who can speak for the country and has created great conflict among Aboriginal groups. One party will not participate in the park council if the other Aboriginal party participates.

Mr McGINTY: Why is that caused by native title? That is a common problem that exists elsewhere independent of the Native Title Act.

Mr SHARP: That issue was not occurring prior to native title.

Mr McGINTY: I think it was, with respect. There has always been an argument -

Mr SHARP: But there was an agreement in relation to the park council. The same would apply to the clarity of the Karijini National Park agreement where a group representing Gumala, which represents some components of the Karijini Aboriginal Corporation, but not all components of it, has a native title claim over the majority of the park where the visitor facilities are. There is some uncertainty in determining which group you should deal with in that process.

Mr McGINTY: When I was the Minister that same issue existed before anyone thought of it in the Mabo context. I know the Government's rhetoric talks about native title -

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Fremantle's comments may be following a theme, but they should not follow a theme that would normally be followed in debate in the House rather than in an Estimates Committee. I am aware of the member's propensity to extract the maximum out of these things. The Minister should deal with the matter and the member for Fremantle should not be posing such questions when dealing with an adviser.

Mrs EDWARDES: What did not exist prior to the Native Title Act were claims under the Native Title Act on those areas which are part of national parks. Karijini and Purnululu are two examples where now there are native title claims and where there were agreements dealing with park councils prior to that, and that has meant a change and therefore has led to some uncertainty among the groups. It is having an impact in terms of the operation of the groups themselves participating in those various councils. We want to overcome that because we want the councils to operate and work with us in respect of those national parks. That is the reason for the reference to what did not exist. What does exist now are the claims themselves.

Mr WIESE: I was not referring to national parks, although the likes of the Fitzgerald and Stirling National Parks will be affected. I was thinking about crown lands where ongoing timber harvesting will occur. There are now two native title claims on those areas. There is a major vested interest in that for the State, as well as the wider community which accesses and enjoys those crown lands. What is the State's attitude to those lands?

[7.30 pm]

Mrs EDWARDES: That has not proved to be an issue.

Mr WIESE: There are at least two claims in the Walpole area, across to Margaret River, and through the guts of the south west, where there are substantial jarrah timber resources. Will the State do what the primary producers have done and oppose the claim? Or will the State allow it to run its natural course?

Mr SHARP: The Government handles native title claims on behalf of the entire State. Therefore the response is made by the State Government. The timber licences and agreements which preceded the Native Title Act are legitimate, and that will impact on any claim.

Dr EDWARDS: At page 194 under "Revenue" governmental recurrent revenue is listed. Is territorial timber the same as royalties? Did the Minister announce that the two increases in royalties would occur in two stages?

Mrs EDWARDES: There will be two implementations but three stages; that is, 10 per cent on 1 July this year and 3 per cent on 1 July 1998. The third stage will involve two consultants being appointed with an independent chairperson who will look at the method of calculation. Any difference in the method of calculation will be applied on 1 July 1998.

Dr EDWARDS: I note a jump between 1996-97 and 1997-98, and after that the forward estimates are flat.

Dr BYRNE: That is money that CALM pays into the consolidated fund; it is not kept under net appropriation. Under net appropriation we are keeping about \$120m under various categories. However, there are a few small categories not covered by the net appropriation. That has been changed very recently in negotiations with Treasury. We will keep that money and have a small budget decrease. It is simply an anomaly. There are many small categories of revenue under the CALM Act.

Mrs EDWARDES: Those figures preceded the royalty increase.

Dr EDWARDS: Therefore, they will increase for a couple of years, and it will depend on the next distribution.

Mrs EDWARDES: They will continue to be increased because as part of our agreement it is not only the increase on the base but also an annual increase.

Mr KEENE: The annual increase is based on movements in the timber price index compiled by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on behalf of CALM and the Forest Industries Federation. Both organisations contributed to the cost. The index measures the value of the selling price of hardwood timber in Western Australia. Movements that will affect the base are determined by the general royalty review which the Minister has just announced.

Dr EDWARDS: The report commissioned by Bunnings did not paint a rosy picture of native forest culture. Does CALM have a general view?

Mr KEENE: Pulp wood is an internationally traded commodity. There are various species of timber which have various pulp yields. The blue gum has one of the highest pulp yields; karri has a high pulp yield and marri has a lower yield. Therefore, as the market for pulp fluctuates so does the value of the pulp. Western Australian pulp material must compete on a world market. Obviously at the time we were hoping - as was everyone in the State - that there would be a pulp mill or some greater value added to the material. However, that did not happen. The report was commissioned by Bunnings to see what it came up with.

Mrs EDWARDES: The figures have not been updated, because they were prepared before I increased the royalty, so I will provide that information by way of supplementary information for the member for Maylands.

Dr EDWARDS: I turn to the forward estimates of revenue from royalties, which is a very important area for forest management. The report commissioned by Bunnings quotes international references and lists marri and karri at the bottom of the list. Does that present a problem? Commercially, from CALM's point of view, what future is envisaged for pulp wood from native forests?

Mr KEENE: The royalty rate from chip logs was increased in January 1996 at the beginning of the general royalty review. Although royalties on pulp products were not increased as part of the Minister's recent determination, they were increased at the beginning of the cycle as part of the general royalty review. As the population expands, overall demand for pulp and paper products will increase. Obviously some of that will be taken up by expanding plantations that have been developed here, in other parts of Australia and overseas. Therefore, to the extent that those plantations have a higher pulp yield they will be more acceptable to a market if the price were the same. In future there may be some price differential. I expect there probably will be for high grade timber with a high yielding pulp, which in turn may be higher than that produced by timber with a lower pulp yield. I do not expect any slackening in overall demand, apart from the normal business cycles.

Mrs EDWARDES: One of the reasons for the extensive increase in the base rate is to encourage further value adding on the use of timber.

Ms WARNOCK: I am one of the extreme conservationists who wish that you would stop cutting native forests immediately! That is just a personal view, so I will avoid any further discussion. I hope I do not appear to have an unnatural interest in the welfare of the chuditch. However, at page 183 mention is made of the establishment of a new threatened species scientific committee to advise the Minister on flora and fauna which are threatened, and to rank them in order of priority. How is the chuditch going, and the other native animals mentioned earlier in connection with the Zoo?

[7.40 pm]

Mr McNAMARA: The new threatened species scientific committee had its first meeting in February this year and put forward for consideration by the Minister amendments to the declared threatened list of flora and fauna under the Wildlife Conservation Act. That is an annual process. It has been going on for some years. We had one remarkable success just over a year ago with the woylie. Other species have been taken off lists because of new knowledge that has been gained, but the woylie was the first species we are aware of on mainland Australia that recovered to the point that it was taken off the state and national threatened lists because of a response to research and management actions that were implemented. A number of other species are progressing towards the stage where they will be able to be removed from the formal threatened lists. The chuditch is one species that is moving in that direction. In the past several months a reintroduction took place in the Lake Magenta nature reserve. It is in the more arid inland and wheatbelt areas where the species has declined the most. It is increasing in numbers broadly throughout the forest areas as a result of the fox baiting program. The same comment can be made about a range of native fauna species that are on that road to recovery.

Mrs EDWARDES: I was in Broome about a month ago. There are three pairs of mates there. Two of the female bilbies are pregnant and the third has a baby in her pouch. The breeding program there is proving very successful.

Mr MacLEAN: Given that the Gngarra pine plantation will be removed progressively over the next 20 years, why is some of the area being replanted?

Mr KEENE: I am not aware of that; I thought we were not replanting that area. Unfortunately there were a couple of reasonably major fires there a year or two ago and those areas have not been replanted.

Mrs EDWARDES: When was the last replanting?

Mr KEENE: I could be corrected; I think it was in 1995. We have started the maritime pine project. We planted 300 or 400 hectares two years ago in the Gingin area. Last year 700 ha were planted and this year the best part of 2 000 ha will be planted. However, that is not on the Gngangara mound.

Mrs EDWARDES: We will confirm by supplementary information the last date any new pines were planted.

Mr MacLEAN: There are small pines there which I thought were relatively new. What restrictions are placed on the use of pesticides and fertilisers on the Gngangara mound?

Mr KEENE: There is a trial there as part of a national program to look at the use of herbicides in general in forest activities. That trial was approved by the Environmental Protection Authority. The trees you may be talking about are two or three years old. They are in a small area of no more than a hectare or two. An agreement was made by the state advisory committee on pesticides for the trials there and in the Harvey coast area to test the relative movement of those chemicals, which are important for controlling weeds and other competing growth in forestry activities. If they are the trees you are talking about, they were in a small area as part of a trial a couple of years ago, and that would not be continued on the Gngangara mound.

Mr MacLEAN: What soil samples have been taken on the mound?

Mrs EDWARDES: We will provide that by supplementary information.

Mr TUBBY: Which department will accept long term responsibility for the old Barton's Mill Prison?

Mr SHARP: The area of land in question is vested in the Lands and Forest Commission as part of the state forest. It was leased to the Ministry of Justice, which was looking at the future use of that area or other uses for it, as were we, when the lease period terminated. To my understanding that lease period has not concluded yet. Some discussion is taking place about rehabilitating that site as part of that lease arrangement. I will check on the current situation and get back to you.

Mr TUBBY: Is there any likelihood it will return to use as a prison?

Mrs EDWARDES: None whatsoever. I was the Attorney General when the decision was made.

Mr TUBBY: The Gooralong reserve in the Serpentine National Park used to be open for weekend camping; however, on 10 December last year it was closed. Is there any likelihood it will be reopened for camping?

Mr SHARP: Some of the land at Gooralong was vested in either the Water Corporation or the Water and Rivers Commission - I stand corrected on that. There are some issues to be resolved about the ability to regulate people entering that area to protect the area from degradation. There has been extreme vandalism there. It takes place primarily over the weekend. Most facilities are destroyed on weekends; that is, toilet blocks, picnic tables and barbecues. There is difficulty applying regulations because although we managed the overall area, we did not have control of part of that land. We are currently negotiating with the Water Corporation about managing that area and getting some powers to enter into management. We will look at opening it for weekend camping after those arrangements are put in place. Gooralong is isolated from the remainder of the park and there has been difficulty protecting the assets there.

Mr TUBBY: Have you tried to work with the local community to help the supervision?

Mr SHARP: Yes, some efforts have been made with the local community. There have also been difficulties with some elements of the local community because obviously people were directed there rather than to other sites because it was vacant and people would not have to travel overnight.

Mr TUBBY: How long will it be before a decision is made?

Mr SHARP: We are negotiating with the Water Corporation at the moment. I do not have a time frame, but I will get back to you with more precise information.

Mrs EDWARDES: We will provide that as supplementary information.

Mr McGINTY: During the past four years no new national parks were created in Western Australia. Is there any intention to create new national parks during the course of the next four years?

Mr SHARP: The Government indicated in its policy that it wants to declare the Mitchell Plateau national park during this term of government. That is the Government's stated election commitment.

Mrs EDWARDES: What is the process for that?

Mr SHARP: We go through a range of processes for clearance for national parks in relation to mineral values. The declaration process and the native title process will also need to be gone through. A number of steps must be taken in that gazettal. That is the major commitment the Government has made.

[7.50 pm]

Mr McGINTY: Does the department have in mind declaring any other areas in the next four years?

Mr SHARP: We have a whole range of intentions as far as land to be declared is concerned. Some might well be stand alone national parks and many others will be added to existing national parks.

Mr McGINTY: Putting to one side the adjustment of boundaries, will there be any new stand alone national parks in addition to the Mitchell Plateau National Park?

Mr McNAMARA: We have an ongoing program of acquisition of various conservation reserves through a combination of purchase and negotiation of transfer of land from vacant crown land or some other vesting or ownership. That program will get some extra assistance in the years ahead from the national reserve system component of the Natural Heritage Trust. That program has assisted us with some significant purchases over the past year or two. Some examples include Cane River Station in the southern Pilbara and important areas on the Swan coastal plain containing some threatened ecological communities. Those areas are acquired for the conservation reserves system. They must then go through the processes to which Mr Sharp referred - that is, native title clearance, mineral prospectivity clearance and so on - before decisions are made as to which category of the conservation reserves system they will be added.

Mr McGINTY: A number of areas were identified by CALM in the 1992 timber strategy as potential new national parks. Nothing has happened on that for five years. What were those areas - I think Mt Roe was one? Is it still intended that they be national parks?

Mr SHARP: I can provide a list of all of those recommendations and their progress, which we report on regularly through the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority. I will make available the listing showing what progress has been made or what impediments exist. They are all being progressed but are at different stages.

Mrs EDWARDES: I will provide that detail as supplementary information.

Mr McGINTY: As I recollect, Mt Roe was the largest. Is that right?

Mr McNAMARA: The Mt Roe national park proposal was subject to a period during which the wildflower picking industry would be able to adjust and that period has not yet elapsed.

Mr McGINTY: That is the major impediment.

Mr McNAMARA: That commitment was given at the time and it is embodied in the forest management plan.

Dr EDWARDS: How much money is in this budget to establish the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority and how much has been allocated to the marine branch of CALM to do its work? When does the Minister expect the report on the compilation of submissions in relation to the Wilson report?

Mr McNAMARA: Public comments on the Wilson report have been collated and analysed. A report drawing them together has been in a reasonably advanced stage for some time. The intention is that upon enactment of the Acts Amendment (Marine Reserves) Bill, currently in the Legislative Assembly, some announcements will be made by the Government. They will include the release of a summary and analysis of the public comments together with the Government's directions about future expansion of the marine reserves system.

The nature conservation division - that is, the administrative division of CALM, which I direct - has a budget in the vicinity of \$4m per annum. CALM is currently detailing the budget at the administrative branch level. The marine conservation branch budget is in the vicinity of \$600 000 per annum. I will check that and, if it is substantially different, I will provide that as supplementary information. The officers in the regions are responsible for managing all of CALM's activities. There is obviously marine reserves spending in the Exmouth district, the Perth district, the Shark Bay district and so on.

Mrs EDWARDES: The NP&NCA has been dealing with marine parks until now. This is the establishment of a new authority to deal to with marine parks and the NP&NCA will deal with the land aspects.

Dr EDWARDS: What amount is set aside for the marine parks authority?

Mrs EDWARDES: No amount has been set because the allocation to the NP&NCA to carry out the marine parks aspects will supply the funds for the authority itself. The scientific committee comprises individuals from the various parks and agencies, so no extra funding is required.

Dr EDWARDS: Presumably the members of the authority will get sitting fees and there will be other associated costs?

Mrs EDWARDES: Yes.

Dr EDWARDS: The NP&NCA does not have an allocation?

Mrs EDWARDES: No.

Dr EDWARDS: Does that hinder its independence?

Mrs EDWARDES: It certainly does not if one knows the members.

Ms WARNOCK: I refer the Minister to page 184, which contains reference to the sandalwood industry. There has been gross exploitation of that industry for many years. I am interested that we have an industry again and that it is being managed in some way. How is that done? The budget is curious. What is the minus \$8.111m figure and the minus \$5.614m figure?

Mr KEENE: The sandalwood industry is managed in accordance with a management plan that was approved about four or five years ago. In summary, approximately 1 950 tonnes of sandalwood is harvested per annum from crown land. In accordance with the Sandalwood Act, which is brief, a further 10 per cent can be obtained from private property. The crown land sandalwood is harvested by about 20 private contractors employed by the department. They harvest the sandalwood and it is delivered to an agent in Fremantle - Wescorp Sandalwood Pty Ltd - which processes, markets and exports sandalwood on behalf of the Government for Asian markets.

Most of the sandalwood is in the pastoral areas. The department has a sandalwood business unit in Kalgoorlie that supervises the contractors carrying out the harvesting. There are rules about what they are allowed to take, regeneration methods and so on.

Ms WARNOCK: The Budget Statements refer to "managed". As I recall from my childhood, sandalwood was grossly exploited. What is being done to prevent that?

Mr KEENE: Some of the most valuable timber is in the junction between the root and stem. The roots contain the sandalwood oil, which is the valuable component. The timber is pushed out with a machine and the contractors are required to insert new sandalwood seeds into those holes.

One of the biggest problems in the past, and it still exists to some degree, is that the sandalwood seedlings are very palatable to stock. That has been a problem in some pastoral areas where there might have been some overgrazing from time to time; that has caused some of the biggest problems. As Mr McNamara said, we have purchased a number of stations in that area. As part of the management of those areas, the stations will end up as part of the conservation estate. The areas are dewatered and destocked. The process is quite significant because the amount of sandalwood regeneration is significantly more than one would observe over the fence.

[8.00 pm]

Ms WARNOCK: What is the meaning of those figures at the bottom of the forest resources management page?

Dr BYRNE: The minus figures mean the revenue exceeds the expenditure. We are making a surplus there. If it were a commercial activity, it would run with revenue exceeding expenditure. The surplus is used to fund the nature conservation program. The Premier mentioned that point in his budget speech at the bottom of page 8 when he said -

Any revenue derived from this purpose will be used to manage native forest reserves and to undertake major tourism, recreation and conservation projects.

Dr EDWARDS: Will the Minister give an explanation of that? Last year's figures were broken into two subprograms. Is it possible to have a short summary because it is like comparing apples and oranges?

Mrs EDWARDES: That is easily done.

Dr EDWARDS: Do the community grants continue under this budget this year? Last year they were under the ministerial office. If they do continue, what figure are they?

Dr BYRNE: The community grants are unchanged from last year. They are in the estimates of the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet.

Dr EDWARDS: Commonwealth recoups seem to have gone down from \$4m in 1995-96 to \$2m in 1996-97 and in this budget the figure is \$200 000. I think we had this conservation last year. Is that to do with Federal Government funding cuts? Will you also outline the impact of funding cuts on threatened species?

Dr BYRNE: The \$200 000 figure at this stage would be an estimate of \$2m, the same as last year. It is not a figure of \$200 000.

Mr McNAMARA: The Environment Australia allocation to threatened species is something on which I do not have clear information. The endangered species program is one of a number of programs that have been in place for several years. It will now be administered through the Natural Heritage Trust. The commonwealth budget papers show how much is allocated to the endangered species program. I cannot recite that figure now.

Dr EDWARDS: I mean the principles?

Mr McNAMARA: It is not clear to us at this stage how the Commonwealth is dealing with ongoing appropriations for old programs as against what is now in the Natural Heritage Trust. In turn, whether there has been any cut in something like the endangered species program is not yet clear to us.

Dr EDWARDS: Will the new money have to be matched or tied in with anything? In the past was it not just a grab from the funds as they passed through?

Mr McNAMARA: Virtually all commonwealth programs have an element whereby a State's chances of success are somehow greater if it can match or partly match the commonwealth funding. The question of matching funding has been a policy issue with the Natural Heritage Trust across all States, because the States do not have a Telstra to sell. That matter has continued to be discussed at a ministerial and, I understand, prime ministerial level. Our expectation is that we will not be required to match the additional commonwealth funding for the Natural Heritage Trust. With the possible exception of the national reserves system, which is orientated to land acquisition, the sum total of state programs exceeds the funding level from the Commonwealth for the component programs.

Mrs EDWARDES: That picks up the point I was explaining about the salinity action plan, to which the member for Fremantle referred. One of the reasons that Western Australia has a very good chance with the salinity action plan is the contribution from the State. When the Commonwealth is looking at cutting up the cake, it likes to ensure that programs are funded with matching funds. Our salinity plan stands up very well against that criterion. That has been identified very strongly in conversations we have had.

Dr BYRNE: The figure of \$200 000 on page 177 is for commonwealth recoups. A very small part of the commonwealth funds is recouped for work done for the Commonwealth. Most of the commonwealth money is included in revenue and other funding sources of \$18m. We have budgeted for about \$2m for commonwealth money. The member will recall our discussion last year that we would find more coming in during the year. Last year we estimated \$2m and the final figure was just over \$4m. It is very hard to estimate in advance.

Dr EDWARDS: Is the lease for the Yanchep National Park about to be signed?

Mr SHARP: Two things have happened: The proponents are coming back again and we have been asking for guarantees for finance. That has been negotiated and is of some comfort. We are waiting for the level of documentation we require before we go towards signing the lease. That is progressing. The main issue for the last few months has been finance. In the meantime the inn has been renovated through a combination of funds from our organisation and insurance because of the damage that was done during the storm. It will be opening in the next couple of weeks. It will be functioning up until such time as the lease is issued.

Mrs EDWARDES: As the member will be aware, when one starts renovating an old building something else is always found. While we were renovating, when something else was found, we did it.

Dr EDWARDS: On page 180 the fourth dash point refers to improved cost recovery. What does it mean when it refers to donations?

Mr SHARP: The Department of Conservation and Land Management Act provides that all donations can be retained as long as they are used at the source of the donation. Donation boxes are provided in a number of areas where fees do not apply. When the public donate, funds come in. Where fees do not apply the same fee box is put in place, but it is indicated that it is voluntary.

Dr EDWARDS: Will the Minister comment about the cost, final outcome, time frame and getting the conservation movement more involved in the regional forest agreements process?

[8.10 pm]

Mrs EDWARDES: This process is continuing at what we regard as a more appropriate rate. We have managed to work through some of the issues with the Commonwealth, including funding and the maps that will be used. We are presently finalising the scientific committee. We will assess that.

Mr KEENE: The process was delayed. We were pleased to see our Minister get that back on track. We hope that it will be finished early next year.

Mrs EDWARDES: Senator Robert Hill and I have said that 31 December 1997 will be the completion date. We expect both federal and state officers to work towards completion by that date. We would encourage the conservation movement to come into the process. They indicated that one of the reasons they have not come into the process is that they felt they had been sold out in Victoria. That occurred in my term as Minister and they had not participated up to that date, so that is just an excuse they have used for not coming into the process. Their involvement would be of real value.

The deferrals are important. The conservation movement needs to be part of the process of assessing which deferrals will become reservations. A highlight of identifying Beedelup was that there was no deferral of land on the western side of the southern forest. That was a glitch in the system. The National Heritage Commission had not been there, yet there was forest growth. That is a wonderful piece of remnant vegetation that was deserving of deferral. It is important that the conservation movement join that process. I will continue to talk to them about it.

Mr WIESE: On page 179 reference is made to expanding and consolidating agreements to manage extensive tree farming ventures with Japanese and Korean investors. Is that still ongoing and how much of the Wellington catchment area is envisaged will be planted under that agreement? From memory it was 50 000 hectares of farmland. How much of the Wellington catchment area will be replanted both by CALM for its own usage and to assist Japanese and Korean investors in that area?

Mr KEENE: I mentioned that CALM is the manager for three separate projects: One in the Albany area with a Japanese consortium; and two on the west coast, one with a Korean company and another with another Japanese consortium. Overall it is anticipated that over the next 10 years approximately 50 000 ha of blue gums will be established. The Wellington catchment was the major area targeted for the Korean company. The CALM business unit that is managing that on the company's behalf is situated in Collie. The initial part of the program was concentrated in Collie. I cannot give the precise figure of how much has been planted in the Wellington catchment.

Mrs EDWARDES: We can provide that by way of supplementary information.

Mr KEENE: The majority of the areas have been planted through share farming agreements between individual farmers and those consortia. The second Japanese consortium has purchased some land in that area; I am not sure how much. I thought it was looking in the area south of Boyup Brook and other areas of that type.

Mrs EDWARDES: We will provide that information.

Division 43: Environmental Protection, \$17 546 000 -

[Mr Ainsworth, Chairman.]

[Mrs Edwardes, Minister for the Environment.]

[Dr B.R. Jenkins, Chief Executive Officer.]

[Mr A. Abraham, Acting Manager, Finance and Administration.]

Dr EDWARDS: What work has been done in the department on the environmental waste levy?

Mrs EDWARDES: A considerable amount of work has been done on how the levy will be implemented and the types of programs. A high level of consultation has occurred in the advisory council on waste management with the various stakeholders; for example, the council has three local council representatives. We are working through a document for the implementation of that levy to assess its benefit to the community.

[8.20 pm]

Dr EDWARDS: When will an announcement be made?

Mrs EDWARDES: Within the next few weeks.

Ms WARNOCK: I refer members to the figures on page 336 of the Budget Statements. The number of FTEs has increased from 186 to 191, but the allocation has decreased. Will the Minister explain the reason for that?

Dr JENKINS: If we compare the actual budget estimate for the previous year, which unfortunately is not in the current Budget Statements, with the estimate for the current year, we will find a slight increase. The figure for the estimate out-turn for this financial year includes substantial items of supplementary funding, particularly related to contaminated sites. It includes funding for Stephenson and Ward Incinerator Co Pty Ltd to the tune of \$1.4m and the costs associated with investigations into the Omex site, which total approximately \$250 000. The total estimated expenditure for the year includes substantial supplementary funding for work which is being undertaken by outside contractors for the Stephenson and Ward work. The work for the Omex investigation is being done by a consultant. The information behind those figures is important. The resources available to the department at budget estimate time indicate a slight increase, but if we take the supplementary funding into account for contaminated sites and other issues there is an apparent decrease.

Dr EDWARDS: Is it correct that the Stephenson and Ward work was funded from an allocation from the consolidated fund and did not come out of the department's budget?

Dr JENKINS: That is correct.

Dr EDWARDS: I have last year's figures and the 1996-97 estimate was \$17.68m, which is \$500 000 more than the actual expenditure.

Dr JENKINS: The 1996 original estimate was \$16.467m. The 1997-98 estimate is \$16.747m, which reflects the slight increase I mentioned in the previous response.

Ms WARNOCK: One of the significant issues and trends on page 335 of the Budget Statements refers to increased efficiency in the environmental management of industry as an emerging issue. It is stated it can be achieved by audited self-management within a system of quality assurance, best practice and cost recovery. I shudder every time I see the words "self-management". I understand that in this case it is "audited self-management" and that gives me some encouragement. What are the real checks with a system like that? My next question will relate to the matter of less formal assessments associated with my bete noire, the Northbridge Tunnel.

Mrs EDWARDES: It will come into the Parliament by way of amendment legislation and members will have an opportunity of dealing with it then.

Dr JENKINS: We have been looking at the way in which the licensing system operates within Western Australia. The previous system was a command and control system. The department would write the specifications of the technical requirements on the licence and it would be responsible for inspecting the licence conditions to ascertain they had been met. It is quite a labour intensive activity.

We are now getting a range of good industry performers who are introducing their own environmental management systems. They are also undertaking audits of their operations and are achieving a standard of environmental performance through their own management which is higher than what would be achieved by a government inspection service.

We want to introduce a system of licensing which encourages more people to set up their own environmental management systems, undertake their own auditing and achieve a higher level of environmental performance. We have invented a new system of licence called a best practice licence. The environmental management system has to be an accredited system and is part of the audited self-management concept. Companies must meet the performance indicators specified by the department. Their performance is determined by the department, but the work is undertaken by the company to achieve the level of performance set. The audit team must include an independent third party. The results of the auditors must be available to the department and the annual performance of those companies has to be on the public record. It is not only a self-management system where they are doing a lot of the work in the management system and auditing areas, but also the information is transparent to the public as well as to the department. A number of industries would like the flexibility to work out how to achieve those objectives rather than have the department specify them on the licence. A number of companies operating in Western Australia have put in the system which would qualify them for a best practice licence and they are very keen to obtain recognition that they are operating at best practice which is a higher standard than what we would expect from licence conditions.

The licence fees have been adjusted in terms of cost recovery. The system of licences was achieving about 20 per cent cost recovery for pollution administration. The licence fees have been increased for those people for whom we have to provide technical licence information and undertake inspections. They are now paying about 10 times more than the people operating under best practice licences. We will have full cost recovery for licence fees in two years' time. We have also changed the licensing system to be load-based, rather than production-based. Therefore, people are paying their licence fees depending on the amount they are discharging into the environment. They are doing two things: Firstly, they are measuring what they are discharging because the licence fee is dependent upon that.

Secondly, that gives a very clear signal to their management that they are paying the licence fees in terms of what they are discharging and therefore they should reduce it.

We believe we are achieving quality assurance by accrediting environmental management systems and having auditing performance which involves a third party. The load-based licensing system is sending the right messages to management and there is full cost recovery and an emphasis on achieving best practice rather than satisfying the licence conditions.

Mrs EDWARDES: We must encourage companies to undertake best practice. That is one of the offshoots of this exercise. From a community point of view, small and medium size companies will be encouraged to take part in this scheme. Previously the emphasis has not been on their management plan and this scheme will achieve that.

[8.30 pm]

Ms WARNOCK: There are reasons for asking these questions. We only have to look at the meat industry in Victoria. Self-management is fine. However, there have been a lot of scandals as a result of that. One has only to look back to a grim past where the bad eggs of industry did all sorts of things and hoped to get away with them. They allowed toxic substances to run down drains because they were further up the river and that sort of thing. Is the authority completely confident that the Government's audits will be sufficient to prevent anything like this happening again? I do not want to suggest that everybody in industry is a baddy. However, when we get a real baddy, we get somebody who messes up the environment no end and it is very bad for everybody who lives or works around that toxic industry.

Dr JENKINS: I understand the question very well. There are two differences between the Victorian system of health inspection and the system we are proposing here. The first is that the Victorian system has relied upon self-regulation. It does not have the performance criteria which have to be reported in the way this system has been developed. The other difference is that the health system in Victoria has only the one option. We have not taken away the regulatory licence. We do not believe every company will qualify for best practice licence. Therefore, those players who are not serious about environmental protection will be on a regulatory licence. They will pay more than their competitors who are moving to best practice, which again is the appropriate message that we should be sending, and the whole issue of the good guys versus the bad guys will be reflected in the type of licence they can achieve, rather than assuming all industry will be good guys.

Mr McGINTY: How do you determine the good guys and the bad guys? Take a company like CSBP, which is convicted fairly regularly for polluting.

Dr JENKINS: I do not believe it would be eligible for best practice licence. Prosecution would mean an automatic cancellation of the best practice licence. We have the ability to take people off a best practice licence and put them on a regulatory licence -

Mr McGINTY: If that ends up in the strong terms that you are now putting it, it will lay to rest a lot of fears about the system.

Mrs EDWARDES: OK Tedi was a good example of a bad guy. A large company like BHP was involved in that. Given an opportunity some may take it. Therefore, we want to ensure that opportunities to abuse do not exist.

Dr EDWARDS: The problem with CSBP seemed to be the wording in the licence. It took nearly a year to get a prosecution. There seemed to be some debate about whether it would proceed. How can you guarantee you will get it right in the first place? Given the other reports you have had about inspections - admittedly about 18 months ago - which indicated that, from a company's point of view, people were not turning up to audit and inspect, can you guarantee that the system will be really tight so that we have the right conditions and then the right auditing and inspecting?

Dr JENKINS: The requirement will be for audits to occur at certain frequencies and that they be available for inspection by the department. If the audits are not undertaken, it will be an automatic loss of best practice licence.

Dr EDWARDS: You said you were getting cost recovery on licences. I assumed it would be more expensive to go through the process of best practice management and then the licence.

Dr JENKINS: More expensive for the company but not the department.

Dr EDWARDS: I see. You have increased the licence fees for people who are getting a general licence?

Dr JENKINS: That is right.

Dr EDWARDS: But it comes down for the people -

Mrs EDWARDES: It is part of the encouragement process for those who accept their responsibilities, including having environmental aspects in their management plan.

Dr EDWARDS: Why are you projecting in the forward estimates on page 342 that licence and permit fees will rise quite rapidly?

Dr JENKINS: That is the phasing in of the new licensing system. The basis was about one-third in the first year, two-thirds in the second year, and full recovery in the third year.

Mr McGINTY: Currently there are 188 staff members in the authority and that figure will go to 193. One of those additional people is in policy, and four are in evaluation. I understand there is a commitment to increase the staff of the authority. How many is that?

Dr JENKINS: There are two additional people. There is currently a senior executive officer. They will get another professional officer to assist them. There is currently a secretary to the EPA and there will be an administrative assistant to that person.

Mr McGINTY: So two extra staff to the EPA.

Dr JENKINS: Yes.

Mr McGINTY: You also say you will open the Geraldton office. How many staff will that involve?

Dr JENKINS: That is already built into the 188.

Mr McGINTY: Are they there at the moment?

Dr JENKINS: Yes. The Geraldton office was opened at least six months ago.

Mr McGINTY: Have the Karratha and Bunbury staffing increases occurred?

Dr JENKINS: Yes. In the previous year there were 165 or 166 staff members. There has been an increase to 188 and there are some minor additional increases going to 193.

Dr EDWARDS: When will the service agreement between the EPA and the DEP be signed?

Mrs EDWARDES: In a couple of weeks.

Dr EDWARDS: What further action will be taken to resolve what appears from the outside to be quite strong conflict between the operations of the two bodies?

Mrs EDWARDES: How one runs an independent authority, with a department, with an appeals convener, and with a Minister is a very complex issue. We are talking about the whole machinery of that process. I am presently working that through in our Cabinet subcommittee dealing with the machinery of government and working out how we can best resolve the issue. I have been back through the history of the association long before our time and have had a look at operations in other States to find out how they have dealt with the issue. There is no example of the association working well in all aspects. Some have particularly good aspects in the way they operate; that is, with a department and a separate authority. South Australia or Victoria has put the authority above the department. However, it then established another council independent of them. Therefore, a third layer was added which again created the same problems in advising the Minister on policy and the like.

I believe it is healthy to have the views of department and the EPA on areas about which they may not have the same opinion. I want to ensure the community has confidence in that process. We will address that level of confidence in the process.

[8.40 pm]

Dr EDWARDS: How is the degree of conflict affecting the operation of the department?

Mrs EDWARDES: In the vast majority of cases there is no conflict. The conflict is not affecting the working operation. I found it frustrating trying to explain that aspect. The EPA and the department are operating in a professional and appropriate way. The EPA has indicated it would like a different arrangement and would prefer to be responsible for its own funds. However, I do not think that is the total solution because there will still be an authority and a department. Primarily, we must go through the whole operational machinery. We must accept that the current system has some pluses and minuses, or make some changes.

Ms WARNOCK: I refer to one of the achievements listed at page 338 indicating that a system was introduced to manage low level hazardous wastes through secure landfill. Does that relate to the treatment of the waste in the East

Perth Redevelopment Authority area? I know that an unusual new system was used to deal with hazardous wastes on that site. At page 341 it is stated that currently there is no integrated management of contaminated sites, and it is proposed to establish both statutory and procedural protocols. Are they related?

Mrs EDWARDES: In the not too distant future I will release a paper on the management of contaminated sites. The paper, which will be released in the next two to four weeks, addresses the statutory framework being proposed. It will be released for public consultation to help finalise the drafting of the legislation which I hope to introduce at the end of this year or in the autumn session of next year.

Dr JENKINS: A number of things have happened within the department with regard to the management of low level hazardous waste through secure landfill. First, there is a much clearer classification of what represents hazardous waste. A waste classification system has now been formalised. We have also indicated the waste acceptance criteria for different types of landfill. There is matching of the standard of landfill with the classification of wastes. Western Australia has had the advantage of the only landfill site in Australia that can take intractable waste. I refer to Mt Walton. Also, we have had initial discussions with a range of players to get a secure landfill close to the Perth metropolitan area to deal with one of the major issues of contaminated sites within the Swan coastal plain.

Unlike the situation in East Perth, where it was possible to carry out treatment on site through biodegradation because it involved hydrocarbon waste, many sites have heavy metals that cannot be treated on site. There must be some form of secure containment. A proposal has been made for the Red Hill site, which is under environmental review, going to a secure landfill to take class IV waste, which is one step below class V waste that can be accepted at Mt Walton. A number of other waste operators in the Perth area are looking at the site selection criteria we have developed for this secure landfill, the volume of waste generated, and proposals to develop secure landfills. We have taken major steps towards a much better system for the management of these wastes in Perth.

Mr McGINTY: I refer to the conflict between the EPA and the department. Dr Steedman has been very critical of the current arrangement between the EPA and the department. At any stage over the past 12 months did he ever threaten to resign or indicate he would not be available to have his contract renewed unless certain undertakings or assurances were given about the structural difficulties between the EPA and the department?

The CHAIRMAN: That is a matter of great interest but it is remote from the estimates. I leave it to the Minister to decide whether to answer the question.

Mrs EDWARDES: Not to my knowledge, and not during my time as Minister.

Mr MacLEAN: I refer to the ground water protection area at Gnangara and particularly Lake Pinjar. There is a piggery in that area with open waste disposal pits and two chook farms with septic effluent disposal. What is being done about that?

Dr JENKINS: Those sites have been inspected to make certain they meet the pollution control requirements. I understand work is being undertaken to meet those requirements.

Dr EDWARDS: Has that piggery's licence expired?

Dr JENKINS: I do not have to hand all the detail, but I will provide that as supplementary information.

Mr TUBBY: I refer to a piggery in the Jarrahdale area. The assessments carried out by the DEP officers are usually done during working hours and on days when there is no problem with the piggery. The problems occur in particular climatic conditions and usually in the evening. Because DEP officers cannot see a problem, it is determined that there is no problem no matter what the local residents say. Is there any chance of an assessment being done out of working hours and in certain climatic conditions?

Dr JENKINS: Many of the inspections are undertaken during normal working hours, but there is no restriction on people carrying out specific assignments to deal with specific problems. Western Australia was the first State to prosecute a director of a company for wilful contamination of the environment. That inspection was carried out at 11.00 pm and, knowing that circumstances were about to occur, the officers were made available at that time. When a particular issue needs to be addressed, the department will provide officers at the appropriate time. I am not aware of the detail of the inspections of the facility referred to, but where there are odours, they often occur from ground base sources which are more prominent with low wind conditions and intense inversions. That clearly occurs more during night conditions and early in the morning rather than during the day.

Mrs EDWARDES: We will get the details of that piggery from the member for Roleystone and follow that through.

[8.50 pm]

Dr EDWARDS: Page 333, under the grants, subsidies and transfer payments, outlines that the catchment grants expenditure has dropped from \$60 000 to \$20 000. Why the drop?

Dr JENKINS: This money is going to the Blackwood catchment through the Minister for the Environment's portfolio. However, agreement was reached between the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Primary Industry that the money is more appropriately directed through the Agriculture portfolio. The \$40 000 difference is transferred from Environment to the Agriculture portfolio. The amount is established and it is an administrative arrangement.

Ms WARNOCK: I am interested in the point on page 337 about progressing the implementation of the environmental management strategies regarding the Perth photochemical smog and haze studies. I realise that it is not a matter to be dealt with in five minutes, or even five years. However, this matter partly relates to my concern about the Northbridge bypass. What is the Government doing to implement responses to the findings of the Perth photochemical smog and haze studies? We have a serious problem as we all know, so what is happening to try to reverse those trends?

Dr JENKINS: The smog study clearly identified the major source of pollution as motor vehicles, and one of the exercises we have been undertaking, even before the smog study came out, is the smoky vehicle campaign. This is a program to identify through observations by the community those vehicles which cause the greatest pollution. Studies undertaken elsewhere say that 80 per cent of certain contaminants are produced by 20 per cent of cars. When we target those cars and deal with those issues, we will have some reduction in smog generation.

Perth is certainly a motor vehicle dominated city in its transport. We have started a travel smart campaign and taken eight organisations to try to work out why people are not prepared to use alternative means of transport. Why do some people cycle to work or use public transport, and what are the barriers to people using alternative means of transport? We are looking at behavioural patterns as well as the science.

Another area of particular importance is that the smog study indicated that the problems will get worse before they get better. It is predicted that more and longer trips will be made. The Department of Environmental Protection and the EPA, under section 16 of the Environmental Protection Act, are reviewing the metropolitan transport study which has looked at options of continuing motor car use versus increased public transport use to compare the two scenarios into the 30 year future. We have the modelling capabilities of the smog study, so we can compare the major events which cause smog in Perth.

A major item noticed in the smog study was the discrepancy over hydrocarbon emissions at Kwinana. We have looked at standard international calculations used for hydrocarbon storage tanks, and supplementary work indicates that the calculations are faulty. We believe that an underestimate was made and the discharges are greater. We are negotiating with BP to increase the amount of sealing of those tanks. The company has a progressive program to reduce hydrocarbon emissions, which are predominant in the area. They represent some of the examples in the smog issue.

The sources of haze are similar in some cases as it also arises from motor vehicle emission. Haze is dominant in winter and ozone gases are dominant in summer. Wood heaters are used on nights which are particularly cold, which have the most intense inversion, and the contaminants released from people's flues are discharged at ground level. That is the time we get haze during winter.

A campaign has commenced to try to make people understand how their wood heaters should operate and to encourage people to buy wood heaters which meet Australian standards. Also, of particular importance is the moisture content of wood. We are in the process of putting out moisture metres to all the wood yards so they can demonstrate to clients that their wood is appropriately managed.

Mr MacLEAN: The shell sand extraction operation of Cockburn Cement at Anchorage appears to have a problem with approvals. It is operating on an interim approval and is concerned it will run out before the actual approval arrives. Will you comment?

Dr JENKINS: You will be aware that the approvals were granted some time ago but the EPA report in relation to that project was challenged in the Supreme Court. It was successfully challenged and the court found that not only the EPA report but also the following ministerial approval was invalid. You will be aware that that process involved short term dredging. The company has submitted an environmental review document which has been through the EPA process and been subject to appeals, which are in the process of being resolved. The company has submitted an environmental review document for the medium term which has been through the public comment phase. The process has led to the EPA appearing in court.

Mr MacLEAN: The main concern for the shell sand extraction is the damage to the seagrass in the area. With what studies is the EPA involved regarding seagrass establishment and re-establishment in its natural state?

Dr JENKINS: The work conducted for the southern metropolitan coastal water studies clearly indicate that the survival of seagrass in the area is a major concern. A systemic regional approach has been adopted to determine the conditions applied to sustain the seagrass in those areas. The work conducted specifically at the request of the EPA in relation to the operation of Cockburn Cement led to an environmental management plan for a comprehensive research program undertaken by the company. This involved independent consultants, university academics contributing their knowledge, and Australian and non-Australian independent reviewers providing advice to develop rehabilitation techniques to seagrasses. They developed the equivalent of a turf cutter. They took seagrass as one would take turf from a turf farm and placed intact mats in areas which may be conducive to seagrass growth. There are plenty of areas in Cockburn Sound and Owen Anchorage where seagrass existed previously where we would expect to have seagrass growth. Those trials are in progress at the moment.

[9.00 pm]

Mr McGINTY: Who owns the information?

Dr JENKINS: The information is being generated by the company, but clearly all of that information becomes available to the Government through the assessment process.

Dr EDWARDS: Does it become available to the public?

Dr JENKINS: The information will have to be available in a final report at some stage. Ongoing seminars have been conducted by the company, where there has been an open invitation to anyone to attend, in some cases when the report reached a certain stage, so that information is getting into the public arena, and it is certainly getting into the major scientific community, with progressive reviews of that information.

Mr McGINTY: With regard to the oil exploration licence that was granted in the Shark Bay world heritage area, when did the EPA or the department first become aware of the licence application or the licence itself?

Dr JENKINS: It is not a licence. It is a permit.

Mr McGINTY: Okay.

Dr JENKINS: There is an important difference. A permit does not give anyone the right to take any action. A permit just gives the proponents the right to develop a program knowing that they will have access to that area instead of other potential explorers; that is, knowing that one of their competitors will not be able to move into that area. They cannot take any action until they have submitted a program for approval, which clearly in an area like that would be subject to environmental assessment. The Government has given them no authority to act in that area.

The decision to grant a permit is made by the Department of Minerals and Energy. After that decision is made, we are provided with a copy of the advice that such a permit has been granted. I do not know the exact date that occurred, but usually we get that information three or four weeks after it has been processed by the Department of Minerals and Energy. The permit was granted in November, and we received the information in late December.

Mr McGINTY: Are you saying that there can be no move to explore that area?

Dr JENKINS: They have no authority to explore. They have the right to develop a program to explore, and that exploration program would be subject to referral to the EPA and environmental assessment.

Mr McGINTY: Will that happen automatically?

Dr JENKINS: If they submit a program, yes.

Mrs EDWARDES: The company has not made any move towards that at the moment.

Dr EDWARDS: Page 337 states that "A draft State of the Environment Report was released for public comment". When was that draft released, how can I get a copy, and when will the final report be released?

Mr WIESE: It is shown as one of this year's achievements.

Dr JENKINS: It is before 30 June.

Mrs EDWARDES: It is the one which is in my briefcase! We expect to release that report fairly shortly, as soon as I have finished going through it. I just need to do it before 30 June, otherwise we will not be able to achieve it! I know that every member here will understand what I mean when they see it. It is taking me some time to go through it word by word because it is extensive.

Mr TUBBY: I want to return to the question of smog, particularly emissions from vehicles. Most of the campaign and most of the regulations have been concerned with petrol vehicles and things such as catalytic converters and a range of other measures. No attention has been paid to diesel emissions. It was brought to the attention of the Select Committee on Heavy Transport that I chaired that diesel emissions are not as safe as was thought previously because they are very high in particulates. The report of that committee made some recommendations with regard to monitoring to find out which vehicles were putting out excessive emissions. Machines like Multanovas can detect emissions as vehicles pass and photograph the vehicle plates, and it is then just a question of prosecution. Has anything been done with regard to those recommendations?

Dr JENKINS: Because Western Australia is not a manufacturer of vehicles, the issue of diesel emissions is best dealt with at the national level. A working party of the National Environmental Protection Council is looking at national environmental protection measures for diesel emissions, but no formal resolution has been made. That is probably a better forum for dealing with what is clearly a national problem. Diesel emissions are an issue in all capital cities.

One of the difficulties with just taking particulate measurements, which has been the traditional way of monitoring in Perth, is that we cannot differentiate between the sources of the particulates. We have now changed the sampling heads that exist on our monitors so that we can collect, through a special filter system, samples of all the chemicals that come through Perth's air. We have just established a contract with the Chemistry Centre to identify the chemical characteristics of the major contaminants in Perth's air that we have not been measuring on a regular basis, such as particulates, and that will give us a better handle on the sources of those contaminants.

Mr TUBBY: You mentioned the Australian Standards with regard to manufacturing. I do not have a problem with the standard of manufactured vehicles and the number of vehicles that are tested, but there is no follow up after people buy those vehicles, and this State has a particularly heavy load with longer vehicles and heavier vehicles than is the case anywhere else in Australia. People often increase the amount of diesel that goes into their vehicle through the injectors in order to boost the horsepower of the vehicle. According to the information received by the committee, that leads to a significant increase in the particulates and emissions from those vehicles. Is any work being done Australia-wide with regard to standards after manufacture?

Dr JENKINS: That issue will be part of the national environmental protection measures that the working group is trying to develop. One of the constraints on doing further work in that area has been the cost of emission testing. One of the relatively new developments is a testing system that is not as sophisticated as some of the tests that have been used in the past but has 80 per cent of the accuracy and is about one-tenth of the cost. We are looking at how we can implement a scheme using that form of instrumentation to get a better handle on emission levels from actual vehicles.

Mr TUBBY: What about tamper proofing the injector systems?

Dr JENKINS: We have not looked at that, and it is beyond the powers of the Department of Environmental Protection. That is really a Department of Transport issue.

[9.10 pm]

Mrs EDWARDES: I will raise that matter directly with Senator Robert Hill the next time I meet with him.

Mr WIESE: I suggest, firstly, that most of the diesel engines, if not all, are not manufactured in Australia. I do not know one manufacturer of diesel engines in this country. Secondly, I am sure a lot more of the problems come from where there is an adjustment or an opening both in the pump and the injectors. When talking to Senator Hill, the Minister should make sure he gets all the known facts, rather than basing the information on supposition.

Mr MacLEAN: The Euro diesels do not have the same problems as those we see around town. As diesel is a carcinogen, semi-burnt diesel is quite a worry. It comes mostly from aged vehicles more than from trucks that have been tampered with.

Mr WIESE: I have three questions. First, page 334 mentions new approaches to environmental management that will be required in urban, transport and land use planning to manage diffuse sources of pollution coming from vehicles and agriculture. What sources of pollution coming from agriculture does the department want to look at and manage?

Dr JENKINS: The dominant sources in the major waterways in Western Australia are phosphorus in fresh water systems, which is a problem in the Swan-Canning system, the Peel-Harvey system and the Vasse-Wonnerup system, as well as nitrogen in near shore marine waters. That was confirmed by the southern metropolitan coastal waters study. Although substantial controls have been put on direct waste water discharges going into the ocean in terms

of their nitrogen load, in winter one of the dominant sources of nitrogen is coming from the flow in the Swan-Canning system and the Peel-Harvey system.

One source of both nitrogen and phosphorous is agriculture, particularly the use of fertilisers. That is a diffuse source. That is an area we must look at. It is a very different style of management from licensing industry, where we are dealing with the much broader issue of fertiliser application to land over large catchments. The emphasis on having new approaches is that we do not believe the traditional system of licensing for discharges is appropriate in dealing with diffuse sources.

Mr WIESE: I am pleased to hear that. My second question relates to waste management; that is, rubbish dumps. There is a great deal of concern, especially among small councils and small townships, about very small rubbish dumps, compared with the city facilities or the facilities in major country towns, such as Bunbury or Kalgoorlie. I am talking about rubbish tips in places like Woodanilling, Beaufort and the small country towns where the requirements - such as covering them with nine inches of sand - appear to be a total over-kill and quite impractical, given the rubbish disposed to those tips on a weekly basis or even more frequently. Those situations are quite clearly impossible to deal with. How will those situations be handled and will the department modify the requirements for those small tips with a very small amount of waste going into them on a weekly basis?

Dr JENKINS: As the member is aware, the department now has the ability to licence all waste management facilities in Western Australia. That was not a possibility until about 12 months ago. We have looked at the range of operational practices that exist in waste management throughout Western Australia. In some cases local government is doing a good job in managing its tips in a satisfactory manner. We do not always find that and some tips on the Swan coastal plain have been closed. As a pollution hazard, they should have been closed years ago. That has been possible only since the implementation of the licensing system.

In the country areas we find a mixed response from councils. Some are managing tips very well. The licence conditions that are appropriate for those tips are already being met. In other country tips, the practice must improve. We would not shy away from providing licence conditions to make certain those tips meet an acceptable environmental standard.

Mr WIESE: What are we talking about? Are we talking about the requirement to cover the material with sand on a weekly basis when all that is involved is three or four utility loads of material? That is quite impractical. Will those tips be licensed on a one by one basis?

Dr JENKINS: We are developing licences on a case by case basis.

Mr WIESE: When will officers visit each of these councils - some of which are in a state of great concern or in limbo about this - to discuss what they will be required to do and how they will cope with the current situation?

Dr JENKINS: We have put out codes of practice for how councils should operate different landfills. That information has been available on a formal basis for two or three years.

Mr WIESE: That is what is causing concern.

Dr JENKINS: The only people who need have concern are those who are not operating their waste management facilities to a reasonable environmental management standard. No concerns have been expressed to us by those who are operating their waste management facilities to an acceptable standard. The only people who have expressed concerns are probably those who need to improve their practice to achieve a reasonable standard of environmental management.

Mrs EDWARDES: If the member has an issue within the couple of areas he has mentioned, I can follow those up if he talks to me about them after this committee hearing.

Mr WIESE: The Minister should talk to local government authorities because strong concerns are being expressed by a great number of the very small councils about the impracticality of meeting the requirements.

Mrs EDWARDES: I will talk to the member next week about the matters he has identified.

Mr WIESE: I appreciate that. My final question on this area follows on from the one by the member for Wanneroo about shell sand mining in Cockburn Sound as a source of lime for cement manufacturers. As the Minister is probably aware, there is another source of very high world quality limestone in the Exmouth-Learmonth area which I understand is undergoing a process of evaluation. How long will it be before the approval of that process is finalised to enable the limestone source to be dealt with?

Mrs EDWARDES: The appeal period has finished and now the appeals must be evaluated. The appeal report will come to me and a decision can then be made. A second application has been lodged with respect to the bargaining. That

has been progressed as quickly as possible. The town is concerned about the trucks going through it and we want to make sure that, if at all possible, we can dovetail those two issues.

Mr WIESE: Will the Minister encourage the use of that source of limestone if it can be demonstrated to be economic as a replacement source for that currently coming out of Cockburn Sound?

Mrs EDWARDES: It is a difficult issue to respond to because the current mining of Cockburn Sound is done under a state agreement which will continue for another 20 years.

[9.20 pm]

Mr MacLEAN: At page 337 the sixth point from the top refers to the Perth coastal water study. Regarding mosquitos and midge control in the lakes area, as spraying is no longer a recommended option, with which I totally agree, what education programs will be put in place for both public and local government to dissuade people from using pesticides?

Dr JENKINS: Mosquito and midge control is an issue of public health rather than environmental management. I understand that the experts in public health are advising people of the concerns and advising local government how to manage the problem.

Mr MacLEAN: Public health is saying spray and EPA is saying do not spray.

Dr JENKINS: We have been working with public health to adopt an acceptable approach to mosquitos and midges. I am happy to follow it up outside this forum. I am not aware that it is still a conflict.

Dr EDWARDS: I refer to the summary of key program level outputs at page 336. The Department of Environmental Protection shows no units or measures, whereas most other organisations have developed some sort of unit or measure. Are you developing units and measures? What will they be and will we see them in the next budget?

Dr JENKINS: A comprehensive program statement in output based management form has been prepared. However, it has not been reproduced here. It is a substantial document setting out our output based management requirements for each division. Consistent with that the department has developed a performance management system that we use on an operational basis which has all the key performance indicators and the schedule of activities that lead into that output based management system. We now have a hierarchy of environmental outcomes as evidenced in our annual report, the output based programs consistent with our program statement and, at the next level down, an internal performance management system which has key performance indicators for every activity within the department.

Dr EDWARDS: Was it too complicated to put it in the summary?

Dr JENKINS: The document is so thick it would have swamped the budget papers.

Mr McGINTY: No matter how meaningless, other departments have been able to include some quantification by unit measure. Why have you not done it?

Dr JENKINS: The question to ask is, why has it not been included in the budget papers.

Mr McGINTY: I thought that was the question.

Dr JENKINS: We have done the work; we do not produce the budget papers. We produce input to Treasury and it produces the budget papers.

Mr McGINTY: Why did Treasury not put it in?

Mrs EDWARDES: We will provide that by way of supplementary information.

Dr EDWARDS: It is important to clarify that because at a briefing with Treasury it was disdainful of departments that had not completed the process. I thought your department was one of those.

Dr JENKINS: No.

Dr EDWARDS: At page 337 the fourth point from the bottom of the page refers to the salinity action plan and money for clearing remnant native vegetation. What is the revised authorisation procedure? Is it the same as the MOU?

Dr JENKINS: Yes.

Dr EDWARDS: What is the cost of all that? Is it counted as a contribution towards the salinity action plan?

Dr JENKINS: No; it is a separate exercise. It is being handled by our evaluation division and is coming through the equivalent of our assessment process. The salinity action plan is being developed as a separate program through our environmental systems division.

Dr EDWARDS: How much money will the DEP use in the coming financial year to implement parts of the salinity action plan?

Dr JENKINS: Consistent with the overall program, the amount will be \$40 000 this financial year and \$100 000 in the next financial year.

Dr EDWARDS: What will that work be on?

Dr JENKINS: We are not a natural resource manager; we are a regulator or evaluator of programs. Much of that work will assist people in identifying areas of environmental priority and which catchment should be looked at for treatment to achieve environmental objectives. It will also develop the monitoring protocols that are appropriate for the ongoing assessment of the effectiveness of the salinity action plan. That is consistent with the approach we are taking with the State of the Environment Report of getting performance indicators in some of the key areas of the environment at a state level.

Dr EDWARDS: Page 339 contains a table of evaluations conducted in 1996-97. It refers to the System 6 update, which is also referred to under major achievements for 1996-97 at page 337 where it says that the Perth draft bush plan was released for public comment. Is that also happening before 30 June?

Dr JENKINS: We planned to produce a short report in December last year. However, we decided to produce a more comprehensive report including more detailed maps and protocols covering descriptions of each area.

Dr EDWARDS: Does that marry with the Perth environment project?

Dr JENKINS: Yes; it is an integration of the CALM requirements on threatened species, the EPA requirements for the System 6 update, and Ministry for Planning requirements for developing the Perth bush plan related to the PEP project. We have expanded the scope of the work. It will be pretty close to being out by 30 June.

The CHAIRMAN: I am interested in some of the claims about the benefits of unleaded petrol versus leaded petrol, such as the reduction of the level of airborne lead. Is the Environmental Protection Authority monitoring exhaust emissions for unleaded vehicles and checking on things like the amount of carcinogens in the exhaust emissions and the aromatic fractions of the fuel that have not been taken out in unleaded petrol which also are highly carcinogenic? Is any work being done in cooperation with the Health Department in measuring residual lead levels in young children?

[9.30 pm]

Dr JENKINS: We have an ongoing monitoring program of lead in the air. It is reported in our annual report each year. That indicates that since the introduction of unleaded petrol there has been a fourfold decline in the amount of lead in Perth's air. Rather than hovering close to the NHMRC level it is now about a quarter of that. We are monitoring the levels of lead in the air. Lead in blood is a health issue. In certain instances the Health Department has looked at measuring lead in blood.

The CHAIRMAN: Has there been an exchange of figures or cooperation between your department and the Health Department? Sydney had a high level of lead in the atmosphere some years ago, but that declined before unleaded petrol came on the market. That decline had nothing to do with motor vehicles but was a result of other contaminant sources. Well based scientific claims have been made that the replacement fuel in unleaded petrol, by its nature, carries with it many damaging carcinogens which leaded petrol does not have to the same degree, and which ultimately could be causing more damage to human health than leaded petrol. Is the output of that work being monitored?

Dr JENKINS: The issue of air toxics has been investigated by a number of agencies. The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation is looking at samples of air throughout urban areas of Australia. With other equivalent authorities in other States, we are looking at how that should be monitored. We have changed all the sampling heads in the Perth metropolitan area so that we can measure those values. We have just let a contract with the Chemistry Centre for the first set of analyses. We do not have the results yet, but we expect them to become available shortly.

The CHAIRMAN: Would that include exhaust emissions not only from the diesels which we focused on earlier but also from the petrol consuming vehicles?

Dr JENKINS: The sampling protocol enables us to test for any chemical.

Mr McGINTY: What is happening with the Environmental Defender's Office?

Mrs EDWARDES: I was asked this question the other day. I have not received any advice from the federal Attorney General. The Environmental Defender's Office is well placed to continue to provide environmental advice to the community.

Mr McGINTY: What is happening with uranium mining at Kintyre?

Dr JENKINS: A formal assessment has been made at the environmental review and management program level, which is the highest level. That is a joint assessment being undertaken with the Commonwealth Government because it has responsibility for export approvals. It will be an environmental impact statement at the commonwealth level and the documentation is being prepared by the proponent in response to guidelines that have been jointly prepared by the Commonwealth and the State.

Mr McGINTY: When do you expect to receive the ERMP assessment to be released?

Dr JENKINS: I am not certain. We would need to ask the proponent. From some of the original assessments, we expected that it would be in the public arena within the next few months. However, things have not been progressing as quickly as originally indicated.

Mr McGINTY: Has any other uranium proposal come to your notice?

Dr JENKINS: There has been no official referral of any other proposal.

Mr McGINTY: Has any informal advice been sought?

Dr JENKINS: Western Mining is looking at Yeelirrie as a possibility.

Mr McGINTY: So, only the two have reached the stage of seeking your advice.

Dr JENKINS: Only one formal referral has been made, and there has been one informal discussion.

Mr McGINTY: Has there been anything from the other uranium deposits?

Dr JENKINS: No.

Dr EDWARDS: Are the guidelines a public document?

Dr JENKINS: Yes.

Dr EDWARDS: Can they be tabled?

Mrs EDWARDES: I will provide that as supplementary information.

Dr EDWARDS: Has the price received for recycled newsprint stabilised? Did any newspaper end up in rubbish dumps when the newsprint price was dreadful for the industry?

Dr JENKINS: There has been a dramatic drop in newsprint prices, and that has limited people's interest in collecting newspapers. I would need to obtain further advice about the details.

Mrs EDWARDES: We will endeavour to provide that information.

Committee adjourned at 9.36 pm
