

VERIFIED VERSION

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Budget Estimates 2017–18

Melbourne — 17 May 2017

Members

Mr Danny Pearson — Chair

Mr David Morris — Deputy Chair

Mr Steve Dimopoulos

Mr Danny O'Brien

Ms Fiona Patten

Ms Sue Pennicuik

Ms Harriet Shing

Mr Tim Smith

Ms Vicki Ward

Witnesses

Ms Gayle Tierney, Minister for Training and Skills,

Ms Gill Callister, Secretary,

Ms Lee Watts, Deputy Secretary, Higher Education and Skills Group,

Ms Jenny Atta, Deputy Secretary, Infrastructure and Finance Services Group, and

Dr Xavier Csar, Acting Assistant Deputy Secretary, VET reform, Department of Education and Training.

The CHAIR — I declare open the public hearings for the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee inquiry into the 2017–18 budget estimates. All mobile telephones should now be turned to silent.

I would like to welcome the Minister for Training and Skills, the Honourable Gayle Tierney; Ms Gill Callister, Secretary of the Department of Education and Training; Mr Lee Watts, Deputy Secretary, Higher Education and Skills Group; Ms Jenny Atta, Deputy Secretary, Infrastructure and Finance Services Group; and Dr Xavier Csar, Acting Assistant Deputy Secretary, VET Reform. In the gallery is Katherine Whetton, Deputy Secretary, Strategy and Performance Group.

All evidence is taken by the committee under the provisions of the Parliamentary Committees Act, attracts parliamentary privilege and is protected from judicial review. Comments made outside the hearing, including on social media, are not afforded such privilege. Witnesses will not be sworn but are requested to answer all questions succinctly, accurately and truthfully. Witnesses found to be giving false or misleading evidence may be in contempt of Parliament and subject to penalty. All evidence given today is being recorded by Hansard, and you will be provided with proof versions of the transcript for verification as soon as available. Verified transcripts, presentations and handouts will be placed on the committee's website as soon as possible.

All written communication to witnesses must be provided via officers of the PAEC secretariat. Members of the public gallery cannot participate in the committee's proceedings in any way and cannot photograph, audio record or videorecord any part of these proceedings.

Members of the media must remain focused only on the persons speaking. Any filming and recording must cease immediately at the completion of the hearing.

I invite the witness to make a very brief opening statement of no more than 10 minutes, and this will be followed by questions from the committee.

Visual presentation.

Ms TIERNEY — Thank you, Chair, and thank you, committee members. Thank you for the opportunity today to talk about the 2017–18 budget and how we are rebuilding the Victorian training and TAFE sector.

When this government came to power we promised we would rebuild the Victorian training and TAFE sector. The sector is critical to driving this state's productivity and growth through high-quality skills in areas highlighted by industry, lifting workforce participation and improving workforce skills. This government is getting on with the job. Since being elected, more than 250 new jobs have been created every day. This year to date more jobs have been created in Victoria than in the rest of the country combined.

We are rebuilding TAFE and restoring confidence in Victoria's training and TAFE sector. Former government policy changes from 2012–2014, including cuts to subsidy rates and the tightening of eligibility requirements, resulted in dramatically reduced numbers of students enrolling in fewer courses and the loss of almost \$300 million in funding from TAFEs. In just two years enrolment numbers fell by more than 115 000. That is why the TAFE sector was operating at a loss of \$52.5 million in 2014. Low quality, tick-and-flick training providers were abusing an unfettered and deregulated VET system and VET FEE-HELP. The training and TAFE sector was in crisis and public confidence at an all-time low.

We are turning this around. The 2015 quality blitz removed a significant number of low-quality private operators offering poor-quality courses and poor outcomes. We are establishing clear policies linking training to jobs, clearly communicated to the sector. We have arrested the decline.

Since coming to office, the Victorian government has allocated more than \$650 million to first restore and then strengthen the TAFE network. The TAFE and dual sector market share of students increased from 31 per cent to 37 per cent between 2015–2016, and community confidence in the TAFE network is building. The government is committed to investing 2.4 billion in training in this budget. This reflects forecasted industry demand under the Skills First reforms.

Since 2015 we have strengthened TAFE performance monitoring to improve accountability for funding and outcomes. In 2015 for the first time TAFEs publicly reported on four consistent key performance indicators in their annual reports and set targets in 2016 against these KPIs. This was a direct response to VAGO's recommendation to improve TAFE performance monitoring. We have also strengthened existing accountability

mechanisms, including monthly financial meetings with board chairs and CEOs to discuss performance, clearer milestones, outcome measures in all common funding agreements and reform of TAFE boards to ensure a diverse range of skills.

Since taking up my position as minister I have visited all TAFEs, some of them more than once. I have reiterated that significant government support, financial or otherwise, comes with significant responsibility and accountability. In response to the Mackenzie review recommendations government is developing new compacts for TAFEs for introduction in 2018. Public compacts will ensure TAFE boards are accountable for the outcomes expected from government investment.

Skills First puts TAFE at the centre of the government's subsidised training system. It began on 1 January this year. We are providing funding for high-needs learners who need additional support to succeed. We have invested in a TAFE network that provides access to relevant training for students and industry. Also included is access to training in regional areas through the Regional and Specialist Training Fund, and a real voice and funding to support innovative training that meets current and future industry needs through the Workforce Training Innovation Fund — WTIF.

Our focus is to deliver high-quality training that leads to real jobs. The funded course list was developed with the Victorian skills commissioner and the industry advisory groups to give industry a clear voice. New subsidies for funded courses under Skills First reflect the real cost of training. We have strengthened the selection process for the training providers seeking VET funding contracts in 2017 to crackdown on low-quality providers.

Early results indicate support for Skills First reforms. We have introduced a number of real-time monitoring mechanisms so that we can support those students experiencing doubt about their training choices two to three months into their course. More than 75 per cent of students reported satisfaction with quality of the teaching received so far this year and felt their training will help them get a job; 86 per cent of students reported that they are likely to complete their course based on their experience so far. This is a great result. By listening to students we gain a better understanding of how we can continuously improve the training and TAFE system.

Moving to the specific initiatives. This budget provides \$8.2 million to fund apprentice support officers to ensure that first-year apprentices aged under 25 receive the support they need to complete their trade. The apprentice support officer program has already boosted the apprenticeship retention rate by 3 per cent. The government's major project skills guarantee has created thousands of opportunities for apprentices, trainees and engineering cadets. It is good to see that our half-year results are showing that there has been a 4.8 per cent increase in apprenticeship enrolments in construction occupations between 2015 and 2016. In partnership with the Victorian skills commissioner I have established an apprenticeship task force to identify issues and barriers for both potential employees and employers, and they will report back to me in October this year.

The government has also committed \$4 million over two years to provide retraining opportunities and support for workers in the Latrobe Valley. The initiative will ensure that there is coordinated services and support for local communities provided by local community organisations.

Committee members, in concluding, we are rebuilding TAFE, creating hundreds of apprenticeships and providing extra support for young people to learn their trade. The government is supporting workers and their communities by providing access to retraining for those who need it. Removing poor-quality training providers from the VET market, higher subsidy rates that better reflect the costs of training, all of this has helped to revitalise Victoria's training and TAFE sector at a time when we need a skilled workforce, we need to keep investing in training and TAFE.

The TAFE and training system was in a bad place when we came to office, and repairing that damage will take some time. Rebuilding and recasting training in this state will require more than financial investment; it will require a sustained effort over a number of years. To believe that a flick of a switch is all that is required underestimates and ignores the devastation and legacy of past policies and therefore the time and effort required to rebuild again. With the implementation of Skills First and the government's strategy for the TAFE network we are already starting to see some change for the better and absolutely growing public confidence.

The CHAIR — As I was listening to your presentation, Minister, I was reflecting upon the various questions that Ms Pennicuik has asked in previous PAEC hearings in relation to the declining quality in terms of higher education and the VET sector more broadly. The budget paper reference is budget paper 3, page 188, 'number

of students enrolled in government-subsidised courses'. Clearly Ms Pennicuik has previously raised these issues. For example, in 15–16 the actual figure of number of students enrolled in government-subsidised courses was 377 831. Yet if we look at the 16–17 expected outcome, it is 321 090, and the target for the next financial is 322 000. Minister, I am just wondering whether you might be able to enlighten the committee as to the reasons behind this decline in the number of students enrolled in government-subsidised courses?

Ms TIERNEY — Thank you, Chair. I think there is some misinformation and confusion out there, so this provides an opportunity to respond. Essentially it goes to the rapid policy changes, such as the subsidy and eligibility cuts between 2012 and 2014, dramatically reducing training numbers — fewer students doing fewer courses — in an effort to reign in the training budget. Between 2012 and 2014 student numbers reduced by over 66 000. Between 2012 and 2014 enrolment numbers reduced by over 115 000. These policy changes included cuts in subsidy rates, placing limitations on the number of courses that an individual could do at the same time or start within a calendar year, and also restricting which RTOs could deliver lower level foundation skills courses.

This government has taken a different approach. We committed to restore trust, confidence and pride in Victoria's TAFE and training sector, with an unapologetic emphasis on quality. The quality blitz that I said commenced in 2015 removed a significant number of low-quality and fraudulent private RTOs, and this is having the effect of further reducing training volumes corresponding to poor quality and poor outcomes for students.

Across the 2015–2016 financial year over 40 per cent of the decline in government-subsidised enrolments was attributed to training providers who no longer held a Victorian government training contract, and I think that is an important note. One of the objectives of Skills First reforms is to restore the stability of the Victorian training sector. Clear policies based on the objective of linking training to jobs, clearly communicated to the sector, are important contributors to this stability, I would say, Chair.

The CHAIR — To summarise, it is that reduction in this very large number of poor-quality courses available. You are having a smaller number of higher quality courses to make sure that those graduates, when they graduate from those courses, have got the skills that are required for practical employment pathways.

Ms TIERNEY — That is correct. We had an overinflated system, where we had a number of people enrolled that did not exist. Some people were enrolled in courses in child care, in hospitality and in health, where you would expect those courses to run for months or indeed years but were indeed in courses that lasted two weeks. We have numerous, real life examples in front of us here, and I can go to each and every one of them if you like. But it does tell and demonstrate a very, very sad and sorry story of how a deregulated market that basically — —

Mr MORRIS — And the fake students of course.

Mr DIMOPOULOS — And the market that benefited from the taxpayer.

The CHAIR — Order! The minister, to continue.

Ms TIERNEY — A deregulated market actually behaved in a very, very bad way. That had a significant impact on young people who were trying to study to then find a pathway to get a job, having their lives upturned in so many ways and their faith destroyed as a result of people taking advantage of them, and indeed running incentives that were only to their benefit and never to the benefit of the student or local communities.

Ms WARD — Minister, I wanted to talk to you about apprenticeships if I may. In your presentation — page 10 on my sheet — you have got the budget initiatives, the 'Drive to grow apprenticeships'. I see in the budget papers — budget paper 3, page 188 — there is a decline in the number of apprenticeship traineeship commencements 2015–16. You talk about the enrolments being stable. Can you please talk to us about what those numbers mean, what the decline actually is in apprenticeship enrolments and commencements?

Ms TIERNEY — The good news is that the apprenticeship numbers for Victoria have actually stabilised. In lots of other jurisdictions they have taken a bit of a nosedive.

Ms WARD — So when you say other jurisdictions, you mean other states?

Ms TIERNEY — In other states; that is correct. We believe that we want to stay not just in the pack but be a leader when it comes to apprenticeships in a variety of areas. That is why we have worked out that there are a number of things that need to be put in place to support apprentices, and that is reflected in this budget through the apprenticeship support officers program. We have got officers located in each of the TAFEs. They work out what the particular needs of the — —

Ms WARD — Are they the job and skills centres or are they separate?

Ms TIERNEY — This is separate to the jobs and skills centres. We have got a number of jobs and skills centres attached to our TAFEs located in shopping centres that are also directing people to TAFE training and jobs. I thank you for that prompt. But no, I am actually talking about the apprenticeship support officers who are actually embedded in the TAFE system, who identify the issues that are creating barriers, whether it be literacy or numeracy, financial — it might also be related to substance abuse. They provide organised wraparound services so that apprentices have the best possible chance to finish their apprenticeship.

In addition to that we have also of course launched the task force, which has got a number of organisations from employer groups, industry groups, as well as unions, that is looking at the barriers that exist in relation to apprenticeships. We are trying to work out more innovative ways of how we can encourage young people but also people who are wanting to retrain into apprenticeships so that they can be part of the huge government projects that we have underway, whether that be the level crossing removals or various other things. That is why we have also got the 10 per cent allocation for those major projects; 10 per cent need to be filled by apprentices, trainees and engineering cadets so that we have got a pipeline of young, enthusiastic, skilled people involved in what is happening in this state at the moment and can secure jobs into the future.

Through the government's \$100 million Back to Work scheme, over 16 000 claims for employing apprentices and trainees were paid, including 846 for out-of-trade or displaced apprentices. We have also, over past budgets, provided registration discounts and a number of other things too, to create some incentives to make sure that we do have a core strength of apprenticeships right throughout this state. I do look forward to receiving that report from the task force.

Ms WARD — The apprenticeship support officers, will they also be connected to local secondary schools? Will there be a connection there?

Ms TIERNEY — Yes. They will work in conjunction with the jobs and skills centres and with the tech schools as well. They will be there to ensure that young people, right from the early years of secondary schooling, understand what their possible options are. I think in terms of the Lilydale campus and the Greensborough campus, where there are other education facilities —

Ms WARD — Thank you, Minister, and thank you for the support of my campus at Greensborough. It is greatly appreciated.

Ms TIERNEY — we will see that there is a connectivity between — at the end of the day — whatever is in that precinct, whether it be a sporting facility, a primary school, a secondary school, a tech school, a TAFE and indeed a pathway to higher education if wanted, so that we can see some real applied learning going on in our education sector.

Ms WARD — It is interesting that you talk about the connection with sporting clubs, because I know especially within football there is real activity amongst older people within clubs to try and help kids get apprenticeships, especially, as well as traineeships. So to be able to connect sporting clubs with the apprentice support officers I think will be a tremendous help across communities really broadly, and it is fantastic. What is even better is that we have girls — 100 girls at Eltham Football Club for example — playing football, who will be able to tap into that resource and those connections and those networks that will help them be able to take advantage of this new scheme. So that is great vision, Minister. Thank you very much.

And I have got more questions for you. Could I get you to go back to page 188, please, Minister, of budget paper 3? There is reference to the decline in government-subsidised course enrolments. What is the quality agenda that has been enacted by the government? What role has that played in reducing the over-inflated enrolments that we saw under the previous government?

Ms TIERNEY — Yes, that is an interesting question and one that is a very live one. We have a situation where we have had the Victorian skills commissioner go out and have consultations with industry and communities for a significant period of time to work out what the real needs are in the community, where the skills shortages are. From that we have been able to identify a list of courses that align to the government's agenda as well as other measures. From that we of course have introduced a new process for the registration of those that want a Victorian education training contract. That process was most fulsomely rolled out towards the end of last year, and those that were successful will have registration for 12 months and then they will need to go through the process again. What we are doing is essentially — —

The CHAIR — Order! **Mr T. SMITH** — Referring to budget paper 3, page 190, you have repeatedly said that you are now providing training to students that leads to real jobs and that the 30 per cent reduction we have seen in student numbers in Victoria since you came to government is because you are increasing the quality of training providers. Why, then, has there been no change in the proportion of VET completers with an improved employment status after training in the two and a half years you have been in government?

Ms TIERNEY — Lee, do you want to take people through it? You have been involved in that process.

Ms WATTS — Thank you, Minister. In reference to page 190 of BP3 and the measure around the proportion of VET completers who are satisfied with their training, the government has met that particular outcome.

Mr T. SMITH — No, sorry. It is VET completers with an improved employment status after training.

Ms WATTS — My apologies. So you will see there that there is a difference of 0.1 per cent between the target and the actual. The information in terms of our student satisfaction survey is that, as with all sample surveys, there can be a degree of variation in relation to the data that is received through the survey process. The outcome is extremely close to being met, as you can see. It is lower than the target, but as the minister has indicated, there were quality issues with some providers in 2015 that may have impacted on the employment outcomes following training. For example, with the closure of a number of providers in 2015, it would have been unusual to expect that there would have been a significant rate of satisfaction with training.

Mr T. SMITH — But in 2015, Minister, you were projecting that figure to be 61.7. You are talking about quality, yet completers with an improved employment status after training, in your own figures, is going down. In fact in the last year of the previous government it was 76 per cent.

Ms TIERNEY — So in fact what was happening still at that point in time is that people were still undertaking training that was not connected to jobs. And the other thing you might not have picked up in my conclusion is that this is going to take some time. You do not understand the decimation that went on. It is going to take some time to rebuild — —

Mr T. SMITH — Minister, I understand what the budget says. You are not meeting your own figures.

Ms WARD — How about you let her explain and answer her question, Mr Smith, instead of continuing to talk over the top of her?

The CHAIR — Order! Ms Ward! The minister, to continue.

Ms TIERNEY — So quality has had an impact, and we believe that we have the policy levers in place to turn things around, and we are looking forward to not just the restoration of TAFE but a new TAFE that is absolutely linked to jobs, that is relevant, that is agile, that is efficient and that delivers not just for the individual but for the local communities around it.

Mr T. SMITH — Minister, the simple fact is that 76 per cent found a job in 2014–15; it is now 50 per cent. Your own targets are going backwards here.

Mr MORRIS — And your own performance is going well and truly backwards.

Ms TIERNEY — We have done surveys since that data was collected, and indeed even as recent as — I think, earlier this month —

Dr CSAR — Correct.

Ms TIERNEY — in-time surveys. The feedback that we are getting overwhelmingly is that people are satisfied with the courses that they are doing, much more than what they were under the previous set of policies.

Mr MORRIS — You have got a figure of 50.6.

Mr T. SMITH — Minister, it is barely half.

Ms TIERNEY — Not only that; they believe that they are going to complete their courses —

Mr MORRIS — You have got a figure of 50.6 in a budget that was released 10 days ago.

Ms TIERNEY — and not only that, they will also get jobs.

Mr T. SMITH — Minister, it is barely half. I mean, you are talking about policy. Barely half, Minister, are getting a job, on your own projections. That is an abject failure.

Mr MORRIS — Compared with 76 per cent.

Mr T. SMITH — This is an abject failure.

Ms TIERNEY — We cannot find the figures.

Members interjecting.

The CHAIR — Order! Is there a question, Mr Smith?

Mr T. SMITH — Chair, I want the minister to respond to the fact that their own projections, and indeed the real turnout from VET in this state is going backwards.

Members interjecting.

The CHAIR — Order! Ms Ward and Mr Smith!

Ms TIERNEY — I mean, that is a good point, Secretary. Do you want to respond on that point?

Ms CALLISTER — Mr Smith, I am just seeking advice about the number that you are quoting for 14–15, because if it is the proportion of VET completers with an improved employment status after training, I believe that was a new measure in 14–15.

Mr T. SMITH — ‘VET graduates in employment six months following graduation’, 76 per cent.

The CHAIR — What is the budget paper reference for that, Mr Smith?

Mr T. SMITH — It is page 365.

Mr MORRIS — The 2015–16 ‘Service Delivery’, the 2014–15 expected outcome, 76 per cent.

Mr T. SMITH — Page 365.

Ms CALLISTER — On budget paper 3?

Mr T. SMITH — Yes, of 15–16.

Ms SHING — The previous budget. They are not talking about the current budget, Secretary. It is the 15–16 budget that they are referring to, and a measure that I do not see replicated in the identical form at page 190.

Ms CALLISTER — No. I believe a new measure was introduced.

Mr T. SMITH — Which, it says, took the place of that previous measure in your own budget.

Ms CALLISTER — So the new measure, the 15–16 target, was 61.7?

Mr T. SMITH — Yes, which you have clearly not met.

Ms CALLISTER — Yes. I am sorry; I cannot see the 76 anywhere, so it is — —

Mr T. SMITH — That is because it is in the 15–16 budget. But the point that we are trying to make here, Secretary, and indeed the minister is incapable of answering, is that you are talking about quality, and that measure, on your own numbers, is going backwards. Sixty-one is now back to 50 per cent — only 50 per cent.

Ms SHING — Are you comparing apples with oranges or spaceships or apples here, Mr Smith? The performance measures change.

Mr T. SMITH — It was 76 in 14–15 — 61 from your own budget down to 50. It is going backwards.

Ms SHING — On a point of order, the performance measures actually change, so for Mr Smith to actually invite comparison between two performance measures that are inherently different — —

Mr MORRIS — And one has replaced the other.

Mr T. SMITH — One has replaced the others; it says so in your own budget.

Mr MORRIS — It is the oldest trick in the book.

Ms TIERNEY — Chair, it is a new measure, and the fact is that 76 per cent of students have indicated that they are satisfied with their course based on their experience so far — this is new statistics and information; 86 are more likely to complete their course based on their experience so far; 77 are satisfied with quality of the teaching based on their experience so far; and 75 per cent feel their training will lead to better employment outcomes based on their experience so far. In addition to this we have been in a pipeline. The new funding arrangements came into effect — Skills First — on 1 January this year. We are in a new world. Other people have not caught up.

Mr T. SMITH — Minister, I do not know what world you are in — —

Mr MORRIS — Going backwards.

Ms WARD — It is the real world, Mr Smith.

Mr MORRIS — Chair, can I move to a different subject?

The CHAIR — The Deputy Chair.

Mr MORRIS — Seeing we are apparently trying to avoid scrutiny on their own failures on this one. Clearly they are trying to avoid the subject.

Members interjecting.

The CHAIR — Order! Is there a question from the Deputy Chair?

Mr MORRIS — Talking about avoiding the subject, Federation Training, Minister — budget paper 3, page 186 — has not tabled an annual report for 2015 or for 2016. The Parliament has no information about how the TAFE is meeting — —

Ms SHING — Yes, it does. You just were not there at the last question time.

Mr MORRIS — So how many students were enrolled in government-subsidised places at Fed Training for 2015, and how many were enrolled for 2016?

Ms TIERNEY — Thank you for your question. I would have thought the first point of commonality in this room would be that one should support TAFE in Gippsland and the Latrobe Valley —

Mr MORRIS — Minister, it is a very simple question: what are the figures?

Ms TIERNEY — particularly given the difficult situation that those communities are in.

Mr MORRIS — What are the figures? If you do not know, just say so.

The CHAIR — Order. The minister is answering.

Members interjecting.

The CHAIR — Order!

Mr MORRIS — It is a simple question: how many in 2015 and how many in 2016? In simple numbers.

Mr DIMOPOULOS — How many of what? You have not even made it clear.

Mr MORRIS — How many students were enrolled in government-subsidised places at Federation Training for 2015 and how many were enrolled for 2016 — which is what the transcript will show I asked a minute and a half ago? So what are the numbers?

Ms TIERNEY — We do not give individual TAFE numbers, but can I respond to other parts — —

Mr MORRIS — Well, if you will not get them to report to Parliament, will you at least tell us?

Ms TIERNEY — If you give me a chance.

Mr MORRIS — You are taking public money and pouring it into this, and you will not tell us what is going on.

Members interjecting.

The CHAIR — Order! Ms Pennicuik till 3.58 p.m.

Ms SHING — Can we just have no pointing? It is actually inherently unparliamentary, from anybody.

Ms PENNICUIK — Thank you, Minister, Secretary, deputy secretaries and everyone, for attending. I would just like to pick up the Chair, who correctly said that I do raise the issue of the rorting of the VET budget and have done for a long time — in fact ever since the previous Brumby government actually led the market contestability with very little regulation. That is when the actual rorting and fraudulent training started. I agree with the minister that it was catastrophic to pull \$350 million out of the TAFE system, which is what the last government did, on top of all the rorting et cetera that was going on. I called for an inquiry in 2012, and neither the Labor Party nor the coalition actually supported that when it was obvious in the community what was going on.

Mr DIMOPOULOS — We were not in government.

Ms PENNICUIK — That was five years ago, but I am glad to see that this government has actually stopped TAFE from falling over the cliff, where it was going to be headed very shortly. But it is a small thing facing what was actually happening to the TAFE sector. What I want to raise now is the issue of sustainability of TAFE. If you go to page 49 in budget paper 4, you will see that the TAFE Rescue Fund, which did stop it falling over the cliff, and the structural adjustment fund are due to expire at the end of 2017–18. The Auditor-General has already raised the issue of financial sustainability in TAFE remaining a risk and that decline in expenditure on assets et cetera is an issue. My question is really, Minister, what plans does the government have to maintain the sustainability of the TAFE sector, particularly with its duty to provide extra services to the students than private providers have to do?

Ms TIERNEY — Thank you for that question. I believe that we probably are in agreement in terms of a number of premises. One is that support for publicly run TAFE institutions and also that we recognise in doing so that there are community obligations that need to be carried out by TAFEs as a result of that — obligations that do not apply in terms of the private sector market.

In relation to the sustainability of TAFEs, part of that sustainability will always be financial support from the state because they are connected to the state. Further to that, though, we believe that because of the amount of government investment into the TAFE system there does need to be a range of accountability measures. There are some that are involved and have been around since 2016, taking on board recommendations from the

VAGO report. But further to that, there are discussions on a regular basis with the board chairs and the board members in terms of financial stability of their TAFEs and TAFEs generally. But there will also be — and I think this is a feature that is in existence in other parts of the world — TAFE compacts where there is going to be an agreement or an indication of government expectation of where TAFEs will be in a number of key performance areas.

I think in terms of sustainability this is the pathway that will take us there in terms of making sure that we do not have a repeat of a range of courses that might have been offered that just did not meet community needs or indeed industry need. In advance of Skills First, the government provided over \$90 million of TAFE boost funding in December 2016 to strengthen TAFEs so that they can successfully transition into the Skills First funding arrangement to deliver their new distinct role. I think the premise of Skills First is to have individual TAFEs stand up and take a unique position in the market and that they now can enter into those funding streams of Skills First that will actually enhance that and make it happen.

Ms PENNICUIK — I hear all that, but of course the system that was fixed that was not broken actually had TAFE delivering most of the training — 70 per cent of the training — and it was underpinned by specific community service grants et cetera to the TAFEs to make sure they were sustainable over and above anything you are talking about now. I still remain concerned that, given the government buy-in to TAFE and its community service, you are still not guaranteeing the sustainability of the TAFEs.

Ms TIERNEY — We will provide supplementary funding because of the very things that I said at the beginning of my previous answer.

The CHAIR — Order! Mr Dimopoulos until 4.08 p.m.

Ms PENNICUIK — Chair, given that some of my time was taken by the coalition, could the minister provide that information to the committee that she was just going to tell me?

Ms TIERNEY — Sure.

Ms PENNICUIK — Thank you.

Mr DIMOPOULOS — Minister, my understanding of the training sector under the previous government was: you know when you are at the supermarket and there is a really nice, glossy, big packet of Smith's crisps, and it is all full and looks fantastic, but when you open it it is actually half full because the rest of it is full of hot air. My understanding is, from your presentation and your comments earlier, we removed some of the dodgy providers, some of the hot air. These are my words, Minister; you do not have to claim them because you have said it in a much more eloquent way. We ended up with naturally fewer students but far more quality, if that is my understanding.

Ms TIERNEY — Yes.

Mr DIMOPOULOS — Just in terms of that whole process, I worked with international students some years ago. Many of them suffered after a couple of collapses of private colleges and those things, so it is harder to fix things once people have paid their money, come over here and set up their lives. What are we doing to prevent dodgy providers or less-than-suitable providers gaining a contract paid for by the taxpayer in the first place?

Ms TIERNEY — In terms of those that are wanting a Victorian government education contract, they need to register, and there is a selection process. That was building on the improvements to the process made last year that provider selection process for training providers seeking their funding contracts for 2017 was further strengthened. The department received 475 expressions of interest. The VET funding contracts for 2017 were offered to 346 private training providers, with the majority being informed of the outcome in December last year. Funding contracts for 2017, as I mentioned in answer to a previous question, are for one year only. All providers will need to apply for 2018. This will allow the department to monitor how the more managed market is operating to ensure that Skills First reforms have the desired effect.

In line with the priorities of this government, the department has cracked down on low-quality providers. The number of training providers holding a VET funding contract, as I said, was reduced from 426 in 2016 to 346 in April of this year. That continues even apart from organisation private providers making applications either at the end of last year or indeed later this year. There are people within the department who do audits, so it is not

just those who are wanting a government education contract. We have an ongoing program where companies are audited. Often we might get a call or an email from parents or students where they think something is not right, and we are able to do that.

Mr DIMOPOULOS — Thank you. This is a quick one before Ms Shing takes over. With the ones that have been found to be less than reputable, do they predominate in any particular course offering? Is it hairdressing? Is it a mix of courses?

Ms TIERNEY — It is wide and varied, I can tell you. We had a number of problems in the provision of certificate I in general education foundation courses, where they enrolled people — some of them had degrees and were doing certificate I. It was just a rort from beginning to end. We had situations where, as I mentioned before, you had unduly fast delivery of training, where you would expect a course to run for a year or more and yet they were being run in a couple of weeks. You had situations where a provider sought to deliver early childhood education and care courses to hundreds of Victorians, but the auditors found that the training premises were a residential home. Of course the department did not offer the provider a 2017 contract. Then of course you had the misuse of foundation courses. The action the department took in this particular case was to terminate its contract and seek the recovery of funds.

Mr DIMOPOULOS — It was an absolute failure that they presided over. Thank you, Minister.

Ms SHING — Minister, thanks for your attendance today. It is nice to see that the proportion of women sitting at the witness table is growing steadily. I hope that at some point we can have 100 per cent women sitting at the table. Eighty per cent is good enough for today's purposes. Thank you, Dr Csar, for being here.

I would like to pick up on Federation Training, which has been the subject of some argy-bargy this afternoon, and to go to the substantive detail around educational outcomes and endeavours in the Gippsland area. This is a part of the world where many people have been employed at Federation Training in a variety of roles, often for a very, very long time, and as I understand it there has been a steady decline due to lack of rigour, oversight and accountability in assisting workers to continue to retrain, to continue to upskill and to continue to develop as a workforce to provide the best educational opportunities for students across Gippsland. Minister, in relation to budget paper 3, page 187, and the allocation of funding to develop a better workforce offering, what work has gone on in and around Federation Training to assist them to take stock of what the needs are and to improve the quality and consistency of course offerings and engagement across a very large geographic area?

Ms TIERNEY — Thank you, Ms Shing, for that question. Being one of the local members I know that you are quite familiar with some of the work that has actually been happening from the education department's point of view but of course from my office as well, because we have been concerned about a situation where two TAFEs were forced, under previous governments, to amalgamate, and it did not go well. You also had a situation where there was a proposed amalgamation between the TAFE and Federation University, and we all know that that did not go very well either. We also know that Federation Training, as a result of that, was left with an organisational structure, a course list and a facilities list that require a lot of work. The recent leadership that has taken up roles within Federation Training is absolutely committed to making sure that the course offerings at Federation Training align with the actual needs of the local community.

Ms SHING — To that end, Minister, Jonathan Davis and Des Powell have been very clear about what they would like to achieve by way of a reset, actually enabling Federation Training to deliver substantive outcomes for students that are relevant to industry. How is government and departmental engagement assisting them to do that though, because this is no mean feat when you look at the fact that many of the workers at Federation Training have been there for a very long time — they are established in their positions — and I would like to know how we in fact bring about that change?

Ms TIERNEY — Of course some of that change can be brought about by government providing financial assistance where it sees that that realignment and change is taking place. But can I also say that I have been heartened by the fact that Federation Training is wanting to have a whole Latrobe-Gippsland approach to the delivery of post-school training. I know that there are issues through the corridor that will take some time. What we have been doing is running industry round tables with the Victorian skills commissioner, and I think that they have been really well received. Employers and industry throughout Gippsland and the Latrobe have had an opportunity to sit down and actually talk about their skills shortages — —

The CHAIR — Order! The Deputy Chair until 4.18 p.m.

Ms SHING — We might come back to that in the next round. Thanks, Minister.

Mr MORRIS — That is all very interesting, but we have an organisation that has, Minister, failed to report to the Parliament two years running — in 2015 and 2016. As you know, you have a responsibility under the Financial Management Act to ensure that that entity reports. I understand that some commentary has been made as to why the reports are delayed, but the point is you are here effectively asking the Parliament to fund this organisation for a third year when we have had absolutely no accountability. So I ask you, and I will ask you for three figures: how many students were enrolled in government-subsidised places at Federation Training for 2015, and how many for 2016? That is the first set. What was Federation Training's full-time equivalent staff headcount as at 31 December 2015 and 31 December 2016? And thirdly, what was the amount of contestable funding that Federation Training received in 2015 and 2016 respectively?

Ms SHING — No, it does not relate to the estimates period.

The CHAIR — I think, Deputy Chair, where this relates to the — —

Mr MORRIS — This relates to funding an organisation that is refusing to report to the Parliament on its use of public money. The department does regular performance reports; the minister will have the information. I think it is entirely reasonable for me to seek it.

The CHAIR — My point was to say that the budget papers relate to the 16–17 actual period, and I think it is fair and reasonable — —

Mr MORRIS — They relate to funding of an organisation which refuses — —

Ms WARD — Shouting does not make it any easier to understand you, Mr Morris.

Members interjecting.

The CHAIR — Order!

Mr MORRIS — I am not interested in semantic splits between whether it is in the budget or whether it is this year or last year —

The CHAIR — No, Deputy Chair. This is the estimates period — —

Mr MORRIS — The fact is the government is seeking more money to go to this organisation and it will not report.

Ms WARD — Keep talking over the Chair, Mr Morris; that always works.

Mr MORRIS — The minister is not carrying out her duties. I understand she has made an explanation, and that is fine, but we still need the information if we are to report to the Parliament on whether this appropriation should be supported. That is what we are here for.

The CHAIR — And as I said, Deputy Chair, I am very happy for questions that relate to the 16–17 financial year and across the forward estimates to be asked. When you are going back to 2015 or 2014, that is outside the scope — —

Mr MORRIS — I am not going to 2014; I am going to financial year 15 —

Ms WARD — No, of course you do not want to go to 2014. Why would you want to do that? Let's not talk about your record in government.

Mr MORRIS — which has not been reported on, and financial year 16, which has not been reported on — neither of which have been reported on. And this government is asking the Parliament for more money for this organisation. We are entirely entitled to ask the question.

The CHAIR — And I am very happy for the question — —

Mr MORRIS — And well done running interference for the Minister, Chair. You are doing a great job.

Ms WARD — And the minister is able to answer it as she sees fit.

Mr MORRIS — She needs it, I know.

The CHAIR — I am very happy for the question to stand as it relates to the 16–17 — —

Mr MORRIS — Chair, are you censoring the committee?

The CHAIR — No. I am — —

Mr MORRIS — Are you saying that it is not reasonable to require information before we report to the Parliament on whether this organisation should be funded? Because that is appalling. That is absolutely appalling.

Ms WARD — Oh, Mr Morris, you are going red. Please stop.

Mr MORRIS — Yes, I am going red because I am bloody angry. I am bloody angry. We are playing politics when this organisation will not report to the minister and the minister is not doing her job.

Ms WARD — It would be nice to just talk about this calmly, Mr Morris, instead of you yelling.

Mr MORRIS — It would be nice if we could get the information.

The CHAIR — Order! Ms Ward.

Ms WARD — Maybe if you stopped yelling, people might be able to give you the information that you seek.

Mr MORRIS — This is absolutely outrageous. It is outrageous behaviour by the Chair.

The CHAIR — We had — —

Mr MORRIS — It is outrageous. I am not joking. I am deadly serious.

Ms SHING — Have we got a walkout?

Mr MORRIS — You start telling me I cannot ask about an organisation that will not report to the Parliament — what the hell are we here for?

The CHAIR — No, I am — —

Mr MORRIS — What the hell are we here for?

The CHAIR — We have two sets of hearings in PAEC, as you know.

Mr MORRIS — Oh, come on, Chair. This is a semantic split.

The CHAIR — No, it is not.

Mr MORRIS — No, no, no. This is a semantic split. You are conniving with the minister to withhold information — —

Ms WARD — Mr Morris, you are obviously more interested in your own voice than you are in receiving an answer —

Mr MORRIS — You are conniving with the minister to withhold information.

Ms WARD — I would suggest that you actually do not have anything of substance, which is why you are padding out your question time with these ridiculous interruptions.

The CHAIR — Ms Ward.

Mr MORRIS — I have asked questions, and I am not getting answers.

The CHAIR — I am saying to you that I am happy for — —

Mr MORRIS — The point is we will eventually get the next lot of figures, and it will be too late because we are on to the next year. The system depends on public organisations reporting in a timely manner, and this organisation refuses to, so it is entirely reasonable to ask for that information now.

The CHAIR — I am very happy for a question to stand as it relates to the 16–17 financial year or across the forward estimates and for the minister to respond.

Mr MORRIS — The question relates to that information.

The CHAIR — I am happy for the question to stand that relates to the 16–17 financial year or across the forward estimates.

Mr MORRIS — Okay, Chair, perhaps you are not familiar with the dates. I asked about 2015 — financial year finishes 31 December for this organisation. I asked about 2016 — financial year finishes 31 December. And just in case you cannot do the arithmetic —

Ms WARD — No need to be patronising, Mr Morris.

Mr MORRIS — the year that we are concerned about is in the budget.

The CHAIR — So as it relates to the budget papers I am happy for a question to stand in relation to Federation TAFE.

Mr MORRIS — You are a disgrace, Chair — an absolute disgrace.

Ms WARD — I think Mr Morris would like to go home early, Minister.

Mr MORRIS — A government that claimed it needed to clean up PAEC — the government did nothing. The members had to rearrange the process. The government —

Members interjecting.

Mr MORRIS — refused to abolish Dorothy Dixers in conformance with your commitments —

Ms WARD — Mr Smith, do you have a question? Or have you run out of questions for the minister?

Mr MORRIS — and now you are censoring the opposition and —

Members interjecting.

Mr MORRIS — seeking information.

The CHAIR — Not at all.

Ms WARD — I suggest the opposition have actually just run out of questions for the minister.

Mr DIMOPOULOS — That is right.

Ms SHING — Mr Smith is also leaving the table. On a point of order, Chair, do you wish to put that question to the minister for the period or alternatively to provide time to someone else?

The CHAIR — Did the minister wish to answer the Deputy Chair's question as it applies to the budget papers?

Ms SHING — Even though the opposition members have now left the room.

Ms TIERNEY — Yes, I do, because I think it is important. We have a new team at Federation Training that are doing their very best to turn things around. They have been left with a mess, to be quite frank. In terms of

the question that Mr Morris had in relation to annual reports, I am yet to table Federation Training's 2015 and 2016 annual reports. The delay is due to the merging of the accounts from two separate TAFE institutes to become Federation Training in 2014. I am pleased that the 2014 annual report has finally been tabled, which is a testament to the new board and management team.

Federation Training has been advised that VAGO certification of the 2015 annual report will be received shortly. Certification of the 2016 annual report will commence once the 2015 annual report is finalised. This is standard practice, as VAGO cannot commence an audit without the prior year being complete. I am confident that the new management and board will continue to improve business practices within the institute so that Gippsland has the local TAFE they deserve.

Turning to the question of requests for data, as part of the Victorian training market report the Department of Education and Training does not publish provider-level data which could be considered commercially sensitive, particularly in a contestable market. TAFEs are in that market and are afforded the same protection as private providers. Consequently I will not be providing training data — activity data — for individual training providers. That is a matter for each provider, including TAFEs.

Ms PATTEN — I would like to refer to the \$8.2 million apprentice support officers program that Ms Ward touched upon earlier. I am interested in to where it is being directed. I did listen to the various places it was being directed, but I note the 2015 VAGO report that was looking at the most disadvantaged areas of Victoria, and they really identified almost six postcodes as being more disadvantaged. We know 50 per cent of the prison population came from 6 per cent of the postcodes, so I would like to know whether you have focused some of this apprenticeship support on those most disadvantaged areas.

Ms TIERNEY — We actually have them located in each TAFE, so there will be people embedded in disadvantaged communities.

Ms PATTEN — But no focus — it is across the board, regardless?

Ms TIERNEY — It is at this stage. But can I say that in terms of the apprenticeship task force that we launched very recently, one of the key barriers, one would assume, to people undertaking an apprenticeship, TAFE or training in skills of various forms will be because they come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Without wanting to predetermine any outcome of the task force findings, I will be very interested in seeing what they do come up with in terms of directly dealing with the issue of disadvantaged and vulnerable young people as well as adults in the apprenticeship system.

Can I also add, though, that in Skills First we have the Reconnect program. It is a funding stream that is absolutely dedicated to the engagement of those that are not engaged in the community.

Ms PATTEN — I look forward to the outcome of that report as well. Looking at the support that those offices provide, and looking at the improvements in apprenticeship retention and completion rates, which is obviously one of the objectives of this program, I think you said there had been a 3 per cent improvement in this area. Maybe you can clarify. On pages 188, 190 and 191 there are three different figures. I have got the number of students enrolled in government-subsidised courses, and the target is 322 000. The number of government-subsidised course completions for the same target is 108 000 — that is on page 191. Then on page 190 — and I understand that this figure is no longer being used — on the bottom, the successful training completion, as measured by module load completion rate, is 80 per cent.

If I look at those figures, 322 000 people enrolled in a government-subsidised course and the target is 108 000 completions, that is not 80 per cent. I understand you are not using the percentages anymore; you are going for absolute numbers. But obviously you would be wanting to give us a percentage completion rate as well.

Ms TIERNEY — Sure. I will ask Dr Csar to make comment on this, but just in terms of the disadvantage and the location of ASOs, there are two that are actually allocated to Federation Training.

Ms PATTEN — Great. Thank you.

Dr CSAR — It is a technical answer: courses take a number of years, people commence every year and completions do not occur in the year in which they commence.

Ms PATTEN — So can I understand that you are looking at an 80 per cent target for completion in 17–18?

Dr CSAR — Our focus is on the number, and it is on increasing the completion rate, yes.

Ms PATTEN — So no percentages now; we will just look at the numbers.

Dr CSAR — Correct.

Ms PATTEN — Why is that? We often talk about improvements by percentages — as the minister did just, saying there had been a 3 per cent improvement — so not using percentages seems to make it very difficult to actually see what sort of improvements there are.

Dr CSAR — That is correct. The targets and performance of the system are presented within the yearly report. It is a complex report. If you like, we can provide on notice a finer cut for you on apprenticeship targets.

Ms PATTEN — Yes, thank you, Mr Csar. Just one final question on some of the initiatives that were announced in the 17–18 federal budget and whether you have considered the impact that they will have on your targets and outcomes.

Ms TIERNEY — We are still evaluating the impacts, to be quite frank. There are a number of concerns that we have. We have registered that in a piece of correspondence from all the skills and training ministers across the states to the federal government, and I am more than happy to furnish you with that correspondence.

Ms PATTEN — Thank you.

Ms SHING — I just wanted to continue in relation to the improvements in course quality and offerings in regional Victoria. It is an area where we have seen, as I have indicated earlier, a lack of consistency and a lack of linkages between the course offerings that have been provided and industry and business. What I would like to again go to is budget paper 3, page 186, on the objectives and the way in which we are attempting to firstly staunch the flow of people from public educational offerings and unregulated vocational training on the one hand back into a system where we do have recognition of courses as a consistent means of assessing capability on the shop floor, on a worksite et cetera. To that end I would like to see what further work is planned to make sure that organisations across regional Victoria retain that level of accountability and engagement into the future, particularly where often in Gippsland you have got more than 10 campuses spread over a really vast area. How do we make sure that everyone who goes to a different campus or has a different experience can have in common an outcome that is geared towards the best chance at a job?

Ms TIERNEY — In terms of the TAFE sector it has a Victorian government guarantee. I think that sends an important message to the community, and that is why we have also re-established the TAFE network. You might have seen on billboards but also on television sets a TAFE advertisement that is encouraging people to get on board with TAFE, and that has been well received. What is also happening of course is that the skills commissioner is going through all of regional Victoria talking to employers and working out where the skill gaps are. In terms of those providers that have been unscrupulous and who reside in regional Victoria, I think most of them do not exist anymore because, as you know, in regional settings people know what is really going on, and they do not last too long if they are not doing the right thing. That has been occurring. Again, in terms of maintaining the quality aspect, it is also through the process that Ms Watts and her colleagues run in ensuring that there are an increased number of benchmarks and a higher level of benchmarks so that we can drive quality through the system throughout Victoria.

Ms SHING — Just on that point, could I ask you to focus on population growth and the way in which that is anticipated to present challenges across the board in all sorts of service delivery areas. With the remaining couple of minutes I would like to see how population growth has been worked into the qualitative improvements and offerings that the TAFE sector can provide.

Ms TIERNEY — I will ask Ms Watts to speak.

Ms SHING — Sorry. Yes, Ms Watts, you were pointed to by the minister earlier on.

Ms TIERNEY — But just prior to that can I also indicate that another large funding stream within Skills First is for the regional and specialist training fund, and that is because we understand in regional Victoria in

particular there are thin markets and there are issues around not having enough students for particular niche courses. So what we are also trying to do is encourage TAFEs to partner up with each other so that they can offer various courses across the board and of course get that TAFE network happening not just on our TV screens but in a meaningful way

Ms SHING — In a meaningful, face-to-face way. Sorry, Ms Watts.

Ms WATTS — Ms Shing, one of the central elements of Skills First, which goes to answer your question, is the concept of the funded course list. The funded course list has been developed and introduced by government from 1 January this year to ensure that courses are available for subsidised training that firstly meet current and future industry needs, that grow employment and further education outcomes and promote equity and address disadvantage.

Ms SHING — And that is an organic list, is it not?

Ms WATTS — That is an organic list which is continuously updated. That list has reduced the number of 1500 courses previously to a targeted list of just over 1000 courses currently. That list and the detailed analysis of that was undertaken through 200 separate industry and community consultations which were facilitated by the Victorian skills commissioner.

Ms SHING — And it will continue to evolve over time?

Ms WATTS — It is absolutely open to evolve over time.

Mr T. SMITH — Secretary, I refer to page 15 of the questionnaire, which shows 365 million of the 1.2 billion allocated to the Victorian training guarantee in 2016 was not spent. Can you confirm the exact amount that was spent from the Victorian training guarantee in 2016?

Ms CALLISTER — Sorry, Mr Smith, which question?

Mr T. SMITH — Page 15, sorry, Secretary.

Ms CALLISTER — I might ask Ms Atta to give you the detail on that.

Ms ATTA — Thank you. The unapplied appropriation for 2016 that is shown in question 12 of the questionnaire and reported in the annual report included a proportion of that relating to the Victorian training guarantee, as you have pointed out. What we can see on page 191 of BP3 for this budget is the 2016–17 expected outcome for the total output, but what I do not have is a breakdown for the calendar year of exactly how much — —

Mr T. SMITH — So we want to know what was spent from the VTG.

Ms ATTA — Yes. I do not have that breakdown currently. That is something that we could look to follow up for you.

Mr T. SMITH — Can you take that on notice, please?

Ms CALLISTER — Yes.

Mr T. SMITH — Okay, thank you, Secretary. How much of the 365.5 million carried forward from the 2016 VTG has been rolled into the 2017 VTG?

Ms CALLISTER — Ms Atta.

Ms ATTA — Thank you. So the 365 million that was not applied in that year has been reinvested over the forward estimates. Again I would have to get you the breakdown of what amount applied in 17–18. The unapplied appropriation or that underspend in 16 reflected the lower activity in the sector partly as a result of the quality blitz at the time that cleaned out a number of the poor-quality providers. We saw that and other previous policy changes around tightening of eligibility leading to that underspend.

Mr T. SMITH — Sorry, can I just — —

Ms ATTA — But the reinvestment has taken place over the forward estimates. I have not got that breakdown for 17–18 right here.

Mr T. SMITH — I just want to clarify: we are talking about the 2017 VTG, not the total output. How much was the VTG, and how much of that 365 million from 2016 has been rolled into 2017?

Ms ATTA — So that is what we will follow up for you.

Mr T. SMITH — Okay, thank you very much. And that is not into other programs; that is simply into the VTG?

Ms ATTA — It has been reinvested into training and workforce development consistent with Skills First, and we will get you that breakdown.

Mr T. SMITH — Okay, thank you very much. So has any of this revenue been returned to consolidated revenue?

Ms ATTA — So that 365 was unapplied in that year but reinvested across the forward estimates, so it has come back into the portfolio.

Mr T. SMITH — Sorry, that does not answer my question, I do not think.

Ms ATTA — It has not been returned as an efficiency, as a saving. It has been reinvested.

Mr T. SMITH — My question is: has it been returned to consolidated revenue? Can you just very simply answer that question?

Ms ATTA — I am just trying to make sure I am technically correct in the way I am answering it. I am happy to follow that up. I think the key thing is that it has been reapplied across the forward estimates. So did it — —

Mr T. SMITH — So is that the full quantum of 365?

Ms ATTA — Yes, that is my understanding.

Mr T. SMITH — Could you clarify that for me on notice? Thank you.

The CHAIR — Order! I would like to thank the witnesses for their attendance, the Minister for Training and Skills, the Honourable Gayle Tierney, Ms Callister, Ms Watts, Ms Atta, Dr Csar and Ms Whetton. The committee will follow up on any questions taken on notice in writing; I think there were six. The response answering the questions in full should be provided in writing within 10 working days of the committee's request.

Committee adjourned.