

VERIFIED VERSION

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into budget estimates 2012–13

Melbourne — 10 May 2012

Members

Mr N. Angus

Mr P. Davis

Ms J. Hennessy

Mr D. Morris

Mr D. O'Brien

Mr M. Pakula

Mr R. Scott

Chair: Mr P. Davis

Deputy Chair: Mr M. Pakula

Staff

Executive Officer: Ms V. Cheong

Witnesses

Mr P. Ryan, Minister for Police and Emergency Services,

Ms P. Armytage, Secretary,

Mr N. Robertson, Executive Director, Police and Emergency Management, Department of Justice;
and

Chief Commissioner K. Lay, Victoria Police.

**Necessary corrections to be notified to
executive officer of committee**

The CHAIR — I declare open the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearing on the 2012–13 budget estimates for the portfolios of police and emergency services, bushfire response and regional and rural development. On behalf of the committee I welcome the Honourable Peter Ryan, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for Bushfire Response and Minister for Regional and Rural Development, and from the Department of Justice Ms Penny Armytage, secretary, Chief Commissioner of Police Ken Lay and Mr Neil Robertson, executive director of police and emergency management. Members of Parliament, departmental officers, members of the public and the media are also welcome.

In accordance with the guidelines for public hearings I remind members of the public gallery that they cannot participate in any way in the committee's proceedings. Only officers of the PAEC secretariat are to approach PAEC members. Departmental officers, as requested by the minister or his chief of staff, can approach the table during the hearing to provide information to the minister, by leave of myself as chairman. Written communication to witnesses can only be provided via officers of the PAEC secretariat. Members of the media are also requested to observe the guidelines for filming or recording proceedings in the Legislative Council committee room, and no more than two TV cameras are allowed at any one time in the allocated spaces. May I remind TV camera operators to remain focused only on the persons speaking and that panning of the public gallery, committee members and witnesses is strictly prohibited. As previously advised to witnesses here today, I am pleased to announce that these hearings are being webcast live on the Parliament's website.

All evidence taken by this committee is taken under the provisions of the Parliamentary Committees Act, attracts parliamentary privilege and is protected from judicial review. However, any comments made outside the precincts of the hearing are not protected by parliamentary privilege. This committee has determined that there is no need for evidence to be sworn; however, witnesses are reminded that all questions must be answered in full and with accuracy and truthfulness. Any persons 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. Witnesses will be provided with proof versions of the transcript to be verified and returned within two working days of this hearing. Unverified transcripts and PowerPoint presentations will be placed on the committee's website immediately following receipt, to be replaced by verified transcripts within five days of receipt.

Following a presentation by the minister, committee members will ask questions relating to the inquiry. Generally, the procedure followed will be that relating to questions in the Legislative Assembly.

I ask that all mobile telephones be turned off.

I now call on the minister to give a brief presentation of no more than 10 minutes on the more complex financial and performance information that relates to the budget estimates for the police and emergency services portfolio.

Overheads shown.

Mr RYAN — Thank you, Chairman — to you and members of the committee. I look forward to spending the next 4¼ hours with you. The justice portfolio budget, which is the first slide, includes the police budget of \$2147 million, or 47.3 per cent, and emergency services, \$302.3 million, or 6.7 per cent, and therefore constitutes 54 per cent of the portfolio budget at large.

In the achievements for 11–12, Victoria Police has been engaged in one of the biggest recruitment drives in the organisation's history. By June this year we will have an extra 850 police on the beat over and above the numbers that were on the beat when we came to government in November 2010. From a zero base, by 30 June Victoria Police will have recruited and trained 90 PSOs — protective services officers — and those PSOs will be patrolling platforms at Flinders Street, Southern Cross, North Melbourne and Footscray. There will be more than 50 PSO recruits in the academy as at 30 June 2012. This year police are likely to see close to 1000 recruits inclusive of PSOs and police go through the academy.

To support this recruitment the government has invested \$17.7 million in the development and implementation of an academy master plan. The plan includes investment in IT infrastructure to reduce the reliance on classrooms and to lessen the pressure on instructors, the firearms range, additional soft fall areas to undertake defensive tactics training, additional change rooms, classrooms, a kitchen upgrade and improvements to the

scenario village to provide for a railway station environment. These works are under way and will lead to a more efficient academy with training platforms on a more modern footing.

The government commissioned Jack Rush, QC, to look into the command management and functions of the senior structure of Victoria Police. The government has accepted 24 out of the 25 recommendations of the inquiry, including better workforce planning, modernising the regulatory framework, clarifying the accountability to police command and improving the accountability for and delivery of information technology projects. The government has moved to implement these reforms quickly.

The Victoria Police enterprise bargaining agreement was agreed, embedding significant workforce reforms and for the first time providing a streamlined plain English document. As a result the EBA has been reduced in length from 532 clauses and 180 pages to 156 clauses and 92 pages. Alongside the EBA the government agreed an allied benefits memorandum of understanding with Victoria Police and the Police Association, the TPA. These reforms will establish a police registration and services board, improve the efficiency of the appeals process for transfer and promotion decisions, improve the expression of interests ballot process for filling general duties positions that will save significant time and cost, clarify the power of the chief commissioner to offer fixed-term or part-time appointments for specific roles and allow for lateral entry of sworn members into Victoria Police.

Victoria Police is undertaking a comprehensive approach to tackling crime. Reducing and preventing family violence is a priority for this government. In February the government announced family violence prevention grants totalling \$7.2 million over three years to support programs to help prevent family violence. In November 2011 the chief commissioner announced a new model to deliver a statewide push to improve service and assistance to all victims of family violence. This will see a doubling of family violence units, with a unit to be located in most of the 21 police divisions across the state within three years. The number of family violence court liaison officers attached to major magistrates courts will also be increased so police can assist more victims in initiating intervention orders. In addition the government has recently released a draft action plan for community consultation to address the increase in violence against women.

The hundreds of additional police that are being recruited, trained and deployed are making inroads into the street offences, and their high visibility presence is having an impact. In the short term you will see more detection of offences such as drug offences; however, pleasingly, as at 31 March 2012 we have seen a reduction in behaviour in public recorded offences, a decrease of 12 per cent on the same time as last year. Victoria Police has undertaken a number of initiatives to proactively ensure public safety in and around the CBD. For example, a 42-member public order response team was established by Victoria Police in June 2011 to enhance community safety at clubs, pubs and licensed venues in the Melbourne CBD.

Last year we introduced tough new hoon laws which, amongst other things, extended the period of immediate impoundment of vehicles on detection of a hoon offence from 48 hours to 30 days. As at 31 March this year, 3168 vehicles had been impounded in the first three-quarters of this financial year.

In March this year I announced the establishment of Taskforce Astraea. It focuses on the investigation of sex offences against children online. Taskforce Astraea is the response to the paedophile task force election commitment and is operating within the sexual crime squad, utilising reallocated resources.

On 18 October 2011 I launched the livestock and farm crime specialist group to support and improve investigations into stolen livestock and other farm-related crimes.

Consistent with the recommendations of the bushfires royal commission, in November 2011 the government launched the Operation Firesetter bushfire arson prevention campaign, a summer fire campaign and community preparedness. At the beginning of December 2011 the government launched hard-hitting television and radio advertisements to challenge the complacency within the Victorian community and prompt Victorians to prepare for the risk of fire by completing a fire plan. Over the duration of the campaign there were 2.1 million visits to the CFA's website, up 885 000 visits on the same period last year. Nearly 30 per cent of visitors had not previously visited the website. Key campaign web pages included the township protection plan page, which received more than 27 000 visits and 12 000 plan downloads. The fire ready kit webpage received more than 13 000 visits and 5000 kit downloads. The fire ready mobile phone app page received 21 000 visits. The fire ready app was downloaded approximately 52 000 times during the campaign.

In response to changing weather conditions and an increased grassfire threat, in January 2012 campaign print and online advertising shifted focus to grassfire warnings. Online advertisements with the message 'You can't outrun a bushfire' resulted in CFA's grassfire information webpage receiving over 5000 hits in the space of a week.

Victoria experienced some of the worst flooding in 50 years in 2010 and early 2011, devastating the state's north and the north-east. The flood review examined the effectiveness of warnings, evacuation and aspects of flood response and recovery. The government supports, or supports in principle, 90 of the 93 recommendations and has already commenced implementation. The majority of the final report recommendations will be implemented through the government's emergency management reform program.

The fire services commissioner is implementing a rolling three-year reform action plan to increase the interoperability, resilience, capability and capacity of Victoria's fire services. From 2011 to 2014 the fire services reform program will provide a framework to refresh, renew and reform the way Victoria's fire services work together and service the community. It is based on six strategic priorities; I will not run through them now, Chair, in the interest of time. The fire services reform action plan is led by the fire services commissioner. It is owned by the Country Fire Authority, the Department of Sustainability and Environment, the Melbourne Fire Brigade and the Victorian State Emergency Service.

VICSES and the fire services' response to the 2012 floods evidenced improvements in our multiagency operations through incident management structures that better use the expertise across all emergency service agencies; working with communities to better prepare and respond; planning that was both strategic and tactical depending on the changing circumstances of the flooding event; better integrated relief operations that met the needs of affected people; support and assistance leading up to the implementation of recovering; and joined-up, timely and relevant community information and advice. A review of operations to identify further opportunities for improvement is under way.

On the issue of emergency management reform, the agencies' improved integration in responding to the north-eastern floods was heartening. However, we believe there is considerable scope to improve our emergency management arrangements. For that reason we released a green paper in September 2011. This reform is a once-in-a-generation opportunity and will create an emergency management system in which the emergency services, organisations and relevant government agencies share a common understanding of emergency management, train and exercise together, work to common operating standards, and rely on equipment and systems that work together. This vision will guide future government investment. A white paper will put forward concrete proposals for legislative reforms and aims and objectives for reform in other areas. Key areas to be addressed include those already mentioned and a variety of others that, again, in the interests of time I will not canvass now. The white paper will be released later this year.

On the issue of cross-agency interoperability, Exercise Fudo was a large-scale, multiagency field exercise conducted across a large geographical area centred around the high-risk areas of Warrandyte and North Warrandyte. Pleasingly, Chairman, this exercise involved firefighting appliances from the CFA, MFB and DSE as well as additional support equipment such as earthmoving equipment and firefighting aircraft. In addition to this, members from Victoria Police, the State Emergency Service, the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority, the Salvation Army and St John's Ambulance were also involved. The exercise involved around 1000 emergency service staff and volunteers. It is truly a window to the future, Chair.

On the issue of supporting our emergency services, the government is delivering two programs which will improve the capability of regional firefighters to be dispatched and communicate while fighting fires; the CFA radio replacement program and the CFA dispatch network, and again in the interests of time I will not canvass them at length, Chair.

We will have improved call taking and dispatch. The government is centralising 000 call taking and dispatch for Victoria Police and Ambulance Victoria in regional Victoria into one centre in Ballarat. As part of this centralisation, regional call taking and dispatch centre is managed by Victoria Police and Ambulance Victoria are being transitioned to the Ballarat state emergency communication centre, which uses a computer-aided dispatch system. Victoria Police has successfully transitioned four out of five regional centres, namely, Ballarat, Bendigo, Mildura and Moe. The final centre, Wangaratta, is scheduled for transition in November this year —

four months ahead of schedule. The program will release 66 police officers back to operational duties by the end of the transition, with 58 officers already released.

In 12–13 the government has provided funding as part of a \$21.8 million emergency communications package to improve the technical infrastructure that supports computer-aided dispatching. This initiative will improve technical infrastructure by upgrading the monitoring of key systems and networks, upgrading the automatic flow of information to emergency service organisation systems and improving database robustness and disaster recovery. In 2012–13 all of Victoria's 000 calls will be managed through one computer-aided dispatch environment.

For the Victoria State Emergency Service 10 new rescue vehicles will be delivered by the end of the financial year. In the important area of lifesaving, work has commenced on the upgrade of the Dromana Bay Life Saving Club facilities, and upgrades to the Carrum facility are due to commence in June 2012.

On the all-important issue of emergency alert, the first national telephone warning system was implemented in December 2009, and — credit where due — I recognise the contribution of the former government to that process. Prior to this, there was no national telephone emergency warning system. A location-based capability will further enhance emergency alert by allowing SMS messages to be sent to mobile phones based on their last known location, rather than based on the customer's registered service address. As a state we are leading this complex project. There has been no international precedent, and we are leading this on behalf of all Australian governments. A contract was executed with Telstra on 23 December 2011 to provide a location-based capability on its network. In addition Telstra will also deliver the necessary changes to the emergency alert platform to support location-based capabilities from the other carriers. Negotiations are continuing with Optus and with Vodafone.

In the emergency services sector and on the issue of election commitments, 58 new and refurbished CFA stations will have been completed by the financial year 2011–12. We will see the rollout of 101 new firefighting vehicles commenced, 416 new crew protection systems will have been installed in CFA trucks, 170 new firefighters protective ensembles delivered, 49 additional neighbourhood safer places established, a record \$11.6 million in equipment to boost 196 local volunteer emergency services groups through the volunteer emergency services equipment program, upgrades to the Melbourne metropolitan radio network to facilitate improved interoperability by government users and to bring Victoria into line with federal radio spectrum requirements, delivery of the VICSES volunteers online system and Web enablement of the incident management system, recruitment of 10 specialist VICSES staff for flood intelligence, incident management and community education warnings, and recruitment of 23 VICSES staff for volunteer support programs.

By way of the budget outcomes for the 2012–13 budget initiatives in terms of police, the police station infrastructure upgrades will see the funding of \$56.4 million — 48.7 million asset and 7.7 million output funding — worth of infrastructure upgrades across police stations to facilitate the deployment of the 1700 additional police and the 940 PSOs. This funding will provide a number of elements to enable police and PSOs to perform their duties, including access to a muster room, ancillary support spaces such as correspondence lockers and clothing lockers, personal issue firearms and storage facilities, vehicles and staff amenities.

The government has also funded an \$8.7 million boost to the staffing of the sex offenders register to more effectively manage the risk and monitor registered sex offenders in this state.

By way of police station upgrades, the 2012–13 state budget provides \$54.6 million in funding to upgrade police stations and build a new operational tactics and safety training, OTST, facility at Essendon. This funding includes \$20.7 million in asset funding for a new police station and VICSES combined facility at Waurn Ponds and an Emerald police station as well as funding for the Axedale police residence, planning and development work for increased service delivery at Mount Waverley and \$27 million for the new OTST facility at Essendon.

Finally, in terms of new investments in the 12–13 budget initiatives for emergency services, there is some crossover between emergency services and the bushfire response. In terms of the bushfire response, in the 12–13 budget the government continues its commitment to Victorians by providing a further \$12.3 million to purchase new firefighting vehicles. This renewal of firefighting vehicles will improve CFA's fire ground effectiveness, improving public safety for Victorians. These newer vehicles are also safer for CFA volunteers in

burn-overs, as they are fitted with the crew protection systems as standard. In the 12–13 budget the government continues to deliver on this commitment by providing \$22.9 million to build or upgrade further stations in regional Victoria by July 2013. These stations will strengthen rural and regional communities and maintain a viable and sustainable volunteer firefighting capability.

In 12–13 the government is providing \$21.8 million over four years to emergency services communications, including the integration of VICSES into incident control centres, which will enable it to better deal with large-scale major, declared operations. In 12–13 the government has provided funding as part of the \$21.8 million emergency communications package to improve the technical infrastructure that supports computer-aided dispatching. This initiative will improve the technical infrastructure by upgrading monitoring of key systems and networks, upgrading new automatic flow of information to emergency service organisations systems and improving database robustness and disaster recovery. In 12–13 all of Victoria's 000 calls will be managed through one computer-aided dispatch environment.

Finally, the government has endorsed the emergency services communication strategic framework, which provides a broad planning framework for provision of integrated multi-agency emergency services communications for Victoria. As part of the development of the framework, the government has provided funding in 12–13 to create a long-term strategic plan for emergency communications. The plan will evaluate the current communications capability to determine where there are efficiencies to be gained in bringing together current capabilities and where there are identifiable gaps in current capability and determine which investment scenario based upon the options identified to move to a preferred future communications model provides the best value for money for the state. Those are my opening remarks.

The CHAIR — Thank you, Minister, for the very detailed and comprehensive presentation. In the remaining time available until 11.00 a.m. we will take questions on the portfolio of police and emergency services.

Minister, given the key growth and efficiency initiatives announced in the budget, can you please outline for the committee the likely impact of the budget on enhancing service delivery, promoting productivity and achieving efficiency gains within your portfolio? In responding, could you also indicate how you intend to monitor the portfolio's effectiveness in maximising improvements in these areas?

Mr RYAN — Thank you for the question and the opportunity to outline how our budget will impact service delivery, productivity and efficiency in the areas of police and emergency services. Amongst the service delivery improvements, first, in terms of service delivery the government is making a record investment. It increases the front-line policing services with the commitment to the 1700 additional police and the 940 protective services officers. The 940 PSOs increase service to the community in terms of improved safety and community confidence at every metropolitan station and in the four regional centres. These commitments have been further supported with a \$56.4 million investment in this budget towards police station infrastructure to accommodate these increased front-line services.

In addition the government has made investments in improved service delivery in road safety. On the road safety front this budget provides for a significant injection of capital and output funding into road safety cameras. The installation of road safety cameras on the Peninsula Link freeway, which is currently under construction, will reinforce to the community that the devastating consequences of speeding will not be tolerated by the government.

In addition to this investment the budget allocates \$17.2 million to support specific road safety initiatives. Victoria Police, VicRoads and the Department of Justice are working on a more coordinated strategy in road safety. The department, with Victoria Police, actively monitors the road toll and the impact of the road safety cameras. In addition Victoria's first road safety camera commissioner, former County Court judge Gordon Lewis will provide ongoing independent oversight of the integrity of all road safety cameras in Victoria.

On the question of efficiencies, front-line services are excluded from the sustainable government initiative. This includes the Country Fire Authority, the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board, the Victoria State Emergency Service, the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority and Victoria Police operational staff as part of the commitment to maintaining front-line service delivery. However, the government considers that there is considerable scope to realise further efficiencies in our emergency services through a range of

measures which include: removing service duplication, merging back-of-office functions, increasing the use of state-purchased contracts and reducing duplication in the IT systems, and I have outlined a number of those initiatives already. Such efficiencies are part of the government's emergency management reform agenda that will drive enhanced capability and capacity through better interoperability of people, of processes, of systems and of technology.

Another recent example of realising such efficiencies has been the extension of the state's metropolitan mobile radio and emergency alert system contracts, which have increased service agencies' capability and service quality within the current forward estimates. A number of improvements continue to be achieved within the service delivery arrangements for emergency 000. ESTA, as it is termed, now provides call-taking and dispatch services for Ambulance Victoria and will soon complete the consolidation program for Victoria Police. When the final D24 at Wangaratta is incorporated into ESTA late in 2012 Victoria will for the first time be able to deliver a vastly improved and more efficient response to public calls for police, fire and ambulance assistance.

The 000 consolidation allows ESTA and the emergency services to pursue further efficiencies through standardisation of many processes. ESTA is now able to implement a workforce management system to balance the staff across the three communication centres and more efficiently address the demand for call-taking and dispatch services, thereby minimising the need for short-notice staff callouts and costly overtime payments. The recent consolidation of the rural 000 call-taking and dispatch service for Victoria Police with ESTA in Ballarat has released 58 police members — that will be 66 by year's end — to operational duty as a powerful signpost of the types of efficiencies and service improvements that the reform program can deliver.

There are a number of other areas to which I can refer, but in the interests of time I will not go through them all. I will refer to the fact that the fire services commissioner plays a very important role in this process. While in the very early days, the department is working with the fire services commissioner to improve the efficiency of the provision of information to the Victorian community. The commission is about to evaluate the benefits of extending the Victorian bushfire information line, and there are a number of issues arising from that particular efficiency measure.

Finally, on issues of productivity improvements, Victoria Police is currently implementing the productivity gains associated with the enterprise bargaining agreement, including the flexibility for shifts in the rosters, enhanced operational readiness across all ranks, streamlined mobility transfer and promotion, the ability to direct members into roles appropriate to their capabilities and the ability to direct members to specific duties outside their normal geographic area. In addition, as I said, there is an allied MOU, but I am happy to take the committee through its details should it be so desired.

The CHAIR — Thank you very much again for a very comprehensive response, Minister. Very briefly could you advise the committee what you consider to be the likely impact on the community in relation to these initiatives in the portfolio?

Mr RYAN — The likely impacts are many, but I will restrict the response, Chair, in the interests of time. In terms of the efficiency improvements, many of these may not be visible to the general public as we work to improve our back-of-house process. However, in doing so we will enable a much more streamlined service to be provided to the Victorian community. Certainly amongst those initiatives the procure-to-pay project will have a direct impact on our many suppliers, who it is hoped will enjoy the benefits of getting paid on time all the time while also having a central point through which their queries can be managed — a very important issue, of course, for the small business sector in particular. There are many other opportunities and advantages arising out of this. There are processes in place for the monitoring of progress of these measures, but in its totality there are many benefits to the community across these various initiatives.

Mr PAKULA — Minister, I will not go to the budget papers in the interests of saving some time; I will go to your presentation. At the back you have got the asset and output measures for police station infrastructure to support police and PSOs. That is \$56.4 million. There was also a DOT budget allocation of more than \$21 million for facilities at railway stations to deliver on that commitment. This was a program that was originally costed at \$161.5 million. In last year's budget it blew out to \$212 million. You also basically absorbed all of the previously budgeted premium station upgrade money, which was some \$55 million. In March you announced another \$20 million for rail station infrastructure. Your spokesperson said that you will place more money on the table as required, and yesterday we heard about \$268 000 toilets. This policy has

become an absolute money pit, and my question is — and I am particularly concerned given the statement of your spokesperson on 21 March — can you confirm that that is it now, that there is no more money being put on the table for the implementation of this PSO policy? Or will we see more and more money expended between now and the next budget and in future budgets?

Mr RYAN — Thank you, Mr Pakula, for the question. The government's commitments around this are very clear, and indeed I recall we discussed much of this last year in this forum. The government's intention always was to ensure the delivery of the 1700 additional front-line operational police and 940 protective services officers by the time of the election in November 2014. That was to be contrasted with the former government's commitment, such as it was, to recruit and train a significant number of police and deliver them by June 2015. We brought forward, as I explained carefully last year, the funding appropriate to having that program delivered seven months earlier. That led to the funding additions, which were reflected in the budget papers last year and which are carried through to this year, so there is no change in fact from what the position was when we sat here last year.

In terms of the funding with regard to the improvements that need to be made to facilities at the rail stations, \$20 million was allocated to that process. That is part of the historical funding. It is actually funded into the budget this year to the tune of the \$17.7 million for the assets and \$1.2 million per annum for the outputs. It will see the facilities provided at 66 stations, and that will be a major start toward being able to put our PSOs onto the platforms throughout the network.

Insofar as the commentary about the cost of those facilities is concerned, there are a number of points to be made. The first thing is that this is not simply an ablutions facility; this is not simply a toilet. There are in fact additional facilities that are being developed at the stations where required. For example, there is a holding facility — a lock-up, if you like — where PSOs can place those who are taken into custody while police are called to deal with them. There is an administrative facility contained within the pods as they are developed in circumstances where they need be developed. I emphasise, Mr Pakula, that there are different facilities at different stations.

Mr PAKULA — A cell at the station. You're going to have a cell at the station?

Mr ANGUS — Let the minister finish his answer. Stop interrupting him.

Mr PAKULA — Is this a cage or a cell or — —

Mr ANGUS — Let the minister finish and you'll hear.

Members interjecting.

The CHAIR — Thank you for your assistance, members. Thank you, Mr O'Brien. Mr Pakula, Ms Hennessy — thank you. Minister?

Mr RYAN — I might also say that these facilities differ according to different stations. No two are the same, and therefore we need to style the facilities to accord with the needs as they apply. I can assure the committee, from an occupational health and safety perspective, that under absolutely no circumstances are we going to have protective services officers working in conditions which are not appropriate to those relevant standards. We are going to ensure those standards are met, and we are also going to ensure that standards of safety are met for everybody involved in this process, be it the protective services officers or those who are apprehended by the protective services officers.

Indeed, very importantly, we recognise that there is a joint benefit in all of this, not only for the travelling public of Victoria but of course for the staff who are otherwise working at these stations, be they Metro or members of the RTBU or otherwise. There is a big benefit for all in having the PSOs on these platforms.

In terms of the issue of cost, I have seen some commentary around that, and I just make this point, Mr Pakula: in time to come, heaven forbid, you were getting off a train at your suburban station and you were about to be assailed by some drunken thug who had the intention of beating you senseless and such event were intercepted and prevented from happening by a protective services officer, I venture to suggest, Mr Pakula, you would regard the \$250 000 as being a very, very reasonable expense.

The practical fact is that over the course of the past 12 months approximately there have been something in the order of 1200 assaults on our transport system. The fact of the matter is that something in the order of 600 of those have occurred on train stations. We need to make sure that our travelling public are kept safe, and we as a government intend to do it, Mr Pakula.

I appreciate that this policy has been contentious. I do. And indeed there has been a lot of commentary around it from various aspects of the public, including from members of Her Majesty's loyal opposition, but, Mr Pakula, I must say I think it is important that, with respect, there be a consistency of view which is put in relation to these matters. I find it interesting, putting it at its lowest, that there is criticism sometimes from those who do not regard this policy as being proper or deliverable, and on the other hand those same people call for the improvements to be made and for the provision of the protective services officers in their particular location.

Mr Pakula, we have committed to the public of Victoria that we will deliver this program. We are well advanced in doing it. We have done it against an absolute tide of criticism which has been provided to us from those who oppose us in the Parliament, and we intend to see this through because in the end our commitment is to the safety of the people who travel the public transport system, particularly our trains, in the state of Victoria.

Mr PAKULA — Thanks, Minister. You had a long go there without interruption so let me make a few points. Firstly, there is no — —

The CHAIR — No, this is for questions. It is not a debate.

Mr PAKULA — I'm asking a question.

The CHAIR — You had better ask it.

Mr PAKULA — Don't interrupt me.

The CHAIR — With great respect, Deputy, I am giving you some advice.

Mr PAKULA — Chair, you have let the minister go on and on and on, and we want to have a go.

The CHAIR — This is not a forum for debate. Deputy, understand that you can give a preamble to the question, but do not debate it.

Mr PAKULA — That is exactly what I am doing. Stop interrupting me.

The CHAIR — Do not reflect on the Chair.

Mr PAKULA — I am not reflecting on the Chair.

The CHAIR — Do not reflect on the Chair.

Mr PAKULA — Stop interrupting me. Minister, let me make a preamble on your commentary. First of all, your initial commitment was always November 2014, so there was no bringing forward. Secondly, there is absolutely nothing inconsistent in the opposition calling on the government to implement its policy but holding it to account for the cost of it. I note that you have not answered the question about whether the spending is at an end — whether everything has now been allocated that will be allocated — and I would appreciate an answer to that question as part of your answer to my follow-up. In terms of the police station infrastructure to support 1700 police and 940 PSOs at \$56.4 million, can you tell us what that is going to mean in terms of upgrading or refurbishing police stations to accommodate PSOs? What is actually going to be built for \$56.4 million?

Mr RYAN — The intention here is to provide the appropriate facilities that are necessary for the PSOs at the respective police stations where the improvements are going to be made. What we are intending here is that there will be improvements to approximately 102 police stations that will require work to be undertaken in the course of this particular program. Insofar as what is actually required at those police stations, I might ask the Chief Commissioner of Police to give the committee an outline of that from an operational perspective. He can complete the information which you seek.

Chief Comm. LAY — The changes at the police stations will consist of things like office facilities, change rooms and storage for equipment and firearms and similar equipment. As you would be aware, these PSOs are not actually starting their duty on railway stations; they will start at police stations, so they need to come, equip up and then be deployed to their relative railway stations. There will be the need to have a storage facility when they finish their role on the stations, to do paperwork, deal with their work on the computers and the like, and to store their equipment. That is the sort of work that we are certainly planning to do.

Mr MORRIS — Minister, continuing the theme, budget paper 3, page 45, the asset initiatives from Justice and specifically the initiative that has just been under discussion, the infrastructure for 1700 front-line police and 940 protective services officers, can you outline for the committee the progress — progress, I stress — in delivering on the government's commitment on railway stations to protect the public?

Mr RYAN — The government, as I have said, has committed to deploying the 940 protective services officers by November 2014. The intention of course is to improve safety for commuters across Victoria's public transport system. In the state budget of 11–12 we provided \$212.3 million for this purpose. The PSOs will patrol all railway stations in metropolitan and four major regional centres of Bendigo, Ballarat, Traralgon and Geelong from 6.00 p.m. until the last service, and they will do it seven days a week. The PSOs will provide an initial response to crime and antisocial behaviour occurring in and around the railway stations, and I emphasise around the railway stations.

The first deployment of the PSOs occurred in February 2012. PSOs are currently deployed to Flinders Street and Southern Cross. The next squad is to be deployed next week. The next railway stations to which the PSOs will be deployed are premium stations, with PSOs on station from 6.00 p.m. until the last train in the inner city locations of Parliament, North Melbourne, Footscray, Flagstaff, Melbourne Central and Richmond.

Victoria Police is recruiting the 940 PSOs at the same time as 1700 additional police, the largest recruitment exercise ever undertaken in Victoria Police history. While the function of the PSOs is of course not a new concept, it is a new role for the PSOs, and it requires a workforce which is designed, recruited and trained from scratch. To date, there are over 1000 in the entrance examination phase, and there have been more than 400 who have successfully completed the entrance examination. As at 30 June 2012 we expect to have 90 PSOs deployed to railway stations; there will be 7 existing PSOs trained to be deployed at railway stations and more than 50 PSOs in the police academy. Victoria Police is well on the way to delivering the 940 PSOs by November 2014.

The PSO graduates will initially be deployed to those inner city railway stations for three months on-the-job training. They will be working in concert with the officers who are part of the transit safety division. As I have said, seven members of the existing cohort of protective services officers are undertaking a bridging course with a view to graduating from the program with the requisite training necessary to undertake duties on the transport network. It is anticipated these seven members will graduate prior to 30 June 2012.

I spent some time at Flinders Street station in the company of the PSOs just last week, and it is instructive to move around the station facilities in their company. It is interesting to see how they interact so constructively with the people who are using the facilities. They are, anecdotally, very popular with those who are operating businesses within the precinct of the stations, and they are doing, I believe, a wonderful job in their relatively embryonic stages in bringing an increased level of safety to the travelling public of Victoria, and in the end that is what this policy is intended to achieve.

Mr MORRIS — A supplementary if I might, Mr Chairman. Minister, thank you for that response. Can you indicate to the committee the process involved in recruiting the new PSOs and the sort of response that has been received from the public?

Mr RYAN — Thank you, Mr Morris. To support the recruitment process and given the scale of it, Victoria Police has entered into a contract with Hoban Recruitment. It is an agency that has the expertise for identifying and assessing suitable applicants for law enforcement professions. I will ask the chief commissioner to explain the process around the involvement of Hoban.

Chief Comm. LAY — As you would be aware, Chair, for the last 150 years Victoria Police has recruited police, and we have done it quite well. Generally we open up the door and we will have a line of people wanting to join the organisation. PSOs were slightly different for us. It was a different model, and we found ourselves in

a different situation. We believed we needed some assistance from external recruiters to actually help us to achieve the targets we needed to achieve, so we engaged Hoban Recruitment. As the minister said, Hobans is an agency specialising in the identification and assessment of suitable candidates for law enforcement roles. Corrections, sheriff's and transport use Hobans for recruiting their people, and they are very, very good at it. We also believed that that was the actual demographic we were trying to attract to PSOs.

Hobans is now managing the initial phase of our recruitment program. They are doing that in conjunction with Victoria Police, and if I might just outline their role, they actually take responsibility for the online application. They then apply a reasoning assessment for these people. They distribute medical packs. They hand out background check templates. They conduct telephone interviews with prospective applicants, and then they run an assessment centre group activity, where they conduct a whole range of testing, including psych tests involving the MMPI model. This is done in conjunction with the police. They then develop and handle the reference checks, and they hand over suitable applicants to Victoria Police.

Doing that work frees up a whole host of police resources where we can actually concentrate on recruiting the 1700 and other very important parts of our recruitment work. Once we get this pool of prospective applicants, Victoria Police then does a background check, we do a fitness test, a medical assessment, a further psych assessment and a final assessment with interviews.

As I say, Victoria Police is working side-by-side with Hobans on the areas I have explained. The initial contract with Hoban was for \$560 000. We have been very happy with the work so far. We have extended that contract now, and it will cost us a total of about \$981 000. The contract extension will ensure that we receive another 100 suitable applicants that can be selected for training in the academy.

The decision to engage Hoban Recruitment is yielding excellent results. We have seen large volumes of high-quality candidates who are expressing an interest in becoming PSOs. We have seen 3000 people actually log on and express an interest. We have got 400 candidates ready to go as PSOs, and it has put us on the front foot in actually delivering what we need to do. We will continue to monitor this process very, very carefully. We know that things may change. We may need to move to a different model, but at this stage we will continue to refine, change and develop to ensure that Victoria Police is best placed to deliver on the requirement of 940 PSOs by November 2014.

Mr SCOTT — Minister, I refer you to the Treasurer's announced 600 jobs further cut from the public sector in this budget on top of the 3600 announced in the December budget update, and to the response to the PAEC questionnaire for your department on pages 17 and 18 that outlined that Victoria Police must find \$67.8 million in savings — just say \$68 million of savings — by 30 June 2013. I also refer you to an article in the *Age* on 8 January which refers to an email from the chief commissioner about the necessary cuts to 2740 sworn police officers and the creation of two senior executive positions to enforce, and I think the quote is, 'the most significant challenges' over the next two years. You have claimed that front-line services are not at risk, and I think you reiterated that this morning. Can you reveal the targets for these cuts and explain how many people will lose their jobs and what those jobs will be?

Mr RYAN — Thank you, Mr Scott. The police and emergency services portfolio, the whole portfolio, is of course very diverse. It includes those front-line service delivery personnel who are critical to the task, as well as a range of the back-of-house policy and administrative functions. The savings are a reality across all portfolios. However, the government does remain absolutely committed to maintaining the high levels of service delivery to the community. In fact we have made the record investments in the nature of those to which I have referred for the recruitment of police and PSOs.

In December 2011 the government announced the sustainable government initiative, the intention being to put the budget on a more sustainable footing. As part of this initiative, the government has exempted particular front-line roles from any staffing reductions. In Victoria Police there are currently more than 12 000 police and PSOs. That is a workforce that will grow to more than 14 000 by November 2014, and all of these decisions are exempt. In the emergency management area — the CFA, MFB, ESTA and the SES — those front-line personnel are also excluded. However, we do believe that there are considerable savings available through efficiencies in our emergency services through a range of measures, which do include removing service duplication, merging back-of-office functions and increasing the use of the state purchase contracts.

These efficiencies are part of the government's emergency management reform agenda that will drive the enhanced capability and capacity through the interoperability and the other measures to which I have referred. Of course there will be savings achieved out of there. We are also seeing that play out through the streamlining and efficiency in the 000 call taking, as I have already referred to.

Mr PAKULA — It does not sound like 68 million worth. Tell us who you are sacking.

Mr RYAN — Through the emergency services — —

Mr ANGUS — Just listen to the answer and you will learn something. Stop interrupting the minister.

Mr PAKULA — He has gone for about 50 minutes with two questions.

Mr ANGUS — Pay attention and you will learn.

Ms HENNESSY — No, it is who is going to lose their jobs as a result of your decision.

Mr SCOTT — It was a straightforward question.

Mr PAKULA — Tell us who you are sacking.

The CHAIR — Thank you, Deputy, for your assistance.

Mr RYAN — Through these and other improvements there will be the delivery of savings while maintaining that front-line service delivery. As with all areas across the government, the emergency services portfolio will be looking to make more efficiencies in our back-of-house policy and the corporate functions over these coming two years, during which time these initiatives are to apply. As the committee would be well aware, staff reductions are being implemented, mainly through the freezing of recruitment other than for exempt roles, and through the ending of fixed-term contracts. The department and Victoria Police employ a number of staff under fixed-term arrangements, so they have the capacity to be flexible with regard to those arrangements. When the voluntary departure packages become available, these will be another important tool.

In addition to these staff reduction measures, the department and its associated agencies are looking to use their buying power better in the manner that I already outlined. The department is also closely examining and making savings in its use of contractors and consultants. In addition, the department is looking at opportunities for greater sharing of its corporate resource capacity across the portfolio. The exact details of all areas and how these savings will be realised across the portfolio are still in the process of being worked through.

Members interjecting.

The CHAIR — Thank you, Mr O'Brien. Thank you, Mr Pakula. It is Mr Scott's question; I am sure he is interested in the answer.

Mr RYAN — The department and Victoria Police will also be working with the Better Services Implementation Taskforce to look at the opportunities for better service delivery reform and modernisation in the course of the coming months.

Members interjecting.

The CHAIR — Mr Scott?

Mr SCOTT — I did not know David O'Brien had the call.

The CHAIR — In actual fact Mr Pakula and Mr O'Brien were interjecting at the same time, so do not be smart about it, Mr Scott; ask your question.

Mr SCOTT — Thank you, Chair. Considering the impact of cuts to back office roles and the comments of the Community and Public Sector Union that that could involve police being forced to undertake duties that would otherwise be undertaken by unsworn police workers, as well as the job cuts and the cuts to the police budget, how many police officers will be taken off the streets to perform the work of sacked unsworn police staff?

Mr RYAN — Mr Scott, it is the expectation of the government that no such event will occur. Victoria Police, like all other government agencies, are expected to identify opportunities for greater efficiency in the delivery of their back-office functions through process redesign and the various other measures which I have outlined, and I am confident they will be able to do so without any interruption to the delivery of front-line services.

Mr ANGUS — Minister, I would like to follow on from Mr Morris's previous question, and you also touched on this in your initial presentation. I refer to the asset initiative 'Police station infrastructure to accommodate 1700 front-line police and 940 protective service officers', as noted in budget paper 3, page 45. Minister, can you please advise the committee what activity is being experienced by the new PSOs who are being accommodated on train stations through this very important initiative?

Mr RYAN — As I say, I understand, and from my own observation it is the case, that the PSOs who have initially been deployed are very active in the role that they have now undertaken. I had the great pleasure of spending that time with them only a few nights ago. The public at large has been very welcoming of the presence of the PSOs, as have the various other members of staff in their different environments who work within the transport system.

I understand there have been arrests against which warrants have been issued. A number of infringement notices have been issued, and in addition vehicles have been checked for potential offences. But perhaps it might be best from an operational perspective if I were to ask the chief commissioner to outline to the committee some of the initial experiences of the PSOs. I think that information would be most instructive to answer this question.

Chief Comm. LAY — As we all understand, at the end of April 2012, 18 PSOs have been deployed to Flinders Street and Southern Cross railway stations. They have assisted with processing 138 offences and the issuing of 918 infringement notices. As you are aware, PSOs are deployed to railway stations between 6.00 p.m. and 12 midnight. They attend a local police station prior to starting the work, as I explained, and that is clearly part of their day. They finish at a police station as well to return their equipment and do the necessary paperwork.

We have seen PSOs operating in accordance with their powers and duties through the legislation and their training, and they are providing an initial response to crime and antisocial behaviour occurring in and around train stations. One of the things that we are seeing quite a lot of is their engagement with the normal travelling public rather than the law enforcement approach — a friendly face, if you will, at the larger stations.

I will just say a little more on the work that they are doing. As I say, they have issued 918 infringements, including 779 notices under the Transport Act; 71 notices for crime offences under the Summary Offences Act; 53 notices under the road rules; and 15 other notices. They have been involved in 138 arrests, comprising 61 arrests for drunk, 46 arrests without warrant, 18 serious arrests under section 459 of the Crimes Act and 13 arrests under section 58 of the Crimes Act, which are more likely to be the summary offences.

We did some surveying of the group that are out on railway stations now to try and capture a picture of a day in the life of a PSO. On 21 March 2012 this was the work that one PSO did during that shift. The PSO spoke to 85 people, checked six motor vehicles, issued 14 infringement notices, executed one warrant of arrest, arrested one person for breach of bail conditions and arrested one person under section 10 of the Mental Health Act. We see quite a diverse role for the PSOs, from engaging with the public right through to quite serious criminal offences.

Mr ANGUS — A supplementary if possible, Chair?

The CHAIR — Thank you, Mr Angus.

Mr ANGUS — Further to that then, Minister, can you please outline to the committee —

Mr PAKULA — This is just outrageous.

Mr ANGUS — what training through the police academy the new PSOs are receiving and also the follow-up training — —

Members interjecting.

The CHAIR — Sorry, Mr Angus. I had trouble hearing your question because of the interjections. Could I have the question again, please?

Mr ANGUS — Minister, further to your previous answer and that of the chief commissioner, can you please outline to the committee the training that the PSOs go through through the academy and also the follow-up training requirements that they are involved in?

Mr RYAN — The PSO training extends over a period of 12 weeks. It includes the same two weeks of operational tactics and safety training, including the training in the appropriate use of firearms and other defensive weapons, that is given to police. I emphasise the point, Mr Angus, because there has been a lot of commentary from those who should know better that the PSOs are trained to some lower or lesser degree than police, particularly in relation to the use of firearms. It simply is not correct. The operational tactics and safety training equates precisely with that that is provided to police. In addition, as is the case with each police officer, each six months or thereabouts PSOs are asked to return to the academy where they go through a refresher course. So the public at large can be absolutely assured that there is complete equality of training of the PSOs as there is with police officers, particularly on the issue of firearms.

I might also say the training includes communication skills, such as how to interact with vulnerable groups and persons apparently suffering a mental health episode. That is a fundamental aspect of what we have asked of the protective services officers. The harsh reality is that our transport system has served the unintended consequence of being a mechanism of ending the life of various people across the years. To have the PSOs on the station able to ensure, as best they can, that people who are there are present for the purposes of being able to use the transport facilities, as opposed to seeking to do themselves a harm, is I think one of the great aspects of this program. The training which is undertaken by the PSOs is directed at that particular element of what they are trained and qualified to do.

Ms HENNESSY — Minister, it might be more appropriate for this one to be to the chief commissioner, but I want to get a handle on the number of operational PSOs as at 30 June this year and next year. Evidence was given to this committee last year that there would be 93 operational PSOs by June 2012. I note that we are using the language of 90 now, so we seem to have dropped 3. I understand that 18 PSOs graduated in February, that you have got 21 prospective officers who started their 12-week training course in March, I think it was, and that is due to be completed next week. How many of those 21 will be graduating, and how many of the prospective PSOs are currently in training? I am just trying to understand what your workflow is. I suppose the bottom line is: will you meet your now dropped target of 90 being operational as at 30 June 2012, and how many do you estimate are going to be operational at June 2013? I understand what you say around November 2014, but 30 June 2012 and 30 June 2013?

Mr RYAN — The minimum number will be 90. There have been some difficulties with a couple of the recruits, who were injured in the course of the training, and it may well be therefore that they will be graduating at a later date. The intention always was to have the 93. If we are able to have those who unfortunately have had to suspend their training graduate in between times, then well and good. But it will be at least the 90. In terms of next year, as I outlined last year, the intention is to recruit, train and deploy another 231 PSOs. If it were, because of the untimely events to which I referred, that we did not have the extra 3, then we would have 234 by 30 June next year. That is the basic intent.

Ms HENNESSY — Given I asked about operational — at that point I am assuming that those figures are operational.

Mr RYAN — It is intended that they be recruited, trained and deployed.

Ms HENNESSY — I note the \$1 million that is being paid to Hoban Recruitment around recruiting PSOs. I was just wondering, and you may have to take this on notice, could you advise the committee how much advertising, recruitment and training of the PSOs has cost to date?

Mr RYAN — Do you mean, Ms Hennessy, so we are clear about this, inclusive of Hoban and any other expense which might have been incurred?

Ms HENNESSY — Yes.

Mr RYAN — So not solely related to Hoban?

Ms HENNESSY — No, not solely related to Hoban but inclusive of Hoban.

Mr RYAN — Is it intended that your question embody the expenditure of this nature since the inception of this policy?

Ms HENNESSY — Yes. I am literally trying to find how much has the policy — —

Mr RYAN — You are after a grossed up figure?

Ms HENNESSY — Yes.

Mr RYAN — We can provide that information to the committee. I do not have that at hand. It is obviously a different form — —

Ms HENNESSY — No problem. Thank you.

Mr O'BRIEN — Minister, I ask in relation to budget paper 3, page 45, as well, specifically again the initiative for police station infrastructure to accommodate 1700 front-line police and 940 protective services officers, can you outline the government's progress in delivering on the promise of 1700 new police officers?

Mr RYAN — As I have indicated, Victoria Police is well on the way — sorry, Mr Pakula, do you want me to stop while you — —

Mr PAKULA — No, carry on.

Mr RYAN — That is all right. I knew you would be interested in the answer, that is all.

Mr PAKULA — I am listening to you.

Mr RYAN — Good. Victoria Police is well on the way to delivering the government's commitment of 1700 additional police. It will take Victoria Police numbers to 13 100-plus by November 2014. In January this year I announced an additional 275 front-line police would be allocated across Victoria by 30 June 2012. It will be another major boost in the state's police resources. That will mean that by 30 June this year 850 of the 1700 police will have been recruited, trained and deployed. That will have happened at a point in time not even halfway through our first term. The additional police will be allocated to 21 divisions across four police regions. By mid-2012, as I say, those 850 front-line police will have been deployed. Examples of this rollout include: in Latrobe, 34; in Frankston, 70; in Ballarat, 52; in Greater Bendigo, 26; in Mildura, 27.

The intake of both police recruits and protective service officers is estimated to exceed 1000 per annum over the next few years. In order to meet this demand the government has provided funding for the upgrade of and alterations to the police academy as well as the development of a master plan to respond to the expected increases in the recruitment and training. I might say, Chair, it is a great day out to go out there and see those activities on the go. The amount of movement, the amount of commitment by those who are involved in the training of the recruits, as well as the participation by the recruits themselves, is something to behold.

The government has already approved funding for urgent works to commence, namely, the upgrades to the stormwater drainage and the ventilation in the existing firing range. The government has reviewed the master plan which has been developed by Victoria Police. We have endorsed the release of \$14.8 million of funding to enable the works to proceed. These works, most of which are either right on or ahead of program, include the construction of the railway platform and classroom as part of the scenario village for PSO training, and that is due to be delivered in August this year; the extension of training facilities, and they include the firearms range, the defensive tactics and the ablution blocks; and the extension and upgrade of IT infrastructure to meet what is needed in contemporary policing.

The initiatives that are necessary to achieve these end results are well advanced, they are ongoing, and we are very, very confident that, just as the progress is seen there in the recruiting of the 1700 front-line operational police, in addition to those who were there when we came to government, we are progressing very well with the improvements and upgrades to facilities which will house those officers as they are deployed.

Mr O'BRIEN — Could I ask a supplementary question? Minister, can you advise also on what roles these new police have been allocated to in terms of protecting the community?

Mr RYAN — Victoria Police is of course responsible for allocating additional police across Victoria in concert with operational need. The volume of recruits coming through the academy has enabled command to create new supervisor and specialist positions throughout the policing regions that are intended to support and to mentor and to guide these police as they come through the system. These allocations include regional inspectors as well as supervisors in specialist roles, such as the all-important highway patrol members. I might ask the Chief Commissioner perhaps, from an operational perspective, to just provide some more detail on this important issue.

Chief Comm. LAY — There is much demand right across the state for police numbers — from local governments, from local communities and the like. We actually use a tool to determine where we put our police. We look at such things as the rate of police per 100 000, the number of computer-aided dispatch calls to a particular area, the number of events in a particular area, the number of crimes against property, the number of crimes against the person, the number of crashes, the number of youth in a particular area, and all these combine to determine where we put our people across the state. Having said that, there are other pressures where we may want to do some work around cybercrime, around organised crime and the like. We then make a determination about how we actually use that allocation of 1700 to move those people into that area.

Mr PAKULA — Minister, I refer you to budget paper 5, page 107.

Mr RYAN — BP 5?

Mr PAKULA — Page 107.

Mr RYAN — Yes.

Mr PAKULA — Which talks about income and expenses from transactions, including employee benefits for the department. I just want to know whether or not the outgoings for the 2011–12 financial year include former Chief Commissioner Overland's payout, and if so, how much it was?

Mr RYAN — As you know, Mr Pakula, matters in relation to the resolution of these issues are of a confidential nature. That historically has been the case, and so it will remain now.

The CHAIR — Thank you.

Mr PAKULA — Well, you say it is confidential. I want to know if it is accounted for in the 2011–12 budget, and I want to know why you are not prepared to reveal how much the Victorian taxpayers were forced to fork out because members of your staff undermined — —

Members interjecting.

The CHAIR — Deputy.

Mr PAKULA — It is a legitimate question.

Members interjecting.

The CHAIR — Deputy! That is enough, you have asked the question.

Members interjecting.

The CHAIR — You have asked the question.

Mr PAKULA — We know why he resigned, and now we want to know how much it cost.

The CHAIR — You have asked the question, now allow the minister to respond. We do not need any assistance, thank you.

Mr RYAN — I stand by the answer I just gave.

The CHAIR — Thank you, Minister. I actually want to change the focus. There has been a lot of discussion on PSOs, and it has been very useful information that we have gathered. I refer the minister to BP 3, page 45, the justice asset initiatives, and also in relation to budget paper 3 page 40, the justice output initiatives, that outline the combined funding of \$21.7 million over four years for emergency service communications. And I ask, Minister: can you provide a breakdown of what this funding will achieve and the importance of the long-term strategic plan with respect to emergency services communications in Victoria?

Mr RYAN — Our community relies, as we know, on the effectiveness of public safety operations. That effectiveness is increasingly dependent upon good communication systems. The current networks are ageing and reaching capacity, and contractual service arrangements are reaching the end of term. This affords both a problem, in a sense, but also an opportunity.

Negotiations have been completed to secure the services of the MMR — the metropolitan mobile radio — and the emergency alert system networks right through to 2016. This will allow time for the sector to plan and procure appropriate communications for the emergency services sector for the future. The government has endorsed the emergency services communications strategic framework. It provides for a broad planning framework for the provision of integrated multiagency emergency services communications for Victoria. As part of that framework I am pleased to advise that the government has provided \$9.6 million in funding in 2013 for emergency services communications and a total of \$21.7 million over four years.

The first \$2.1 million will be used to create a long-term strategic plan for emergency communications. That plan will enable strategic future investments in the emergency services sector by evaluating the current communications capability to determine where there are efficiencies to be gained and improvements that can be made, and determining which investment scenario, based on the options identified, is appropriate as we move to a future communications model.

Of course, Chair, we are all too well aware of the problems that arise when this planning is not done properly, when funds are allocated inappropriately and when outcomes accordingly mean that ICT projects across the spectrum of government service delivery are planned without an appropriate business case being made for them which can therefore result in catastrophic impacts upon the budgetary bottom line of the government of the day.

Secondly, \$3.9 million will improve the resilience of the emergency services telecommunications agency — the computer-assisted dispatch system which is operated by ESTA. That essential funding will benefit the procurement of additional network and database hardware, the implementation of effective IT monitoring tools into the 000 system, improvements to the network that supports 000 operation and enhancements to the databases and associated systems which store the emergency services data.

And thirdly, the government has provided \$15.7 million for VICSES, the state emergency services, to be integrated into incident control centres which will ensure interoperability with other emergency service organisations and improve information sharing and multi-agency response during emergencies. That funding is intended for a number of outcomes. They include upgrading VICSES's current business systems and processes so they are scalable and able to deal with major emergencies that will enable VICSES to access the soon-to-be-developed DSE Floodzoom program, enhancing VICSES capability. It will improve VICSES interoperability with the other emergency service organisations at the incident control centres. It will increase the bandwidth for VICSES volunteer units, providing volunteers with far faster access to emergency information, and importantly it will integrate VICSES telephone systems with the CFA, the DSE, the MFB.

Overall this funding is absolutely critical to ensure Victoria's communications networks enhance the ability of our emergency service agencies to respond to and manage hazards that threaten life and property, and as I am sure we are all very well aware, this was one of the focal points of commentary and recommendations through the bushfires royal commission. We are pleased and proud to be giving it effect.

The CHAIR — Thanks for your response, and it is a very fulsome response, but you did touch on, in your presentation earlier, issues around the emergency alert system. I note the commentary earlier in the year about the difficulty in relating that to just advice to the billing address of mobile phones and also landlines. Can you update the committee on any work that the government is doing in relation to ensuring individuals can receive messages on their mobile phones when they are away from their home base, in relation to the location of the handset?

Mr RYAN — I was pleased to announce in January that Telstra is the first of the three carriers to sign up to the location-based component of the national warning system. We all know it, of course, as ‘emergency alert’. Historically we as a state have led the way on the telephony-based warning systems. We have played a crucial role in the establishment of emergency alert, and again in fairness I pay credit to the former government’s contribution to this initiative.

This system sends voice and text messages to landlines, to mobile phones; it offers warnings to the community of an impending emergency — and I emphasise that might be an emergency of any order, not just fire or flood, but emergency generally. It is the national telephone warning system that was implemented in December 2009, and prior to this there was no national telephone emergency warning system. Emergency alert has proven to be extremely valuable in being an addition to the warning systems, and it has issued, at this point in time, in excess of 7 million messages.

One aspect of this system as it stands currently is that it sends messages based on the billing address of the landline or mobile phone. It cannot take into account where the individual is at the time of the impending emergency. What our recent announcement means is that from November 2012 emergency service agencies will be able to deliver warnings to mobile phones based on their location. As an example, there are currently approximately 900 permanent residents in Lorne. During the summer season that can expand to 20 000. It is one of the most fire-prone areas in our state; Victoria is of course one of the most fire-prone areas on the face of the planet. When it is fully implemented the system will have the potential to reach the model handsets of all 20 000 people in that area over the holiday season. Very obviously this is an enormous leap in being able to give emergency services in Victoria the ability to provide more timely and accurate warnings. The service is not available anywhere else in the world. It would not have been developed had it not been for the commitment of our state and the commonwealth to act on the need to get messages to our communities at risk of natural disasters and other emergencies.

Another of the great advantages of this system is that international visitors will also receive warnings through their phones. We are committed as a government to every measure and action to mitigate the dangers to our community. This is clearly evidenced by the many issues to which I have already referred. This contract with Telstra was executed in December. The negotiations are continuing with Optus and Vodaphone, and we are hopeful of being able to have all carriers involved in this important system as soon as that possibly can be achieved.

Mr SCOTT — Minister, I would like to ask you a question related to performance measures. I refer you to budget paper 3, pages 175 and 355. They are interrelated, and I make that clear. On page 355 there are two performance measures which have been discontinued, and on page 175 there are two replacement performance measures for those two discontinued measures. The first of the discontinued measures is ‘Reduction in crimes against the person’ where there was previously a target set for this financial year and the last financial year, of a 2 per cent reduction. In the replacement performance measure ‘Reduction in crimes against the person (rate per 100 000 population)’ the target per cent reduction is 1 per cent. I am sure I do not have to tell you that as it is a percentage reduction rather than an absolute, they are directly comparable figures.

The second performance measure which has been replaced is ‘Reduction in property crime’. The original percentage reduction for 2012–13 and for 11–12 is 3 per cent. In the replacement performance measure the reduction in crime percentage is 1 per cent. Again it is directly comparable, as it is a percentage rather than an absolute figure. So whether you do it on the basis of all recorded crime or on a per 100 000, it actually makes no difference to that target figure. In the context of more police and more resources, can the minister explain the reduction in targets and the lowering of the bar?

The CHAIR — Minister, it is a fairly detailed question, but I invite you to respond.

Mr RYAN — I will ask the secretary to deal with the matter.

Mr PAKULA — What a cop-out.

Mr O’BRIEN — What are you talking about?

Ms HENNESSY — That is weak.

Ms ARMYTAGE — In relation to the performance targets that have been set as part of BP 3 obviously we have taken account in both of these measures in terms of population shifts and also the changes that are in line with — —

Mr SCOTT — No, no, no.

The CHAIR — Allow the secretary to respond.

Ms ARMYTAGE — It is how the measure has been calculated.

Mr ANGUS — Listen to the answer.

The CHAIR — Allow the secretary to respond, then you can follow up.

Members interjecting.

The CHAIR — It is not your question; it is Mr Scott's question. Ms Armytage has got the call.

Ms ARMYTAGE — The percentage measures are based against the rate per 100 000. Population shifts have been calculated in relation to each of those measures in terms of the reduction of crimes against the person as a percentage. It is a percentage rate per 100 000 of the population. Therefore the rate has been taken into account in terms of changes in the population. Also in both of those two measures they look at that relative to the performance over time. They have been calculated in terms of an adjustment over that time series data.

Mr SCOTT — I will follow up with another issue related to crime reduction targets, but I just say I find that an extraordinary response. The Minister for Crime Prevention would not tell us what the crime reduction target was, saying it was a matter for you, Minister. He clearly stated that in our previous hearing we had with him. What is that crime reduction target?

Mr RYAN — The intention here is to recruit, train and deploy another 1700 front-line operational police and to recruit, train and deploy 940 protective services officers to provide our policing with every conceivable form of resource that we are able to afford as a state to enable them to do their job and to support police in every possible way in their important roles in relation to crime prevention and solving crime.

Accordingly, we are throwing everything possible at the task of being able to achieve that bottom-line outcome. In the sense of nominating actual specifics about it, that is not something in which we engage. Rather, the reality is we need to consistently and continually be able to ensure that we amass as much resource as possible in being able to see that achieved. It is the case that there are measures from time to time that are included in the papers with regard to these particular issues. Governments of all persuasions, I think history would say, have filled those out faithfully. History would also say that the ability to actually achieve them is something that has escaped the capacity of our forebears — the former government. We have now instituted a series of processes which are going to make sure — —

Members interjecting.

The CHAIR — Thank you for all of your assistance, colleagues. I ask the minister to continue his response.

Mr RYAN — We are ensuring that we have this huge investment in the interests of all Victorians in our policing and being able to have people walk their streets, be in their workplaces, travel the transport systems in a manner which is safer than people have been otherwise able to enjoy here in our state. We are making good progress in that regard.

Members interjecting.

The CHAIR — Thank you very much. I take it, Minister, you have concluded.

Mr RYAN — I have, Chair.

Mr MORRIS — Minister, I refer you to budget paper 3 page 45, the justice asset initiatives. The table on that page includes funding of \$33.9 million in 2012-13 for the bushfire response emergency services. Can you

outline for the committee the importance of this funding, together with the outcomes for the CFA, for their firefighters and for the communities they serve?

Mr RYAN — The government, as I am sure is the case with all members of Parliament, greatly values and respects the work that the CFA and its volunteer firefighters undertake in protecting life and property in Victoria. I was pleased to announce in the 11–12 budget the completion of our election commitment with the investment in 60 Country Fire Authority stations that were built or upgraded within 12 months, and at the same time we increased our commitment in the 2011–12 budget papers to 250 stations, including a total of six co-located facilities with VICSES by 2014. The coalition has kept this commitment through the funding of \$22.9 million for many more stations in 12–13.

The CFA currently has 882 rural fire stations across Victoria, many of which are 30 to 40 years old and have difficulty these days in being fit for purpose due to inadequate storage for the current trucks and the equipment. The new and the upgraded stations will provide a better operational environment for the CFA volunteers and staff. All stations and all equipment purchases are made in accordance with the CFA's asset replacement program to ensure equity among brigades, to meet service delivery requirements and, all importantly of course, to provide value for money.

Of the number of stations on the CFA's rural fire station program for 12–13, Tallangatta and Wycheproof CFA will receive new stations which will be co-located with VICSES. It is an excellent opportunity to achieve a much greater efficiency in the delivery of services from facilities such as these. The government has also ensured the CFA will be able to continue to update its fleet of trucks, with \$12.3 million provided in 12–13 alone. This funding will enable the CFA to acquire additional vehicles, providing crews with access to the technology, the operational capability and the all-important safety features that are offered by the new vehicles. I have been fortunate myself to try out the crew protection system that has been built into the new vehicles. It includes radiant heat protection curtains, water-spraying systems and heat-shielding panels. These features, as we know — particularly after the tragedy at Linton — are essential to ensure the wellbeing of our hardworking volunteers.

The funding for new vehicles follows funding in the 11–12 budget where the government funded 101 vehicles — a mix of medium tankers, heavy pumpers, heavy concept tankers, protective equipment units and mobile command vehicles. The CFA, as we know, is one of the largest volunteer organisations in the world, and we as a government will continue to respect and acknowledge the tremendous contribution that they make in the way in which they protect all Victorians.

Ms HENNESSY — Minister, the budget papers — particularly budget paper 5 page 172 — detail the revenue related to fines and explain that increases in revenue are expected due to a 12.5 per cent increase in the value of penalty units and CPI indexation. Police on-the-spot fines are expected to increase by 26.9 per cent to 159.5 million, so that is an extra 33.5 million forecast in the next year for police on-the-spot fines. Can you tell us how you calculated that figure and assure us that there will be no pressure on police to issue more on-the-spot fines for things such as swearing in public?

Members interjected.

The CHAIR — Thank you, Ms Hennessy. Thank you, Mr O'Brien. Thank you, Mr Pakula. Thank you, Mr Angus.

Mr RYAN — I thank Ms Hennessy for the question. Can I first deal with the last proposition she advanced. There is a clear distinction between our role in government and our responsibilities for the resourcing of police as opposed to issues of operational responsibility, which fall to the chief commissioner and to police. The notion that we as a government would in some way seek to influence police in the way that you have suggested today, Ms Hennessy, is an affront, and I reject it.

Ms HENNESSY — I asked you to assure us.

Mr RYAN — I reject that assertion. The implication it carries is offensive. On the issue, which was the initial part of your question, there are a number of points to be made. The government does not view the infringement system in itself as revenue raising. An infringement is a cost of offending; it is not a cost of living. If you do not break the law, you do not have a problem. The government will increase the fines and the

penalties associated with the infringements in 12–13. In 12–13 the penalty unit is going to increase to \$140.84, and it does represent an increase of 12.5 per cent from 11–12.

The published revenue related to police fines has increased by more than 12.5 per cent to 19.1 per cent for road safety camera fines, 26.9 for police on-the-spot fines and 14.4 for toll road evasion fines. That increase is mainly due to the increase in the value of the penalty units, CPI indexation and to various road safety initiatives. It is also the result of the turning back on of the fixed camera sites on the Western Ring Road following the roadworks, the recommissioning of the cameras on the Hume Freeway and an increase in the volume of infringements as enforcement methods improve. Of course there will be additional work undertaken at Peninsula Link. In addition to those matters, there is the ongoing program with regard to the renewal and the improvement of the existing technological systems which underpin our road safety systems. The net outcome is that which you see in the budget papers.

Ms HENNESSY — Just a follow-up, Minister. Could you tell the committee how many people have received fines for breach of the new laws that were introduced last year in relation to having a traveller while driving?

Mr RYAN — I am unable to advise you of that specific item of information now, but I will provide that information to the committee.

Mr PAKULA — Maybe the chief commissioner can. Maybe the chief commissioner has the information.

Ms HENNESSY — Chief Commissioner, are you aware of how many fines have been — —

Mr ANGUS — You have asked the question. Just hang on a minute.

Ms HENNESSY — How many fines — —

The CHAIR — Ms Hennessy, just hold on. The question has been directed to the minister and the minister has given a response. Have you completed your response, Minister?

Mr RYAN — I have, Chair.

Mr ANGUS — Minister, I refer you to budget information paper 1, regional and rural — —

Members interjecting.

The CHAIR — Ms Hennessy!

Mr ANGUS — It is my turn now.

The CHAIR — Can you just put a sock in it?

Ms HENNESSY — Well — —

The CHAIR — Please, put a sock in it. Your constant barrage is just driving me absolutely spare. Thank you.

Mr ANGUS — Minister, I refer you to budget information paper 1, 'Regional and rural Victoria', and in particular to page 21, which outlines how the government is continuing its work towards major emergency management reform, in particular in its green paper on emergency management, *Towards a More Disaster Resilient and Safer Victoria*. Minister, can you outline for the committee please what stage this project is up to and the importance of this initiative?

Mr RYAN — This of course touches upon a series of issues of critical importance to all Victorians. In September 2011 I released a green paper titled *Towards a More Disaster Resilient and Safer Victoria*. It is the first step in reforming Victoria's emergency management arrangements. The coalition government has two objectives in releasing the green paper. We need to address the fact that while emergency services and volunteers do a magnificent job, and they do, their work is often hampered by administration and legislation that simply does not have a sufficiently strong or clear focus on serving all within the community or to achieving a

genuine all-hazards, all-agencies approach. Secondly, we would like to overcome the barriers that prevent communities from receiving the highest possible service, particularly in times of critical need.

The green paper was the start of a process that will be the first opportunity to effect significant change in our emergency management systems since the legislation was last amended in 1986 when the current Emergency Management Act was introduced following the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires. As the green paper notes, Victorians are and will continue to be at risk from a broad range of natural and human-induced disasters. The green paper itself, in its foreword, lists, from memory, 31 incidents of different sorts which have occurred over the past 60 years or thereabouts; they being a mixture of flood and fire, which make up probably 80 per cent of those events, and other events, too, some of which, Chair, I know you to be intimately associated with, namely, the explosion of the gas plant at Longford near Sale on 25 September 1998. They refer to the collapse of the West Gate Bridge and the tragic circumstances around that. They refer to a variety of such incidents that have occurred across the years. We need to modernise our emergency management legislation to accommodate what the future holds in this regard.

With more of the extreme weather events likely to occur, it is therefore vitally important for Victoria to have efficient arrangements in place to manage those risks. The findings of both the 2009 bushfires royal commission and the Victorian flood review show that Victoria's existing legislation, policy, governance and operational arrangements for crisis and emergency management do need modifying and upgrading. Victoria manages smaller emergencies relatively well, but we need legislative, administrative and cultural change to break down the silos that operate organisationally at the minute and which inhibit the notion of an all-hazards, all-agencies approach to handling major emergencies when they occur.

This green paper is designed to challenge the current thinking of everybody who is involved in this whole sector. Through the paper it provides an overview of the current legislative and policy arrangements for crisis and emergency management, a discussion on international trends over this important area, an analysis of all the issues and challenges for Victoria's arrangements and the immediate and longer term options for reform, noting that these are not the only options nor are they mutually exclusive.

In total 32 options had been listed in the paper. Many individuals, businesses and local councils contributed to the wide-ranging feedback, and I thank them and pay credit to them for having done so. The submissions, along with the stakeholder consultation, have formed the basis of a white paper which the government will release later this year. That will outline a major overhaul of Victoria's legislative and policy framework for emergency management. It will demonstrate the government's commitment to taking the necessary steps to improve the ability of the state to deal with those natural disasters when they inevitably happen. It will pay due tribute, I might say, to those extraordinary people who are the volunteers who do so much to protect all of us across the state, and I say that particularly, Chair, in the context that next week is National Volunteer Week.

Mr PAKULA — Minister, I take you to budget paper 5, page 196, 'Contingent liabilities'. There is an estimate in June 2012 of \$378.2 million in contingent liabilities for legal proceedings and disputes. I am wondering if you can tell me whether there is any contingency within that number for any future compensation claim against the state by the former chief commissioner, Mr Overland.

Mr RYAN — I reiterate the answer that I made to the question of a similar nature previously: these matters are of a confidential nature, and so it will remain.

Mr PAKULA — Minister, you will note that I have not asked you to tell me what you paid him. I have asked you to tell me where in the budget papers we can find the payment, and in this question I have asked you simply whether or not the contingent liability figure includes any allowance for a potential compensation claim. I am not asking you to breach a confidence; I am asking you to explain the budget papers and whether that contingent liability figure contains a potential payment to the former chief commissioner — that is all.

Mr RYAN — As I say, Mr Pakula, these matters have historically remained of a confidential nature, and so it will remain.

Members interjecting.

The CHAIR — Thank you, everybody. Thank you, Ms Hennessy. Mr Pakula has asked his question and the minister has responded to it.

Mr O'BRIEN — Minister, I refer you again to budget paper 3, page 45 — you have touched on this before — specifically the justice asset initiatives for police station upgrades. Could you provide further details on this investment across Victoria?

Mr RYAN — Thanks, Mr O'Brien. The budget invests \$56 million to upgrade and to build new police facilities that are necessary to accommodate the rollout of the promised — Mr Pakula, did you want me to stop?

Mr ANGUS — He's gone to ask the audience.

Mr RYAN — the rollout of the promised 1700 new police officers and the 940 protective services officers. Victoria Police, of course, will determine the priority stations for these works, based on operational need. This builds on the 2011–12 budget, which invested \$602 million to deliver the 1700 new police and \$212 million for 940 PSOs by November 2014. As I have stated, 850 of those will be out on the beat by 30 June this year.

The budget also invests \$54.6 million to progress specific capital projects for new and upgraded facilities to support the needs of Victoria Police into the future. These include \$27 million for the Victoria Police operational tactics and safety training complex in Essendon. This follows the 11–12 budget allocation of \$3 million to enable site identification and preliminary design activities to commence for this new facility at Essendon. The OTST comprises a number of units that are committed to providing best service to members to ensure operational safety and community satisfaction. OTST facilities provide for the development of sworn members and PSOs of any rank through the provision of operational safety and critical incident management programs. Without the establishment of the replacement OTST complex, Victoria Police will lose the capacity to deliver compulsory training to over 2500 police members and PSOs every six months if it is that this situation were to progress beyond January 2014. The facility project is estimated to generate, very importantly, 97 jobs in its construction.

Thirteen point six million dollars is also being allocated for a new police station and VICSES combined facility at Waurn Ponds. In addition to all of that, \$6.27 million has been allocated to build a new Emerald police station. I might say that these projects are to build on the previous infrastructure commitments we made in last year's budget. Our government will continue to invest in these police station upgrades in future years to ensure our commitments are met.

As I have already indicated, I say again the facilities we make available in all environments for our protective services officers will be appropriate to the standards which are set through our occupational health and safety obligations as well as being appropriate to the specific needs of policing at large.

Mr SCOTT — Minister, I refer you to budget paper 3, page 196, where there is an output measure: 'Level 3 Incident Controller trained staff and volunteers'. I would just like to ask you: can you give a guarantee that all ICCs will be upgraded and there will be an adequate number of trained staff to staff the centres by the start of the 2012–13 fire season?

Mr RYAN — Pardon me for a moment, Chair. Mr Scott, it is a matter that, as it happens, I have reserved for our next presentation, since it relates to the bushfire-related issues.

Mr SCOTT — It is interrelated, though.

Mr RYAN — It is interrelated. I freely acknowledge that, as I did at the time of my initial presentation. I am happy to deal with it — —

The CHAIR — Can we come back to it?

Members interjecting.

Mr RYAN — Yes, if we can deal with that in the course of the next — —

The CHAIR — On the basis of that, Ms Hennessy, would you like to have a question?

Ms HENNESSY — Yes. Minister, just in relation to budget paper 3, page 174 onwards, could I just ask you: given the police EBA deal delivered significant pay increases and improvements to working conditions for all members, will you outline the actual — —

The CHAIR — Ms Hennessy, I am not sure if your mike is working. I do not normally have trouble hearing you.

Ms HENNESSY — You're dreaming, Chair.

Members interjecting.

Ms HENNESSY — Minister, essentially what I would like you to tell the committee is what the genuine bankable productivity gains were in relation to the deal, like the actual dollar figure of the productivity gains.

Mr RYAN — Could we just pause for a moment?

The CHAIR — Yes, that is fine.

Mr RYAN — This has been a wonderful initiative for police and for the people of Victoria. The government has welcomed the new four-year enterprise bargaining agreement. It came into effect on 1 December last year. It expires on 30 November 2015. It in fact spans the period from July 2011 through until December 2015. The average headline salary cost over the period from the end of the old agreement in July to December 2015 is 3.9 per cent per annum. The net cost of that agreement is within the budgetary parameters, and contrary to some of the reports it does deliver significant productivity improvements. It will deliver a better trained workforce able to serve the community much more flexibly, which is even more critical given the significant increase of 1700 police and 940 PSOs over the period to the end of 2014.

These changes will directly improve community safety by the more immediate capacity to deploy police and to provide for a far more professional operational police force for the future. If the precise details to which the member refers are to be taken into account right through, I think it would take more time than we have available to us, but I will just go through some of the range of improvements over the former agreement. They include an improved general duties allocation process to speed up the placement process; the flexibility of the shifts in the rosters both to match operational needs to ensure that members are in the right place at the right time and to reduce the need for overtime shifts; and enhanced operational readiness across all ranks of the force by extending operational, tactical and safety training. That of course will result in a better trained workforce and enhanced safety for police members and the community. It involves streamlined mobility, transfer and promotion processes to assist the placement of members into roles appropriate to their capabilities. It provides the ability to direct members to specific duties outside their normal geographic area to improve flexibility, and there are other enhanced employment flexibility arrangements, such as abandonment of employment provisions and clarification of allowances.

In conjunction with all of this — and these are just the EBA initiatives that I have referred to — there are the benefits that flow through the memorandum of understanding. It will see efficiency in the appeals process for transfer and promotion decisions. Just stopping there for one moment, Ms Hennessy, as I recall, in 2009 it had got to the point where the transfer and promotion process was taking anything up to 112 days to take effect. We have it down now to something of the order of — and I stand to be corrected — about 75 days. Under the new arrangements that have been agreed to in the MOU and signed off by the chief commissioner, by the TPA and by the government, that period of time will reduce to about 14 days. It is an extraordinary benefit in itself which is going to have very beneficial consequences.

The initiatives in the MOU include also a new police registration and services board. It will enable members who take career breaks from Victoria Police to remain registered with the board and facilitate their re-entry into Victoria Police so their experience and expertise is not lost. It provides us, therefore, with a bank of police officers who will be available should it be that circumstances warrant being able to call on them. It will facilitate the lateral entry of sworn police from other jurisdictions into Victoria Police by the board checking their probity and their qualifications and experience. That, of course, has been a long sought after initiative, and dare I say in 2007 I think I remember a press release coming out from the former Premier of the day, Mr Brumby, indicating that that initiative was supposed to have been achieved under the former EBA. In fact it never materialised.

Through a review division it will improve the efficiency of determining appeals of transfer and promotion decisions under new processes within strict guidelines. Through a professional standards division it will assist Victoria Police command by approving competency standards and educational courses and supervising training arrangements. The agreement will in fact deliver a far better trained workforce which will be able to serve our

community with far greater flexibility than we have ever seen before. The changes will directly improve community safety by the more immediate capacity to deploy police and provide for a more professional operational police force. The amendments which will be required legislatively will be introduced into the house later this year, and we would hope that with those amendments passed by the Parliament, if that be the case, we will achieve an outcome which by any standards will have advanced our capacity for contemporary policing in the state of Victoria in a way that we have not seen before.

On top of all that I reiterate the issues I referred to previously in responding to a question on this topic. As to the actual structure of the EBA itself and the way in which we have been able to reduce it in terms of its content, we have been able to make it far more able to be easily interpreted. Finally, we have been able to do away with the additional agreements which were a feature of the EBAs up until this one was brought about. We have now been able to bring all these arrangements into both the EBA and the accompanying MOU. It is a great outcome.

Ms HENNESSY — Minister, can you tell the committee — and I am happy for you to take this on notice if you do not have the figure at your fingertips — what the productivity gains are as a percentage of police payroll?

Mr RYAN — As I have just indicated, we have made extraordinarily substantial gains in productivity through the way in which this EBA has been negotiated and the associated MOU. Those gains are already being reflected in Victoria Police, and they will be further reflected once we have the amendments in the house.

In the sense of the constitution of those elements which go to make up any EBA, as you know Ms Hennessy, it has been always the task of the government of the day to make sure that those arrangements are negotiated in a manner which is fair to all concerned and in accordance with the wages policy of the day. That is precisely what has happened in this case, and we are thrilled with the outcome.

The CHAIR — Thankyou, Minister. This brings to a conclusion the time allocated for questions on the police and emergency services portfolio. I thank particularly Chief Commissioner Lay for his attendance today, and I adjourn the hearing until 11.15.

Witnesses withdrew.