

# CORRECTED VERSION

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

### Inquiry into budget estimates 2011–12

Melbourne — 12 May 2011

#### 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 T. Leech, Executive Director, Police, Emergency Services and Corrections, Department of Justice; and

Chief Commissioner S. Overland, Victoria Police.

**The CHAIR** — I declare open the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings on the 2011–12 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, MP, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for Bushfire Response and Minister for Regional and Rural Development; Ms Penny Armytage, Secretary of the Department of Justice; Mr Tony Leech, executive director, police, emergency services and corrections, Department of Justice; Mr Simon Overland, Chief Commissioner of Police; as well as Ms Marisa De Cicco, director, justice policy, who will be operating the presentation only. 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 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 my leave 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.

I am also pleased to announce that this series of budget estimates hearings is being audiocast 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 had 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 48 hours after the hearing.

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

I ask that all mobile telephones be turned off or switched to silent.

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 portfolio of police and emergency services.

### **Overheads shown.**

**Mr RYAN** — It is a great pleasure to be here. The total justice portfolio budget — and I believe members have before them the series of slides to which I now speak — is \$4.43 billion. The police and emergency services portfolio comprises just over 53 per cent of the portfolio budget, including government contributions to fire services.

In the second slide on achievements under 'Police', Victoria Police has announced the deployment of the first 450 additional police members expected to be deployed by mid-2011. The Police Regulation Act has been amended to facilitate the additional PSOs (protective services officers) to implement the government's commitment on railway station safety.

I will just mention that a key strategic focus of Victoria Police is the delivery of the 1700 additional police. This recruitment task represents the most significant increase in police resources ever undertaken by Victoria Police.

The work is progressing on the deployment of the additional officers, and the chief commissioner will speak to that matter shortly. This will see the 450, as I have already referred to, including delivery of the additional 100 transit officers.

The balance of the remaining 1250 members that are intended to be recruited in this first term of our government will be delivered over the forward estimates period up to November 2014. The Police Regulation Act has been amended to remove that statutory cap of 150 PSOs which was there previously, to expand their purposes and to enable implementation of the government's election commitment on transport safety. There will be a bill before the house shortly which will take that issue further.

On slide 5, in terms of the additional police and PSOs, 1700 police are intended to be recruited by November 2014, and an additional \$46.8 million is therefore in the budget papers to bring what was a budgeted allocation of \$555 million up by roughly \$47 million to the figure that appears in the budget papers of \$602 million. Nine hundred and forty PSOs are to be recruited by November 2014. The original figure that had been costed was \$161 million. That has been increased by some \$51 million to bring it up to the \$212 million, as is referred to in the papers. The intention therefore is to bring forward the recruitment of those officers, both the police officers and the PSOs, so that they are available by the end of our first term — that is, by November 2014.

In addition, \$17.8 million is being provided for the police academy infrastructure and master plan. There are various commentaries around that, but in the interests of time I might just point out that the allocation of \$212 million for the protective services officers does not include any capital for infrastructure upgrades at the train stations. There is a separate amount of \$20 million which is an election commitment in relation to that funding, and that capital will be allocated in turn on advice from Victoria Police on the specific station needs.

The academy has received additional funding to expand its infrastructure to support the training and the additional Victoria Police members and the PSOs. The funding in this budget is \$17.8 million, and that is in addition to the \$10.07 million provided in 10–11 as a Treasurer's advance for the demountable classrooms that are being installed at the academy. I also say that the 11–12 budget funding includes an amount of half a million dollars for the master plan for the academy to respond to future demand, as that may emerge.

In the next slide, insofar as police infrastructure and equipment, \$27.15 million is there for the first stage of the police station and infrastructure upgrade; \$3 million to fund land purchased for a new operational tactics and safety training facility and \$1.2 million for the all-important new brawler vans.

If I can go to the next slide without expanding on any of those other matters, on the integrated road safety camera credibility and transparency issues we are seeing the establishment of an independent road safety camera commissioner. This will be an Australian first and I think will be a great innovation for Victoria and for Australia at large. We have instigated an Auditor-General performance audit of the entire road safety camera system. We are increasing the warning and information signage about road safety cameras in regional areas, and the first elements of that were unveiled recently. We have launched the Cameras Save Lives website, and we are publishing on a weekly basis the road safety camera locations. All of this is intended to bring an air of transparency to the operation of the speed cameras and to restore public confidence in the fact that cameras do in fact save lives.

Across to the emergency services area; in emergency services the budget breakdown is there. The emergency services budget is \$273.9 million. It represents 6.2 per cent of the justice portfolio, and this is a net government funding figure.

There is climate change in Victoria with extreme weather events occurring more frequently. We had 10 years of drought, as we well know, and then we had the record-breaking floods with 25 000 Victorians affected; the loss of utility services; damage to roads, bridges and rail; isolation and community fatigue. There were 137 700 emergency alert messages sent, and we have all tracked the series of events that occurred going back to mid-last year right through until now.

On the next slide is set out the budget flood commitments. In the interests of time I will not read through them line by line, but the total estimated cost is \$676 million. The allocations across various categories are there, and no doubt we will return to some of those in the course of these discussions.

On the next slide, all importantly, is supporting our volunteers. I might say that this is National Volunteer Week, and we all recognise as a Parliament and as a community the extraordinary contribution our volunteers make to the welfare of the state, so in the course of this budget we are reflecting in a very real way upon the fact that we have 90 000 emergency services volunteers across the CFA, VICSES, LSV and AVCGA. They are all experiencing an upward trend, I am pleased to say. As a matter of interest, just in terms of the CFA, the trend in operational membership has increased from 09, when it was 35 448 precisely, to 31 March this year, when it had 39 265 operational members.

On to the next slide; the 11–12 budget is increasing emergency services capability and support to volunteers. There is a \$207.8 million funding package which is set out under those different categories. Of that, \$65.8 million is for 60 CFA stations to be rebuilt or refurbished, as may be, and also for the acquisition of another 101 vehicles. Then again there are the different categories of commitment which the government has made that are set out in the course of the slide. I think for present purposes, Chairman, I will stop at that by way of the initial presentation.

**The CHAIR** — Thank you, Minister. We have a bit less than 1 hour and 50 minutes for questions on the police and emergency services portfolio. I remind members of the committee that the questions should relate to the budget estimates. In that context I ask the minister: how have predictions concerning population growth shaped in the budget for the 2011–12 and out years for the discharge of the police and emergency services portfolio responsibilities?

**Mr RYAN** — In the budget papers I note that the Victorian economic projections show continued growth over the short-to-medium-term period but a lower growth rate than that experienced over 09–10 and through 10–11. The projections estimate the state's 09 population growth at 1.8 per cent. That is expected to slow slightly to a rate of about 1.7 per cent in 10–11, with a further slowing in 11–12 down to about 1.5 per cent and remain at that annual growth rate over the forward estimates period.

In all of that, population growth is a key driver of demand across the whole of government but specifically for today's purposes within the provision of justice services. Specifically, the department has considered a number of very pertinent aspects of this, they being that Victoria is projected to grow from 5.13 million people in 2006 to 7.4 million people by 2036, an increase of 2.27 million or 44.2 per cent; Melbourne is projected to grow from 3.744 million in 2006 to 5.525 million in 2036, an increase of 1.781 million or 47.5 per cent; further, Victoria's regional population is growing at its highest rate since 1992 and is expected to increase by 37 per cent from 1.45 million in 2009 to 2 million by 2048; and, as a fourth principal point, Victoria's regional population is ageing faster than that of Melbourne.

In June 2009, 13.6 per cent of Victoria's population was aged 65 and over. This figure is expected to reach 23.1 per cent in 2056 — well hence, I am pleased to say. So in terms of this issue the aspects most significant to justice are amongst the following points: population growth in key regional cities is increasing demand for services, not surprisingly, and population fluctuation in holiday destinations over peak periods is creating challenges for emergency services. You, Chairman, if I may say, would be all too familiar with the situation that prevails along our coastline, for example, in areas that, as it happens, we respectively represent. Whether it be Walkerville or Sandy Point or Venus Bay or down around Wilsons Promontory, just to take examples, population X might increase by a factor of 10 or 20 fold for a period of up to three months of the year. These issues place pressures upon the provision of services by the department.

In addition to that there are pockets of disadvantage to which we have to have regard. There are newly arrived communities with their particular needs. There are rural areas that are more susceptible to declines in employment, and that can produce its own difficulties.

Justice delivers its services through a regional management structure which is divided across eight regions of the state, and the department regularly examines the volume and the type of work across geographic regions and it makes adjustments staffing-wise where it possibly can. Of course there are fixed elements to what justice does by way of the operation of the court system, for example, that do not lead themselves to change so easily, but where there is increased demand driven by population growth, the change in policy will necessitate substantial ongoing investment to maintain the community's confidence in the criminal justice system.

The demand on the criminal justice system is also driven by changes in policy settings. The increase in the number of front-line police, protective services officers and transit safety division officers combined with sentencing reforms is going to have a significant downstream impact on the courts, on corrections, on the Office of Public Prosecutions, on Victoria Legal Aid and on the victim support agencies and the other justice system agencies, and we are conscious of those matters.

Interestingly, the sworn officer FTEs are estimated to grow at an average of 2.7 per cent per annum over the forward estimates period, which is well above the annual average population growth of 1.5 per cent, and that in turn is reflective of the government's proposals by way of the recruitment and training of additional police and PSOs.

The level of population within each of the police services areas is a key consideration in the allocation of police members, and I will perhaps have the chief commissioner in a moment speak to the modelling that is applied in the distribution of members.

In late March the chief commissioner announced the deployment of an additional 600 front-line operational police — 450 of those graduates from the academy and another 150 who have been redeployed. The spread of the numbers of those police officers is, of course, a matter for police command, but we are very pleased to see as a government that there has been a substantial increase in numbers not only in the Melbourne environment but certainly in terms of the regional parts of the state as well.

If I might move to the emergency service organisations, again population has an impact on service delivery. The demand for 000 call-in, for example, has increased by 12.8 per cent from 2005 up to 2010. A lot of the increase in this activity is to do with the growth around the urban fringes with the peri-urban population growth, and we saw the significance of that on that tragic day of 7 February 2009.

In light of these high population growth forecasts the emergency service organisations have to plan operations long term to ensure that the services are delivered in the areas of the most population growth and where those population figures continue to escalate.

I might say that the whole issue of population growth as a general concept is extraordinarily important to us as a state. We welcome the growth in population, but it is important to plan for it; it is important to make provision for it. Replete through the government's budget is the commitment to ensure that those issues are accommodated. Chairman, I will ask the chief commissioner to commentate around the question of the deployment of police officers.

**Mr PAKULA** — Chair, on a point of order, before the chief commissioner, could you, just for the sake of the committee, remind the minister of the need for answers to be of sufficient brevity to allow questions to be asked. It was a very fulsome answer, Minister, but it was extremely long.

**The CHAIR** — Thank you, deputy; it was a very comprehensive answer to a very important initial question.

**Chief Comm. OVERLAND** — The minister is correct; we obviously do look at population and the impact population has in determining how we allocate resources across the organisation. There are a number of demand-based ratios that we look at — for instance, the number of police per 100 000 population; also the number of police per 100 000 population aged between 15 and 30, because that influences the demand for services; the number of computer-aided dispatch events per full-time equivalent; CAD events adjustment, so we have to make adjustment for those areas that have more 24-hour police stations because they take more resources to run; CAD events per population; the number of crimes against property per 100 000 population; the number of crimes against property per FTE; the number of crimes against the person per 100 000 population; the number of crimes against the person per FTE; the number of road traffic collisions per FTE; and the proportion that each PSA, or our basic local service area, contributes to the total state crime rate.

Each of those is rated equally, and then out of that, that has led us to make decisions about where the resources get allocated. For instance, in the north-west metro region, our biggest region, 24 additional police will go into Brimbank, 21 into Melbourne; and in the eastern region, 16 into Latrobe, 11 into Shepparton. These are the highlights. There are obviously other areas. In the southern metro region, Frankston gets 35 and Greater Dandenong gets 16, and in the western region Ballarat gets 25, Bendigo gets 12 and Mildura will get 14.

There are also 100 people who have gone into our operations response unit and 100 into transit safety, and there are 15 out of the 600 who have gone to the academy in order to deal with the volume of new PSO and police recruits that we need to train, but those 15 positions have been marked and in year 4 they will come from the academy and be returned into front-line operational roles.

**Mr PAKULA** — Minister, at pages 239 and 240 in budget paper 3 there are a range of indicators under the headings, ‘Public safety and crime reduction’ and ‘Policing services’. I want to ask you whether you have full confidence in all of the data that you are receiving from Victoria Police.

**Mr RYAN** — The issues around the data that are provided within the budget papers are of course very important to us — to government of any persuasion in establishing its budgetary processes. We receive that information through police. We act upon that information as provided to us, and we believe that the budget papers properly reflect the material that is passed to us by police.

**Mr PAKULA** — I note, Minister, that you skilfully avoided answering the question about whether you have confidence in the data you are provided with. You have spent a number of years basically criticising the nature of the data that Victoria Police provide, you have not expressed confidence in it today, and I wonder in those circumstances why that data finds its way into the budget papers when you are clearly failing to express confidence in its accuracy.

**Mr RYAN** — Mr Pakula, in answering this and other related issues, I am conscious of course of events that are occurring in other areas. I am not going to enter into a discourse today around matters that are the subject of consideration in other areas. Suffice to say that we have framed the budget on the basis of the information that has been provided to us and we stand by our budget.

**Mr MORRIS** — Minister, if we turn to page 59 in budget paper 3, in particular the justice asset initiatives, there is additional funding in there of \$62.7 million for bushfire response emergency services. Can you indicate to the committee exactly what the extra funding will deliver?

**Mr RYAN** — Thank you, Mr Morris, for the question. The government is going to invest \$65.8 million to build 60 new or to upgrade that number of Country Fire Authority stations and to roll out 101 new firefighting vehicles in the course of the next 12 months. This represents a huge investment on behalf of those magnificent CFA volunteers.

The government has also significantly increased its commitment to new stations overall in that we have outlined in the budget papers the intention to deliver more than 250 fire stations across all CFA regions, including some co-located Victorian State Emergency Service facilities that will be constructed on six of those sites.

As a general principle I am a strong supporter of co-location. I think the notion of being able to bring together these entities in a way which has us best respond to the needs of our communities in the emergency circumstances is an important issue for us, and just as in investment generally the days of building single-purpose facilities are waning, I think being able to get to the point of having a co-location or a sharing of facilities as a general principle is a good idea.

The government, as I said, is investing in 101 CFA trucks and appliances, including 74 light tankers, 20 heavy tankers and 7 other specialist appliances. That is all in this year 11-12. That will be followed by a further investment in trucks and appliances over the period of 2012 up to 2015.

These announcements are all in accord with the commitments we have made to our volunteers, and very particularly to the CFA volunteers. We have re-signed the charter, which was, in fairness, instigated by the former government. We have re-signed that — the Premier and I. We have now enshrined in the CFA legislation the principal aspects of the charter so that the volunteers know that they truly have a voice in determining the future of the CFA and its general directions and their part in it. I think this massive investment that they will now see take place is another sign of the great faith which we as a government and indeed, again in fairness, which the Parliament at large have in the CFA volunteers.

**Mr SCOTT** — Minister, I refer you to pages 35 to 38 in budget paper 4, which make reference to the allocation of additional police resources across the police services areas and I ask you a question regarding how

they will be prioritised. Who will make decisions regarding the prioritisation, you or police command? I note your earlier answer to the Chair's question.

**Mr RYAN** — The government very obviously has an acute interest in what is done by way of the construction of these police stations, because the capacity to deliver police services is very much related to where those stations are located and the capacity to be able to staff them properly. We are, as a government, undertaking our part of the role by the recruitment of the additional officers — the 1700 additional front-line operational police. The deployment of those police is a matter for police command. Decisions in relation to police stations, upgrades and the like are matters I will pass to the Chief Commissioner of Police to deal with.

**Chief Comm. OVERLAND** — We have a strategic facilities program that runs and is regularly refreshed, looking at what our infrastructure needs are across the state. They are a regular part of BERC considerations. That list is updated on a regular and annual basis. Ultimately it is of course a matter for the government and the BERC process to determine where it wants to allocate funding for the development of either new infrastructure or the upgrading of existing infrastructure. You see that reflected in the announcements that have been made in the budget this year.

For instance, there are significant commitments to either build new police facilities or to upgrade existing facilities. I can run through those if you like, but they are actually in the budget papers. You can see them for yourself. As the minister said, though, again it is for the government to fund the additional increase in resources, but it is very much for police command to determine where those resources have gone. In reference to my previous answer, I explained the way we go about doing that. We try to do it in a very factual way, looking at a range of data to make sure we are actually putting the resources where they are most needed.

**The CHAIR** — Do you want to follow up?

**Mr SCOTT** — I do, Chair. Minister, prior to the last election the coalition stipulated how many additional police will be deployed to individual stations. In light of your previous answer where you said police command would make this call, how does your government intend to deliver its political promises to local areas when it is not actually up to you, or will you put pressure on police command? Who will have the final say — you or Victoria Police?

**Mr RYAN** — The final call is made in these matters by police command, as has been indicated by the chief commissioner. We respect that as being the case, and that is what will happen.

**Mr ANGUS** — Minister, I refer you to budget paper 3, page 124, regarding the justice output initiatives, in particular the funding over the forward estimates period for the Victorian SES of \$13 million for command, control and operational capability. Minister, can you please outline for the committee the need for this spending, and particularly its significance in relation to the recent flood events in Victoria?

**Mr RYAN** — Thank you, Mr Angus, for the question. The need for this funding has been, I suppose, highlighted by the events to do with what has been a campaign of flood events really going all the way back to the middle of last year. We have had a succession of situations now where we have a total of 104 towns across 28 municipalities that have been subject to the floods. Even as I speak, there are many locations that are still, believe it or not, under water as a result of the most recent of events. It is very important that we support Vic SES in its command and control role.

This \$13 million will allow the State Emergency Service to fill the gaps in its key incident management team leadership roles that have been identified in the recent floods and to do that by making available additional paid staff. The incident control teams are absolutely critical to the management of the flood events. We have to have people in each of the principal centres that are administering the resources who are capable and competent to be able to discharge this very important task. This \$13 million is going to assist in that regard. It will support the State Emergency Service to control these major sustained events for which it has lead agency responsibility.

In these recent series of events, I think it reasonable to say that State Emergency Service have been called upon in a way that perhaps is not otherwise seen. I am conscious — and no disrespect to others who have contributed — that Mr O'Brien, who is at the table here today, was front and centre across a lot of western Victoria in assisting those who were on the ground fighting the fight in company with the volunteers.

The money will also improve the flood intelligence capability so the community is able to receive adequate and timely information. The warning of impending flood events and that sort of intelligence is vital. It will provide asset support by way of the acquisition of new mobile command and control vehicles, for which the government has committed \$6 million. This is in addition to the replacement over a four-year period of critical emergency response motor vehicles, boats, plant and associated equipment that is older than its designated useful life.

The funding will support a total of 26 new state emergency staff, including 13 paid staff who will be there to fill the operational leadership roles to which I have just referred and 13 staff in systems support to ensure Victorian communities have the support from the state emergency services that they need so we can have a proper informed decisions being made by those who are in control.

The six new mobile command and control vehicles will have full access to the State Emergency Service's control systems. That in turn will aid the fast and flexible response which is needed when these events occur. The replacement, over a four-year period also, of critical emergency service assets that are older than their designed useful life will include trucks and boats. The volunteers did, as I said, an absolutely outstanding job in the course of these recent terrible events. They had an impact of about \$1.1 billion; that is our estimate at the moment. The total cost of the floods is expected to be that across the 28 municipalities, and we see this as a very important contribution to the work that is undertaken by those all-important volunteers.

**Ms HENNESSY** — Minister, just in relation to your election commitment to invest 161 million for the recruitment, training and redeployment of 940 new PSOs and the 20 million for capital investment in railway stations to deliver on your PSO promises, I take you to budget paper 3 at page 54 where that initiative is now costed at 212.3 million, which is a blow-out of over 50 million. I also make reference to evidence that the Minister for Public Transport gave in this forum on Tuesday that it now appears that the blow-out for this initiative is in the realm of 85 million. The Treasurer gave an answer in this forum on Friday in which he claimed that the reason for this blow-out was a bring-forward of the delivery date of these PSOs from 30 June 2015 to November 2014, which is of course before the next Victorian election. I just want to clarify: did the Treasurer mislead this committee on Friday when he made this claim in that your policy never contained a June 2015 implementation time frame — —

**Mr O'BRIEN** — Point of order, Chair.

**Ms HENNESSY** — Or is this just being concocted to — —

**The CHAIR** — Sorry, Ms Hennessy. There is a point of order.

**Mr O'BRIEN** — I have a point of order, Ms Hennessy. I do not recall either of the two witnesses conceding that there was a blow-out or certainly any misleading, and to assume that in the question — —

**Mr PAKULA** — It was not assumed in the question.

**Mr O'BRIEN** — It was assumed in the question. It is improper.

**The CHAIR** — Thank you for your assistance, Mr O'Brien. I think we will allow Ms Hennessy to conclude her question, and I do not suppose that the minister will need assistance in clarifying the facts.

**Ms HENNESSY** — Did the policy that you took to the last state election contain a June 2015 implementation time frame?

**Mr RYAN** — Thank you, Ms Hennessy, for your question. For a start, I am not going to commentate upon answers given by other ministers who come before the committee. That is not my role, and I am not going to do it. In terms of the delivery of the policy, what we intend by the budget figures is to ensure that we can in fact deliver the 1700 police officers — front-line operational officers — and the 940 protective services officers within the envelope of our first four-year term. The former government made commitments around police being delivered through a period ending 30 June 2015, and the costings of \$555 million in relation to that particular initiative were based around that principle.

We committed to delivering these police officers within our first term. To do that we have to bring forward the funding and make sure it is appropriate. If we are going to do this as we intend — seven and a half months earlier than the former government did as it scrambled to catch up with the policy that had been announced by



the coalition in opposition — then we will need this extra money. I emphasise: this has absolutely nothing to do with a blow-out. That is an inappropriate term to use; it has no application to this.

**Mr PAKULA** — You guys have got to be joking!

**Mr RYAN** — What we are doing here is taking the figures which would otherwise have seen delivery of this program by June 2015 and bringing them forward as we said we would do to ensure that these police are delivered by November 2014. To do that — to bring it forward by seven and a half months — the extra money is required, and that extra money is provided in accordance with basic budgetary principles.

Similarly, in relation to the delivery of the protective services officers, it is our intention to enable their delivery by November 2014. Accordingly we have included in the budget the additional figures that will ensure that that occurs. This has nothing to do with a blow-out; that is a completely inappropriate term — —

**Mr PAKULA** — Tell your colleagues that; they use it every day.

**Mr O'BRIEN** — Yes, on your record.

**Mr RYAN** — And we are pleased to say that we are going to be able to deliver.

**Mr PAKULA** — So when we do it, it is a blow-out; when you do it, it is a bring-forward?

**Mr O'BRIEN** — We are bringing things forward because you do not have the money to pay for it.

**Mr RYAN** — We are able to deliver the program we have promised to the Victorian public within the time that we indicated, and that of course is a policy which in both its respects was so warmly embraced by the Victorian public.

**The CHAIR** — Thank you, Minister. Before I proceed I am going to remind members of this committee and members of the gallery of my opening statement, and I will re-read a part of it:

Only officers of the PAEC secretariat are to approach PAEC members. Departmental officers, as requested by the minister or his or her chief of staff, can approach the table during a hearing to provide information to the minister, by leave of me as chairman.

I ask members of the committee to remind their staff that that is the situation. Ms Hennessy to follow up.

**Ms HENNESSY** — So what are you saying, Minister — that you went to the election with a commitment that you would implement them by June 2015 or November 2014?

**Mr RYAN** — Of which are you speaking?

**Ms HENNESSY** — PSOs.

**Mr RYAN** — The PSOs budget was originally costed around the latter delivery date.

**Ms HENNESSY** — June 2015.

**Mr RYAN** — We intend, however, to ensure that they are delivered within the period to November 2014. Accordingly the additional money has been made available and the protective services officers will be delivered.

**Mr PAKULA** — You never said 2015 before the election.

**Mr O'BRIEN** — If you want a competition for blow-outs, \$1.3 billion for myki is yours. That was your portfolio.

**Ms HENNESSY** — You never told that to the Victorian public. You misled the Victorian public before the last election, and now we have an \$85 million blow-out. I wonder whether they will warmly embrace that.

**Mr ANGUS** — It is a good initiative to bring it forward.

**Mr PAKULA** — Never once did he say that before the election.

**Mr O'BRIEN** — The desalination plant is a \$5 billion blow-out. There is a big difference between that and bringing things forward.

**The CHAIR** — Order! Settle down!

**Mr O'BRIEN** — There is a big difference between that and bringing things forward.

**Ms HENNESSY** — Thank you, Kenneth Galbraith!

**Mr O'BRIEN** — Welcome, Deputy Premier. In your capacity as Minister for Police and Emergency Services I take you to page 54 of budget paper 3, justice output initiatives. Under 'Public safety and crime reduction' the first line item is the 1700 new front-line police. I ask you, Minister, why is this additional investment required and what will it achieve?

**Mr RYAN** — Thank you, Mr O'Brien, for your question. This additional investment — this very significant, indeed record, investment — is necessary for a variety of reasons.

The first, and paramount, is that we as a government see ourselves as having a responsibility to ensure, as best we can, the safety of all Victorians. Victorians should be able to walk their streets in safety. They should be able to travel the transport system in safety, and we want to do what we can as a government to better enable that to happen. Accordingly, we are embarking on these two important policies for the recruitment of the additional police officers and the recruitment of the protective services officers.

The second aspect of this, in response to your question, is that this may not have been necessary to the same extent had it not been that over the past several years Victoria had sunk to the point where we as a state were spending less per capita on policing than any other state in the Australian nation. We had sunk to the point where Victoria had fewer front-line operational police per capita than any other state in the Australian nation, and that is a circumstance which had prevailed for several years prior to our coming to government. That is an unacceptable and disgraceful state of affairs, and we intend to address it.

The third element of this issue is that, whereas in the first instance it is the people of Victoria who suffered as a consequence, because of difficulties around issues very much to do with alcohol-fuelled violence, the others who suffered equally in the first instance were police officers themselves, because we simply did not have enough within our ranks out there doing the job that is necessary to fulfil these vital tasks.

It was for those reasons that we embarked on these issues for the purposes of putting our case to Victorians, and I am pleased to say they responded very positively, and thus it is we are now in government. As has already been indicated by the chief commissioner, the first 450 recruits from the police academy have now been deployed in the sense that we have had an indication from command as to where they will go, and they will be out on the beat by 30 June. In addition to that we will have the 150 who are redeployed from other forms of activity, and they will be out there also doing these important jobs.

Mr O'Brien, particularly from a regional perspective, and as the chief commissioner has said, I am thrilled to see that aside from those important areas around Melbourne, we are going to see additional police in places like Frankston, where we will have another 35 officers; in Ballarat, another 25; in Bendigo, another 12; Mildura, another 14; and in the Latrobe Valley, another 16.

When I go to police stations across Victoria, as I do regularly, and when I am out on the streets with police — as I was Friday week ago with the Safe Streets task force from about 8.00 p.m. until about 2.00 a.m. on Saturday morning — police say to me that they are thrilled to have the support of the government because it means there will be more troops on the ground and they will have resources available to them that they have been crying out for, for a decade. Now we as a government are going to provide them.

**Mr PAKULA** — Minister, I want to take you to budget paper 3, page 240, and the performance measure: 'Proportion of the community who have confidence in police'. Minister, on Monday you announced that you had commissioned a review of Victoria Police structures and command, and in terms of the impact of that on the budget I am wondering whether you can estimate for the committee the cost of that review, from which department or agency funding will be sourced for the review and for associated costs, and whether the funding for that is provided for in the budget.

**Mr RYAN** — Thank you, Mr Pakula, for the question. I will ask Ms Armytage to deal with answering that question.

**Ms ARMYTAGE** — Thank you very much, Chair. In terms of the public confidence in policing measures that is obviously detailed within the report there is a confidence in terms of a measure that has been set. There is obviously a process of regular review and monitoring in terms of the achievement of that target, and in light of our trend over the expected outcome for this financial year, which is a very positive outcome ahead of the target that was set, there is a level of confidence that for this coming financial year the target will be achieved.

**Mr PAKULA** — Minister, I note that you have thrown to Ms Armytage, but the fundamental question about the cost of the review was not answered by her. I have got to say, Minister, it does appear for all the world that this review is just a device to delay a decision, to paper over cracks in the cabinet — —

**Mr O'BRIEN** — On a point of order, this is about budget and estimates. I listened carefully to your first question about how much it would cost and how it is going to be funded. That is a budgetary and estimates matter. The second matter, you know, is not appropriate for this committee.

**Mr PAKULA** — That is not true at all. It is about confidence in police, and I have asked a question. Chair, can I reframe the question?

**The CHAIR** — I will not accept the line that you were going down, but if you choose to reframe your follow-up question, I may consider it.

**Mr PAKULA** — All right. Minister, I am just wondering why you do not simply turn to your right, look the chief commissioner in the eye and tell him whether or not he has your confidence — —

**The CHAIR** — No. You are out of order.

**Ms HENNESSY** — It is the fundamental question of confidence in policing.

**The CHAIR** — You are out of order.

**Ms HENNESSY** — It goes to the heart of this.

**Mr PAKULA** — A point of order, Chair.

**The CHAIR** — What is the point of order?

**Mr PAKULA** — Absolutely at the heart of the question of that performance measure — page 240, budget paper 3, 'Proportion of the community who have confidence in police' — is the question of whether the minister and the cabinet have confidence in the chief commissioner, and I am wondering why the minister would not want to simply answer that question before the committee today.

**Mr MORRIS** — On a point of order, Chair. I would suggest that the link the Deputy Chair is seeking to make between budget paper 3 and the question he is putting is not tenuous; it simply does not exist. The matter is outside the scope of the estimates hearing.

**Mr SCOTT** — Arrant nonsense!

**The CHAIR** — Mr O'Brien, further on the point of order?

**Mr O'BRIEN** — It is also inappropriate in the context of a review that is to take place.

**Mr PAKULA** — That is not a matter for you to adjudicate on, Mr O'Brien.

**Mr O'BRIEN** — It is not a matter that you should be inquiring into if you are into proper process and proper procedures and not seeking to pre-empt the outcome of inquiries.

**Mr PAKULA** — Thank you very much.

**The CHAIR** — Thank you, Mr O'Brien, Mr Morris and Mr Pakula. Mr Scott, on the point of order.

**Mr SCOTT** — To suggest that the confidence that the public has in the police force has not been impacted — which seems to be the inference from the rulings from the Chair and the points of order from the government members — by the current debate that is occurring is frankly arrant nonsense. To suggest that ‘proportion of the community who have confidence in police’ is not material to a budget outcome performance measure in the budget papers frankly defies logic and common sense.

**Mr O’BRIEN** — On the point of order — and this will finish my contributions on it, if I could have one final one — that again was a miscategorisation of my point of order.

**The CHAIR** — Mr O’Brien, thank you.

**Ms HENNESSY** — On the point of order, Chair, in the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee it is well within the remit of our jurisdiction to inquire into the drivers of the community satisfaction ratings. That is an output that is contained in the budget paper. To sit here and suggest that we should not talk about the elephant in the room is absolutely ridiculous.

**Mr O’BRIEN** — That was not the question, and you are allowed to ask about the budgetary consideration.

**The CHAIR** — Thank you! I have heard from most members of the committee, other than Mr Angus, on the point of order. Let me be clear about this: Mr Pakula has raised an issue which he is arguing is within the remit of the committee to consider in relation to the budget estimates. It is clearly a matter that is before the minister as to the administration of his portfolio — matters which the committee does not have purview of.

**Mr PAKULA** — What?

**The CHAIR** — The issue for us as a committee is in relation to the budget estimates, and it is not a matter of dealing with matters that are within the responsibility, generally, of the minister. This is not a general question time where members can raise any matter of government administration.

**Mr PAKULA** — It is in the budget papers.

**The CHAIR** — It is a matter for the committee to deal with in relation to the budget estimates.

**Mr PAKULA** — But it is in the budget estimates.

**The CHAIR** — This matter that you have raised is not within the budget estimates.

**Mr PAKULA** — So say you.

**The CHAIR** — And I am ruling it out.

**Ms HENNESSY** — So what everyone is talking about does not matter?

**The CHAIR** — We will simply move on.

**Mr PAKULA** — Crazy.

**Ms HENNESSY** — So much for an accountability — —

**The CHAIR** — We will move on to a question which I will direct to the minister. I refer the minister to budget paper 3, page 59, ‘Public safety and crime reduction’ under ‘Asset initiatives’, and I ask: will the minister provide more detail of the government’s investment in police station upgrades?

**Mr RYAN** — The chief commissioner has responded in part at least to the matters to which this question is directed. The simple fact is that an increase in police presence, combined with longer operating hours and upgraded police stations, will inevitably deliver improved policing services and create safer and better protected local communities. That is a pivotal aspect of government policy. It is what we campaigned hard on. It is the message we took to Victorians prior to the election. The thrust of what we are seeking to deliver by way of outcomes as reflected in the budget papers is intended to achieve that result.

The budget papers for 2011–12 provide funding of \$33.5 million for the first stage of the government’s election commitment of \$40 million for the construction of new police stations or the upgrade of existing stations. These upgrades include Ashburton, Mooroopna, North Ballarat/Sebastopol, Forest Hill, Heywood and Mooroolbark. Funding is provided to commence community consultation and planning for a police presence in Paynesville, where I know, Chair, you have a great familiarity with the events occurring within that town and the concerns that have been expressed by the people of Paynesville. There is an allocation of funding to get things under way from their point of view.

The funding also provides for land acquisition and the planning of police stations located at Emerald, Waurn Ponds and Sale. I pause to say that in Sale there is a 24-hour police station, which is the oldest station of its ilk now remaining in the east of Victoria. Once you leave Dandenong there is no older facility which operates as a 24-hour police station than that which exists in Sale. It has been the intention of command to see this station replaced, and I must say I am delighted to see that that process will at least commence with this land acquisition.

In addition to Sale, Somerville and importantly the Essendon operational tactics and safety training facility will be the subject of this additional funding. The balance of the government’s election commitments on police stations will be detailed in the budgets in the out years, and Victoria Police is working through an implementation plan for new police stations and for refurbishments and upgrades to commence appropriate works and land acquisitions as soon as is practicable. This is an issue which goes to the heart of providing better policing for Victorians.

**Mr SCOTT** — Minister, I also refer you to budget paper 3, page 240, and the output performance measure ‘Proportion of the community who have confidence in police’. Only a couple of days ago Liberal MP Bernie Finn used his Facebook page to call for the chief commissioner’s sacking. Are you prepared to openly repudiate Mr Finn’s attack and bring him in to line?

**Mr O’BRIEN** — On a point of order, Chair, they are just trying to re-engage in — —

**The CHAIR** — It is disappointing that I have to go here again, Mr Scott. I rule your question out of order, and I will move to the next — —

**Mr PAKULA** — We need to call a meeting of the committee.

**The CHAIR** — You may.

**Mr PAKULA** — Well, we might.

**The CHAIR** — Well, you may. Do you want to do it now?

**Mr PAKULA** — No, I think — —

**The CHAIR** — I am ruling the question out. We are moving on. It is Mr Morris.

**Mr PAKULA** — Hang on, Chair. Is the member going to have an opportunity — —

**The CHAIR** — No! He asked a question; he knew it was inappropriate. I moved on to Mr Morris.

**Mr MORRIS** — Thank you, Chair.

**Mr O’BRIEN** — It has been ruled out of order, and you know it.

**The CHAIR** — Mr Morris?

**Mr MORRIS** — Minister, I refer to — —

**Mr O’BRIEN** — Learn the terms of reference of this committee.

**Mr SCOTT** — It is not inappropriate at all, Chair.

**Ms HENNESSY** — It is not inappropriate to ask about the fundamental crisis that is occurring in the minister's portfolio when he is measured on community satisfaction and confidence. This is a committee of accountability.

**Mr SCOTT** — It is a performance measure in the budget paper that refers to 'Proportion of the community who have confidence in police'. It is clearly part of the budget process.

**Members interjecting.**

**The CHAIR** — Order! Let us be clear about this. I have made a ruling that no question that is simply of general government administration will be entertained.

**Mr SCOTT** — But it is not; it clearly refers to a budget measure.

**The CHAIR** — We dealt with the point of order earlier. Mr Scott ignored my ruling on that point of order. Mr Scott, you have asked a question which I have ruled out of order. I have moved on to the next member of the committee. Mr Morris, please continue.

**Mr MORRIS** — Thank you Mr Chairman. As I was saying, Minister, I refer to the justice output initiatives, page 54 of budget paper 3, and in particular the item relating to the Victorian SES, \$9.3 million for a funding boost under the heading 'valuing volunteers'. Minister, can you indicate to the committee exactly what these initiatives will provide and, perhaps more importantly, how they will assist emergency services volunteers?

**Mr RYAN** — I thank Mr Morris for his question. I emphasise for a start that this is a separate program from that to which I have already addressed some commentary. There is a separate budgetary item of \$9.6 million for the Victorian State Emergency Service, and that relates to employing more staff and adding equipment. This program, on the other hand, is \$9.3 million, and the Victorian State Emergency Service, of course, has long been dependent upon its volunteers and the extraordinarily valuable contribution which they make to the emergency services workforce.

In total there are about 90 000 emergency services volunteers working across the Country Fire Authority, Life Saving Victoria, the Victorian State Emergency Service and the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association. Supporting and enhancing these emergency service providers is vitally important to us as a government, and that is why that commitment is reflected in the \$207.8 million package which is referred to in the budget papers.

This particular component of it, this \$9.3 million, is over four years. It will allow the State Emergency Service to change its business models so as to provide support for volunteers who carry the heaviest administrative burdens. It is of course a source of enormous frustration to those who are in a volunteer capacity in different organisations, and I do not care whether it is the State Emergency Service or the local footy club or otherwise, that those volunteers who come with the intention of actually doing on-the-ground work find themselves more and more, in this contemporary world of ours, having to be involved in administrative burdens. This is intended to relieve those burdens.

The new training model will incorporate training scenarios for complex events in a safe learning environment, and it will enable the preparation of the volunteers for the rigours of the emergency response. We are also, in this package, establishing a volunteer support officer network, and this is the point to which I was referring a moment ago. The aim of this is to release 81 567 volunteer hours to be spent in training and operations each year. So we will have that work now being undertaken through this package by people who are employed to the task. This network is going to enable interagency coordination of support across those different volunteer groups, information sharing, sharing of research, as well as sharing training workshops, again, all of it intended to enable the volunteers to be freed up to do their important work.

I just want to conclude on this point: that the issues around occupational health and safety, which, again, in this day and age are so important, will also be enhanced by this package. We all well remember, I am sure, the nightmare of Linton and the tragic loss of lives of those volunteers some years ago which resulted in minimum skills training, for example, being introduced to the CFA. Initially there was a sense that this might be just too much to expect of them, but history would say it has gone on to literally save lives, and I think these packages are very important for the critically important aspect that they play in the training of the volunteers and making sure they are able to do ultimately that that they joined the organisation to do.

**Ms HENNESSY** — Minister, if I could take you to budget paper 3 at page 240. Today's newspaper reports that a number of cabinet ministers spent Monday calling for the sacking of the chief commissioner so the government could install its own man.

**Mr O'BRIEN** — A point of order — —

**The CHAIR** — A point of order — —

**Ms HENNESSY** — Minister, can you give this committee an assurance —

**The CHAIR** — Ms Hennessy, you have heard there is a point of order.

**Ms HENNESSY** — that you are 100 per cent united behind your chief commissioner?

**The CHAIR** — Ms Hennessy, you are out of order!

**Mr O'BRIEN** — The opposition members are clearly flouting your ruling and grandstanding for the camera. They are not interested in proper process and the terms of reference of this committee.

**Ms HENNESSY** — Grandstanding? The fundamental issue that goes to confidence in Victoria Police is a functional relationship between the minister and the chief commissioner —

**The CHAIR** — Ms Hennessy, you are out of order!

**Ms HENNESSY** — and this minister refuses to answer it.

**The CHAIR** — You will desist when I am speaking from the chair. I have ruled on this matter. We will move on. Mr Angus.

**Mr PAKULA** — Chair, I think we need a meeting of the committee.

**The CHAIR** — All right. Could the room be cleared, please.

**Mr PAKULA** — I am happy to do it openly.

**The CHAIR** — No, we are going to clear the room. All meetings of the committee are in private.

**Ms HENNESSY** — Except when they are webcast!

**Mr PAKULA** — That is your ruling, Chair, but I am just saying — —

**The CHAIR** — No, those are the rules.

**Mr PAKULA** — I am happy for it to be as is.

**Ms HENNESSY** — A public meeting.

### **Hearing suspended.**

**The CHAIR** — In relation to where the proceedings are up to, before we took our little break I had ruled a question out of order, and I am proposing to move to the next member of the committee, who would be Mr Angus, to ask a question. I just want to report that because of the interruption to proceedings we will slightly reschedule. We were to have a 15-minute break at 11.00 a.m.; I propose to shorten that break slightly so that we do not lose too much time.

**Mr ANGUS** — Minister, I refer you to budget paper 3, page 54 under the justice output initiatives, and in particular the \$900 000 over four years for the 'Life Saving Victoria administration grant — Volunteer support network'. Minister, can you please outline for the committee what these initiatives provide and how they affect emergency service volunteers?

**Mr RYAN** — Thanks, Mr Angus, for the question. This very important budget item of almost \$1 million will provide Life Saving Victoria with volunteer support officers to assist the clubs in having the appropriate

volunteer resourcing available to them. What it enables to happen is that the grants will ensure that volunteer support officers are able to undertake administrative tasks in the nature of those that I have just referred to with the SES volunteers. This is about the completing of forms, grant applications, fundraising — general administrative roles.

Again, with Life Saving Victoria one of the great frustrations is that the people who come into the organisation to participate in it in an active sense find themselves ground down by filling out forms. What this money will do is ensure that we have these volunteer support officers who are able to undertake that task. The commitment is part of the government's \$7 million boost for Life Saving Victoria. The volunteers in the smaller rurally based clubs are generally those who are least equipped to undertake the range of administrative tasks that are expected of them. They did not join Life Saving Victoria to fill out BAS returns, for example, or to be negotiating with councils and arranging insurance for local events. What they want to do is go out there and act as volunteers and, in the case of Life Saving Victoria, to be out on the beach or by the pool doing their important work.

For every 100 volunteer hours of club captains and committee members in Life Saving Victoria only 27 of those hours are spent in operations and training. It is a situation which is risking defeating the purpose. The erosion of the volunteer hours is a risk to the community because it consequently has a lower level of emergency support and than would otherwise be the case by the installation of programs of this nature. This initiative is a part of the government's extensive package for the emergency services, and that includes the \$65.8 million I already referred to with the CFA, \$38 million for the Victorian State Emergency Service, a total of \$9.5 million for Life Saving Victoria, including the upgrading of clubhouses and the 1.2 million for financial assistance. These are of course very strong budget commitments which I know are very much appreciated by those volunteers doing their all-important work, and in this instance by those who comprise Life Saving Victoria.

**Mr PAKULA** — Minister, I refer you to budget paper 3, page 240, and the total output cost. For 2011–12 it is shown as being \$2.061 billion. The footnote at the bottom says the increase is due to additional funding for front-line policing and PSOs. What provision has been made in Victoria Police's budgets to pay for negotiated wage increases in a successor enterprise agreement for police, in particular for the funding to implement the government's 2.5 per cent wages policy?

**Mr RYAN** — Thank you, Mr Pakula, for the question. I think this goes intrinsically to the EBA discussions and negotiations. That is what it is intended to relate to.

**Mr PAKULA** — Funding for it.

**Mr RYAN** — Funding for it. As you know, Mr Pakula, there are processes in place at the present time with regard to the EBA negotiations. These processes are part of a series that are to be undertaken by the government. This will include of course our teachers and our nurses and those involved in the public service. We have, as I believe you also know, indicated an intent to commence this with a process of 2.5 per cent on the table plus bankable savings, for want of another term. Those discussions are going through the whole procedure associated with enabling that outcome ultimately to be achieved. In terms of the specific aspect of the funding arrangements for this, I will ask Ms Armytage to answer that.

**Ms ARMYTAGE** — The provisioning in terms of the EBA outcomes, whilst they are not known now, there is obviously a factoring in in relation to the CPI growth that is built into the forward estimates and would be seen as being relevant in terms of the wages policy, but the detail of that we can come back to the committee with.

**Mr PAKULA** — If you could, that would be good. Just to follow up, Chair, I understand, Minister, that the government has committed to police and particularly the Police Association that police wages will not go backwards in real terms. At the moment we have an inflation rate of 3.5 cent, so I am wondering where you will find the additional funding to fund the difference between your wages policy of 2.5 and the inflation rate of 3.5, given your commitment that they will not go backwards in real terms.

**Mr RYAN** — Thank you, Mr Pakula, for your further question. I think the first issue here is the premise to your question. You are framing it in a manner as if what you are putting to me is the outcome, the result of the process which is now in train. That is not the case. As I have already indicated, we have started into the process. I think there have been about eight or nine meetings since the logs were exchanged, so there are discussions



ongoing. To be talking now about how we fund whatever levels when we do not yet know what the outcomes of those levels are ultimately going to be, I think, is trying to have that conversation at an inopportune time. We need to see in fact what is the result, and then we will be able to better gauge the propositions you are putting to me.

In terms of specific funding, as the secretary has indicated, we will return that information to the committee.

**Mr O'BRIEN** — Minister, I refer you again to budget paper 3, page 54, and the justice output initiatives, which outline funding of \$6 million across forward estimates for Life Saving Victoria clubhouses. Can the minister outline to the committee the impact of the new clubhouses and outline the need for them?

**Mr RYAN** — Thank you, Mr O'Brien. Of course this is a great initiative from the perspective of those wonderful volunteers who comprise Life Saving Victoria. The government is providing \$6 million over the next three years for clubhouse upgrades. I might say that part of that money will go to the Seaspray Surf Life Saving Club, which is one of the 58 clubs in the state of Victoria — I stand to be corrected on that figure, but I think I am right in saying 58. It is critically important that the clubs are able to have the appropriate standard of facilities for the important work they do. This funding will enable Life Saving Victoria to upgrade the clubhouses that are in significant need of repair and redevelopment; it will provide facilities that support the best possible lifesaving services that are provided through these facilities. The proposal forms part of the government's \$7 million boost for Life Saving Victoria, and \$6 million of this will be used for these upgrades and also to ensure that again in terms of Life Saving Victoria appropriate standards of occupational health and safety are met.

This is in addition to the \$1.3 million over four years for a multicultural water safety program, which provides water safety education, training and swimming activities for participants from multicultural communities, and another \$1.2 million over four years for the 57 lifesaving clubs — I stand corrected; it is 57, not 58 — to ensure those clubs remain financially viable and maintain effective delivery of volunteer lifesaving services; and another \$1 million over four years to support volunteer lifesavers in field-based activities. It is an important aspect of the overall funding package which we are providing for these people who do such wonderful work in looking after those who are engaged in water-related activities.

**Mr SCOTT** — Can the minister, with the assistance of the chief commissioner, break down by financial year the numbers and the locations at which the promised extra police and the 940 PSOs will be deployed as promised over the forward estimates period? Specifically, could you advise us how many police, PSOs and recruits in training, and their location, there will be on 31/12/11, 30/6/12, 30/6/13, 30/6/14 and at the next election?

**Mr RYAN** — Thank you, Mr Scott, for your question. The rollout of the police officers and the protective services officers will occur on a graduated basis, and it will happen obviously over the course of the forward estimates period. The location of that rollout and where those officers and protective services officers are to be stationed is a matter for command, and I will accordingly ask the chief commissioner to deal with this.

**Mr SCOTT** — As I said. By way of assistance, I am happy for some of that to be on notice. I am not expecting all of that detail immediately.

**Mr RYAN** — Thank you, Mr Scott, for that very gracious extra aspect.

**The CHAIR** — Mr Overland, can you contribute to this?

**Chief Comm. OVERLAND** — I will do my best, given there is a level of detail in the question that has been asked. I am not quite sure where to begin, but I will do my best. For the 2011–2012 year we are looking at needing to recruit some 1020 police recruits in order to get the 400 growth; that includes recruiting against attrition. The PSO numbers would be around 107 to achieve a neutral rollout in that first year of 93 PSOs. That is a total of 1127 people that we will need to recruit and put through the academy in that time.

In 2012–2013 it is 1136 police recruits to deliver again an increase of 400 and 266 PSOs to deliver an increase of 231. In 2013–2014 it is 946 police to deliver an increase of 300 and 538 PSOs to deliver an increase of 468. That is a net total of 1484 that will need to be recruited and trained in that year. In the final year, by November 2014, it will be 364 police recruits and 170 PSOs, making a total of 534, that we need to recruit in that time.

That is a net increase of 150 police and 148 PSOs. Our intention at the moment on our forecast is to have all of those resources fully deployed by November 2014.

In terms of where they will actually be located across the state, as I indicated to you in a previous answer, based on the range of data that we looked at to do that, we have actually planned the forward deployment of certainly the police resources out over the four years. To be quite frank, we are announcing them on a year-by-year basis because we need to rerun the data. We do not want to be announcing where we think the numbers will be going in year 4, because that may well change, even though we have done that detailed planning. I think that is the prudent thing to do, because the numbers will change depending on the impact they have and depending on shifts in population and a range of other things. Our intention would be within the next couple of months to announce where the additional police for the next financial year will be deployed across the state.

In terms of the PSOs, again our initial planning is that in year 1 they will be deployed primarily in the inner metropolitan area — on the rail loop and on surrounding major railway stations such as Richmond, North Melbourne and those sorts of areas. Again in terms of planning further ahead, we will gradually spread the PSOs out across the network. For instance, in the second year we would look at them moving onto the Lilydale, Belgrave, Craigieburn, Pakenham, Cranbourne, Epping, Frankston, Sydenham and Werribee railway lines. But we will need to work through that in some detail. I have done my best to answer your question; I am sure I have not answered it in total. We will obviously have a look at it and come back with the full detail.

**The CHAIR** — Thank you; we will take that question on notice and see if we can have some more detail.

**Mr SCOTT** — Just very briefly, and again if there is detail that needs to be taken on notice, I am quite happy because I understand those circumstances, could I have further information on the basis for making determinations about the location for those three categories, particularly the PSOs and the police? I know there was some provided earlier but the basis for the determination. Again, if there has to be detail provided, I am happy to take that on notice.

**Mr RYAN** — I will ask the chief commissioner to address that, Mr Scott. As you, if I might say, very fairly accepted, we will need to come back to you with some of the finer detail about which you seek information. But to the extent that the chief commissioner can, I will ask him now to respond.

**Chief Comm. OVERLAND** — I outlined the basis on which we allocate the police resources in a previous answer. I can run through that again if you like.

**Mr SCOTT** — No, thanks.

**Chief Comm. OVERLAND** — Essentially it is that range of data that we look at. With the PSOs we will run through a similar exercise. So, again, we will deploy them on the basis of where we think the greatest need is. We will be looking particularly at crime, public order issues, safety concerns around particular railway stations, so the resources will be going to the priority areas. That is why you will see that the initial rollout will be very much focused in the city — Southern Cross, Flinders Street, the rail loop and the inner stations I spoke of, North Melbourne and Richmond. When we look at our data obviously there is greater commuter movement through those areas. But also when we look at our data the greatest crime and public order issues are in those locations, so the distribution of the PSOs will be based on that sort of analysis.

**The CHAIR** — Thank you, Mr Overland. Minister, I refer to page 124 of budget paper 3 and the output initiatives for ‘Public safety and crime reduction’. What is the government’s progress on upgrading the capacity at the Victorian police academy?

**Mr RYAN** — Work is currently being undertaken at the academy to facilitate the additional training requirements by expanding the existing facilities. As I remarked previously, the \$10 million which had been allocated previously is in the process of being expended. The intake of both the police recruits and the protective service officers for the transport system to meet that target of 940 is estimated to exceed 1000 over the next few years. The 2011–12 budget provides 17.8 million in funding for the upgrade and the alterations to the police academy to support the recruitment and training of both the 1700 front-line operational police and the 940 PSOs and to develop the police academy business case to respond to expected demand.

Just to highlight two extra points that arose in the course of this last question, we are talking net numbers here. We are as a government committed to adding another 1700 front-line operational police over and above attrition; it is a net increase. The other thing to contribute to this is that of course the raw numbers going through the academy do not tell the complete tale in terms of training periods required because the police training, obviously, is of a longer period of time than is the training attributable to the protective services officers. It is important in the analysis of the raw data that we do not just dwell on numbers per se but rather relate those to the training periods applicable to the two categories. That is also a very pertinent point to the issue you raised.

**Ms HENNESSY** — Minister, just before, Commissioner Overland said there would be 107 PSOs delivered in the first year, and you have previously said there would be one-quarter of the 940 PSOs. Who is right?

**Mr RYAN** — Thank you, Ms Hennessy. What the chief commissioner was indicating was that the phasings show 93 PSOs are to be delivered in the first year. In terms of our intentions as a government we have committed to the fact that by the conclusion of our term we will have a total of 940 PSOs operative on our stations. Any other references that have been made in relation to the number you posed to me, which was —

**Ms HENNESSY** — One-quarter of 940.

**Mr RYAN** — One-quarter of 940, was around —

**Ms HENNESSY** — Your commitment, Minister.

**Mr RYAN** — It was around the principle that as an average that is what you are looking to do to get your 940. But what we need to do of course is to phase it up because we are starting this as a new program. As a matter of logic we are not going to be able to deliver the average figure in the first year. We need to build this up, which is reflected by the phasings, and so it is that this policy will be delivered.

**The CHAIR** — Thank you, Minister. Ms Hennessy, you are fine?

**Ms HENNESSY** — Yes.

**Mr MORRIS** — Minister, I would like to move to an issue which is certainly a concern to many of my constituents and that is the transparency and reliability of road safety cameras. In the context of the budget, note 6 on page 26 of budget paper 5 deals with other revenue. Can you advise the committee on progress the government is making to increase the transparency and reliability of road safety cameras, particularly the establishment of an independent road safety camera commissioner?

**Mr RYAN** — I well appreciate that the issue of road safety cameras has been a contentious matter in Victoria, and I might say not only in Victoria but in other jurisdictions as well. What we as a government have committed to do is to restore in the minds of the public of Victoria faith in the operation of the cameras.

When I first assumed the role as minister, as the chief commissioner will attest, I spent considerable time with him and the deputy commissioner, Ken Lay, who of course has been a focal point of the efforts of command to deal with the ever-present threat of the tragedy of loss of life and injury on our roads. Having gone through myriad detail with police and having had numbers of conversations with them, I concluded that they are right and that particularly deputy commissioner Ken Lay, who is a passionate advocate around this issue, is right in saying that the cameras do save lives. So we have set about a course of doing what we can as a government to bring about that change in culture, if you like, in the way people view the use of the cameras in Victoria.

We have committed to increase this issue of transparency and accountability in the camera system. As part of that process, at an early stage I wrote to the Victorian Auditor-General to ask that he undertake a performance audit with regard to the cameras, and the findings arising from that audit will be tabled in a timely manner, as the Auditor-General deems appropriate. We will see what he has to say later in the year.

The cameras, as I have remarked, have been the subject of considerable community commentary and scrutiny, and what the audit will do is complement the establishment of the road safety camera commissioner. This is the first such appointment in Australia, and I think it has much to offer us in the overall context of enabling people to have faith in the system.

The creation of the commissioner is part of the government's commitment to achieving that end result. The cameras are an important aspect of a range of strategies which are used by police for the purposes of doing what we can to contain the road toll in Victoria. They have a magnificent record in that regard, and what we are looking to do through the work around the cameras is to add that element of it to the broader aspect of the approach which the police are taking in a variety of ways, apart from the cameras, to address this ever-present problem.

All aspects of the operation of the cameras, from location to accuracy, liability, testing and maintenance, will be subject to the commissioner's consideration. The commissioner will report annually to the Parliament on his or her activities, and that report will include monitoring the road safety camera system and making recommendations for its improvement as the commissioner may deem appropriate; investigating any aspect of the operation of the road safety camera system which the commissioner deems appropriate; and undertaking complaint investigations where a systemic issue arises — and we have a few locations, of course, in Victoria where commentary has been made around this issue. The commissioner will be supported by a reference group which comprises people with a diverse range of skills who will provide the commissioner with advice about the operation of the camera systems.

We are proud of this initiative, and we believe it will bring much to the transparency that is needed and appropriate for the operation of the cameras in Victoria.

**Mr PAKULA** — Minister, on page 55 of budget paper 3, there is commentary about the government's commitment to upgrade more than 250 CFA stations and purchase additional firefighting equipment over the first term of the government. I am wondering whether you can advise the committee how much funding has been allocated in the budget to equip that commitment?

**Mr RYAN** — The government in the campaign allocated \$36 million as an amount of money that would be dedicated to this all-important task. The balance of the funding, as is the usual process, will be provided through the fire services levy. As the committee knows, we have also accepted the recommendation by the bushfire royal commission that there be a new form of levy established, and that process will occur in the course of our first term.

**Mr PAKULA** — Minister, I just want to make sure I am reading the budget papers correctly. If you go back to page 54 — page 55 is the commitment — is the \$3.1 million listed against 'Bushfire response — emergency services' the only new money that is provided in the budget for that commitment?

**Mr RYAN** — I also just want to be clear about this. Are you putting this in a context of new money in relation to bushfire response overall?

**Mr PAKULA** — No, new money to equip this commitment that you have made on page 55. I just want you to point me to where it is in the budget.

**Mr RYAN** — I will have Ms Armytage deal with it, Mr Pakula.

**Ms ARMYTAGE** — Through you, Chair, there has been a one-year allocation, which is clear in the budget papers on page 55 in terms of the upgrade of the 60 stations and the firefighting vehicles. This is part of the broader commitment to upgrade 250 new and upgraded stations, including the SES facilities, and they are planned in terms of that rollout.

In 2011-12 there will be 74 light tankers, 20 heavy tankers and 7 other special appliances that will be purchased, and all of those will be purchased in accordance with the CFA's asset replacement strategy, because that means they can distribute them across their brigades et cetera and make sure that they are convinced that they represent value for money. This first year of funding has been allocated, and then the four-year commitments for the remaining period will be determined in due course.

**Mr PAKULA** — But the first year you are referring to is the 3.1 I pointed out?

**Ms ARMYTAGE** — Yes, that is the one.

**Mr ANGUS** — Minister, I refer you to budget paper 3 at page 59, asset initiatives, ‘Public safety and crime reduction’. I wonder if you could provide some more detail for the committee in relation to the government’s investment in police brawler vans and how this will improve public safety.

**Mr RYAN** — I might have the chief commissioner add something to this in terms of the importance of the use of the facility. The government is allocating \$1.2 million in the 11-12 year to fund nine of these new brawler vans. They will be used to patrol both city and regional crime zones and to help Victorians who are attending major events. They have a highly visible presence, and they help Victoria Police tackle violence and antisocial behaviour particularly in the entertainment precincts. Indeed the police have said to me anecdotally that when the blue is on there is nothing like the arrival of a brawler van with lights flashing and sirens sounding to bring things to a halt.

**Ms HENNESSY** — A bit like cabinet meetings, Minister.

**Mr RYAN** — Indeed, Ms Hennessy, so I am told. The budget allocation is intended to fund the purchase of eight mini-vans and one maxi-van. The smaller vans accommodate four offenders with a crew capacity of 5, and the larger van has a capacity to hold 16 offenders and 5 members. Victoria Police will determine the rollout of these new vans and allocate them as they see appropriate.

Coincidentally, when I was out on the street only a few days ago at about 1.00 in the morning, not far away from here, and I might say all present company excluded, there was a gentleman who was in a very bad state of disrepair — —

**Mr O’BRIEN** — Was that the former Prime Minister?

**Ms HENNESSY** — I don’t think you want to start interjecting on — —

**Mr PAKULA** — Malcolm Fraser is keeping his pants on these days, Mr O’Brien.

**The CHAIR** — We are getting to the end.

**Mr RYAN** — The police were very sensibly able to stop the car in which I was then travelling for the purposes of accompanying them that night, and they were able to go to the assistance of this gentleman, because he was obviously very much the worse for wear and I think in an environment where he might otherwise have been subject to assault and some real damage being done to him. Police were then able to call one of the brawler vans to come and escort this gentleman, no doubt, down to the custody centre, where he would have a quiet pause and a think about things for about 4 hours, walk out, get his PIN notice for \$478 and wonder why the hell he did it in the first place.

Perhaps I can pass to the chief commissioner for some other observations about this.

**Chief Comm. OVERLAND** — These vehicles will help us with our ongoing efforts against public disorder, particularly alcohol-fuelled violence right across the state — and they will be used across the state. It can be an issue for us on a very busy night; we can often struggle to deal with the number of people that we need to take into custody at any given point in time. One of the capacity constraints is actually having the vehicles to put them in, so the brawler vans — the mini-brawler and the bigger brawler — will be very useful in that context. They will also be used in other contexts: demonstrations and other public order issues that we have across the state. They are an important addition to our fleet, and they will be very well used over the next three or four years, I can assure you.

**Mr SCOTT** — I would like to follow up the minister’s answer; he segued quite nicely into my question. This regards the Melbourne Custody Centre. I ask the minister: what are the projections for overnight or longer stays in cells at the Melbourne Custody Centre; how do these projections differ from current numbers and previous projections; and specifically where is the budget allocation to implement the Ombudsman’s recommendations for management and operation of that centre?

**Mr RYAN** — Thank you, Mr Scott, for your question. I might say again, in context, that in a previous instance when I was out on the street with the Safe Streets, dressed in jeans and other appropriate gear — —

**Ms HENNESSY** — No Superman cape, Minister?

**Mr RYAN** — No. Thank you very much, Ms Hennessy. I actually attended the custody centre in concert with two other uniformed police officers with whom I was travelling on that particular night. When the high roller door was lifted to enable us to have access, those inside saw two uniformed officers and another chap coming in, in jeans, in the form of yours truly. I do not want to take the committee through all the gory detail, but suffice it to say I almost had a closer look at the interior of one of those cells than I had otherwise anticipated.

In direct answer to the question, the custody centre acts as the main city watch-house for police to take those who are arrested for different offences — including lodgements of those who are drunk, and last year there were 5773 of those — as well as prisoners who are facing a court appearance. Last year the centre had 18 098 movements or transactions, with an average stay of four to five days. Due to the nature of the facility, the number of persons detained on arrest and prisoners varies according to police operations.

G4S custodial services took over the operation of the MCC on 28 March 2010, and we are aware that the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's 09 annual report noted the managerial, procedural and other operational changes made at the custody centre by Victoria Police and the then contractor, although the commission was concerned with the infrastructure constraints. G4S has continued to work collaboratively with command to observe those important issues around the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, and accordingly improvements in operation have actually occurred.

An upgrade of the CCTV monitoring, which had previously been the subject of critical comment by the Ombudsman, was included in the new contract for G4S.

The access to the exercise yards with natural light has not been possible to implement at the custody centre due to infrastructure constraints and planning restrictions. The department and command are working together to minimise the number of people who are actually held at the custody centre. In addition to that, the average number of days individual detainees spend at the centre has been substantially reduced from 28 to 14.

In February last year the Ombudsman reported on the progress by Victoria Police in relation to implementing the recommendations contained in his previous reports — that being 'Conditions for persons in custody' and the 'Use of excessive force in the Melbourne Custody Centre'. The Ombudsman has commented that significant progress has been made by Victoria Police in relation to police cells. A subsequent report by the Office of Police Integrity noted that the implementation of the recommendations aimed at improving the condition of the cells remained, as was termed, sporadic. The report noted the OPI advised that the actual conditions for the detainees vary significantly depending on where they are detained due to the variations in the local rules and the physical constraints of cell blocks and environment.

We understand as a government that this remains an area that in time to come will quite appropriately be deserving of further attention, because it is necessary that anybody who is held in this environment is held in a circumstance where they are safe and where often it is they quite frankly need to be protected from themselves. We will ensure that we continue to oversight the provision of appropriate facilities to enable that to happen.

**Mr SCOTT** — I note your statement 'in time to come', so I take it there is no money in this budget to implement the Ombudsman's recommendations for the Melbourne Custody Centre.

**Mr RYAN** — If I were to have the Chief Commissioner of Police to make some observations around this, he can deal with the proposition you are now referring to.

**Mr SCOTT** — In terms of the budget.

**Chief Comm. OVERLAND** — There are undoubtedly some constraints around infrastructure that currently exist at the MCC. We are doing what we can to work within those constraints. More broadly, though, we have completed some recent work looking at our own cells to make sure we are absolutely compliant with the various recommendations that have been made by the Ombudsman and the OPI. There is work being undertaken on those facilities now in order to make sure that we are absolutely fully compliant with respect to all of our cells.

We take very seriously our responsibilities around the detention of people in custody. But that said, there are some constraints we have to work within, and one of those is around the infrastructure we have to work with.

**Mr SCOTT** — Chair — —

**The CHAIR** — You have had your follow-up question. I call Mr O'Brien to ask what will in fact be the last question.

**Mr O'BRIEN** — Deputy Premier, in your capacity as the minister, referring back to the justice output initiatives, I just want you to touch briefly on Life Saving Victoria's multicultural water safety program. I refer specifically to budget paper 3, page 124. I just ask you, Minister, if you could briefly outline how this program is intended to operate.

**Mr RYAN** — Thank you, Mr O'Brien. The government is providing \$1.2 million over the next four years for the Life Saving Victoria multicultural water safety program. The funding will continue with important issues around water safety education, training and swimming activities to culturally and linguistically diverse communities. For obvious reasons, Mr O'Brien, this is critically important.

The benefits of the program include improved community safety in aquatic environment through education and learn-to-swim sessions. This point is very pertinent in that there is a tendency to think of this program as having a particular application only at a beachside setting, whereas rather it is dedicated to aquatic settings at large.

The benefits extend to the participation of culturally and linguistically diverse communities. To act as a catalyst for increasing their involvement in aquatic sports, role models are being created for the 'train the trainer' opportunity so that this knowledge can be passed on. The other element of the program that is important is that it provides numerous active participation opportunities for those who are culturally and linguistically diverse to better enable us to be as sure as we can as a government that we are giving proper training to people in these categories of our community who may not be as familiar as many of us are otherwise with not only the great opportunities that come with engaging with aquatic activity but the dangers that are inherent in doing so.

Accidental drowning and non-fatal drowning incidents place a tremendous financial burden on society, even if you are looking at it in those stark terms. The estimated direct cost of the drowning deaths in Victoria going back to 09–10, which are the most recent figures we have got, was \$61 million. What the figures also show is that the culturally and linguistically diverse communities tend to be overrepresented in those numbers. We want to make sure therefore that we do everything we possibly can to assist this important element of the community in the best way we are able to secure their protection and safety in aquatic environments of all sorts.

**The CHAIR** — This brings to a conclusion the estimates hearing for police and emergency services. I thank Mr Overland and Ms De Cicco for their attendance.

**Witnesses withdrew.**