

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE No. 2

Friday 8 September 2006

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas

TOURISM, SPORT AND RECREATION, WOMEN

The Committee met at 8.00 p.m.

MEMBERS

The Hon. P. Forsythe (Chair)

The Hon. M. A. Burnswoods
The Hon. A. Chesterfield-Evans
The Hon. C. E. Cusack

The Hon. C. M. Robertson
The Hon. P. G. Sharpe

PRESENT

The Hon. S. C. Nori, *Minister for Tourism and Sport and Recreation, and Minister for Women*

Department of the Arts, Sport and Recreation

Mr R. Aaby, *Director General*

Tourism NSW

Mr J. O'Neill, *Executive Director and General Manager*

Premier's Department

Dr K. Bigsworth, *Director, Office of Women*

Dr E. Coombs, *Assistant Director General, Office for Women and Performance Development Division*

Sydney Olympic Park Authority

Mr B. Newman, *Chief Executive Officer*

Major Events Board

Mr K. Simmonds, *Director*

Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority

Ms D. Talty, *Executive Director, Major Projects*

Department of State and Regional Development

Mr L. Harris, *Director General*

CHAIR: I declare this hearing open to the public and welcome Minister Nori and all officials. Thank you all for coming, particularly as it is Friday night and the Sport portfolio is included. We do not intend to have a break during the night, but if anyone wishes to give me advice that the Knights are winning, I am more than happy to receive that.

At this hearing the Committee will examine proposed expenditure for the portfolios of Tourism, Sport and Recreation, and Women. Before we commence I will make some comments about procedural matters. In accordance with the Legislative Council guidelines for the broadcast of proceedings, only Committee members and witnesses may be filmed or recorded. People in the public gallery should not be the primary focus of any filming or photographs. In reporting the proceedings of this Committee the media must take responsibility for what it publishes or what interpretation is placed on anything that is said before the Committee. The guidelines for the broadcast of proceedings are available on the table by the door.

In relation to the delivery of any messages, any messages from attendees in the public gallery should be delivered through the Chamber and support staff or the committee clerks. Minister, you and your officials are free to pass notes and refer directly to your advisers while at the table. I ask that Hansard be given access to material placed on the public record during hearings. This is the usual practice in the House and it is intended to ensure the accuracy of the transcript. Equally, if you should read answers from papers, particularly if that material contains names or acronyms, and it is able to be passed to Hansard, that will be of assistance. I ask everybody in the gallery, officials and members to turn off mobile phones. When I ask that they be turned off, could I indicate that that means not just placed on silent, because that does interfere with Hansard recording.

The Committee has agreed to the following format for this hearing: blocks of 15 minutes for the Opposition, 15 minutes for the crossbenchers, and 15 minutes for the Government. We intend to examine the portfolio of Sport first, then Tourism, and then Women. However, I should indicate that crossbenchers have mixed portfolio questions and wish to proceed in a slightly different order. But we will try to adhere to that rotation.

Ms SANDRA NORI: It would be good to keep within the portfolio so that some can go home.

CHAIR: I will direct this comment to the crossbench. Are you happy to stay in Sport as the first block, Tourism as second block and Women as third block?

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Yes.

CHAIR: I note that Government members indicate they are happy with that. Then we will proceed on that basis. In relation to any questions taken on notice, I advise that the Committee has resolved to request that answers to questions on notice be provided within 21 calendar days of the date on which they are sent to your office. Minister, do you anticipate any problems with that?

Ms SANDRA NORI: We have not had any problems in the past.

CHAIR: Officials will need to be sworn in. I will not swear officers in relation to the portfolio of Women until later. Minister, you do not need to be sworn in.

DIANA TALTY, Executor Director, Major Projects, Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority,

BRIAN NEWMAN, Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Olympic Park Authority,

ROBERT ADBY, Director General, Department of the Arts, Sport and Recreation,

JOHN O'NEILL, Executive Director and General Manager, Tourism NSW,

KEVIN SIMMONDS, Director, Major Events Board, and

LOFTUS HARRIS, Director General, Department of State and Regional Development, affirmed and examined:

CHAIR: Minister, I will ask if you wish to make a brief opening statement, but I indicate that if it is lengthy we will ensure that each portfolio has its allocated time.

Ms SANDRA NORI: I do not intend to make an opening statement. However, if at the end of the night some matters have not been elicited through the questioning process, I might make a wrap up comment, if the Committee is happy with that.

CHAIR: That will be at about 10.30 p.m. and whether you wish to go on past that time is certainly in your hands.

Ms SANDRA NORI: Thank you.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Minister, what do you intend to do to stem the tide of major New South Wales sporting fixtures being staged in Melbourne?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I take it that is an oblique reference to major event strategy in New South Wales. Is that what you are really getting at?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Yes.

Ms SANDRA NORI: In that case, let me give you some background. I am happy for officials to step in.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I am sorry, Minister, my question was in relation to sporting fixtures.

Ms SANDRA NORI: But the question obviously covers a number of elements of my portfolios.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I just clarify that my question is directed towards sporting events.

Ms SANDRA NORI: You have to understand that if you are pursuing an events strategy through sport you have an obligation to the taxpayer to ensure that the event also brings some economic benefits. That is not a hard and fast rule. You would host some events—like the World Slalom—because you think that is good for the sport. But you always have to balance that against economic benefits. I see sporting events like the Olympics as being more than the sport or sports that are involved in the event.

What I would say to you is that of the three major global sporting events on this planet, we have held two, and have done so within three years of each other. I am referring to the Olympics and the Rugby World Cup. That leaves us the football, or soccer, World Cup. As you know, all Ministers for tourism, including the Commonwealth Minister, as recently as a month ago, endorsed support for FFA should it make a bid for a future football World Cup.

We have had a lot of sporting events in Sydney, and we have put a lot of money into it—Australia versus Uruguay and Australia versus Kuwait—and more football games are being played in Sydney than in Melbourne. Although you have not mentioned it, I presume you are referring to the Bledisloe Cup. New South Wales continues to have the lion's share of rugby fixtures. I am anticipating what you are thinking, but you need to realise that so far as the Bledisloe Cup is concerned the Australian Rugby Union [ARU] did not approach the New South Wales Government. We put a lot of money into the Rugby World Cup. My understanding is that the Bledisloe Cup being staged in Melbourne next year had a lot to do with internal politics, a particular ballot that was going on at the time, and promises made.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Did you or the Government do anything to seek to retain the staging of the 2007 Bledisloe Cup fixture, which is now destined for Melbourne?

Ms SANDRA NORI: You realise that they never approached me. I am very happy for the Director General of the Department of Arts, Sport and Recreation to say whether he was approached. It is a bit hard to support something if you are not even approached for support. But I also point out the support that the New South Wales Government gave only a couple of months ago to the National Rugby League [NRL] to make sure the NRL Grand Final—\$3 million—stayed in Sydney. I do not believe you can separate support for sporting events from support for events generally. As a matter of public policy I cannot believe it would be wise to try to segregate the two and try to pretend that there is not a relationship or a consequence, or that in some way they are not contingent upon each other. The Government has to balance supporting two of the world's biggest sporting events with support for something like the Catholic World Youth Day, which is probably one of the world's largest events, sporting or otherwise, and certainly the world's largest youth event, as well as conventions and exhibitions, like the Rotary Convention in a couple of years, which will bring 20,000 to 25,000 delegates, the Lions Convention, which also will bring 20,000 to 35,000 delegates, and the World Masters Games, which is coming here in 2009. You cannot separate our going for sporting events from what else is on the plate

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Were any specific steps taken to retain the Bledisloe Cup fixture in 2006, which was staged in Brisbane?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I will ask the director general to answer that question. I certainly was not approached to support it.

Mr ADBY: It is my understanding that there was a discussion whereby the Chairman of the Major Events Board was advised that the event was going elsewhere. There was no negotiation and no opportunity for the New South Wales Government to retain those events. Having said that, it must be appreciated that the Australian Rugby Union still played its two traditional rugby union test matches in Sydney, and it proposes to continue that. We believe that it is an internal decision of the ARU to take the Bledisloe Cup to promote its game to other cities. But the same number of rugby test matches will be played in Sydney that are traditionally played in Sydney.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Were any steps taken to retain the deciding State of Origin fixture, which was staged in Melbourne?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I answered that question. Sorry, I thought you were referring to the final. I beg your pardon. I certainly was not approached. Perhaps Mr Simmonds from the Major Events Board could explain whether we were approached.

Mr ADBY: It was Brisbane that was due for a third game, I think

Mr SIMMONDS: My understanding is that we were not approached, but the NRL has played State of Origin in Melbourne in the past. Going from memory, it was 1997. As Mr Adby said, the NRL has a franchise in Melbourne and, obviously, it wants to spread its best games into the other commercial markets of the country.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: There is no strategy to retain those games in Sydney?

Ms SANDRA NORI: We were not approached.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Why are you planning to spend \$94,000 of taxpayers' funds on government advertising this month to depict bad parental behaviour at a football match during the finals of winter sports, when most junior teams have already played the last round of the season and will not play again until next winter? Would it not be more beneficial to run those advertisements at the commencement and during the next winter sports season in 2007, or is the Minister expecting an outbreak of parental abuse during the cricket season?

Ms SANDRA NORI: You probably have not understood what we have done. The \$94,000 refers to production costs. We now have an advertisement that can run for years until there is no more

sports rage, poor parental behaviour and other behaviour. The fact that it was launched recently reflects production times and the completion of production. If I may say, the question is somewhat naive. Are you seriously suggesting, given that even as recently as last week there was a horrendous example, an appalling example of sport rage, that the Government should not start using these promotions? You may not realise it, but there is a whole range of summer sports. Please do not make the assumption that sport rage is something that happens only at football matches.

The reason it was launched on that day is that it tended to be the grand final day for a whole lot of competitions, so that we were reaching more parents than we might have otherwise. To suggest that we spent \$94,000 in one month to launch a campaign is to be ill informed. That is the production cost of this particular item of advertising, and it is there forever. We have it until such time as sport rage ceases to exist. I am staggered that you would think that any money spent on sport rage was worthy of your derision. I am happy to take you right through the kinds of things that have been happening in sport rage. You would be truly horrified if you only knew the facts. Mind you, they seem to be getting a bit of publicity. If you think we should not spend our money on that then would you like me to tell me what we have been doing this year on sport rage?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: The question relates to the scheduling of the advertisement. Are you saying that it was scheduled to commence—?

Ms SANDRA NORI: It is not a television commercial. It is being shown at sporting fixtures. Sport goes on all through the year. Wherever there is a stadium or a place where sport is played that has a screen it can be shown. It is footloose in a time sense. It is not television money, if that is what you are saying.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Why was it not launched earlier in the season?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Because it was not produced earlier.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Was it scheduled to begin on the day that it began?

Ms SANDRA NORI: That is my understanding.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: That was on time and when you expected it to happen?

Ms SANDRA NORI: The department told me that it was ready to go, and we decided to launch it on the day of junior NRL grand final.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: What have you done to protect children playing junior contact sport from oversized players? Do you intend to introduce weight-for-age guidelines for the various codes of contact sports, such as rugby league?

Mr ADBY: There are a number of initiatives and we have worked with a number of codes. If you want the actual detail I would like to take the question on notice.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Yes, I would like the answer to the question. How do you explain the fact that the important Capital Assistance Program has remained funded at around \$40,000 per electorate for the entire 12 years of the Carr-Iemma Government? Should it not have been at least adjusted for inflation over those years?

Ms SANDRA NORI: It has not been costed at \$4 million. In fact, it was considerably less a year or so ago. It is now up to \$4 million.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: What are you doing to increase the level of, and participation in, school sport? What liaison have you had with the Minister for Education and Training on this vital topic?

Mr ADBY: Just bear with me while I locate the brief. Again, there are a number of initiatives that we work with, both at the Federal level and at the State level, that involve a great many programs that go across a number of initiatives. They include trying to address the obesity initiatives.

We are involved in the after-school programs, which is an initiative of the Federal Government. We have worked very closely with the Department of Education and Training on that. We have a number of initiatives that also involve children with a disability, and we are working with the Department of Education and Training on those, and we have a number of initiatives that involve children from other disadvantaged groups and other language groups, and we are also working with the Department of Education and Training on those.

We had a briefing only last week where we were in contact with the University of Sydney about a number of research studies they have done on obesity issues. We are currently preparing to enter into further dialogue with the Department of Education and Training and other departments also on a number of initiatives in those areas. There would probably be half a dozen different programs and, again, I would be happy to take the question on notice to give full details of those programs.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Can you advise the of the funding on those programs?

Mr ADBY: Absolutely.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Minister, have you had any meetings with your colleague the Minister for Education and Training on this topic?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I have had a meeting on this topic with the Minister for Education and Training, but not in reference to the programs that the director general has just alluded to. It is a completely different program that is not just about sport. It is also about a supposed socialisation of boys and girls, but it is using a particular sport to achieve that. I am happy to talk about that later.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: It is a Government question that is coming up, I take it?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I hope so.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: We will wait for that, thank you. Minister, do you believe it is time, given the child obesity crisis, to make school sport compulsory?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Unless my memory is failing me, I could swear that I stood with the then Minister for Education and Training, the Hon. Dr Andrew Refshauge, a couple of years ago when he announced a change in policy that, in effect, would give effect to what you have just said.

CHAIR: The time for Opposition questions has expired. Dr Chesterfield-Evans, are you ready?

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Yes.

CHAIR: Are you aware whether the Greens are coming to this session?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Yes.

CHAIR: I will split the time equally, which means that you have about 7½ minutes.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Right. Minister, do you know how many people attended the A1 Grand Prix in 2006 at Eastern Creek?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I cannot drag it out of my head. It is somewhere in my subconscious. I am happy to take that on notice and get back to you.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Do you know how much money it put into the New South Wales economy?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I can take it on notice.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: You are apparently quoted as saying it was \$10 million, Minister.

Ms SANDRA NORI: I do not deny it is; I do not confirm it. I do not deny it, but if you are going to ask me specifics like that, I will take it on notice.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: How much did the Government spend on staging or supporting the event?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I will take that on notice.

Ms SANDRA NORI: Are you are going to support it again and stage it in 2007? This is the A1, the V8 grand prix.

Ms SANDRA NORI: I know what you are saying, but, you know, the Government does not stage this event, so the question is wrong.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: No, it supports it, or it may or may not support it.

Ms SANDRA NORI: Correct.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Is it going to support it, Minister?

Ms SANDRA NORI: That is like asking which way did he go, left or right, and pointing straight ahead. You just asked me a question stating that the Government may or may not support it. I said "Correct". The decision is pending.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: I was trying to get you to say whether it will or it will not, Minister.

Ms SANDRA NORI: Well, I think my answer implied that it is still a pending decision.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Okay. Minister, do you agree that public green space should be accessible to the entire community?

Ms SANDRA NORI: You will have to explain the question because—

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Recreational areas.

Ms SANDRA NORI: No, let me explain. If something is public recreational space, then it is, by definition, available for all people, is it not? Is that what you are really trying to ask me?

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Yes. I am just getting you to confirm the obvious, Minister. This is just an introductory question for you.

Ms SANDRA NORI: Thank you.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Are you aware that the perceived threat of terrorism has resulted in a reduction of public seating and toilet facilities in public parks and other areas?

Ms SANDRA NORI: No, I was not.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: The Older Women's Network think it has resulted in that. Is the Minister aware that older women have a one in four chance of developing some form of bladder weakness and they need both public toilets and access to parks?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Look, Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans, you are very lucky that I have a bit of nursing experience, but I am bugged if I know if that kind of questioning is appropriate to a

Minister for Sport. I am not a medical practitioner. Why do you not address that question to the Minister for Health? It is not an anatomy exam, okay?

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Minister, people with weak bladders tend to want public loos. I am concerned about those in parks.

Ms SANDRA NORI: Unless they are blokes, of course, and then they do not have to worry, do they?

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: No. Prostates are a very large problem also, Minister, as I am sure you would be aware.

Ms SANDRA NORI: I do not have one, you know.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: And you might not be aware, either.

The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS: Do you have an obsession? We had public toilets in the Planning estimates this morning. Is it a competition?

CHAIR: Order!

Ms SANDRA NORI: You will be pleased to know that the public toilets at Centennial Park did win an architecture award.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: I am delighted about your knowledge of architecture, even if your anatomy knowledge is a bit shonky.

Ms SANDRA NORI: All right. So older people have weak bladders. Okay, yes.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: I am pleased to inform your actions on the matter of toilets in parks.

Ms SANDRA NORI: You know that most parks are run by councils. Let us take it up with them.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Minister, I hoped you would be an advocate for causes you believe in.

Ms SANDRA NORI: I am very happy to be an advocate for local government to do its job, absolutely.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Minister, do you agree that many parks and open recreational spaces are dominated by males playing vigorous games and that this is sometimes an obstruction for all the women to enjoyed the recreational space?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Madam Chair, would it not just be simpler and smarter, rather than letting a member of the Parliament ask such ridiculous questions, if we just had a conversation about it? I know where he is coming from. I just want to save him the embarrassment of asking these questions and how it will read in *Hansard*.

CHAIR: No.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: I think the Older Women's Network will be very happy that I am reading out the questions, Minister. Whether you pour scorn on me or not is quite irrelevant to that. I am not playing to your audience, or you. I am playing to people who asked the question like I play to the people of New South Wales. If you do not want to answer the question, that is just great.

Ms SANDRA NORI: We will just have to give you a medal, Arthur.

CHAIR: Order! We have managed to get through two weeks of estimates without these sorts of comments.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: We have not had this Minister before, though.

CHAIR: Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans is entitled to ask his questions and, Minister, we would ask you to answer them.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Will the Minister consider a gender study of such recreational space use?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Yes, I will.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: That will give better consideration to zoning recreational areas so that older women can enjoy the outdoors, free from interference and the possibility of physical injury?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I am very happy to undertake a pilot study that would help us address the issue you have raised.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Thank you, Minister.

Ms SANDRA NORI: However, it is local government's responsibility in 99 per cent of cases and we should actually take it up with them rather than the State Government. What I would rather do is call on local government to do a pilot study.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Do you want local government to pay for a study?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Yes. It is their parks.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Yes, but you are taking an overall view of sport in this State.

Ms SANDRA NORI: I am sorry?

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: You are the one who takes an overall view of sport, presumably.

Ms SANDRA NORI: That is right. I am going to ask them to co-operate very nicely by undertaking such a study.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: They will probably ask for the money, Minister.

Ms SANDRA NORI: No, they will not.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: They have plenty to spare, have they?

Ms SANDRA NORI: It will not cost very much. All it will take is someone to sit outside a park in a couple of well chosen suburbs over a period of about a week so that you have a full cycle of events in the park, and you will soon see whether what you say is true. Presumably, that would inform and suggest some solutions, if the situation is amenable to a solution.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: So you personally will not be doing that type of study, or your Government?

Ms SANDRA NORI: No, Arthur. I will not be going down to parks around New South Wales, sitting there for a week, counting people who are using the—

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: You will not facilitate it within your department, Minister? When I say "you", I mean your department. I do not mean you personally.

Ms SANDRA NORI: What we will do—if you want to misconstrue my answer, go ahead. It is very simple. Let me tell you what the Government departments can do. If it is essentially a local government issue, because it is their property and they are the ones who have, in a sense, the greater knowledge of their local area, surely, we would provide them with a template and the suggestion, and we would encourage them to go out and do the study, making sure we have a reasonable sample of different circumstances so that they could suggest some solutions.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Minister, are you responsible for sport in this State?

Ms SANDRA NORI: No, I am not responsible for sport in this State, but I am the Minister for Sport, which is a different concept.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: You are the Minister for Sport but you are not responsible. Is that the essence of your answer?

Ms SANDRA NORI: No. You see we have this problem every year.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Yes, we do.

Ms SANDRA NORI: You seem to not understand definitions. A Minister for Sport in any jurisdiction is not responsible for sport as such. Someone is the Minister for Sport and is responsible for the Government's policy on sport, but actually the administration on sport is done by many myriads of different sporting organisations, peak councils and volunteers. It is a definitional issue.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: As a flick passer, Minister, you have no peer.

CHAIR: The time for the Hon. Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans has expired, but I would like to be fair to the Greens, because I know they are trying to attend another estimates hearing. I will now go to the Government.

The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS: Hang on, there are three Greens and two estimates hearings on at the moment. Also, if I could point out—

CHAIR: You do not need to argue, I am about to go to Government questions.

The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS: Yes, I know, but we had terrible trouble this afternoon with the Greens in the Transport committee, because the Greens were forever not in the room. They then turned up and asked the same questions that already been asked, and it went round and round.

CHAIR: That is something about which you need not be concerned. The Committee will now go to Government questions and I will give the Greens an opportunity.

The Hon. CHRISTINE ROBERTSON: Minister, what is the New South Wales Department of Sport and Recreation doing to address bad sporting behaviour in sport?

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Produce an ad.

Ms SANDRA NORI: Pardon?

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Produce an ad.

Ms SANDRA NORI: That just shows how little you know, Arthur.

CHAIR: Order! The Minister has the call.

Ms SANDRA NORI: We have been running a series of programs for a couple of years and each year we add one more program or event to our arsenal. For example, this year we have done two things. First, was the development of that ad which I referred to in answer to an earlier question. The reason I am particularly pleased about that ad and surprised at the Hon. Catherine Cusack's response to it is that that ad goes beyond sport, because there are people who behave like the actor in that ad, not only at sporting fields but also in their homes to their partners, and in pubs and clubs. That ad has sent a message that that will be beyond sport, even though it was developed as an anti-sport rage promotion.

The other thing we have done this year, and we did it because it came out of last year's debrief for Sport, was that we were asked to somehow devise a program whereby we assisted the volunteers in sport, be it the coach, the team manager, or the parents who generally help with their teams, to learn conflict resolution skills. Again, this year we have embarked on a new program and delivered a package through the National Centre for Disputes Resolution developed by them. It is a twist on their normal package, I guess, and they made it a bit more relevant to sport. We have delivered 10 seminars across New South Wales, which have been very well attended by a lot of different codes.

Again, I would like to think that the benefits of those seminars, where people talk conflict resolution skills—and if you recognise that every team manager-volunteer coach is probably someone's mother, uncle, brother, father or husband—are actually helping through sport, through this particular program, to disseminate those skills. That can only lead to an improvement in interpersonal relations and community behaviour generally. The seminars are helping to impart those skills to a broader community. It is very important that we tackle this issue of sports rage. It can happen anywhere, it has happened in surfing. It tends to be team sports and it tends to be male sports, but it is by no means exclusive to them.

It is very important, because sport rage sets such a poor example to kids and destroys the fun that children have. I am sure in many cases it would turn them off sport. If you come to terms with sport rage, you are also learning lessons for life. The saddest part about sport rage is that 37 per cent is perpetrated by the players. You hear more about parents, spectators, or perhaps the team coach misbehaving, but a lot of it actually comes from the kids themselves. It is very important that they learn very early that dummy spits and behaving like that is inappropriate.

The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS: Minister, what is the Government doing to increase the profile of women in sport?

Ms SANDRA NORI: We have a range of programs. This is a matter of personal concern to me and I am happy for the director to take you through our official programs. In more recent times I have convened a working party, I suppose, of the major women's sports that have included a number of male sports such as union and league and the male side of cricket, to try to come up with a process by which women in sport can get better sponsorship and better media coverage: in fact, an extended media coverage. We had a very successful initial meeting. The department has gone away and worked up a program. Very shortly there will be a second round of the roundtable to which I have invited sports managers, advertising companies and other high profile individuals who could contribute to this discussion of how we get more media profile for female sports.

Without the higher media profile they will not get sponsorship. I have some high profile people to be involved in that. Let us hope that that leads to a process of greater awareness and better outcomes for women in sport. The director will address some of the other initiatives.

Mr ADBY: There is a range of programs that we have pursued to try to enhance the involvement of women and girls participating in sport. We have the sportswomen Get Out In Front Program, a joint program funded by the New South Wales Premier's Department, the Office for Women and it involves Sydney university and is run in partnership with the Institute of Sport and the New South Wales Department of Sport and Recreation. The program involves media and sponsorship, skills training for talented athletes, identified through the regional sports academies. The Women In Sport Leader Scholarship Program, which we run each year, is held throughout New South Wales. It has awarded approximately 400 scholarships.

The program has led to career advancement for many participants and improved opportunities for women in sport. The three scholarship categories are sports management and leadership, international travel, coach and official development. New South Wales Sport and Recreation developed a gender-equity standards framework and guidelines to assist State's building organisations to develop strategies to increase the number of women and girls as decision-makers, participants, coaches, administrators, and officials in paid or volunteer positions. We have introduced the New South Wales Minister's Recognition for Contribution to Women in Sport and Recreation Award, which acknowledges women and men who have made a significant contribution to women in the sport and recreation industry in New South Wales, either through their performance or input behind the scenes.

New South Wales Sport and Recreation has also delivered a number of Come And Try Sports Clinics to introduce girls to a range of new sports, including predominantly male sports such as surfing and football. We have delivered sports development camps for girls with a disability aged 11 to 18 to increase activity for them and to nurture and develop their talent. We have developed a number of targeted programs that promote physical activity in young people, including for girls that aim to prevent obesity. We have supported a girls cricket development squad at the Illawarra Academy of Sport for girls under the age of 17, with a pathway to the Australian women's cricket team.

We have introduced a scholarship program aimed at developing the coaching skills of women involved in New South Wales yachting clubs or associations. We have introduced the women in motor sport scholarships enabling young women to attend an international and domestic motor racing competition as members of an Australian pit crew. We have developed a number of publications designed to increase the participation of women in sport and we have provided funding for media training workshops, which aim to increase the representation of women in sports throughout Australia. We have also provided financial support for both regional and city-based "Meet the Sports Stars", which involves young schoolgirls meeting with sports stars that they can identify with. It is a great opportunity for them to experience those high-profile elite athletes.

Ms SANDRA NORI: The director general forgot to mention one other scholarship. We have instituted a very modest scholarship—nevertheless it is a scholarship that did not exist before—for women in surfing.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: What support has the Government provided to develop sporting facilities across the State?

Ms SANDRA NORI: The main one would be the regional sporting facilities grant. I can take you through some of those details of that. Over the last four years the grant has been worth nearly \$15 million. Of course, a very large chunk of that goes to regional New South Wales. It has funded nearly 1,500 facilities as a result of different requests, mainly from local government. That is under the capital assistance program. Then, of course, we have the regional sports facilities program. Since the budget year 2002-03 we have given just over \$11.5 million from this program to a total of 113 projects. Since 2003 I think about 70 per cent of these grants have gone to regional and rural New South Wales.

The aim of this program is to assist with the development and enhancement of major sport and recreation facilities that meet the needs of the local community. One good thing I have noticed in a lot of these projects, in particular in the smaller towns, is that by giving them money that enables them to upgrade their facilities they can hold competitions for which they were not previously technically qualified. That means that not only the local town benefits from having improved facilities; it can hold more events, which brings people into town, in some cases across from Victoria. That is great because it adds to the economy of the town.

Then, of course, we all also have the money that we give—about \$3.7 million—to surf life saving. About \$2 million of that is spent on capital works. A year or so ago we announced that we would be giving surf life saving \$2 million to upgrade all their facilities on a rotational basis. Last year was the first year. We are about to sign off on this year's \$2 million upgrade. In some cases it is

going to things like better access for an ambulance, or to the creation of a seminar room so they can hold more training. In some cases it is to provide better and safer storage for expensive equipment.

The Hon. CATHERINE ROBERTSON: What new initiatives is the New South Wales Government implementing to promote more activity and positive social values in school?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Since the last estimates we have commenced two programs that would come into that category. One program involves getting young indigenous people to do the Duke of Edinburgh Award, which started off in Dubbo. It so happens that in the first round all the participants were young Aboriginal girls, but the outcomes were really quite significant. We pre-qualified them through SistaSpeak, a program that started with the Office of Women. When they did that they wanted to do more. So we thought that it fitted in nicely with a project that we were planning to do anyway, that is, to get more indigenous and disadvantaged kids doing the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

So we got them out of SistaSpeak and put them into the Duke of Edinburgh Award. It was very successful. They were lucky enough to meet Prince Edward on his only regional visit in New South Wales. They were doing training at the Dubbo Zoo. I think it is fair to say that the lives of these young lasses have changed. They were seen in libraries doing homework, they were heard apologising to teachers for unruly behaviour, and they have shown a keen interest in doing something with their lives. We have a couple of other ideas about where they could go to next. So hopefully their outcomes have changed.

In some cases some of the girls were going to school in order to attend the SistaSpeak program. They then got engaged with the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Since that time the Duke of Edinburgh Award has really spread in the Central West. A lot more Aboriginal kids and also non-Aboriginal kids from Wellington and that sort of area are doing the Duke of Edinburgh Award. The other one that I introduced this year is called Dancing Classrooms—a project that is going to six schools. We now have sponsorship for next year to take it a bit further to 12 schools.

Dancing Classrooms teaches dancers to learn respect, co-operation and partnership. So the kids will be learning what is potentially a sport at a most elite level. It is a very aerobic sport. It certainly provides them with at least a social skill. The whole idea of introducing this program was to try to create a program that would socialise boys and girls in dealing respectfully and co-operatively with one another. However, I guess that the emphasis would be more on teaching the boys such behaviour. The program will culminate with a final. It is a competition between schools that will culminate in a final at the Sofitel Wentworth in November.

We are lucky to have Mark Beretta hosting the final. We will have some ballroom dance displays and all the kids will be there. We have also organised for some of the parents to have lessons so that they can join in what their kids are doing. So it is a sport but it is also about teaching social responsibility by getting young boys and young girls to interact with one other respectfully and co-operatively. I sincerely hope that it means in the end that women who like to dance will finally find someone to dance with in this country.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Moving on to tourism, the Australian Bureau of Statistics tourist accommodation report for the March 2006 quarter notes only a 0.9 per cent increase in demand for tourist accommodation in New South Wales, compared to a dramatic 8.4 per cent experienced in Western Australia. How do you explain that?

Mr O'NEILL: Obviously there are a lot of swings and roundabouts in the demand for accommodation. The figures that we have from the Australian Hotels Association [AHA] for occupancy in New South Wales show that of the 540,000 rooms that were available in the year to June 2006, 69 per cent were occupied. That was up from 65 per cent the previous year. So there certainly seems to be an increase in occupancy in hotels on average across the State.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: When you said that was an increase of 2 per cent, what is that compared with?

Mr O'NEILL: As at June 2006 the stock of rooms was 540,000 across the State. The average occupancy was 69.15 per cent and that was up from the previous year when the stock of

rooms was approximately the same—it was 544,000—and the average occupancy was 65 per cent. So there has been about a 4 per cent increase in the average occupancy of available rooms in those financial years—between 2004-05 and 2005-06.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Just to clarify, are you comparing occupancy rates over a 12-month period, or are you comparing them with figures in the previous report?

Mr O'NEILL: I am assuming that this is the average for the entire year. This is the AHA's annual accommodation report. So I am assuming over that full 12 months that is the occupancy of those 540,000 rooms.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: The same report also showed that New South Wales was well below the national average, with dollar takings from tourist accommodation only up a mere 3.4 per cent compared with 15.3 per cent in Western Australia, 13.4 per cent in South Australia and 12.1 per cent in Victoria. How do you explain the dramatic differences in these figures?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I do not know what report you are referring to but the report we got, I think, eight weeks ago showed that New South Wales had the highest income from tourism expenditure of all the States. I am quite happy to share that information with you.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I am referring to the ABS Tourist Accommodation Report.

Ms SANDRA NORI: The tourism industry does not use the ABS; we use the national visitor survey and we get the stuff from the Bureau of Tourism Research, which is now called Tourism Research Australia. Those are the figures that are used by all State governments, including the Commonwealth. You will find that there is usually a discrepancy between the ABS and the figures that we use and are produced by the organisation that the States and the Commonwealth fund. So it is not very useful, if I may suggest, to use the ABS figures.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: They were referring to a trend in takings.

Ms SANDRA NORI: I can only tell you that the best research in Australia, which is part of Tourism Australia—

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I am not disagreeing with that, Minister. Is the trend that has been outlined—

Ms SANDRA NORI: The trend in New South Wales is that expenditure is going up. In fact, the figures that came out in the last 24 hours showed that in New South Wales at least international visitors are staying longer and spending more.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: But this report is suggesting that the increase is minor compared with the increases being experienced in other States.

Ms SANDRA NORI: I am not in a position, nor do I want to be and I refuse to be, where I use figures that are not the most accurate available. Sorry.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: So your report shows a different trend, does it?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I refer you to the documentation that comes out of Tourism Research Australia.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: The April 2006 forecast issued by Tourism Research Australia indicated that in the period from 1998 to 2015 annual visitor numbers in New South Wales are predicted to fall by just over 9.5 million compared with an average increase of eight million visitors in Queensland. How do you explain this significant difference in visitation rates?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Are you talking about a forecast?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: That is correct.

Ms SANDRA NORI: And you have just asked me how do I account for a fall in rates that has not happened yet.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: No, the forecast.

Ms SANDRA NORI: So you are revising your question.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: No.

Ms SANDRA NORI: I thought you asked how do I account for this fall. Did you say forecast, not fall?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: The forecast, yes.

Ms SANDRA NORI: I am sorry, I thought you said it was a fall—as though it had already happened.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: The year 2015 will not happen for another nine years.

Ms SANDRA NORI: Correct. That is why I could not understand your question.

CHAIR: Without splitting hairs, I think question was clear.

Mr O'NEILL: The domestic tourism economy has been flat for many years now. That is also true of domestic tourism economies in New Zealand, Canada and the United Kingdom. In Australia, in particular, the challenges are that very high mortgages, particularly in the Sydney property market, have seen a potential withdrawal of discretionary expenditure from holidaying. Some 90 per cent of domestic travel in New South Wales is by car, and petrol prices are obviously having an impact. Also low-cost carriers have seen significant benefits for destinations that have jet access. All those forces are challenging for domestic tourism overall and, in particular, for parts of New South Wales. But I think the trends here are not out of step with the trends that you will find nationally, or indeed internationally.

Ms SANDRA NORI: I have something to add. Mr O'Neill is a public servant so he cannot say what I am about to say. Nevertheless, it is true. One of the great trends in Australian tourism—and it will hit New South Wales more than it hits any other State simply because we are the most populous State; there is no other reason; it is a statistical fact—is that fewer people are taking their annual leave. In 2005 Australian workers banked up 70 million holiday days. Any survey work will show that 60 per cent of full-time Australian workers do not use their full annual leave entitlements in a year. More than one-third of full-time workers—this is staggering—do not take any annual leave in a year. They cite all sorts of reasons, including family—

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Pardon me for interrupting, Minister. But I draw you back to the question that I actually asked. Why are visitor numbers projected to decrease in New South Wales but increase by eight million in Queensland?

Ms SANDRA NORI: You will have to ask the originators of the survey. I do not like it when people try to project through to 2015 or 2020. There will be a lot of water under the bridge between now and then. There is no doubt that there is a change in the trend of consumer behaviour. From New Zealand, to Canada, to the United Kingdom, to Australia there is a propensity not to travel domestically and a slightly higher propensity to travel internationally. Therefore, it makes sense to me that we should be concentrating in this part of the cycle on trying to attract international visitors to this country. After all, that is what New Zealand is going to be doing. As WorkChoices starts to hit and people start trading their holidays for pay, that will start to seriously hit regional tourism destinations, and it will hit New South Wales harder than anyone else simply because we have more people here whom in the past we have relied on to travel to regional New South Wales and provide those economies with holiday dollars.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Do you have any sense at all that Tourism Queensland is performing better than New South Wales?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Let me tell you something—I wish I had the relevant piece of paper here—Queensland has Jetstar and its predecessor flying into Cairns at a great rate knots on planes that are not landing in Sydney. It has more low-cost carriers going into Coolangatta than any other city or State. Queensland should be roaring ahead on that basis alone but it is not. New South Wales lost 0.1 per cent of domestic visitation according to the last round of figures. So we are holding our own. I think Queensland or whoever has made these forecasts is being wildly optimistic.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Given that tourism is worth an estimated \$23 billion to the New South Wales economy, why has the New South Wales Government not increased spending on tourism when other States and Territories—for example, the Northern Territory increased its tourism budget by \$10 million earlier this year—have done so.

Ms SANDRA NORI: You think the only way that you can get tourists into this country is through the tourism budget. Let me take you through a few things. One of the most important investments that a Labor Government ever made in tourism was the construction of the convention centre. That is an investment in tourism but it does not show up in the budget papers. The Olympic Games do not show up in the tourism budget papers.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I am referring to this year's budget not the 2000 budget.

Ms SANDRA NORI: It is a complex position. You have asked the question and I am going to give you the detailed answer. By the way, so you know, New South Wales as a proportion of its budget spends six times more on tourism than the Commonwealth does on promoting the whole of Australia. Let us put it into perspective: We spend six times more on a pro rata basis than the Commonwealth does as a proportion of its budget. You may not have noticed this, but about a month or three weeks ago—

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: It sounds desperate.

Ms SANDRA NORI: This is just another way of explaining to you that there is more than one way to skin a cat. Tourism New South Wales consummated an arrangement that had been in the making for a couple of months with Channel 7, Pacific Magazines and News Limited. I will take you through the details of that.

Suffice it to say, that of itself is the equivalent of an additional \$14.5 million to the New South Wales marketing budget. In fact, even as recently as a couple of days ago, because of that particular arrangement we have begun discussions about even doing some work offshore through those media partnerships which will leverage enormously the taxpayers spend and give reach that we could not have hoped for and could not have hoped to have bought. It is fair to say we are the envy of the other States. Let me give an example of some of the elements.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I do not need anything further because in terms of what the actual question was I believe you have answered that in terms of the relativities of the State.

Ms SANDRA NORI: One more second.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: We only have 15 minutes.

Ms SANDRA NORI: That is okay but it is important you understand this or you will keep asking silly questions. For example, this particular partnership will add an additional \$6.7 million worth of targeted media exposure through our State, an increase of 25 per cent in the number of people who will see our television advertising six times or more and an increase by 22 per cent in the number of people who will see our advertising via print media three times or more. For example, in the past we have had about six episodes of the Great Outdoors program and we are now going to have 24 dedicated episodes. These are real marketing and advertising advantages that have come about because of this co-operative partnership, and this is just the beginning.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: What is the exact cost of payroll for staff in Tourism NSW and the Major Events and Strategies Monitoring Unit?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I will take that question on notice.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: According to the 2004-05 annual report of the Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation the total expenditure for the department for that years was \$152 million, 30 per cent of which, that is, \$45.6 million was employee related and a further 21 per cent, that is, \$31.92 million, was attributable as "other operating". Considering that these areas constitute the highest percentage of all items that are broken down in the report, could a further breakdown of these expenses be provided?

Mr ADBY: I will take that on notice and give you more information on the breakdown of it.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Who determines how the money of the department is allocated?

Ms SANDRA NORI: It depends on which part of the last 12 months you are talking about.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: The Department of Tourism?

Ms SANDRA NORI: You know it is now in State Development, do you not?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Yes. Who is determining how that tourism funding is being allocated?

Mr HARRIS: The funds are allocated to the Department of State and Regional Development but in the budget papers they are broken up separately into the various components. The department, as you probably realise, has a responsibility not only for tourism and the core business of the former stand-alone Department of State and Regional Development but also for the ministry of Science and Medical Research. Those breakdowns are actually shown in the budget papers. Then they are aggregated into a total allocation to the department and broken down in exactly the same proportion as shown in the budget papers.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Who is determining those allocations?

Mr HARRIS: It is part of the standard budget process that departments provide to Treasury information on their budgetary requirements for the coming year. In this way it is provided from tourism and through the process of budget review committee that constitutes the budget for the department. It is separately identified for Tourism. It is based on the aspirations that Tourism has for its programs and its obligations during the year.

Ms SANDRA NORI: Basically it is the budget committee that determines it.

CHAIR: The Hon. Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans I am prepared to give you the entire time available to the cross bench if the Greens do not come, that is, a 15-minute allocation.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: I probably will not need all that, thank you. I note your comments about Tourism NSW and its partnership with News Limited and the channel 7 group, but the Tourism and Transport Forum seems most concerned about New South Wales spend on tourism. In its press release on 17 August it states:

Tourism funding in New South Wales is half that of Victoria. Tourism investment has a proved success in Victoria which has benefited from increasing room rates.

It also points out that there was a drop of 0.7 per cent last year and 1.1 per cent in the past 12 months. Minister, are you concerned about those figures?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I am happy to take you through some of the arguments that I have already used. I think 17 August is probably referring to a study whereby when we went through the

numbers it showed that the decline in the share of nights in New South Wales went from 30 per cent to 29.9 per cent so all of 0.1 per cent so I am not entirely convinced of the figures of the Tourism and Transport Forum. It has for a long time argued that the Tourism budget should be increased.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: If it is half Victoria's I am not surprised. Do you have any guides to their cost-effectiveness?

Ms SANDRA NORI: As I pointed out there are many ways to skin a cat. I think New South Wales is fortunate that it has a city like Sydney, the reputation that it held the Olympic Games and so on, which means our profile is higher. One can mount a logical argument that would suggest that different cities have to have different strategies, and different States have to have different strategies to achieve a similar result. But do not forget, the Commonwealth Games earlier this year would have boosted Victoria's intake of both domestic and international visits. I think the real test will come next year when we compare the figures. The impact of interest rates, fuel prices, the love affair with home renovations, plasma screens and so on is much more likely to have an effect in New South Wales than in other States.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Do you evaluate the effect of your advertising campaigns?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Yes, we do.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: What measures do you use to assess if they are working?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I will let the general manager take you through the detail of that but we do. Recently we changed the means by which we are going to track it but we have been tracking it through Roy Morgan Research and always have tracked our impacts. I think the advertisements we have been running over the past 18 months or so covering most of regional New South Wales have had a very good response from the market. I think they have been in large measure the reason why, given all the factors that are working against us, that there was only a drop of 0.1 per cent.

Mr O'NEILL: The way in which we seek to evaluate the marketing activity is in a number of ways. First of all we look to the target audience and we ask them were they aware of the advertising, do they prefer New South Wales as a destination, are they more likely to travel here and do they intend to do so in the next 12 months. That is one measure. Where we work in partnership with the private sector which we often do, we ask them before we set about an advertising campaign where they are providing a call to action—in other words, a number you can call or a web site you can visit to make a booking—what their expectations would be were they not doing this in concert with us. Then we measure the result against an expectation we set with the combined activity.

Ms SANDRA NORI: That is code 4. We can actually count the number of packages sold, so that is quite empirical.

Mr O'NEILL: We also pass leads via the demand that is generated through calls to action to our own web sites back to industry. In the 2005-06 year we promoted New South Wales via TV to 5 million people, and we reached them on average more than 10 times; and our magazine and newspaper advertising reached more than 7.3 million people, on average, 5 times. As a result, 4 in 5 people said they were aware of New South Wales holiday destinations, 1 in 2 preferred them to other destinations, and 1 in 3 of those people said they intended to visit us next year.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: These are domestic, are they?

Mr O'NEILL: Yes. In relation to the leads that we generated via our web site, we passed on half a million leads to the tourism industry; in other words, people who were pre-qualified were saying they were looking for a holiday in New South Wales, and they were passed on via our web site. We also won a couple of awards for our marketing. The Pacific Asia Travel Association [PATA] judged us to have the best domestic marketing campaign of any city or State in our promotion of Sydney in the Asia Pacific region, and we won the gold award for that. We also very recently won the Public Relations Institute of Australia, New South Wales, award for our promotion of the 100

years of Tourism Bureau operation. Those are the sorts of measures we use. The final thing that might be worth saying is that we also look to awareness of what is called our tag line. In the case of Victoria, they have "You'll love every piece of it" off the jigsaw puzzle, which has been in the marketplace for many years now.

Ms SANDRA NORI: Twelve years.

Mr O'NEILL: In our case, as the Minister alluded to, we have launched a campaign which to some extent was based on what we saw as the germ of a pretty good idea in the way that Victoria was broken down into its component parts. We did the same thing after talking to consumers of New South Wales as a destination, and broke the State down into different regions. We have built a campaign around New South Wales, promoting it as the sum of its parts—the North Coast, the South Coast, Sydney, the Outback, the High Country and Heart of Country NSW. The tag line is "New South Wales—There's no place like it". As a consequence of the work that we have been doing, we now have near 20 per cent recognition of that, after less than three years in the marketplace. That compares with 25 per cent awareness for Victoria. So we are coming up on them very quickly in a very short period of time.

Ms SANDRA NORI: And guess who won the international award in that same PATA award giving night? The Kiwis did, not Australia. It was just a backhander to Tourism Australia. Don't worry about it.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: I had missed it.

Ms SANDRA NORI: New South Wales takes out the best domestic campaign, New Zealand takes out the best international campaign. Where is Australia in all that?

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: I thought you could pick up the international. We have as many people in New South Wales as has New Zealand, Minister.

Ms SANDRA NORI: The responsibility for international marketing rests with the Federal Government.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: So you do not do international marketing?

Ms SANDRA NORI: We do some, but nowhere near what the Commonwealth Government obviously can do because it is tasked to do it.

Mr O'NEILL: I could elaborate, if that is useful, on our role in international markets. We are co-located with Tourism Australia. Given the scale of resource you need to promote internationally, we try to work in partnership with Tourism Australia and the industry. Primarily, we seek to influence the people who are travel broking, that is, promoting Australia as a destination, and we try to make sure they have as good an understanding of Sydney, and New South Wales more generally, has to offer, and include that in their activities. So we tend to try to influence the influencers, if you like, rather than market direct to consumers—although we do some PR events. With the Internet, of course we are increasingly looking to try to leverage that a bit as well.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Do you use the Internet for marketing? For instance, could you target all birdwatchers in the USA to go to western New South Wales? Would that not be a feasible and cheap proposition?

Mr O'NEILL: Segmenting the market and understanding how to reach niche audiences using the Internet is a really key strategy going forward. It is something again to understand the segments in a market like the United States. It means we need to work very closely with Tourism Australia, which has the budget to do market research and focus groups. Telstra just recently has undertaken the most comprehensive segmentation study of the Australian marketplace, and it is changing the way marketers in this country think about what can be done. I think that is very much part of the future, and it will be something that we will continue to do in concert with others because of the need to get insights into those very big international markets.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: But the department is not looking at those yet?

Mr O'NEILL: There has certainly been some niche online activity. In Singapore, for instance, we have partnered up with City Bank and promoted opportunities for City Bank card members to take advantage of New South Wales and Sydney holidays. That is a form of target marketing using databases to get to a high-network individual audience that has a propensity to travel and has proven it has done so. So, yes, we do that already. Obviously, the Internet offers opportunities to do it, over time, in a way that it has never been done before in history.

CHAIR: You raised the issue of the web site. Yesterday I went into the web site and put in "Major Events Board", which ultimately took me to the Science and Medical Research section of the department. Is there an explanation for that?

Ms SANDRA NORI: On a day-to-day basis the administration of the Major Events Board sits in State and Regional Development, so how it operates on a day-to-day basis is my responsibility. But the decision on really major events obviously goes back to budgetary considerations.

CHAIR: Is there a web site on it?

Mr O'NEILL: There is a database. So, if you are a consumer looking to understand what events are on in New South Wales, you can do that by the visitnsw web site. There is also a site called events.nsw.gov.au. So there are a couple of places where consumer information about events that are on can be surfaced. Otherwise, the reason, perhaps, that you would be directed to the corporate dsrd site would be because that is where the administration of the Major Events Unit occurs.

The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS: Minister, we have already gone through part of this, but it may be useful to do it in general. Has New South Wales dropped market share of domestic tourism, or is this part of a global trend?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Quite clearly, it is a global trend. That was confirmed by information that was presented to State Ministers, including the Commonwealth Minister, less than a month ago at the Ministerial Council provided by Tourism Australia. There is no doubt that the consumer mindset is going through some kind of change. It is always very unsettling for us all when this happens. Some of it is put down to a concept known as cocooning, which means that the consumer does not feel safe — not necessarily physically threatened, but does not feel safe about surroundings, so they prefer to surround themselves with hard assets. In some cases it is plasma screens, and in some cases it is buying IT gizmos for the kids. That is a very real phenomenon in advanced western economies: a lot more of household discretionary spend has gone on IT. That is evidenced by the fact that some houses used to have one PC, but now have a laptop for every kid as well, so a lot of money has gone that way.

In Australia, I think the impact of fuel prices is enormous, as are threats about interest rates, and the enormous investment particularly in the Sydney market into housing and home renovations and extensions, and the phenomena, which is global to appoint, is that people are taking fewer and fewer holidays. As I said before, at the end of 2005 there were 70 million holiday days banked up in Australia. I am not kidding when I say that as people start to trade off their holidays for increased pay under WorkChoices, it will get worse, particularly in regional New South Wales. What do you do about that? The smart money would say that in this particular cycle we should switch our emphasis to international markets.

However, I should point out that after the Asian currency collapse in 1997, after September 11 and the unfortunate coincidence that Ansett went bankrupt a few days later, and all that conflagration of events—the Afghan war, SARS, Bali bombing— domestic tourism actually jumped, because people were not really willing to go overseas. On all of those occasions we actually pulled international campaigns. We pulled campaigns out of Singapore and all sorts of places after September 11. It was just not worth spending the money because people did not want to travel. It was the same after the Asian financial crisis. I was not Minister then, but we pulled more money out of Asia and put more money into the United States. That begs the question: Why aren't we therefore spending more money internationally? Of course, that is the responsibility of the Federal Government.

The response of the Federal Minister, as recently as one month ago, was just staggering. At the same ministerial council meeting the New Zealand Minister made it quite plain that its domestic tourism market was dead and it is going to target Sydney, because that is its closest international market. Our cousins across the Tasman can get on to it, but it seems to be beyond the Federal Government. What makes it more scary is that the current television campaign produced by the Federal Government, although it is quite nice cinematically speaking, the tag line has proved to be very problematic, either controversial or unworkable. The language does not work in our biggest growing markets like China. It is not appropriate in India.

The tag line is untranslatable, if you wish to be polite, into French, German or Italian. It has caused controversy in Canada and the United States of America and, surprisingly, the United Kingdom. I thought the Poms were being a little bit precious, frankly. Nevertheless, that is not helping. That of itself would not be the end of the world if the campaign that preceded it a mere two years earlier on which millions was spent and which was trumpeted as the great saviour of international tourism for Australia sank without a trace. We have now had two duds in a row, which starts to make it a problem. However, I have no doubt that in this particular cycle the concentration should be on international while the domestic mindset takes stock of itself. Until such time as that changes we should try to capitalise on that.

The Hon. CHRISTINE ROBERTSON: Tourism is particularly important to regional economies. What is the Government doing to promote tourism in regional New South Wales generally and in Tamworth particularly?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Why would you worry about Tamworth?

The Hon. CHRISTINE ROBERTSON: Because I live there.

Ms SANDRA NORI: In general, as you would know, we have produced five regional television commercials that go to air from time to time. The one that covers Tamworth is Heart of Country. We have had some very good responses to all the various parts of that campaign, which is an integrated campaign, obviously web based. It features a Felicity Urquhart. She ended up on *Sydney Weekender* because of that.

The Hon. CHRISTINE ROBERTSON: She is a product of ours.

Ms SANDRA NORI: Are you taking personal responsibility?

The Hon. CHRISTINE ROBERTSON: No, she is a product of Tamworth.

Ms SANDRA NORI: I know she is a Tamworth girl. In general, our major branding campaigns and tactical campaigns consist of television commercials that cover consumer experiences of New South Wales. I will hand over to John O'Neill for greater detail.

Mr O'NEILL: Recently we hosted a food and wine function in Sydney. The New England North West Regional Tourism Organisation came down and we hooked it up with *Gourmet Traveller*. We are seeking to work both at an umbrella level and at a tactical level not only with the destination but also with the emerging food and wine. We work hard to leverage pre and post the Country Music Festival, particularly with publicity and visiting journalist programs. We are hoping that New England North West will get involved with, although we are still waiting for it to do so, what we call destination development workshops. We have some very good people in Tourism New South Wales who understand how a destination develops over time and how to anticipate the challenges, and also how to help shape it as a destination if it does not have some of the amenity that would make it otherwise attractive.

We have people who are very good at understanding the lifestyle of tourism product, such as how to develop a hotel or theme a hotel into the attributes of the local environment—the natural geography of the place. We have been running these workshops, where we take people from a business and we meet with local government and industry. Basically we sit around for a day or two and understand where visitors are going and where they are coming from, what they are going to see

and why they are going. Then we also look at what product and what attributes the area has, to see whether there might already be something in that area that appeals to a market that they are not already getting. We also talk to them about ways in which they could develop the product or the destination in a way that might be attractive to a segment of the market that they are not getting, which could give them extra expenditure. We work in a range of ways, both at the umbrella marketing level with some of the niche food and wine, and experiences, and also at the development level.

Ms SANDRA NORI: Taking one bit more on Tamworth, then taking it away from Tamworth, I just realised that as Minister for Tourism and Sport and Recreation, by giving money to Manilla to—

The Hon. CHRISTINE ROBERTSON: Jump off cliffs?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Yes, to create a world standard launching pad off Mount Borah so that you can hold the world paragliding championships there, which will see the influx of a lot of international visitors. It is a very niche market, but paragliders range from doctors to plumbers. But a relatively small grant like that will create even more international visitation, mainly because these people are fixated on paragliding in the best spots, and apparently that spot in Manilla is one of the paragliding launch meccas. Another way we support a lot of regional tourism is events, and one of those more interesting events came my way. A husband-and-wife team, who happen to be among the best ballroom dances in the world, run a family studio in the Illawarra last year. Last year they invited me to their one-week dance class. I suppose it was a masterclass. Do you know that 600 international visitors were staying in Wollongong for a week to learn ballroom dancing?

This year they have applied for regional flagship funding. Whatever processes it goes through in the department I will not pre-empt that, but I would be surprised if they do not do well in their application simply for the sheer numbers that they bring. We have spoken to the Regional Development Council in Wollongong and local government to expand the event away from just the dance and create public events, a bit like Fashion Week has created public events. From humble beginnings I would think that that event could really grow and not only become a cultural event that involves the broader community of Wollongong but also put a bit of a stamp on Wollongong. From humble and unusual beginnings I predict that in years to come the festival will grow and grow, in much the same way that the Tamworth music festival started off so humbly and now is such a very large event.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Earlier you spoke about the importance of the convention centre, but how important is the business travel market to New South Wales? What are we doing specifically to attract that business?

Ms SANDRA NORI: It is very important, because it is what keeps the five-star hotels going. The other States ought to be grateful for the convention, exhibition and conference business that comes to Sydney because very often they pre and post tour, and many delegates attending conferences bring spouses. Sydney has led the way. It is the taxpayer of New South Wales who has created investment, but the rest of Australia, I think quite happily—I am very happy for the rest of Australia to benefit—gets the benefit. I wish that the Commonwealth would recognise in its repatriation of GST to the States the role that Sydney plays in attracting international visitors, particularly the business tourism sector, which is so important because it is so high yield.

Mr O'NEILL: We work fairly closely with the Sydney Convention and Visitors Bureau. We provide about half its funds every year. We also have a seat on the board and try, where we can, to align the marketing activity that we are doing with marketing activity that they do, so that they provide a key plank in the fulfilment of the strategy to get business tourism. There is no doubt it is a very high yield tourist or visitor, if you like, that comes with business tourism. I think we have had some work done with the Sustainable Tourism Co-operative Research Centre. Just on the point that the Minister was making earlier about the value of revenue that is generated by the tourism economy over all, I think we have estimated it at something in the order of \$2.3 billion that is generated every year out of tourism in taxes. About \$1.3 billion is GST money and the rest is money that comes in various forms of excise, gaming taxes, duties, payroll tax and FBT, certainly from both expenditure and revenue points of view.

CHAIR: Minister, do you wish your bureaucrats in Sports and Tourism to be allowed to leave?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I am happy, as long as the Committee does not do what it did to me one year: decide in the Women's section to ask me about women and boxing after we had let Sport go.

The Hon. CHRISTINE ROBERTSON: I remember that.

Ms SANDRA NORI: Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile did that. If you can assure me that we are not going to hop back into the other portfolios, I would be very happy for them to go home. You are vouching for the Greens in that, are you?

CHAIR: We have given them time. They were aware of the breakdown of time.

Ms SANDRA NORI: On the condition that we stick to that, we can go to Women. If the Greens come in and want to hop around the other portfolios, we will have to do that some other way.

CHAIR: If the Greens come in, it may well be that we do that. We can always have supplementary hearings, as you know. We have done what we can. I take this opportunity of thanking all of the advisers who have been with you and who will be leaving. Thank you very much for your attendance.

Mr ADBY: Thank you.

(The witnesses withdrew)

ELIZABETH COOMBS, Assistant Director General, Office for Women and Performance Development Division, Premier's Department, sworn and examined:

KERRIE BIGSWORTH, Director, Office for Women, Premier's Department, affirmed and examined:

CHAIR: Minister, do you wish to make any statement in relation to the women's portfolio?

Ms SANDRA NORI: No.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Minister, given the office's previous downgrading from a department to an office, you must have been disappointed earlier this year when the Treasurer, in his audit report, proposed further downgrading of the office by transferring it to the Department of Community Services. Did that transfer actually take place?

Ms SANDRA NORI: No, it did not.

Dr COOMBS: I will answer the issue about the audit. Raised in that there were certain alignments that could occur inside Government for the Women's portfolio, but it was a report to Government, not a report of the Government. As you can see, we have remained the office inside the Premier's Department.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Where is the Office of Women physically located at the moment?

Dr COOMBS: Physically, as in which building?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Yes.

Dr COOMBS: It is in Bligh House, in Bligh Street.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: In relation to the Women in Motor Sport scholarship program, what was the outcome of that?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I can give you the report, but I do not think I have it on me. I am very happy to provide you with the report that was written up by the participants.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Is that an ongoing program, Minister?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Well, it was related to the A1 Grand Prix—here we go back into Sport. If the A1 Grand Prix are willing to re-host, then I guess it will continue, but in all my discussions with the A1 Grand Prix in recent times, they have felt that they got something out of it, that it was good to have a young lass there. It is also an education for them, frankly, to see a young lass there. She is working with Alan Jones, the F1 winner, so I could not see any reason why we would not. It is a \$5,000 scholarship. It is very much about making the point. I have encouraged the motor sport industry to think about fundraising so that it can actually provide additional scholarships, but it is about making the point that women have a role to play in even the most male-dominated sports, like motor sport.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: If you would not mind, if a copy of that could be obtained, I would be appreciative.

Ms SANDRA NORI: Sure.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: The Sister Speak Program—I hear a lot of positive things about that program. I just wonder whether you are proposing to roll that program out statewide?

Dr COOMBS: We are very happy with the program. It is a six-week series of mentor-sponsored workshops that are aimed at supporting and inspiring young Aboriginal women in years 6

to 9 of school to continue to pursue their education, examine peer options and work towards financial independence. We trialled that in the Dubbo. It was developed over the 2004-05 year. It was successfully piloted in Dubbo in 2005 and it actually assisted, in an initial period, 21 students from the Delroy college. I think in the previous session there was some discussion about the outcomes there, but they really were wonderful. It was quite good to see the change in those young women. Not only has there been an improvement in literacy and numeracy among the young women in the program, but also they aspired to continue to learn and achieve. That cohort, the 21 who went through, are now mentoring younger students. We heard they are now partaking in the Duke of Edinburgh Award. But the teachers report that the young women are more engaged with the school overall. We are looking to actually propose that the successful program be rolled out to Lismore, Newcastle and Nowra during this 2006-07 year.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Has the Government succeeded in implementing the Girl\$avvy Program in at least 40 towns?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Yes, I think so. Yes.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Is it possible to get a list of those towns?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Yes.

CHAIR: That is taken on notice. Thank you.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Minister, I want to ask your question about dating agency rape. Does the Government have any views or programs to deal with the problem of women or children being raped as a result of introductions received through dating agencies?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I will take that on notice.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: What support are you extending to the domestic violence committee's coalition campaign to highlight the number of women and children murdered by violent partners?

Dr COOMBS: There are a number of ways that I could answer that. First, I would like to make a statement about recognition of the considerable damage it does both as a personal and community cost as a result of domestic violence. We are working not only in our own activities but also as part of whole-of-government approach to domestic violence. We are working in particular with the Human Services Sub-committee that has CEOs, a forum, who work in this area themselves. But also too as part of the other issues which have occurred inside government, and they include the review of the Government's domestic and family violence funding and services, the domestic violence court intervention model, the women's domestic violence court assistance scheme that operates at 55 courts across New South Wales, and DOCS early intervention programs, as well as working with DOCS, NSW Police, Health and the Legal Aid Commission to also work in some of those things which cut across a range of agencies. We are also developing policies of support in that area.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I am sorry to interrupt you, but my time is so short. Is any support specifically extended to the domestic violence committee coalition's campaign, that specific campaign?

Dr COOMBS: I am sorry, I will have to take that on notice.

Ms SANDRA NORI: I add that we are working through another couple of initiatives at the moment. Hopefully we will be able to announce them in six or eight weeks. They are in relation to very innovative and unique campaigns on domestic violence.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Minister, have you had an opportunity to read Paul Sheehan's book *Girls Like You*?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Not sure, cannot remember. If I have I do not remember reading it.

The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS: Why would you bother?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Do you recommend it?

The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS: I would not read anything Paul Sheehan wrote.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I highly recommend it, Minister.

The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS: I am not surprised.

Ms SANDRA NORI: Could you let me in on the joke? What is it?

The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS: He is a hideous *Herald* journalist, who writes all the anti-Muslim stuff.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Do you agree that there are cultural groups in our community who do not necessarily share our values of equal citizenship for women?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I will take that on notice.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Are there any forums or educational programs—

Ms SANDRA NORI: I will tell you what I do think. I think there are lots of men, and they come in all sorts of colours, shapes and sizes, who have very peculiar attitudes to women. I am not going to the extent that you want me to go.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Are there any forums or education programs to tackle cultural differences?

Ms SANDRA NORI: For boys or for girls?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Presumably for the benefit of girls?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Okay, now that you have clarified that.

Dr COOMBS: I am concerned that I may answer in a broader sense, not specifically what you are after.

Ms SANDRA NORI: We have run programs.

Dr COOMBS: We have, but it was particularly related to a view on whether people are not making an effort. We do not specifically address that issue, but we are most certainly concerned about supporting young women who come from different cultural organisation and have backgrounds and have a range of activities. Our programs work in that area. Also as part of the Premier's Council for Women we have a number of women who represent different ethnic backgrounds, racial and cultural areas.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: My final question is: What research or advocacy is being undertaken by the Office for Women to address generic cultural differences and attitudes towards women?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Just about everything we do is about either trying to help women reach their full potential, or in some way make sure that their position in society is equal to that of men, and sending out messages that are likely to enhance the chances of that happening in that cultural change. I really find the line you are going down quite offensive.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: That is your prerogative, I guess.

Ms SANDRA NORI: No, I think it is intellectually dishonest. I know what the Hon. Catherine Cusack really wants to say. Why does the Hon. Catherine Cusack not name the cultural groups that she does not approve of? Why don't you name them, Catherine?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Minister, I have asked my final question on that matter. I am asking you—

Ms SANDRA NORI: If you want to be a racist red neck, don't do it on me.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Minister, are you familiar with the New South Wales Criminal Justice Sexual Offences Taskforce report entitled "Sexual Offences—The Way Forward"?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Elizabeth Coombs will answer questions related to that.

Dr COOMBS: I wonder if you would mind repeating the question?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I am interested to know if the Minister is familiar with the New South Wales Criminal Justice Sexual Offences Taskforce report entitled "Sexual Offences—The Way Forward"?

Dr COOMBS: Yes, that report has been made available through the kits I mentioned earlier, the Human Services Group.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Are you saying that the Minister is aware of it?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I am sure I can recite it, from the first paragraph to the last paragraph. What kind of question is that? What do you want to know? Tell me, then I can help you. This is the second question on my reading habits. What else do you want to know?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I am asking you if you are familiar with the report. I can then ask you about the recommendations.

Ms SANDRA NORI: Then ask me about the recommendations.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Okay. Given the Government has had the report for 10 months, is there any response or action taken regarding those recommendations that call for action?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I will take that question on notice for the relevant Minister, Minister Debus.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Given that a number of those recommendations, as you are obviously aware, relate to a range of different departments, including the Office for Women, are any of those being acted upon? Or, are they all pending a broader response from the Government?

Dr COOMBS: They are under our consideration. Some are going through Cabinet subcommittees and the like, as I understand. I could not comment on the progress at the moment.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: So, have any of the ones under active consideration been implemented?

Dr COOMBS: Once again, my formal response is that they are still being considered, going through the policy approval process. I am, however, happy to get back to you in terms of the bureaucracy.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Minister, have you played any role in advocating for any of those recommendations?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I sit on the Human Services and Social Justice Subcommittee of Cabinet, and yes, we submit to that. No, you cannot have documents that are Cabinet in confidence.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: The report is already on the web site, Minister.

Ms SANDRA NORI: Fine, the report can be. What do you want?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I am trying to understand why some simple recommendations, for example where a non-publication order is in place, to place appropriate signage at the entrance to the court to inform members of the public that the proceedings are subject to a non-publication order.

The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS: You should be downstairs asking the Attorney General.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I am asking the Minister, because a member of the Office for Women sat on this committee and the Minister for Women obviously has an overview and advocacy role. Whereas, I understood that has been the case in the past. I am trying to establish if that is the rule?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I will take the question on notice for the relevant Minister, because she cannot be bothered going there and asking him herself.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: You do not see any role for yourself in this whatsoever?

Ms SANDRA NORI: That is not what I said.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Yes, you did, Minister.

Ms SANDRA NORI: No.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Yes, you did.

Ms SANDRA NORI: Oh, Catherine. It is 9.50 p.m.; either you accept the answers I have given you in the spirit they are intended, or if you do not want to hear them and understand them, that is not my problem. You know that we make submissions. You know that we advocate. You know it is not my responsibility: it belongs to Minister Debus, go and ask him.

CHAIR: You have taken the question on notice and we look forward to the response.

Ms SANDRA NORI: Good; from Minister Debus. Why not ask me questions about Fisheries while you are at it. We have had an anatomy lesson here tonight, as well.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Minister are you continuing to undertake monitoring of the implementation of the Government's election commitments made in 2003? One of those commitments was to monitor those commitments?

Ms SANDRA NORI: My understanding in respect to the Office for Women is that we have met them.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Have you been working with the superannuation industry to raise women's awareness of superannuation?

Dr COOMBS: It has been an issue on the agenda of the Ministerial Council for Women. It is an issue that women advisers have addressed over the years. It is also an issue that we have raised as one that we would like to continue to work on in the coming 2006-07 year.

Ms SANDRA NORI: It was something that we were going to do in collaboration with other States. We are working on that in collaboration with all other Ministers for women rather than reinventing the wheel.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Is the Minister aware that older women have started strengthening programs but have problems accessing gyms and fitness programs?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Yes, I know that older women have started strengthening programs and that they sometimes find it difficult to gain access to gyms.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Nothing was specifically identified in the State Plan for older women. Will the department give consideration to formulating a plan for appropriate, health, employment, education, housing and welfare initiatives based on age and gender in view of the fact that older women will be one of the fastest growing sectors in the period that the State Plan is implemented?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I am happy to answer that question but I should tell the honourable member that the State Plan is still under consultation. It has been an eye opener for me in this sense because I have attended a couple. Whilst ageing comes up as a concern in the community, as one would expect, it surprised me that people were not drawing a distinction between the genders. Yet, quite clearly, on current trends the largest part of that cohort will be female. So it was interesting to me to see that the community did not quite recognise that.

But the State Plan is a reasonably detailed and comprehensive plan. Therefore facilities for the ageing obviously will have to be part of it. I am very aware of the fact that women will face similar but also very different issues as they age, and that they will constitute the largest cohort. That is why on housing in particular we have been active in trying to get not only industry but the community and planners to understand that the housing needs of older women will be a significant issue in a fairly short time.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Can I reassure the Older Women's Network that you will be trying to adapt the State Plan?

Ms SANDRA NORI: You do know that I meet with them, do you not? You do know that I know them?

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: From what I am reading I am surprised, but I am delighted to hear that, Minister. Can I assure the network that your department will be working towards implementing in the State Plan appropriate health, employment, education, housing and welfare initiatives based on age and gender?

Ms SANDRA NORI: We can ensure that the departments responsible for those things are aware that women will represent a larger proportion and have different needs to men in the same age group.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Can you give us some statistics on the expenditure and frequency of older women being the victims of domestic violence in New South Wales? How much is being spent on prevention and education?

Ms SANDRA NORI: We will take that question on notice. Again, that will have to come from Minister Debus.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Is the Minister considering an elder abuse dedicated phone line for people who are victims of domestic violence?

Ms SANDRA NORI: That would be a question for the Government. It would be something that I would be happy to recommend to the relevant agency, but we are not a case management agency in the traditional sense; we are a policy deliverer and program deliverer. I take your point that such a line might be useful, but the Office for Women would not establish that line.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Presumably elder abuse is more common for older women than it is for older men. It is likely but I do not know whether or not it is true.

Ms SANDRA NORI: You and I get into trouble because you ask your questions in such a way that they are open to a couple of different interpretations. All I am doing is narrowing down what you are asking me. You seemed to imply that the Office for Women should open and run such a line.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: No.

Ms SANDRA NORI: In that case I am happy to recommend to the relevant agency that that is something that ought to be examined and looked at. But you realise that the Office for Women would not run it?

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: I understand that. I had discussions with your office a several years ago and I was given a bunch of statistics. Some time ago Ms Voltz was very helpful in this regard when she defined the role of the department as collecting—

Ms SANDRA NORI: It is policy seeking and it is the deliverer of some generic programs.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: I understand it was policy with advocacy within government, which is why I asked a lot of questions involving advocacy within government.

Ms SANDRA NORI: That is not quite how the question comes across. Often you make it sound as though this office should physically be doing it. Now that we have cleared that up it will be fine.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Presumably as a Cabinet Minister you are in a better position to advocate than most of us.

Ms SANDRA NORI: I just said that I would.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: We like to think that you were there flying the flag. We are merely encouraging you to greater effort, or we are asking you to recount the wonderful efforts you are making in this regard.

Ms SANDRA NORI: You have won. What is your topic?

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: How many beds are available in New South Wales for older women who are victims of domestic violence?

Ms SANDRA NORI: By beds do you mean places in refuges?

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Yes.

Ms SANDRA NORI: That is what you mean; you do not mean beds.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Yes.

Ms SANDRA NORI: I will take that question on notice because again that is not something that this office manages.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: It is Community Services.

Ms SANDRA NORI: I will take that question on notice.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: I understand that you collect statistics on how women are doing. Is that not the case? One of the things Ms Voltz told me related to statistics collection.

The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS: You did not ask that.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: I was talking about the functions of the department.

Ms SANDRA NORI: I will take that question on notice and get the relevant Minister to answer the question.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Will the Minister advocate for women to put in place trained emergency staff to deal with the issue?

Ms SANDRA NORI: The issue of domestic violence, as opposed to police and the courts?

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: No.

Ms SANDRA NORI: You do not know what you are asking do you?

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Yes, I do. I am rephrasing the question because of the way in which it was written to make it clear for the Minister because she has difficulty with these questions.

Ms SANDRA NORI: You do not know what you are trying to ask; that is your problem. You even have to have the questions written out for you.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Yes, it is but I am trying to phrase it even more optimally because the Minister has such terrible difficulty understanding questions. Will the Minister advocate for women to put in place trained emergency staff to deal with the issue of sexual abuse in older women quickly and sensitively so that evidence is not lost or overlooked and medical evidence is obtained quickly, given the fact that 50 per cent of women who have been sexually abused die as a result?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I will take that question on notice. When you said "trained experts" do you mean within the hospital system because you did not state that?

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: I presume that is right. They would be the experts, would they not?

Ms SANDRA NORI: If you will accept my assistance in phrasing your question for you we should add the words, "within the hospital system". I presume that is what you meant.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: I presume counselling and so forth would take place outside the hospital afterwards?

Ms SANDRA NORI: But that was not what you asked me. You just asked me whether I would support the training of experts to assist these women. You have to give it a bit of context. It is all right; I will take that question on notice.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: I would be delighted if the Minister used whatever innovative approach she could to solve this problem.

Ms SANDRA NORI: Who are the perpetrators? Maybe we should start dealing with them. I bet you they are blokes.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: The Older Women's Network wrote this question. Will the Minister write to the Federal Minister for Immigration on behalf of women victims of trafficking who are detained in New South Wales and who co-operate with police in order to assist women to obtain a class of visa that will allow them to work in Australia and provide other assistance?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I write to her every month. I wish she would answer my letters. I will do that with pleasure. I will show the honourable member every letter I have written to the Federal

Government. New South Wales has taken the lead on this issue. In some ways the Federal Government has been very tardy in this area. I am happy to hand the member the file.

The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS: I remember chairing one of several forums that the Minister organised in this building.

Ms SANDRA NORI: We had a task force, we have taken the lead on it federally, and we got the Federal Government to institute some visas. Mind you, even though they claimed that they had instituted visas to help women in that situation so that they felt safe and would come forward with evidence—the real problem was that once they were nabbed if they were thrown into the immigration detention centres they would clam up and the next thing you know they would be out of the country anyway—women were still being put in the slammer. We might get there one day on this one.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Can you tell me whether there is equity between the sexes in salaries and positions in the public service in New South Wales? How do we compare with other States in these indices?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I will take that question on notice so that we get you a detailed and accurate answer.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, what activities did the Office for Women undertake to promote International Women's Day?

Dr BIGSWORTH: International Women's Day [IWD] is an annual event that occurs on 8 March. It is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the achievements of women in New South Wales, highlighting the current issues affecting women. The Office for Women instigates and participates in a range of highly successful initiatives for women on and around International Women's Day each year. This year, as part of the IWD celebrations, there were 78 grants, totalling \$71,100, allocated by the Office for Women to local councils for a range of community activities. In addition, for the 2006 celebrations the Office for Women organised or assisted in organising the New South Wales Woman of the Year Award, which attracted 107 nominations; the Premier's reception, held at Government House, which was attended by 280 guests—the Woman of the Year Award was announced at this event—and the UNIFEM breakfast, which is a major international women's day event in New South Wales and was attended by close to 1,000 people. Minister Nori spoke at that event.

The Office for Women also supported International Women's Day by helping other organisations to arrange speakers for their events. International Women's Day gives us all an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of women, to reflect on our continuing struggle and to look at innovative ways to improve their status.

Ms SANDRA NORI: As an offshoot of that, the other day we ran an Aboriginal women in leadership event. It was quite interesting. At the head table we had three professors; a governor of the Reserve Bank; the Governor, who was one of the three professors; a couple of PhDs—these two were the PhDs—the woman who runs Harvey Norman; and of course Dr Sandra Eades, who is a professor as well. I think you would have to go to a thousand functions—which, of course, we as politicians do—before you would come across such an august head table. And it was all women. One of the three professors was an Aboriginal woman. I thought it was fantastic. The response to that lunch was really interesting. We even had a couple of blokes turn up, Arthur.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: I hope you did not give them as hard a time as you have given us tonight.

Ms SANDRA NORI: I always give men a hard time—there is a quip in there somewhere. I think good things will come out of that networking luncheon. In fact, I have had a couple of phone calls from women saying they want to do more, using their corporate profile and their corporation, to assist and support Aboriginal women in leadership positions. I think it is great.

The Hon. CHRISTINE ROBERTSON: What is the Office for Women doing to help working women now that the Working Women's Centre is closed following problems with Federal Government funding?

Dr COOMBS: When the Working Women's Centre closed \$100,000 then became available to us, and we have used that to undertake a number of other programs in relation to that particular area. In 2005-06 the Office for Women provided \$100,000 to the Combined Community Legal Centre to conduct a women's employment rights project. The aim of that project was to provide up-to-date employment law advice and information to community advocates and organisations assisting women. We also provided some money in the same financial year to Asian Women at Work to give employment-related support and advice services for Asian- and Arabic-speaking women. I understand that this particular project provides training for English as a second language teachers to become skilled in that area and to develop a manual, particularly for women of those backgrounds who may have the same skills in English, to be able to negotiate, liaise and work things out in the occupational area. Furthermore, we have started up a partnership with the Youth Action and Policy Association, which is known as YAPA, to conduct research with young people and to develop a new school and community-based resource about employment.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I think YAPA has been going for years, has it not?

Dr COOMBS: They may have been going for years but we have only just started up this program with them. It is a qualitative research program, so it is about experiences and impressions. I am advised that the new resource Girls at Work: Getting a Fair Go is actually about giving practical and targeted assistance to young people so that when they enter the work force for the first time during a period of great industrial change they will be equipped to deal with it. We must remember that for a lot of young women their first job can be very casualised. They are very vulnerable and insecure employment areas. If they do not know their rights and entitlements or how to negotiate to stand up for themselves they can be disadvantaged. It is very useful to have a resource at this time for younger women.

There is a range of other things that we have been doing, some of it through the peak organisations and the peak meetings that we run. The Premier's Council for Women recently did a consultation that concerned violence. It looked at the experiences of women generally and younger women in the workplace. We have been working on other areas through grants in certain areas. We know that through the peak networks there is always an ongoing desire to bring issues to the office that can then be picked up and taken through to the policy arenas that the office is locked into through the Premier's Department and the various committees that we are represented on. We also utilise the opportunities we have when Cabinet minutes come through, or any other papers that we brief the Minister on, to feed the advice and information we get into policy advice.

The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS: Minister, can I get some information on the Lucy Program? What is happening there?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Lucy is going great guns. We have got more and more universities wanting to come and be part of it. As you know, Lucy is a program that we instituted to match up young women who are at tertiary level and doing a course that could loosely be called management—so it could be an economics degree, a commerce degree, a law degree or a business degree—with a significant person in either the public or the private sector. About a year ago we decided to open up the mentor role to men, and we got some very high-profile men involved. That program is going great guns.

The University of Western Sydney says that it is now so incorporated into its business management studies and the way it manages the young women who are doing the course—who typically are slightly older, often single parents, who are working and trying to study. The university says that matching these young women for six months with a mentor, who is then available throughout their subsequent academic training, is really making a difference to their university studies. The university feels it is an integral part of preparing someone for a business or management career. The whole idea is that these mentors, some of who are among the top business men and women in this country, will be on the look out for these students down the track when they finish they degree. They could act as a referee for them or they could be a scout for their first job. We are very happy with the way it is going.

The University of Newcastle has indicated it would like to take over the program which is incredible given that we only started the program in 2004. It will be good if that happens because the program, set up by the Office for Women, has been tried and tested. We will pass that on to the university and that will leave us more resources to do something completely different. The mentors are drawn from Fujitsu Australia Limited, Telstra, AMP, Mercedes Benz, Westpac, NAB, AON Insurance, Citigroup, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal?

Dr COOMBS: NSW Treasury as well.

Ms SANDRA NORI: That is right, we have Sue Power from NSW Treasury, Telstra, Blackmores, Blake Dawson Waldron, lawyers, Sparke Helmore Lawyers, Premier's Department and the Department of Commerce. The mentors from the big end of town have included Jack Cowan, Aussie John Symonds, Gerry Harvey—it is probably his wife, Katie Page because she runs the show—and Andrew Kaldor, one of the Kaldors. It has a high profile. It is going really well and 122 women have graduated. They have been assisted by 125 mentors and I think fairly soon the University of Newcastle will take over the program which will liberate some dollars in the Office for Women for it to start something else, try it, test it and grow it.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Will the Office for Women participate in the rural women's gathering this year?

Ms SANDRA NORI: Yes, we always do. Apparently it is in my diary.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: You commented on the importance of profiling women's sport at the elite level. Minister why were you neither present nor represented by a parliamentary colleague at the A-league women's netball final at Olympic Park last Friday night?

Ms SANDRA NORI: I will take that question on notice. There was a reason why I could not get there. I will match my diary and attendance at functions against yours any day of the week.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I was not in attendance because I was here at estimates last Friday night but my colleague, George Souris, was there representing the Opposition.

Ms SANDRA NORI: They would not have even known he was there. What are you talking about? I did not see him or the shadow Minister at the netball test between Australia and New Zealand either about six weeks ago? Give me a break. There are at least three competing functions every minute of the day in this job.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Will you take on notice the second part of that question which is: Why were you not represented by a parliamentary colleague at that event.

Ms SANDRA NORI: Oh yes.

CHAIR: Do you want to give the Committee a summary?

Ms SANDRA NORI: No.

(The witnesses withdrew)

The Committee proceeded to deliberate.