

## GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE No. 2

Thursday 20 June 2002

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas

### SMALL BUSINESS, AND TOURISM

The Committee met at 5.30 p.m.

#### MEMBERS

The Hon. Dr Brian Pezzutti (Chair)

The Hon. Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans

The Hon. Ron Dyer

The Hon. Amanda Fazio

The Hon. John Jobling

The Hon. Richard Jones

The Hon. Janelle Saffin

#### PRESENT

**The Hon. S. C. Nori**, *Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Tourism*

**Department of State and Regional Development**

**Mr L. Harris**, *Director-General*

**Ms J. Ricketts**, *Director, Small Business Development Division*

**Tourism New South Wales**

**Mr T. Thirlwell**, *Managing Director*

**Ms P. Murphy**, *Director, Business Services*

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**CHAIR:** Before questions commence, some procedural matters need to be dealt with. Part 4 of the resolution referring the budget estimates to the Committee requires evidence to be heard in public. The Committee has previously resolved to authorise the media to broadcast sound and video excerpts of this public proceedings. Copies of the guidelines are available from the attendants. I point out that in accordance with the Legislative Council's guidelines for the broadcast of proceedings only members of the Committee 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, you must take responsibility for what you publish or what interpretation you place on anything that is said before the Committee.

There is no provision for members to refer directly to their own staff while at the table. Witnesses, members and their staff are advised that any messages should be delivered through the attendants on duty or the Committee clerks. For the benefit of members and Hansard, would departmental officers identify themselves by name, position and department or agency before answering any questions referred to them by the Minister. Where a member is seeking information in relation to particular aspects of a program or subprogram, it would be helpful if the program or subprogram were identified.

The Committee has determined that it will start with 20 minutes each for the Opposition and crossbench, and then the Government will have 20 minutes. If the Government does not wish to use its time, we have an option of completing early or splitting that time evenly between the other members. I have asked the Minister what she is going to do if the lower House bells ring. If members have questions they wish to place on notice we will have those to you by 5.00 p.m. the day after the Committee has concluded—that is, 48 hours after the hearing has concluded. The questions will be in on Monday for this hearing. We would like the answers back in 21 days, if practicable. The Clerk will collate the questions. There is always the possibility of a follow up hearing, as you understand. I declare the proposed expenditure open for examination. Are there any questions?

**Ms NORI:** Mr Chairman, before questions commence, could I take up a little of your time?

**CHAIR:** Of course.

**Ms NORI:** I understand this is your last estimates committee.

**CHAIR:** Yes, it is.

**Ms NORI:** Well, what a pleasure it has been meeting with you once a year. I wish you the best in your retirement. On a sad note, I acknowledge the contribution of the Hon. Doug Moppett on this Committee. Despite the banter and the politics, I always found his questions an attempt to make a genuine contribution to the estimates process. In my view, he also displayed a genuine interest in the two portfolios. For that, I remember him.

**CHAIR:** The Committee notes the Minister's comments with approval. Minister, do you have any opening comments about the portfolio?

**Ms NORI:** No. You are here to ask questions. I am sure I will get my point of view across during that process.

**CHAIR:** We are delighted to have you back again, Minister.

**Ms NORI:** Thank you.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Minister, how might I define "small business"?

**Ms NORI:** That is an interesting question. I doubt that, in this day and age, we have a fundamentally consistent definition of "small business". I say that quite frankly. In a sense, it reflects the changing nature of small business. Forgive me, it will take me a moment to describe. I can give you the formal, statistical, definition used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], but are you asking me for that or are you happy to hear my description?

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** I would like your description.

**Ms NORI:** In essence, we are trying to assist firms that exhibit the difficulties that a small business might face. In other words, a business with only five people in it may have a huge turnover. Does that mean the business is large or small? What are we basing it on: its turnover or staff numbers? We are looking for businesses that do not have the in-house resources, in general, to do their own marketing, to have a discrete and separate dedicated marketing department, to have a discrete and separate export manager or export department, yet they need to market and they need to export. They are two obvious examples. We try to create some programs that assist them with that, recognising that that is always a problem for a small business. They are active, flexible, passionate and hard-working, but time and resource poor. We want to take them onto the next level. Why do we care about whether they market or export? Because the more they export, the more likely they are to employ more people.

My departmental officers will correct me if I get the formal definition of "small business" wrong. There used to be an extensive definition depending on which sector you were referring to. Now a "small business" is one with 20 employees or less. Of course, a lot of our money also goes on start-ups, and that is through the Business Enterprise Centre [BEC] program. It is not strictly speaking a BEC program now, but it is the start-ups.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** In looking at resources and marketing and export, would the definition of the Australian Bureau of Statistics—that is, a small business is one with less than 20 employees—be a little restrictive or difficult in some cases? Should we agree with the ABS definition?

**Ms NORI:** On the one hand, you need a definition; on the other hand, you need to be a tad flexible. We tend to talk about small to medium enterprises [SME] and that takes you across the 20 employees line.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** If we want to try to maximise the effect for our small business people, is there a way we can improve this?

**Ms NORI:** What do you mean? Take on the ABS because of its definition?

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Well, if need be. We need to try to discover where the problems are, so that we can do something about assisting and correcting the difficulties.

**Ms NORI:** But would that not come down to making sure that the Department of State and Regional Development has sufficient offices, personnel and programs—I believe it does—to ensure that local businesses know that there is help there. We then have the flexibility to work out whether they fit into one of our programs. Clearly, if BHP came along and said, "We want to access your small business programs" we would say no. We have to rely a bit on the client manager's judgement to see whether a company fits into our suite of programs. But we have constant evaluations; we do the Delta Outlook evaluation of our client base every year. I can take you through what the Delta Outlook survey shows about clients. Bear with me, I have that information here somewhere.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** We would appreciate that. The difficulty is: What do we need to do and what should be done to obtain that flexibility? It is a difficult problem in country areas.

**Ms NORI:** Ministers stick up for their departments, and in this case I do so quite happily. I am confident, from my contact with the department and visits to the bush, that we are very lucky. A lot of officers in this department—as indeed is the case with Tourism—could almost certainly be making a lot more money in the private sector and a lot of them have come from the private sector, yet they choose to work in the public sector. I am confident that the department employs people who are commercially savvy and have experience in the private sector. They are able to make those judgements. Obviously, we would welcome input that allowed us to be constantly evolving our position and revising our programs—which we do.

For example, I refer to the Women in Business Mentor Program. We started off with a set program of straight mentoring, if you like—matching up a new businesswoman with an experienced

business person, usually a woman, for a six-month program of one-on-one mentoring—plus workshops on marketing, financial planning, business planning and so on. The program evolved, we took it to the cities and then we took it to the regions, and then we evolved it further. We still run the program, but in addition to the formal six-month program we also run growth workshops, which are set. You do not have to belong to the program; it is a one-off thing in a regional area. For example, it might be on marketing or on business planning. We hold them around regional New South Wales. Similarly, our home-based business program started off as a pilot in Penrith. We are now piloting it on the Central Coast. From that, we will evolve further programs.

Let me take you through one for last year. In August 2001 305 businesses were surveyed—these are clients of the department—and they were asked about business results for the year ended 2001. Companies were those that had commenced or completed a business development project with financial assistance supported by the Department of State and Regional Development in 1999-2000. Allowing this time lag ensured a realistic assessment of business impact of these systems. Overall, the small and medium-sized enterprises which have participated in the department's programs increased sales by 9 per cent to an average of \$5.2 million. Jobs were added at the average rate of 10 per cent across the group. Just over half the group were exporters, whose overseas sales surged by 23 per cent to an average of \$1.4 million in the year under review. I have no doubt that the current review will show similar, if not better, results.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** I am pleased with that outcome, Minister. I imagine that the documentation you were reading from is in the public domain?

**Ms NORI:** Yes, it is.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Obviously, your officers will have suggested a number of new options to you. Could you briefly outline one or two new options that your officers have suggested to you that can improve small business?

**Ms NORI:** My portfolio is divided into two areas, if you like: what I call BEC—that is, new start-ups—and the rest. As I said before, if you could reduce the department's aim to one thing it would have to be that we are trying to get our companies to become exporters or to export more than they do. Now, that could be through the high-growth business program, which is not specifically export-oriented as such. However, in a way it is—it all links back and it is all dovetailed. We have racked up a number of export missions, export trade delegations. We have increased those. I can get the department to give you the outcomes of those and where future ones are planned.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** We would appreciate that.

**Ms NORI:** Everything we are doing is planned in one way or another. We give support at the very early stage to small business in the bush. We are always out there looking for the ones that might have export potential and taking them through the various programs so that we can get them to export.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Minister, as I have wandered around the countryside small businesses have said to me that one of their problems is payroll tax. They say, "Payroll tax gets to me. It is a major problem. What can we do about it?" Minister, I would be interested to hear your views on it. What do you perceive we can do about it?

**Ms NORI:** I do not want to be facetious, but there is a reason I always carry with me in the House—I am ready to go, except I never get asked the question—because I am quite—

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Well, I am happy to help.

**Ms NORI:** Wrong Chamber. Clearly, I am aware of the arguments. It is raised with me from time to time. The *Australian Financial Review* carried an article on this topic recently. In a sense, it saddens me that it is not something that is in the major press. I suppose they think it is boring, which is a great pity. I think it is something that every person in New South Wales ought to be concerned about—whether they are Liberal, Labor or whatever else. We are very much stuck with a situation of vertical fiscal imbalance and we are very much stuck with the situation of horizontal fiscal equalisation. Let me tell you what that means—it does mean real revenue foregone for this State.

For every dollar of GST that we collect in New South Wales we get 81¢ back. As Minister for Tourism, it irks me because I reckon we get more dollars out of GST, which we send back to the Commonwealth Government, than any other State. As I said, for every dollar we collect we get 81¢ back. By contrast, for every dollar that Queensland pays in GST it gets back \$1.12—that is 31¢ more than New South Wales; South Australia gets back \$1.31; Tasmania gets back \$1.94; and the Northern Territory gets back \$5.72. The problem is that it is difficult for the New South Wales Government because of that imbalance of return from the Commonwealth Government. In my view, it does not matter whether it is a Federal Labor government or a Federal Liberal government because neither of them had the guts to address this issue. I get quite saddened by this is because it is not a burning issue in the public domain. Yet, as a Minister, it makes my blood boil.

**CHAIR:** Yes, but New South Wales has the lowest threshold and the highest rate for payroll tax. We are the biggest employing State in the nation, so that must overcompensate.

**Ms NORI:** I was asked for an overall answer, an overall suggestion as to how I see it eventually being solved. That is my answer for the long term. In relation to payroll tax specifically, this is the fifth year in a row that payroll tax has come down. It is down to 6 per cent. Of course, in the most recent budget the Treasurer announced that apprentices have been excluded. In New South Wales the trend has been that we are bringing payroll tax down. There was an increase of only 122 businesses that pay payroll tax, or 0.6 per cent, over the last 12 months to 30 June 2001—this is from Treasury—so it does not seem to me that a lot of extra people have been caught by the payroll tax in the last 12 months. I am told that it is estimated that 11,000 small firms pay payroll tax and that about 40 per cent are small business. Payroll tax has come down 25 per cent under the Carr Labor Government. It was 8 per cent under the previous Coalition Government.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** You were saying that about 11,000 small businesses—

**Ms NORI:** That is what I am told by the Office of State Revenue. I am not in a position to have judged it myself.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:.** That is okay. Could you advise us of the actual amount of money that might be paid in dollars in payroll tax by those 11,000 small businesses and—

**Ms NORI:** I would have to take that on notice.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** If you would, that would be most helpful

**Ms NORI:** That question can be answered only by Treasury—Treasury is the keeper of that knowledge.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** I understand. I thought you may have had that information in your file. The advice I have received is that the total receipts have gone up considerably. My information is that in 1995 we had approximately \$2 billion in payroll tax receipts, which increased to \$4.1 billion in 2001. It is my understanding that they are looking now at \$5 billion in March 2003. Would you care to comment on the increase in the totality of dollars?

**Ms NORI:** All I can say is that we raised the tax-free threshold from \$550,000 to the \$600,000, which created a saving of \$110 million to business. Could I take that question on notice?

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Yes, I would appreciate that. Because I think it is—

**Ms NORI:** However, you could ask Mr Egan in about an hour and a half.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** We may do that. At this stage, we have you here and the opportunity to ask you these questions. If you would have a look it would be appreciated. Your response with respect to small businesses is of concern to us.

**Ms NORI:** But I can also point out that, strictly speaking, you are asking me about a line item in another Minister's budget. Therefore, I suggest that the question may be out of order. As a courtesy to you, I am happy to take the question on notice.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Thank you. I understand that Australian Business Ltd released a document called "New South Wales Business Priorities 2003". I take it that you are familiar with that document?

**Ms NORI:** I am fairly certain I was at the launch.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** As you will recall, the major concern in the document deals with the burden of workplace compliance regimes. It expressed a particular concern that legislation is applied inconsistently. Minister, I would be interested to hear your views in that regard. Do you have specific details and information about how you have tried to overcome these problems?

**Ms NORI:** I thought that Australian Business Ltd's document was mostly about addressing issues of a skills base, whether young people were prepared to go into trades, and whether we would continue to attract young people in what might be called the more traditional areas of manufacturing. I thought it talked about that. Of course, if we are talking about compliance I am quite happy to talk about the impact of the GST. The GST has had a significant impact on small business.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** I am principally wanting to understand the workings of your department—how it seeks to improve small business in New South Wales

**Ms NORI:** I am happy to talk about the Government's programs. My department does not have statutory or constitutional control over business licensing, compliance and those sorts of matters. Most of those fall under the purview of the Department of Fair Trading.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Where your department has some worries, how does it try to solve them?

**Ms NORI:** In general, we talk to the Department of Fair Trading. I raise issues through the Cabinet process. If I see a new resolution coming in, I get advice from both my departments and make representations accordingly. I have a very strong personal philosophy that it is the duty of the Minister to put the case for his or her portfolio's constituency at its highest. I am not there to see everyone's problems. During the Cabinet process, if you like, that is the position that I take.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Are you satisfied that you are successful in that regard?

**Ms NORI:** I am not here to discuss the Cabinet process.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** No. I am just interested in you

**Ms NORI:** I am happy that my views are put forward and that they are taken note of. Do you realise that I regularly meet with the Australian Industry Group, Australian Business Ltd and the Chamber of Commerce? I have a small business peak organisations meeting on a regular basis. Obviously, I have a lot of close contact with, and the friendly co-operation of, the department as well.

**CHAIR:** The Opposition's time has concluded. Does the Hon. Arthur Chesterfield-Evans have any questions?

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** I refer the Minister to stamp duty. It has been eliminated from public company share transfers, but not from private company share transfers. Why is that continuing? Are you advocating on this?

**Ms NORI:** When a small business, an individual or an organisation raises something with me formally—for example, by way of letter or through some of these meetings or forums with peak industry organisations—I create a set of minutes, pass those concerns on, explain where I got it from, and I pass them onto the relevant Minister, including the Treasurer. I make the relevant Minister aware of what the industry is telling me.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** In other words, as far as stamp duty is concerned, you advocate for this through Treasury within Cabinet, more or less?

**Ms NORI:** I pass on their concerns, issues or comments to the relevant Minister. My difficulty as Minister for Small Business and as Minister for Tourism is that both portfolios have a ubiquitous presence across all portfolios. It is the same in the Federal Parliament. I am sure that Joe Hockey, my Federal counterpart in both portfolios, experience the same situation. It is not an unusual situation for Ministers to find themselves in. I am sure I am not the only Minister in that situation. Again, with respect, you are straying into areas that are not my portfolio responsibility in this estimate committee process.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** If you are going to take an advocacy role for your portfolio, it is one thing to help each individual business—it is like a doctor helping each individual case of diarrhoea without fixing the pump. If you are saying that the pump is beyond your—

**Ms NORI:** It is my job to pass those concerns on—or it might be a comment, a view, an interesting insight. However, there is also a whole-of-government approach to budgetary matters. I suggest to you—I may be pre-empting the comments the Treasurer will make later tonight—that the Treasurer has the portfolio responsibility for matters that you raise. I am sure he would argue with you, and put forward to you, that the fundamental problem New South Wales faces is one of not getting back enough of its GST. We had the same problem before the GST, I might add. In some ways, though, it is worse—I think it is another seven years before we get back from the GST process an amount equivalent to that which we would have got under the old grant scheme. It is something that ought to concern us all. New South Wales has about one-third of the country's small business sector. Tourism was hit with a tax for the first time—it was never subject to wholesale sales tax. In my view, we are being duded by the Federal Government with respect to the GST. You have to ask yourself about a taxation system that does not give you an incentive. The tourism industry can go out and work its butt off and get more and more dollars for New South Wales, but that money then goes straight to Queensland via the Commonwealth Government's GST process.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** If I asked you the same question about stamp duty on insurance premiums and insurance costs, would you give me the same answer?

**Ms NORI:** I understand there were some changes in the budget.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** They have been reduced, have they?

**Ms NORI:** That is my understanding.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** They have not been abolished though.

**Ms NORI:** I am correct. The Treasurer announced a halving from 1 August of stamp duty on general insurance, including public liability insurance from 10 per cent to 5 per cent, which is already the rate for professional indemnity insurance. I am sure if I search for it I will be able to show you what that means with respect to income foregone for this State. Do not forget that we are in an environment where we have had to support HIH Insurance to the tune of \$600 million and UMP to the tune of about \$300 million. We are in extraordinary times.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** I did have some interesting suggestions regarding civil liabilities, but we will not go into that at this point.

**CHAIR:** How accurate is that \$300 million figure?

**Ms NORI:** That is the figure that I have understood. I am happy to check it. Do you not listen to the Treasurer in your House? He is in your House, not mine.

**CHAIR:** That is why we are interested in your comment, Minister, because he has not made any comment.

**Ms NORI:** Perhaps it was the Premier in our House.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** The non-government sector has pooled resources to try to minimise insurance costs. Have you looked at any sort of scheme like that for small business?

**Ms NORI:** We had discussions about that at the last small business peak organisations meeting. We have offered to foster a meeting with the relevant stakeholders in the insurance industry for all peak organisations—bankers, Australian Business Ltd, a whole range of people. We have offered to facilitate that meeting and that process.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** In my experience, when I talk to small business they always go on about the complexity of various government charges. Do you do an advocacy role to simplify those things? Is there a survey of things that could provide a systems analysis, if you like?

**Ms NORI:** As I said, we make representations and pass them on, either through the Cabinet process or with other Ministers. We draw it to their attention and we try to advocate; that is correct.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** But you do not put together a package of all the different charges and what could be done—that is, analyse where they come from? One has to stand back and look at the complexity of all the different charges, perhaps, and where they come from and then look at an alternative way of getting that amount of revenue with the minimum of inconvenience, if you like.

**Ms JANINE RICKETTS:** The Minister has asked me to talk to you about the Business Licence Information Service [BLIS] in the Department of Fair Trading. The service is designed for people starting in business and for those in established business so that they can go to one point of reference to find out what their obligations to governments at all levels are. The Commonwealth Government provides data on its various compliance regimes into that system as well. BLIS is available online. People can plug in and describes the kind of business pursuit that they are engaged in. They then receive in the mail a package of all the information that is pertinent to them. That system is being upgraded as part of the overall business licence project that is being rolled out by the Department of Information Technology. We, as a department, are actively involved in looking to make sure that these enhancements are not just driven from a technology perspective but from a business user perspective, which I think is what you are talking about.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Simplification alternatives.

**Ms JANINE RICKETTS:** Yes, we get involved in those debates, both through the Minister's advocacy but also at officer level.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** The other thing that small business complains about is big business squeezing it. That often occurs with respect to rents and anti-competitive practices. Do you do any advocacy in that area, either directly or through the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission[ACCC]?

**Ms NORI:** Yes. In fact, the one you left out is banks. We have been particularly active in advocacy for the way the banks treat their small business clients. We did a couple of studies and at last count banks were charging small business something like \$2 billion a year across Australia. The frightening thing is that in the first study it was about \$1.2 billion, by the second study it had gone up to about \$2 billion, and now it is around \$2.5 billion. What does that tell us? It is not getting better; it is getting worse. That is an issue that we have been particularly active on. I first raised in at the Small Business Ministerial Council meeting in 2000. I told the then Federal Government—all States agreed—that we wanted the ACCC to do a special investigation. It has taken until now to get a letter back from the Federal Minister for Small Business in which he has told me that the ACCC is a sort of



option group, where it pops in and pops out. That is not good enough, in my view. I think the ACCC should go to town and put pressure on the banks.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Can you not deal with the ACCC directly?

**Ms NORI:** You can, but there is no point me doing it if the Federal Government does not want to get behind it. Clearly, if the Federal Government does not want to get behind it there is no incentive for the ACCC to do it on its own. We have called on the ACCC to do it. I believe it is the responsibility of the Federal Government to ask one of its agencies to do it. The ACCC apparently keeps a watching brief, but I will be raising it again at the ministerial council meeting.

**CHAIR:** The Hon. Dr Chesterfield-Evans' time has concluded. Does the Hon. Richard Jones have any questions?

**The Hon. RICHARD JONES:** My first question cuts across both portfolio areas. Last year the Government funded a training and development program for small tourist businesses called Leaders in Tourism.

**CHAIR:** The Committee is still examining the Small Business portfolio.

**The Hon RICHARD JONES:** My question cuts across both portfolios. Despite pleas from Western Sydney tourism groups, funding has not yet been committed for this project in the next financial year. Will your Government continue to assist to provide business development programs specifically designed to assist businesses in the growing tourism sector in Western Sydney, in particular?

**Ms NORI:** I point out that we instituted that program post-September 11 as part of the recovery package. We felt that tourism businesses, which are small businesses—if you take out the airlines and the major hotels—might experience some cash flow problems in the wake of September 11, the collapse of Ansett and everything else that has gone wrong in the past 12 months. It was run through the Department of State and Regional Development, but we did have support and input from Tourism New South Wales. It was done from the small business angle, even though it was specifically for tourism businesses, rather than Tourism New South Wales doing it on its own. It was a way of happily marrying up the objectives of both agencies. It was about making sure that they had the skills to deal with the situation as it occurred. It is for two years. We are evaluating that program so we can tweak it as we go to the second phase.

**The Hon. RICHARD JONES:** What about Western Sydney specifically? I have received questions from businesses in Western Sydney saying, "Are you going to help us?"

**Ms NORI:** Well, none of them has written to me.

**Ms JANINE RICKETTS:** We have been running these Leaders in Tourism network groups in different areas to gauge demand and interest. We find that people in some areas are more prepared to come to seminars to talk about business issues than others. The network groups have been running in the Blue Mountains, in the Illawarra and in three different parts of Western Sydney. The ones that are currently scheduled finish on 30 June. In Western Sydney they have been running in the Hawkesbury area, in the Camden-MacArthur area and in Parramatta. We got a relatively lesser response in the middle part of Western Sydney. We got a very strong response in the Blue Mountains. We are looking at where we can best deploy this approach. There are other approaches we can use to help tourism businesses that are not, if you like, as prepared to come along to seminars. It is a program delivery issue.

**The Hon. RICHARD JONES:** Other members have referred to civil liability insurance. What analysis have you done of the impact of the civil liability crisis on small businesses? How can you help?

**Ms NORI:** First, obviously all the other States in Australia have to recognise that there is a problem and we all have to row in the same direction. If we do not all row in the same direction, it

will all filter through to the weakest link and we will cop it anyway. In other words, if the other States do not adopt something similar to us and do not take some of the hard decisions that we have taken, increases in premiums will filter some out—if, indeed, people can find insurance. It is very difficult. The first tranche of our reforms are relative to a pattern in the United States of America, in which there is a focus on the payment side. In September we will be dealing with the law of negligence. We hope that will create an environment in which more players will come into the market and offer a solution. However, there is a Federal component to this. The Trades Practices Act confers in various contracts an implied warranty. Before we can deal with that in a jurisdictional sense in New South Wales, the Commonwealth Government has to deal with that issue so that we have the power to deal with it. I am referring to the issue of waivers, which will go, in many respects, to the heart of the whole negligence debate. There is no doubt these are difficult times, and they have not been helped by HIH obviously.

**The Hon RICHARD JONES:** How many small businesses have come to you asking for assistance? Have you been able to give them any assistance?

**Ms NORI:** No. I have received lots of letters and phone calls congratulating the Government on the stand it has taken. No-one has physically come to me and said, "Could you write out a cheque and underwrite it?" Also, I have placed the issue on the agenda of both the Small Business Minister's Council and the Tourism Minister's Council, both of which are due to meet in the next four to five weeks.

**The Hon. RICHARD JONES:** From time to time, I ask questions about women in small business. How are women being assisted?

**Ms NORI:** Approximately half a million or so people operate a small business in New South Wales, of whom about 30 per cent are women. There has been a 20,000 increase between 1999-2000 and 2000-2001, which is a bit over an 8 per cent increase. They are going well. It is a very uplifting part of the program we run. I find it uplifting to be involved in the Women in Business Mentor Program, which I referred to earlier. Our program is enthusiastically received. One unintended but beneficial consequence of this program is that we are creating a kind of mini women's business network, particularly in the regions where the program has been run. Women are obviously much more time poor than their male counterparts—

**CHAIR:** That is a sexist comment.

**The Hon AMANDA FAZIO:** The Minister is stating the facts.

**Ms NORI:** If a woman is working and has children, it will not matter what level of responsibility she has, what position she holds in her organisation or how many hours she ploughs into her business, she will still be doing her unfair share of housework and domestic duties. Women are particularly time poor. Evidence suggests that women comprise 30 per cent of small business operators in this State, but they comprise only 10 per cent of membership of various business organisations. Networking is useful for them—"networking" in its business sense, not in its social sense. They have so little time to do that. Through the Women in Business Mentor Program—in which they learn skills and how to grow a business in an environment of friendly and supportive women—we are creating an informal network for women in business.

I am happy to take you through the outcomes. This feedback is consistent—every time we do it it is the same. In fact, you may care to read about it in the *Hansard* of estimates for last year or the year before. Feedback from the Women in Business Mentor Program 2001 indicates that 98 per cent of the mentorees increased their business skills, would expect that and you would want that; 46 per cent increased their annual turnover; and 24 per cent increased the number of employees in their business in the six months to the end of the program. To me, that is the most impressive statistic. Very often, you are dealing with someone who is operating from home. Why is she operating from home? There are two reasons: first, it is a way to juggle family commitments and work and get an income; and, second, as the big end of town downsizes and outsources, and as improvements in technology mean that you can operate from home as a sole operator, it has created a lot of opportunities in what we might call business services. This State excels in business services.

**CHAIR:** The Hon. Richard Jones' time has expired. Does the Government wish to ask any questions?

**The Hon RON DYER:** No, Mr Chairman.

**CHAIR:** We will try to conclude this portfolio by 6.30 p.m. We will then have a five-minute break. Minister, have small businesses raised with you concerns about the unfair dismissal laws in New South Wales?

**Ms NORI:** They do from time to time. This is on the *Hansard* record in the Legislative Council. When I really scratch the surface with them, I find that it is not unfair dismissal as such; they are talking about the peaks and troughs. To me, that is a work flexibility issue, which is different to unfair dismissal. However, I know it comes up and I know everyone thinks that it is a problem, but let me suggest to you that it is much more an issue of perception than reality. The statistics and the objective information available just do not bear out.

**CHAIR:** Perhaps Minister—

**Ms NORI:** I am about to take you through it, if I could.

**CHAIR:** I am wondering whether you are aware that in New South Wales unfair dismissal applications outnumber Federal applications three to one.

**Ms NORI:** Well, let me tell you what I know. For example, I refer to a Federal Court judgment from 16 November 2001 in the case of *Hamzy v Tricon International Restaurants*. The court found that there was no reason to think that unfair dismissal laws make any difference to employer's decisions about employ of staff. Several surveys in both Australia and the United Kingdom have reached the same conclusion. Moreover, the court concluded that the significant factor in employment growth is the state of the economy, not unfair dismissal laws. That is true. New jobs are created by economic growth, stability, opportunity and good government—all those sorts of things. A survey conducted recently by the Chartered Practising Accountants [CPA] indicated that only 5 per cent of small business respondents consider that the unfair dismissal law was the main impediment to employment.

**CHAIR:** Minister, are you aware that 67 per cent of business surveyed by Australian Business Ltd reported in "New South Wales Business Priorities 2003" said that the impact of unfair dismissal legislation was either very important or extremely important to their business operations?

**Ms NORI:** I have no doubt that that is what that survey showed, but I am putting to you that there is a lot of contrary—

**CHAIR:** Have you done your own surveys?

**Ms NORI:** No, I have not.

**CHAIR:** So, the CPA survey has one figure, which is a completely different basis to the Australian Business Ltd survey—

**Ms NORI:** I have not finished telling you all the surveys upon which I am relying to produce this answer. CPA Australia's business policy adviser, Judy Hartcher, says that the perceptions of small business are as much a barrier to generating long-term employment as the operations of the law itself. Furthermore, research conducted by Rowena Barrett, Senior Lecturer from the Department of Management at Monash University, has shown that the link between unfair dismissal legislation and job creation was dubious. As of May 2002, New South Wales had a seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 6.1 per cent, compared to a national rate of 6.3 per cent. I use this collaterally, if you like: the number of small businesses has grown by 65,000, or 21.3 per cent, in the years 2000 to 2003, which is 3 per cent more than the rest of Australia. Furthermore, the number of people working in small business has grown by 16 per cent.

**CHAIR:** Minister, on this issue—

**Ms NORI:** No, it is important because it is all this additional data that I think makes the point that I am trying to make—which is that there may be a perception problem, but it is not one based on reality. Let me put one further piece of information to you. The data I have comes from a whole range of sources, some of which cannot be disputed. This is the one: the Department of Industrial Relations says that unfair dismissal claims covered by the New South Wales legislation, which is coming to your point, are rare and affect less than 0.2 per cent of the workforce. Moreover, the number of claims has been decreasing since 1997. There were 27 per cent fewer unfair dismissal claims in 2000 than there were in 1996 and 1997. I am suggesting to you that a lot of what you said is not based on factual information and that to some extent it is media hype. Let me tell you about this, and I think it is a fairly—

**CHAIR:** Minister, we have limited time. I have another question.

**Ms NORI:** No, let me finish. Ninety-four per cent of unfair dismissal claims are conciliated or settled, and reinstatement or re-employment occurs in only 0.7 per cent of cases.

**CHAIR:** Minister, that is the very question I am coming to. Has the Premier or the Minister for Industrial Relations consulted you about the Government's proposal to make reinstatement the preferred solution to unfair dismissal matters, as was reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 23 May this year? Has either the Premier or the Minister for Industrial Relations sought your opinion about making reinstatement the preferred option?

**Ms NORI:** You know the Premier recently announced that we were going to—

**CHAIR:** My question is: Has the Premier or the Minister for Industrial Relations consulted you about the Government's proposal?

**Ms NORI:** Obviously, there is a Cabinet process. Ministers are asked to comment in the Cabinet.

**CHAIR:** But you have not been asked formally by the Premier.

**Ms NORI:** You have obviously never been a Minister, Mr Chairman.

**CHAIR:** I would think the Treasury—

**Ms NORI:** It is a very formal process.

**CHAIR:** I thought the Cabinet Office might have written to you, Minister, that your department might have been formally consulted or that you may have been formally consulted.

**Ms NORI:** They are. With respect, Mr Chairman, you obviously do not understand the Cabinet process. The Cabinet process does exactly what you are suggesting. Departments are written to, Ministers are asked to comment, formal comments are put through. There is a whole process. That is how it is done.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Minister, earlier I asked you about rents. In the retail sector, for example, shopping centres have the power to set rents and then to jack them up if the business is successful. The negotiation of those rents is a difficult issue. What do you do to monitor rents and to advocate in regard to rents for small business as against big business?

**Ms NORI:** The main thing we did was reform retail tenancy legislation. We introduced the concept of unconscionable conduct. That has a number of elements to it, but it is not restricted to the elements that are enumerated in the legislation. The registrar for retail tenancy disputes is here tonight if you wish to hear more information. We obviously encourage mediation. Between 1995—the unit was established in 1995—and January this year, something like 2,749 disputes have been resolved through informal mediation. During that period 1,000 matters have been referred to the unit for formal mediation and 85 per cent proceeded to mediation. Of the 909 disputes that have been mediated, only 2 per cent have settled to the satisfaction of both parties. I can tell you that once that legislation was

introduced it took two years for the Federal Government to allow us the draw-down from the Trade Practices Act. It sat there from 1998 to 2001 before it had teeth. Even prior to the draw-down, because the industry was on notice, because the legal profession was on notice and because the Property Council was on notice, they knew where the line in the sand was drawn and their behaviour started to reflect that legislation.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Had the rents stopped rising then? Had it affected rents?

**Ms NORI:** Rents can rise and, in some cases, should rise. We have created a legal environment and a legal remedy—access to that remedy is affordable in this State; it is much cheaper than having to go through the Federal system, but that option is still available to them. Landlords do not lose their property rights, they are the owners. However, they may not exercise that right unconscionably.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** I understand the legislation; I was here when it was passed. Has it lowered rents? Have you done a survey of small business to see whether rents are a lesser or greater percentage of their costs?

**Ms NORI:** Do you not think that I would know that from the discussions that I have with those peak organisations—retailers come to those meetings. I have different sections of the retail industry come to me on a fairly regular basis and we have discussed this. This is simply not a matter that has raised its ugly head with me. People are extremely happy with the way the legislation is proceeding.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Minister. We will now move to questions from the Hon. Richard Jones.

**Ms NORI:** However, would you be able to point to the line item in my budget that would allow this question to be in order?

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** I do not think it is a question of line items; it is a question for your department, surely.

**Ms NORI:** I think it is a question of line items.

**CHAIR:** The Hon. Richard Jones has the call.

**The Hon. RICHARD JONES:** How is your department reaching out to people from non-English speaking backgrounds who are recent arrivals, some of whom have been refugees, to start small businesses?

**Ms NORI:** We have a number of programs, including a business migration program.

**The Hon. RICHARD JONES:** I am talking about people who are disadvantaged, people who have virtually nothing. I am not talking about those who are already businesspeople; I am talking about people who have come here and need to get an income together and want to start a small business.

**Ms NORI:** We do not have a system of support in this scope of small business, such as seed funding or grant funding. We do have some grants and we do give some financial support under various programs but, by and large, our programs assist people who have the capacity, at the very minimum, to establish their own business with their own resources.

**The Hon. RICHARD JONES:** There is a hole there, is there?

**Ms NORI:** I do not believe that there is a hole there, because we are not about business welfare.

**The Hon. RICHARD JONES:** No, but what about helping new arrivals to start a new business?

**Ms NORI:** Perhaps I misunderstood your question. We have a very extensive support network for people who want to start up a new business—the BECs, and I am happy to take you through that program. I thought you were asking me: Do we put our hand in our pocket, pull out the cheque book and say, "Here, now start a business"? The answer is no.

**CHAIR:** We are out of time.

*[Short adjournment]*

**CHAIR:** The Committee shall now consider the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of Tourism.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Minister, has your office or your department received submissions from small business interests in or around the Eurobodalla shire with respect to adverse effects for business as a result of the Mogo charcoal smelter?

**Ms NORI:** Not that I am aware of, but I am happy to check my records.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Has there been any independent economic assessments of the impact of the charcoal smelter on nature-based tourism in the Eurobodalla shire?

**Ms NORI:** By "independent" do you mean by Tourism New South Wales? Is that what you mean?

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** By any independent body.

**Ms NORI:** In what sense? It would have to have been drawn to my attention. In theory, anyone on this planet could have done an assessment and then not drawn it to my attention. Do you want to rephrase your question?

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** No, Minister. I think—

**Ms NORI:** You mean someone in Government, surely?

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Anything that affects small business is surely your business.

**Ms NORI:** I am trying to make a point. Your question, with respect, is poorly phrased. You asked me whether anyone has done an independent assessment. In theory, if we take the literal English meaning of your question, you are asking me whether any single human being on this planet has done it. I do not think that is what you are trying to ask me. Could you rephrase your question?

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** No. I said: Has there been an independent economic assessment of the impacts of the charcoal factory proposal on the nature-based tourism industry in the Eurobodalla shire? A lot of the small businesses in the Eurobodalla shire are up in arms about the Mogo charcoal smelter. If one is taking a whole-of-government approach, surely one must balance the positive effects of the charcoal smelter, which presumably people are singing about, with the negative effects, which some people are complaining about. Obviously you, as a representative of the smaller, nature-based tourism people in that area, would be getting some facts on which to base a position and then arguing that position, would you not?

**Ms NORI:** I will let go of my objection. I do not think you have addressed it; I do not think you understood what I was saying to you.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** I certainly have not.

**Ms NORI:** No. Why do you not ask me what you are really trying to ask me? I want you to understand the very syntax of this question.

**CHAIR:** I think the member is being perfectly clear.

**Ms NORI:** No, he is not.

**CHAIR:** Are you aware of any surveys that have been done?

**Ms NORI:** I heard different to what he asked.

**CHAIR:** If there have not been any done, why have you not done them?

**Ms NORI:** Let me tell you what has been done. There has been an exhaustive assessment process. On 11 May the Minister granted development consent for the carbon facility at Mogo, subject to 136 strict provisions. Each and every concern raised by the local community was examined and has been responded to in the approval. The conditions that were imposed by the Minister guarantee that the community will not be subjected to unacceptable impacts from the plant's operations. They will have a hands-on role in monitoring the plant's construction and operation. All data will be made public. Obviously, all members of Parliament are invited to examine the comprehensive assessment document that has been published on the PlanningNSW web site. The approval heralds the beginning of a new multi-million dollar export silicon industry for the State, creating 180 permanent jobs in regional New South Wales. Australian Silicon chose Mogo as its preferred site for the charcoal facility. It is quite rightly its decision, not the Government's decision. The Minister for Planning is obliged to assess the development proposals before him, not to tell the proponents where and how to run their businesses.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Have you looked at the tourism impacts? Can you show us a document that you commissioned which looks at the effect—

**Ms NORI:** No, I have not commissioned a document to that effect.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Have you got data on other information collected about the likely impacts on tourism that could have been presented by you or somebody else in the decision-making process?

**Ms NORI:** I am satisfied with the decision of the Government and the Minister for Planning.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Are you satisfied that you advocated adequately for the tourism industry in that area?

**The Hon AMANDA FAZIO:** Mr Chairman, I fail to see the relevance of questions about the Mogo charcoal plant in the Tourism portfolio. Between 8.00 p.m. and 10.00 p.m. tonight General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4 will be dealing with the Planning portfolio. It is appropriate that the issue be raised with the Minister for Planning.

**CHAIR:** No. The Hon. Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans is asking whether the Minister for Tourism, the Minister for Planning and a whole-of-government approach looked at the impact of this smelter on nature-based tourism. It is a perfectly legitimate question.

**Ms NORI:** I emphasise that the planning process takes into account all stakeholders; it is a very exhaustive public consultation process. The tourism industry was well and truly consulted.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Do you facilitate that consultation process or does PlanningNSW do it?

**Ms NORI:** You understand as well as I do the consultation process. I do not work outside my jurisdiction; I do not interfere in the planning process in that sense. There are people responsible for that process; it is done by people who have the expertise to conduct that process.

**The Hon. RICHARD JONES:** The Government launched a body called Tourism Sydney in February this year with the responsibility for strategically marketing the whole Sydney region. I am

advised that, to date, no plans have been revealed as to how this body will contribute to Western Sydney. What support and activities are planned to specifically assist the small mini-tourism businesses in Western Sydney?

**Ms NORI:** I will talk in general terms, and then I will get Tony Thirlwell, the Managing Director of Tourism New South Wales, to talk about the specifics. Tourism Sydney is a division of Tourism New South Wales. In one sense, it is quite an innovative concept; in another sense, it is really best described as an evolution of what we have always done. It is an evolution; it is a twist, if you like. It was brought about largely, in my view, because of what we learned and what we did during the Olympics with the Sydney media and marketing centre. The Olympics left a legacy with respect to branding of this city and, as a consequence, the branding of the country. It was very positive. We wanted to elevate the way we market Sydney post-Olympics. A maturation of the name and the product occurred in the lead-up to, and because of, the Olympics. We are going onto another level.

It is innovative because we are trying to, in a sense, broaden the involvement of other entities—government, semi-government and private sector—to come together in a specific way to really ramp up the marketing of Sydney. Of course, that would involve the Sydney Olympic Park Authority [SOPA]. That is part of Western Sydney. It will involve product and attractions from all over Sydney. Obviously, the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority is involved, as is the Department of State and Regional Development. It is about all sorts of people, agencies, the private sector and government bodies recognising that tourism is everyone's business. Even though the primary aim of the Opera House, for example, is to put on operas and concerts, it is also a tourist attraction. It is also involved in its own way in marketing Sydney. That is fine, they can do that.

But we want to do something that is connected, that shares the load, that is inclusive of all possible entities that have an interest in marketing Sydney. What is innovative about this is that it is a joint project between the Department of State and Regional Development, Tourism New South Wales—the lead agency, obviously, reporting to me—and the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority. This does not relate specifically to the Tourism Sydney section of Tourism New South Wales, but we have a project called Sydney Tourism Experience Development [STED]. I hate the name "STED", but we have not come up with a better one. I call it the "precinct promotion program". We promote precincts that are loved and well known to Sydneysiders. We work on the basis that a visitor who is here for more than three or four days wants to visit the places that the locals like to go to. Within that, we have a number of projects promoting and assisting precincts in Western Sydney. However, it is obviously not restricted to Western Sydney. For example, Parramatta, the Hawkesbury and Cabramatta come to mind.

**Mr THIRLWELL:** We have a dedicated officer in Tourism Sydney, who was an officer of Tourism New South Wales. That officer has been seconded to Tourism Sydney. That officer specialises in and works in outer Western Sydney. We have been doing that for three years. The STED program the Minister just mentioned accommodates a number of precincts in Western Sydney. We do a number of promotions. We do specific promotions at Parramatta hotels. We work increasingly closely with the Sydney Olympic Park Authority. Next week there will be a significant promotion in Brisbane to attract more Queenslanders to come down to Sydney to see their team being beaten by New South Wales in the State of Origin match. Significant activity occurs in the Western Sydney precinct.

**The Hon. RICHARD JONES:** Going somewhat further west now, if I may—

**Ms NORI:** How far west?

**The Hon. RICHARD JONES:** As far as you can go. What are you doing to promote nature-based tourism in far western New South Wales? Will the drought, which is apparently looming, affect it?

**Ms NORI:** I might be the Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Tourism, but I am definitely not a meteorologist

**The Hon AMANDA FAZIO:** What do you expect the Minister to do about the drought? Seriously!



**Ms NORI:** Ironically, for example, I do not think the rain would help the Darling River Run. One of our warnings is that you do not drive on certain parts of that track if it has just been raining because you could get stuck.

**The Hon. RICHARD JONES:** Generally, how is nature-based tourism going in western New South Wales?

**Ms NORI:** I guess it depends how you define "nature-based tourism".

**The Hon. RICHARD JONES:** Eco-tourism. I guess it is non-invasive; looking at wildlife, and flora and fauna.

**CHAIR:** The Minister should know what eco-based tourism is.

**Ms NORI:** What I was really trying to say by that comment was this: I do not think, by and large, you would have a category of person who is an eco-tourist. What you have is people who, when they go on their journey—particularly if they are going out into that part of the world—will enjoy and probably take an interest in all sorts of things. They may be interested in Farm Stay, which is technically speaking but not strictly speaking eco-tourism. There are some products that observe those principles. People may go bird watching, they may want to play two-up as well. It is a bit hard to categorise any one individual tourist. I will get Mr Thirlwell to tell you about our nature-based tourism projects. If you are talking low-impact, you could also be talking about backpackers.

**Mr THIRLWELL:** Tourism to western New South Wales is very important to us. We recognise that tourism is an important economic driver and is of benefit to that part of the world. We have an outback regional tourism organisation that promotes and develops tourism to the outback. It is working very closely with the Year of the Outback. There are specific promotions to bring people from mainly Melbourne and western Victoria into New South Wales. That is working quite successfully at this stage. The Minister mentioned that she launched a specific program called the Darling River Run, which is part of our Drive New South Wales program, to get people to drive from Bourke to Wentworth, taking a little deviation off the Darling to go to Broken Hill. That program has received good reception, and it is going really well.

You referred to visitors who primarily want to see the outback and observe nature. There are specific programs for birdwatchers who like to see a certain number of birds before they die. Niche programs are available for them to do that, but we do not put a lot of money into that. We drive the main visitation programs so people can experience the feeling of being out in the country, meet some real outback characters—the people are as important as the animals—and observe kangaroos and birdlife in national parks. That is progressing quite well. Nature tours are being developed at the moment, which the Minister will launch shortly. We are working with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Department of Land and Water Conservation and State Forests in that regard—the government agencies that own some of the nature product that you talked about. We are working actively with them to make sure that we balance the needs of the environment and the opportunity of revenue that might be generated through tourism into those areas down the track.

**The Hon. RICHARD JONES:** What are you doing to encourage graziers and others to have Farm Stay on their properties? There is not much infrastructure out west, as you know. For example, there are very few hotels for people to stay at.

**Ms NORI:** This is what I was trying to say earlier. For example, are we encouraging nature tourism through the Darling River Run. We are also encouraging them to go out to perhaps upper Mungo. It is not just an eco-tourism experience; it is a great anthropological experience, it is a great indigenous tourism experience. I also refer to Touring by Car. We are bringing in some Farm Stay. We have Farm Stay at Tilpa as part of the Darling River Run. A cotton farmer has diversified into Farm Stay—she was referred to quite extensively in the national press. So, yes, we are encouraging farmers. We give them a vehicle to promote their product and move onto a large campaign like Touring by Car. For example, the Farm Stay at Tilpa has come on board.

**The Hon. RICHARD JONES:** My understanding is that there is very little organisation of Farm Stay, that there is not much promotion of it.

**Mr THIRLWELL:** There is a Farm Stay Association, which does some promotion of its group and tries to encourage certain standards among Farm Stay. We worked with them with the accreditation. One of the other key areas is developments. It is not just about marketing. We have a regional development officer based in Dubbo who looks after that part of New South Wales—a very big part of New South Wales. That is encouraging people who make inquiries about starting a Farm Stay, getting involved in eco-tourism. We generally facilitate that development, give them advice. We often refer them to the Department of State Regional Development services about starting a small business, subject to the needs of running a small business. Increasingly, more and more people are getting into that sort of activity. They see it as a way of supplementing their income from agriculture. It is an increasing trend in the western part of the State.

**The Hon. RICHARD JONES:** It can be painful at times during the drought, I would say.

**Mr THIRLWELL:** Yes.

**Ms NORI:** New South Wales Holidays, which is the wholesale division of Tourism New South Wales, also promotes Farm Stays in its brochures. I point out to you that two things have happened. I have seen it grow ever so slightly—it is incremental, but it is getting there. I think Pub Stay is a real thing of the future. The Australian Hotels Association is getting behind these pubs, which were the first forms of accommodation, the first pit stops for the Cobb & Co. The association is getting behind its members so they dust down the accommodation in the upstairs part of their pub, make sure it is up to scratch and meets all the latest standards. Increasingly, that is adding to our stock of well-priced accommodation. Some of them are changing the nature of traditional pub accommodation—they are going up to much high levels. It is interesting that we are having that diversity of stock.

I think we are all old enough to remember when backpacking meant you left Sydney and went to Byron Bay, maybe stayed a night or two at Murwillumbah and off you went. But backpacking and backpacker accommodation is expanding—it is not just up and down the coast; it is going further and further west. It is also getting a little bit more innovative and creative. It is no longer necessarily 10 bunks in the room and you have to do the dishes in the morning, before you are allowed out and come back the next night. It is much more private accommodation. It is beginning to nudge into that budget but comfortable accommodation alternative. I do not have all the details here. For example, in Tamworth the Youth Hostels Association is running programs so people can go out and do a couple of days on the farm, crutch sheep and do all that sort of stuff. They are having a farm/bush experience. It is all very interesting. Small businesses in the bush and the farmers realise that tourism is here to stay and that that is a good thing.

**CHAIR:** The honourable member's time has expired.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Minister, I would like to follow up on a comment made by Mr Thirlwell a moment ago. As I understand it, the nature tourism plan was to be released in December 2001. If I understood the comment correctly, it will be released soon. Could you explain to me what "soon" means?

**Mr THIRLWELL:** As well as developing the nature tourism plan, we are also developing a master plan called Towards 2020. It is a whole-of-government plan to replace the plan that was put forward in 1995, which took us to 2010. That plan is with the Minister and will go to Cabinet shortly. The nature tourism plan is an important part of that. They need to be brought together and launched at a similar time.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** That is perfectly understandable. Will it be six months, 12 months?

**Ms NORI:** No, it is going to Cabinet shortly. I would say that it will be available in the next couple of weeks.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** I wanted to clarify that. I noticed an interesting item in the budget documents. There is special funding of \$1 million over two years to counter negative consumer perceptions following the December-January bushfires, which had an effect on tourism. Where did we find the \$1 million? How did it come into being?

**Ms NORI:** There is a bush fund.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** No, I am interested in—

**Ms NORI:** The Treasury, obviously.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** So there was a special supplementation from Treasury?

**Ms NORI:** Yes, but do you not want to know where we spent it?

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Yes, as you put that question to me, perhaps you might care to—

**Ms NORI:** Where do you think it comes from—do you think it grows on trees? The funding came about because the Blue Mountains, in particular, was probably more dependent on the American market than any other region in New South Wales. Some product in the Blue Mountains was a niche American market. September 11 and the collapse of Ansett did not help them—not because you needed an Ansett flight to get to the Blue Mountains, I might add. However, Ansett conducted a number of international flights and we lost capacity, particularly out of Asia. People who were involved in the Star Alliance then lost their connections within Australia. Unfortunately, we cannot trap tourists permanently in New South Wales—they occasionally escape and get across the border after we have had them here for a while. Then, on top of that, you have to launch products. We were already ramping up our touring program, with the preparation of Drive New South Wales, and that gave us the perfect opportunity to leverage off that and to create some advertisements on Sydney television for the Blue Mountains and the Shoalhaven.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Obviously, they are pretty keen to get it going. You have been out there. What money has been spent so far out of that \$1 million?

**Mr THIRLWELL:** Of the \$1 million, \$750,000 will be spent this financial year and a further \$250,000 will be spent in the next financial year.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** It is June, six months on from the bushfires. What sort of moneys have we expended to date?

**Mr THIRLWELL:** We have expended \$750,000.

**Ms NORI:** Have you not seen the advertisements on the television? Did you not see the Rediscover the Blue Mountains Day?

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** I may have seen them, Minister. I am just curious to ascertain the expenditure.

**Ms NORI:** I have the full list here, and obviously I would want you to read it

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Minister, if you would like to table the full list that would save time.

**Ms NORI:** I will give you chapter and verse.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** No, give me the totals please. We have a limitation on the time, otherwise you may be coming back to visit us on many other occasions.

**Ms NORI:** That would be fine, because I would not want it to be said that we did not do anything. Perhaps I could just give you a quick idea. We had an instant response and we had to

develop advertisements—do not forget that we had to consult with the industry in the Blue Mountains and the Shoalhaven as to what kind of advertisements we had. We had to then produce television advertisements and so on. There was a range of responses, some of which were immediate, some of which were a bit more mid-term and then we had the television advertisements. That will continue. Let me tell you, the Blue Mountains and the Shoalhaven are delighted. But, could I just raise another matter here?

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Minister, I would prefer it if you could table the names of the people you have spoken to and what you have done. That would save some time. I would like to look over some of the other things you are doing.

**Ms NORI:** Media promotions, newspapers. The advertisements have been supported by the Federal Government as well.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Minister, please. I refer to Sydney promotions. There are 10 different Sydney campaigns with key industry partners achieving strong results. That is good. What were the 10 campaigns?

**Ms NORI:** Do you want me to do that now?

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Yes.

**Ms NORI:** You just told me not to.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** No, that is a different question.

**Ms NORI:** I must have misunderstood your question. I thought you told me not to talk about the Blue Mountains.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** No, I did not do that. My question comes under Budget Paper No. 3, volume 2, page 17-2, where you deal with marketing and domestic marketing. Under the heading Sydney promotions you refer to 10 different Sydney campaigns and you say that there are key industry partners. I would like to know, briefly, about the 10 different Sydney campaigns.

**Mr THIRLWELL:** I will take that question on notice because I will not remember all 10. We used two major seasonal campaigns: Sydney in Winter and Sydney Uncovered, which is very strong in Melbourne and Brisbane. We also run a summer campaign. We run seasonal campaigns with partners such as Bridge Climb. We run campaigns with Qantas Holidays and a range of others over the 12 months. I can provide that information on notice.

**CHAIR:** That would be appreciated.

**Ms NORI:** We went back into Singapore with the Feel Free campaign; we had campaigns in Hong Kong and Japan. We also ran television advertisements for the first time in New Zealand.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Following on from that, you achieved strong results in 2001-02. That is highly desirable and I am pleased that that is so. Could you tell the Committee how your department assesses these strong results?

**Mr THIRLWELL:** All our campaigns are evaluated. There are a couple of different methods. The most obvious way is response. Nearly all campaigns have a response mechanism. For example, our web site [www.visit.nsw.com.au](http://www.visit.nsw.com.au) can measure the responses of that web site and the questions that are asked from that. At the moment our web site is getting about 125,000 responses per month. As a result, about 1,500 email bookings are made to the operators. There is a web site response. With nearly all the campaigns we fund people can make a phone call and request further information, which is provided to them. We can monitor those phone calls. The most important thing is to monitor the conversion—that is, how many people who made a phone call or went to the web site came. We take a sample of campaigns—it would be too expensive to do every campaign—and follow up people who made a phone call and find out what they did. We call that a conversion study. We find

out how many people converted, actually took the trip to Sydney, for example. We also do this for our regional drive campaigns.

We do other research. We go into the marketplace every week asking questions such as: Did you see an advertisement for Sydney? What did you think of that advertisement for Sydney? Does it change your view of Sydney? Do you intend to travel to Sydney? There is an extensive market research program. We do not get the visitation numbers, the actual people who came, until well after the national visitors' survey comes along after the event. But we know how many people responded and we have an idea of how many of those converted and actually travelled. We also know from research what people in Melbourne and Brisbane are thinking about Sydney, or other campaigns that we might be running.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Basically, the procedures are in-house.

**Mr THIRLWELL:** Our research is conducted through a professional research company that is contracted to provide those services.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Who might that be?

**Mr THIRLWELL:** It varies, depending on the service required. It is the best person to this job at the time.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Do you call tenders?

**Mr THIRLWELL:** Yes, we call tenders.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** There is obviously a list of consultants.

**Mr THIRLWELL:** We call tenders and get a list of preferred consultants, which we use on a regular basis.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** For those 10 different campaigns, would you use 10 different consultants to assess them?

**Mr THIRLWELL:** No, we would not assess that number. We have a suite of about three consultants that we use on a regular basis that are proving to be cost effective.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** If there are only three, you probably could advise me of who they are.

**Mr THIRLWELL:** Yes, I can do that.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Do you want to take that on notice?

**Mr THIRLWELL:** Yes.

**Ms NORI:** I want to add to Mr Thirlwell's answer. Do not forget that tourism is a bit like: how long is a piece of string? How would you ever know if someone who saw our advertisement decided to come?

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Minister, the document says "strong results", which is very pleasing and cheering.

**Ms NORI:** I am just adding some information. I do not know how much you know or understand about tourism, Mr Jobling.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** You are probably lucky you do not. I might have some connections that you do not know about, so be careful.

**Ms NORI:** We can measure, to some extent, when a promotion is accompanied by a New South Wales holiday package. Obviously, we can check how many people have booked a holiday package—that is another indicator. However, not all campaigns have a New South Wales holiday package component.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** With respect to the 2001-02 financial year, what was the total amount your department spent on marketing?

**Mr THIRLWELL:** With respect to marketing, most of it is shown under Treasury figures under other operating expenses, which is the revised figure \$44 million. Some of that would be development, but in the order of \$42 million would have been spent on marketing activities, both domestic and overseas.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Is it possible to break that into the two segments of domestic and international marketing? That would assist us to gain the flavour of how your department works.

**Mr THIRLWELL:** We try to work on two break-ups when we look at our marketing budget—we spend approximately 60 per cent of our marketing dollars domestically and 40 per cent internationally.

**CHAIR:** Why was that other spending expense revised in 2001-022 from \$36.3 million up to \$44.25 million?

**Mr THIRLWELL:** It comes out of the operating statement.

**CHAIR:** That is in the operating statement. In other words, what you referred to as the \$4 million.

**Ms NORI:** No, some of that was co-op. Co-op dollars are dollars that we get from the industry, and that can vary from month to month depending on what campaign we are running. Sometimes you perceive a need that was not there before. I suggest that September 11 created precisely that situation. You might have to change your plans or what you are doing midstream to accommodate that particular distortion of the market. The other part of that figure that you referred to was the enhancement post-September 11 and when Ansett collapsed. That is how the Government responded to both those crises.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** I am pleased that the money is being spent and that there is industry co-operation and sharing on that basis. Obviously, an \$8 million increase is a large sum of money. I would appreciate seeing that broken down into much more detail. Would it be possible for you to explain to us in some detail where that money went to and how? You may want to take the question on notice.

**Mr THIRLWELL:** I will take the detail on notice, but I will give you some indication of it now. A large part of it was spent domestically in developing Driving New South Wales, a television campaign targeted at Melbourne and Brisbane to convince people from those markets to drive to Sydney via regional New South Wales—to come up the South Coast and go back along the Hume Highway; to come down the North Coast and go back along the New England Highway. This year about \$2.7 million was spent on developing that Driving New South Wales campaign and buying the media to make that happen to benefit the operators in Sydney and regional New South Wales. We also went into the international market—we went onto television in New Zealand and in the United Kingdom.

We are doing specific programs. All our overseas markets have received additional funding—the United States, Japan, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Germany all got extra money from that to run programs with industry parties to drive business. So that is where that money has gone, and it has been acquitted this year. There will be some more funding next year to keep those programs rolling, to really get the industry to recover from the shocks of last September. Of course, in that funding was the bushfire money referred to earlier—the \$750,000 that we have already spent this year on the Blue Mountains and the Shoalhaven to help them recover from tourism difficulties associated with the bushfires.

**Ms NORI:** Some of that money went to the Sydney Convention and Visitors Bureau [SCVB]. We wanted to make sure that that lucrative business tourism kept up to speed. Post-September 11 some conferences were cancelled in the United States and in Europe because people did not want to travel. There was a perception that we were a safe destination. There was some capacity, I would not say a lot, to do a bit of conference switching. That money has meant that the SCVB can now have a dedicated Asia person, if you like. We are looking at possibly co-locating them in our Hong Kong office. The Asian market offers a lot of opportunities, and we want to build that up.

In the last seven months or so months we have been able to have television advertisements that we have not had before. For example, our summer campaign was a television campaign. We had not had a television advertisement campaign in Melbourne and Brisbane for summer in years. As I said, television advertisements went into New Zealand for the first time. Thanks to our wholesalers and the kind of relationship that the agency has with the wholesalers internationally, we are able to run television advertisements in Great Britain—that is no mean feat, given the cost of media when you compare the sterling to the Australian dollar. The very good relationship that Tourism New South Wales has with our international wholesalers means that we can stretch our dollar further and do things that would normally cost an arm and a leg.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** It is very interesting to hear about the co-operation between the department, industry and business. Mr Thirlwell indicated that this funding will continue next year, as will this co-operation. How much was received from industry in 2001-02 for the marketing? Is that included in the \$42 million?

**Mr THIRLWELL:** It is included in this part of the marketing expenditure because a mixture of government funding and industry funding is used to market our programs. It is the figure of grants and contributions from industry and other sources. A little bit would be from the Commonwealth Government and some may be from local government sources.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Could you identify them separately?

**Mr THIRLWELL:** I will try to do that, but they are a very small part at the moment. The industry contribution would be in the order of \$7.5 million.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** In total, local government, industry and the other sources is \$7.5 million out of the total of \$42 million?

**Mr THIRLWELL:** Yes.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Could you take on notice the break-up so we can see what the other small portions are?

**Mr THIRLWELL:** This is an estimate, in the light that we have another week to go of this financial year.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** It is not like a government department and they are all going to spend it in the last week, is it?

**Mr THIRLWELL:** No, we receive money. People are keen to work with us and we are getting invoices and funding from people. The budget was \$6.9 million and it looks like the estimate is about \$7.7 million in total. We will have an increased figure above that next year.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Having discussed the Sydney promotions and the 10 different campaigns with you, can we break that down into a total cost of the promotions? How have you assessed the outcomes and views on it? If it was a success, who assessed it and determined the outcome of the Sydney promotions? You would probably want to take those questions on notice?

**Mr THIRLWELL:** I will take it on notice. The assessment is obviously as objective as we can make it. But, as the Minister commented, you do not know exactly what effect an advertisement shown in Melbourne has on the visitation rate. We do our best to assess that. A lot of the assessment

comes from the industry partners, and they expect to gain significant business from it. If they get business they are generally very happy. If they do not get any business from it, they let us know and they say, "You have got to do better next time." They are quite an indicator as well.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** So that would be one that consultants looked at and came back to you on? Could you make available to us the steps they use to assess it?

**Mr THIRLWELL:** Yes, I can do that. It will vary, depending on the campaign. Obviously, we spent more time assessing the ones we put more money into.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** I hope you get better assessed.

**CHAIR:** That question will be taken on notice. Do Government members have any questions?

**The Hon. AMANDA FAZIO:** Yes. Minister, have you been able to identify any impacts on regional tourism in New South Wales because of the Federal Government's inability to sort out the problems with Hazelton and other regional airlines?

**Ms NORI:** There is no doubt that regional New South Wales is dependent on air travel. With the possible exceptions of Broken Hill, Coffs Harbour, Ballina and Lismore, most trips for tourism purposes are done by car. It would impact very much on small business. Country businesspeople need to come to Sydney to conduct their business. Prices have not necessarily gone up, but there are fewer cheaper fares. Qantas would argue that its prices have not gone up, or not by much. However, the availability of the cheaper seats is an issue. That is creating an impost.

**The Hon. RON DYER:** Minister, given the importance that this matter has attracted in previous years, I refer to the boat at Old Sydney Town. Has it finally sunk without being sold?

**Ms NORI:** I am no longer a shareholder in the property and I do not know. Speaking of the Central Coast, it was a great pleasure to officially re-open the reptile park, which had undergone—

**CHAIR:** Minister, I ask you to be relevant to the question.

**Ms NORI:** I am, I am talking about the Central Coast. As I was saying, I was pleased to open the reptile park. I am pleased that it was able to re-establish its animals.

**Mr THIRLWELL:** We checked today and the ship is still afloat.

**Ms NORI:** Thank you.

**Mr THIRLWELL:** And business is doing quite well still.

**CHAIR:** The Hon. Arthur Chesterfield Evans has the call.

**The Hon. ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Could I ask about niche or hobby tourism?

**Ms NORI:** What are your hobbies?

**The Hon. ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** I went to Grenfell, where they are trying to market history and model boat contests. Yesterday we were debating threatened species. I wondered whether they were of interest to groups who would look at butterflies or other threatened species. Can that be used in the market? If so, how do you identify those possible niches and what do you do about it?

**Mr THIRLWELL:** I mentioned birdwatching earlier and I know people who want to see 500 bird species before they die. They are keen to do that, and they are out there doing it. People internationally are interested in niche markets, as the Hon. Dr Chesterfield-Evans said. Birdwatching is a significant one. In the United States a number of people undertake agri-tours because they want to



look at farming techniques. There are a wide range of those. We work with wholesalers. There are specialist wholesalers who target those markets, particularly in the United States, and become known to those communities. They are usually clubs or associated with universities. We work with them to let them know what opportunities exist in New South Wales. We get significant visitation from them—they are usually small numbers but high yielding, because they are prepared to pay a handsome dollar for a very good experience. That work continues. Domestically, it is a bit hard for us to find where they are because we have not got a big enough market for it, but in the United States, for example, there are large numbers of people in most of those niches and we can work with them.

**Ms NORI:** Mr Chesterfield-Evans, I suggest that you contact the Australian Museum in College Street because it works with agri-tourists. It has done birdwatching and so on. It has a very interesting product. It is called Frontier Tours. I have yet to do it, but I am told that it is an excellent product. We actually launched it in this auspicious room. Mr Thirlwell said that people want to get their 500 species of bird. He does not mean catch and kill; he means to note in a book that they have sighted them. But there are people who niche in trains, locomotives and aeroplanes. Some airports provide a platform and other comforts so people can sit and see the planes come in and out. But as Mr Thirlwell said, with a population of 20 million, if someone has an interest that represents about 1 per cent of the population we do not have a huge market. However, 1 per cent of 272 million—that is the population of the United States—is a market. We are always on the look out for creative things.

**CHAIR:** I give the call to the Hon. Richard Jones.

**The Hon. RICHARD JONES:** These days people go to the Internet to book hotels, look at destinations and buy tickets. What are you doing to promote the use of the Internet, particularly for smaller operations in regional and rural New South Wales?

**Ms NORI:** Mr Thirlwell will give you the more technical details, if you like. In general, about three weeks ago in Brisbane, Minister Hockey and all the State Ministers looked at the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse, which was a long time in the making. I can say with pride that New South Wales got its database right very early on—some of the other States were lagging behind. We now have an integrated site for the whole of Australia, which does precisely what you are suggesting. I see this as a great opportunity for regional New South Wales because it means that people can surf the net, decide on a destination, find out information about that destination and the product in a way that they would not from a traditional travel agent brochure.

I am concerned about the possible sale of the rest of Telstra—there are rumblings in that direction again. While the Internet and mobile telephones represent a great advantage for regional businesspeople, for tourism and small business, they only do so if they are reliable, accessible and affordable. Some of the things our overseas visitors would like to see are somewhere beautiful and isolated. They may find them hard to get on the net or on their mobile. This could represent a real problem. I am worried about the possible sale of Telstra because I wonder what incentive there will be, if there is no government ownership, for it to ensure that every skerrick of regional New South Wales has an equal chance to compete in the global market, using modern technologies. If they cannot have access to these modern technologies, we will lose a lot of jobs and a lot of opportunities will go down the drain. There are black spots all over New South Wales—you can be half a kilometre out of town and your mobile phone drops dead.

**The Hon. RICHARD JONES:** Will you explain your answer on notice?

**Mr THIRLWELL:** I do not think I have time to go into too much detail, but the exciting thing, besides the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse, is the State Tourism Data Warehouse. We now have a system, subject to the technology—

**CHAIR:** Virtual warehouse.

**Mr THIRLWELL:** We are publishing technology now that we are talking to the regions about which will allow us to go out and assist an operator to connect to the data warehouse and create their own web site. A visitor information centre can do the same thing and create its own web site. A regional tourism organisation can do the same and create its own web site. All that feeds into a State Tourism Data Warehouse, which feeds into the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse which will take

all that product to the world. The next 12 months will be very exciting, subject to them being able to connect to the world by their telecommunications services.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** In the budget you make the statement that Sydney marketing and development had three key government departments in 2001—namely, Tourism New South Wales, the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority and the Department of State and Regional Development. They collaborated to ensure a more co-ordinated approach with the industry into the marketing development of Sydney. What role did your department play in that? Spinning on from that, what was your budget to deal with this co-ordinated approval? What was the role and contribution of the tourism industry? What funds did they supply? How much went into this?

**Ms NORI:** I have answered this question—it was Mr Jones' first question.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Not in the detail that I am looking for.

**Ms NORI:** No, you were not listening.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** I was, and your answer was terribly unimpressive.

**Ms NORI:** No, you were not listening. I will go through it again.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** There are two alternatives, you know.

**Ms NORI:** I will just take you through it again. You are talking about Tourism Sydney, which is a division of Tourism New South Wales. Clearly, the agency has always marketed Sydney. I made that quite clear. I talked about the evolution of that process. I said that it was possible only because of the Olympics, the kind of branding that Sydney got because of the Olympics, the kind of experience that we got because of the Olympic and leading into the Olympics. It was something that could not have been justified and could not work in the way that it is working now had it not been for the Olympics. You might recall that I said in my earlier answer that in one sense it is not new, and in another sense it is quite innovative. It is innovative because we are wanting to make sure that all organisations, be they other government departments or quasi-government organisations such as Sydney Olympic Park Authority and the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority—you might recall that I talked about the Opera House—work together to create a greater pool of money to market. There is also greater consistency and branding. We are all rowing in the same direction. It is about integrating and making a statement that tourism is everyone's business, that it has a reality to it. That was not possible prior to the Olympics.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Minister, could I interrupt you because of the time?

**Ms NORI:** Mr Thirlwell will answer the technical question.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** Before Mr Thirlwell does that, I note that the Olympics were in 2000. Your reference in the document was to 2001. Therefore, in 2001 in the co-ordinated approach what was the role of your department? I am interested in the budget in relation to the co-ordinated approval. I am also interested in what role, if any, the tourism industry played in 2001? Did it supply funds? If so, how much?

**Ms NORI:** Mr Thirlwell is going to answer the questions, as I indicated at the beginning of my contribution.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** For 2001?

**CHAIR:** Could you send that answer in to us because we have run out of time?

**Mr THIRWELL:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** Minister, thank you for your attendance.

**Ms NORI:** Thank you.

**CHAIR:** It was delightful to see you again. I thank Mr Thirlwell and the many staff members who have given up their time to be part of the estimates process.

**The Hon. JOHN JOBLING:** While Mr Thirlwell is answering that question, could he also indicate whether there is a discrete budget for Tourism Sydney within Tourism New South Wales?

**The Committee proceeded to deliberate.**

