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GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE No. 3

Friday 18 September 2009

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas

GAMING AND RACING, SPORT AND RECREATION

The Committee met at 2.00 p.m.

MEMBERS

The Hon. A. R. Fazio (Chair)

The Hon. J. G. Ajaka
The Hon. G. J. Donnelly
The Hon. K. F. Griffin

The Hon. C. J. S. Lynn
Ms L. Rhiannon
The Hon. R. A. Smith

PRESENT

The Hon. K. P. Greene, *Minister for Gaming and Racing, and Minister for Sport and Recreation*

Communities NSW

Ms C. Mills, *Director General*

CORRECTIONS TO TRANSCRIPT OF COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

Corrections should be marked on a photocopy of the proof and forwarded to:

**Budget Estimates secretariat
Room 812
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000**

CHAIR: I declare this hearing for the inquiry into budget estimates 2009-10 open to the public. I welcome Minister Greene and accompanying officials to this hearing today. The Committee will examine the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of Gaming and Racing, and Sport and Recreation.

In accordance with the Legislative Council's guidelines for the broadcast of proceedings, only Committee members and witnesses may be filmed or recorded. People in the public gallery should not be the primary focus of any filming or photos. In reporting the proceedings of the Committee, the media must take responsibility for what is published and what interpretation is placed on anything said before the Committee. Guidelines for the broadcasting of proceedings are available on the table by the door. Any messages from attendees in the public gallery should be delivered to the Chamber and support staff or the Committee clerks. Minister, I remind you that you and your officers are free to pass notes and to refer directly to your advisers while you are at the table. Mobile phones must be turned off. The Committee has not determined to split the time for the portfolio areas. Minister, do you have a preference to do one or the other first?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I think the shadow Minister would like me to do Gaming and Racing first. I am happy to do that if the Committee agrees. He has a long drive, so I think it is only fair.

CHAIR: We will deal with Gaming and Racing first and then Sport and Recreation. Minister, the House has resolved that answers to questions on notice must be provided within 21 days from the date on which the secretariat forwards the questions. The Committee has not varied that resolution. The transcript of the hearing will be available on the web from tomorrow morning. All witnesses from departments, statutory bodies or corporations will be sworn prior to giving evidence. Minister, I remind you that you do not need to be sworn as you have already taken an oath to your office as a member.

CAROL MILLS, Director General, Communities NSW, affirmed and examined:

CHAIR: I now declare the expenditure open for examination.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: Despite being introduced in November last year, why is the list of the special licensing conditions for the 48 late trading hotspot venues yet to be updated?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: It has been.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: When was it last updated?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: We issued a press release last week. The new data takes effect as of 1 December. That was clearly published.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: When was it updated prior to that?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: That was the update.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: That was the first update?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Yes.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: Does the Government have a system in place whereby venues can be removed from the list?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: When the Government announced that this would come into effect on 1 December it indicated that after consultation it would put in place a review process that could lead to venues being removed from the list. From memory, that removal process was announced on about 25 June. As I said, the first part of the process was advised last week.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I refer back to an earlier question. I understand from what you said that the statistics were updated two weeks ago.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: That is right.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Has the actual list of the 48 venues also been updated or does the list remain the same?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Unfortunately, I do not think you understand the process fully.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: If you could explain it to me I would be very grateful.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: There have been some misunderstandings in the Coalition. On 1 December 2008, the Government released a list of 48 venues that had significant measures mandated because of the incidence of alcohol-related violence and assaults on their premises. We then advised in June this year that there would be an opportunity for venues that decreased the number of assaults that occurred on their premises in a calendar year to have the measures removed. We also advised that that data would be applied twice a year, on a financial year basis, that is, from 1 July to 30 June; and also on a calendar year basis, that is, from 1 January to 31 December. Those statistics, as with the original data, will be taken from Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research data.

On 1 December 2008, 48 venues were above the threshold. The threshold has been set at 19 assaults for level one. The second level was announced in June and it will apply to venues experiencing between 12 and 18 assaults.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: What constitutes an assault?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: That is determined by the police. We have clearly announced that the financial year data, which became available last week, and the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] data would take effect from 1 December this year. That means simply that if you were on the list as at 1 December last year, if your level of assaults as per the BOCSAR data released last week had come down below 19, then you would no longer be on level one sanctions. If it had come down below 12 assaults, you would no longer be on either level one or level two sanctions as at 1 December this year. Similarly, when the data for the calendar year comes out in March next year that will also give licensees the opportunity to come off the list as at 1 June. Similarly, if new venues are shown to have increased levels of assaults, they will potentially go onto the list.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: What is confusing me is this: you have the two lists—I will call them the 48 list and the BOCSAR list.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: No, the BOCSAR list is the list of 48.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: The BOCSAR list comes out and there have been some changes. What was listed as one, two, three, four have been changed; there are changes in the number of assaults. Maybe a venue had 10 assaults and now suddenly it is down to zero, or perhaps it is the other way around and a venue that was not mentioned on the list suddenly has 20 or 30 assaults. I am confused in that there does not seem to be a correlation as to when the BOCSAR results came out. Currently the 48 venues on the web do not seem to have changed in their number. Am I wrong about that?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: The list of 48 came in on 1 December last year. That stays in effect until 30 November this year. The data that came out last week will determine what creates the list as of 1 December 2009.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: So the next change will not occur until the whole 12-month period has elapsed.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: As I say, every six months you will use 12 months data to determine the number of assaults but there will be a re-examination—if that is the right term—every six months. So there will be calendar year and financial year. It will be assessed every six months, using 12 months data.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: If a venue was in the top one, two or three or in the 48 and within a three-month period, say, January, February, March, it does enormous work to clean up and there are no more reported assaults—it has been absolutely brilliant and the recent BOCSAR statistics show that—there is no mechanism to have that venue removed from the list of 48 until December.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: That is what I am saying; it is December and June each year. The list starts on 1 December and 1 June. The reason we have done it on 12 months worth of data is because some venues may be popular just during summer. There may be some venues, perhaps during the snow or ski season, that are popular during winter. So you have to look at the full 12 months worth of data but it will be assessed every six months. So there is a mechanism for people to be removed from the list if they have shown improvement. We hope this does not happen, but if venues do not have the proper processes in place and they have an increase in assaults they could either be put on the list or maybe go from level three to level two or from level two to level one sanctions.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: When I tried to Google this, if I can use that expression, I noticed that the venue that was ranked No. 1 on the 48 list—I do not want to mention the name—had dropped to 96 when you look at the updated BOCSAR list. So there is this perception that you still have—

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I do not think that is correct—if you have the right venue No. 1.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Could you take that on notice, because it appears that way to me?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: As I say, I am not sure what list you were looking at. I appreciate what you are saying about not naming the venue—that is admirable on your part—but certainly the information I have is that one is still one. I might add that it has had a reduction in the number of reported assaults.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Based on the confidence, if I can use that term, in the regulations, why did your Government legislate away the rights of businesses such as Scruffy Murphys in relation to the fight that was going to the courts, or the fight that no longer went ahead in the courts? Can you explain to me what occurred there?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I think that is clearly on record. Legislation was put through Parliament, and you only have to research *Hansard* to see the full rationale behind that. I recognise the Coalition did not support that, and that is your democratic right. However, those arguments have been clearly articulated and are on the public record via *Hansard*.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: You do not feel that the amendments were introduced to avoid scrutiny on the part of the Government?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: The reality is that the court found in favour of the Government anyway.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Can you tell me how much the Government had to reimburse the seven hotels in relation to legal fees?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Are you talking about the cost to the Government in terms of our legal fees?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: No, as I understand it, apart from your legal fees, the Government had to reimburse the seven hotels in relation to their legal fees.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I will take that on notice.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: If you could also take on notice what the Government paid in relation to your own legal fees—two separate amounts.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: Following the review by the Independent Commission Against Corruption into the New South Wales registered clubs industry—which was released in June last year and which found that clubs make a social contribution of \$811 million a year or \$675,000 per annum per club—what is the Government doing to ensure that clubs remain viable during the global financial crisis?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: The Government continues to work with clubs. There were something like 60 recommendations—68 recommendations from memory, but I stand to be corrected on that. We are working with the club industry in initiating a club viability plan. The most important thing to recognise here is that there are now in excess of 1,400 clubs in New South Wales. Again, just to give some very brief history, clubs were established and continue to be established as groups of people who come together to serve a common cause or purpose. Whether it is the local rugby league club, the RSL club, the Catholic club, a group of musos, or

whatever, it is a group of people who come together to support the cause that brings them together. Therefore, for clubs to maintain their viability, the most important thing is that the members of the club support that club.

There is obvious recognition throughout the industry that clubs must continue to have strong membership bases but, most importantly, membership bases that support those individual clubs. Regardless of whether it is the local bowling club, clubs obviously have overheads and costs that have to be borne. If they have 200 or 300 members, those members need to support those costs to allow that club to continue to be viable within its community. I was at a club in my electorate last week, Grandview Bowling Club, which has just undertaken some refurbishments. I made the point that one of the reasons the club has been able to spend, I think in its case, \$300,000 doing some refurbishments of its facilities is because of the membership base and the membership support. That is the most important thing for clubs—to maintain their viability and, as you rightly record, their contribution to their local communities, their social contribution.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: You would have to acknowledge that if clubs were not putting \$600 million to \$800 million a year into community-type projects, there would be a void that the Government could not fill, given the parlous state of its current financial position?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I am not sure all clubs have a parlous state?

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: No, the Government's parlous state.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: It is an attempt to make a joke.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: No, it is no joke.

CHAIR: Order! Is there a question for the Minister?

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: Yes, it was an acknowledgement that given the parlous state of the New South Wales economy, the Government would not be able to cover the \$811 million that the clubs industry currently puts back into the community?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: As I said, there is recognition from everybody in this room and the broader community generally that clubs do make a significant contribution to their local communities; there is no doubt about that. We continue to work with the club industry, whether that be with individual clubs, the RSL and Services Cubs Association, Clubs New South Wales, the Registered Leagues Clubs Association, or the Royal New South Wales Bowling Association. We will continue to work with them because clubs do make a contribution. However, for those clubs to maintain their viability, it is important that they continue to gain the support of their members.

Your colleague Mr Ajaka is known in the Rockdale community. In fact when John was on Rockdale Council they had a significant battle, from memory with the Bexley Bowling Club, about the payment of rent. If I remember correctly, one of the difficulties they had was that council, during John's time there, was trying to put the rent up. There was recognition that the club was struggling to survive because of the need for its members to get involved and support the club. They also had a number of very generous members who were, to use a legal term, working pro bono to try to keep that club afloat, and John obviously recognises that as well.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: How many more clubs like the Demons Sports Club at Seven Hills will you slide into oblivion, to use the words of the president of the club, "thanks to the illustrious State Government and their pokie tax grabs and smoking bans for putting the club into a financial free fall". Would you comment on that?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Like you, people like to take any opportunity to have an unsubstantiated dig at government as a whole, but the reality is there is only something like about 590—certainly less than 600—clubs in New South Wales that actually pay poker machine tax. The great majority, well over 60 per cent of clubs, do not pay tax to the Government at all.

I am sure that you would not be advising any clubs not to have measures in place to look after the health and welfare of their members and their staff under the regulations that have been put in place as part of the Public Health Act with respect to indoor smoking. As a community we recognise that it is now inappropriate for people to smoke in confined venues, just as it is inappropriate within the confines of this building for people

to smoke. The Government has taken that on board in terms of licensed venues. As for the specifics of the club you quote, I obviously have not got the details of the balance sheet in front of me, but again I refer to my previous answer. The ongoing success and viability of clubs ultimately is in the hands of club membership and the support that that membership provides to ensure the future of the club.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I appreciate the answers you have given so far. These clubs do contribute over \$800 million back into the community and they are not-for-profit clubs, so they are not taking the money and paying it out to shareholders; they are putting it back into the community, whether it is for the great game of rugby league or some other reason. What role is your department playing, whether by way of assistance, advice, or consultancy, in trying to help clubs that are sliding and facing financial difficulties to get over the mark? What is actually being offered to them? If this poker machine tax is one of the reasons that the club is sliding, is consideration being given to helping the club overcome those problems so that it can survive when the economy gets better?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: The Government has taken action in that regard. Only the minority of clubs pay that tax, and in regard to those clubs that are facing short-term difficulties the Government has introduced a tax deferral scheme, and that tax deferral scheme applies similarly to hotels.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I return to the list of venues and the statistics. I notice that the list is based on the number of assaults. A club such as Panthers has thousands of patrons whereas other venues are very small. Is it merely the number of assaults or is the size of the venue and number of patrons taken into account?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: It does not matter whether you go to a small venue or a large venue; when you go to a venue—particularly if you take your family to that venue—you want the safest possible environment. Whether it is a large establishment or a small establishment, you need to have in place measures that are appropriate for the size of the venue to ensure the safety and wellbeing of your clients. I am sure you would expect, no matter the size of the venue, that appropriate security mechanisms are in place to protect the welfare of patrons.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Considering that gambling tax is a significant part of State revenue and that at the same time problem gambling is growing, do you feel, as the Minister, that you are pulled in different directions—that is, should you address problem gambling or do you let gambling flourish to help boost State coffers?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Problem gambling is something that this Government takes very seriously. A small percentage of the population have difficulties with gambling and the Government has introduced a significant number of programs, particularly in the last five years, to support those who have difficulties in that area. In terms of gaming revenue, that is obviously something that the Treasurer looks at.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: So you do not feel pulled in different directions? You do not feel that you are in a conflict situation?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I feel no greater conflict than any member of Parliament or any member of the bureaucracy in terms of dealing with conflicting issues as we do on a daily basis.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Over the past year, with pressures from the global financial crisis, your Government would have had to reassess revenue streams. Therefore, considering that gambling tax is quite significant in this State, and it is growing, have you been part of discussions within government over the past year with regard to that revenue stream, as some assessments have been made that some people would be engaged in less gambling because of financial pressures? Has this issue been discussed with a view to possibly taking steps to ensure that revenue stream is maintained?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: No.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: None at all?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I get the impression you are inferring there is pressure on me to increase gaming revenues. Is that at the core of your question. If that is the case, the answer is no.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I am not saying you are under pressure. I am trying to understand, considering that revenue from gambling tax is significant and growing—will you agree with that?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Revenue is significant, yes.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: And it is growing?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I am not sure whether it is growing too much at the moment.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I would like you to confirm the figures. The figures I have show that it was \$1.6 billion this year, which is about 8.6 per cent, and by 2012-13 it will be \$2 billion. I am interested in getting those figures confirmed.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I cannot tell you what the figures are going to be. People can make predictions as to what is going to happen in the future, but it is not going to—

Ms LEE RHIANNON: My question is: Surely your Government would be making those predictions?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: You would have to talk to the Treasurer about that, because, as I say—

Ms LEE RHIANNON: You are not part of that?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I regulate it.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: But you are saying that you do not feel under any pressure in that respect?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: No.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Does the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing maintain a record of grants made under the Community Development and Support Expenditure Scheme? Is it possible to get a list of those grants?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Community development and support expenditure [CDSE] is made within local communities. I am not sure whether we have a specific list. For instance, recently I was in the Bankstown local government area, where I think there was a presentation of approximately 70 cheques on behalf of the area's 13 or 14 local clubs that met the criteria for contributions to the CDSE.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: All I was asking was whether there is a comprehensive list and if it is publicly available.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I am not sure that there is a comprehensive list. I can take that on notice. As I say, those grant allocations are determined by local committees set up within local communities. Many clubs—but I am not sure all—in their annual reports list the various groups within the community that they provide financial assistance to. But I am not sure that they actually have to send the list to us.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I was just asking whether the list is available and if it is publicly available.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I will find out if it is available. As I say, it is publicly available if individual clubs make it available.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Minister, have casino owners made representations to you about the highroller and private gaming rooms in Star City Casino being smoking exempt? When that was initially negotiated, did they initiate those negotiations?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I was not the Minister when that was negotiated.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Have you been involved in any discussions about that exemption being maintained?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I have had a number of discussions with Star City Casino, but I am not sure whether I have had a discussion on that. I know we have talked about it. Certainly one of the things—

Ms LEE RHIANNON: But you have talked about it being smoking exempt?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: It has come up in conversations that it is, but, as I say, I have never been asked to do anything more on it that I can remember. I will just confirm that. No.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: So that is just set in stone? There is no review process as to whether this should be maintained?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: It is currently being maintained, yes.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I know it is currently being maintained. I will ask the question again. Is there any process for that to be reassessed?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: On my understanding, when it came into place, in order for Star City Casino to remain competitive with its interstate rivals smoking was allowed to continue in its international private gaming areas. This exemption was granted in line with interstate exemptions.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: As the regulator, do you have any provision, or is there any possibility for you to initiate a review of that smoking exemption?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: That is part of the smoke-free environment law, so that is a matter for the Minister for Health.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Again I will ask you the question. Given that the matter is so serious, I want to explore it a little further. Given that smoking is still permitted in pubs and clubs, is that something you have given your attention to, given also that workers in the highroller room, in the pubs and clubs, and in the private gaming rooms at Star City Casino are exposed to smoke? Is that an issue that has come up for you at any time, given that these workers are exposed to smoke?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: As I say, I think that is a matter for the Ministry of Health and the Minister for Health.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: It does not come up for you at all?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: No, it is a health-related matter. It is under the smoke-free environment law.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: All matters to do with the workforce do not come under you at all?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Matters to do with smoke-free environment regulations come under the Ministry of Health and the Public Health Act.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: What matters to do with the workforce in these venues come under you?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: As I say, we look at the general regulations in terms of clubs and hotels. You made a comment there, and I am not sure that it is correct in terms of clubs and pubs. Clubs and pubs only have outdoor smoking areas.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: That is really open to debate. If you go to some of these pubs and clubs, how they call these areas "outdoor" is extraordinary. I know that is not your area, but it is really pushing it, is it not, to use the term "outdoor"? I want to go back to my earlier point. Do you have nothing at all to do with the workforce in the casino, et cetera?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: It depends what you mean—

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I am trying to understand what you have to do with it. Workers' health is obviously very important.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: For sure. And, as I say, that is obviously a matter for the Ministry of Health.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: But I wonder if you could be more proactive in this area. That is why I am trying to understand what you have responsibility for. The way workers are exposed to passive smoke is incredibly serious—

Mr KEVIN GREENE: And that is why the Government, through the Minister for Health, introduced the various pieces of legislation which see pubs and clubs, and indeed other places, banning—or not allowing—smoking indoors.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: But we know that workers in Star City Casino are being exposed to smoke. We know how dangerous that is in this day and age, and you, as the Minister, I understand, have some responsibility for the workforce. Yes, the Department of Health is a key part of this aspect, but I really think you have more responsibility to intervene here. That is what I am trying to understand.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: My department administers the Liquor Act, the Casino Act and the Gaming Machines Act. I think the areas that you are discussing would be under WorkCover, Industrial Relations, or the Department of Health.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Again, I want to understand whether you cover this. I have noticed the betting that is now going on when the rugby league is on. Is that something you cover?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Yes.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: What do you think about it? It is quite serious—

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Very serious.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: And whether the odds change—

Mr KEVIN GREENE: The odds change in terms of what is happening in the game.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Yes, and really fast.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Indeed. I think the cricket last year was in a similar situation. The reason that changed as of about October last year was that New South Wales had a significant number of restrictions that were impacted on by a High Court determination which meant some of our restrictions had to be taken away because they were considered to be not under the Constitution. So they are now advertised.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: What you are saying is that you cannot do much about that?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: What we have done is impose some general restrictions—in other words, offering free bets and that sort of thing. Certainly when that decision came out last year—in fact, we were in the middle of another court case at the time on that very matter—there was a period of time when some of the corporate bookmakers, in particular from the Northern Territory, were advertising free bets and all those types of things, which were basically inducements to bet. We do not allow that. We have brought in legislation to cover some of that sort of stuff. For example, with regard to tonight's game, Parramatta versus The Titans, which will be broadcast nationally—there is some contention about what time it is being broadcast nationally—that is where those odds are.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Is there any discussion through the COAG process about what you do about all this?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: That did not come up at the last Ministerial Council on Gambling [MinCo] meeting.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Do you plan to initiate discussions on that?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: As I say, we are not the only State that got knocked off. In fact, from memory, the original case was in Western Australia. It was as a result of the case in Western Australia that we were restricted. All those types of things in terms of broadcasting come under the Communications Act nationally.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Would not COAG be a place for such discussion? It is complex. It is not about stopping gambling; it is just about trying to have some regulation. I am curious that it has not been discussed at COAG. There is so much harm minimisation going on about everything these days.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: There is certainly a lot of harm minimisation in terms of gambling. There has been consideration at the MinCo in regard to Internet gambling and issues in and around that. But, as I say, the whole marketplace has been opened up. I am actually anticipating questions on racing. Trevor Khan is not here this year. What is going on George? We have missed out—

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: That is the second half. What, you are not happy with me?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: No, I am just making sure we are going to get the racing questions. One of the issues is that whole impact of bookmakers and betting agencies that are licensed outside of New South Wales.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I am not a gambling expert at all—far from it—but our office has received more complaints about Keno than other forms of gambling, even more than poker machines. I know it is totally anecdotal but is this an area where you are finding that people are feeling that it is unfair, in terms of how the game is conducted? Has anything like that come across your desk?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: We get individual cases of people concerned.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I am sorry, as an actual assessment more than my anecdotal comments?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: What I am saying to you is, the only issues that I can remember that come instantly to mind are people who felt they were underpaid—no one ever complains about being overpaid—during the process. That is the only correspondence that comes to mind in terms of Keno. Obviously we regulate Keno.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Has that been frequent?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Infrequent. But in terms of the regulations for Keno obviously we oversight that and Keno has now been around for well over 10 years—probably over 15 years.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: You spoke previously about issues of alcohol-related violence. Could you further elaborate in relation to patron safety, both within venues and the broader community?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Certainly. I think I covered a lot of this earlier. The Government has made clear its determination to tackle the problem of anti-social behaviour and alcohol-related violence caused by excessive drinking in our community. A comprehensive package of government initiatives based around the liquor laws is helping to address this issue. The new Liquor Act provides the modern regulatory tools that are necessary for industry, the community and regulators to work together to reduce alcohol-related problems. These tools include liquor accords, community impact statements, new offences to deal with troublesome patrons and targeted licence conditions.

The new Liquor Act supports the operation of liquor accords, which have been given greater responsibilities under the law and can now apply to ban troublemakers from multiple venues. Recalcitrant licensees can also be required to comply with an accord under the new laws and an additional power allows regulators to require a financial contribution to an accord. The new liquor licence laws also include regulatory tools that encourage licence applicants and licensees to work with their communities. For example, community impact statements require applicants for liquor licences and extended trading hours to discuss their proposal with their local community before making an application. The community impact statement summarises the results of this consultation so that licensing regulators are aware of local issues.

The Liquor Act also includes new offences where intoxicated or violent patrons attempt to re-enter or remain in the vicinity of licensed venues once they have been turned out. These provisions assist licensees to deal with troublesome patrons while sending a message to consumers about the need for responsible behaviour.

New enforcement tools in the Liquor Act are another key to reducing alcohol-related problems. The preferred approach is to work with industry and the community. However, the new tools provide regulators with leverage so that conditions can be imposed on a licence and directions issued to licensees and staff if that is necessary. Most licensees do the right thing, and the Government will continue to work with venues to ensure best practice is adopted to minimise the potential for alcohol-related harm. However, there are circumstances where the risk of violence is high and the Government is directing special effort at addressing problems through a range of innovative measures.

On 1 December last year special licence conditions were imposed on the 48 venues across the State that recorded a high number of assaults during the year ending June 2008. The conditions are designed to address problems such as assaults, glassing, intoxication and disturbance of nearby areas. They include a 2.00 a.m. to 5.00 a.m. lockout, a requirement to cease serving alcohol 30 minutes prior to closing, and a prohibition on drinks being served in glass or breakable plastic containers. The conditions also impose a ban on alcohol shots and require a 10-minute time-out each hour where either no alcohol is sold or free water and/or food is distributed to patrons and they are actively encouraged to consume water.

Following a review of these measures the Premier announced a new system in July that will see venues subject to special licence conditions based on the number of assaults on their premises. Venues with higher number of assaults will be subject to the full range of conditions, while those with lower numbers of assaults will need to comply with more limited targeted requirements. The list of venues subject to the special conditions will be revised and republished twice a year, based on assault data provided by the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. The scheme will also allow venues with reduced incidents to be removed from the list or have the number of conditions reduced. Before any conditions are imposed licensees will have the opportunity to show cause as to why they should not be added to the list of premises subject to special conditions.

The Government's initiatives to tackle alcohol-related violence have also included amendments to the liquor laws to require a six-hour closure each day for all new liquor licences, and this has effectively put a freeze on new 24-hour licensed venues. Police and local council enforcement officers have also been given more power to enforce alcohol-free zones by allowing them to confiscate and tip out alcohol that is being unlawfully consumed. In addition, people who use false IDs to purchase alcohol and enter licensed premises are now required to spend an additional six months on their provisional driver licence.

In March 2009 the Government released a discussion paper seeking community views on a safety ratings system for licensed premises. Arising out of the analysis of the submissions on the discussion paper, the Government intends to release a further tool, developed in conjunction with industry and local government, to help licensees and patrons better manage and reduce the risk of alcohol-related violence and anti-social behaviour. This tool will identify operational level safety practices and strategies that research and operational experience suggests may mitigate alcohol-related safety risks.

In June the New South Wales Government established the Sydney Liquor Task Force to tackle alcohol-related crime and violence in and around Sydney's central business district. The first outcome of the task force was the announcement of legislation to freeze new alcohol licences in trouble hot spots. Parliament is currently considering this legislation. Other issues to be considered by the task force include management of people in and out of hot spot precincts, policing issues and training options for staff. The Government has increased the number of liquor compliance inspectors to support the broad range of alcohol initiatives introduced since 1 July 2008, with 25 new inspectors recruited during the 2008-09 financial year. These inspectors are working directly with licensed venues experiencing high levels of violence to reduce risks and institute better management practices which increase community safety. Routine regulatory and enforcement activity is also continuing across licensed premises in New South Wales to ensure compliance with licence conditions and the liquor laws.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: My question follows on from an earlier line of questioning—

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Sorry. Do you want to move on?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Yes, if we can. I would like to ask you some racing questions if we have time.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Are we happy to?

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Through the Chair.

CHAIR: You can keep going with your questions and you can ask racing questions when they are finished.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I am just going by what the Minister is asking, Madam Chair.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: It is up to you, if you want to.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Give up the Government time, if I understand what you were saying Minister, and go back—

CHAIR: Why do you not ask your racing questions and then if there is time free we can go back to Government members for some questions. Is that all right?

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: If the Minister is happy with that.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I am happy to do that. That makes things expeditious.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Finish nice and early. That will be great.

CHAIR: No, we will not be.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: We should be clear as to what is being engaged here. Am I to understand that this is surrendering our time to the Opposition but the hearing will be for the same period? There is not a reduction—

Mr KEVIN GREENE: We will not do that then. I was just trying to make things easier for everybody.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: No, the Opposition is not that generous. Perhaps I could continue with my questions.

CHAIR: Continue.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I am confused.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: On the issue of problem gambling, which has been raised already, I would like you to elucidate further on that, and I will ask you a specific question about that. This is obviously an area of concern for the Government that requires ongoing vigilance and policy refinement. Can you update the Committee on the Government's ongoing initiatives in this important area?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Research indicates that the rate of problem gambling in New South Wales has not increased over the past 12 years. Significant resources are being allocated and reforms put in place to further contain the problem. The Government is dealing with problem gambling on a number of fronts, including through reforms following the review of the Gaming Machines Act 2001, the Responsible Gambling Fund, an evidence-based approach, and the Gambling Hangover campaign.

Parliament passed reforms to the Gaming Machines Act last December following a comprehensive review of the Act. The majority of the reforms commenced on 31 January 2009, and they have received widespread support. A reduction in poker machine numbers by 5,000 down to 99,000 and new harm minimisation measures will provide further protection to local communities from problem gambling. Other measures include: a cap on multi-terminal gaming machines in clubs; reducing red tape, which should further cut poker machine numbers by 3,000 over five years through the poker machine forfeiture trading scheme; requiring venues to move or shield poker machines that are situated in inappropriate locations, such as, where they may be visible from the street; and banning credit card cash withdrawals from ATMs and EFTPOS facilities in gaming venues.

The reforms complement existing regulatory measures to reduce harm associated with problem gambling. Existing measures include: no 24-hour gaming in pubs and clubs through a six-hour daily shutdown

period; locating ATMs away from gaming machines; banning gaming venues from offering free or discounted liquor as an inducement to play; banning advertising of gaming machines; compulsory training in the Responsible Conduct of Gaming for people working in gaming venues; and gambling help contact information on all gaming machines.

Since 1995 well over \$100 million has been allocated to help people with gambling problems and those close to them through: counselling services staffed by highly skilled counsellors; gambling-related research; raising awareness of the problem; and a range of other important community projects. The existing statewide 24-hour Gambling Helpline telephone counselling and referral service is for problem gamblers and their families. A new national 24-hour online gambling counselling service is also due to commence later this month. It will target those with poor mobility, those living in more isolated areas and younger people who otherwise may not be comfortable talking face-to-face about their problems. Overall, the New South Wales Government, through the Responsible Gambling Fund, funds over 150,000 counselling hours each year. This is delivered by more than 49 counselling and support services operating from over 200 locations throughout the State.

To ensure that policies and programs for problem gambling are evidence-based the Government, through the Responsible Gambling Fund, continues to provide significant funding for problem gambling-related research. For example, the Responsible Gambling Fund will shortly commence a comprehensive needs analysis project to examine the optimal range and configuration of counselling services across New South Wales, funded by the Responsible Gambling Fund. This research will build on the experiences of the past decade and ensure that as many people as possible from all walks of life who might be affected by gambling problems and who seek help are able to get help when and where they need it.

On a national level the Government works cooperatively with other jurisdictions to conduct research into problem gambling related matters. In June 2009 research was completed into gambling problems in Australia's indigenous population. It found that New South Wales has one of the lowest rates of problem gambling in this target group. The Government is committed to raising awareness of the risks of problem gambling and providing options for those seeking help. That is why the New South Wales Government launched a \$1.8 million statewide problem gambling awareness campaign on 3 July 2008.

The Gambling Hangover campaign targets young men "the morning after" when feelings of remorse about gambling losses are at their peak. The campaign helps these young men identify the early signs of a gambling problem and offers easy-to-access help. An evaluation has shown that the Gambling Hangover campaign created positive engagement with the target audience. In particular, there was high awareness and approval for the campaign among young men and they had a significantly better knowledge of problem gambling symptoms. Calls to the Gambling Helpline were up an average of 5 per cent, and some 4,000 visitors to the new Gambling Hangover website engaged in self-help activities such as ordering booklets or using interactive tools. The next stage of the campaign is expected to commence in 2010.

It is worth noting that the Australian Gambling Statistics published by the Office of Economic and Statistical Research, Queensland Treasury, shows that the average real per capita expenditure on all gambling products in New South Wales has been falling in recent years. Also, gambling revenue as a proportion of total State income is declining. State income from gambling taxes was 5.52 per cent in 1995-96, and it is expected to be 3.18 per cent for 2009-10.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: Further to your previous answer about gaming machines, part of the changes to the Act included a local impact assessment process for gaming machine entitlement trading. Could you advise the Committee what effect these new arrangements are having on the trading environment of gaming machines and the reduction in machine numbers in New South Wales?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I am advised that since the commencement of the amendments to the Gaming Machines Act 2001 on 31 January 2009 the number of poker machines removed from pubs and clubs has nearly tripled. The new local impact assessment [LIA] process, which was introduced to simplify and streamline the process for venues to obtain additional poker machines, also has resulted in a shifting of poker machines out of high-density gaming areas. The reforms to the Gaming Machines Act are part of the Government's efforts to address community concerns about problem gambling. For some years now clubs and hotels have been able to trade poker machine entitlements so long as they forfeit one out of every three, so that it can be removed from operation. By cutting the red tape through the new LIA process the Government has encouraged clubs and hotels to trade more poker machines.

Under this system each local government area [LGA] is classified as low, medium or high density, based on poker machine numbers and expenditure and economic and social data. Venues may be required to complete a class 1 or 2 LIA based on the classification of the local government area they are in and the number of additional poker machines sought. Those venues obtaining poker machine entitlements from within the same LGA or venues which are in a low-density area and are seeking no more than an additional 20 poker machine entitlements per year are not required to complete an LIA. This has cut red tape for these venues and provided them with business certainty. Class 1 LIAs, in particular, have made the application process for venues seeking additional poker machines quicker and cheaper, allowing for applications to be processed in a shorter period.

Venue operators can complete an LIA themselves. Guidelines are available from the website of the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing to assist applicants in preparing LIAs. Twelve class 1 LIAs have been received, with three determined so far. Applications have been taking around six to eight weeks to determine, compared to the former social impact assessment process, which could take up to two years for a determination to be made. The class 1 LIAs granted so far have seen the Western Suburbs Leagues Club committing to provide \$100,000 to the Healthy Kids Foundation, Riverwood Legion and Community Club committing to provide \$60,000 to Learning Links—the Hon. Kayee Griffin would be well aware of both those organisations—and Pittwater RSL Club committing to construct six outdoor futsal courts and associated amenities for use by the community. No class 2 LIAs have been received to date. This demonstrates that local government areas with a high density of poker machines are finding it extremely difficult to obtain more poker machines.

Overall, the new LIA process has encouraged venues to trade more poker machines. Between January 31 and June 30 this year nearly four times the number of machines were transferred between venues, compared with the same period the year before. In fact, we have seen 1,514 poker machine entitlements traded in just five months, compared with 386 in the corresponding period the year before. As a result of this trading activity 365 poker machine entitlements have been forfeited and removed from operation forever. That is more than two machines taken off the gaming floor per day. This compares with just 126 forfeited poker machine entitlements over the same period the year before. As more machines are traded we will continue to see reductions in machine numbers across the State. So far poker machine entitlement numbers in high-density areas have fallen by 323 over the five-month period, with a decrease of 174 in medium-density areas. These results are encouraging after just a short period of time and we will continue to reap benefits from this scheme.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Minister, my question relates to a matter that has received some attention in the media, that is, security at Star City casino. The Casino, Liquor and Gaming Control Authority is a separate line item in the budget papers and its main functions include protecting the integrity of the casino operators. Star City is often in the spotlight for a variety of reasons. Can you tell us what security measures are in place at the casino and how the casino is monitored on an ongoing basis?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: The Government continues to apply a high level of security to operations of Star City casino and its compliance with the law. I am advised that a review of Star City security training in 2008 by the Casino, Liquor and Gaming Control Authority considered that the training conducted within Star City security department is of a high standard and all staff were sufficiently trained to carry out their duties in a competent and effective manner.

Training for security staff is conducted in a wide variety of areas including first aid and emergency procedures; fire procedures; bomb threats; armed hold-ups; detecting minors; advanced resuscitation; advanced conflict management; incident reporting; physical removal techniques; court procedures—presenting evidence, protocols and so on; responsible gambling and responsible service of alcohol; conflict management; use of metal detectors; and occupational health and safety. Star City is responsible for the protection of its assets, its employees and its patrons, as with all licensed venues.

In a 2006 section 31 investigation Star City staff who were interviewed consistently praised the work of security officers in carrying out their functions. No evidence was found of incidents being inappropriately handled by reason of an inadequacy in the resources available to the security department. I am advised random metal detector searches are conducted by security officers at entry points to the casino using visible wand detectors. The security department also operates a safety team, with members who are trained specifically in high-level verbal as well as physical conflict management.

In respect of the responsible service of alcohol [RSA] and responsible conduct of gambling [RCG], independent reviews conducted by Barringtons have found they did not appear to be major issues with Star City's responsible conduct of gambling and responsible service of alcohol identification and the standards of

action taken by security. Security was found to be very effective in monitoring the ages of those persons who appeared to be minors attempting access to the casino and, overall, security staff working at the casino appeared to be of a high standard. It was noted that all entrances to the various venues and bars were adequately policed and when any type of unruly behaviour occurred or when a patron was found to be intoxicated to a level that warranted action security were on hand.

An indication of work conducted by Star City security in protecting its patrons and staff is reflected in statistics for the six-month period from 1 January to 30 June 2009. For example, 75,415 metal detector scans were conducted. Patrons refused entry to the casino included 9,525 for dress, 7,398 for being underage, 8,050 due to RSA issues. There were 32 patrons forcibly removed. Patrons requested to leave the casino included 3,919 for RSA issues and 4,773 for behaviour; and 121 persons were detected for illegal and undesirable activity, such as prostitution. The Government will continue to monitor Star City's compliance with all relevant legislative requirements.

CHAIR: We will now go back to the Opposition for some questions on Gaming and Racing.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Can you tell me how many employees the former Greyhound and Harness Racing Regulatory Authority had?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: It was 40-something. I will just get the exact number.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: While your staff are getting that, can I ask you how many employees work for the new Greyhound Racing Regulatory Authority?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: There is no new Greyhound Racing Regulatory Authority. The responsibilities of the Greyhound and Harness Racing Regulatory Authority were transferred to two bodies, they being Greyhound Racing New South Wales and Harness Racing New South Wales. Nine of the staff transferred to Greyhound Racing New South Wales, 14 transferred to Harness Racing New South Wales, 13 took voluntary redundancy and six were redeployed. That makes 42 staff. There were some casuals on top of that.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: If we take the 9 and 14 that were transferred to the two separate new authorities that is a total of 23. You have gone from 43 to 23.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: No.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Were any other new employees employed?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: My understanding is that new staff were employed by those organisations to fill the gaps.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Can you tell me how many for each?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I cannot tell you that off the top of my head.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I am happy for you to take it on notice.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I say that because Greyhound Racing New South Wales and Harness Racing New South Wales are independent bodies. For instance, I know the former secretary of the Bathurst Greyhound Club is now working for Greyhound Racing New South Wales in looking after the grading. He took up a position that was not filled by staff moving over from the previous authority.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Can you give me an indication on an annual basis how much has been saved by the Government as a result of the restructure?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: There has been nothing saved by the Government because the Greyhound and Harness Racing Regulatory Authority was funded by the industries. They are still being funded by the industries but now in their own independent organisations.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Was there any money spent by the Government in relation to the restructure or was that also spent by the industries?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I will take that on notice, but I am pretty sure they funded the bodies previously. The final direct costs of winding up the authority and the transfer of functions will be met by the receiving bodies, Greyhound Racing New South Wales and Harness Racing New South Wales.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: So I take it there will be no cost to the Government?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: That is right.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Thank you, Minister. My colleague will now move on to Sport and Recreation.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: Minister, I understand that there was a letter written to you, which is on the New South Wales Sports Federation website from the chief executive officer, Debbie Kemp, which is addressed to you. In regard to Government funding she states:

It is currently at an unacceptably low level particularly in relation to the funding received in other states.

Funding in monetary terms has not increased in at least 20 years, and therefore, in real terms has decreased.

Can you explain why funding has not increased in line with that in other States over such a long period?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Without going into the full details of funding for sport and for the federation what I can do is quote the following:

On behalf of the NSW Sports Federation Board thank you for the recent consultation process we undertook and of course for the funding that has been committed to the Federation. We are particularly pleased to have the opportunity to continue making progress with Game Plan 2012 and I look forward to discussing the scope of the projects.

That was sent today by Debbie Kemp, the Chief Executive Officer of the NSW Sports Federation.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Would you mind making a copy of that letter available to the Committee?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I am not sure that we can do that.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: You can take it on notice.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I do not think we are allowed to table documents. But that is the correspondence that I have received from Debbie Kemp today and that is as a result of the funding from the process that we have gone through with the NSW Sports Federation.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: She does make the point in a previous letter that funding has not increased in the past 20 years and that it has actually decreased. Is that a fact or is that something she has made up?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: As I said, I could go through all the various pieces of funding to sport programs in New South Wales for the last whatever number of years. In terms of funding for the NSW Sports Federation, we have just negotiated new arrangements, and from the correspondence you can see that the NSW Sports Federation is happy with those arrangements. We have got to be careful—and it is the old apples and oranges situation across States—as part of the funding that we provide is accommodation costs. We do not charge rent on various facilities. At Sports House, for instance, I cannot remember off the top of my head what the cost of Sports House is to us but that rent is for various individual bodies including the Sports Federation as a part of that. As I said, we have to be very careful in comparing apples with oranges. As has been clearly shown, and following on from the previous comments, we have come to a new arrangement with the New South Wales Sports Federation with which it is very comfortable.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: Are we talking about the Sports Development Program?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: That funds various organisations. We provide up to \$60,000 for individual affiliated sporting groups. Not all of them receive \$60,000; it depends on their size.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: The impression we got was that over 20 years the funding has, at best, stayed the same. If one takes into account the CPI and other increasing costs, in real terms there has been a decrease in funding.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: It depends on which apples you are comparing with which oranges. Investment in sport generally varies from one year to the next. The Sports Federation is very happy with the new arrangements as we progress to Game Plan 2012 and the work they are doing in that regard.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: The New South Wales Sport and Recreation website states under "Grants":

Information on the grants provided by NSW Sport and Recreation is currently being updated. Detailed information on grant programs will be available shortly.

When did that notice first appear on the website and when do you anticipate the information will be provided?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: A review of New South Wales Sport and Recreation grants has now been completed. The changes arising from the review will ensure that funding programs support increased participation in recreation and sporting activities and that investment is prioritised to achieve the most effective outcomes for the community. The future focus of New South Wales Sport and Recreation funding programs will be on supporting development of recreation and sporting facilities; raising awareness and promoting the image and importance of participation in sport; supporting achievement in sport at all levels; increasing participation in recreation and sporting activities; and reducing barriers to participation in recreation and sporting activities.

From 2009-10 New South Wales Sport and Recreation funding will be consolidated around three key focus areas that are aligned to Government priorities. These include the Sport and Recreation Facilities Development program. A consolidated and more strategic approach to supporting facilities development in New South Wales will be introduced this year. New guidelines and application forms are being developed that will outline broad priorities for future facilities funding. Recognising that funding programs are an important contributor to enabling a strong and responsive sport industry and the development of athlete pathways, the Sport Development Program will be maintained along with current funding commitments to the New South Wales Institute of Sport and regional academies of sport.

In addition, a new \$500,000 fund for sport and athlete development initiatives will be introduced to support innovative projects that contribute to industry capacity and development and the reduction of barriers to participate in sport. This will replace previous allocations that supported athlete development. A range of priority target groups will be identified in new program guidelines. Recognising the importance of increasing community engagement and social cohesion through participation in recreation and sporting activity, a new \$700,000 fund for sport and recreation participation initiatives will be introduced. This will support projects that deliver innovative and flexible approaches that increase participation and reduce barriers to participation. New program guidelines are being developed to target the highest needs groups and issues. The new approach to sport and recreation funding will deliver benefits to the sport and recreation industry, other organisations that support increased participation in recreation and sporting activities and to the community more broadly. Watch this space. You will find out very shortly.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I am trying to find out what "very shortly" means.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: When is your birthday?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Very shortly. Do I take it that grants cannot be applied at the moment and that they are not being awarded?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: The grants in that scheme—

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Are they on hold while the development takes place?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: As I said, we have just undertaken a full evaluation. When the new forms are organised they will be placed on the website and the programs will be loaded shortly.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Do you mean next week, next month or early next year?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Before the end of October.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Will there be a pull back in the availability of funds compared with what was previously available?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: As I said, all those programs will be funded.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Are we looking at the same amount?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I went through the figures. There was \$500,000 for athlete development and \$700,000, plus the facilities programs.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: You said there is difficulty in comparing apples with oranges. How does our funding compare with the funding provided in Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: It depends on the programs. You would be well aware that community organisations can apply for funding as part of the Community Building Partnerships initiative. Sporting organisations can also now apply for program improvements. For instance, a sporting group may wish to develop a sports field. They will now be able to apply for funding through that additional arm of government. The Government is committed to providing funding for sport from a number of buckets of money. That is why it is very difficult to compare our funding with the Queensland, Victorian and Western Australian funding. A good example of facilities funding is the EnergyAustralia stadium at Newcastle. The New South Wales Government has invested in a number of facilities over and above other programs that are funded. Some programs also involve talented athletes.

Earlier this year I announced that an additional \$500,000 would be provided to the regional academies program. That was in addition to the original \$1 million grant. Those regional academies are very much a part of sports development. The New South Wales Institute of Sport is renowned not only in Australia but worldwide. I was there recently and spoke to a group of sports administrators and government representatives from Hong Kong who came to study at the facility. People come to the institute from across the world because of the investment that the New South Wales Government makes in that program. That is something we can be extremely proud of.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I have a number of examples, but we will have to put them on notice because we have only four minutes left. Given the growing obesity epidemic among children, what is your Government doing to better engage children in sporting and recreational activities? Can you provide the results of any such programs?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: There are a number of programs and they are not exclusive to NSW Sport and Recreation. I agree that we should be engaging young people in as many sporting activities as we can, whether that is as parents, as a government or as educators. The Government has a number of programs across health, education and sport and recreation. For instance, next Monday applications close for the first week of our October Sport and Recreation school holiday camps. Those programs are held at 11 venues across the State.

They are ongoing, extensive programs that cover a great variety of sporting skills and activities and provide opportunities for children throughout the State. I was promoting those the other day on radio and by other press releases. I agree with you. If you look at some of the facilities—and I have not been to all of our sport and recreation camps—the ones that come to mind, say, at Berry and Lake Burrendong, have a variety of activities. Lake Keepit has a different range and variety of programs. As a former schoolteacher I can assure you of the work in terms of the personal development, health and physical education programs and the things involved there to encourage young people into sport. I talk to individual sports codes, and there is the work they do to develop activities for young people—whether it is soccer at Ador Avenue, rugby league, AFL, or netball. Only recently we saw the efforts of the Australian Diamonds, who are obviously at the pinnacle of netball in Australia with the success of our netball programs.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Can you produce some statistics or other information that shows some results of what your department is doing? I am happy for you to take that on notice, obviously. I do not expect you to do it now.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Okay, yes.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: According to the 2007-08 annual report, \$45,000 was provided to support athletes travelling to international sporting competitions. Are you able to indicate how much has been allocated for 2008-09 for the same purpose?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I should be able to give you that. Sorry, was it for 2008-09 or 2009-10?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: In 2007-08 it was \$25,000. I am trying to ascertain the figure for 2008-09. It sounds like a very small amount.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I will have to take that on notice and get the exact figure for you. I might add that that is part of some of those figures I was going through in the talented programs.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I am happy if you take this on notice. Can you indicate what your Government is doing in regard to gender parity in sport today? The Hon. Lynda Voltz's boxing is probably the best example, and she is not here today.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: The New South Wales Government is committed to increasing the number of women and girls involved in sport and recreation from an early age and to encourage their continued involvement in sport and recreation over the course of their lives. The Government is supporting the 2010 International Women in Sport Conference, which will be held in Sydney, and it has committed \$500,000 to this event. Recently it announced another \$15,000 in funding to provide 15 scholarships to assist women from disadvantaged backgrounds to attend the conference, which is the first of its kind in the Oceania region. The department conducts a number of programs focusing solely on increasing the participation of women and girls in sport. These include the Women's Sports Leaders Scholarship Program. Do you want me to table this?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I am happy for you to table it. I do not want to take time from the crossbench members.

Document tabled.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Minister, can you outline how the joint partnership between the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and the Department of Sport and Recreation will provide \$1 million over four years for children with a disability to access sporting facilities?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I might defer to the Director General to do that.

Ms MILLS: I will find the briefing as we progress. However, I can say that we are in the second year of that initiative. We have a large number of programs and we have a new set of programs commencing in this holiday period, which target not only children with a disability but their families and siblings. We have a significant number of places made available across the State for that. I can certainly get you on notice the number of people who have participated in the program, but the funds have been fully expended in each of the years. There is a high level of demand for the services.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Given there is a high level of demand for the services, are you applying for more money? At the end of the day, \$1 million does not go that far.

Ms MILLS: It is only one part of the services we provide for young people with a disability through our programs. We also have people with a disability participating in all our centres and programs. I now have the briefing so if you do not mind I will give you a detailed breakdown. To give an example of how we are reliant not only on the money from the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care but also on our own initiatives, we spent \$350,000 in 2008-09 on the Disability Sport Assistance Program, which supported over 37 different projects across the State and provides not only an ongoing opportunity for people with a disability to participate in sport but also training and education for coaches, officials and volunteers to assist them to accommodate young people and adults with a disability in their programs.

We also supplied \$230,000 to support members of organisations of the New South Wales Association of Disability Sports, \$70,000 to support elite athletes with a disability through the Institute of Sport, \$25,000 for annual travel scholarships for athletes with a disability to participate in international competition, and \$35,000 towards programs for emerging athletes. In addition to that, the Minister has recently announced the creation of

a disability advisory body to provide opportunities for us to consult widely across the mainstream of disability sports and recreation services to ensure we have the best focus on our programs into the future.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Minister, I am interested in how you are handling sports rage. I understand that you have a prevention code and there are various initiatives. Do you have any data on the prevalence of this in particular sports or geographical areas?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: We do not have any specific data on that. It seems to be something for individual sports. One of the things I can say is that the Sports Rage program provides support to associations and therefore it is down to them to provide support to their clubs. At the start of the winter season this year I launched some support to clubs to help them deal with some of these situations. One of the things we always need to emphasise is the need to recognise that a very, very small percentage of people in any sport will ever play sport at an international level. Therefore, the great majority are there to enjoy the participation and, as the Hon. John Ajaka talked about before, to get people involved in sport. Therefore, parents need to recognise that we want to develop a love of sport. That is the highest priority across all codes, and certainly the sports themselves agree with what is a pretty self-evident statement.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I guess that you do not actually have evidence to assess whether your initiatives are actually reducing the incidence of sports rage.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Yes, I think we are doing some surveys of individual codes. But we do not have up-to-date data.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: But you expect that you will have.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: We will do some surveys, but we are not going to be able to say there were 17 sports incidents in whatever local government area because no-one is going to have that sort of specific data.

Ms MILLS: We conduct surveys of the level of satisfaction with the kits. We hand out many thousands of kits. We also conduct face-to-face training each year for conflict resolution and so on. The feedback we have had on satisfaction with use of the kits—which is in a sense a surrogate for how much they are being used and how effective they are seen to be—is well over 80 per cent.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I want to move on to the Southern Highlands Regional Sporting Complex. What is the current and ongoing role of the Department of Sport and Recreation in the shooting complex?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: The Government is committed to ensuring that people who wish to participate in shooting sports are able to do so in a safe and responsible way. The Government's decision to develop the present Hilltop rifle range into a regional shooting complex was taken in order to solve the ongoing difficulties of a number of shooting clubs in securing long-term tenure to pursue their sporting and recreational interests.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: What is your ongoing role? Are you helping them set it up?

Ms MILLS: We will administer and manage the site. Presently we are not actively involved as it is still a matter for the Department of Planning.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I also understand that it is before the Land and Environment Court at the moment.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Have you had any role in the modifications that have been applied for?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Our department actually applied for the modifications.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Why did you apply for the modifications?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: When the original development was approved we felt the modifications were needed to ensure the ongoing viability of the site but all those modifications are within the bounds of the various environmental studies, et cetera that have been undertaken.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: My understanding was that the modifications in some cases actually go against the recommendations for the site. Why did you take it upon yourself to apply for the modifications?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: The variations requested are considered necessary to maximise use of the complex and minimise cost without compromising environmental standards. The modifications were placed on public exhibition until 26 June to enable public submissions. The matter is currently before the Land and Environment Court and therefore it is inappropriate for me to comment any further at this time.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: You just used the word "requested". Who requested that you put in for those modifications?

Ms MILLS: The Sport and Recreation Division of the department has consulted with a number of parties, including people who are potential users of the site, to ensure that the site could actually be suitably available for them as shooters. Whilst we obviously want to balance that with environmental concerns, there was a view from within the department, based on information provided to us, that some of the conditions that were originally applied would in fact not enable it to be used effectively as a shooting centre. Our request related to ensuring that, whilst environmental concerns are absolutely maintained as our top priority, some of the conditions, particularly relating to weekend usage, actually seek modification to those so that we can have a viable shooting centre.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I specified who requested that. I understand that the clubs involved are the Southern Highlands Rifle Club, the Illawarra Regional Shooting Association, the Illawarra Service Rifle Club, the Kiama-Albion Park Rifle Club, the "74" Pistol Club, the Phoenix Pistol Club, the Illawarra branch of the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia, and the Shooters Party. Which of those bodies, or any other body, made that request?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I will have to take that on notice.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: You explained that the modifications were undertaken to ensure that it could work successfully as a complex. Some changes have been made to hours, and you explained about it working at the weekend. Could you explain the changes that have been proposed with regard to storing ammunition on the site?

Ms MILLS: I will have to take that question on notice.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Could you take on notice why you applied for each modification?

Ms MILLS: We would be happy to provide that information.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: As the shooting complex is promoted as a sporting complex and it receives money from the new administration, why are military rifles used at the site. I am not referring to the operations of the Australian Army but where military rifles are used for sporting activities there—SR98 and SR25 military rifles?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I would have to take that question on notice. I do not claim to be an expert on guns.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: There is a big difference between rifles and guns.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I understand that the Army uses the site five to 10 days per month. Could you explain the arrangement that you have with the Army with regard to its level of involvement and payment?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I would have to take that on notice. That is very detailed and specific.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Seriously?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Yes.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I just thought you would have had some of that detail, but fair enough. Please take that on notice. The other aspect I was hoping you would have some information about—otherwise please

take it on notice—is the issue of contamination. Considering that contamination is considerable—that issue has been covered, I understand, in the work that you have set out to date—and it has to be cleaned up, will it be necessary to allocate money from any Department of Sport and Recreation grants or any other budgets to clean up the contamination? How will that be handled?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Hilltop itself has been funded through a special line item in the budget and my advice is that it will take in part of that funding. I know that environmental standards, which I presume you are referring to, in terms of contamination will be maintained. I cannot be more specific than that.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: There is a history of conditions of consent being broken, and that information has been regularly detailed in the past on the department's website. That was one reason I was exploring the issue. The other reason is to clarify where the payment for that contamination clean-up will come from. Can you take that on notice?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Certainly.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I move on to community sports and recreation facility grants. Do you publicly release a list of the names of organisations and local government areas where those grants have been given?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Yes, we do. You are talking about the Capital Assistance Program [CAP] grants?

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Yes.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Ones were allocated a while ago. All the grants we allocate appear in our annual reports and also on the website.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Can you provide what percentage of funding grants was awarded to elite sporting associations as a percentage of all funding for 2008-09?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Are we again talking about CAP grants?

Ms LEE RHIANNON: You have your overall funding and then funding for the elite sporting associations, so I am trying to find out the proportion.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I am not sure of your definition of "elite". Are you talking about funding to specific sporting organisations like funding to rugby league, funding to swimming, funding to soccer—that is sport.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Maybe if I change "elite" to "professional" it might make it easier.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I would not have that information; I will take it on notice. Are you talking about grants, as in Sports Development Fund grants, or are you now talking about Capital Assistance Program grants, because there is a significant difference.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I appreciate that; I am sorry if I was not clear. You provide a whole range of grants, so probably recurrent grants.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: So that is the Sports Development Fund grants. As I say, they are up to a maximum of \$60,000. Are you talking about the grants that go to Cricket New South Wales, the New South Wales Rugby League, Netball New South Wales and Football New South Wales?

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Yes. I want to try to get a proportion, a comparison.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: I just want to understand where you are coming from. You are talking about professional codes. As to Football New South Wales, if you play in the Premier League or State League you will get paid, but if you play in the youth league competitions that it administers or in the general associations, all players are going to be amateur. You can get the differentiation. It is similar with New South Wales Rugby League and the funding that goes to it. Where it runs what would be considered the second or third tier competition—whether it is the Jim Beam Cup or whatever—players get paid, but at the same time players are

running around in the Penrith Junior League playing A reserve. If you are trying to say that the funding is going to professional athletes, really it is not—regardless of whether it is swimming or football, as in soccer, or cricket. Funding goes to Cricket New South Wales, but it has, as an example, a community participation section of the organisation. It also runs its Emerging Blues Program—

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I might put the questions on notice and work over them again. I need to spell it out more clearly. While we are dealing with the disability issue, does the department have any goals or targets in relation to increasing the participation rates in sport of people with disabilities?

Ms MILLS: We do not have a specific target, no.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: We do want to see young people participating. The Director General just referred to some of the changes we have made to make sure we get more money into disability sports funding. In fact, Communities NSW is taking on the back-of-office work as part of its work so that we can get more funding into disability sports organisations. We want to encourage disability sports participation, whether it is Paralympic-type activities or lawn bowls and those types of activities. We are trying to get more funding into that. One of the reasons I have set up this Ministerial Advisory Council is so we can get specific advice on the needs of those who live in the community. Recently you would have seen The Rollers participating at Homebush at a fantastic international event.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: I note that a key responsibility of your portfolio, as outlined in the budget papers, includes delivering an effective, well-managed and responsibly conducted sport and recreation industry. In relation to combat sports, what measures is the Government taking to ensure greater protection and accountability within the sector?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: The Combat Sports Act 2008 was passed by Parliament in December 2008 and will commence on 1 October 2009. The Combat Sports Regulation will also commence on that date. The Act extends the existing regulatory coverage of boxing, kickboxing and wrestling to include a range of other sports, including jiu-jitsu, Muay Thai, mixed martial arts, and cage fighting. Combatants and other industry participants in these sports will now be required to register from the beginning of calendar year 2010.

A new Combat Sports Authority will replace the Boxing Authority in supervising the conduct of these sports. Earlier today I announced the new members of the authority. The members have been appointed for an initial 12-month period. The authority will be chaired by Mr Terence Hartman and also includes Dr Ameer Ibrahim, Mr David Granger, Mr John Clark, Mr Steven Griffiths, Mr Allan Kemp, Ms Laura Jayne Ng, Mr Richard Pinson and Ms Jane Spring. These people have been chosen for their skills and experience in sports participation, administration and regulation. The breadth of their professional experience covers law, investigation, enforcement, and health and safety.

Statutory regulation of boxing dates from 1986 when the Wran Government introduced the Boxing and Wrestling Control Act, which established a new approach in the regulation of an industry that had become controversial, exploitative and dangerous. Over time, the Boxing Authority has maintained control over supervision of the sport to ensure that boxers were properly medically assessed, that all matches had a doctor in attendance, and that promoters, managers, trainers, seconds and others were included within the coverage of the Act as registered industry participants.

The Boxing Authority has operated very effectively. The members attend promotions, check gloves and bandaging, and ensure that all activities relating to the preparation of the boxers are conducted properly. By expanding the coverage of the legislation, proper safety standards will be established across the combat sports industry. The increased popularity of sports like mixed martial arts and cage fighting, which are admittedly not to everyone's taste, has required a response to ensure that the competitors are not exposed to unnecessary risk.

There has been a longstanding policy in boxing that children younger than 14 years cannot compete in matches. This policy was determined on the basis of sound medical advice. Despite some disquiet about this policy among sections of the sport, my predecessors in the Sport and Recreation portfolio have determined that this policy should stay. I have continued this approach. The policy will now be applied to the other sports subject to this legislation. In the case of cage fighting and mixed martial arts, a minimum age limit of 18 years will apply. A condition will be attached to all permits for relevant amateur combat sports events, stipulating the minimum age of combatants.

A further significant change is the removal of exclusions on women from competing in boxing and kickboxing. The 1986 legislation reflected a general view that women should not compete in these sports. Since that time, community attitudes regarding discrimination against women have changed. This includes the right of women to participate in such sports if they choose to, and not just in Australia. The 2012 Olympic Games in London will include women's boxing for the first time, so it is timely that the restrictions be removed. Women are already competing in some of the sports that will be subject to the new Act, so it is appropriate to remove gender-based exclusions. I note that two members of the new authority are women.

The Combat Sports Authority will have increased powers to refer matters for prosecution where the offender is unregistered, or to impose penalties on any registered combatants or industry participants who fail to fulfil their obligations. The Combat Sports Regulation 2009 was the subject of a regulatory impact statement, and several submissions were received from industry stakeholders. These and other interested parties will be consulted by the Combat Sports Authority as it begins its work.

For some people currently involved in combat sports, the new legislation will represent a change in the way they operate. Previously there was no requirement for registration, no insistence on proper matching of opponents, and no need to ensure the attendance of a doctor at all promotions. This is not to say that the promoters of combat sports events are cowboys or outlaws, but they have previously operated outside the regulatory system and this new situation will require an adjustment.

I am advised that Communities NSW has initiated discussions with industry representatives to advise them of the regulatory requirements and to assist them with the transition. In establishing these important relationships, the Combat Sports Authority will be able to build a profile for the industry that will demonstrate professionalism and a commitment to the protection of participants. This approach has informed the development of combat sports legislation since the 1980s. I am grateful to the members of the Boxing Authority for their professionalism and dedication to managing the sport, which has given us an excellent template to follow in developing the new regulatory system. The new Combat Sports Authority will include two former members of the Boxing Authority. The other members are drawn from a range of combat sports.

Following commencement of the Act, the department will publicise the registration requirements in order that industry participants and officials are fully aware of their obligations. Female officials will be identified, accredited and trained as necessary. The commencement of the Combat Sports Act will ensure the continuation and logical extension of combat sports regulation in New South Wales.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: What funding and support is the Government providing to increase sport and recreation opportunities for indigenous people at all levels in New South Wales?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: The New South Wales Government has provided almost \$500,000 over financial years 2007-08 and 2008-09 for initiatives to give young indigenous people more opportunities to participate in sport and recreational activities. The focus has been on initiatives to encourage broad-based participation, talented athlete support, and the development of leadership skills for Aboriginal youth through sport and recreation. Some of the initiatives funded include the Talented Indigenous Athlete Program, the Traditional Indigenous Games Program, and tertiary scholarships and school-based traineeships. Other key initiatives delivered through partnerships include the Indigenous Sport Program and the Indigenous Swimming Program.

Communities NSW has a strong partnership with the Australian Sports Commission for the delivery of the Indigenous Sport Program in this State. The Indigenous Sport Program has two objectives: to increase the active participation of indigenous Australians in sport and physical activity; and to encourage community ownership and management of sport and physical recreation activities, including through skills development. The Sport and Recreation Division of Communities NSW coordinates the delivery of the Indigenous Sport Program through its Aboriginal sport development officers located in Sydney, Lennox Head, Tamworth, Dubbo, Orange, Batemans Bay, Wagga Wagga, and Newcastle.

During 2008-09 the Indigenous Sport Program engaged over 21,000 participants in 408 sport and recreation activities across the State. The highest participation rates were seen in the under 18 category with 19,760 and 2,189 adult participants. A total of 206 participants identified themselves as having a disability, 434 participants were coaches, 270 were officials and 158 were volunteers. Under this program funding is also provided to a number of State sporting organisations to support programs that increase participation opportunities and skill levels within indigenous communities.

During 2008-09 sports such as AFL, netball, athletics, basketball, cricket, rugby union, football, softball, and surfing received Government support to deliver a range of introductory programs that link participants to local clubs, through to talent development opportunities for Aboriginal youth. For example, as part of their broader surf education program, Surfing New South Wales provided a unique opportunity for 20 Aboriginal children from Brewarrina to travel to Sydney to try their hand at surfing for the first time. The day was focussed upon promoting healthy lifestyles and positive lifestyle choices, whilst providing a new opportunity for these children who had never before seen the ocean or experienced the thrill of riding a surfboard.

In partnership with the Dubbo Youth Foundation, New South Wales Sport and Recreation facilitated an indigenous swimming program in the Dubbo, Narromine and Wellington communities during the summer of 2008-09, partnering with local swimming clubs and coaches. This resulted in 55 Aboriginal youth participating in regular daily swimming club training, weekly time trials and the district's seasonal carnival events, most for the first time. Another bonus has been the involvement of parents as volunteers in the swimming clubs.

To encourage and support skill development, Communities New South Wales funds five university scholarships in sport and exercise science for indigenous students: one at the University of Western Sydney, valued at \$30,000; two at the University of Wollongong, valued at \$15,000 each; and two at Southern Cross University, also valued at \$15,000 each. Two indigenous sport traineeships on the mid North Coast are being undertaken with formal training conducted in conjunction with the Australian Training Company. Trainees complete a range of core compulsory theory and elective studies and workplace training with Nambucca Shire Council or Kempsey Shire Council.

Also, there are four school-based trainees completing the Certificate II in Sport and Recreation: two from the Illawarra—Bulli High School and Corrimal High School; and two from metropolitan Sydney—Sarah Redfern High School and Minto High School. The certificate is a nationally recognised award that is achieved by fulfilling theory and practical requirements of traineeship over years 11 and 12 of high school. Formal training is undertaken in conjunction with the Australian Training Company and practical industry experience is gained through paid employment during the term of traineeship incorporating sport administration, sports facility maintenance and sports program delivery. The initiatives outlined above reinforce the Government's commitment to increase opportunities for indigenous people to participate in sporting activities throughout New South Wales.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: Minister, I note the key responsibility of your portfolio is to improve the wellbeing of both individuals and communities through participation in sport and recreation and the development of community-based facilities. You did speak briefly about some of these issues. Can you please give the Committee some more information about how the grants program is delivering on this?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Madam Chair, I am happy for the Minister to tender that, if he wishes, and to deem it as the time has elapsed, if that assists the Minister and his voice?

CHAIR: No, thank you. We will proceed until 4.00 p.m. Please provide an answer Minister, if you so desire?

Mr KEVIN GREENE: Happy to do so. The Sport and Recreation grants program is part of the Government's ongoing commitment to building stronger, healthier and more active communities across New South Wales. In the last financial year the New South Wales Government provided over \$18.8 million for the operation of sporting associations, sports development grants and sporting facility capital grants. All of these programs contribute to increasing participation levels and delivering on a range of State Plan outcomes.

An amount of \$4 million was allocated to 317 clubs, councils and community organisations to assist with the development and upgrade of their local sports facilities. There has been a combined total investment by the Government of over \$22 million to around 2,000 sporting projects under the Capital Assistance Program since 2003. These grants work on a partnership approach, with the New South Wales Government providing up to 50 per cent of the net costs and the community or local council also making a contribution. The department's facility development grant programs are weighted towards regional areas. Since 1996 regional areas received: 58 per cent of the available funds under the Capital Assistance Program, and 65 per cent of available funds under the Regional Sports Facility Program.

Some examples include a number of field lighting projects in recognition of the trend towards more evening sports training and competition, and the need to optimise use of sporting fields; \$30,000 for the Western Suburbs AFL Club; \$18,432 for the Branxton Rodeo Committee; \$30,000 for the Sutherland Shire Softball Association; \$38,182 for Lake Macquarie's Toronto and Auston ovals; and \$30,000 for the Figtree Junior Soccer Club in Wollongong. A number of projects aimed at increasing the hours of available use of local pools were also funded including installation of gas-solar pool heating systems at Guyra and Uralla pools and a thermal cover for Darlington Point Shire Pool in Murrumbidgee.

A priority for funding through the Capital Assistance Program is for projects that improve safety for participants and spectators. Examples include the purchase of a safety and rescue boat for the Drummoyne Junior Sailing Club; installation of noise barriers at the Central Coast Junior Motorcycle Club; resurfacing of netball courts in Dareton and four tennis courts in West Wyalong; upgrades to canteen facilities at Springwood United Football Club; kiosk facilities at the Greenham Park Sporting Complex, Balranald and a canteen facility at the Alan Burns Oval in Trangie; and the provision of a new and safe electrical system at the Newcastle Petanque Club.

The Capital Assistance Program is also used to increase participation opportunities for groups in our community that face barriers in accessing sport and recreation. Some examples include \$30,000 for a skate park for the youth in Brewarrina; \$7,186 for a sailability storage facility in Pittwater; \$9,000 for wheelchair access to the 1st Bega Scout Hall; and \$8078 for an access ramp at Glenreagh Mountain Railway Recreation Facility in Glenreagh, which is in the Clarence electorate.

The Government committed a total of \$8 million to the New South Wales Surf Club Facility Development Program over four years. The funding was for capital projects specifically for the upgrade of surf life saving clubs. Over the four years of the program 52 surf life saving clubs have received funding for capital works, ranging from construction of new facilities to essential safety works to minor upgrades. In 2008-09 nine projects shared in \$2 million worth of funding. One of these was the Fingal Beach Surf Life Saving Club. The club experienced severe damage to its clubhouse following a fire in 2006. The substantial funding through this program has enabled the club to commence work on a new clubhouse, allowing the expansion of surf life saving services to the community and visitors to Port Stephens.

In 2008-09 grants totalling \$535,945 were awarded for 32 projects under the Safe Shooting Grants Program. This program assists shooting clubs to improve safety and comply with legislative requirements. Projects included the Murwillumbah Pistol Club, which received \$20,000 for the provision of steel baffling and extension to the height of the wall around the range to assist in compliance with requirements stipulated by the New South Wales Fire Arms Registry—which requires clubs in proximity to other buildings to have baffling and ensure bullets cannot stray; Dubbo Field and Game Club, which received \$15,000 for automatic traps which are considerably safer to operate, and a requirement under Occupational Health and Safety legislation; Tamworth Pistol Club, which received \$25,000 to redevelop their shooting complex and club house to enable them to host regional championships; and Wagga Field and Game Club, which received \$20,000 for the purchase of automatic traps, trap mountings and increased storage to improve safety and make the club more functional. Since 1998, when the Safe Shooting Grants Program was first offered, 88 per cent of the available funds under the program have been granted to regional areas.

The Government is committed to developing a robust sport and recreation sector through grant programs such as the Sports Development Program, which will provide funding to assist State sporting organisations and peak industry bodies to fulfil the activities detailed in their business plans. Over \$1.5 million has also been provided to support the operations of 11 regional academies of sport in New South Wales—10 of which are independent—nine of which offer programs to athletes in regional areas, and two of which support athletes in western Sydney.

The Government has a proud tradition of supporting people with disabilities to access sport, from the grassroots through to elite levels. In 2008-09 funding of \$350,000 was provided for the Disability Sport Assistance Program, with 37 projects receiving funding support. This program offers regular and ongoing participation opportunities for people with a disability. Projects include training and education for coaches, officials and volunteers, skill development, and the purchase of various modified equipment. Further funding provided in 2008-09 was: \$230,000 to support the member organisations of the New South Wales Association of Disability Sports; \$70,000 to support elite level athletes with a disability through the New South Wales Institute of Sport; \$25,000 for annual travel scholarships so that athletes can gain important international competition experience; and \$35,000 towards programs for emerging talented or pre-elite athletes.

The Government recognises the difficulties facing many country people who wish to participate in sporting and recreational activities. That is why in the past year over \$430,000 was provided to support athletes, coaches and officials in regional areas through the Government's Country Athlete Scheme, the Country Coaches and Officials Travel Scheme and the Far West Travel Scheme, which subsidises associated costs. A strong sport and recreation industry and quality local sport and recreation facilities are key to our commitment to boost regular participation by all sectors of the community. Through these grant programs the Rees Government is making it easier for residents across New South Wales to enjoy healthy active lifestyles.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Thank you, Minister, for that detailed answer.

CHAIR: That brings us to the conclusion of this budget estimates hearing. Thank you for your attendance, Minister Greene, Ms Mills and the other departmental officers. As I indicated earlier, any questions on notice will be sent to you for response within 21 days. The Committee members have up to two days from the conclusion of this hearing to lodge further questions on notice. The Committee secretariat will be in contact with you in that regard.

Mr KEVIN GREENE: It has been a pleasure. I hope my answers were as you required.

(The witnesses withdrew)

The Committee proceeded to deliberate.
