



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
First Session

Standing Committee
on
Public Accounts

Service Alberta

Tuesday, September 10, 2019
1:30 p.m.

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The 30th Legislature
First Session**

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Phillips, Shannon, Lethbridge-West (NDP), Chair
Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (UCP), Deputy Chair

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Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)
Feehan, Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (NDP)
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Hoffman, Sarah, Edmonton-Glenora (NDP)
Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (NDP)
Rosin, Miranda D., Banff-Kananaskis (UCP)
Rowswell, Garth, Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright (UCP)
Rutherford, Brad, Leduc-Beaumont (UCP)*
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* substitution for Searle Turton

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Standing Committee on Public Accounts

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Ministry of Service Alberta

Stephen Bull, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Office of the Corporate Chief Information Officer

Brandy Cox, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic and Consumer Services

Darrell Dancause, Senior Financial Officer and Executive Director, Strategic Planning and Financial Services

Cynthia Farmer, Deputy Minister

Laura Wood, Assistant Deputy Minister, ERP Transformation

1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, September 10, 2019

[Ms Phillips in the chair]

The Chair: All right. We have 1:30, folks, and I would like to call this meeting of the Public Accounts Committee to order and welcome everyone in attendance.

My name is Shannon Phillips. I'm the MLA for Lethbridge-West and chair of this committee. I will ask that members, staff, and guests joining the committee at the table introduce themselves for the record at this point, and then I will go to the members on the phone lines. We will begin to my right.

Mr. Gotfried: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Richard Gotfried, deputy chair and MLA for Calgary-Fish Creek.

Mr. Rowswell: Garth Rowswell, MLA, Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright.

Ms Rosin: Miranda Rosin, MLA, Banff-Kananaskis.

Mr. Guthrie: Peter Guthrie, MLA, Airdrie-Cochrane.

Mr. Walker: Jordan Walker, MLA, Sherwood Park.

Mr. Rutherford: Brad Rutherford, MLA, Leduc-Beaumont.

Mr. Bull: Stephen Bull, assistant deputy minister and corporate CIO, Service Alberta.

Mr. Dancause: Darrell Dancause, senior financial officer, Service Alberta.

Ms Farmer: Cynthia Farmer, Deputy Minister of Service Alberta.

Ms Cox: Hi. Brandy Cox, assistant deputy minister of strategic and consumer services as well as acting assistant deputy minister of shared services at Service Alberta.

Ms Wood: Good afternoon. Laura Wood, assistant deputy minister of ERP transformation.

Mr. Driesen: Rob Driesen, Assistant Auditor General.

Mr. Wylie: Doug Wylie, Auditor General.

Mr. Feehan: Richard Feehan, MLA, Edmonton-Rutherford.

Ms Hoffman: Sarah Hoffman, Edmonton-Glenora.

Mr. Dach: Lorne Dach, MLA for Edmonton-McClung.

Dr. Massolin: Good afternoon. Philip Massolin, clerk of committees and research services.

Mr. Roth: Good afternoon, everyone. Aaron Roth, committee clerk.

The Chair: We also have on the phone, I believe, Ms Renaud and Mr. Amery. Is that the exhaustive list so far? We welcome them as well. If they might introduce themselves on the phone, please.

Member Barnes, if you'd like to introduce yourself for the record, and then the others who are on the phone may do so.

Mr. Barnes: Drew Barnes, MLA, Cypress-Medicine Hat. Thank you.

Mr. Amery: Good afternoon. Mickey Amery, MLA, Calgary-Cross.

Ms Renaud: Marie Renaud, St. Albert.

The Chair: Okay. Very good.

For the record, obviously, the following substitution: Mr. Rutherford for Mr. Turton.

A few items of business. The microphones, if we've forgotten since the spring, are operated by *Hansard*. Please set your cellphones and any other devices to silent for the duration of the meeting. These committee proceedings are televised live on Alberta Assembly TV. The audio- and video stream and the transcripts of the meeting can all be accessed on the LAO website.

Now we will turn our attention to the agenda. Friends, are there any changes or additions to the agenda?

Seeing none, would a member like to move that the agenda for the September 10, 2019, meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be approved as distributed? Mr. Dach has moved it. All in favour? Any opposed? Members on the phone? Not opposed? Good. Then the motion is carried.

We'll move on to the next item, which is approval of the minutes. Do members have any errors or omissions to note in regard to the previous meeting's minutes?

If not, would a member move approval of the July 2, 2019, minutes? All right. Mr. Rowswell has moved that the minutes of the July 2 meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be approved as distributed. Is there any discussion on this motion? All in favour? Any opposed? Members on the phone? Not opposed? All right. Thank you. The motion is carried.

We will now move on to welcome our guests from Service Alberta, who are here to address the office of the Auditor General's outstanding recommendations as well as the ministry annual report for 2018-2019. Officials from Service Alberta will provide us some opening remarks not exceeding 10 minutes. Then, after that, we will turn it over to the Auditor General for five minutes of comments. After that, then I will share with the members, for the benefit of refreshing our memories, the question rotation, and we will move into the business of the meeting.

Mr. Stephan and Mr. Toor have joined us. Welcome, members. We are now moving on to Service Alberta to provide opening remarks not exceeding 10 minutes.

Without further ado, please go ahead, Service Alberta.

Ms Farmer: Good afternoon, and thank you. My name is Cynthia Farmer, and I am the Deputy Minister of Service Alberta. Thank you very much for the opportunity to come here today to present the ministry's annual report for the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

You've already met many of the members of the executive team, but we would like to introduce one other member, Manon Plante, our assistant deputy minister of the FOIP office, who is sitting in the gallery. Together as a team we provide executive leadership to Service Alberta, which, in turn, delivers vital services to Albertans every day.

Service Alberta plays a key strategic role for the government of Alberta and the citizens we serve directly through the support for front-line services and indirectly through the support for other government ministries. We connect with Albertans every day, typically through important stakeholder groups that we oversee and regulate, and we provide technology and business solutions for our government colleagues.

Service Alberta's goal is to provide timely and effective services to Albertans through our partners and stakeholders. The ministry supports Alberta's economy by protecting consumers and ensuring that markets are secure, competitive, and fair. Our two most public-facing areas of business are registry services and consumer services. Registries cover everything from motor vehicles, land

titles, and corporate registry to vital statistics and personal property registration services. Consumer services supports a fair and effective marketplace for consumers and businesses by developing, administering, and enforcing consumer-related legislation. Additionally, we administer Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, FOIP, which applies to public bodies, and the Personal Information Protection Act, PIPA, that applies to provincially regulated private-sector organizations.

Service Alberta also provides a wide range of services to other ministries in government. We provide leadership for information management and technology, IMT, across government, we provide government-wide access and privacy services in accordance with the FOIP Act, and we provide key financial services, centralized print services, and management of the province's internal mail network in more than a hundred Alberta communities.

Our provincial telecommunications and registries division serves municipalities and other levels of government in a couple of big ways. One is through the administration of the Alberta first responder radio communications system, or AFRRCS, as we call it. AFRRCS is the public safety radio system built for use by provincial and municipal first responder agencies, including police, fire, and EMS services. We also administer SuperNet, which connects schools, hospitals, libraries, municipal and indigenous offices, public safety services, and government buildings in rural and urban communities across Alberta.

As the 2018-19 annual report indicates, Service Alberta's operating expenditures for the fiscal year were approximately \$736 million. Projected revenues for the 2018-19 fiscal year were approximately \$656.7 million. The bulk of the investment in Service Alberta, approximately \$577 million, was spent providing business and technology services to the government of Alberta overall. We spent more in fiscal 2018-19 than we did in the previous year but still came in under budget.

Most of the increase in the actual expenditure for 2018-19 resulted from the implementation of the enterprise resource planning initiative. Enterprise resource planning, or ERP, is a government-wide initiative to replace aging technology systems that support internal business processes with trusted modern technology. ERP represents a significant change to the way the government of Alberta does business and delivers services to Albertans. Service Alberta spent approximately \$45.1 million on this endeavour. The rest of the increased spending, about \$9 million, came from the process of consolidating IT management and technology services to other ministries.

In terms of revenue, Service Alberta accrued approximately \$717.9 million in fiscal 2018-19, which was an increase of \$22.7 million from the previous year. Most of the department's revenue, more than \$638 million, came from registry-related services such as motor vehicle registrations, land titles, personal property, and business and corporations. That is an increase of approximately \$8.8 million over the previous year, primarily resulting from more commercial and passenger vehicle transactions.

1:40

Other revenue came from providing shared services to other ministries and external entities such as funding from natural gas suppliers and the Balancing Pool for the Utilities Consumer Advocate payments, payments for materials from the Queen's Printer, the payment from the RCMP for the use of AFRRCS and the government's public safety radio system. Those revenues came in at about \$79.1 million, an increase of \$14 million over the previous year.

Now I would like to take the opportunity to speak to certain recommendations that the office of the Auditor General has made

to Service Alberta in recent years. Let's start with November 2018, the Auditor General report outlining three recommended changes to the SuperNet contract. The Auditor recommended that Service Alberta improve the performance measurement processes, improve oversight of contractor compliance with the contract, and improve its approach to contract evaluation. These recommendations came as no surprise to the department. The previous SuperNet contract was 17 years old and needed significant updates. We are pleased to report that the SuperNet 2.0 contract reflected the suggested changes. We have been in communication with the office of the Auditor General, and we are prepared for reassessment at their convenience.

Another recommendation from the Auditor General, in May 2017, called for Service Alberta to complete a comprehensive inventory for IT applications used across government. In June 2017 Service Alberta's information management and technology group released the GOA application catalogue, which provided data for 1,500 applications. This catalogue helped our IMT professionals understand how IT applications can create impacts for other ministries and the services they deliver across the GOA. A second phase of our catalogue approach was introduced in March 2018 to provide in-depth data on system architecture, reliability, maintenance activities, and more.

In addition to tracking IT applications, we are also working to make them more reliable, such as when unanticipated disruptions in service occur. As with the SuperNet contract recommendations, we have been in touch with the Auditor General's office on our approach to IT applications management, and we are ready for reassessment.

We have also heard from the Auditor General about Service Alberta's emergency response capabilities. In 2014 the Auditor General recommended that we improve our ability to recover applications in the event of a disaster or major failure. In the last five years we have made a lot of progress to ensure services are available when they are needed most. We categorize each application based on the desired recovery time following a disruption. As of November 2018 more than 96 per cent of our critical systems have a disaster recovery plan that has been successfully tested. We acknowledge that more work needs to be done to enhance Service Alberta's state of preparedness for emergency. We have a plan in place to ensure that tests for disaster recovery plans for all critical applications will be completed, with the successful results by November 2020. We have advised the Auditor General that we will be prepared for reassessment at that time.

So we are prepared for a disaster event, but what about cybercrime? In 2012 the Auditor General recommended that we should inventory existing IT security measures, then take steps to implement controls, mitigate risks, and clarify responsibility. Our cybersecurity strategy has developed considerably since then. We introduced 10 information security management directives that outline basic IT security controls. We began conducting monthly assessments three years ago. At present 68 per cent of the controls are compliant, and we want to be at 100 per cent by 2022.

Risk assessment is also important. A robust process was implemented in February 2017 to ensure that all new and upgraded systems go through a formal threat and risk assessment process. Of the estimated 1,500 government systems, roughly 300 have gone through this process. Systems that have not changed are being assessed when time is available. As you can imagine, this is a lengthy process. Although it will take between eight and 10 years to complete all of the assessments, it is a low risk because they are internally focused. We built upon our cybersecurity principles with the IMT security risk framework, implemented in 2017. It includes

a number of processes, templates, and a security risk register that lists more than a hundred IMT security risks.

The Chair: Thank you, Deputy.

I will now turn it over to the Auditor General for his comments. You have five minutes, Mr. Wylie.

Mr. Wylie: Madam Chair, thank you. I'll be very brief. Actually, the deputy has done a good job of going through the outstanding recommendations, so I'm going to turn my time back to the committee chair.

The Chair: All right. Well, that was easy.

Our time allotment format for questions from committee members has been revised lately to reflect our two-hour meeting today. The first rotation, friends, will be 15 minutes each for the Official Opposition and government members. We'll start with the Official Opposition, we'll go on to government members, and then we have second and third and fourth rotations, which will be 10 minutes each, rotating Official Opposition and government members. The final rotation – and we'll remember that we put this forward as sort of a trial, if you will, to see if it works for us – is to have three-minute time slots each for any opposition committee member, followed by government members, that will allow members the opportunity to read questions into the record for follow-up, for which we are looking for a response as an undertaking by the relevant department.

I am now going to open the floor to questions from the Official Opposition. Because I am going to lead off some of the questions, I'm going to pass the chair over to Mr. Gotfried while I ask questions.

[Mr. Gotfried in the chair]

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, Madam Chair, now not as chair. Please proceed with the 15-minute allotment.

Ms Phillips: Sure. Well, thank you. I'm going to focus on outstanding Auditor General recommendations. In particular, what it appears to me is that most of the outstanding, long-standing recommendations have been satisfied by the department, but one has not, and it's an important one. The security risks issue remains outstanding, and security risks have changed considerably since the recommendation was first made in October 2012. I think that it's important to ask: what is the timeline for implementation of these recommendations, and how is the department meeting the cybersecurity risks of 2019 based on 2012 recommendations given that the department doesn't foresee satisfying this recommendation entirely until 2022, a full decade after the recommendations were first made?

Ms Farmer: Thank you very much for your question. It's a good recommendation from the Auditor General that we should be looking at cybersecurity, and I'm hoping that the committee is hearing that and that we've been working diligently, but as we develop our response in terms of dealing with a security risk management framework and those frameworks that are in place, it is a complex undertaking with our current systems. We have current systems that are being adapted, so we need to make sure that those new systems that come online fit within the cybersecurity. Also, how do we look at those systems that are currently in place, and how have we proposed as far as a bit of a longer timeline? It is a lot of work. The preproduction assessments in 2017 and – as I mentioned, the security risk management framework was implemented, and that was a really important piece for us to do to meet the recommendations of the Auditor General.

I think I'm going to ask Stephen just to respond a little bit more on the process and why it is taking so long.

Mr. Bull: Absolutely. With regard to the 2022 goal that we have, this is around having complete compliance with the information security management directives that were put in place and were approved in 2012, which, as you say, is a number of years ago. Those security directives are linked to an ISO standard, ISO standard 27000. While the directives are very high level, the standard still remains in effect and basically up to date with the types of threats that we encounter on a regular basis. The management directives themselves were things like making sure that we have physical security controls in place. Over the last seven years those types of physical security controls have evolved, so the target has evolved, but the directive still remains in effect. We expect to have everything 100 per cent compliant by 2022.

1:50

The other measure that was discussed was with regard to the legacy 1,200 applications that haven't had security threat risk assessments completed on them. As the deputy indicated, we consider that to be low risk, mainly because these are internal-facing systems, meaning that members of the public don't access these systems. They're not exposed to the outside world. They're just used internally. That being said, we do want to go through the process of making sure that we do those risk assessments. Again, the way that we do risk assessments evolves as the threats change, et cetera, so with any changes that we make to any of our systems, there is a refresh performed of the threat assessment that is based upon the types of tools and technologies that we have available but also, as I say, the different threats that are out there in an ever-changing world.

Ms Phillips: I can do a follow-up, Mr. Chair?

The Deputy Chair: Yes, Madam Chair. It's your time to use.

Ms Phillips: Yeah. So one follow-up, then. One of the things that we see developing is data governance protocols, in particular as these relate to the federal smart cities initiative. The federal government has come in for some level of criticism for not having a data governance protocol to accompany its smart cities initiative and the development of 5G. How is this government going to weave that into its work so that we are not following recommendations from 2012 that predate the technology that is in most of our phones today for data governance issues and challenges that we know are going to involve Albertans' data and the government of Alberta data more largely as well?

Mr. Bull: Would you like me to . . .

Ms Farmer: Sure.

Mr. Bull: Okay. I'd be happy to provide a more comprehensive, written response to this question, but at a high level, we have looked at all the different types of data that we have existing today within government. That data is given a type of classification, and then we have data governance rules around how that data then has to be protected. So we have protected A, B, C, et cetera. That is dependent upon the type of information that is contained, so is it personal information of Albertans, et cetera? Then we have rules, as I say, with regard to where that data can be stored, how people need to request access to that data, what's available on the open government portal, for example, but also rules around if we move to a cloud solution, again, the levels of encryption that are required, based upon type of data.

Ms Phillips: I'm done.

The Deputy Chair: Okay. You can pass it on to one of your colleagues if you wish.

Ms Phillips: All right. I will retake the chair now.

[Ms Phillips in the chair]

The Chair: I saw Mr. Dach, then Ms Hoffman second, please.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Chair. I just wanted to follow up on the same line of questioning as the chair had. It occurred to me, as the officials were speaking, that members of the public, whom we represent, are also listening to these conversations we're having in this room today, and they're hearing that the risk assessment controls will be in place by 2022. We've heard some explanation, technical analysis as to why, supposedly to give us some comfort that we're being protected, but I don't know if that's satisfactory to the public, if it's an explanation that the public would be comforted by. I'm wondering: if indeed you had a roomful of constituents, which, in fact, you do – you have a province full of them listening to you and perhaps reported to by the media – can we give some reassurance to the public, in terms that might be easily swallowed, that this time frame of 2022 to put these risk assessment controls in place is kind of a normal thing and that in the meantime we're keeping up to date with all the changing kaleidoscope of risks that we're facing every day?

The public now, in my view, is imagining, you know, somebody sitting in their basement in some far-off place in the world figuring out a way to get into whatever data site that they possibly can to create havoc or for whatever purpose they want, whether it's to disrupt our infrastructure or to just interfere with our elections or what have you. I'm just trying to see if we can get an answer that you feel the public could be comforted by in responding to this time frame that I think many people in the public would think is excessive.

Ms Farmer: Thank you very much for the question. I think that the public should be reassured that we have an IMT security risk management framework in place. I would also point out that since February 2017 all new and upgraded systems entering the GOA IT environment have been assessed from a risk perspective and their risks included in the corporate registry. So we have prioritized significant services, and I think that the public should be aware of that.

One other element that I think would be important for the public to know is that we do postproduction assessments. Since 2015 Stephen's shop performs monthly vulnerability scans on IT infrastructure and a biannual vulnerability scan of web-based systems, identifying any vulnerabilities, and those vulnerabilities are resolved based on criticality.

The Chair: Thank you.
I have Ms Hoffman.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Just building on that, it's been seven years since we've had the original recommendations. I imagine there was a timeline set at that point for when full implementation was anticipated, but I know that in the update, from my review of *Hansard*, in spring 2017 we were told that it would be done by April 2019. When that timeline changed from April 2019 to 2022, did we inform people that the timeline was changing, what was the rationale, and how do we have assurance that this new, modified timeline will be achieved for 100 per cent implementation by 2022?

Ms Farmer: Thank you very much for the question. In terms of the timeline I'm unable to answer in terms of the change of the 2019 timeline. What I can tell you is that in the department right now cybersecurity is a priority. I have been working with our team in terms of how we can accelerate this and how we can meet, as far as the intent of the recommendation, so that Albertans can have comfort in our systems but also as far as representatives being pleased and proud and secure in the service that we deliver.

I would like to take that question back, if you don't mind, in terms of looking at the 2019 time frame, and look at what commitments we made and provide a written response if that would be good.

Ms Hoffman: Madam Chair, if I might, that would be more than sufficient. I would really appreciate that. Also, if we could put in that written response what confidence we have that we would be able to achieve that new 2022 timeline. I get that timelines might need to be changed, but when we're setting a new one, I want to know what benchmarks we're putting in, what measures to make sure that we do achieve the 2022 timeline.

Ms Farmer: Happy to do that.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Mr. Feehan, we have three minutes remaining.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you. I'm just wondering a little bit about the sort of ongoing planning around the changes around the Internet technology and the need for security obviously becoming an increasingly complex part of the work that you're going to have to do. I'm wondering about your planning for the future and being in a place where we're responding more readily in terms of timelines for changes as they come forward and what kinds of resources you're putting forward to ensure that we're able to meet what's bound to be a greater need next year than it was last year, and that's bound to be true every year. I'm just wondering what your overall plan is for dealing with that change in complexity.

Ms Farmer: Thank you very much for the question. In terms of moving forward, just as we have in the past, with the framework that was introduced in 2017 – I think that's a very important guidepost. It's important that as we bring in new systems or we build new systems, we are actually looking at it and that it does meet the test within the framework. If we have to go back and readjust the framework, that is an important conversation.

In moving forward, we are very interested in terms of making sure that our systems are looking at security and risk on a day-by-day basis. We have staff for whom this is their job 24/7, in terms of looking at cybersecurity, looking at our risk, and looking at our systems. New programs that are coming in: as we mentioned, those are prioritized as far as that we test those systems against our security framework and ensure that they've met the base level of service prior to being launched.

Would that be fair, Stephen? Do you have another supplement along that?

2:00

Mr. Bull: Yes. The only thing that I would add is that we also participate in a number of Canadian forums specifically around cybercrime, cyberattacks, et cetera, so there is a lot of sharing of best practices between different provinces as well as the private sector. We also have an external organization that monitors our network 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and they continue to evolve the tools that they use as well to identify whether there are potentially some malicious attempts to access our system, of which

there are many every year because, unfortunately, that's the world that we live in.

Mr. Feehan: A follow-up?

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Feehan: Do you anticipate that you're going to need to put more energies and more resources into this type of work as time goes on? Is this going to sort of inevitably absorb more concern from the provincial government?

Ms Farmer: I think we need to have continuous thought, sir. I think that we need to continually be vigilant that there are individuals or groups out there that could be malicious. The framework has become important, and we have staff that are dedicated that are important. But the third component is to make sure that if we need other tools to use in terms of helping us with this work, whether it be a technology tool or whether it will be an outside agency, we will use them.

The Chair: Thank you, Deputy.

We will now rotate over to the government members for 15 minutes. I will make sure that we keep a good list, so I will keep an eye over on this side. We'll begin with Member Rosin, please.

Ms Rosin: Awesome. Well, thank you so much for being here today with us. My first question. Key strategy 4.3 on page 31 of your report states that the ministry is working to "modernize programs and services to be more inclusive and reflective of a diverse and growing population" by making it easier for certain groups to apply for or renew a driver's licence or access other registry services. Honestly, I'm not sure why the government constantly feels the need to focus on small factions of society rather than bettering the whole of our province. As I see it, accessibility to a driver's licence should be standard across the board if you want to ensure safety on our roads. So I would like to know if and how the red tape that prevents modernization can be cut across the board to make sure that registry services are readily accessible to everyone. And further: how do you foresee working with Alberta registry agents to ensure that all Albertans have fair and flexible access to the services they need?

Ms Farmer: Thank you very much for the question. It's important to know that in Service Alberta our mandate is from birth certificates all the way to motor vehicles to land titles, so we are partnering, really, with an Albertan on a day-to-day basis. They will need us at really significant milestones within their life. The Albertan may have sight impairments, hearing impairments, and we need to think in terms of: how do we support those Albertans in moving through those milestones? Our ministry does look in terms of: if we're launching a website, if we are sending out materials, we're looking at all Albertans. That's an important piece.

In terms of our partnership with registry agents, we have 224 active registry agents that are in communities across the province, that can meet with Albertans and help them move through those life moments. We'll continue to work with those Albertans in those key pieces.

When we consult with Albertans, when we consult with our registry agents, they tell us about things and they share with us through our consultations and our conversations about opportunities that we can have to streamline or opportunities that we can have to enhance service. We're very open to thinking about Albertans and how we can enhance our services and support them. In this case, particularly with our registry agents, how do we work

with our registry agents? They're a really important element for us to get good feedback.

Ms Rosin: Thank you.

Well, I'll move on. Key strategy 4.2 on page 30 states that the ministry is working to "improve Albertans' access to registry services through innovative service and delivery methods and technology." I'm wondering if you can speak to whether the ministry is exploring potential private-sector partnerships both in person and/or online to help make the registration process and registry services more accessible and efficient.

Ms Farmer: That's a great question, and I'm giving it a little bit of thought on how to deal with this one. Our registry service agents and the registry services are really important as far as groups to provide us with feedback, and they do. They are very good in terms of giving us an idea, a context for which Albertans are being challenged and for opportunities. We will continue to work with them. In the past we've looked at mobile registry services and whether that may be an opportunity. Also, there have been discussions about: how do we move more services online? That's an important conversation that we're having with registry agents, and that was happening in the 2018-2019 annual report, the consultation. We'll continue to do that in terms of as we move forward into this business year also.

Ms Rosin: Thank you.

Further to that, there appears to be some potential redundancy with processes. As an example, Albertans are required to register their business every single year. I'm wondering what the current status is with respect to not only the fees for registration services but to the current frequency of such transactions. I'm also wondering if the ministry is exploring or willing to explore the option of lengthening the period between renewals for businesses or within other services offered through the registry system and perhaps expanding multiyear options with respect to such registrations and renewals.

Ms Farmer: Those are all very good questions, and I appreciate those. As an answer I would say that the last annual report encompassed a period of time where questions were being asked, and we are in another budget year, where there may be opportunities for us to have those conversations in partnership with registries and other services. As I mentioned, last year – and we continue this year to have conversations with our important stakeholders.

Ms Rosin: Is that something we could request follow-up on?

The Chair: Well, hon. member, we are here to consider the annual report in a backward-looking fashion and the audited financial statements and outstanding recommendations. It is the job of a policy committee to recommend future action. Public Accounts has a specific mandate. I think that maybe what we can do is that during the three minutes of reading other questions into the record for an undertaking, if the question has to do with the consideration of the '18-19 report, then we can do that, further questions.

Ms Rosin: Okay. Perfect. Thanks.

Another one. The parameters of this one are quite narrow, but page 48 of your annual report states that \$8.8 million in revenues from 2017 to '18 were collected "mostly due to an increase in the volume of commercial and passenger vehicle transactions." I've come to understand that an out-of-province vehicle inspection is only valid for two weeks and that after that period the car must be re-inspected to be registered. This seems a little unnecessary and

burdensome, possibly, even costly for Albertans or businesses who are simply holding a stationary vehicle on their property until they find a buyer for that vehicle. There also seems to be some potential drain on registry resources, adding costs and using up valuable time but not necessarily increasing the ministry's revenues or effectiveness. I'm wondering if you can speak to whether amending this regulation by providing some additional latitude is something the ministry may consider.

Ms Hoffman: Just a point of order, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Yes, please.

Ms Hoffman: I think it's a fair question to ask the minister and to ask about policy-setting initiatives. Again, this is about looking at last year's financials and about the current policy. I really appreciate the question. I think it's totally fair, but I think asking the Auditor General and the public service about a policy initiative would be better directed towards a minister, and I think it's beyond the mandate of our committee, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Yeah. I think we should move on and, again, within the three minutes, if we want to ask in a way that considers the '18-19 annual report, then we can do that. Let's move on to the next question.

Ms Rosin: Could I maybe, I suppose, rephrase that as: can you speak to the effect that having to reregister or reinspect a vehicle every two weeks has had on either your budget or the cost to Albertans and if that is something that you see as maybe room for improvement? Is that better rephrasing?

Ms Farmer: I would be happy to provide a response specifically to that question, a written response. Thanks.

Ms Rosin: Thank you. How am I doing for time? I've got lots.

Okay. We understand that your minister has been meeting with the public-private registry agents and their association representatives across the province. I know you came out to my riding a few weeks ago. With an eye to providing enhanced levels of service, consultation, and access, particularly in the rural areas, I'm wondering if you can comment on some of the initiatives that are under consideration, maybe reducing red tape or reducing costs or enhancing service based on feedback.

The Chair: Hon. member, this questioning is directly out of order, so find a different one.

2:10

Ms Rosin: Okay. I guess I'll give up my time, and I'll pass it on to the next member. Member Walker, I think you're next in the rotation.

Mr. Walker: Is it me?

Ms Rosin: Yeah.

Mr. Walker: Is that okay, Madam Chair?

The Chair: Yes. It's your time.

Mr. Walker: Yeah? Great.

Well, thank you, guys, so much for being here. It's wonderful and very informative. I really appreciate it. Previous to this year's annual report Service Alberta's service modernization division performed a number of tasks for the ministry regarding crossministry IT support and facilitation for IT-related initiatives.

This year the service modernization division is not mentioned. Can you inform us as to which division of the ministry has taken over this work?

Thank you very much.

Ms Farmer: Thank you very much for your question. With the movement to consolidate IT services under Service Alberta, the division underwent a name change to reflect a larger role within government. All duties and functions under the previously named service modernization division have been retained under the office of the corporate chief information officer, including IT support and the facilitation of IT-related initiatives. That would be Stephen's area.

Mr. Walker: Do you want to add something there?

Mr. Bull: No. That was a perfect reply.

Mr. Walker: Okay. Wonderful.

Just following up on that, the Executive Council has a digital innovation office, set up in 2018, which has the stated mission of, and I quote: driving digital transformation. Does this overlap at all with IT's objectives of Service Alberta, and if so, where?

Ms Farmer: Thank you for the question. Service Alberta works collaboratively with the DIO, the digital information office, to support their small team in delivering a number of initiatives. This includes providing resources and support to drive digital transformation. The objectives of Service Alberta remain the same in addition to supporting specific projects with the DIO. We continue to drive innovation across GOA. We wouldn't see it as an overlap. We would see it as a change agent and one that is really important for government as we're moving forward and looking at what services are required.

Mr. Walker: Thank you.

Moving on, page 26 reads that "the Enterprise IT Environment . . . initiative" will "support more centralized governance and result in more effective GoA IT spending decisions." However, the ministry spent more money on technology services in 2018-2019 due to the centralization of GOA IT services. Can you explain whether this increased spending will make this work more efficiently, and if so, how?

Ms Farmer: Thank you very much. Efficiencies will be gained with leveraging IT talent, services, and solutions and funding on a GOA-wide basis. A current example of this is the work being done to reduce the number of data centres used by the GOA from more than 30 to three. The economy of scale will be leveraged to deliver the same or better service at a lower ongoing cost to Albertans. While year-over-year actuals increased by \$9 million, Service Alberta was under budget by \$48 million in 2018-2019. In 2018-2019 \$14.72 million was spent on this initiative, and when completed, annual savings of \$5 million will be achieved. The nature of information technology services creates some variation in spending based on the nature of projects being undertaken.

Mr. Walker: Thank you.

I'm going to move on now to enterprise resource planning. The government is in the midst of implementing a new enterprise resource planning system. Is the implementation on time and on budget?

Ms Farmer: Thank you very much. We're spending a lot of time on ERP. It's an important transformation for government and how we deliver services. As reported within our annual report in our financial statements, we were on time and on budget.

Mr. Walker: Great. As you may know, I share the same municipality with your minister. He's a great guy.

Okay. What government needs will the new system meet better, or is this purely a modernization to current standards?

Ms Farmer: You know, ERP is very exciting, so thank you very much for asking us this. We have hundreds of staff that are committed to ensuring that this is successful. The reason that we need ERP is to better meet as far as really important tasks. We're looking at adoption of industry-leading practices for corporate services across finance, human resources, and supply chain management. We're going to use modern technology and leading practices to really enable the GOA to be more effective and more efficient, so we're looking at automated processes, and we're looking at, really, thinking about how we can do things in a better way, less duplicative.

Some specific examples of how the new system will make things better for government are reductions in support costs, from retiring of old computer applications and improved productivity to procurement; consolidation of reporting on grant payments; purchasing and long-term contracts; efficiency on decision-making through workflows. Consolidation of interministry activity will be streamlined and have system integrity. I could go on and on. There are many more. But we're very excited about this transformation.

The Department of Service Alberta is very committed to its success, but so are many of the other departments that you'll be meeting with at Public Accounts.

Mr. Walker: Agreed. With the centralization of government IT services into Service Alberta, how will the ministry be tracking satisfaction across government departments, and how will you report the results to Albertans?

The Chair: You have 30 seconds, Deputy.

Ms Farmer: That's an important question. Satisfaction will be tracked in terms of ongoing discussions. We have CIOs that are attached to each department to look at the plans of each department and what their priorities are, and that's an important element. We do use surveys in terms of giving us feedback, and within the IT transformation, the use of that survey tool, as we do with IT services – we'll continue to use other tools to get that feedback.

The Chair: Thank you, Deputy.

We will now move on. We're now into the 10-minutes-each rotations. We will begin with the Official Opposition, with Mr. Dach.

Mr. Dach: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'd like to turn our attention to rural concerns right now, most notably broadband. As you may know, I'm the critic for Agriculture and Forestry with the Official Opposition, and I do feel a great level of concern expressed to me by the farmers of our province, who today, along with many of our resource extractors, express serious concern about the lack of broadband services in their areas. I know that this is a goal of the department and ministry: to implement broadband, when they're instructed to do so, as quickly as possible.

In 2016 the CRTC set a target of 50 megabits per second download, 10 megabits per second upload for broadband services to 90 per cent of Canadians by 2021 and for all Canadians by 2031-2036. Technically that may lose a lot of people, but I know that what people are asking me is: when the heck are we going to get broadband in our area so we can use it? In this day and age, with artificial intelligence and automation, farming today without broadband is unthinkable. Same thing with resource extraction.

This is something that somehow has to be maximum prioritized. I'm just wondering if you get the sense that you're really being pushed to prioritize that implementation of broadband so that people can join the rest of us who have that access and provide the services . . .

The Chair: Mr. Dach, if we could have our question refer back to either the annual report or the outstanding recommendations, please, as I said to Ms Rosin.

Mr. Dach: All right. Well, I would imagine that the question I would like to ask is: regarding projections on time frame, has your department ever done a projection on how long it might take for these goals to be achieved if left solely up to the private sector?

Mr. Bull: Yes, there was some analysis that was performed last fiscal year, so in 2018-19, that actually looked at a number of different scenarios. We've also had many discussions with Alberta's incumbent Internet service providers and telecommunications providers, and they would consider the investment in Alberta so that everyone would have high-speed broadband. They call it a generational investment. So, if left up to purely the private sector, by the time that you reach everyone – that means rural and rural remote – we could be talking approximately 20 years.

Mr. Dach: That's probably pretty scary to every sector – agriculture, resources – and anybody in the province because we need that broadband service way before then in all corners of the province. I know that we're hearing from rural areas that it's a significant lack. But I'm just wondering: given the time frame what impediments are there to getting it done quicker? Is it cost? How much are you thinking that it's going to cost to get this infrastructure that's lacking in place, and why is it taking so long?

2:20

Ms Farmer: It's a good and challenging question because reliable broadband, as you mentioned, does stimulate economic development, and it also stimulates job development. It really does empower all residents in Alberta, including those indigenous, rural, and remote communities.

We have been doing, as it says in the annual report, work to understand the demand, the speed, and the performance. Stephen talked about that we're working, looking at it with providers – and that has been happening last year also, within this annual report – to really understand what the opportunities are and what solutions we can bring to the table, whether it be government or as far as those providers. So we'll continue to – as far as within our department, it is a priority to do work as it was outlined in the annual report, and I believe we'll be continuing to have those conversations.

The Chair: Thank you.

At this point I'd just like to quickly pass the chair so that I can just ask a follow-up question to Mr. Dach if I might.

[Mr. Gotfried in the chair]

The Deputy Chair: Chair accepted.

Ms Phillips: Sure. Thank you.

To follow up on that response, then: will the department undertake to table the analysis that shows their analysis of demand and of timelines to satisfy that piece of the annual report? In other words, what I'm asking is: will the department undertake to show us, not tell us, that this is the case?

Ms Farmer: We're happy to share information reports that we have, so we will table some information, yes.

Ms Phillips: All right.

The Deputy Chair: Back to you, to be in the chair, Member.

[Ms Phillips in the chair]

The Chair: All right. I have Mr. Feehan and then Ms Hoffman.

Mr. Feehan: Okay. Thank you. I just want to follow up a little bit on the rural, particularly in my role as a critic for Indigenous Relations, about the planning that you have done and your annual report's intentions in terms of rolling out broadband to indigenous communities, largely, of course, First Nations communities and Métis settlements. I have a number of different questions, but I just want to start with an open question: is there a particular analysis that you've done that you could perhaps provide to us about the needs in the indigenous community as opposed to the larger community?

Mr. Bull: The analysis that was done in '18-19, which helped us to identify the 711,000 Albertans that don't have access to the CRTC's target, does break it down into different communities, including First Nations, Métis settlements. So when we provide that information, that will be included in there.

Mr. Feehan: Okay. Now, I understand that there was a recent ministers' tour that was to gather some new information. Was there any new information gathered, or was this a repeat of the analysis that you had previously done in the previous year?

The Chair: Mr. Feehan, that information would be contained in next year's annual report, so I think we'll table that question for now and move on to Ms Hoffman.

Ms Hoffman: Thanks. Building on that question of my colleague just previous to me, I'm wondering if it's possible to get – connecting back, I know we're talking about broadband, and we've also talked about SuperNet. The piece in between, for me, is from some of my recent experiences around health care workers who were doing things like home care and the increased amount of charting that we do in the home and, of course, gaps in being able to access that information if there are areas that aren't covered by access to a signal essentially. I'm wondering if there is information that you can share in relation to this report and the targets around having confidence that health care workers, for example, the connection between Alberta Health and Service Alberta, can access information and do the proper charting in communities that maybe today have black zones where they can't get a signal.

Ms Farmer: We're happy to share the information that we have. Those are important questions, so we're happy to go back and look at the reports and the information that we have and share it with the committee.

Ms Hoffman: Okay. Thank you very much. It would be great if there is existing information that relates to this last fiscal year and that goal. I imagine that there has been, because I know it's something many of us have probably heard about in our travels.

Thank you.

The Chair: All right.

Ms Hoffman: I have a separate topic.

The Chair: Yes. Please proceed.

Ms Hoffman: Can you give me a time reading?

The Chair: One and 46.

Ms Hoffman: Okay. I think it's long enough for me to get the question out there. I don't know that you'll have the answer today, and I'm fine with it coming back in writing. It's around the materiality of the review and the confidence that we have in the financials. I imagine that in a ministry the size of Service Alberta, percentage-wise, it might be a larger percentage of your financials that get reviewed. I'm wondering if you can talk a little bit about what the materiality looks like in preparing your financial statements and the relationship between that and perhaps the Auditor General's materiality for doing the audit of those financials, if we could talk about that level of confidence in producing these documents.

Mr. Dancause: The Auditor General actually sets that materiality level for us of their audit every year and what they would consider materiality. This year, because of the nature of the statements, it's a larger number, that takes into account all of the GOA. Our confidence level in the statements we provided as per the Auditor General's audit as well is high. The quality is there, the assurance is there that nothing materially is out, if that's your question.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much.

Do we know what the dollar amount was or the percentage of your total financials, just to give us an idea of what that . . .

Mr. Dancause: I can confirm for you.

Ms Hoffman: That would be great.

Mr. Dancause: We'll confirm that in writing, but I think it was around \$50 million, give or take.

Ms Hoffman: Okay. Of the total GOA?

Mr. Dancause: Of ours.

Ms Hoffman: Of Service Alberta. Okay. That makes me feel more confident. Good. But, yeah, if you could confirm that, I'd really appreciate it. If the Auditor General has anything to add about materiality for the audit that they perform, I'd be happy to receive that as well.

Mr. Wylie: Through the chair, would you like that in writing, or would you like me to respond now?

Ms Hoffman: If you can do it in 30 seconds, I think that's . . .

The Chair: Three. Three seconds.

Ms Hoffman: Oh. In writing would be excellent.

The Chair: All right. We will now rotate over to government members for our 10-minute rotation, starting with Mr. Walker, please.

Mr. Walker: Thank you so much. What I'm going to do – my question is through the chair here – is circle back to my previous question. I felt you guys – we were sort of cut off. You didn't have enough time. This is a question regarding the centralization of government IT services, which is very important to Albertans, including constituents in my area of Strathcona county. Just again, with the centralization of government IT services into Service Alberta, how will the ministry be tracking satisfaction across

government departments, and how will you report the results to Albertans?

Thank you.

Ms Farmer: Thank you very much for the question. As mentioned, we track in different ways in terms of our relationships, in terms of departments, and in terms of what our department priorities are and whether we have met targets in terms of meeting their priorities. Many departments will have a priority of a certain system interface that they're expecting, so we'll be tracking in terms of those plans.

The second piece is really those surveys that we plan on launching. That would be surveys that are similar to what we already have in place, where if you have called the IT desk, where you've had a problem and you've had an interaction with the staff at the help desk, it'll be followed up as far as a bit of a survey of how you liked the services. That's a really important information element for our department. We're looking at how we can duplicate that in terms of ensuring satisfaction for departments.

The piece that we'll also be looking at is for Albertans, and that will be another conversation that we'll be having in terms of: what does an Albertan see and what do they experience when they're using those online services with the government of Alberta? We do know that in our phone lines, the 310 line, we do get satisfaction information there, and we receive over a million calls in terms of Albertans asking for help. So we do get a sense of how they're feeling about the service that they receive also.

Thank you.

Mr. Walker: That's some great information. Thank you for that.

My next question. The Ministry of Health IT services: I see they're not being folded into Service Alberta's mandate, and that's interesting. Is this simply an issue of size and scope? Please explain.

Ms Farmer: Thank you for the question. It's a very good one. It's a matter of phasing. It's a matter of that the Ministry of Health IT services were not folded in at the beginning due to the size and complexity. Really, it was intended to be in a future phase discussion, and I don't believe that any conversations happened during the '18-19 business year in terms of the timing of that phase. The number of services that did co-locate and come together within Service Alberta has kept us very busy, but as we've talked about, there are some economies, some learnings. When we move to the Health conversation, in that phase there will be a lot to build from in terms of those experiences.

2:30

Mr. Walker: Thank you.

What would you see as the conceivable benefit – and is there any? – if, once this phasing is completed, you were to eventually integrate services for the Ministry of Health under Service Alberta or overall? Once you get there, would that just really complicate and convolute things more than it would help? What do you see overall as the benefits, and what are sort of the complications? You don't have to go too deep into the weeds but just in general.

Ms Farmer: It's a good question, and it's an important conversation. The Ministry of Health has a significant role in terms of Alberta Health Services, its size and its complexity, so there would have to be a lot of attention as to: what is the opportunity, and what are the challenges? It's a really important conversation. I believe that last year, '18-19, there were conversations that those would be for last year. Those conversations were so critical; the timing was off. But as we learned last year, those kinds of questions will be important in considerations of any future phasing.

Mr. Walker: Thank you.

Moving on, what are some of the challenges you are facing as you centralize and integrate IT services across ministries? Is it particularly certain ministries that are challenging for whatever IT or technical reasons, or is it other issues? What are the main challenges?

Ms Farmer: I'm going to pass this to Stephen. As our CCIO I think he can give us a good frame of the challenges.

Mr. Bull: Thank you very much, and thank you for the question. Absolutely, whenever we look at a single governance model, we have a number of challenges but we try to turn those into opportunities.

Really, it's a change of shifting expectations for ministries. In the past they were used to having their own control, their own budgets for IT, and they were able to prioritize and make sure that the projects that they wanted to see move forward always moved forward. That doesn't necessarily mean that those projects were the highest and most important projects for Albertans. By moving to a centralized model, we now have that opportunity to have a shared governance model so that the decision-making around priorities actually looks government-wide, which still leaves them sometimes a little bit frustrated that some of their projects aren't moving forward, but it is for the greater good.

Another challenge that we had is that historically some ministries were dependent upon contingent labour. Those were contracts that they had with individuals, and those individuals provided support and also did some development work of their application portfolio. That's a concern to us for a number of reasons, especially because it means that the knowledge of those systems isn't held within government of Alberta staff. When there is an inevitable turnover or change in contractors, sometimes we've been left a little bit in the dark with regard to the best way to support and make sure the systems remain available. Again, one of the challenges we had is moving from that model, where it was very much dependent upon individual contractors, to making sure that we're moving forward with a model where we have better governance over all of the systems, where we understand the systems more and can make sure that they're available to the right level of resiliency.

Mr. Walker: Thank you so much. That was very thorough. I really appreciate that.

Just following up with a supplemental, what would you say are some of the benefits and cost savings that are already being realized from this initiative? If you could give some examples, that would be wonderful.

Thank you.

Mr. Bull: The deputy mentioned earlier our EIE initiative, where we are consolidating data centres. We started off with over 30 data centres in the GOA. We are now down into the teens, and the goal is to get down to three by September of next year. Through the investment that's being made there, the eventual savings will be \$5 million per year. That's one example.

Mr. Walker: Thank you so much.

Madam Chair, I'll pass my time on now to Member Rowswell.

The Chair: Yes. You have two minutes.

Mr. Rowswell: Two minutes. Okay. I will start.

I appreciate the conversation that MLA Dach had with regard to broadband and the SuperNet. I've been learning about this and the importance of it and the lack of it and the problems that it's creating

around communities in my constituency and, I'm sure, all over rural Alberta. Can the ministry provide the committee and Albertans with an update on the status of the Auditor General's recommendations from May 2017, particularly with respect to defining performance measurements for the SuperNet?

Ms Farmer: We're happy to provide that as far as a bit of an update. While the office of the Auditor General conducted the legacy SuperNet contract management processes audit between June 2017 and January 2018 and presented its findings in 2018, Service Alberta has been working since 2015 on procuring and implementing improvements needed to bring the 17-year-old contract into alignment with today's practices and approaches. As I mentioned, we were able to negotiate as far as requirements within the contract, and we have let the Auditor General's office know that we're ready for a reassessment on that piece.

Mr. Rowswell: Okay. From what I understand, the SuperNet is there and that it's just a function of connecting and that the cost of connecting is prohibitive for a lot of people, businesses or individuals and towns. Is there a process to monitor the performance of the contracts in light of the experience with SuperNet 2.0?

Mr. Bull: Yes. From a SuperNet perspective, the contract that we have that we call SuperNet is with regard to the connectivity into public-sector institutions, so hospitals, schools, libraries, government offices around the province.

The Chair: I'm sure we'll get back to it.

In the meantime we are now in our next 10-minute rotation. I believe it was Mr. Dach who wanted to lead off, and we'll take it from there in another 10-minute rotation, please.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to ask one more question with respect to broadband as we are on a bit of a roll here. Really, it seems to be that all sides of the House have a concern about implementing broadband as soon as possible to benefit our rural communities and businesses. I'm wondering: with respect to the annual report and the needs assessment and demand analysis that was done therein, has there been any attention drawn to or been any analysis done to determine what the aggregate annual loss or cost has been by sector of not having high-speed broadband in all corners of the province? If you look at the cost to the agricultural sector or resource extraction, whether it be oil and gas, whether it be forestry, has there been attention paid to what the actual losses have been on an annual basis?

Ms Farmer: Thank you very much. It's a very good question. Unfortunately, I don't have the answer to that question. We're not aware, Stephen and I, at this point in time that there was that research done, but we will go back to the department and talk to our colleagues within the department to see if there was that work done within the department or if there's any other information that we can provide you to answer that question.

Mr. Dach: More specifically, what I'd like to know is if indeed the telescope should be on what the advantage would be of having it now economically versus not having it. What economic cost annually is there?

Ms Farmer: We'll go back to the department and see if that work was done last year, within the 2018-2019 year, or whatever information the department had and share it with you.

Mr. Dach: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Feehan.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you. Just when you're doing that analysis that you just spoke to, I would love to know if there's any particular emphasis on indigenous communities as well.

I guess that really leads into the question that I have with regard to the broadband. What kind of procedures do you have in place to ensure that First Nations and the Métis settlement communities are not left to the last in this whole process? In your annual plan do you have a specific designated structure of working with the indigenous communities in order to make sure that they stay up with the rest of the communities?

2:40

Ms Farmer: That's a very good question. In the maps that I've seen on SuperNet and broadband and in looking at what's available throughout the province, it's applied from a geographical point of view and where the schools, the hospitals are. We can go back and look in terms of if indigenous communities were included, but the maps that I've seen to date are primarily of the province, that Albertans need access, and what it would take to move as far as that conduit so that they could have the access.

Mr. Feehan: Let me just give you some context to my question a little bit. My concern is always, of course, that indigenous communities have a smaller population than others, so if you just simply left it to saying, "We'll go to the next-largest centre," every time they would inevitably be left till the last. I'm very concerned about that. I think the same questions that are being asked by MLA Dach would refer to the indigenous communities. You know, how much economic opportunity is lost? They already are all the smallest communities, and now they're going to be farther behind than everybody else in terms of the Internet. I just would like to see in the annual plan some kind of specific emphasis on ensuring that we don't end up having this divide between indigenous and nonindigenous communities.

I cut you off, Mr. Bull. Perhaps you wanted to answer.

Mr. Bull: The only thing I was going to add was that in fiscal '18-19 we did two rounds of meetings specifically with First Nation and Métis advisers, and that was to talk to them specifically about some of the challenges they face. We also work closely with a number of First Nation Internet service providers and also TSAG, the technology service advisory group for First Nations, and we have supported them in a number of funding requests that they've put in to the federal government, some of which have been successful and are actually resulting now in improved services in a number of First Nations, especially in the north of our province.

Mr. Feehan: Let me just follow that up with one more technical question. Are there any interjurisdictional impediments to the province of Alberta providing those kinds of resources on Crown land that the First Nations live on?

Mr. Bull: We haven't come across any issues to date around that.

Mr. Feehan: So that won't stop us from driving the line up the road?

Mr. Bull: No. There's always a process you have to go through, of course, to get approvals to put in infrastructure. As I say, they have been successfully completed. That includes going into one of the national parks as well.

Mr. Feehan: Okay. I wonder if I might just switch the nature of the questions I'm asking now. I know that there is an increased

emphasis under performance measure 3(a) about increasing the number of invoices that are paid electronically. I just wanted to know: is there some economic analysis around that? Is that saving us money as a province, or does that save individual Albertans money, having moved in that direction?

Ms Farmer: Thank you very much for the question. Service Alberta encourages other departments to use electronic invoicing wherever possible. We provide information to other departments on the availability of electronic invoices, and we ask our partners to use this option as often as possible. Albertans are speaking to us, businesses are speaking to us about wanting that service to be available. Timeliness: the turnaround times are really important for them, particularly for businesses. We've heard a lot from businesses in terms of a tough economy and that it's really important that if we can move to an electronic version to pay, they would prefer that. Our department works very closely with other departments in terms of that choice.

Mr. Feehan: I support this happening. I'm glad to see that it's part of your annual plan to move forward on this and meet the needs of businesses in the province. I also, then, become worried about the security issues that are involved with that form of payment, particularly the nature of phishing scams and so on. We had an unfortunate event at MacEwan University, where a legitimate bill was paid to an illegitimate receiver, and I'm just wondering whether or not we need to have concerns about that or if you have a plan.

Ms Farmer: Thank you very much for the question. I'm going to pass it to Laura. We introduced when we talked a little bit about moving into ERP and the enterprise risk – but there is a specific step within that process in terms of ensuring that invoices are triangulated. It's just to answer your question.

Laura, could you share that?

The Chair: You have two minutes, so straight to the point.

Ms Wood: Okay. Thank you. As part of ERP we're adopting leading practices in expense management and expense payments, invoice payments, and so forth. We're doing that with our new SAP system, our new ERP software, so it wouldn't go out by e-mail anymore; there would be a more direct payment. That's where we want to make sure that we have better access for electronic transfer, not through e-mail, and that we comply with the highest security standards. I know the issue came up earlier about how we are protecting that data, and very much as Stephen Bull commented on our SISO standards, our security standards, the same applies to our ERP solution. Through last fiscal year we did our due diligence with our service provider, and during that time we found that our service provider met or exceeded our security standards on that front, so that gave us more comfort that we're protecting Albertans' information, privacy, and also, you know, any fiscal transactions.

Mr. Feehan: Has this movement to the ERP system caused expenses for people on the other end? Do they also have to adopt a program similar to yours in order to make sure that they're secure on their end?

Ms Wood: Our goal is to make it easier to do business with government, and the process shows us that. As we roll out, that'll be a very important measure for us to continue to check.

Mr. Feehan: So you have a measurement for that?

Ms Wood: I don't have one today. It's part of our benefits planning of the future.

Mr. Feehan: Okay. Good.

Ms Wood: So not to share today, but it's certainly a priority.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you.

The Chair: All right. That draws that element to a close. We have 10 seconds left.

We will now move over to government members again for another, I believe, 10-minute round. Right? Yes.

Mr. Rowswell: Thank you for that question, MLA Feehan. Just, you know, one of my thoughts was, "What are you doing?", and I think you've described that quite nicely to meet your targets. A supplemental question to that is: can you point to examples of red tape or IT inadequacies that may be inhibiting you from reaching your 90 per cent target, and how do you plan to eliminate those barriers? If not, that's fine.

Ms Wood: Thank you for the question. I think, in pointing to inadequacies and understanding the direction that we need to go, through last fiscal year we did a study called process review and renewal. We took an enterprise-wide approach in understanding what the leading practice is that we need to adopt to make sure that we have efficient and effective red-tape-removed processes to serve Albertans. That was a huge priority of last fiscal year leading into our solution design and then implementation. Big priority for the ERP program.

Mr. Rowswell: All right. Good. Just keep doing what you're doing.

Ms Wood: Thank you.

Mr. Rowswell: Going back to broadband, I hear a lot of – like, when I talk to the mayors and councils and stuff throughout my constituency, they're concerned about rural depopulation because the kids just say, "I'm getting out of here; I've got to go to where I can get better Internet connection," or businesses have said, "Well, I'll put up with this for now, but if it doesn't improve in a year, I'm out of here." I've had mayors tell me that. They're just going to go to someplace that has a better connection. So it comes to the survival of rural Alberta and making sure we keep young people wanting to be there.

Do you believe the original targets and objectives, benefits of the SuperNet will still be realized by the majority? I know from the tour that was going around that apparently 80 per cent of Albertans have access to broadband compared to a much smaller number in Saskatchewan, but the 20 per cent is rural. I'm just wondering. Do you think it's possible to speed that up? The problem, as I see it: we have the SuperNet; the connectivity is the expensive part that's keeping it from getting done. Just what are your plans?

2:50

Mr. Bull: Thank you for the question. You're completely correct that the big gap is in rural Alberta and especially rural, remote Alberta. The SuperNet has been used by the private sector to enable broadband services in some regions of the province and some of the rural areas. Under the SuperNet 2.0 procurement, which was under way in last fiscal, '18-19, one of the requirements of the proponents is to put forward a plan as to how they will use SuperNet to support broadband, to support municipalities and Internet service providers. So that is something that will be coming as part of that contract.

Mr. Rowswell: Right. Well, thank you. My last question is about MyAlberta ID. In regard to the MyAlberta ID program the annual

report mentions its use in Advanced Education and Alberta Health Services. Are there other ministries using it, and if so, how?

Ms Farmer: Thank you very much for that question. In addition to Advanced Education and AHS we have a number of ministries that are using MyAlberta digital ID: Alberta Health for MyHealth records; Service Alberta for Alberta personal property registration electronic system; Community and Social Services, service jobs information system; Labour and Immigration, economic standards complaint service; Justice and Solicitor General, personal directive registry; Advanced Education has a number, quite a number. ApplyAlberta would be one, learner pathways transfer credit, MyTradesecrets profile, MyTradesecrets application. I won't go through all of Advanced Education, but they use the tool.

The Chair: These can be tabled instead of rattling them off into the record.

Ms Farmer: Thank you.

Mr. Rowswell: That's very good. That's good.

The last other question was – this might be redundant – with the progress you have made, are you making MyAlberta ID compatible with Albertans' My Service Canada Accounts?

Ms Farmer: Yes.

Mr. Rowswell: Okay.

Ms Farmer: Starting on August 28, Albertans with a verified MyAlberta digital ID can now easily register for My Service Canada Account. So that's within this year.

Mr. Rowswell: Very good. Thank you.

I'll pass on my time.

The Chair: Okay. I have Mr. Gotfried next.

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you to our guests today for all their incredible hard work and information today in clarifying how you're working hard for Albertans. My first question: \$424 million of your expenses, almost 16 per cent of the budget, of course, is being invested into IT and new strategies and services there. I wonder. A lot of this is the investment in the IT, but the other side of it is: how does it save us in terms of processes, and how has it saved us in terms of processes like data entry, which maybe in the past was done on a very manual basis? Now with some of the IT infrastructure there is an opportunity for that to be captured electronically rather than to have somebody not doing a particularly exciting job sitting there doing data entry on a keyboard. Could you maybe explain how you're not only implementing the IT infrastructure in place but how that's helping in terms of developing better processes, more efficient processes to save money in other parts of the enterprise as well?

Ms Farmer: I'm going to make a couple of comments, and I'll give the opportunity for Laura to speak. Consolidating IT services is an important element in terms of government to think about: how do we move our business processes forward, how are we more thoughtful, how are we more efficient? When the IT services were spread across different departments, we didn't necessarily have the assurance that we needed in terms of that it wasn't the most efficient and effective manner. So we consolidated services, and that was a significant piece of work last year. But now we're working on – as we mentioned, we've been really committed and working with enterprise, the ERP system, that Laura has been leading.

I'm going to ask Laura just to provide some examples of where we plan on seeing efficiencies.

Ms Wood: Thank you for the question. Last fiscal year, as I mentioned, we undertook a study called process review and renewal, and that helped us evaluate the corporate services processes across the enterprise and see where we could adopt standard leading practices for government. That helped us identify: if we have a lot of manual transactions, are those necessary? Is there a system solution that could remove those tasks? We found that in 90 per cent of the cases we could adopt standard-leading technology. Our new ERP solution is designed to come in now and implement those processes that we studied last year. The remaining 10 per cent still are able to be standard, but there were unique things required for government that we would need to see to.

But, all in all, it allowed us to remove very transactional and task-based work, replace that with an automated, very modern standard process, and then spend our time instead on evaluation and on exceptions management and more strategic work as well as getting better information for all of government to support decision-making. Those manual efforts that exist today – you know, it doesn't aggregate very well, and we don't have a very good enterprise lens on that, so the upgrades we're making in process and system together should really support a more modern, efficient government.

I hope that answers your question.

Mr. Gotfried: Yes. Thank you. I think, again, it's about focusing our human resources on doing effective work, and I'm happy to see that that IT platform is helping to achieve that.

I'd like to move just on to some questions with respect to consumer protection. In the annual report the desired outcome 1 is that consumers are protected, with five key strategies and two performance measures. In that desired outcome it says: "Consumers are protected": the department measures achievement of this outcome by tracking the number of programs and educational initiatives that Albertans access." I guess my question is: how does Service Alberta determine that the new consumer protection programs and educational initiatives are effective and having the desired impact on consumers? I'm having a little bit of a hard time understanding how just accessing the educational and program information is actually delivering better consumer protection. Maybe you could just clarify that for me.

Ms Cox: Thank you for the question. Certainly, the performance measure – when you're talking about an output in terms of numbers of initiatives, I certainly can understand the perspective of: how does that correlate to an outcome to ensure that we're improving performance around consumer protection? What I can say is that the types of initiatives that we undertook . . .

The Chair: All right. I'm sure we'll get back to it.

I will now move over to the Official Opposition. I believe I have Member Hoffman first. Take it away.

Ms Hoffman: Thanks. This round I'd like to ask some questions around the consumer investigator unit, which I see completed 849 investigations. I'm wondering if you could confirm, first of all, that it's all complaint driven, and if it's not, if you can expand a little bit on the process and how you initiate your investigations.

Ms Cox: Certainly, and thank you for the question. You're right. There is a portion that is complaint driven. We get about 3,000 complaints a year. Those don't all actually translate into investigations. There's a triaging process. You know, sometimes

there are things that are for other jurisdictions. Maybe it's in municipal purview. They can be redirected, those types of things. Then we get down to that 800 number that you mentioned earlier. That's one portion of the work.

We also do have an intelligence unit that works proactively with a network across Alberta as well as with other organizations in different jurisdictions across Canada that look at kind of an organized crime element, those types of things. We want to make sure that we are in fact being proactive and seeing if there are things that we should be looking into on our own before a complaint is actually triggered. So there are two pieces to the investigations.

Ms Hoffman: If I could just follow up, Madam Chair. With regard to the last year, 849, were there any complaints that were carried over into the next fiscal? Of the 3,000-ish was 849 the total number that warranted investigation, or were we lacking resources to do the full number of investigations that were warranted?

Ms Cox: The 849 do relate to the investigations that we actually undertook. That isn't the number that were closed off. There are ones that do span multiple years, and that's not – you know, we can't say that that's just about resources. Some of them are very complex. They require lots of investigation, lots of conversations with folks, including, again, with other police organizations to support. Some of them do in fact take a couple of years to get through because of their complexity, but, again, with the hope that we have an effective resolution to those investigations so that consumers are protected.

3:00

Ms Hoffman: Thank you so much. I think bridging from one of the questions we talked about this morning at our professional development: having looked at the evidence from this last year, looking backwards, is it your opinion that there were sufficient resources, or would we have been able to complete more if there were additional resources in this area, or is it simply that this is as many as can be completed in the time frame; it wasn't resource dependent?

Ms Cox: I would say that my understanding is that all of the investigations that were required were in fact addressed or started, that, you know, we do have good caseload management processes in place. We certainly didn't turn any complaints away because of a lack of ability to undertake investigations.

Ms Hoffman: Good. Then another follow-up from there. I think the acts that relate to this – and correct me if I'm wrong – are the Consumer Protection Act, Residential Tenancies Act, Real Estate Act, Condominium Property Act, and Land Titles Act. I'm just wondering if completes coalesce under one act more than another, and if so, are there themes that were identified? Where do we spend the majority of our time in relation to those acts, or am I missing any acts?

Ms Cox: Actually, the investigations unit does have some purview to investigate things under the Criminal Code. There's a delegation that's offered to them. But the majority of them are through the Consumer Protection Act. Then there is also a major caseload component. Again, that's through that organization of policing-type organizations that work together to support who's in the best position to support doing those investigation pieces. But the other pieces of legislation that you referenced in terms of residential disputes, they fall under a different group, not the investigations unit.

Ms Hoffman: Okay. Excellent. Very good to know.

Around the Consumer Protection Act is there a specific area of consumer rights that there were complaints focused around in that area? Is it around online purchases? Is it around other things that are happening in the community? Where in terms of consumer protections were the majority of the complaints?

Ms Cox: I don't have the exact statistics. What I do know is that many, many of our cases relate to door-to-door sales.

Ms Hoffman: Yeah. I had one recently where somebody said that my neighbour down the street referred him to me, and I immediately picked up my phone and called, and I was, like: hey, I'm sure you didn't. It's amazing how – and, you know, I'm probably not one of the more vulnerable people in my neighbourhood, but if somebody used my name to one of my neighbours, I certainly would be deeply concerned that they were using other neighbours to help validate their issue. If individuals in my neighbourhood, for example, have these kinds of experiences, how can we initiate these kinds of complaints, and how could I support that work through my MLA office, in looking backwards at where some of these were launched?

Ms Cox: Yes. There are multiple venues for people to report complaints, and we can follow up in writing with the appropriate websites and telephone numbers if that makes sense.

Ms Hoffman: Yes, please.

Do we still have time remaining?

The Chair: You have a bit of time if we have other matters that we would like to canvass in this 10-minute time.

Ms Hoffman: Sure. Why don't we share with my colleagues. If they don't, then I'll continue.

Mr. Dach: I've got one quick curiosity question that we might deal with now. That's just basically, and it revolves around – I think you talked earlier about the electronic invoicing. I wonder if that reaches into that payment that you have online, wherein individuals who receive photoradar tickets in the mail, if they look at those tickets and look to pay that by cheque, by mailing it in, and thereby avoid a service charge, they will find nothing on the printed ticket that is in their mailbox to suggest that there is that option available to them. Every option on that printed ticket involves going to a courthouse, a registry office, or online, where you will be charged a service fee. So I'm not sure if it's an intended consequence or what the reasoning was behind it, to eliminate any reference on the printed ticket to the option to pay that fine by sending a cheque by mail directly to the appropriate office in Calgary. I won't say whether or not I speak from total personal experience, but I have witnessed these tickets on a few occasions, and I can tell you for sure that there is no reference whatsoever to that. I'm just wondering, if indeed that is a matter of a consumer, if it should be addressed by your department.

Ms Cox: Certainly – and thank you for the question – Service Alberta: one of our roles is to facilitate things like the payment of tickets, but actually what's on the ticket, those types of things, is done through Justice and Solicitor General. So I may offer that you may wish to redirect that question to officials from that department.

Mr. Dach: I'll tell my friend about it.

Ms Cox: We will gladly take your payment, though.

The Chair: Any further questions?

[Mr. Gotfried in the chair]

Ms Phillips: Okay. I am going to begin with one, but I'll pass the chair. There won't be time for a response, so we'll get back to it on the next rotation.

Going back to the outstanding AG recommendation around information assets and security, has the department met with relevant security and intelligence officials on all of the latest security threats, is there an ongoing relationship, and how are you showing the public that you are responding to their recommendations in an environment that is changing rapidly, particularly with the development of 5G and different, if you will, developers of that 5G network? We will get back to that because we have one minute. Perhaps if Mr. Bull would like to begin that, and then the beeper will beep.

Mr. Bull: Absolutely. Thank you for the question. Yes, it is an ever-changing world, so members of our information security office are members of professional bodies. Those professional bodies continue to provide materials, training, education, et cetera, to maintain their knowledge of what is happening and changing in the world. We are also a member of working groups that go across Canada, again, looking at the different types of threats and the evolving threats that are appearing. We work closely with law enforcement where needed on some of the investigations that have been performed, for example. So, absolutely, we remain up to date with regard to the different types of threats that are out there, and I'm pleased to say that unlike other jurisdictions around the world, we haven't fallen foul of any of the attempts to access our systems and do malicious things.

[Ms Phillips in the chair]

The Chair: All right. We are back down to a 10-minute rotation, and we are with Mr. Gotfried.

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Madam Chair. We'll double back on where we left off if that's fine with you. Just again talking about the educational initiatives and programs and how, I guess, maybe I view that as – it says, again, that our objective is “consumers are protected.” I maybe think that that's a way of helping consumers protect themselves, which, of course, is a big issue there. Maybe you could explain to me again how you're inferring some of the metrics on that educational and program outreach with actual protection of consumers and how you're using that data to actually drive some of your programs forward?

Ms Cox: Yes. Again, this performance measure that talks about the number of educational initiatives, or if you're looking at performance measure 1(a) where we talk about the “number of new or expanded consumer protection initiatives,” that measure is really about advancing an agenda around consumer protection. So we do look at, you know, the types of initiatives that we undertook in '18-19: amending the automotive business regulation so that consumers have information when they're purchasing a vehicle that tells them how it was used and if there was extensive damage and those types of things. We also advanced the ticket sales regulation to make sure that bots weren't purchasing tickets and then turning around and selling those out on the market for quite significantly higher types of prices, as well as looking at a regulation around high-cost credit.

Those initiatives are all aimed at protecting consumers and looking at what the risks are out there, understanding that the environment is constantly changing. The things like bots weren't there seven years ago, so we want to be able to be aware of what

things are on our landscape, and: how can we put protections in place for consumers that respond to those new threats?

Mr. Gotfried: What other means are you using in terms of measurement to determine whether consumers are protected, recognizing that the education and the program outreach is important, but how else are you measuring that to ensure that we have appropriate not only legislation but the administration and perhaps enforcement of that?

3:10

Ms Cox: Again, our performance measures are specifically those kind of output measures around the number of education initiatives, the number of times that those things are being accessed. But in terms of the ways that we determine what things we might want to bring forward in terms of additional consumer protection, we get some insight into that through things like investigations. So if door-to-door sales are particularly aggressive, then we need to look at whether or not new regulation needs to come into play. In '18-19 there was a lot of interest around that automotive sales piece, so we understood that from complaints that were made or queries into our consumer questions line. That helps to inform what types of additional protections we might want to do to respond to what's out there.

Mr. Gotfried: Okay. On a similar line, your most recent annual report states that your ministry “supports a fair and effective marketplace for consumers and businesses by developing, administering, and enforcing consumer-related legislation.” Looking back, do you have any concerns with respect to the resources in place for not just the administration of consumer protection legislation but, as importantly, the enforcement of same that perhaps put some teeth into discouraging that type of behaviour going forward?

Ms Cox: I would say that, you know, as I mentioned earlier, I think that we were able to handle the cases that we had. If you look at something like residential disputes around tenancies, we do have a high caseload volume but were able to respond to those in a timely manner in '18-19.

Mr. Gotfried: Okay. Further to that, I guess you've mentioned a few but there's obviously some industry sectors you've identified for closer scrutiny perhaps due to marked increase in consumer complaints. But do you believe that the increased monitoring and enforcement might be required and directed to certain industries to address growing consumer concerns? How will you ensure that you're delivering appropriate protection and/or deterrence?

Ms Cox: I think that something – you know, as I mentioned, as we're looking at not just the response to complaints but some of that proactive work that we do to understand what is happening before complaints even come, it helps us to know where we need to direct our resources from an education initiative as well. If we're looking into an industry where maybe there are some growing concerns, we can target our education. We have a number of fact sheets that we produce and publish, that we try to get out to consumers. We are using social media to try to make sure that we're hitting different audiences and that the spread is as wide as possible. I think through all of those endeavours we're hopefully able to respond to the things that we're seeing through that kind of environment.

As I mentioned earlier, jurisdictional scanning. You know, our partners in other jurisdictions, through a network, are very good at

helping us to see what's coming in their markets that we should, maybe, be considering in Alberta.

Mr. Gotfried: Now, just sort of on that same line, I mean, you've got complaints. You've got, I'm sure, demographics on that. My concern is around aging population, some of the global abuse both online and phone as well, the door-to-door issues that we've identified as well, and of course what usually starts as a deal too good to be true. Maybe I wouldn't ask for details today, but can you provide us with some demographics of the complaints you're getting to see if that's skewing towards an older and aging population that in some cases may be more vulnerable for various reasons? Just so that we can understand that better in terms of how you're addressing that, how it can be addressed, and it maybe becoming a growing issue. Are there metrics on that?

Ms Cox: We can certainly come back to you. One thing I would mention is that one of the things that was brought forward in terms of the consumer bill of rights, that was done in '18-19, was about kind of enhancing literacy. The Consumer Protection Act is very dense. In some ways it's quite technical, so the consumer bill of rights, that was introduced as part of and spoken to in the '18-19 annual report, does provide some more layman's terms that we hope would resonate with an aging population, so that they know, you know: what are their rights as consumers? What can they say no to? What can they do about it and within what time period if they've felt pressured to commit to something through a door-to-door sales tactic, for instance?

Mr. Gotfried: It may not always be the best way.

Just one last question on this again. On page 19 of Service Alberta's annual report there's mention that the ministry will be working on "addressing outstanding provisions of the Consumer Protection Act and [its] associated regulations." What are those outstanding provisions, and what measures are in place to address them going forward?

Ms Cox: There are two kinds of pieces of unproclaimed sections within the Consumer Protection Act. One is with respect to unilateral contract changes, and the other is with respect to warranty around service repair work in the automotive industry. That work was outstanding in '18-19, so going forward, that's something that we could speak to in the future.

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you.

I'd like to pass my time to MLA Guthrie here. I'm trying to remember who was taking this one. Thank you.

Mr. Guthrie: Good. Just looking at the statement of revenues and expenses, I noticed we had with revenues an increase of 2.1 per cent. Expenses were up 10.1 per cent. Now, this kind of boils down to two categories, one being business services, that was up 42.6 per cent, and then land titles was up 53.6 per cent. Land titles was significantly over budget. Can you explain the spending changes in those two main categories?

Mr. Dancause: In land titles in this past year we had what's called a land titles insurance claim. There's a fund created by the Land Titles Act that can pay for claims for people that have been deprived of their interests in land as a result of mistakes of the registrar. There was a \$7 million claim against that. That's what the big difference is there.

As far as the business services there was an additional \$45 million put into the ERP this year. You'll see that that number is substantively bigger than the year before. That's where the ERP is funded out of, so for implementation of ERP.

Ms Cox: Sorry. May I supplement?

Mr. Dancause: Yeah.

Ms Cox: Actually, the \$7 million claim from the land titles insurance fund was not a mistake of the registrar. The fund also covers fraudulent things that are done by other parties. A fraudulent document was submitted, and that resulted in the claim. I think that's an important distinction in terms of the responsibility.

Mr. Guthrie: So this is a one-off, an anomaly, I guess. Okay. So we won't expect that.

You know, it appears, anyway, that there was a significant budget hike from 2018 to 2019. Now, we didn't hit that budget target even though we had a 10 per cent increase in expenses.

The Chair: Why don't you finish your question, hon. member, so that it's on the record, and then if it's something that we can ask them to provide, an undertaking to the committee, then they can do that.

Mr. Guthrie: Sure. Okay.

There was a significant budget hike from 2018 to 2019. We didn't hit that budget target even though we had a 10 per cent increase in expenses. This mainly stems from technology services. I'm curious about the reasons for that and whether or not, you know, technology services – was it because we still need further deployment and that budget shortfall will still be needed and requested for, like, next year?

The Chair: If the department would like to just provide a short written response to that question, I think that would suffice for our purposes here today.

Now we're on to the fun lightning-round portion of our afternoon's deliberations whereby we have three minutes per side to read questions into the record that we think we would like more information on. We begin this with the Official Opposition. I would just like to turn it over to folks. I have a couple as well, at which point I will just take it up at the end and move the chair over. Go ahead, please.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just have one, and then I'll pass it on to my colleagues. A question I had regarding outstanding recommendation 6. It had to do with the department protecting information assets follow-up. It was indicated already in our exchanges that the department was at one point ready for follow-up and has now changed that designation to not ready. I'm just wondering if we can find out precisely what changed to have the department alter that designation to not ready. I'm curious. I don't know if we've dealt with it adequately, and I'd like to know the answer.

Thank you.

3:20

The Chair: Any other follow-up questions? Please, Member Hoffman.

Ms Hoffman: Sure. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Mine flows from the OAG briefing, and it's with regard to the 13 performance measures. Six of them don't have results for the last fiscal year, '18-19. We're wondering how the department will assess the achievement of the desired outcomes that were set without having those measures and if that will be addressed in subsequent reports. I know we're looking backwards, but sometimes you have to start with the ground-level data. That's one of the questions that I wanted to read in.

Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Member Feehan.

Mr. Feehan: All right. I just have a quick question about the International Open Data Charter, that I gather we have adopted, which I'm fully supportive of, but I'm wondering about the costs of doing that and therefore the timelines of getting all of our old data out into the public. Will that be limited by costs, and if so, how long do you anticipate it'll take to have all of our historical data made available?

Thank you.

The Chair: I'll just pass the chair over and just quickly ask a couple of things.

[Mr. Gotfried in the chair]

Ms Phillips: One, I'm interested in a timeline for satisfying the outstanding recommendation from the Auditor General given that it has been since 2012. Two, I'm not sure if I heard a clear answer on whether a data governance protocol would be adopted by the province as part of satisfying that recommendation given that folks around the world now are saying to governments, at both a subnational and national level, that data governance protocols are critically important to all of our security. Third, I'm interested in how many FTEs it will take to satisfy the recommendation and if the department is adequately resourced at this time to satisfy the outstanding recommendation.

[Ms Phillips in the chair]

The Chair: With that – I think I spoke quickly enough; apologies to *Hansard* – not seeing any others on the Official Opposition side, we'll now move over for three minutes on the government side.

Mr. Gotfried: I think we're ceding our time.

The Chair: Okay. All right. Well, then, we are dismissed a little early. That's very exciting. Thank you, folks. If we don't have any other items for discussion under other business, we will then reconvene this committee tomorrow, September 11, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. There will be a premeeting briefing for the committee members from 9 to 9:30.

Just one other housekeeping item. Folks from Service Alberta, can any outstanding questions be responded to in writing within 30 days and forwarded to the committee clerk for our consideration? Thank you for your time this afternoon.

Other colleagues, we will see you at 9 a.m. in the Grassland Room for our prebriefing prior to welcoming our friends from Justice and Solicitor General on outstanding recommendations and consideration of the '18-19 annual report. Thank you.

Now I need a motion to adjourn, friends. Mr. Gotfried has moved the motion to adjourn. All in favour? All right. This meeting is adjourned.

Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 3:23 p.m.]

