

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 6 October 1983

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A

Chairman:

Mr Max Brown

Members:

The Hon. H. Allison
 Mrs J.E. Appleby
 Mr H. Becker
 Mr S.G. Evans
 Mr D.M. Ferguson
 Mr T.R. Groom
 Mr J. Mathwin
 Mr K.M. Mayes

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

The CHAIRMAN: Before declaring today's vote open for examination, I would appreciate being advised as early as possible of the time table for the examination of the vote, and I will leave that to the Opposition. The Chair intends to proceed along the lines adopted previously: that is, the lead member of the Opposition will be given the opportunity to ask three questions of the Minister and then the Government will be given three questions, and we will alternate between questions from Government and Opposition members. All questions must be directed to the Minister and not to his officers. Members outside of the Committee will be recognised by the Chair only if it seems that the in-depth examination of the vote is coming to a conclusion and with the agreement of the Opposition.

Community Welfare, \$35 920 000

Witness:

The Hon. G.J. Crafter, Minister of Community Welfare.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr I.S. Cox, Director-General, Department for Community Welfare.

Mr C.E.M. Harris, Deputy Director-General, Department for Community Welfare.

Mr W.H. Beattie, Director, Resource Services Division, Department for Community Welfare.

Mr G. Billett, Senior Finance Officer, Department for Community Welfare.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed expenditure open for examination.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Can the Minister explain the considerable over-run in departmental expenditure during the past financial year? The over-run has been substantial, although not nearly so much in the recurrent area as in the miscellaneous area. Part of that is understandable, but until the change of Government the Department has been running on a tight budget. A statement from the Director-General dated 14 September 1982 made provision for some over-runs but they were literally chicken feed compared to the multi-millions that were finally expended. Could the Minister explain the reasons for the considerable over-expenditure since November of last year?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: First, the demands placed upon the Department have been increasing steadily and over the period of the previous Administration there was a reduction in staff. One of the undertakings that the previous Opposition

and the present Government gave to the South Australian community was that it would reverse that trend in the human services area, especially the welfare sector. That has begun to occur and I make no apology at all for that. I believe that the run down in the Department was quite callous, given the dimensions of human tragedy that exists in our community, the rapidly increasing level of unemployment, family break-down, and other consequences of the down-turn in the economy.

It was inhumane to cut welfare staffing and other aspects of the Department, and that trend has been reversed deliberately. There has been no extravagance in the expenditure voted, bearing in mind that for a large portion of the financial year the previous Government was in power. It allowed expenditure to proceed over and above the amount voted, especially in staffing. In the Budget Committee hearing last year the previous Minister pointed out that there was to be a substantial reduction in staff: this did not occur. When we came to Government we reviewed the need for such staff and the way in which those reductions were to be achieved and the subsequent cut-back in services.

Conscious decisions were taken on maintaining staff and on appointing additional staff. Also, the previous Administration indicated clearly to the community that it could expect increasing demands for some services. I refer specifically to emergency financial assistance and the budget advisory service. The incoming Government was required to provide additional funds for those services in order to maintain them at a basic level. That was a budgetary decision any Government would have to take to provide such essential services.

The other component of expenditure of an outstanding nature not voted for was the increase in the Miscellaneous lines because of increased demand. They are formula-based expenditures over which we have no control, apart from not proceeding with those concessions. There are rational and humane reasons for the over-expenditure. The Department is in much better shape now than it has been over the past three years, and I believe that the morale of the Department is vastly improved as, indeed, is the delivery of services. I ask the Director-General to give more specific details on the expenditures.

Mr Cox: In regard to salaries the increase in expenditure was \$2.314 million and, of that, \$1.416 million was related to increases in award payments. In regard to the maintenance of staffing levels, it was suggested we should reduce to last year's amount. In about November last year the review committee agreed that we should be reducing, with a decision to be made early this year. That required \$620 000. Electricity concession salaries was a new project requiring \$40 000; disaster relief administration was \$131 000; and internal leave payments increased by \$100 000.

The total increase in spending on salaries of \$2.314 million is calculated in that way. In the contingency line there was an increase in spending of \$394 000. One would be aware of the Government's procedure of giving 4 per cent for inflation in contingencies, and then one can go back to Treasury in relation to inflation above that. The Department took the calculation of its basket of goods in relation to inflation and it would have cost us to meet the total inflation in contingencies about \$245 000, but all our increase required was \$209 000. Therefore, our management of contingencies was better, taking into account the cost and inflation increase.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: The \$131 000 to which you referred was an additional cost for disaster relief administration. To what extent were those people permanently full-time appointments, to what extent were they casual contract appointees, either full-time casual or part-time casual? I understood from inquiries through the Department that the Department for Community Welfare regional and branch

staffs had been put under considerable strain because existing staff had been redeployed from the work that they were usually doing, and no additional staff had been provided.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: Within hours of the bushfires, Cabinet approved the appointment of 20 bushfire relief workers. Initially the Department had hoped that we could take experienced people from within the Department and put them on this important and difficult work. Cabinet approved that each of those persons would be replaced for the period that they were doing this work. It is true that one cannot take out people experienced in a social context and replace them with someone else, and that caused some strain. There was indeed tremendous generosity by the Department, because at one stage almost one-third of the Department's staff was involved in disasters of one form or another.

However, in the ongoing work done by the bushfire relief workers, some people from the Department were redeployed. They were replaced by people from outside of Government and from other Departments. I think that one or two teachers were used, but a wide range of people were employed. Their employment has been terminated. Those people who were in the Department have returned to the Department and, in some cases, people who replaced them on a temporary basis have been able to be employed within the Department, and others not. However, we can furnish details on that and the additional staff that was required in the administrative area on a temporary basis as well.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: That accounts for an apparent discrepancy in two figures that I committed to memory. One that the Minister quoted was \$290 000 for the cost of the bushfire administration. The Director-General's figure of \$131 000 is probably a realistic figure for the number of additional staff appointed. The rest was absorbed within the Department. I cannot give the page reference: it is a figure that I have from memory.

Mr Beattie: The figure of \$131 000 was for salaries. During that time the 20 bushfire workers were officers who worked in the field: they were a combination of departmental officers and officers from other departments. In addition, we took on an additional 12 staff for clerical and administrative work for the bushfire relief unit, and another two administrative and clerical staff for the flood relief unit that became incorporated into that. In addition, we took on another two field officers, relief workers based at Nuriootpa, for the floods. Of all those officers, three will remain on the Department's establishment. All the officers were redeployees from elsewhere in the Public Service or were part-time staff brought in on that basis.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I had not intended to pursue this matter so early, but as we are on the subject perhaps we could once again extend our congratulations to all departmental employees. They were not all Department for Community Welfare officers. I think Barry Greer came in as a secondee, and he chaired the proceedings in an excellent manner. We congratulate anyone who was in any way involved. The Government and the Opposition were unanimous in their approach. The matter was regarded as a national disaster, and the Government took the obvious approach, giving it top priority. Congratulations to the Minister and his staff.

Details are contained in the yellow book concerning the current expenditure of \$6.205 million for 1982-83 and an anticipated expenditure of \$5.64 million in 1983-84, which does tend to inflate the line, although I do not know how the sum could be included in the finances in any other way. I hope that it is not regarded as \$11 million of Government money when, in fact, the vast majority of that amount was collected from the public which responded magnificently.

That is just a passing comment. In regard to that matter, for 1983-84 it is proposed that there be a permanent staff of one full-time equivalent for disaster preparedness and three full-time equivalents for assistance to victims. Does the Minister intend to retain those people as permanent disaster relief staff, or is this simply a temporary measure until the \$5.6 million has been disbursed, the amount which remains in the account from public collection?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I thank the honourable member for his reference to the work done by the Department. It was an incredibly traumatic experience, and I am very proud of the response made by departmental officers at all levels and the way that people from outside who came in to work within the Department were accepted, and I refer to Mr Greer and Mr Myles Cundy, who came to work following the flood disaster, in particular, and also to the teams of people that they led, which formed one of the keys to the success of the undertaking, namely, that such competent and compassionate people were able to come in and give that leadership and direction which was so important at that time.

I have prepared a small paper on the Department for Community Welfare's responsibilities as to State disasters. Attached to it is a report of the consolidated appeal funds. It is a pity perhaps that the yellow book does not indicate clearly that the funds involved were not Government funds but funds collected from the community. Perhaps this document explaining the appeal funds will clarify that for those who read *Hansard*. I will seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard* the balance-sheet of the appeal funds. This is the consolidated appeal funds financial balance-sheet as at 5 October, and will give honourable members the most up-to-date information on the appeal funds. It is anticipated that within the month there will be a winding up of the appeal fund.

I take this opportunity to put on record my appreciation of the work done by the people who formed the appeal fund committee, known as the Premier's Advisory Committee. It consisted of representatives of the Adelaide City Council, Red Cross, the various media agencies that were involved with the appeals, and Government officers. It was an incredibly well organised committee and very responsive to the need to distribute those appeal funds quickly, equitably and with sensitivity, and that was achieved to the satisfaction of the South Australian community. There still remains a very small amount of money to be distributed, including bank interest which has accrued, and decisions on those matters will be taken in the next few weeks. I seek leave to have the financial statement of the consolidated appeal fund incorporated in *Hansard* without my reading it.

The CHAIRMAN: It is purely statistical?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: It has been general practice for the Committee to accept certain information to be inserted in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

BUSHFIRE RELIEF UNIT—Consolidated Appeal Funds
Financial Statement at 5 October 1983

Receipts	Actual \$	Estimated \$
Premier's Appeal	6 037 854.83	6 051 000*
Lord Mayor's Appeal	2 475 000.00	2 475 000
NWS Channel 9 Appeal	2 711 600.00	2 712 000
Interest to 31.8.83	399 626.52	411 000
	<u>11 624 081.35</u>	<u>11 649 000†</u>

Payments		
Emergency Assistance (includes 'emergency payments' from DCW offices)	906 115	906 115
Funeral payments	27 000	27 000
Relocation assistance	413 750	413 750
Property loss payments	8 305 366	8 812 635
Pain and suffering grants	780 500	780 500
Grief payments	698 000	698 000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	11 130 731	11 638 000
Plus payments from sched- ules approved but not allocated	26 020	
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	11 156 751	11 638 000
Undistributed funds	\$467 330	\$615 249 (up to)

*1 includes pending fodder transport subsidy reimbursement by Treasury (\$11 290)

†2 does not include:

- up to \$50 000 anticipated cash settlement from Tasmanian 'gifts-in-kind' scheme.
- up to \$71 000 expected from W.A. Appeal (BRU advised 3 p.m. 5 October 1983).

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I will have distributed to members a brief paper outlining the Department's response to those disasters. I will ask Mr Beattie to clarify the honourable member's question about on-going staffing for disasters.

Mr Beattie: There is one officer on a full-time basis involved in disaster preparedness. The three officers proposed for 1983-84 are the full-time equivalents of officers involved on a part-time basis: senior officers and other officers throughout the Department, both in the field and the central office, are involved in that sort of planning.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: The Minister has said that he did not wish to apologise for a range of circumstances which emerged during the last financial year. However, it is quite obvious that the provision of a large number of services, particularly in the grants area, is as a result of public demand. There is an open-ended commitment on the part of the Department to provide those grants, and if the Department over-expend in that area it is an indication that socio-economic circumstances have been declining and will continue to decline. His Government came to power on a promise of quickly improving circumstances and lessening the unemployment problem, and the realisation that massive over-expenditure occurred, according to the Minister, as a result of demand, would also indicate that the very substantial increase in provision for the 1983-84 financial year predicts a steadily worsening situation. I wonder to what extent the previous gross under-estimation of the cost of provision of aid services to South Australia is running into next year, and whether there is once again a substantial under-estimate of the depth of the problem.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I have prepared a general summary of the budget which might help honourable members. It mentions briefly the basis for the additional expenditure in the last financial year, and an explanation of the increases to be provided in the current financial year. I take it that the honourable member is referring specifically to the 'Miscellaneous' lines. That is where the response is less predictable, and where successive Governments are locked into a system of continually escalating payments because of demographic trends and socio-economic changes that occur in the population. As we are considering the budget in its whole context at this stage, perhaps I could distribute the

general summary sheet of the budget, which might be of interest to honourable members.

The matter of concessions is of concern, and I know it was of concern to the previous Administration. The Government has established a committee to review all Government concessions, not just those provided by the Department for Community Welfare but those provided by other Government departments. During the last financial year a substantial sum, \$76 million, was paid out by way of concessions to those in need in the community. It is important that from time to time the delivery of those concessions is reviewed.

It is well known that there is a wide variation in the eligibility for various concessions in the community and there has been criticism in the past that a number of those concessions are not targeted to those most in need; for example, those based around home ownership in the community do have other value to the community as a whole in maintaining home ownership, but nevertheless there has been criticism of those concessions. Consequently, an inter-departmental committee is looking at the whole range of concessions to see how they are granted and to see how they interface with the social security system which exists at the Commonwealth level, because criticism has been made that the Commonwealth Government, particularly in the past seven or eight years, has not accepted its responsibility in terms of the provision of income maintenance in the community. The Victorian Government established a task force upon its election in April last year and has been very critical of the level of benefits paid by the Commonwealth Government. This has been a subject of discussion at meetings of Ministers, and it is a matter which we hope will be substantially changed in the years to come.

Mr Beattie: The Concessions Review Committee is currently looking at all concessions offered by the State Government. So far it has identified 20 that are administered by 15 separate Government agencies and departments, at a total cost to the community of \$76.1 million. One problem that has been identified in the concession scheme is the wide range of identification required of the various recipients of the concessions. We have established that 10 different forms of identification are required. The eligibility criteria are in some cases totally unrelated, and there are quite a number of anomalies and inequities among the various systems. That leads to a large number of complaints about the system as it exists. The committee is looking at a range of measures to make the funds disbursed under the concession scheme more equitably distributed. It is also looking at areas such as identification and options in relation to rationalising the eligibility criteria. The committee is expected to report to Cabinet by January 1984.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I think the honourable member was asking whether we were going to over-run in the Budget this year and the short answer is that we predict we will; that has been the case in previous years. There is a scientific way of tackling this problem in departments like the Department for Community Welfare.

Mr Cox: The question of the control of the budget, which I think is being more explicitly addressed, is that we have made an estimate this year of what our expenditure would be if the current economic situation and the current affairs remain as they are. In the area of salaries, for instance, there is already the additional 4.3 per cent, which is money that is in the Treasury coffers for us to get if it is proclaimed as part of the State award. In relation to contingencies there will be some over-run because of the costs of postage, telephone calls and fuel, but we will get the over-run only in relation to inflation. We controlled it last year to below the inflation level, and we will be trying to control this budget in the same way. The level of some of the concessions

is an estimate of the take-up in some ways, and that always requires adjustment in relation to the accounts of the Department.

Mr BECKER: I am confused about the cost of the administration of disaster relief. On page 116 of the Estimates of Payments under 'Administration, Disaster Administration' the actual payments were \$193 349 and the proposed salaries, wages and related payments for 1983-84 are \$55 300, with contingencies proposed at \$45 000, which totals \$100 300. On page 67 of the Auditor-General's Report under 'Administration costs—bushfire and flood relief' the Auditor-General states:

A Bushfire Relief Unit was established within the Department to administer emergency assistance and to distribute appeal funds to bushfire victims. Subsequently, this unit also became responsible for the distribution of assistance to flood victims. Administration expenses amounting to \$193 000 comprised \$166 000 for bushfire relief and \$27 000 for flood relief. These costs have been met by the State.

How were the figures given by the Director-General and the Auditor-General arrived at?

Mr Beattie: Concerning the Ash Wednesday bushfire, departmental expenses for salaries and contingencies for 1982-83 came to \$187 711. The Department also incurred a number of payments for other departments such as State Supply, State Development and Agriculture, the Housing Trust and a number of councils. The Department's accounting and finance section undertook all such Government work for that disaster. We incurred a number of payments totalling \$1 101 786 in 1982-83. Following the Barossa Valley flood, \$27 056 was incurred in connection with salaries for the Flood Relief Unit. Contingencies relating to that Unit and other payments on behalf of State Development, for emergency assistance to flood victims, flood relief grants to victims and payments to councils totalled \$1 542 009 for 1982-83. We have proposed figures for 1983-84.

Mr BECKER: We have a figure in the Estimates of Payments and another in the Auditor-General's Report. The Department had to meet the cost of \$193 000 in 1982-83. If it made payments of \$1.101 million on behalf of other departments, was the Department reimbursed? Does the Department for Community Welfare vote show an amount for all moneys spent on behalf of other departments?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The Department was reimbursed for those expenditures and a line was created to cover them.

Mr Beattie: The \$27 000 shown in the Auditor-General's Report for flood relief is the figure that I have just quoted. The remaining \$166 000 for the bushfires came to exactly \$166 293 for salaries and contingencies. Our figures do correspond with the Auditor-General's Report.

Mr BECKER: Did any of that \$1.101 million come out of the Bushfire Fund Relief Appeal?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: No. There was strict auditing of all funds and total adherence to the philosophy, adopted from the beginning, that all the public appeal funds should be distributed to those who suffered as a result of the disaster. The administration expenses relating to that distribution and the commitment of assistance given by the Government have all been met from general revenue.

Mr BECKER: I notice that this financial year it is proposed to increase the staff by 16.8 persons. As at the end of June 1983, the total staff was 1 292. At the end of this current financial year it is proposed that the staff complement will be 1 308.8. I have no qualms about that but I am concerned about whether it will be sufficient, bearing in mind the pressures that have been placed on the Department with the current economic situation and its ramifications within the community. I am very worried and cannot get any accurate data concerning the level of poverty in South Australia. What will be the short and long-term impact on the Budget and on future planning, in particular, for the human

resources areas? Will the Minister report on what his Department is doing in that regard?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: This accords with a question the honourable member has on notice. It is difficult to say that we have adequate or inadequate staff. If one asked me or officers of my Department, we would all say that we would like more staff. There are limitations on the number of staff that can be provided in any given financial year. We have staff requirements, and the allocation of staff is constantly under review. I believe that we must be as flexible as we can to meet burgeoning needs in the community and to ensure that all resources, whether fiscal or human, are used to the maximum degree possible.

When we came into Government we were faced with a position where there was to be a reduction of 35 staff if the Budget was to be met, and I referred to that earlier. That staff was retained in the Department. The Government took a decision during the year to increase the staff of the Department by 30 additional positions: 25 of those were social workers and 5 were administrative and clerical staff. That is a quite substantial commitment in any given year, and I believe that that has certainly gone some way towards allaying the fears that you and other people have raised.

However, this is a matter which must be kept constantly under review, bearing in mind that the bulk of the work done by the Department results from our statutory commitments and, whilst we would like to have more time to do creative work in the community to alleviate poverty and carry out preventative social work and community development work, there is a limit to how much of the staff's time can be allocated to that purpose, because of statutory commitments.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: The Minister has made two statements: one today to the effect that the Department was in good shape. A few weeks ago he commented that public confidence in the Department was at a relatively low ebb, and I think that that would have been running parallel with the national and local publicity given to the problem of children absconding from or being removed from parental care. I appreciate that I have had some relatively small part in that, in that I publicised the problems that have been brought to my attention.

I think that it is apparent that since the 1930s we have hardly ever needed a Department for Community Welfare to be in better shape and to be more able to cope with the massive number of socio-economic and psychological problems that are rife in the community. If that public confidence is at a relatively low ebb but the Department is in pretty good shape to cope with problems, the Minister is faced with the issue of how to regain public confidence in his Department.

On several occasions I have asked for an independent inquiry which I believed and still believe would have cleared the Department and would have brought to public and Ministerial notice those relatively few areas of concern which have received substantial publicity where, on behalf of the Minister and senior staff, junior officers are possibly making decisions which are abrasive as far as the public is concerned. I believe that that is the measure of most of these problems which emerge. However, the Minister has chosen to ignore 700 or 800 signatures which were appended from two areas of Adelaide to a petition soliciting an inquiry.

The Minister has also made a more recent statement to the effect that a 'mini-Ombudsman' had been appointed to deal with those problems on appeal by aggrieved parents or others. Has the Minister also initiated any sort of internal inquiry in the hope of fossicking out problem areas so that he can take personal steps to try to solve them, or is the matter still being largely ignored?

We have two areas to consider: one is the future problems which may be dealt with by the 'mini-ombudsman'; and

the other is the large number of past problems which are still the subject of extensive correspondence to me, if not to the Minister. Can the Minister tell the Committee whether my assessment is correct: whether the problem is that public confidence in the Department is at a low ebb and, if so, how will he take positive steps to regain that confidence, confidence definitely being needed?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: First, I do not think that I said that public confidence in the Department was at a low ebb. What I recall having said was that public confidence in the Department was certainly seriously harmed by some irresponsible and inaccurate reporting. I certainly adhere to what I said earlier today, that the morale of the Department has improved substantially. It is a very difficult area of Government service, and it will always bring staff and, indeed, the Department into situations of conflict with people who are often deeply disturbed in the community; we can expect that from time to time. However, I hope to have responsible debate in the community upon the role of the Department in those circumstances.

From time to time, errors will be made by officers of the Department. I think that I would be foolish not to admit that, and we must ensure that there are adequate checks, balances and reviews, so that these instances are minimised and, indeed, staff are protected from the pressures and temptations placed before them. As a result of the representations that have been made to me (and, I understand, to the previous Administration—indeed many of these matters are not current: they have been around in some cases for many years and very few of them are matters which have arisen during my period as Minister), I have rejected a call for a judicial inquiry or Royal Commission, because I do not believe that that is the appropriate way to allay the fears of people in the community.

I believe that, in accordance with the amendments which were passed by this Parliament some years ago but which only recently have been brought into effect, there needs to be an ongoing and objective review available to the clients of the Department where they are critical of the actions taken. A static review, if one likes, would look at the situation of a particular case or a number of cases that exist at that time. Every case with which the Department deals is different, and I think that the real value of an objective review and appeal system is the ongoing surveillance of the work of the Department.

If trends occur, and if there is a breakdown in the systems of the Department and the guidelines under which the officers operate, that will show up clearly and something can be done about it. Rather than set up an appeal system within the Department, although bringing in external persons to do that, I think it is better if this is done by a welfare ombudsman. The Ombudsman in this State has a reputation of independence and thorough inquiry, and he also has staff experienced and competent at assessing departmental services and actions of individual officers.

Therefore, an agreement has been reached with the Ombudsman that he will accept those functions, provided that there are amendments to the Community Welfare Act, and I am pleased to say that that has commenced. I think that in that way members of the community can be assured that an objective assessment of their complaints is taking place. However, that is not the only avenue open to them: they can go to courts. I refer to the case where a child is no longer living at home, whether that child has voluntarily placed himself or herself in the guardianship of the Minister, whether that has been done by the courts or whether the parents have sought some assistance in caring for that child: the Department does not have the power to permanently remove the child from his or her home. That power is

restricted to the judges and judicial officers of the Children's Court.

The security for parents there is judicial review in decision-making, and I think that is an important safeguard for the community as well. Many of the cases referred (although I must say that there is no great number of those cases) have been the subject of judicial review, and I will be happy for them to go as well to the welfare Ombudsman so that he also can review the decisions taken in each of those cases. Therefore, in that way I am satisfied that objective review is taking place.

The honourable member referred to internal reviews. Extensive internal review is made of cases to which he referred and, indeed, all cases. This is built into the guidelines of the Department's reviewing of each child for whom the Department has responsibility. A number of other special checks and balances exist, so that individual officers, whether they are junior or senior officers, are not making decisions alone. Important judgments on care of children are not taken in an isolated situation. I am satisfied that those internal checks and balances are effective. Of course, in all circumstances that will not satisfy people. In cases where people are not satisfied and where they make a complaint, I refer such complaints to the appropriate authority. Perhaps Mr Cox could comment further on this. This is an important area and, as the honourable member said, it is important that the public have every confidence in the Department.

Mr Cox: The question of annual reviews of children is part of the provisions of the Act. The Act was recently amended to provide for a community person to be present on the panel that reviews the progress of each child under the care of the Minister. That provision has been implemented during the past financial year, and every panel now has a community person represented on it whose function is to vet what the Government and the staff are doing as being in accordance with what the community would consider right for the families involved. There are some problems with that, because some of the foster families do not necessarily want a person in the local community knowing their business. We are attempting to handle those sorts of privacy matters. We now have a community representative on each review committee, which is required by the Act.

The standard procedure which covers youth/parent conflict is very important as far as our staff is concerned. The Department has documented procedures, and that document is used constantly by our staff. The Minister may agree to that being inserted in *Hansard*. It explains clearly the use of senior personnel in matters where serious decisions have to be made about children either staying at or leaving home. It explains explicitly what one is expected to do.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: What is the date of that document?

Mr Cox: It is reviewed about every two years. It was introduced in 1981, when the matter was reviewed by the previous Minister. It was reviewed again by the present Minister at the time of his taking office. Standard procedures are applicable to every area of our work. Whilst obviously there is room for professional movement, there are things that we expect to be done in regard to each aspect of a case. The book is about 300 pages thick covering our social work procedures. Also we have a youth training centre manual, which addresses an equally complicated area because of personal incidents and the sorts of problems that are encountered. We also have an administrative manual. Therefore, the operations of the Department are not hit and miss: our practices have been formulated, and these guidelines are tremendously important for new staff members. Obviously when one knows the way to go, it is not so difficult.

The honourable member referred to the matter of inexperienced staff and to the possibility that work is being done by young people: as 60 per cent of social work staff have been working for the Department for more than five years, they are experienced to that extent. They are located throughout various areas. As to the suggestion that staff are very young, about 20 per cent of the people concerned are under 29 years. So, in terms of social work, the rest of the staff are older than that. Many staff members have been working in these areas for a long time.

One of the most difficult areas of human affairs that social workers face is the rising incidence of abuse cases, the aggression of parents, and a new awareness in the community of the aggression that occurs within families, together with the whole question of parents' rights about how far they can go with their children, about what they should or should not do, as well as the whole question of neglect and poverty. There is no doubt that one can not always get the agreement of all parties involved in those sorts of issues, particularly when one must take some action which reflects on care. Some care is not of a satisfactory standard. This is a world-wide problem. When action is not taken and a child dies there is criticism (and I refer to the Maria Colwell case in England, into which there was a massive inquiry when it was said that social workers procrastinated and did not take action and that there were too many people involved).

The Department took notice of that and determined that in such cases we would not let that happen, and we try to safeguard the personal rights of people in regard to difficult decisions that must be taken. Of about 47 requests received by the Department in September which went direct to the Minister, about eight of those were complaints. Considering that there are 337 social workers in the field, it is apparent that few complaints are received of a nature that may become a public issue.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I am happy to distribute copies of these guidelines to Committee members. It would probably be inappropriate for them to be inserted in *Hansard*. I point out that these guidelines were amended in May of this year as a result of discussions I had with the Department. Those changes are indicated by asterisks. They relate, first, to the additional safeguards that arose out of amendments to the Community Welfare Act; and, secondly, to the situation where the whereabouts of a child is withheld from its parents, as well as the circumstances that surround that situation and the use of a mediator (for example, a minister of religion, a teacher, or some other person in the run-away child situation) in an attempt to resolve a conflict where a community welfare worker is seen by one party or the other as having taken sides, or the like. In such situations where the welfare worker just cannot bring about that mutual discussion on the matter, we have encouraged a mediator to come in.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: The Minister's reference to the provision of the first welfare Ombudsman system in Australia was a pleasing one. My first reservation concerns the question of whether this may be a case of Caesar judging Caesar. Will the mini-Ombudsman, who will be located in the Ombudsman's office, be a person with complete independence, or will that person be seconded from the Department for Community Welfare having Government sympathies or Government affiliations?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The welfare Ombudsman will be the present Ombudsman, Mr Bakewell. I apologise to the honourable member because the press release did not explain that. I have had discussions with Mr Bakewell and the international President of Ombudsmen from Sweden, in which there is a separate welfare ombudsman structure. We wondered whether to appoint a person who would obviously

come from a welfare background (and the allegation made by the honourable member could well be made in the circumstances) and whether staff should have been seconded to the Ombudsman's office to assist with inquiries. However, the Ombudsman said, 'No', that he would prefer to have his own staff do this work and that he would carry out the investigation, or it would be carried out under his personal supervision. That is the safeguard that the community has.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I appreciate the fact that the Minister has been prepared to make available instructions to departmental officers. Of the numerous complaints that people have made to me, they have generally pointed out that the Minister and his senior officers have one intention under the terms of either the Act or the regulations, but that the way that the Act and those regulations are interpreted or put into effect in the field, vary considerably. Would the Minister, when he is revising the instructions to officers again, bear in mind some of the requests that have been made to me. They ask for better liaison between parents, children, police, and Community Welfare staff.

I will not go through the whole range, but one of the more important ones is Regulation 10 of the Community Welfare Act, and the Minister has referred to this. It refers to why the Department does not always disclose information to parents when lawfully asked. There has been some withholding of information regarding the whereabouts of children and such other facts when parents have called seeking my advice. In section 7 (b) the obvious aim is to preserve the welfare of the family, and parents have asked whether that could be one of the paramount factors: the welfare and unity of the family should be a prime consideration. That is stated in the Act, and it is a major concern of the Minister.

Another question refers to when the Minister discharges minors under section 40. There have been times when the minor was discharged to a third party, not the parent, with no Ministerial explanation as to why that course of action was taken. The request is that the Minister negotiate with parents, and at least explain why he has taken the alternative action to discharge the child into someone else's care: this applies more particularly under section 44 (1) (a).

Also, there is an alleged tendency on the part of some Department for Community Welfare field officers in advising children that they can legitimately leave home at the age of 16 years. Parents believe that that should not be a common practice, with that sort of advice being given. There should be unity of the family, and keeping children at home until they are 18 should be an aim of the Department. I cannot confirm or deny that allegation, but that is one that has come forward.

Another problem is the co-operation between the Welfare Department, police, and parents, when the address of a missing child is being sought by parents. There seems to be a lack of communication, and parents are saying that there has been stonewalling on the part of both police and the Department for Community Welfare. Community Welfare is defending the child, and the police often do not want to be involved in a household matter: they prefer to be involved more in criminal matters, and that is understandable. I am not criticising the police for that attitude. The last request by parents is what does the Department for Community Welfare recognise as moral danger? This question arose mainly as a result of one or two girls having been taken from parental care and it subsequently being discovered that they were pregnant.

Parents question the propriety of the Department in leaving children residing with the young men with whom they had run away, and also the action of the Department in not advising parents that abortions were imminent or had, in fact, taken place. What does the Department believe moral danger to be when that sort of thing can happen? If

the Minister is in any doubt as to the accuracy of these statements, I would remind him that I have correspondence from two parents who have sent me copies of letters addressed to the Minister in the first place, and we are dealing with cases that are familiar to both of us. I will not publicise the names, as I do not believe it is proper, if only to protect the children.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I thank the honourable member for those questions: they have been raised from time to time. They emanate in the main from an organisation known as 'Parents who Care' and another recently formed organisation 'The Family Rights Association'. I will ask Mr Cox to comment. We have developed a dialogue with that group of parents so that we can consider the suggestions that have been advanced. I think I said this in response to a question from the honourable member in Parliament some time ago: it is important to know the other side of each of these cases, and to the honourable member I would always offer the assistance of the Department in these matters so that within the limit of the confidentiality rules that our Department has, we could give background briefings to the honourable member in his position as shadow spokesman on these matters so that the complexity of the decisions that have to be taken can be fully understood.

One of the difficulties in answering public criticism is that we cannot reveal the full story of these cases, and that will always be so. I honour that respect because the overriding responsibility, and indeed the aim of the Department, is to reunite children with their families wherever that can possibly be done. It grieves our officers, as much as it does the parents, and indeed the community, to see children and parents in conflict.

There is no way that we would want to see that entrenched in parent-child relationships in the community. However, the complexity of the situations and the root causes of those breakdowns are many and varied, and are often most tragic. What seems shallow, even to the parties when the surface is scratched, reveal quite deep-seated and often, unfortunately, irreconcilable differences. Often it is only time that heals these situations.

There are not many of these difficult cases. I think there are 90 000 teenagers in South Australia of whom about 900 leave home for one reason or another in a year. Of those my Department would come in contact with 250 or 300, and of those only a handful would end up in a terrible bind. Mr Cox and Mr Harris have been concerned and active in trying to accommodate the concerns raised by the honourable member.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I appreciate what the Minister has said and I hope that he realises that, as a general principle, I have declined to enter into the public area on behalf of individuals. After consultation with both the present Minister and the previous Minister for Community Welfare what I have done is to attempt to re-establish public confidence in all aspects of community welfare administration by trying to highlight the relatively small areas in which problems exist and today, by pursuing that range of problems once again, I hope that this will do much to restore public confidence.

I believe that it is a question of the attitude of the people who are the Minister's shop front, not the Minister's attitude nor his Director's attitude, but the attitude of the people in the shop front, because they are in the homes, they are in the streets, and in the Community Welfare Office selling the Minister's Act and his regulations. If the Minister's code of conduct is satisfactory within the terms of the Act and satisfactory to the public, he will have gone a long way towards mitigating any problems.

Mr Cox: I cannot help but go back to the *60 Minutes* programme that we had to suffer and the way in which it

handled our staff. In a conversation prior to being interviewed the *60 Minutes* staff told me that I had nothing to worry about because it was shown that my staff really cared. That was their statement to me in my office, and it seems to me that through it all we have attempted to develop that atmosphere within the Department. A survey we undertook about two months ago showed that about 455 teenage problems and their families were being handled by the Department, and in only seven of those cases were we unsure how to handle the situation of telling the parents where the children were.

The situation is that a child makes some sort of accusation of abuse or makes some sort of allegation that the home situation is intolerable, and there is a great difference of opinion between the parents and the child about that matter. Under law we are bound to tell the parents that the child has been placed so that there is no situation. The next step is to say whether we should at that point break the child's confidence, and that is always a difficult situation, especially in cases like the seven cases to which I have just referred. That survey was done at a particular time, and it changes by the month.

The other thing raised in terms of this whole matter was why there is no disclosure. This sort of disclosure is a difficult situation, because it must be a Director's direction not to disclose and it must be constantly reviewed. We do not take the non-disclosure insensitively, and the Director has to be informed in relation to the decision not to disclose to the parents. The parents know the child has been placed and the parents in most cases (except those seven) know where the child has been placed. We have had circumstances where parents have been difficult about emergency foster care. I think the history of the Department in relation to the family is one of the most interesting in history.

I think in 1970 we had 3 500 under the care of the Minister, and that figure has been reduced markedly over the years and it is now just over 1 000. We have established emergency foster care and we have established emergency places so that we can get a breather in order to get the child back to the family. That has been a successful procedure. The statistics reflect the commitment of the Department for the rehabilitation of families, and often, with the breathing space, a family can be reconciled. It is really a matter of how the situations are handled.

Young people have the right to legal aid and some have already obtained legal advice in relation to returning home. In terms of where a child stands in relation to the law, a child can ask a social worker whether he can leave home at 16 and, if the social worker does not describe the position at law, he loses his credibility and the child loses a chance of real support in relation to that family.

Mr Harris: The honourable member mentioned the provisions of section 40. I might add that the proclamation of the Community Welfare Act Amendment Act on 2 May (with the exception of two sections) provided a change in section 40, which is now renumbered section 28. It provides that children can be placed under the care of the Minister only on the parents' application or, if they are over 15, on their own application, for one month. It is a temporary provision that is reduced from the previous provision of three months: hitherto, children could be in residential care for three weeks, but this excludes that. Children are in care for one month only, and during that time the intention is to try to bring the parties together in an attempt to reconcile them.

It is also true that, in many cases that perhaps become the more difficult ones, one or more courts are frequently involved, as well as the Department, and it is seldom that we are in difficulty on these temporary care provisions. Differences do occur, and I think the whole problem of

custody of and access to of children is one of the more difficult situations dealt with by, depending on the circumstances, three courts: the Family Court, the Supreme Court (in relation to the Guardianship of Infants Act), and the Children's Court.

In many cases they have been involved and in some cases the Ombudsman under his powers has also been involved. There is much protection. It would be only in extreme circumstances that the parents would not be notified of the address. That would be usually for the protection of the child or at the child's expressed wish and all the circumstances make it desirable that it should not be revealed.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: The Minister said that parents do have one other recourse and that was to go to the law themselves. One of the parents pointed out that he had taken action against the Minister and his Department, but the Minister made his writ ineffectual by discharging his daughter after she had had an abortion and not going before the court to establish the rights at law of the parties. I would suggest that, if there is right on the side of the Minister and the Department, it would have been appropriate to clear the Department by allowing that action to take place. I might have had only one side of that, and I have had no comment from the Minister. If the Minister would like to clear his Department's name, I would be happy to hear him.

Mr Harris: I am familiar with the case. In the first instance, the child was not under care, although she was subsequently placed in care under temporary control for her protection. That matter had been raised with the Supreme Court and it had also been raised with the Ombudsman.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: The Ombudsman had interceded, and the parent says that the Ombudsman told him that, as far as he could ascertain, the Department for Community Welfare had handled the case correctly. There is no dispute with that.

Mr BECKER: That information is reassuring, as I also have a problem in my district. I hope that that person now rings the Ombudsman at all hours of the night and morning threatening suicide. It has been a terrible problem to explain to some people their child's rights and to get them to accept them. Can the Minister say how many social workers are employed by the Department, and what are their classifications or categories? It gets down to supervision. The age of some social workers was referred to earlier, and that about 60 per cent of social workers have less than 5 years experience. These matters affect public acceptance of them. There is an old saying around the community that one is not a social worker until one is 35 years of age, simply because one has not had enough experience of life until then. What supervision is exercised over young social workers, and what is the ratio of senior to junior social workers?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The honourable member made one error, namely, that only 40 per cent and not 60 per cent have less than 5 years experience in the Department. In regard to not being a mature social worker until one is 35 years, I suppose one could say the same about doctors and lawyers who also deal with important aspects in the lives of citizens of the State. Yet, most doctors and lawyers are young, although most of them, as with social workers, are well trained, competent, caring, people and form the backbone of human services in assuring the quality of life that South Australians enjoy.

To put the age of workers and the services of the Department in context, it has 29 district offices and 14 branch offices. We have 337 social workers in the SWO1 to SWO4 classifications. In the SWO1 category there are 267 people; in SWO2, 43; SWO3, 5; and, SWO4, 22. The age profile of these officers is as follows: from 20 to 29 years, 19 per cent; 30 to 39 years, 45 per cent; 40 to 49 years, 25.8 per cent; and, over 50 years, 10 per cent. The honourable member

can be reassured about his 35-year rule of thumb, if that is a reliable measure. Those figures show that most social workers in district and branch offices are at least 30 years of age or over, with 70.9 per cent being between 30 and 49 years of age. That possibly suggests a crucial age. Only 2.7 per cent of the 337 staff are under 25 years of age, a figure that should allay the fears expressed by the honourable member.

Every district and branch office has at least one social worker over 35 years of age. The length of service in the Public Service for the 337 social workers are as follows: less than 5 years service, 40.6 per cent; 5 to 9 years, 38.5 per cent; and, ten years or more, 20.9 per cent. That shows that 59.4 per cent of social workers in district and branch offices have five or more years service. At present, every district and branch office has at least one person with six or more years of service. No doubt the Department enjoys that degree of experience as a result of the expansion of the Department in the early 1970s and the subsequent improvement that took place. In regard to the supervision of staff (particularly new or junior staff) I would ask the Director-General to comment.

Mr Cox: In each office, a senior takes case responsibility, and works with three to five staff members. There is much case discussion and a full review by the district officer and regional staff of each case. The Regional Director supervises between five and six district officers and some branch officers. Much of that supervision is for certain cases and relates to the way in which they operate. There is a network of supervision with a high degree of accountability expected by staff because of their experience. The development of standard procedures was to give some uniformity across the whole spectrum of our work.

Mr BECKER: Does the Department employ psychologists and, if so, how many and what are their classifications?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The Department employs psychologists and relies on the clinical expertise of professionals, such as psychiatrists, doctors, and even kindergarten staff, right across the spectrum when carrying out assessments, in order to obtain as much information as possible before decisions are taken on the placement and care of children. Last year we provided psychological services to 1 762 persons. In terms of assessment and treatments, the breakdown is as follows: children, 557 assessments and 274 treatments; adults, 219 assessments and 474 treatments; and, family units, 91 assessments and 147 treatments. We employ 11.7 full-time equivalents.

Mr BECKER: I refer to the State disaster control and relief services shown on page 84 of the yellow book with specific reference to 'Programme Sector: Emergency Services'. A subheading 'Need being addressed' states:

Over 70 per cent of the State's population is in the metropolitan area where there are risks of bushfire, flood and earthquake. Risks of large scale industrial accidents and other disasters must also be allowed for in planning.

The airport could be included in that, although I hope an accident never occurs. The programme papers describe what is being done and what is being planned, and under the heading '1983-84 specific targets/objectives', states:

The Ash Wednesday II bushfires and Gawler-Barossa floods of 1983 pre-empted the planned simulation exercises. The operational experience gained during the response to these incidents tested the planning in a far more effective way than any exercise.

For 1983-84 a plan exists to review and amend the State Disaster Plan - Welfare as a result of the Ash Wednesday II experience. Can the Minister inform the Committee when that review of the disaster plan will be undertaken, and what we can expect in the future in relation to the community awareness of the service?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The honourable member raises very important issues indeed. He will be relieved to know that we have a plan for the Adelaide Airport but, hopefully, we will not have to use it. Of course, this is a difficult area, because every disaster is different and the response to it must be different as well. Sadly, we learn from disaster to disaster how to respond to them. In Clare, just prior to the Ash Wednesday bushfires (and indeed Clare was also affected by the flooding that followed), the community was involved in a rehearsal, and that gives an indication of how a community that has been through a rehearsal is well prepared.

It has been suggested that the effects of the disaster in physical and human terms were very much minimised by the preparedness of people and their knowledge of how to cope, bearing in mind as well that we had incredible difficulties in communications with Clare on Ash Wednesday this year. Therefore, that community (and indeed our office was a focal point on that day and following) was isolated from the other resources of the State, and I think that we have learned something from that. There has been a very thorough internal review of the Department's response to disasters, bearing in mind that, strangely, our Department was not represented on the State Disaster Committee. I suppose that there could be disasters where welfare is not involved as heavily as we were, but that is hard to imagine. A review has been and is still being conducted by Mr Scriven and Brigadier Lewis; obviously that will result in amendments to the legislation covering State disasters. However, I can assure the Committee that we have gained a great deal of experience and have amended some of our approaches to responses to disasters which we can predict with some degree of certainty. We hope that we have contributed, as a Department, to the overall review being conducted by Mr Scriven and Brigadier Lewis, and that we can play an on-going role in the training of persons in the community to respond to disasters.

One of the pleasing things to us has been the continuation of commitment by those spontaneous groups of people that arose out of the floods and the bushfires. We have had some discussions with representatives of those groups in the hope that we can perhaps involve concerned people in on-going education programmes and maybe in other community work from time to time so that there is an infrastructure at the community level ready, trained and available when any disaster should arise.

The CHAIRMAN: Before calling on the member for Glenelg to ask a question, the Chair finds itself in the same position as it did yesterday. This line includes 'Aboriginal Affairs' and I understand that the Minister will have to change officers to deal with that matter. I ask members, particularly members of the Opposition, to give the Chair some idea of when they would like to start asking questions on Aboriginal Affairs, so that we can change officers. That is an anomaly which the Chair has found.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: We would be quite happy to deal with Aboriginal Affairs towards the end of the afternoon session, say, sometime between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN: I will leave that with the Opposition. I merely wanted to bring it to its attention now.

Mr MATHWIN: My questions relate to young offenders, an area in which I am very interested and concerned, as are all members in this place. I am sure that the Minister would be most disappointed had I not asked a question on this line. I refer to page 28 of the yellow book, which states:

Numbers in secure care have been stable with decreased detention orders being offset by increased remands.

I take it that that is directly from the courts and not from assessment panels. It further states:

Diversionary programmes such as community work warrants default and decentralisation of youth project centres to country

areas have reduced the number of detention orders particularly in the second half of the year, at South Australian Youth Training Centres.

I take it that there is an on-going programme in relation to community works orders. The document also states:

There has been a 300 per cent increase in youths choosing the community service option in satisfying outstanding warrants.

Of course, 300 per cent is a very large amount if it is in relation to a fair number of offenders. One would be delighted to think that most young people are opting to do some work in the community. Of course, that gives some satisfaction to people who have been faced with that problem, and gives them some feeling of restitution; there are still some people in the community who believe that restitution is not a dirty word. What are the figures in relation to the statement about 'a 300 per cent increase in youth choosing the community service option'? Is the proportion between males and females percentagewise about the same?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I thank the honourable member for his question and for the support he has indicated over a period for the de-institutionalisation process that has been going on in the Department. The Department has proved an example to other juvenile justice systems throughout Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere. Our juvenile justice system has enjoyed a wide range of options for rehabilitation and non-custodial care that the adult justice system does not enjoy. That is one of the things being addressed and indeed is included in those amendments to the legislation controlling prisons, so that there can be a range of options other than imprisonment or a monetary penalty, whether it be work release community service orders or some other course for adults. This has been of great advantage to juveniles. There is a range of accommodation available other than in secure care, and community service orders and a warrants default programme have been available, so that there is an alternative to the often negative penalties brought down by the courts. I think that we have come to grips in a very real way with a programme of sternness yet a positive programme that will hopefully rehabilitate young offenders as well.

I think there is a degree of proof to show that that is working in South Australia. We have a decreasing number of young people who require the harshest penalty of all, that is, incarceration in secure care. I will ask Mr Harris to comment further on this matter. I think that the honourable member may have confused slightly the warrants default scheme and the community service orders programme.

Mr Harris: There are two basic schemes where some community service is involved. As the Minister has mentioned, one is the warrants default scheme. The primary objective of that scheme is to reduce the number of young offenders who may be detained in secure centres due to default of payment of fines and costs determined by children's courts. The number of warrants processed by the group dealing with these in the current financial year was 2 386. It is expected that this figure probably will increase for the 1983-84 financial year. The value of community work remains at \$25 for an eight-hour day. Community workers have dealt with a quite large number of people during the past financial year (some 543 warrants as against 195 in 1981-82). The number of warrants satisfied by community work may well increase during this coming year. We intend to improve our liaison with the courts and correctional services personnel who operate the community service order scheme, to obtain more efficiency in the servicing of warrants. If a court determines that a warrant may be dealt with resulting in action other than detention in a secure centre, if there is a default, the matter may be referred to our Department. An attempt is made by departmental officers to contact the child concerned and find out whether

it is possible for the matter to be resolved by either payment or community work. If that is not possible, then the matter is referred back to the police for implementation of the normal course of action.

The community service order scheme can be incorporated as part of a bond made under the Children's Protection and Young Offenders Act. In the past year 17 people were involved in that programme. It should be borne in mind that that is a straight alternative to a child's being placed in detention on a detention order. I understand that the number is increasing slightly this year, as the success of the scheme improves. I do not imagine that there will be large numbers involved in the warrants default scheme arising from default in payment. But to mid March this year some 23 community service orders had been made. The indications are that the number of those issued will be about double that of last year.

Mr MATHWIN: It was indicated that 543 persons have been working under community service orders. That is quite a lot of people which would entail a lot of work being found for them. I am pleased about that result, although there does seem to be a lot of work going on. It was further explained that 17 people were given community work orders directly from the court. I take it that the Department sends to the courts details about work that is available that can be used by the courts as it desires for the purposes of putting a youth on a community work order rather than putting him into an institution.

Mr Harris: I made the point that they were not community service orders but orders made for working out a default of payment of a fine or costs from the Children's Court. Prior to the introduction of this type of scheme, if a fine was not paid automatically when a child was located he or she was placed in secure care. There are now several alternatives: when a person is located he or she may pay the fine or work out the fine under a community service order. During the past year a smaller percentage has been paying the fines, and a higher proportion has been working out fines under community service orders. There are still some cases where people cannot be located or where warrants have to be finally returned to the police for servicing. The warrant default programme involves people, who instead of paying out a fine in the required time, are contacted by the Department and work out their default order.

Mr MATHWIN: I take it then that only 17 community service orders have come from the courts in the past 12 months? That does not seem to be very many. Is the Department still working in only two areas, that is, at Norwood and down south at Christies or Noarlunga, or are other areas now available for community service order work?

Mr Harris: The same areas are still being worked, but the warrant default areas are worked out from almost any district office. It depends on the nature and circumstances of a youth, but in some cases not much supervision is required. It is simply that a person has defaulted on a payment due to the fact that they might have not been working, or whatever, and such a person is offered an alternative method of expiation by being offered work. This is managed by nearly all our district officers. It is perhaps more difficult in country areas, although it does occur there. The member mentioned the small number of community service orders. However, there is now a small number of people in our residential secure-care centres, and the community service order is an alternative method available for the courts to use as part of a condition of a bond, instead of directing a child into secure care. Courts are fairly careful in making that sort of an order. There are different classifications of support. Some youths need a very high degree of supervision, and that is provided by our staff. Others need a lesser amount of supervision, and that is provided

by some of the community organisations with whom they work. Operations are continuing in the southern area, at Norwood, and in some other areas.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I think the honourable member asked for a practical example of how community service orders are undertaken. A while ago I was at Elizabeth. There is a neighbourhood service house known as EPIC at Elizabeth West. Nearby there is a community garden. They have a tractor there, and various things are growing in the garden. Also there is a kindergarten operating in the house, and a range of other services is provided. They also have two houses in the country where families go for week-ends and the like. Young people are often referred to such centres. They may be used for supervising children, digging the garden or doing some other work around the house, which is community work done for the purpose of paying off a fine. A great majority of these people involved are unemployed and may come from families where the breadwinner is also unemployed, and for many of these young people it is a valuable source of contact with a care group in the community.

Mr Cox: In the question of the low numbers, there is an assessment process. It is an alternative to institutions, and if there are 55 young people at SAYTC for 17 to receive community service orders means that there has been a determination that they are not a risk to the community whilst they work. The problem of alternatives of care is to make sure that there is a balance between of what it is decided to do with the child and the nature of the offence. Because we have six or seven alternatives, with special supervisions, project centres and supervision of bonds-in various ways, we regard the community service order as a most serious matter, and we try to take the decision that a person who goes on it will not place the community at risk. It is that area of decision that is most difficult. In the terms of any other State in Australia the numbers in institutions are low, so the ones placed there are very severely disturbed and are a risk to the community. So, the numbers to be considered for service orders are also small. We strongly support the service order scheme, and we would like to use it more as long as we do not place the community at risk.

Mr MATHWIN: I thank the Director for that explanation. I have seen this scheme operating in other countries. In West Germany, for instance, it has been successfully operating for eight or nine years. Most of the direction comes from the court. The court has the option, it is given programmes that are available, and it decides which offender is given a community work order. It can send an offender to Borstal or have him placed on a community work service order. I understood, perhaps wrongly, that not enough information was being supplied to the courts on the availability of work programmes. I criticised the previous Government when I suggested a couple of years ago, that this type of work could be done.

St Jude's Cemetery, at Brighton, was one such project. The council was to do the supervision and provide the tools, but no-one turned up. So, when I heard only 17 people were being placed on work release orders it concerned me, because I believe, as I am sure the Minister and the Department believe, that it is far better to have these young people, if they are reliable enough, given an opportunity and chance to do that type of work, rather than being put in an institution. We would all agree with that, as we would also agree that some people will have to be put into an institution and will probably remain there, God help them, for the rest of their lives. How much progress has been made by the Department in this regard? I know there are alternatives such as early release, assessment panels, etc., but what concerns me are the people who go to court and, where there are then only two alternatives available, the court decides.

I wonder whether the courts have information of programmes and work available for these young people to do.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The honourable member has put it in a rather simplistic way with regard to the alternatives: it is a little more complex than that. Mr Cox will explain how this matter is dealt with.

Mr Cox: As members are aware, under the Act no-one can be placed in secure care without an assessment report. The assessment panel consists of an assessment officer from our Department and people involved with the young people (sometimes an educationist and sometimes a social worker or the parents). It brings together a composite report to suggest the sort of risks that the child has in terms of being in the community, the way he can be handled, the alternatives, and the options. The options always tend to be the non-institutional options. That assessment is then placed before the judge of the court and a decision is made in relation to which option the judge accepts. Judges have to make the decision; we can only make recommendations.

Many of the young people who are in institutions do not have a work problem, but rather other deep-seated problems so, if it was only a work problem, we would be able to use this programme very much more (programmes such as the cemetery that the honourable member talked about). However, it is really related to an assessed risk and an assessed use of that programme. I hope that we will be able to reduce the institution size by another third as a result of these programmes, and the support of the Government for them is very encouraging to the staff, who are very determined to do that.

Mr MATHWIN: I was disappointed, as I said earlier. I do not criticise this Government but the previous Government, because progress was too damn slow.

The CHAIRMAN: I will allow the member for Glenelg to continue.

Mr MATHWIN: As the community work orders entail a number of volunteers within community or community groups, are there many volunteers available? Has the Department a list of volunteers who are interested in helping in this area?

Mr Cox: It is a matter of organisation. There are problems associated with getting jobs ahead of time when one cannot be sure if there will be the people available to fulfil them. It is like the honourable member's cemetery illustration. The cemetery is still not done, because no-one was naughty enough to do it. So, there are those sort of problems with getting too far ahead with too many volunteers. There is a very competent person, the Chief Residential Officer, who is very much involved in the community and in the warrants default programme, which has been very successful in getting volunteer groups to look after those children and in seeing that times are worked out with us and in checking that the hours are done. With community service orders we attempt to fit the supervision particularly to the child in point, and we have to run our supervision along with the volunteers. Work projects currently available run into the latter part of 1984. So, we have a list available, and we have an inventory of jobs until the end of 1984.

Mr MATHWIN: I realise that the Department cannot put a number of young offenders in one area. It could not put, for instance, 10 people to work in a cemetery, because there would be problems.

[Sitting suspended from 1 to 2 p.m.]

The CHAIRMAN: I have been advised that Mr Klunder replaces Mr Groom on the Committee for this afternoon's session.

Mrs APPLEBY: On page 38 of the yellow book it is stated that by the turn of the century there will be in Australia between 600 000 and 900 000 more people aged 65 years and over, and one-half of the number of these people will be over 75 years. In view of the present attitude of the community towards care for the aged, what is the current situation regarding the appointment of a Commissioner for Aged Care and Services, when will the appointment be made and what role will the commission take?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: That question is of considerable importance to not only the State Government and the Federal Government but also to local government, because we are all involved in some way in providing care for the aged. The increased need for care for the ageing applies particularly in South Australia because an exceptional proportion of our population is ageing. The position of the Commissioner for Aged Care and Services is that currently a consultative process has been set up between organisations and persons in the community who are concerned about the provision of services for the aged, the co-ordination of these services, and the relationship between the Commonwealth and the State Governments particularly with respect to financial matters.

The great bulk of commitment for funding aged care programmes and aged care accommodation in particular is with the Commonwealth Government, but nevertheless the State also believes that it should focus its services and its activities more directly. That is why it is proposed to appoint a Commissioner to pull together the threads to assist Government policy planning and to help overcome some of the problems caused by the overlapping of service delivery between respective departments. The result of the consultation process will be that legislation will be introduced in Parliament to create that position probably early next year, and it is hoped that by the middle of next year that legislation will have passed Parliament and that person can be appointed.

Mrs APPLEBY: When the task force set up to develop and establish policies for aged care and services was established, was any research done on the specific needs of aged care in the community and how they are being serviced in the community at the moment?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: There has not been a direct study on that within the Department, although considerable work is being done at the Federal level which has resulted in the McLeay Report and other like studies. The Commonwealth Government is similarly moving towards a new co-ordinated approach to providing services to the community, and it is likely that by about mid-1984 there will be a similar office created federally to carry out the same sorts of task that we envisage the officer will carry out in South Australia.

Mr Cox: Surveys have been carried out into domiciliary care and some of the other already established services in the community and the gaps in those areas are well known. Most of those surveys were carried out under the health portfolio. I think that the job of the Commissioner for the Aged will be to bring together what are not necessarily health but rather community wellbeing issues, and that requires a different interpretation. As South Australia is well ahead in talking about appointing a Commissioner for the Aged, the way in which it is done will reflect on whether we get new creative ideas or more of the same.

I believe there is an overwhelming view that aged care has been too institutionalised and too limiting on the prospects of the elderly to enjoy life and that, rather, the approach has been to help them merely get through their ageing process. I would have thought that the new alertness to the needs of the aged would open up the door for a different kind of service. I believe that the appointment of a Com-

missioner for the Aged would start that creativity rather than just provide more of the same.

Mrs APPELBY: On page 18 of the yellow book it is stated that 45 community welfare offices are located throughout the State, providing 'personal counselling and health care counselling and support community self-help activities'. Can the Minister state the number of hours worked in the field compared with the hours spent completing the necessary paper work?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I will try to ascertain those figures for the honourable member. Much of the work of the welfare workers is statutory work required by legislation to service the courts and other requirements, and a considerable amount of paper work is involved in doing that. That limits the amount of creative work that welfare workers can do in the community. The staff see so many needs in the community; they see avenues to meet those needs constructively, and yet they are unable to spend as much time as they would like in those pursuits, because of their responsibilities. The staff are, to my mind, incredibly generous with their time and do a lot of out of hours work in community activities, often in supporting those who are doing this work voluntarily in the community.

Programme performance budgeting has highlighted the apportionment of time between hours spent in the field and hours spent behind a desk. In individual and family support, general counselling for individuals and families, social work services and health care, there was a 25 per cent apportionment in 1982-83, and that has increased to 35 per cent of time we envisage for the current financial year. The social work services in health care had 5 per cent of time allocated for that activity; child protection, 5 per cent in the previous year and 6 per cent this year; young offenders and children at risk—children's aid panels, 5 per cent last year reduced to 3 per cent this year; and supervision of young offenders in the community, 20 per cent. Work with children has been reduced from 5 per cent and has now been discontinued, albeit involving other activities. Emergency financial assistance—payments to recipients—has been reduced from 10 per cent to 8 per cent because of the changes in the method of providing that service.

The co-ordination and licensing functions connected with foster care represent 10 per cent. The promotion of community participation (volunteers and community aides) shows a reduction from 5 per cent to 3 per cent. Welfare development in the community has fallen from 10 per cent to 8 per cent. Professional and technical support services, a new category, has been allocated 2 per cent. That is an indication of the apportionment of time that has been made as scientifically as possible and gives some idea of the concept toward which staff are working.

Mr Cox: The apportionment has been forced on us by the requirements of the programme performance budget, and twice a year we have taken a survey of the staff to ascertain the exact proportion of time spent on the various functions. The figures have been somewhat distorted this year by the disastrous situation we had earlier and the additional need for support for some families. Also, child abuse problems have increased. The community work figure depends on what stage and at what time. Many developmental community work projects, especially from the disastrous period and the industrial period, have become less in their effects. We carry out this practice each year.

A change in the figures does not necessarily reflect a change of emphasis but rather a change at the time of the survey. In terms of community work, we believe that we can still make changes in the paper work required so that, with the aid of computers, it can be made more simple, with the result that less time is spent by staff on paper work and more in the field. That is our aim but, with the increasing

nature of appeals and the processing of the rights of people, documentation tends to increase; so, although over a period we have tried to reduce documentation, we are now looking at documentation to see what information can be made available in précis form. Our concern is real in terms of running a welfare service: the more time that is spent on paper work, the less time will be spent with the client. This matter is constantly under review.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: What provision is being made for the appeal sections of the Community Welfare Act to be implemented? Has such a programme been set back by the most recent announcement by the Minister that a mini-Ombudsman will replace the appeal provision?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: It is intended that those powers provided in the legislation shall be vested in the Ombudsman, so that the Ombudsman would be the appellate authority and a separate appellate authority would not be set up in the Department as was planned. Given the powers provided in the legislation, the appeal structure and the powers vested in the Ombudsman, this arrangement will make for a comprehensive appeal structure.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Will the legislation need to be changed, and will the money allocated for that line be reallocated to the Ombudsman's office for the appointment of extra staff?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: No. The Ombudsman does not require a payment from us. It may be inappropriate for the Department to pay the Ombudsman to provide a system of appeal against it. The money provided for that line will not now be required for that purpose. That is one of its advantages.

Mr Cox: The sum of \$31 000 has been provided for the implementation of that part of the legislation. As the Ombudsman has been established, his powers are somewhat more than those provided in the legislation, so appeals could go to the Ombudsman as part of the appeal system. If the funds are not taken within this new initiative, there must be renegotiation with the Treasury about the use of the money. The other parts of the legislation have not been proclaimed where it might be appropriate to take action.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Another initiative that the Minister is committed to is the setting up of consumer forums. Have any of these forums been set up as yet? If they have been, when and where have they been set up, and what have been the results of their establishment?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The amendments to the legislation brought about a whole series of ways in which the work of the Department could be scrutinised and there could be participation in the work of the Department and community support for it. The appeal system, the consumer forums and the reviews are all designed with that in mind. They have risen out of a review conducted at the instigation of the previous Government. The consumer forums are seen as an important part of that pattern. As yet consumer forums have not commenced operations but we hope that they will commence operations soon. They will give an opportunity for concerned people in local communities to assess the work of the local officers of the Department and the general services delivered at that level. In that way the Department can hopefully keep in touch with the needs of the community and continue to obtain community support.

Mr Cox: Invitations will be sent out to local residents who have been receiving or are currently receiving departmental services or who have applied for the provision of such services. Representatives of Government departments, Government instrumentalities and non-government welfare organisations that are providers of community welfare services in the local area and other appropriate organisations may also receive invitations. The list of consumers will be updated so that all consumers involved will receive invi-

tations. It will be for them to raise the quality of the care they get.

The forerunner of this innovation was the Mann Report, which was the first report on how consumers feel about our services. We considered that that was so valuable that this would be a better practice, as it would enable the consideration of issues that needed to be raised. The agenda will be at the discretion of the meeting, and a record of formal proceedings will be kept and forwarded to the Minister. Then certain questions that will be raised will have to be answered, so there will be communication back and forth. So, the forum will not have a permanent membership, apart from some of the agencies represented, because consumers of the service change. However, it is an attempt to make a flexible arrangement and to obtain consumer opinion about the way the Department serves.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: The Minister is also committed to appointing a Commissioner for the Aged. Is such an appointment imminent?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The Government is working towards this appointment on the time table to which I referred in reply to a question from the member for Brighton. We believe that a process of consultation with the community is necessary before the introduction of the necessary legislation. The legislation will be important in ensuring that appropriate powers are vested in the ethnic/aged commissioner or consultant, and we hope that such an appointment can be made by the end of this financial year.

Mr BECKER: I refer to page 118 of the Estimates of Payments, 'Evaluation, Research and Projects Branch', showing an expenditure of \$359 431 last year and a voted amount of \$384 100 this year. Will the Minister tell the Committee what research and projects have been handled over the past 12 months, what are estimated this year and what evaluations will be brought down?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: Research and evaluation is an important part of the Department's work, and this also relates to projects. The research branch is funded to provide a statistical service to the Department, to provide information on the welfare needs of the community and to provide access to departmental information for external researchers. There is an additional demand on such information right across the Government service.

In 1982-83, 7.1 staff and a contingency budget of \$62 000 were provided for this purpose. Funds were spent to develop and update a range of statistical collections, including intake recording, foster care, outcomes measurement, child maltreatment and social indicators. I do not know whether the honourable member has seen the documents on social indicators but they are comprehensive.

A large number of short statistical reports were produced on the following: work-load estimates; family day-care fee structures; responses to Parliamentary Questions on Notice; the Hindley Street project; financial assistance applications; unemployment benefit recipients; language facilities of staff; young Aboriginal offenders; demographic and welfare projections; and the effect of indirect taxes on the poor. Those papers have been prepared or work has been done in those areas. On-going research is carried out on a whole range of issues.

The Department undertakes research into crisis care; the adoptions criteria; family day care for special needs children; the survey of emergency financial assistance applications; crisis points for young people seeking emergency financial assistance; supporting parent survey; survey of unattached refugee youth; family dynamics, youth homelessness and youth shelters; children's aid panels; school experiences of children in foster care; budgeting advice survey; and an adopted persons contact register. Such research is done mainly in conjunction with a particular office or officers in

the field, so there is the research component for the everyday welfare of social workers. That indicates some of the work done under that category in the Department.

Mr BECKER: At page 116 of the Estimates of Payments, the line 'Community Welfare Advisory Committees—members' fees' shows an expenditure of \$14 577 last year and a proposed expenditure of \$14 600 this year. Will the Minister say to which committees it refers, who are the members and what amounts they receive? Are any travelling or other expenses paid to members of those committees?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: In the Department for Community Welfare it is important that there be the ability to obtain advice from committees of this nature. I refer to the Community Welfare Grants Committee, the Adoption Panel, the Residential Child Care Advisory Committee and the Child Care Advisory Committee. I will provide the honourable member with membership details later. Other committees are as follows: the Adoption Board; the Central Eastern Child Protection Panel; the Central-Northern Child Protection Panel; the Central Southern Child Protection Panel; the Central Western Child Protection Panel; the Community Welfare Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Care; the Community Welfare Grants Advisory Committee; the Family Support Services Management Committee; the Murrayland/Riverland Regional Child Protection Panel; Northern Country Regional Child Protection Panel; the Residential Child Care Advisory Committee; the South-East Regional Child Protection Panel; the Community Welfare Grants Review Committee (a short-term committee which has now reported); and the Aboriginal Lands Trust Committee (under the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio). The Youth Accommodation Advisory Committee has just been appointed.

Mr BECKER: I would like a copy of those committees and their full membership as it would appear, with an expenditure of about \$14 000, that many are not paid. We are trying to put together a list of these committees.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The figure is greater than \$14 000, and I ask Mr Beattie to explain how it is covered in the Budget.

Mr Beattie: The regional committees for child protection panels appear under 'Regional administration' rather than under the line referred to; therefore, more money is paid out.

Mr BECKER: The Budget refers to allocations to the various regions. Can the Minister advise the Committee of the number of staff and their classifications in each regional office?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I ask Mr Beattie to explain the statistical information.

Mr Beattie: We will provide that information on notice.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Will the Minister say how the key worker programme at Elizabeth is progressing?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: It is an important concept and an area of great interest, as it provides a relationship between education and welfare and also touches on peer responsibility and the involvement of volunteers. The key worker programme is being monitored closely, and I will ask Mr Cox to give some evaluation on how the project is panning out.

Mr Cox: The key worker scheme started in two schools, and the more successful has been in Elizabeth West. We supplied a senior person from our Department for this co-operative programme between the Education and Community Welfare Departments. The Director-General of Education and I visited at the end of last year to review the programme personally and meet the people involved. At that time there would have been 10 to 12 young people involved with those who were supporting them. The school, the principals, the children, and the people involved spoke highly of the scheme, and it is obvious that it has a built-in evaluation system. I think that, over the first seven

months of the operation last year, 16 students were involved in the scheme and 10 successfully achieved their goals and became involved in the school programme.

Since then another 22 have been involved in the programme, which costs only \$27 900. I think that you would be familiar with the fact that the child selects the person that matters most to him. I visited the Elizabeth West school twice to see how it was operating. One child had chosen the school caretaker, and I happened to be in the office one day when the child was late for school. He asked the school principal how on earth he would explain it to the caretaker. The depth of relationship is enabling these people to feel something new about their school experiences, and it is certainly a positive programme. It has been discussed by the Schools Commission to ascertain whether it could be operated universally. It has not expanded, and I think that it will be reviewed again to ascertain how far we should develop it here. However, it certainly is, along with the Norwood Project Centre, a real contribution to those children having difficulties with learning and school behaviour.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I refer to the expenditure item on page 76 of the yellow book in relation to funding of day-care centres, as there is a substantial reduction in that line. Is that related to the change in Federal funding and the removal of that line from Federal funding?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: Yes, it is. The Commonwealth has accepted direct funding responsibility for several centres, and that accounts for that.

The CHAIRMAN: That question comes under 'Miscellaneous', with which we are not dealing now.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I have advanced beyond the Community Welfare line inadvertently.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is not out of order, but it will be dealt with under 'Miscellaneous'.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I refer to 'Emergency Financial Aid' on page 12 of the yellow book. That has a considerable reduction on last year's allocation, yet I believe that there would be an increased demand. In a statement in the yellow book the Minister said that a reduction on several lines would not mean a reduction in service. Has that service been transferred to another line, or is it a straight-out anticipation that there will be a lesser demand this year?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: That requires a technical explanation. There is no reduction in the level of that service nor in the level of demand for it. However, as it relates to Commonwealth payments as well, perhaps Mr Beattie can explain.

Mr Beattie: Funds in relation to the 'Emergency Financial Aid' line were transferred to the 'Emergency Financial Assistance' line with Government and Treasury approval on 1 April this year, so we have combined both lines. Emergency financial aid applied to those people awaiting unemployment benefits, and we paid them a percentage of the unemployment benefits in two amounts before they received the first social security payment. It was convenient to combine those two lines for administrative and accounting purposes through the year, but that does not mean a reduction of any sort in those payments: in fact, the payments are reflected under 'Emergency Financial Assistance'.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I thought that it may be something like that. I hoped that the Minister might have achieved something that I was soliciting in the Budget debate a couple of weeks ago when I pointed out that the Department for Community Welfare was really doing the Federal Government a service in providing from State revenue emergency financial aid for people who were applying for interim assistance before receiving unemployment benefit cheques. It seems that the State Governments are really duplicating what could be a Federal Government service.

The Federal Government should act more humanely, and provide sufficient staff to give applicants counter cheques when it is obvious that they are desperately in need of funds. The computerised programme was quite unable, at State capital level, to provide quick aid. Has or will the Minister solicit further help from the Federal Government in taking over full responsibility for what is obviously a Federal responsibility already? We are helping people who are desperately in need.

If the Federal Government were to consider the question on a more humanitarian level, it would provide staff and make sure that everyone who went into the employment office and was unable to obtain work would qualify for social security benefits and obtain them immediately from the proper source, the Federal Government. I do not know whether the Federal Government would view it at all sympathetically, but at least we could keep trying to prevent duplication at State level. Obviously, we have better things to do with State funds.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: We have achieved this much with the Commonwealth: it has agreed to be represented on a State-Commonwealth working party to consider the specific problem. On this matter it is a united chorus of State Ministers at meetings with the Commonwealth. It is a matter that varies from State to State as well, depending on the level of commitment expressed by the respective State Governments. It is a real problem for State welfare departments to administer what is really an alternative social security system to those people most desperately in need. I think that 85 per cent of the emergency financial assistance paid from the Department for Community Welfare is paid to persons with children to buy food and, in my view, it is clearly a Commonwealth Government responsibility.

The Commonwealth has increased the amount available to non-Government organisations that provide emergency financial assistance, although, this is a drop in the ocean. Therefore, it is hoped that out of the working party may come a new expression of commitment by the Commonwealth.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Page 14 of the yellow book refers to welfare development in the community. The reduction there is also considerable, from \$533 000 in 1982-83, to a proposed \$457 000 in 1983-84. Can the Minister or his staff explain the rationale behind that, and does the Minister believe that development has already progressed to an acceptable level and that this is a reduction in need?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: This relates to the apportionment of social worker time to which I was referring.

Mr Cox: The apportionment of social work is done by two surveys to which I referred previously, and the alteration in the apportionment is done by checking out how social workers spend their time in a week. This year there was an increased amount of time apportioned to disaster and family counselling because of things that happened in that period. That has distorted the figures. Community welfare workers are generous, so when it is apportioned it affects the cost. A percentage becomes less, and therefore the percentage of salaries will be less. It is not a policy change, but it is due to a relationship to the time of the survey.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: It was in response to the disaster?

Mr Cox: Yes. That was very much a major part of it, but we should be able to decrease it again.

Mr MATHWIN: What is the Department doing in an attempt to stem the colossal escalation in costs of the State's institutions? We all know that it is costly to house offenders, whether juvenile or adult, and that it is a costly business for taxpayers. It is perhaps even more costly in regard to dealing with young people. The rapid escalation in costs over the years has been pretty breathtaking.

The cost per inmate for the South Australian Youth Remand Assessment Centre (formerly Vaughan House) has now increased to \$73 000 per inmate, or \$1 404 a week. For the South Australian Youth Training Centre (formerly McNally) the cost has risen to \$57 000 per inmate. I realise that the idea is to have as many people as possible fulfilling community work orders undertaken outside these institutions. Of course, when dealing with young offenders the prime concern should not be the cost. Our prime aim should be in trying to guide them back on to the right path. The frightening escalation in costs worries me, as it has done in previous years.

The number of inmates has decreased and we are catering for only the most hardened offenders, yet costs have increased. What is the Department doing to counter this? Whether the same staffing levels are to be maintained, I do not know. It would be ideal to have more staff, particularly to help young offenders, and a two-to-one or even a one-to-one situation would be desirable, but no community can afford that. Can I have some information about this?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The honourable member's question raises a myriad of issues. I shall touch on some of those, and then ask my officers to provide more specific details. The Department is in a situation where, in fact, the more it reduces the population of those institutions, the more the cost per child rises, because of the way in which institutions are staffed, having regard to the minimum staffing requirements.

There has been a deliberate policy for many years to give every opportunity to those young offenders in regard to rehabilitation because, as the honourable member so rightly said, although the cost may seem to be expensive now, eventually it could mean a saving to the community in the long term if those young offenders can rehabilitate their lives. Of course, it is hard to put a value on that. There are reasons why the costs have been rising each year, such as salary increases and costs associated with the running of the institutions at certain minimum staffing levels. Some of the day-to-day costs associated with those institutions have risen at a lower level than has inflation.

The two major institutions often referred to are SAYTC (South Australian Youth Training Centre) and SAYRAC (South Australian Youth Remand Assessment Centre) are both highly specialised facilities which are used for the most difficult young people in this State. In accordance with Government policy and departmental philosophy, enormous efforts have been made and will continue to be made to reduce the number of young people admitted into those institutions and to reduce the period of time that any one person committed for the longest possible term spends there.

Further, the aim is to provide a quality and range of programmes that will minimise the negative effects of such placement and maximise the ability for people to enhance personal, social, and technical skills. In the three-year period 1980-81 to 1982-83, the average number of young people in residence has dropped from 103 to 85: a significant drop, if this is translated in terms of the number of difficult children over a period of a year who are involved. While the number of children in care has been reduced significantly at most centres, it has not been possible to reduce commensurately the number of staff.

There is a minimum staff level appropriate for care of a unit of eight young people. This number cannot be reduced if, say, there are only three people in a unit. Also, there are policies in regard to keeping children separate who are first time offenders, and those who may be there for supervision only, from the hardened and seasoned offenders. Regard must be had to those who are there on remand and to those who are a high-security risk or a low-security risk, as well as to whether they are males or females. If we are to

continue with that sort of programme, the number of units in each centre cannot be reduced.

It thus becomes apparent that even with the Department's success in reducing the number of young people in residence, it is unable to reduce staff because a minimum staff level still exists even if the numbers of inmates are reduced. For each person that we succeed in taking out of institutional care, our costs (if one has regard to the formulae I have outlined) seem to increase. The Public Service Board has recently appointed a committee to review the staffing levels in those institutions, with representatives from the Public Service Board, the Treasury, the Department for Community Welfare, and the Public Service Association. Perhaps Mr Harris can comment further.

Mr Harris: The Department has also developed a range of alternative programmes for the secure care of young offenders. Those cover supervision, care in the community, community based residential services, intensive neighbourhood care, the community services scheme (mention of which was made earlier), the community work programme, and the joint Education Department and Community Welfare Department project centres and access worker projects. These are all tending to reduce the number of people involved. Also, as the Minister said, it is reducing the time spent by people at the centres.

This causes a disproportionate cost in regard to each person, because of the reduction in numbers, and one would really need to reduce it by a unit or more in each location for a significant cost reduction. We must be realistic and take account of the capacity of institutions. SAYTC has a capacity of about 80 and SAYRAC has a capacity of 51. The maximum number at SAYTC for the past year was 74 and at SAYRAC it was 43. If one then makes a revised net cost on that basis, one comes up with a figure of something like \$40 000 a year for SAYTC and \$35 000 for SAYRAC, which is a much more realistic figure.

Another institution which has not been mentioned but which does have an apparently high cost ratio is Lochiel Park, which takes some young offenders and also other children who are intellectually handicapped and need special forms of care. Its capacity is about 16, but in addition to that it has some in-day care and some in-and-out reach programme. The cost there would be about \$39 000 if one takes into account those factors. Also, Lochiel Park provides a programme for country-based education students who stay in residences so they can be exposed to issues in the city, and that provides a useful service for those people.

There are differences in the costings provided in the Auditor-General's Report and those provided in the Department's report. The differences seem to be caused because different costing factors are used. In the Department's figures we use the overall Department's cost, P.B.D. cost, and superannuation cost, whilst the Auditor-General uses a slightly different set of figures with a higher proportion of P.B.D. costs and excludes superannuation, yet it arrives at a slightly higher figure.

There is an argument in future for getting these two reports on to a basis where they can be properly assessed to take into account the provision of the day-care services that occur from the centres as part of the total functioning, bearing in mind that this State has the lowest number of young offenders in secure care. Unless we reduce it by X number of units at either place, we will not be able to cut costs significantly although, as the Minister mentioned, a staff review committee has been appointed with representatives from the Public Service Board, the P.S.A., and the Department to consider staffing in order to ascertain whether we can cover those issues.

Mr MATHWIN: I was comparing it more or less to the adult system of correctional services. I did not think that,

in the costing, it brought in the cost of the other programmes available. They are under different headings in the yellow book. If it is the case of an overall costing, that is something in the Department's favour. I have no argument in relation to Lochiel Park, as I know of the operation there and the type of child who attends there. I do not put that in with the offenders situation generally.

Mr Cox: In case I gave the wrong impression, I was not inferring that the community programmes we have are part of the costing. They are alternatives to placing people in care and they are costed separately. From Lochiel Park there is a day-care programme, and more are covered, so the community programmes are separately costed. I did not want to give the wrong impression.

Mr MATHWIN: I refer to page 28 of the yellow book that states under the line 'Issues/Trends':

Recruitment of Intensive Neighbourhood Care families continues to be difficult and new strategies need to be developed.

Can the Minister explain that statement? On 'Supervision in the Community' the proposed staffing has increased by two. Proposed employment levels for 1982-83 were 64.6; the outcome for 1982-83 was 69.2; and the proposed level for 1983-84 was 71.4, so it is not a great increase. Is there any connection with the Intensive Neighbourhood Care Scheme and the problem that the Department appears to be having? Are the young people who go into that scheme directed from the Department's committee or from the court?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The problems are not with the programme, which is operating successfully, but in the recruitment of more families. It is an incredibly difficult task to ask a family to perform. I have visited and spoken with several INC families, and they do an excellent job that cannot be done by institutional care or by other means. It is valuable work, but there are only a limited number of families prepared to undertake that work, and we would like to see the number increased. It is to that matter to which the booklet refers.

Mr Cox: The INC scheme is used for offenders who come and are assessed through court, and the placement is agreed to. Then the INC parents take the responsibility in reporting to court on the way the young person is functioning. Concerning recruitment, there is a bit of a burn-out rate in terms of what people can do, when they can handle it, and what they want to do, so we have to keep up an ongoing recruitment programme. Then we use it for special intensive neighbourhood care placement, which is used for some of the adolescent girls who used to go to Vaughan House in the old days. That has been an incredibly successful programme, and it is a matter of keeping before the public the need for INC families. We have tried all sorts of approaches: in local Messenger press and recruiting families through the Commonwealth Employment Service (and that has been quite successful), so we are all the time trying to keep numbers up because of the great demands.

In the past 12 months 255 children have been placed in the INC scheme: it is an incredible number. Those children would have previously been in institutions. It is much like the community service order: an alternative that changed the nature of our situation. The figures for placement of the children and the areas are: in the central northern region, 98; central southern region, 21; central eastern region, 31; central western region, 61; northern country region, 20; southern country region, 24. Local staff are supporting it as well as supervisors of young offenders in the community, and they have a joint responsibility. There is the problem of the distortion of proportion of the way in which we did that survey, and I think the honourable member understands that.

Mr BECKER: Page 59 of the Auditor-General's Report states:

Family Maintenance Trust Account System

A review and evaluation was conducted on the internal control procedures associated with the computer system which maintains accounts for Trust moneys. The review revealed that there were inadequacies in the procedures relating to data entry, access to computer held information and accountable stationery. Following the referral of these issues, the Department advised that revised procedures would be implemented.

Can the Minister advise the Committee what are the revised procedures, and when will they be implemented?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: They have already been implemented, and one of the difficulties with the Auditor-General's Report is that it is always 12 months after the event. I suppose in terms of Government this really refers to the period before I became the Minister, but the Department obviously treats with urgency and with great respect comments made in the Auditor-General's Report. They are conveyed to the departments at the first opportunity, and in this respect the family maintenance trust account system has been upgraded in line with the Auditor-General's comments and the new procedures have been implemented. Unfortunately, since that time other weaknesses have been found in the system in relation to the handling of cash and they have been attended to as well. This is an area of the Department's work which is constantly under review and every check that has been suggested that can be implemented has been implemented to minimise deficiencies in that system.

Mr Beattie: Two basic problems were highlighted in the Auditor-General's Report. The first was in relation to the storage of blank cheques and the printing of those cheques. The Auditor-General's staff observed at one stage of the review that the room where the cheque printing machine was situated was left unattended for several minutes and the cupboard where blank cheques were stored was left open. The procedure is now that there is always someone in attendance in the room when it is open, and when it is unoccupied it is kept locked. The other weakness was in relation to cheque reconciliations and getting them countersigned. That has been corrected since it was brought to our attention.

Mr BECKER: On page 498 of the Auditor-General's Report it is stated that three cheques to the value of \$160 were forged and uttered in the Department for Community Welfare and that \$379 in cash was stolen and that was recovered from an insurance company. How could cheques be forged and uttered? What security arrangements have been introduced to help stop that occurring again? On page 499 of the Auditor-General's Report is a list of items stolen from various offices of the Department for Community Welfare. It is stated that the Berri district office lost a rubber raft valued at \$225. I wonder why that office should have a rubber raft? A safe valued at \$492 was stolen from the central western group home; the Woodville district office lost a computer valued at \$3 656; the Youth Project Centre at Magill lost a safe valued at \$492 and a lawnmower valued at \$206; filing cabinets to the value of \$206 were stolen from various offices; and sundry items totalling \$574 were stolen from various offices. I am particularly interested in the rubber raft at Berri and how these various thefts could have occurred.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: It must not be forgotten that many of our clients are experienced in these matters.

Mr Beattie: First of all, I should say that when a theft occurs it is referred to the Minister, then to the police, and to the Auditor-General. The police are always requested to investigate a theft. In relation to the cheques being forged and uttered, many of our emergency financial assistance payments are made by cheque and people will take them and alter them and pass them off for amounts greater than

the cheques originally issued. At least one of those cases occurred in that way. I cannot recall the other two, but it is likely that the same thing happened. In relation to cash stolen, sometimes the thieves steal the safe as well as the cash. The computer stolen from Woodville was one of three small micro-processors we bought on trial to use in our local offices. Someone broke into the Woodville office overnight and stole the computer. It was reported to the police, but there has been no report back on that. The Government insures itself for many of these items; apart from the money that we had covered by insurance, the items have not been covered.

Mr Cox: In relation to the rubber raft stolen from the Berri office, the Welfare Department runs youth project centres at Berri at which water sports play an important part. It is logical therefore that the Berri office would own a raft. The loss of the raft had a bad effect on the youth work programme.

Mr BECKER: With such a large number of people using the offices, have the security systems been upgraded in an attempt to prevent breaking and entering and in some way to try to protect the Department's property?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: This is difficult, because we use a wide variety of buildings and structures for our services and it is difficult to secure many of them. It is surprising what people do take as they go through the offices. I will have the officers explain this. We ask the Public Buildings Department to advise and assist us when we are looking at ways of solving the security problems. We have a difficult job to do.

Mr Cox: We have not had much success with security systems, although in terms of the number of locations and considering some of our clients the amount of breaking and entering is not really great. The problem with securing our premises is that they are used night and day by community groups. It is difficult to secure the buildings with so many people using them, but that use is a great defence against their being broken into during those hours. It is difficult to secure them regularly and to make sure that the alarms do not go off at the wrong time. We had that problem at Marion. Breaking and entering does not seem to happen in the same place twice.

Mr BECKER: If the Department was able to employ a few part-time caretakers that could solve some of the security problems and it would also create a few jobs.

Mr Cox: We use security firms at some of our locations, but that really is superficial in terms of what you are discussing. The problem is that security people come and go, it is well known that they come and go, and so they are used in some locations but not in others.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: The report to the Minister of Community Welfare from the Residential Child Care Advisory Committee, dated December 1982, refers at page 8 to the youth accommodation programme, the youth services programme, and points out that the capacity of the project is 45 teenagers, with occupancy rates appearing to average at around 70 per cent capacity. The next sentence appears to be a contradiction in terms. It states that the project staff reported that they were regularly unable to meet demands for the service. The Emergency Housing Office reported that it received approximately 30 requests per month from under-18 year olds, and the report summarised the number of problems encountered by various organisations which were funded under the programme, and the problems included obtaining houses suitable for the purpose of emergency youth accommodation; overcoming local objections to the establishment of that type of accommodation in residential areas; obtaining and retaining adults to provide live-in minimal supervision (on a voluntary basis); the dilemma of organisations meeting significantly increased

costs if live-in supervisors are to be paid a salary; and finding adequate independent accommodation for young people as the next stage after shelter accommodation.

As recently as early this morning, while travelling along Hindley Street at 12.15 a.m., I saw some young people sitting around in a hotel doorway and others squatting on the pavement. Has the research done by the Department succeeded in producing an accurate estimate of the number of youngsters who might not approach the Department for accommodation but who might be, as was reported in a South Australian newspaper recently, sleeping in disused premises or any other illegal and unacceptable accommodation they could find?

Mr Cox: The cry is that there is insufficient youth accommodation, yet the average is down below what one would expect. One problem in respect of formal accommodation, such as in hostels, is that some young people seem to want to come and go. The mobility of young people and their apparent desire to avoid control in a hostel environment varies and the hostel manager cannot fill a bed immediately a young person leaves until it is certain that the young person will not return. There are tremendous problems involved in the running of youth hostels and in doing the work we do in the matter of young people requiring accommodation.

The emergency accommodation unit run by the Housing Trust also provides accommodation for some of these young people. The Port Adelaide Mission has been running a different style of operation and using houses under minimum supervision. All these schemes succeed in helping certain clients, but the need for such accommodation is as varied as are the young people coming under our care.

The Hindley Street project, which has been run by the Department in co-operation with the Adelaide City Council and the churches, has shown that most young people coming to the city have accommodation to which to go, but many of them do not necessarily want to go to that accommodation all the time. A hostel (the Other Way Family Home) has been established for Aboriginal young people of the type seen by the honourable member in Hindley Street, and that has succeeded in attracting young people. However, there are young people who for some nights and even for some weeks will use accommodation which to the community is unacceptable. Some of them approach us, but they do not necessarily want the type of accommodation that we can offer: they want independence as well as cheap accommodation. A combination of factors must be considered when dealing with the provision of accommodation. The Government has split the committee concerned with residential care into two committees, one of which, the Youth Accommodation Committee, I see as tackling the issues raised by the honourable member.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Can the Minister say what is the problem regarding the Aboriginal youth emergency hostel that is currently managed, either formally or informally, by a Mr Campbell, who is assisted by Miss Sandy Saunders of the D.C.W. Aboriginal Co-ordination Unit? Late last year, Mr Campbell approached me when he was in different accommodation. He then moved into the accommodation provided by the D.C.W. at 4 Rowells Road, Lockleys. Although I do not think that that was satisfactory long-term accommodation, I give the Department credit for trying to help this gentleman.

Mr Campbell seems dissatisfied less with the nature of accommodation than with the long-term prospects of him and his group. He said that young people admired and/or respected him and had sought his help as a more acceptable alternative to the accommodation provided by one or more church organisations that were also interested in this problem. Mr Campbell suggested that Mr Cox had been considering

Brookway Park and other alternatives. I suspect that Mr Campbell may ultimately seek to provide himself with full-time long-term employment with the Department, but whether or not that is a desirable aim I cannot say because I do not know him well.

Would there be any problems associated with Mr Campbell's being appointed a permanent officer of the Department? Is his charge that the Government is continually giving him the brush-off correct? No doubt, Mr Campbell is providing a service for youngsters who are underprivileged and at risk, but I do not know whether his qualifications are such as to make his permanent appointment acceptable to the Department.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I imagine that some of the young people seen by the honourable member in Hindley Street would have been of Aboriginal origin. It is a matter of great concern that so many Aborigines in the community are homeless young people. Mr Campbell met the need for accommodation in probably a most unsatisfactory way judged by acceptable community standards: there was overcrowding and a whole series of unsatisfactory aspects in respect of the accommodation he provided. So that service had to cease. The Department accepted a responsibility to care for those young people and assess their needs. Some of them were encouraged to return to their families and others to transfer to other caring situations. Some could not be helped in any conventional way.

Mr Campbell grappled with the problem of providing a service sympathetic to the Aboriginality of those young people, and perhaps a lesson can be learned by reflecting on that point, which is related to the points raised by the member for Glenelg concerning the number of young Aborigines in secure institutions, which is higher than their proportion in the general community. That also worries me. Regarding Mr Campbell's efforts, we sought a sponsoring organisation to provide that necessary service, and OARS has accepted that responsibility. We have provided a house at Brookway Park and OARS, in conjunction with Mr Campbell, has undertaken to establish there a small hostel for Aboriginal girls. That project, which is in the final stages of negotiation, will receive funding from the D.C.W. It is hoped that Commonwealth funding will be forthcoming for this service at the Other Way Family Home, which is now well established, so that we can satisfy some of the needs of these young people who are very much at risk in the community at present.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Over the past few years a budget advisory service has been provided by the D.C.W. Last year it cost \$150 000, about \$35 000 more than was originally intended. In fact, the Minister made available an extra \$35 000 to meet last year's cost. A substantial amount of that allocation of funds is taken up by a couple of permanent staff based in Adelaide. A conference was held from 8 to 10 April in the Rymill Conference Centre, at Stirling East. It was a national conference of financial counsellors. One of the evident results is that budget advisers throughout South Australia are relatively dissatisfied because of the heavy work load they have to sustain in the relatively few hours that they are allowed, irrespective of whether they are in metropolitan or country regions.

The increased demand for budget advice in the 10 months to the end of April 1983 meant that a total of 2 750 new clients sought assistance compared with 1 754—an increase of about 1 000, or about 55 per cent over the last financial year. It is important to draw the Minister's attention to this matter, as I have received comments from people in the field, including representatives in court, people seeking budget advice, and clients who are owed money by people who are to appear in court. Those people seem to be happy with the quality of advice given, with the result that it

frequently keeps people away from bankruptcy and helps steer them on a better financial course, as well as helping the courts to make decisions in such cases.

If the number of people seeking advice is increasing at that rate, whilst the amount of money allocated for 1983-84 is about the same (to within a couple of thousand dollars) as was expended last year, has the Minister or have his staff realised the extent to which the system has proved acceptable and valuable to the clientele and the community? It would be a pity if the budget advisers in South Australia downed tools and resigned in frustration, as is rumoured will happen. I know of one or two people who have done so or are considering so doing.

It would be a pity to lose that expertise to the Department, especially when one considers the number of hours they work whilst being paid for only actual working time. They are paid casual rates as they do not work on a full-time basis with stand-down time. I have been told by budget advisers across the State that many have not claimed car and telephone expenses and have done much work out of hours for which they have not been paid. The respect extended to those people is good for the Department. Is the Minister aware of the prestige attached to the budget advisory service, and will he reconsider the amount allocated to it, even if it means transferring some staff from another line?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I recall uttering similar words of support last year when I was in the honourable member's position. The service is effective and its success is largely due to the recruitment of people who carry out the service. The casual nature of the employment plays a considerable part and is a great advantage in the delivery of the services. In my electorate I have had contact with budget advisers who have been helping some of my constituents. The honourable member places an over emphasis, I believe, on work related to bankruptcies. Whilst that is part of its work, it is not substantial, bearing in mind that the total number of bankruptcies in South Australia for the last financial year was 910. Many of those arose from business failures, and the proportion of bankrupt people having contacted the service was quite low. Bearing in mind the total number of clients with which the service deals, it is a minor aspect of its work.

It must be borne in mind that, apart from the case work, budget advisers do much educational work: for example, 114 talks were given to 62 school groups last year and more than 6 000 free budget advice kits were distributed. This work is incredibly important to help prevent young people from falling into the traps into which their parents may have fallen, or at least to make them aware of such traps. Other people in the community are encouraged to assist those in financial difficulties and that has a spin-off effect amongst the community. Additional funds were provided towards the end of the last financial year to maintain and extend the service. That additional funding has been incorporated into the budget for the coming financial year.

The former Minister explained last year during the Budget Estimates Committees the difficulty of trying to arrive at a firm budget for the service as it depends on fluctuating demand. For some strange reason, it fluctuates in various areas and under different circumstances. It is difficult to provide that accuracy in the Budget. However, as a support service it is highly regarded. Should there be insufficient funds for the current year, I will again seek additional assistance from the Treasury if and when required. Perhaps Mr Cox would like to comment.

Mr Cox: One of the remarks was about casual employment. The service was established to ensure that it was available at night-time throughout the State. At the time that it was established there did not appear to be any great merit in having full-time budget advisers who would not

be aware of local conditions, traders and communities. We went for the hourly rate for casual employees, many of whom enjoy the night-time occupation, do it well, and find that it is a social service despite their being remunerated. There appears to be little merit in creating permanent positions as the service will lose flexibility and sensitivity. We will look into the aspect of claims for car expenses. We were under the impression that such amounts were usually being claimed.

Mr MATHWIN: I refer to the INC scheme, figures for which were given by the Director-General. Can the Minister give me some idea of the recidivism rate in that area?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: It is an interesting area of assessment, but we have some difficulties, as I understand they have in the adult area in collecting statistics of recidivism, because of access to police records as well. The Bureau of Crime Statistics has been doing some work in this area and it has access to certain police statistics. I will take that question on notice and ascertain what information is available. However, I think the honourable member will find that as yet there is not a great deal of information available on recidivist rates.

Mr MATHWIN: That is a pity. I think it is imperative that, in order to do some good regarding these offenders, we collect figures, so that we know whether or not we are advancing in the right direction or whether we have to consider alternatives. That is why over the years I have been persevering in relation to keeping honest statistics: it does not reflect on the Department but on the schemes which we are trying to put into operation.

As the Minister has said, the figure relating to young offenders generally is out of proportion to that in relation to Aboriginal offenders and, unfortunately, it has continued in relation to adults. When bringing these young people into institutions or giving them some sort of treatment, it is desirable that they remain in their own environment rather than bringing them down from their outlying areas into Adelaide. I have not been to SAYRAC for some time (some people might be glad about that and some people might not), but the last time I was there a number of Aboriginal people there seemed to be out of their depth. Once they are in those institutions, some of them might prefer to be there and will probably re-offend in order to come back. I think that it has been proven that that happens.

In reply to a question I asked about two years ago, it was stated that we were trying to reach some agreement with the Northern Territory authorities to use their facilities for young people from the Far North. How successful is this procedure? Are we able to work in conjunction with the Northern Territory authorities and use their facilities (I know full well that they use ours in the case of adults)?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: On the question of recidivism rates, it has been brought to my attention that some research on the INC programme is being done by Flinders University under a grant from the Criminology Research Council, and that might give some information that will be available quite soon. It may be of interest to the honourable member, and it is certainly of interest to us, to ascertain whether some assessment can be obtained. The matter of Aboriginal people coming into institutional care is of considerable concern, and it bedevils administrators as to how to provide for those young people (if one can ever do that successfully), particularly those children from remote areas. Only a minority of children come from remote areas. Nevertheless, it is incredibly traumatic and, as the honourable member says, it could lead to a more appealing cultural experience and it may take young people away from their traditional cultural settings and families and have very negative connotations. It is costly and has many more pitfalls.

In the remote communities a new era (if I can call it that) is developing with respect to care and concern for the young. I am not saying that it is having great success, but I can feel it when talking with the elders in those communities. For example, I refer to the problem of petrol sniffing. There is much more concern on the part of people in those communities now to deal with that problem themselves and accept responsibility for it rather than looking for some outside body to come in and say, 'This is how you solve the problem,' because it relates very much to the cultural identity of those young people *vis a vis* their parents and the community itself.

One of the practical things that is happening is the outstation movement or the homelands movement where families and, where appropriate, young people themselves are going to the outstations and perhaps learning for the first time some of the traditional ways of life, reasserting their identity, and moving away from a semi-white civilisation and offending within that structure in an artificial community (as many of the settlements are) where traditions have broken down. So, there is that new spirit coming about, and I think that that will help considerably in dealing with young offenders on those lands.

The magistrates who go there are aware of this and are very sensitive. If they can bring down a penalty or a sentence which dovetails into this, it is my experience that they will try to do that. However, it is very much in its infancy at this stage and it is something on which the Law Reform Commission has worked. Mr DeBelle, Q.C., from South Australia, was involved in that reference to the Law Reform Commission and it is something on which Judge Lewis has worked in reference to South Australia. Judge Lewis and Mr David Hope (an anthropologist and teacher) have received a grant from the Criminology Research Council as well to continue that work in our remote communities. So, perhaps there is some hope that there will be less institutionalisation, in the cities, of young Aboriginal offenders.

With respect to Giles House (the institution in Alice Springs) it was believed that it may have solved some of these problems. It appears that, although there has been only one child in that institution, it does not have the capacity to develop an on-going programme for this State. So, we have reached agreement between the Community Welfare Ministers and the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General so that we can now have legislation that will allow for the free movement of young offenders between the States. This has been a real problem, because different laws have applied and all sorts of hassles have been experienced in relation to the transfer of young offenders between the States. In relation to Pitjantjatjara land, it is possible to move in and out of State boundaries fairly frequently, and we hope that that will assist the situation as well.

Mr MATHWIN: I refer to the provision for teaching young offenders at SAYRAC. There are many young girls and boys there most of whom are of school age. The last time I visited there it appeared that the education provided was inadequate. I know that this is a problem for the Department, because often the offenders are not there very long, although it is by law necessary for children to go to school until they are a certain age. Some people there may not want to learn, but nevertheless some attempt should be made. Rather than not doing anything at all, they should be attending classes and perhaps encouraged to do so. I know that a number of education officers are working at SAYRAC. Will the Minister outline the education programmes available within the institutions, particularly at SAYRAC?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: Education is an important aspect of the whole programme planned for young people in institutions. In fact, schools have been established at both SAYTC

and SAYRAC and teachers have been appointed to teach there. In some respects the honourable member's question should also be directed to the Minister of Education, because he is responsible for the curriculum and the programmes that are undertaken. Of course, these programmes are conducted in close consultation with community welfare officers. I imagine that it would be difficult during a visit to assess the nature of the real work that is going on there. I would be pleased to provide the honourable member with further information if it is required. The curriculum is modified and personalised to suit the requirements.

For example, at SAYTC a mini-supermarket has been established. Young people derive skills in working out which foods have nutritional value and how to buy economically. Also, there is a workshop there for repairing cars. These types of things are dealt with, and even in the most secure area of SAYTC there is still an on-going education programme with a craft component, which is regarded as very important. Bearing in mind the severe disturbance of these young people, and their inability to sit down and do academic work (some certainly do it, but many do not), it is obviously a difficult area in which to operate. Nevertheless, education is important, and I understand that there is no laxity or less time spent on those young people. Perhaps Mr Cox, who was a teacher at one stage, could give some further information.

Mr Cox: The inmates at SAYRAC are mainly there for a short term, although there are a few there for longer periods. The matter of what should be done for these people educationally is very complex, having regard to their degrees of disturbance when they come in, particularly the first-timers, and as to how they feel about life. It is difficult to determine what you should do for them over a period of three or four weeks. A very nice combination has been developed at SAYRAC between residential care workers and teachers working together to ensure a continuity of relationships which attempts to begin to rebuild what often has been a fractured school relationship. We attempt to make assessments (which is the main task at SAYRAC) about the best course of action required. Many of the inmates return to their own schools where it is appropriate. We attempt to find suitable placements for children in schools. If part of a child's problem has arisen because of misplacement in a school, it is the role of SAYRAC to rectify that.

SAYRAC has an incredible number of courses. It has very low class numbers. School is compulsory, and those of a certain age are required to go to school full time. Children above that age are also given the opportunity to go. The programmes involve assessment and broadening their education. Sometimes we make good headway in relation to remedial education. It is a very complex thing which has been the experience in remand centres throughout the world. It is difficult to ensure that the three-week detention period is used profitably. The question of how to combine trade and education has become more complicated because of the current work situation. Previously if one worked hard at a trade there was some guarantee that one would get into that industry, but now it is much more difficult to do that. We are trying to ensure that what we do provides the best scope for employment possibilities.

Mr BECKER: Page 60 of the Auditor-General's Report states, under the heading 'Staffing costs—Magill Home':

The review of the staffing costs of the Magill Home revealed that—

- the amount of overtime worked was significant;
- the number of nursing care hours per resident in hostel accommodation appeared to be disproportionate to the number of nursing care hours per patient in infirmary accommodation;
- advantage was not being taken to fully utilise infirmary beds funded by the Commonwealth.

Following referral of these issues, the Department advised that a review of the organisational structure of the Home and the level of overtime would be undertaken.

Can the Minister say whether that review has been undertaken as promised, when that review was held, and what results had followed?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The Department has acted on the advice of the Auditor-General. The nature of the work done at Magill Home of itself requires a considerable amount of overtime to be worked. One of the questions raised was the care of the elderly which requires back-up for absent staff, and the like, and things change from time to time. The comments regarding nursing care hours for the hostel care versus infirmary care involved some errors in the calculation which has been the subject of discussion with the Auditor-General with a view to clarifying that matter. The level of occupancy was dramatically affected by the industrial dispute and the disruption which occurred some time ago over the proposal to shift patients to Windana.

The other aspect is that this is the only institution of its type conducted by the Department for Community Welfare, so it is hard to make comparisons within the departmental structure of the services provided. All these factors and a number of other concerns have given rise to discussions between myself and the Minister of Health about the future of the Magill Home, and about whether it would not be better placed in the Health Commission area. There have been discussions with the staff and unions and discussions between the Department for Community Welfare and the Health Commission about this matter, and I am hopeful that we can in a short time transfer this to the Health Commission where I think it will be better placed.

Mr BECKER: It is a pity that it ever started and that it has continued, because it must be terribly unsettling for the residents and difficult for the staff. I do not think either deserve that situation. Referring to the emergency financial assistance payments, the Auditor-General commented:

The review of the procedures in operation in branch offices revealed a divergence from those promulgated by Central Office. Following the referral of this issue, the Department advised that revised procedures would be implemented and that departmental resources would conduct random inspections to ensure compliance with prescribed procedures.

Has that now been carried out, and does the Department have an internal audit section that continually oversees these sorts of problems, preventing a repetition?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: Emergency financial assistance procedures are checked twice annually by senior officers who travel to every district and branch office in the State and examine the appropriate documentation in those offices. There is a concise detailed set of standard procedures which relate to emergency financial assistance which must be adhered to by all staff. However, given the wide variation of socio-economic conditions and new research advances, there will always be some minor deviations in the application of these guidelines. This is a complex area: every case is different. It is not easy to lay down definitively, but since the previous audit the standard procedures have been revised and delegations upgraded.

Mr Cox: We do not have an internal audit system as such. We were one of the departments selected for experimentation in the State Government system for internal audit. We advertised several times in that period of experimentation for that position to be filled, but we could not get anyone to satisfactorily fill that position. The experiment has gone on in the Service and Supply internal audit, and we now have a report on the use of internal audits. We have two senior officers who do the checking of this process. Emergency financial assistance is different from income maintenance in that it has to reflect the needs of clients,

and that is why we still use social workers in helping to assess the needs of those people who come in.

That does lead to some differential ways of treating needs at that time. We are checking it as the Auditor-General requested. I think that the way in which the Auditor-General has reported on the Department this year has been interesting when compared to previous years. In previous years they have raised these issues, because we have used them like internal auditors, we have corrected them, and they do not get in to the Auditor-General's Report. I have spoken to the acting Auditor-General and he has said that the auditors were not getting credit for what they had done. They have raised these matters within the Auditor-General's Report and the reply has been given that the Department has fixed up the matter. It is a different way of reporting. I prefer to handle it and get it fixed as soon as it is brought to our attention. That is our policy as administrators. What happened here is that it was raised again and we have to report back. I believe that sometimes our action gets lost in the fact that there are problems.

Mr BECKER: I raised that point because it is easy for some people to criticise, but they should realise that if they follow something through it becomes clear. In relation to emergency financial assistance, each case has to be treated on its merits and I know that an internal audit system is desirable. It amazes me that the Department was not successful in getting someone.

Mr Cox: We interviewed twice on that matter to find someone who really understood the process of internal audit and was not going to just count the money. I wanted someone able to put the policy right, someone able to ask whether the resources given were right, and whether the money was right. To find a person like that in a short time for that experimental period was impossible. I agree that there should be an internal audit.

Mr BECKER: In relation to the \$80 000 allocated this year to the Anangu Pitjantjatjaraku community, will that allocation be sufficient, and what will they do with it?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: First, that money is calculated on a formulae with the Commonwealth Government, which contributes on a 60:40 basis. For our State component to be increased we and the Pitjantjatjaraku Council must negotiate with the Commonwealth. There is a three-way discussion on this funding, on the control of it, and on the merits of claims for additional funding. There is a substantial bureaucracy established by the Pitjantjatjaraku Council, and that has brought about a considerable advancement for the community and in the potential for the community to accept self-management or more decision-making for its own future direction or welfare.

A whole series of projects is on the drawing boards fostered by that staff; for example, the maintaining of the register of permits issued for travel across the Pitjantjatjaraku lands; an anthropologist is employed by that community; the legal cost associated with advising the community on a myriad of matters with which the community is dealing; land ownership; access for mining (there is substantial agreement on mining on the lands); legal disputes that arise in one form or another; or generally on the amendments of the legislation that is negotiated by lawyers. The community owns an aeroplane, and operates a transport and mail service, and it is involved in making submissions dealing with the health service and with education programmes on the lands.

If you have an opportunity to go to one of the council meetings, I advise you to do so. It is quite an experience to see how decisions are made and recorded and how relations are carried out with Government authorities and with others in the community. For example, today there is a meeting of the council which is considering the use of liquor on the lands. Mr Young, the Deputy Director of the Department

of Public and Consumer Affairs, which deals with licensing matters, is negotiating on regulations that the community is asking to be brought down pursuant to the Pitjantjatjara Land Rights legislation, so that they can have strict control over liquor on those lands. All those things are being conducted from the Pitjantjatjara Council offices.

Mrs APPLEBY: Recently, a task force was established within the Department for Community Welfare to look at matters. When is the task force expected to report, and what resources of funds for administration and research have been set aside for the task force? What research officers, project officers, and secretarial staff have been allocated to the task force, and what is the Minister asking the task force to provide and how will the practical response come from immigrants to South Australia?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The Department has an Ethnic Welfare Adviser who was appointed to a permanent position earlier this year. That person advises the committee on the needs of the ethnic community, conducts discussions with the Minister's staff, and represents the Department on inter-departmental committees and the like, so that focus is given to the needs of migrants in the community.

However, to comprehensively look at the programmes of the Department and the needs of migrants in the community and our relationship with other service providers, a task force was established several months ago to identify the welfare needs of migrants and recommend how best those needs can be met; to examine existing departmental programmes and services in relation to how effectively they relate to the people of non-English speaking backgrounds; to examine staffing policies of the Department in relation to meeting the needs and the location of non-English speaking background people; and to make recommendations on the role of ethnic organisations in relation to the provision of welfare services to migrants.

With those quite broad criteria that task force, which is as representative as one could make it of the ethnic communities in South Australia (and given that it is difficult to incorporate all groups in one department), the committee has been asked to consult widely in the community and it will be doing that to ensure that it receives all the advice that it can.

In relation to the resources that are available to that committee, the Ethnic Welfare Adviser will be attached to that task force, and whatever other resources are available in the research section of the Department and amongst its staff will be made available to that committee as required. There is also a funding component so that it can travel to country locations to carry out its work. I cannot predict what it will suggest, but the committee that was referred to earlier did consider this matter and made some recommendations.

Those recommendations are in the amendments to the Community Welfare Act. The Department must consider ethnic backgrounds in relation to its delivery of services. We hope that the committee will produce a package of recommendations, some short term and others long term regarding staffing, the direction in which the Department should be heading, and its relations with other departments and the non-Government sector, so as to provide an effective delivery of services to the community. In this respect recommendations will have to be made regarding the ageing ethnic people of this State and the delivery of services to those people.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: At page 15 of the yellow book, 1.0 full-time equivalent was provided last year but only 0.5 is provided this year for the Equal Opportunity for Women staff. Further, 4.5 full-time equivalents have been provided this year in respect of the co-ordination of planning, policy formulation, and programmes affecting Aborigines. Will the

Minister comment on the reduction of staff in respect of equal employment opportunity for women and on the provision of staff in respect of programmes affecting Aborigines? To what extent will the latter staff co-ordinate their activities with those of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: There has been no reduction in the equal opportunities staff, but there has been an alteration in the way in which assistance is provided for that staff.

Mr Beattie: The Women's Advisory Branch now shares typing resources with another section of the Department and that arrangement has not been recorded here. The Department still has a full-time Women's Adviser.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: We had a Women's Adviser and we still have one. There has been no reduction of effort in that regard. I now introduce Mr Nader (Secretary of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs).

The Hon. H. ALLISON: On page 29 of the yellow book, \$266 000 is shown as having been spent in respect of children's aid panels in 1982-83, whereas only \$171 000 is proposed this year; and 9.6 staff were employed last year, whereas only 6.2 are proposed for this year. In 1982-83, \$268 000 was spent on services to children's courts, whereas only \$122 000 is proposed for this year; and 11.8 staff were employed last year, whereas only 5.7 are proposed for this year. Will the Minister explain the reduction in both these lines?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: This refers to the notional apportionment of time of social workers in the Department. One of the aberrations in these figures has occurred because of an industrial dispute earlier this year. That resulted in officers withholding their services from the courts, and has accounted for some of the variation in the two surveys referred to earlier. Therefore, the difference does not denote a reduction in the amount of work.

Mr Cox: Actually, there is an increase in the case of the Children's Aid panels. As the Minister has said, the industrial dispute had an effect and there has been a catch-up in the last few months.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: In his most recent report, the Auditor-General refers to the use of departmental motor vehicles. The sum of \$1 million is an appreciable increase this year in the sum allocated for the purchase of vehicles. As I recall, the basis for replacement of departmental vehicles was changed in 1982-83 to a life of 2-1/2 years or 50 000 km travel. Is the increase in the allocation for the purchase of vehicles due to an extensive replacement programme that has resulted from that extended period and greater distance now having caught up with the vehicles in the fleet? How many vehicles has the Department and how many will it have after that \$1 million has been spent?

The Auditor-General has commented on the after-hours use of departmental vehicles and has attributed some of that use to the unavailability of parking facilities at regional and branch offices. I should have preferred that the after-hours use of the vehicles related to after-hours work rather than inability to find a parking space. I suspect that the refusal of Department for Community Welfare officers to have their telephone numbers published in the telephone directory or made readily available in some other way, although I admit that their telephone numbers are available from police stations, may have a bearing on the matter. The after-hours use of vehicles may be related to after-hours work, because Department for Community Welfare work is done mainly when parents and children are at home in the evening. Is the Minister considering paying overtime to staff rather than appointing additional staff to work during the day?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The increase in expenditure on motor vehicles this year is the result of the previous Government's decision to extend the service life of vehicles

from two years or 40 000 km to 2-1/2 years or 50 000 km. Under the previous formula, 82 departmental vehicles would have been replaced during the past year, thus reducing the 1983-84 allocation by about \$574 000.

The costly day of replacement was deferred to the crucial year that has now arrived. The \$1 million allocated to the Department for its vehicle replacement programme has been placed within the capital budget of the Department of Services and Supply and is therefore not seen within my Department's estimates. For the 1982-83 financial year, \$315 000 only was spent on vehicles. That figure included the replacement of 49 sedans (\$257 000); seven station sedans (\$43 000); and, one camper bus (\$15 000). The proposed expenditure for the financial year is estimated to be \$1 million. That amount of money is programmed to be spent as follows: 99 sedans (\$713 000); nine station sedans (\$71 000); 18 mini buses (\$145 000); five utilities (\$39 000); and, one tractor, (\$12 000), giving a total of \$980 000. The overall fleet comprises 257 vehicles.

Secure housing is inadequate at a number of Community Welfare Department locations. About 12 to 18 months ago a vehicle left out overnight in Norwood was burnt. It is similar to leaving school property out at night—a great risk is involved. To allay the honourable member's fears, many officers do use motor vehicles when on duty during the evening. The Crisis Care Office is often called out on matters after hours as it is the first point of call before being referred on to a case worker or duty officer. That situation does not apply in country areas as Crisis Care does not have a country centre. The officers themselves pick up the crisis calls. I ask Mr Cox to give further information.

Mr Cox: Problems are experienced by welfare agencies that are expected to work in the evening, the real problem being that 3.5 hours on average are spent by social workers outside of the normal 9 to 5 day. They do get time off in lieu. As all Government cars are now identifiable, some complaints are received and often relate to children being in the car. Staff are often embarrassed as they can be singled out whilst they are doing their job. At traffic lights I have been identified in a Government car. Even though I have been on duty, people believe it is a misuse of Government property.

If we ask staff to return cars to the office rather than take them home, we add an hour to the time off in lieu due to the person who must return the car to the office. The economics of administration for car use and secure care adds to time involved and takes away from time that could be spent with clients. Officers sometimes take a car home and visit a client on the way to work, thus giving the Department an hour. We have attempted to find a way around the problem, but it is easy to be critical of the use of cars, despite a legitimate need for such use after hours.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I hope the Director did not misunderstand me. I am less worried about after-hours use of cars than about the non-availability of after-hours telephone numbers. Last weekend I contacted the regional officer in the South-East about a problem with the family of an absconded child who had gone to Murray Bridge and back. It was a parent-grandparent problem. A regional conference was taking place in the South-East on that problem, and I was informed that a telephone number was available. The number was with the Mount Gambier police. My office has a good relationship with the Department for Community Welfare in that area. It is significant that people in crisis have to go to a police station and find out from an unusual source where they can contact a community welfare officer. That facility should be part of community welfare services to the public and a crisis number should be available without one having to go through a police station.

Mr Cox: We have tried various methods, including the switching of phones. However, as staff changes so do telephone numbers. In country areas, where only a few staff are available, the workload can become unbearable on some weekends. In the Riverland we have developed a phone switching service, and the same number goes to various houses. We are trying to find ways around the problem. There was support for a country Lifeline in Whyalla to overcome the problem there. We are aware of the problem as well as the additional night-time work involved that makes some staff unavailable during the day. It is a complicated matter but one which we regard as important.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I now refer to the Office of Aboriginal Affairs. I have been requested to approach the Minister in an attempt to gain his support for the retention of the Aboriginal design within the Australian currency. The \$1 bill, featuring an Aboriginal design on the reverse side, is to be withdrawn from circulation and be replaced by a coin. Several people have asked whether we will lose the Aboriginal design completely or whether the new \$100 note will feature an Aboriginal design. Will the Minister join the many people who have made representations to the Federal Minister to retain some Aboriginal identity on our currency? The Federal member for Barker has also been approached. On a release he sent out dated September 1983, he mentions that he has raised the matter with the Federal Treasurer (Paul Keating) but has not yet received a response. Many people have expressed some interest in this matter.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I will be pleased to join that movement and will undertake to write to the Federal Treasurer and to my colleague the Federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs to ensure that full consideration is given to the matter during the preparation of the design for the new currency.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I suppose that the Minister, like many other members of Parliament, would have been circularised either by letter or by what I consider to be a fairly expensive telegram. I do not know what this would have cost, but the general import of it is that the Legal Aid Movement is short of money. One would hardly think so, looking at the length of the telegram. I do not know how many of these have been sent out, but this telegram from the Legal Aid Movement, signed by Marlene McArthur (the Chairman), is soliciting assistance. Has the Minister been approached, and has he contacted the Federal Minister with a view to increasing the funding for legal aid in South Australia? Alternatively, was the State Government prepared to supplement the legal aid funding? The gist of this telegram is two-fold: first, the Legal Aid Movement is short of funds; secondly, the funds which it needs are for further land rights negotiations.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I received a similar telegram. Some months ago I took up this matter with the Attorney-General and asked him to contact his Federal counterpart. I wrote to my Federal counterpart (the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) generally about funding for the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement and raised one specific issue: the unsuitability of its present accommodation. One has to be an athlete to get into the building, which entails walking up dozens of steep steps to get to the office.

As I understand it, the Federal Government is taking these matters into consideration with a review which is being conducted into Aboriginal legal rights by Mr Joe Harkins (the former Chairman of the Commonwealth Legal Aid Commission). I am very much concerned, and I had discussions with Dr Lange (the Executive Officer of Aboriginal Legal Rights), briefly with Mr Stanley, Mr Hiskey (one of their solicitors), and Mrs McArthur about this issue. I can understand that the most pressing demand is the ability of the service to provide solicitors as a result of

criminal charges. However, I would suggest to the Committee that the area of Aboriginal lands rights is fundamental to the advancement of the Aboriginal community as such. It is a pressing problem, and I would have thought that a high reputation would have been obtained in this State by the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement for the way in which it has given advice to communities, in particular to the Yalata people, in the Maralinga lands rights issue, in a most responsible way. To lose that body of expertise is a real loss to the Aboriginal community as a whole. The Government can provide funds, as the previous Government did, with respect to Pitjantjatjara land claims to the community for legal costs, and that money has been paid to the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement.

Therefore, to that extent additional assistance was given by the State Government for the provision of legal advice by the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement in land rights claims. However, this is an enormously time-consuming area because of the consultation process, the travel requirements, and the number of meetings that are held. So, it is a costly and time-consuming area for very senior lawyers who are involved in the service. Before I received that telegram, I had taken up this very matter with the appropriate authorities. It is primarily a Commonwealth responsibility, and I am hopeful that relief will be provided.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: My next question concerns an anthropological report. I am not sure who commissioned the report, but the gentleman responsible for it was on television last night—a Mr Rod Hagen. It was a report for the Kokatha people. I do not see on the Aboriginal lines any specific funding. We have the 'Pitjantjatjara people' allocation and the Maralinga lands rights negotiations, both of which, according to the legal aid people, are adequately funded by the State Government. However, I understand that \$28 000 might have been made available by the State Government for this anthropological report. One would assume that the correct place for that allocation would have been in Aboriginal Affairs or Aboriginal Lands Trust. I wonder, if in fact it had been funded by the State Government, why the account therefore has not appeared in Aboriginal Affairs somewhere, because it is obviously connected with that, and very little else. If it is a State Government funded report, will it be made public, and will the Minister be acting on that report without its being made public?

I ask that question with a special purpose, because I understand that the report, from comment made yesterday evening, names a number of people and, if they do not have access to the report, obviously they would have no means of responding to any claims or statements made within it. It is a complex issue. I know that the secretary has probably only just returned from negotiations in that area. It is a very sensitive area. It is obviously a public report and I believe that hasty action would be improper on the Minister's part, and failure to disclose the contents of the report would also be improper, bearing in mind that it is publicly funded.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The report was commissioned as a result of a Cabinet decision, and I believe that it cost some \$28 000 to be prepared. As I understand it, it arose out of a breakdown in relations between the joint venturers in the Roxby Downs project and the Kokatha people. In preparation of the environmental impact statement for that project, the joint venturers made available initially a sum of \$5 000, and the accountability for the expenditure of that money related to a long protracted set of negotiations and disputation between the Aboriginal community and the joint venturers. Eventually, some of that money was paid and then there was an increased amount of \$10 000 available. However, all in all this resulted in very little of the relevant

studies being carried out by the people and their anthropologist; indeed, whether it was to be carried out by their anthropologist or the company's anthropologist was the subject of disputation.

As a result of a meeting (I think that it was the first meeting) between the State Government, the joint venturers and the Kokatha people at Parliament House earlier this year, the Government carried out some negotiations with the joint venturers and found that they were not prepared to provide further funds. So, the Government itself provided those further funds for there to be a proper anthropological study of this area. Unfortunately, this work could not be carried out in time to be included in the environmental impact statement but, of course, it is very much linked to it.

The company carried out substantial studies into flora and fauna, bird life, and the like, in the area, and it was a great disappointment to me that similar work could not have been carried out with respect to the Aboriginal culture, history, sacred sites and the like. That work has now been done, and Mr Hagen, who has done that work, has made available that report to the Government and, indeed, my colleague the Minister for Environment and Planning, who has vested in his Ministry the responsibility for Aboriginal heritage. That is why that Department has made the funds available and that is why that report is to him. He has done it in collaboration with my Ministry, but he has had the carriage of it. I believe that that is the appropriate area for it to be accounted.

It is related very much to the environmental impact statement of the project. I do not know when that report will be made available. It certainly will not be dealt with hastily; it will be the subject of considered opinion by the respective Ministries involved in this matter and indeed by the Government. No doubt, it will be made available in due course. As recently as yesterday my colleague the Minister for Environment and Planning briefed me on this matter. He is hopeful that the report will give a basis to a resolution of a dispute that has arisen between the Kokatha people and the joint venturers.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: The Minister said that we would now have a proper report done. I understood that the report that had been commissioned by the joint venturers was in fact 'proper'. How one defines 'proper'. I do not know, but the anthropologist who prepared the report would certainly have regarded her work as being proper in every way. If by 'proper' the Minister means that there may have been an inbuilt bias in the joint venturers' report and that he was anxious to obtain a more objective report commissioned through an independent anthropologist, a Government sponsored one, I admire that motive but, after having viewed the programme on which Mr Hagen appeared yesterday, I would simply have to say that the propriety or objectivity of his report would have to be held slightly in question, because on that programme he did set himself up, not simply as an anthropologist, but I believe more as an advocate for the Kokatha people.

It would have been more appropriate had he lodged the report and not made the appearance; it is just unfortunate, and may cause more ill will than is necessary. I simply put that point, not by way of a question, but simply to reinforce the earlier question that I asked about whether the Minister will act quickly. I think that now a good balance can be obtained by examining both reports and by having the Cabinet really analyse in depth the import and objectivity of both those separate anthropological reports. I believe that there is a mid ground which can be reached. I thank the Minister for his candour.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I did not see that television programme and so, unfortunately, I cannot comment on it. As

the honourable member would be aware, the difficulties in this area abound. One of the criticisms of the work done by the joint venturers first of all was that the anthropologist was an expert in linguistics, and not in some of the areas that pertain to this location. Secondly, there was a criticism that may appear facile to many people in the community that the report was done by a woman, and it is claimed that a lot of the information was men's business, and that the men were not prepared to pass that information on to a woman. Indeed, there was even criticism that the Hagen Report, when made available to the Minister, would be reviewed by women. This is a sensitive area and is one that must be dealt with with sensitivity. One of the lessons for us all in dealing with these issues is to take into account the culture and the sensitivities of the people with whom we are dealing in these very important issues.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I thank the Minister for that comment, too. I would simply point out that, as late as this afternoon, I was informed that there is still dissent. Setting aside the sexuality of the two anthropologists, there still remains the question of whether the people who claim to be the representatives of the Kokatha and Arabunna people are in fact traditional elders. I realise that a press statement was released and that one gentleman claimed that the issue had been settled. However, I was assured as recently as this afternoon that in fact there are traditional elders who still feel that they have not been consulted and that they have far more right to determine the future of the area than do those who are simply specifically appointed by the Government and who do not have the traditional tribal status of the elders who are directly related to the land.

It is not a question that will be resolved easily. I do not envy the Minister or the Cabinet in their resolution of it. But I still feel that there is some considerable way to be travelled before the traditional ownership is properly established. I do not think we should say much more, because a Select Committee is still considering the issue; the Minister himself still has to report. I will be away for a month, and so will be taking very little part in the deliberations.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The Federal Government made money available for consultation on the very point raised by the honourable member. It was disappointing that some of the elders who claimed to have an interest in this matter did not attend or were unable to attend those consultations. They may have been absent for all sorts of reasons, but it just highlights some of the difficulties in this area.

The CHAIRMAN: There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the vote completed.

Minister of Community Welfare and Minister of
Aboriginal Affairs, Miscellaneous, \$33 105 000

Chairman:
Mr Max Brown

Members:
The Hon. H. Allison
Mr H. Becker
Mr S.G. Evans
Mr D.M. Ferguson
Mr T.R. Groom
Mr J.H.C. Klunder
Mr J. Mathwin
Mr M.K. Mayes

Witness:
The Hon. G.J. Crafter, Minister of Community Welfare
and Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr I.S. Cox, Director-General, Department for Community Welfare.

Mr C.E.M. Harris, Deputy Director-General, Department for Community Welfare.

Mr W. H. Beattie, Director, Resource Services Division, Department for Community Welfare.

Mr G. Billett, Senior Finance Officer, Department for Community Welfare.

Mr L.J. Nader, Secretary, Office of Aboriginal Affairs.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the vote open for examination.

Mr BECKER: In regard to electricity concessions for pensioners and others, I note that the actual payment made for the first six months amounts to \$2 259 450, and that an amount of \$4.9 million has been allocated this year (page 119 of the Estimates of Payments). How many people have received concessions to date, and what is the estimated number of people who will receive concessions in the future? At page 65 of his report, referring to electricity concessions for pensioners, the Auditor-General reports as follows:

Electricity concessions for most pensioners and social security beneficiaries were introduced to operate from November 1982. The scheme is administered by the Department with the maximum concession being \$50 per annum. The amount of concession granted to pensioners is reimbursed by the Government to the electricity supply authorities. For the eight-month period in 1982-83 the concessions reimbursed amounted to \$2.260 million whilst in a full year the cost is estimated to be \$4.9 million.

Have any people been excluded from receiving such concessions? It seems to me that there could well be some anomalies as to who qualifies. How many people received concessions following the provision of the first allocation for that purpose? What is the anticipated number in the future, and is the scheme still bringing up some anomalies?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: Judging from the letters I receive from members of Parliament, there must be some anomalies in the system. I imagine that an anomaly is that many people in the community would like to receive this benefit. It is only a small benefit (\$50 per annum). However, that means a lot to people who are battling with rising power costs. The scheme was designed to help the most needy people in the community. One of the issues that has arisen concerns the situation where two pensioners are living together (not as husband and wife) in a house. The benchmark in that case is where the combined income for that household is in excess of what it would be for a husband and wife. We have to aim at providing this benefit for those most in need. Nevertheless, in the situation to which I have just referred people could be in very necessitous circumstances; for example, they may be looking after an invalid child. There could be many other reasons.

The single unemployed is another category desperately in need (well below the poverty line), but it was not envisaged that persons who were not supporting others would receive this benefit. Both of these categories are being considered by the committee that I referred to earlier today that is looking into the whole concessions area. Prior to the election both Parties promised the electorate that they would provide electricity concessions. The then Government provided for a scheme which was far inferior to the scheme that the present Government has offered. I say that in terms of people who would benefit from it. The scheme that the previous Government provided was based on similar criteria to that which applies for water and sewerage rate concessions. The criteria were outlined in a statement made by the former Premier in an article in the *Advertiser* of 21 October 1982. The scheme that has been developed by this Government is much more comprehensive, but, even so, it has not satisfied everyone; I think that is only to be expected.

The take-up rate by pensioners in 1982-83 was about 93 000, and I think that figure will now remain fairly constant. The take-up rate by beneficiaries was initially about 3 500, but it has now increased to about 5 500. More people in South Australia are becoming unemployed for longer periods of time (bearing in mind the criteria include unemployment for six months). Currently about 27 000 people in South Australia have been unemployed for a period greater than one year, and the length of time for unemployment is increasing all the time (the average in this State is now about 38 weeks). So, more people will become eligible for this benefit. I was advised that almost a quarter of the households in the State that consume electricity now receive this benefit. So, it is a very comprehensive benefit if that figure is accurate. However, it is very difficult to get an accurate figure.

Mr BECKER: Was that some benefit of a concession or all concessions?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: Of the electricity concessions, yes. I qualified that because of the data on which it is based but it is a broad criteria. It is the broadest criteria in Australia that applies for any concession, that I am aware of. Nevertheless, eligibility is being reviewed by the concessions committee.

Mr BECKER: I thank the Minister for that information. For many years I advocated that there should be some concession to pensioners, particularly for those disadvantaged people who need electricity or power to generate warmth in the winter (people with arthritis and other disabilities affecting mobility), and in the summertime in the form of cooling. It concerns me because some of the heating equipment in Housing Trust flats, I feel, is a bit old-fashioned and expensive to operate. So, these people appeared to be disadvantaged, and I think that the concession that we give is one of the highest in Australia.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The difficulty too for the poorer community is that they can least afford to insulate and provide those other energy saving devices that are available to us. So, in that sense, the poor do suffer more. One area in which the Government readily relaxed the eligibility criteria was for those people on life support systems which need enormous amounts of power. So, that was done irrespective of the review finding.

Mr BECKER: That was very good, because there are people in the community who need support systems, such as asthmatics and people with renal problems. The Electricity Trust was always very reluctant to give that concession because it estimated that it would cost about \$2 million. I felt that the time had come. In making the Budget estimate, will that figure be affected by any moves undertaken federally as far as pensioner concessions are concerned? I refer also to the other concessions given: land tax, \$8 000; local government rates, \$9.3 million; water and sewerage rates \$9.150 million. Will those figures be affected by any decisions made by the Federal Government in relation to the assets test?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: One of the problems we have in planning, whether in the nature of the concession provided or in the budgetary sense, is to know precisely the criteria to be applied for the assets test which will not come into effect for another 12 months, and which still seems to be the subject of conjecture as to how it will apply. I understand at the moment that one of the effects of it may well be that many more persons with substantial assets will place those assets in their home and not in other areas, and that could well mean that there will be a further draw on the concessions for rates and taxes, and the like. Bearing in mind that it is anticipated that only 20 per cent of pensioners will be affected by the means test being proposed, and that many of those people would have assets which would take them outside of the eligibility for the concession, this may not

impact to any great extent. Perhaps Mr Beattie, who is Chairman of the Concession Review Committee, might comment on that point.

Mr Beattie: The Concession Review Committee is studying the effect of the Federal Government moves, but we do not have an update from our Federal colleagues to enable us to make any judgment on that. I hope to collect some information in the next week when talking to them, and when we receive that that will be part of the consideration of the Concession Review team.

Mr BECKER: The subject of land tax surprised me. I thought that people who paid land tax were those who had other property. I thought pensioners would not have qualified. There are pensioners who have holiday shacks, and if they have a house in the city and a holiday shack in the country, they could be subject to land tax.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: Those people who live on one piece of land that is under two titles may become eligible—I am not sure about this. However, I think there are some situations in which people can be levied for land tax, particularly in country areas. They could be quite poor, and yet in fact have two pieces of land. We need to check that out. However, the amount of money involved is very small.

Mr BECKER: Would there be many people involved in that sum of \$8 000?

Mr Beattie: It is an anomaly that has occurred from when the land tax existed, and one cannot take it off people now that they have it. There are a diminishing number of people eligible for it, and this number will disappear over a period of time. I do not have the details, but I can forward them to the honourable member if need be.

Mr BECKER: Can Mr Beattie take that question on notice?

Mr Beattie: Yes.

Mr BECKER: Will the Minister explain why grants to welfare activities amounting to \$1.237 million represent only a slight increase on last year's payments of \$1 189 954? What is the shortfall between the number of applications and the amount available for grants?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I anticipate that the short-fall will be increasing because of demands in the community and increasing responsibility being accepted by the non-government sector in the provision of services in the community, which is encouraging indeed. One of the first things that happened to me when I became the Minister was that a stack of letters was put on my desk which showed the grants that had been determined for this year. I agreed with all the recommendations that had been made by the previous Government. I released that information publicly and it was printed in the press, because I thought it was of interest to the people in the community not only as a kind of accountability but to perhaps encourage others to know that this money was available and to tell people the extent of the work that is being done in the non-government sector.

I established a Community Welfare Grants Review which was carried out, and the report is now in the hands of the Government. In my Ministry I am trying to investigate ways in which we can meet the increase in demand for this limited amount of money. It must be understood by the Committee that in the current financial year and perhaps in future years a substantial sum is available through the job creation programmes and for organisations that are applying for this money for similar projects and, in fact, for new programmes which they might undertake. As many of the new organisations that have been formed in recent years have been related to meeting the needs of the unemployed, there is specifically a target group for job creation funds, and I believe that the guidelines are flexible enough to encompass them. In addition, \$5 million has been made available in the State Budget for these programmes as well.

The South Australian Council of Social Services has had funds made available to it to assist organisations to apply for this money and to assist organisations that receive that amount of money. I am hopeful that although some organisations have already received grants many more will apply and will receive grants under the job creation schemes to supplement this money that is made available under the Community Welfare Grants Fund. In addition, I am concerned to supplement these funds and have received Cabinet approval to establish a working party to look at how we can obtain more funds from either within the Government or externally for voluntary organisations. Many suggestions have been made to the Government by commercial organisations and caring individuals and from within the Grants Committee itself about such programmes as the United Way, and the like—whether taxation, for example, on pinball machines should be considered, or whether it involve community chest type of arrangements. I want that committee to come up with practical suggestions of how we can get more money for the grants fund.

We need substantial additional moneys that I cannot see us obtaining in the normal Treasury process as it currently exists. I am acutely aware of the problems mentioned by the honourable member. I believe that the substantial sum available through job creation schemes will meet some of these needs but in the long term we must find additional money.

Mr BECKER: I would like to see the United Way scheme implemented in South Australia, because I think it has merit. I know that many voluntary organisations are not acceptable to some of the trusts and foundations that are set up to provide money for charitable organisations. I believe the Co-operative Building Society is now making money available to some voluntary organisations, but even the larger voluntary organisations cannot apply to these so-called trusts. Obviously the trusts have been established for taxation purposes, and no-one knows to whom they are giving their money. In the past loopholes in the taxation legislation enabled some of these illegal schemes to operate. However, a considerable amount of money in the community could go into one central fund perhaps associated with the Department for Community Welfare, which would have the responsibility of spreading that money evenly throughout the organisations delivering welfare services in the community.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The committee we have established will comprise representatives of business (particularly big business, because obviously a programme like that will have to rely on big business), representatives of trade unions (because obviously they must be involved integrally in this matter), and community groups themselves and some of the larger charitable organisations which run quite massive fund-raising programmes should be involved.

Mr Cox has been to the United States to look at these programmes specifically, and last week I made some comments on the Hindley Street project about the responsibility of businesses to fund projects like this where in fact there is a direct economic incentive to give money to particular welfare or *quasi* welfare projects. I must say that I was heartened by the response from business men in Hindley Street to that suggestion. I would hope that that can be formalised in the months ahead. I am sure there is much goodwill in business. We see it in organisations like the Duke of Edinburgh awards, to which considerable generosity has been shown by commercial interests. We also saw it when \$12 million was donated to the bushfire relief appeals in South Australia. There is generosity in the community if the needs can be presented to those who have that money to give to causes of this type.

Mr Cox: I was fortunate enough to visit in Washington the person who is the organiser of the United Way throughout the States. As the United Way projects are independent in each city throughout the country, he plays an advisory role. He spent quite a lot of time discussing the allocation of funds. We started from the end and worked forward. We talked about the allocation of the funds before we talked about how we received the funds. He was fascinated by the way our community welfare schemes work. He supported them strongly and said that they were only starting to do it project by project in the United Way.

They wanted to hear more about how we assessed our funding, so I told them something of the work we had done in the field of project funding. The way is open in South Australia to implement a scheme on the lines of United Way. I know of only two such schemes that are functioning successfully in Australia: one at Geelong and the other in New South Wales. The Geelong scheme has involved trade unions, business people and members of the community who donate small sums which, in the long term, amount to a considerable sum. There is always anxiety that organisations depending on fund raising will miss out, but it seems that the charitable dollar given through the wage packet is a successful method of fund raising, especially if it is augmented by a Government grant in the case of smaller self-help clubs and agencies. I believe that the possibilities in this field are great indeed.

Mr BECKER: The small groups battle to make a few dollars: they do not seem to be able to attract the necessary expertise or manpower because they are not socially acceptable. If the Government, through D.C.W., could somehow give credibility to something that helps everyone, we would be well on our way to achieving what we wish to achieve in this regard.

The CHAIRMAN: There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the vote completed. I thank the Minister's officers for their attendance and for co-operating in the way they have.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I thank you, Mr Chairman, for your able chairmanship of the proceedings, and the Minister and his officers for their attendance and the help they have given members.

Mr MAYES: I move:

That the draft report, as circulated, be the report of the Committee.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

The CHAIRMAN: That completes the Committee's deliberations.

At 5.23 p.m. the Committee concluded.