

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 26 September 1985

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A

Chairman:

Mr Max Brown

Members:

The Hon. H. Allison

Mr S.J. Baker

Mr J.H.C. Klunder

Ms S.M. Lenehan

Mr E.J. Meier

Mr K.H. Plunkett

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

Community Welfare, \$85 089 000

Witness:

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

Departmental Advisers:

Ms S. Vardon, Director-General, Department for Community Welfare.

Ms L. Mann, Acting Deputy Director-General, Department for Community Welfare.

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

Mr G. Billett, Acting Senior Accountant, Department for Community Welfare.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed expenditure open for examination. Before calling on the member for Mount Gambier, who may make a statement if he wishes, let me inform the Committee that I have made a practice of allowing three questions, or thereabouts, by the Opposition and then we go to Government members, and *vice versa*. The member for Mount Gambier.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Thank you, Mr Chairman. I open by making a brief statement relevant to one of the smallest lines in the whole of the Community Welfare budget. I refer to page 153 of the Estimates of Payments, the last item on the page, 'United Way—Underwriting' with an amount of \$35 000. The Minister is to be complimented for at last having placed this item in the Community Welfare budget. It is overdue. We have probably missed a golden opportunity over the last two or three years to augment South Australia's charitable organisation funds very considerably. The reason I say that is that, although we did have a meeting about 18 months ago with the Minister and a group of other interested parties, at that stage I detected that the Minister was having second thoughts (I may be wrong) about the United Way methodology and was reviewing a number of other alternatives.

However, at that meeting we pointed out that the former Minister for Community Welfare, Hon. John Burdett, had introduced a Cabinet submission back in 1982 specifically with the United Way scheme in mind. Since then Heini Becker and I have investigated the system in the United States, including Hawaii. While Los Angeles has raised about \$60 million a year in United Way funding, Hawaii (which

is more appropriately comparable with Adelaide—Honolulu in particular) has raised, over the last 10 years, \$5 million in 1974 rising annually to \$10 million in 1984. In each of those years they have exceeded target. In case any members of the Committee are not aware of what we are discussing, I point out that this is a way of getting people voluntarily to subscribe to South Australia's charities by way of weekly, fortnightly or monthly payroll deductions—a purely voluntary measure.

I was impressed with the United Way approach, partly because there are 80 senior members of the Honolulu community involved in the Hawaii United Way Aloha, and those people comprise a board of directorate. They are rostered in the manner of 10 members to each of eight individual committees which have the task of allocating to various applicant charities appropriate amounts of money for their needs. I was most impressed by the extremely high calibre of that directorate. People representing trade unions, industry, business, commerce and religion are involved. I find that politics is largely excluded, as this United Way system is run independently of government. For that reason I query whether this amount of \$35 000 is a one-off allocation or whether the Minister does have in mind a two or three year allocation.

In 1982 I was looking at some \$50 000 allocation, which I suppose would be more nearly some \$75 000 now, and that amount was for three years funding for administration purposes. The Minister can comment on that matter. The independent board of directors (independent of government) is of an extremely high calibre. The accommodation in which the United Way Aloha office is housed is modest—not opulent, and the organisation boasts a very low proportion of income actually going towards administration costs. The Minister is welcome to the information that I have on this system—I have a complete dossier on the United Way Aloha from Mr Bruce Wolgemuth, the Executive Director.

As I said at the outset, I compliment the Minister on introducing this scheme at last—although I would have liked to have seen it introduced 18 months or two years earlier. I believe that such a scheme is a wonderful way of augmenting collections for South Australian charities. It is unusual for Oppositions to be supportive of Governments so early in a budget debate, but I join with the Minister in requesting that members of the community generally have a really good look at the scheme and that they participate in it.

I have a couple of reservations. One of them is that the Minister of any Government which puts such a scheme into operation might find some opposition from existing charitable organisations which are already well into fundraising, and doing that extremely successfully. They must be given reassurance that they will not be prevented from holding their annual appeals, which I believe will continue to be well supported, by the very virtue of the fact that they are on radio or television or involve door-knocking. Those appeals are well supported and are a part of South Australia's institutional fundraising.

My other reservation is that Governments themselves should not take substantial additional funds coming into the system as a reason for reducing the Government's own contribution. I do not think that that has happened with the Hawaiian system. The Government still contributes either through the system or around it, and it simply means that in accordance with the requests which were made in the Minister's own report entitled 'The Review of State Government Concessions—Final Report', released almost 12 months ago today, funds might well be freed up by the United Way system of funding, raising for those charitable institutions and individuals who are otherwise neglected.

So, my compliments to the Minister for at last introducing this scheme, and I recommend that those in the general community give it serious consideration and support. The question I address to the Minister is whether he has in fact reconciled himself to the idea of a scheme now closely akin to the United Way scheme, whether it be similar to that existing in Hawaii, Los Angeles or Corning, and whether the Minister could give the Committee some enlightenment as to when it will commence, the way in which the \$35 000 will be spent, and some reassurance as to the Government's long-term intentions.

The CHAIRMAN: Before he answers the question, I give the same right to the Minister if he wishes to reply to any of the subject matter that the member for Mount Gambier raised before asking the question.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I thank the member for Mount Gambier for his comments and his indication of the Opposition's support for this important measure. I appreciate also the contact that the honourable member has had with the working party that the Government established to consider the feasibility of a United Way-type of program in South Australia. Obviously, the success of a scheme such as this depends very much upon a wide community base support and the support of the major political Parties is fundamental to that. That is important in gaining the confidence of the community and particular sections, such as industry and commerce, the trade unions and generally those working in similar areas of fundraising.

The line that the honourable member refers to is to provide assistance for the employment of a person or consultant now in order to take this scheme to the next stage. The working party concluded that this scheme was feasible. However, it said that there were some matters that required further research and investigation and that there was also a need for further consultation, particularly with those charitable organisations that have very well established fundraising programs and with those persons who are professional fundraisers, because they were uncertain as to the effect this program would have upon their endeavours and those organisations that relied upon them. This funding will now be used to take this program along to the next step. As I said last year to the Estimates Committee, I was hopeful that this scheme could be established during our Jubilee year. I think it would be an appropriate way in which the efforts of our community throughout that year could be focused in some way on the support for the disadvantaged and those organisations that provide the whole range of services to those in need in our community.

I have had discussions with some of the professional fundraisers, and I think that there are some very real concerns that we need to clarify. I hope that we can now move, with this budget approval, into that phase of the development of this program. The Government is very keen to see this develop and it gives a commitment that there will be no reduction in Government effort as a result of funds raised in this way. In fact, during the period of this Administration, quite the opposite has occurred, and in this budget there are substantial increases in funding to the non-government sector through the Community Welfare Grants Fund, the seniors grants, and the like.

Also, in conjunction with the Commonwealth, there are quite clear benefits by way of support for accommodation programs, the home and community care program (which is perhaps more related to the health portfolio, but it certainly touches upon welfare and other related areas), and similar programs. There will be no diminution of Government effort in this area, but it will enable the non-government sector to receive a fillip that it would not otherwise receive. Most importantly, I think it gives an opportunity to many people in the community, who do not have the

chance, to contribute in a small way to a charitable organisation. I think great benefit can come from strengthening the bonds of our community by giving people that opportunity to make a very small donation, but, when the donations are gathered together, considerable resources are marshalled.

I have also studied the United Way concept in the United States. We must be careful to ensure that any scheme we establish here does not mirror another scheme just because it is successful in another place. We must ensure that any scheme established here is relevant to the State and has the support of the community. We must take every step necessary to ensure that it is not a failure. We owe that to the community.

I want to make sure that we have a successful project. That is why the gestation period has been long, although I do not think unreasonably long. We want to conduct this matter in the most responsible and thorough way. I thank those members of the community who were involved in the study of this scheme for their quite extensive consultations. Those members came from the community, industry and commerce, the trade unions, and the Public Service: Mr Glen Broomhill, a former Minister, chaired the working party, members of which were Mr Bernie Lewis, of the Adelaide Permanent Building Society; Ms Elaine Martin, School of Social Administration, Flinders University; Mr Peter Baker, a public relations officer who served the previous Tonkin and Corcoran Administrations; Mr Lang Powell, Executive Director of SACOSS; and Ms Mary Beasley, who at that time was a Commissioner of the Public Service Board.

That working party has taken us to the point where we can now proceed to the next phase. I appreciate the indication of support from the Opposition and hopefully we will see this scheme in operation next year. Although it probably will not be known as United Way, the scheme will be of similar dimensions.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Is it the Minister's intention for the scheme to be closely allied to United Way in so far as it is independent of Government (self-sufficient) and there will be no Government direction as to the allocation of funds? As I mentioned, some 80 men and women are involved on the board of directors in Honolulu, where the \$US10 million was raised, which translates to a higher figure in Australian dollars. During my introductory speech I said that administration costs of the scheme were low and seemed to range between 7.5 and 10 per cent over the past 10 years, as far as I can ascertain from a quick perusal of the document.

In case anyone is sceptical about the long-term liability of such a scheme, United Way in the United States was established in 1919 under the name of the United Welfare Fund. Although the name has been changed, the fund essentially has spread from city to city. Presently 62 individual agencies participate in the Honolulu/Aloha United Way—a smaller number of agencies than we appear to have in South Australia where allegedly SACOSS says that we have about 4 000 charitable agencies. Perhaps the proliferation of charitable agencies in South Australia will be a problem that will have to be overcome in terms of their competing for funds. Across the whole of the United States I found a tremendous amount of pride in belonging to United Way. I noticed, on office after office, large blue neon signs with the words 'This company is a United Way company'. So, obviously it is not something that people shy away from: it is something of which they are proud. As I said, I commend the scheme to the community and ask the Minister what is the Government's intention regarding its operation.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The Government has not made final decisions on these matters, but it is certainly my

intention that this should not be a Government authority: I think that is the crucial element in its success in other places. It is placed and based within the community itself. So many people give time voluntarily to conducting fundraising programs within industry and also then sit on the numerous committees that make these allocations and provide a follow through with the funding for those organisations.

A considerable amount of accountability and assessment are required concerning those funds, and that is one of the very successful parts of the United Way program, where organisations are, if you like, given certain goals. Some are given funding on a conditional basis whereby programs are altered or developed, so that one maintains a vitality and sense of direction in the delivery of those services to which the public has generously subscribed.

We must be careful to look at the structure and history of welfare programs in the United States and try to translate that to welfare programs in Australia. There is a tradition in this country that Governments at all levels are much more heavily involved in the delivery of welfare services, whereas that is not so in the United States. For example, in the area of child abuse the programs in the United States are substantially built around voluntary efforts and fund raising in that respect, most of it being conducted outside the Government sector.

For example, I saw in the Fishermen's Wharf area of San Francisco a merry-go-round which had a sign on it that every person who rides on it contributes towards a program to prevent child abuse. Fortunately, we do not expect the community to have to subscribe to those programs: they are built into Government departments with statutory responsibilities to ensure that there is that certainty in delivery of such important services. Nevertheless, there is a huge need to properly fund and support the non-government welfare sector. That is where it is intended that these funds will be directed. I see that sector and other people who support this work in the community as participating in the establishment and conduct of this program.

It is important that the public have the knowledge and confidence in the program and, where it is necessary for the Government to give that backing and support, then that should go without saying. I think that the public in Australia do have some reservations about giving to charities. They need to know a little about the substance, backing and purposes of any charities, particularly a new structure such as this. So, as I said previously, we need to look at how this will be established and whether it is required to be established by Statute or by some other means. However, I believe the scheme will certainly need Government support in the early stages so that the public can give to it with confidence.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Going to more mundane topics, in the yellow book we see at page 9 'Replacement of motor vehicles in 1985-86, \$417 000': I will raise another matter about motor vehicles later, but can the Minister advise the current policy on motor vehicle replacement? Is it on an age or mileage basis?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I ask Mr Beattie to give the specific details.

Mr Beattie: The department has adopted the policy handed down by the Premier's Department that all motor passenger vehicles in the department be replaced every 2½ years or at 50 000 kilometres, whichever comes first. Other vehicles, such as small buses and four wheel drive vehicles in the Far North, are replaced when they become uneconomical to maintain.

Ms LENEHAN: I congratulate the Minister on the appointment of the new Director-General and Deputy and Assistant Directors-General, appointments that have been

well received in the community. Following those appointments, I understand that the department has instituted a significant restructuring, and this is obviously reflected in the diagrammatic flow chart shown on page 3 of the yellow book. Will the Minister inform the Committee of the importance of the changes made and the reasons for those changes? Will he also explain the reasons for creating the new positions of Director of Human Resource Management, Manager of the Program Unit and Manager of the Non-government Welfare Unit?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: It will take some time to answer those questions in detail. I also am delighted that South Australia has secured the services of Ms Vardon as head of the Department for Community Welfare. I place on record my appreciation of the enormous contribution made by the former Director-General, Mr Ian Cox, to the delivery of welfare services in this State. Since the Estimates Committees met last year the Deputy Director-General, Mr Harris, who served the department for a very long time, has retired.

Our Community Welfare Department is the envy of other welfare administrations around the country. It has been built up by very hard work with strong support from successive Governments during the 1970s. This is the foundation on which our services have been resourced. I think that it would be of interest to Committee members to know that Mr Cox, along with his appointment to the Public Service Board, has a brief to work in the area of delivery of human services. In some ways that is a natural progression from the work that he did in the area of community welfare. He has become very involved in the planning of new towns such as Golden Grove and Morphett Vale East and has been very much involved in a whole range of projects relating to the coordination of human services. That work is bearing fruit in the community.

The work of the Department for Community Welfare reaches out into numerous areas of government, as it should. The changes to senior management of the department have, naturally, brought new emphases and approaches to the department and to the delivery of welfare services. I am pleased that the Director-General has been able to carry out extensive consultations throughout the department: this is a large department with a staff of 1 400, but all staff members have had an opportunity to discuss matters of interest with respect to their own positions, the positions of others with whom they work, or the more general topic of delivery of welfare services.

The senior management of the department has assessed very carefully where the department should be going, so that we do move into periods of longer term planning and that we are able to cope with some of the trends in the community that we predict will occur. We can respond to them before rather than after, which is so often the case in welfare services in other jurisdictions. With respect to individual positions and changes being made, particularly in areas like the non-government welfare office, I would ask the Director-General to explain to the Committee in further detail.

Ms Vardon: When we finished our consultation with the staff we found that there was an urgent need to upgrade our support services to staff. The product that the Department of Community Welfare has is in fact a front line service delivery from one human being to another and it is the relationship or intervention that is important. We found that staff were increasingly stressed by the quality of work they were expected to do, particularly with child protection. We thought that it was extremely important to upgrade the whole human resource servicing. We amalgamated the personnel function and the staff development function. We upgraded our work in occupational health and safety, which

we thought was not sufficiently up to standard, and we were concerned that we have a good industrial relations base.

We sacrificed a senior position and created a position of Director, Human Resource Management. That Director also has the responsibility for equal employment opportunity work in the department. One of the urgent issues we are addressing at the moment is the recruitment of people who have a second language or can understand another culture. We believe that our department needs a change in its profile, and we are particularly keen that the whole of the population in South Australia be represented in the staff. For that reason we put on a senior manager who would have the influence to make those things happen rather than keep it at a junior officer level within the department.

We were aware that this Government had made an undertaking to open a non-government welfare unit. At the Minister's request I interviewed, with the Minister's staff and my staff, almost 200 non-government organisations in this State. They gave us ideas on what the non-government welfare office should look like, and we are about to advertise the position of manager this Saturday in the newspapers. That person will supervise the bringing together within the department of all those staff who deliver grants to the community or provide a consultancy service to the non-government sector in any way. We hope to upgrade our information services and general support to the non-government sector, which sometimes feels that it is hard to get into the big bureaucracy as they look at it from outside as being much bigger than they are. We are trying to break down the barriers and make it a more responsive place.

We were concerned that one of the strengths or sometimes the weaknesses of our department was that the whole development of programs and policies has happened at the regional level, which meant that sometimes we were not able to access important information quickly or put it together. So, we are maintaining a useful strength, namely, that our Directors should be not only responsible for managing regions but also be responsible for program work. We are creating a resource unit in the central office for people who can do some research and bring together our programs. For that reason we are opening up a program unit. It will be very small—not a big bureaucratic office. We are not taking staff from the field but rearranging the staff that exists and giving it a new focus. That probably describes the major changes we have undertaken administratively at the top.

Ms LENEHAN: I note that the Director-General, Southern Region, is located at Glandore. I put in a request for the southern area that that office should be moved a little further south, so that it is much more geographically centrally located to service the needs of the ever-increasing southern community. That is a parochial question, but an important one. My second question relates to page 25 of the yellow book, and the reference to substitute family care for children. I note in the needs being addressed in the first section that departmental records show that in 1983-84 there were approximately 4 400 placements of children in various forms of long and short term substitute family care, including 69 placements for adoption and 3 950 placements with approved foster parents or relatives.

I note under 'Specific targets for 1985-86' that the third point mentions that proposals for significant changes to the current foster care/private care concepts and practices are being considered by the department. I ask this question because on Monday night I had the privilege of representing the Minister at a large foster care parents meeting in Prospect, and I was extremely impressed by the fact that people had travelled from all over Adelaide to attend that meeting. In fact, I met many of my own constituents who had travelled from the southern suburbs. My admiration for the people involved in the foster care program run by the

department is something that I cannot express in terms of the recognition and support these people should have. By the end of the meeting my admiration had grown about 10 times for the people involved. Will the Minister explain to the Committee what sort of changes are envisaged? The yellow book reference says that they are being considered. Are they still at consideration level or are they being implemented? It is important that we know just what are the changes and whether they are in a state of implementation.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I thank the honourable member for her very important question. A lot of this work goes on unnoticed by the community. An enormous number of people care for children who are in a crisis situation, who have simply been left alone in the community, or whom a court or authority has determined need to leave the family home. The department does rely very heavily on that depth of goodwill in the community. This also is the counter-balance to institutionalisation of children. All honourable members will know that in the last decade or so, particularly in South Australia, we have moved from an institutional approach to caring for children in need in the community, including orphans, neglected children and the like, to caring for them in families. That has proven to be a very enlightened and successful approach to the delivery of this service.

However, we do need to ensure that the regulations and structure surrounding the care of children in this way are monitored. The department is constantly doing this. Substantial expenditure is involved in providing financial support for families in this way. I ask the Director-General to explain to the Committee some of the changes that have been brought about and some of the matters we are considering in the department to improve our services and make them more relevant in this area.

Ms Vardon: I have spoken now to every foster parent group in South Australia and have heard a number of problems which we are tackling straight away. Some of them we are doing in a very big way and others in a smaller way. First, we are going to get a better working relationship with the non-government sector. Some fostering programs they do extremely well. The emergency foster care program in this State, run by a non-government organisation and supported by the department, is probably the best I have seen in Australia. It is our wish to give that organisation greater support in future for emergency placement, because we often know that a child needs a placement urgently and cannot wait until we look around to find one.

We will also set up a policy formulation committee, which will recommend to the Minister policies in relation to non-government sector initiatives in the foster care area. It is clear that in this State there are children who are profoundly handicapped, either physically or intellectually, or due to emotional disturbance. We believe that there needs to be a sophisticated placement unit for those people. Such units tend to be high cost propositions. There are probably only 20 or 30 children at a time at the unit. We are proposing to establish a special placement unit in this State for those children. This will take a lot of work, but South Australia does not have such a unit while most of the other States do have one, and we propose to get the establishment of such a unit off the ground.

We propose to develop for ourselves an intensive foster care program for adolescents. Some children, although not offenders, are very borderline cases and they do not normally fit into an ordinary placement. We wish to establish some very specialised foster care parents to look after these young children—in a similar way to the INC program, which has been so successful in South Australia.

We have noticed that there are some anomalies in the payments made in relation to children: children under the guardianship of the Minister receive certain benefits that

children in private care do not receive. We are proposing to the Minister that more equal payments should be made. We are concerned about the general support provided to foster care parents. We think that they probably have some administrative problems with us. We have a turnover of staff, and sometimes people do not always see the same person. For some of our people foster care has not been important. We have now put up foster care to No. 2 priority with the department, and we maintain that a child separated from his or her family needs help now and not later down the track.

We are upgrading the whole of our practices in the work of foster care. We are looking at better ways of recruiting foster parents and better ways of supporting them. We are introducing a concept of permanency planning, details of which honourable members may or may not want to know about later. Hopefully, we can streamline many of our practices in that area.

Ms LENEHAN: Earlier I alluded to a seminar for foster parents that I attended last Monday night, at which seminar the matter of child abuse was looked at. My third question relates to page 48 of the yellow book. Under the section 'Needs being addressed', it is specified that, in the period of 1983-84, 816 cases of child abuse came to the department's notice. How many notifications have there been in this area in the past 12 months? I shall ask further questions relating to this area of child abuse and child protection later.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: This is one of the most difficult areas in which officers of the department are required to operate. There has been a dramatic increase in the reporting of child abuse in this State, and indeed throughout Australia, in recent years. A number of factors have caused this, and I think they are well known to all honourable members. However, what we do not know is whether there is an actual increase in the incidence of child abuse in the community or whether there has simply been an increase in the reporting of child abuse. The evidence tends to confirm the latter theory, although one cannot reach any absolute conclusions.

We do know that many more families themselves are coming to the department and saying, 'Help, we have a problem and we want to try to do something about it.' Child abuse is often perceived as involving a person who is a stranger to the child, whereas in fact we know that it invariably occurs within the family circle, which thus makes the work of intervention in that situation even more complex and difficult.

Certainly, the approach developed in this State has led the work in Australia, and indeed in most other countries, and it has been adopted by other jurisdictions. We have a multidisciplinary approach, involving health and the law enforcement authorities, as well as the community and welfare authorities, in responding to a cry for help from a family or to a complaint lodged by an authority. Here the role of the Education Department and people in the education system is particularly important. This is an area where there has been a growing awareness of, first of all, the responsibility of watching out for signs of child abuse, and then to do something about that.

There is also a growing acceptance of this responsibility within the health profession. As the honourable member said, in the year 1983-84, 816 child protection notifications were reported. In 1984-85, the reports increased by 55 per cent, to 1 264. The upward trend is continuing, with the figures for July 1984-85 and August 1984-85 having increased by 40 per cent and 48 per cent respectively—so, that graph continues to climb.

The department has allocated top priority to this area. The Director-General just referred to the placement of children in care as being the second priority. The first priority throughout the department is child protection programs. An

active research and staff development effort is in train to support child protection workers. In fact in this budget there is an allocation for additional specialist resources to be placed in the field to assist those people who are working on these most difficult cases. They involve taking officers into the family situation, and sometimes into the courts or in front of multidisciplinary panels, and trying to sort out the issues involved, while at the same time providing a caring and supportive element in the life of those families who have numerous problems to confront before they can live a dignified existence.

In a number of cases, of course, the children must be removed from a family situation, and that takes the department into another phase of caring for those children. It is always our hope of course that children can remain within their own families. That generally is the wish of the community in relation to the department's work. But at times that cannot be done. It is a decision taken not by the department: but by the courts after due consideration of the circumstances, and any such decisions are reviewed by the courts as required.

So, this area of work within the department is in an evolutionary stage. I dare say that we have learnt a great deal as a department in 10 years, with staff within the department growing in experience. It must be borne in mind that an enormous expansion of the staff of the department occurred in the 1970s. The experience of our staff is now quite substantial, considering their length of service and the work that they have done in relation to the numerous activities of the department. We are now building up a body of expertise to influence these unfortunate cases.

We are also very much involved in the other areas of Government that have responsibilities for trying to establish within the community the necessary support structures which can be so effective but which are often lacking. We are very much involved in the formulation of law reform in this area as well. There are some deficiencies in the law in this area. It is not easy to determine ways in which to overcome them, but it is important that the experience of the department is used in the formulation of law reform. The recent release of the child abuse task force report has very much been influenced by the work of officers of the Department for Community Welfare.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I had intended to pursue the line relating to motor vehicles, but as the honourable member has raised this question of child abuse, I would instead like to continue with that line, referring not only to the line but also to the report which has been recently released, a very good report, through the Minister of Health. I do not know whether this is an indication that the Minister of Health will be increasingly responsible in this area as opposed to the Minister of Community Welfare—and that is not really the essence of this question—but I wondered where the Minister and the Government stood philosophically in relation to the report. I have spent some time analysing it on a page by page basis and relating it to other readings.

I see two dilemmas. The first is that the Government of the day, irrespective of who is the Minister, has an extremely difficult problem, in that social services officers and the Minister can be literally pilloried by the public and the media for either one of two actions: first, for neglected duty, that is, failure to intervene in very serious cases; and, secondly, for being too quick to intervene, for intruding on parents' rights. Over the past few years I know from personal experience of a number of complaints relating to children being removed from families when the children have been close to the age of being independent of those families, and the Minister has been severely criticised for having intruded and usurped parents' rights.

On the other hand, the Minister and his department have to also analyse a number of questions: when are they going to decide whether a family is being too strict and physically abusing the child, as opposed to simply exercising normal parental discipline, against which a number of children (again, in my experience in and out of school) have rebelled? They are resentful of any physical discipline.

There is also the question whether or not a parent is being deliberately neglectful of a child, or whether the parent has a very low degree of competence, probably associated with a degree of ignorance and very often coupled with poverty. It is very often hard to buy soap in order to be clean when you are impoverished. Even cleanliness is an expensive item in many areas.

A third aspect is how the Minister and his department decide upon sexual abuse as opposed to what may simply be norms within a given family of physical intimacy. In some families all members may choose to walk around the house in a state of nudity, whereas others may be absolutely prudish about any form of exposure of their upper or lower body, even after emerging from the bathroom. It is a very difficult area. Again, poverty itself involves a value judgment in our affluent community. I think it is easier to establish whether or not we have poverty. In each locale, city, state or country—any part of the world—living standards are vastly different. Social values are often based on materialism rather than people. We have the two sides of the coin upon which the Minister and his department will ultimately have to reach a decision. I note that the Minister said that the law is deficient, that some of the areas are extremely difficult to make decisions on, but ultimately I see it going in one of two directions—either we go towards respecting family autonomy, in which case the department, the police and society generally will err on the side of leniency towards the parents; or the other decision is one of deliberate State intervention. This is where I think many of the Minister's problems have occurred in recent years, in cases of alleged State intervention, which automatically means swift action and less latitude for parents.

My estimate of the situation over the past three years has been that, from the point of view of those many people who have complained about interference by departmental officers, State intervention has been a more deliberate policy. Has the Minister given any instructions to the effect that State intervention is the accepted mode, or is he still taking an open pragmatic point of view, waiting for yet another report on a report and balancing his judgments? I know that it is not an easy question for the Minister, and therefore not easy to answer, but I would like some idea of Government direction.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I will try to detail to members of the Committee some of the specific actions that the department has taken in this area. We can then perhaps discuss some of the broader issues, but the honourable member is quite correct: I would dearly like to tell members of the Committee and indeed the public that we have the answers to this problem, but we do not, and nor does any other Government or Minister have the answer. We are dealing very much with a change in community attitudes. There are vastly differing views as to what intervention should occur in the circumstances.

The honourable member is correct in saying that the definition of what is child abuse is in itself a very vexed question which has not been clarified anywhere near the extent that would make the work of officers in our department that much more straightforward. However, we know that behaviour considered acceptable perhaps as recently as a decade ago is now unacceptable. We know that behaviour that was hidden and not talked about is now no longer hidden and is talked about. Because of that, there is to be

a response to the suffering that has been caused to children in the past, that as a society we now no longer accept cruelty or dehumanising behaviour with respect to children. I am referring not just to sexual or physical abuse of children but also to psychological abuse, which makes the work that much more complex: it can be excruciating, and the effects can be carried with a child throughout its life. I acknowledge the honourable member's remarks and his appreciation of the difficulty of this question and, indeed, the difficulty that the community faces, because this is often raised on a single issue basis.

We know that hard cases make bad law, but people can then often perceive the department or its officers in a particular light because of a response to a particular case and the particular circumstances of that case. Every case is different: indeed, some of the cases are incredibly complex and circumstances change quite rapidly throughout the management of a case. It always concerns me that people in need in the community who are tentative about coming forward for help may be deterred from doing so by some of the debate that occurs in the community and in Parliament on management of certain cases.

However, I can say—and it should always be repeated—that the removal of a child from a family does not occur without the authority and intervention of the court. There is judicial review of these decisions, and that can never be over-emphasised. The courts play an important role in this area, which is a great safeguard for the community. We have also developed other checks and balances so that there is objective analysis of each decision of the department, both internally and externally.

With respect to some of the steps that have been taken, perhaps I will go through what I referred to earlier in more detail. It should be established that the department is required, at law, to investigate all situations of maltreatment and neglect which come to its notice and take appropriate steps to ensure that no further harm occurs to the child. Notifications come to the department both from professionals (required by law to report abuse or suspected abuse) and from friends, neighbours, relatives and victims themselves.

Last year there were 1 264 notifications involving just over 1 600 children. In relation to the first priority for programs operating from field locations, in all situations where a child is suffering or at risk from physical, sexual or emotional abuse or negligence it has meant an increased workload, which is anticipated to rise by a further 50 per cent at least during 1985-86. We have a decentralised structure in the Department for Community Welfare located throughout the State, and that is where these matters are attended to first.

A major publicity strategy aimed at professionals was carried out in late 1984. This concentrated on teachers, nurses and medical practitioners, all of whom have made significantly increased reports since the campaign. Honourable members will know of the literature provided at that time. We have established in the department six new positions of Supervisor of Child Protection Services. That will significantly upgrade the quality and capacity of our department to provide these responses.

This year there has been compulsory training of all managers (that is, district officers and senior community welfare workers) who have a responsibility to supervise child protection workers. Next year there will be mandatory training required of all front line staff in the department. The department is developing a training kit so that all workers know the latest training methods. There is continuing new information coming forward in this area of techniques being used to assist in our work.

Records of notifications and subsequent investigations have now been centralised and computerised to minimise the possibility of lost reports; to provide a reliable and regular sample of statistics; and to be a basis for ongoing research. This system is the most advanced in Australia and has been copied by other States. The final stage of computerisation expected by early 1986 will be 24 hour availability of all records of abused children and known perpetrators of abuse. This has been an area of singular importance.

The department will be very much involved in the establishment of the Justice Information System, which will link us with the police, correctional services and other like records. That information will then be readily available to our officers throughout the department. Joint work with other agencies is widespread: the Cabinet task force on child sexual abuse has had extensive community welfare involvement; there are joint training programs with the police and CAFHS nurses in detection and investigation of abuse; the child protection liaison committee, which meets bimonthly, will update all the agencies on services available and issues needing resolution; there has been a further tightening of guidelines in dealing with allegations of abuse of children in department approved care; and compulsory training has been instituted in domestic violence intervention; and so on.

They are some of the specific actions that have been taken in the department. Both the department and the Government have given this area the highest priority, and resources available to the department have been substantially increased to ensure that these services are delivered to the best of our ability.

Ms Vardon: The Minister has outlined nearly all the major tasks we are performing in the department. The honourable member mentioned the difficulty of working out when to intervene. A child knows when it has been abused beyond what is normal for the child: certainly, the protective behaviour program of the Education Department is making children more aware of that. The department tends to believe the word of the child if they talk about being abused, particularly those children who talk about being sexually assaulted. It is not within a child's normal comprehension to invent a story about child sexual assault. When our officers go in they err on the side of the child's story.

There is a fundamental principle in our department that if we can resolve the problem in the family, in relation to a child protection matter of any kind, that is best. However, we take a hard line at what then is a criminal assault, and we recognise that. Our goal is to make the child safe, not necessarily to whisk a child away from its family. We can set up a lot of guidelines, but the final analysis is up to the professional judgment of our officers in relation to the degree to which they should intervene and assess what is and is not normal.

Our training program is trying to get a standard across the board so that there is some commonality about how they make those choices. We understand that families are very different. Our major concern is with the child who has no control over the situation that it is in, and abuse is perpetrated against it which flags to us that it needs continuing protection from harm.

We have a fairly tight system of intervention when a child is notified. Our officers are required to be out there within 24 hours and conduct a full assessment. We find some of the calls superficial. People can wrongly identify a ringworm as a burn, and other such things. Our people work fairly carefully with CAFHS nurses and teachers to try to filter out what might be unjust, unusual or unsubstantiated notifications before going into heavier action.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I thank the Director for that reassurance because in South Australia there have been

published admissions by young people who have regretted lying to departmental officers and police about the actions of their parents. The Minister would have seen copies of this in the popular press. They are relatively rare, but an element of doubt still exists. At the other end of the spectrum, again relating to sexual abuse and the punishment of sexual offenders, page 72 of the report carries a reference to the method of pre-trial diversion. Is the Minister strongly in favour of the diversionary practice which would enable an offender to plead guilty and take, what I regard (and what the book refers to in one or two sections) as a soft option; that is, to be taken out of the prison system, counselled on a compulsory basis, and be ultimately considered to be cured.

Is the Minister strongly in favour of such pre-trial diversion? I am not trying to influence him in any way, but I have examined the system and its potential. I see plea bargaining as something that I do not find a desirable element. I hope that the recommendation that the Attorney-General be the major filter—he either approves or disapproves and then channels into the courts or to assessment panels as the softer option—is not favoured. I prefer that the Attorney-General's role should be extremely strong and determined. However, I also question even in the longer term, the desirability of sending too many people down through the diversionary process simply because there is an admission contained within this report itself.

I think there is a general acceptance within the medical psychiatric fraternities that there is very little record of sexual offenders ultimately being cured. A very small proportion can actually be demonstrated to have benefited from the counselling process, remaining within the community and being considered an improved person. I question the whole rationale behind this plea bargaining diversionary treatment—the softer option—and ask the Minister if he would seriously consider not being too strongly influenced by one factor which may be considered important when Treasurers are looking at the whole matter—the fact that it may be regarded as a cheaper option to Government and to the taxpayer.

That is referred to at page 72, euphemistically speaking, as 'economically advantageous to the community', which I think means the taxpayers' purse—justice through the Treasury or justice through the courts. Does the Minister have any firm ideas on that? I obviously do.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: First, I refer to the case, about which the honourable member spoke, of the child who admitted that she told lies to the authorities in order to obtain intervention. The facts of that case, which may not have been made public, are that the parents of that child signed an authority for her to come into the care of the department and asked the department to take over that parental responsibility for a period of time. Whilst the child may or may not have made untrue admissions to authorities, that was secondary to the decision where the department was faced with a child coming into its care. So, this is another example of a very complex set of situations.

That story received a centrespread in the *Adelaide News* under scandalous headlines. I feel that this is incredibly destructive to the confidence that many people in precarious situations have in the work of the department. It is not possible for me, here or in any other public forum, to talk about the specifics of these cases, and that just makes the problem of public perception even more difficult. But, it is a temptation to make a sensational story, particularly out of child abuse cases, and to paint the department in a very unfortunate light. Yet we, day in and day out, are the vital element in assisting children and families in these tragic circumstances.

With respect to the proposals contained in the task force report, I point out to honourable members that this is a

discussion paper and the report contains a schedule of events that will take place in order that the Government can properly formulate policy in this area. Submissions on this—the first discussion paper that the task force has released—are being called for. They should reach the Government by 30 November this year.

Honourable members will know that it is proposed that the task force have its final report, recommendations and consultations carried out before Cabinet considers this matter in August 1986. We are at the beginning of a process of wide community consultation and discussion. So, the task force has developed a number of strategies and approaches that are available for public discussion and consideration. This is a very wise course in dealing with a subject such as child sexual abuse. As honourable members would also know, there is a study under way on domestic violence, which is also closely associated with this matter, and the Director-General is chairing that study.

The honourable member raises serious doubts about the diversionary approach that is one of the issues raised in this report. That surprises me, because I understand that the document recently released by his Party dealing with women's policies adopts the approach about which the honourable member raises doubts. It takes almost verbatim the recommendations of this report, page by page. It was released some few weeks before this report. That is a dangerous approach for a political Party to take when, after all, this needs to be tested by public consideration.

We need to have all the respective groups in the community probing this, telling us what is good about it and what is wrong with it. Then a policy can be brought down. The honourable member's dilemma is one that he must address within his own Party forums. I hope that he responds to this report. I look forward to seeing how these different approaches develop. However, there is some merit in a diversionary approach. We have used this in the juvenile offending area in this State now for some time. I believe that has proven to be a successful approach with respect to some offending by young people. I understand that some 90 per cent of young people who appear before juvenile aid panels never come before a court again.

That is a very clear indication of its success. We need to study very carefully the implementation of the diversionary program with respect to this area of activity. Obviously, that is something the Government will do. Nevertheless, I do not think it can be clearly dismissed as of no assistance in this area. It has some substantial merits.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I referred a few moments ago to motor vehicles, and gave the page reference in my opening question. Vehicle control obviously has emerged in other Estimates Committees as recently as yesterday or the day before. We had the nice bits of agreement with the Government for an opening, but we have one of the nastier bits again where a member of the community has seen fit to report a Government vehicle. I have its registration number, but I do not intend to make it public. I will give it to the Minister.

The vehicle allegedly is a Department for Community Welfare registration. It was seen on 10 and 11 September this year at Mount Hotham, in the Victorian Alps, in the car park at the summit. It was fitted with a roof rack and the objector says it was obviously there for skiing purposes. I will be pragmatic and say that it could have been a departmental officer pursuing somebody across the Victorian Alps in search of maintenance support for a client in South Australia. However, I believe that the Minister needs to know to whom the vehicle was issued, why it was there, how long it was out of the State and so out of commission, if so, to the department, and a number of other things.

The Committee would like to know, relevant to the whole field rather than to this individual question (to which the Minister can give me a private response later), what are the

controls exercised by the department and the Government generally, what instructions are given to officers about motor vehicles and how these controls are implemented.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I would appreciate the honourable member giving me that information, so that we can check it and get back to the Committee as quickly as possible, rather than there being reporting of the matter out of context. If the vehicle was seen during the school holiday period it might have been part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme program. As the honourable member would know, part of the department's fleet of motor vehicles is used for that scheme. It may also have been involved with one of the wilderness programs that the department operates for young offenders.

Recently there has been publicity about the work done by a group of young offenders in the Far North of South Australia in cleaning up at Marree. A number of our young offender programs involve the making of canoes, boats, skis, and the like, as part of the rehabilitation program. As part of that program they also get to use them (and all the skills associated with that) and to follow through their new-found hobbies and interests. We need to check this matter out.

We receive quite a number of letters from members of the public and members of Parliament saying that they have seen a departmental vehicle at the beach, a picnic place, shopping, or wherever. Often that vehicle used is associated with our institutional care, involving young people in a shopping program, going to the beach, a picnic, and so on. This is done for young people who have deprived backgrounds and extraordinary living situations at times to bring back some normality, family life and some experience of the benefits of living in a more normal community situation.

This duty falls upon officers of the department, who perform it in their own time out of hours and take on substantial responsibilities in conducting expeditions and programs. It is much easier to keep children in institutions, or to run programs in the backyards of those institutions, but they do not do that. For that reason, I will have this matter checked and get that information back to the honourable member.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: It could be that this officer warrants a medal rather than censure.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: Quite so. If the officer was skiing, something will be done about it. I can assure the honourable member that that happens rarely in a department such as the Department for Community Welfare. I will ask Mr Beattie to explain some of the controls and safeguards in this area.

Mr Beattie: The departmental car fleet comes under the control of the Director-General, who has delegated that control to the directors. Officers are not permitted to use motor vehicles for other than official purposes without the approval of directors and district officers. The delegation for using cars interstate lies with directors. More importantly, the department has just instituted a new fleet management system which is mentioned in the Auditor-General's Report and which helps us to keep track of vehicles very much more effectively and efficiently.

That system has been installed for the past five months. It enables us to identify each vehicle, where it has been assigned, the number of kilometres travelled, and helps us to identify those vehicles that have a high or low mileage, thus enabling us to use them more effectively. It also helps with the replacement program referred to previously. Those controls work quite effectively, and in the last 12 months we have had very few complaints about cars being abused such as in the case to which the honourable member referred.

The CHAIRMAN: I test the wish of the Committee. It has been suggested to me that, because there is only one

line, we could skip from Community Welfare to the Aboriginal Affairs line, and I really could not rule that it would be out of order. I am wondering whether members might care to deal with the Community Welfare line, and then any other matters for which the Minister is responsible could be dealt with, bearing in mind that he may have to change officers. Does that sound reasonable?

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I noted the unusual nature of the budget this year where, under Community Welfare, a large number of programs previously itemised very specifically have been not only spread within Community Welfare but transferred to other Government departments. For that reason my work over the last couple of weeks has simply left the whole of Community Welfare as one entity and I had hoped that we would be able to range across the whole of the program in the course of the debate rather than confine ourselves to one line. Aboriginal Affairs is an integral part of the Community Welfare program, and it is difficult to split.

The CHAIRMAN: We are in a position where, if somebody wishes to ask a question or seek information on a certain matter, it is quite easy for the Minister to change officers, if need be. Is that the position?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I am quite happy to accept questions right across the board throughout the day. However, I have asked Aboriginal Affairs officers and the Commissioner for the Ageing to attend at the House this afternoon for the rest of the day, so members could bear that in mind.

The CHAIRMAN: That clarifies the position.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I realise it will necessitate a number of officers staying throughout the day with additional officers being brought in, and I appreciate that.

Mr KLUNDER: I refer to electricity concessions, particularly in terms of how many households in South Australia receive such concessions and how electricity concessions in South Australia compare with those in other States. Rather than asking supplementary questions, I ask the Minister to give the Committee an idea of the impact of electricity concessions as established by the Bannon Government.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I thank the honourable member for his question, as it does raise an issue of importance in the community. The honourable member will recall that, prior to the November 1982 election, an undertaking was given by the then Opposition to introduce pensioner concessions on electricity charges. At that time an undertaking was given that that would include a number of categories of persons in need in our community, particularly those who were in the care of children in family situation. The then Government gave an undertaking that it also would introduce a concession scheme, and both Parties said that it would be a sum of \$50 per annum to be taken from electricity accounts.

However, the statements made in late October 1982 by the then Government indicated that some 70 000 South Australian households would receive that concession. The Government's concession in fact reaches almost 110 000 households in this State, and that is the most comprehensive concession of its type in Australia. Of those people, 103 000 pensioner households received concessions in 1984-85, compared to 100 200 in the previous year. The takeup rate by beneficiaries remained at approximately 5 500 households, the same as at the end of the 1983-84 financial year.

The Government has, in addition, made a payment of some \$12 million to the Electricity Trust of South Australia so that electricity tariffs could be reduced in real terms by 2 per cent and an undertaking could be given that the increase in the next year would not exceed the consumer price index. There has been in that way an arresting of increasing electricity charges and a direction of Government resources to those families experiencing difficulty in meet-

ing this vital expense or in purchasing this vital commodity within a household.

The extent of increases should be put on record, as it is important to note the impact that electricity charges have had on low income families and individuals in our community. At 1 July 1980 electricity tariffs were increased by 12.5 per cent, and on 1 July 1981 by 19.8 per cent. On 1 May 1982 they were increased by 16 per cent. A further increase of 12 per cent was approved in late 1982 but was not announced prior to that election, which meant that during that period, from 1 July 1980 to late 1982—just over two years—the increase in electricity prices in this State amounted to 60.3 per cent.

The present Government was committed to that expenditure of 12 per cent in late 1982, and that was announced on 1 December 1982. It then increased electricity tariffs by a similar amount of 12 per cent on 1 November 1983 and similarly on 1 November 1984 by a further 12 per cent. This was required, as the previous Government had found, as a result of the gas price agreement and also the substantial effect of the bushfires, which impacted on electricity costs in this State.

On 1 September this year a reduction of 2 per cent was announced. So, this Government has made decisions other than the decision to which it was committed to increase electricity tariffs by 22 per cent during its period of office. Nevertheless, that is almost one-third of the increase during the previous Administration. The cost of electricity has proven to be a burden in many households. So, under the three budgets that this Government has brought down the ETSA concession scheme has now provided almost \$18 million to those 110 000 households in the State, plus the recent transfer to the Electricity Trust, bringing the total to some \$28 million in Government expenditure to support households in that way. So, there has been an incredible commitment to deal with this matter, and it is something of which the Government is most conscious. We will be judged on the actions we have taken.

Mr KLUNDER: A number of my constituents will find that a vital answer to some of their problems. What is the percentage increase in the total amount of concessions provided by the State Government since it came to office?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: Ten years ago the concessions that the Department for Community Welfare provided amounted to \$4 million. They were the traditional concessions of water rates and council rates. The total package of concessions, that is, community welfare and other State Government concessions in the current budget, amount to about \$120 million. Therefore, all honourable members can appreciate the extent of the commitment being made by the State Government to supplementing the income of pensioners and beneficiaries, as well as the unemployed in this State. In the past decade there has been an incredible growth in the number of people living in poverty in this country.

That has had a resultant drain and effect on resources of State Governments, and particularly on community welfare departments. It has been a tragic period in the history of this country, and because of the paucity of Federal Government support during that period we have seen the number of people living below the poverty line increase from about 1 million (in the early 1970s) to 2.5 million today, with some 800 000 children living in families whose total income is below the poverty line.

I think that the South Australian State Government has done all within its capacity to try to alleviate that situation. There is a further component to the concessions provided, namely, that they are also intended to allow aged persons to remain in their own homes for a longer time than would normally be possible. The concessions relating to rates and taxes allow this, and that is very much in line with enlight-

ened policies to provide support for aged persons living in their own homes within the community, where there are family support structures and the like.

The concessions policy in this State is the most comprehensive of any State Government in Australia. It does have those other effects on the community which can only strengthen it. Also I should point out that the concession structure has had to be developed because of the deficiencies and the run down of the federal income maintenance structure in the last decade. Fortunately, steps are being taken to redistribute resources at the federal level to those most in need in the community. One group that concerns us all is the young unemployed. They were denied any increase in their benefits during the whole period of the Fraser Administration federally, and we are now seeing the results of that in a generation of young people who are suffering and who will continue to suffer throughout their lives as a result of the many deprivations that they experienced during very long and sustained periods of unemployment.

Mr KLUNDER: Will the Minister clarify for the benefit of the Committee the difference between his departmental

budget and the total amount of concessions provided by the State Government? I ask this question as a result of having read a speech made on 12 September by the member for Mount Gambier, wherein it appears that he confused the two issues.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I appreciate the opportunity to clarify this matter, especially for the benefit of the member for Mount Gambier, because I think that his comments indicated some confusion (which may have been transferred to other members and to readers of *Hansard*) between the statements that I had made with respect to Government concessions as a whole—not only those provided through the Department for Community Welfare lines but also those provided through numerous other Government authorities and departments—and the total budget of the Department for Community Welfare, which in fact is less than the amount of concessions received by the community as a result of total Government effort at the State level. With the concurrence of the Committee, I shall incorporate in *Hansard* a table on the value of State concessions, and that might clarify this matter.

THE VALUE OF STATE CONCESSIONS

| | | 1983-84 \$m | 1984-85 \$m | Estimated 1985-86 \$m |
|--|--|----------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| (a) Utilities and Rates | | | | |
| E. & W.S./D.C.W. | Water/Sewer Council Rate Remissions | 19.4 | 21.3 | 22.4 |
| E. & W.S. | Water/Sewer Rate Remissions to Organisations | 5.7 | 6.1 | 6.5 |
| D.C.W./E.T.S.A. | Electricity Concession Scheme | 5.5 | 5.4 | 5.6 |
| | | 30.6 | 32.8 | 34.5 |
| (b) Remissions of Fixed Fees and Charges | | | | |
| Transport, Dept. Motor Registration | Rebates on Vehicle Registration, Driver Licences and Stamp Duty | 8.6 | 9.6 | 9.9 |
| Education | Government Assisted Students Scheme—assistance towards books and school fees | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.7 |
| TAFE | Fee exemption for Stream 6 courses | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Fisheries | Exemption on commercial fishing licence fee and remissions on registration of gear | | | |
| Lands | Concession on licence fees for pensioner occupiers of Crown Land on old mining areas at Wallaroo | | | |
| | | 10.5 | 11.4 | 11.9 |
| (c) Admittance and Fare Concessions | | | | |
| S.T.A. | Eligible persons are entitled to free or reduced fares on public transport | 16.4 | 19.3 | 19.8 |
| Transport Department | Fare Concessions for eligible persons on intrastate and country town private bus services, intrastate A.N.R. services and M.V. <i>Troubridge</i> Service | 0.6 | 0.7 | 0.7 |
| Education Department | Conveyance of Student Allowances—assistance for travel for students who live more than 5 km from their school or school bus route | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| (1) Education Department | Conveyance—disabled children | 0.9 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| State Opera | Concession on seat prices for eligible persons | | | |
| Lighthouse Theatre | Concession on seat prices for eligible persons | | | |
| History Trust (Constitutional Museum, Birdwood Mill and Schubert Farm) | Concession on admittance for eligible persons | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| National Parks and Wildlife Service | Concession on admittance fees to facilities, parks. Reduction in hunting and fauna permit fees. | | | |
| | | 18.7 | 21.7 | 22.2 |

| | | 1983-84 \$m | 1984-85 \$m | Estimated 1985-86 \$m |
|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| (d) Other | | | | |
| Housing Trust | Rent Reductions | 32.0 | ⁽²⁾ 36.5 | ⁽³⁾ 39.0 |
| | Rent Relief | 4.6 | 6.2 | 9.0 |
| | Mortgage Relief | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.9 |
| Health Commission | Spectacles Scheme | 1.7 | 1.6 | 1.8 |
| | Pensioner Dentures | 1.3 | 2.2 | 1.8 |
| | Transport | 0.7 | 0.8 | 0.8 |
| | | 40.7 | 47.7 | 53.3 |
| | | 100.5 | 113.6 | 121.9 |

Total (a), (b), (c) and (d)

⁽¹⁾ Not included previously

⁽²⁾ Excludes \$19.0m recovered through Commonwealth grant

⁽³⁾ Excludes \$19.5m expected to be recovered from Commonwealth grants.

Mr BAKER: My first question relates to the running of the training centres, or 'secure care' as it is called in the yellow book. All members are aware of the enormous costs involved in the running of secure care. I refer to page 61 of the Auditor-General's Report and from page 50 onwards in the yellow book. The Auditor-General was providing a comparison of the costs of running the Youth Remand Assessment Centre, the Youth Training Centre and Lochiel Park Training Centre. It is fairly evident that there have been some vast escalations in average occupancy costs. For example, at the Youth Remand Centre, a person staying in that centre costs \$120 000 per annum to maintain; in the Youth Training Centre they cost \$92 000 per annum to maintain; and at the Lochiel Park Training Centre they cost \$76 000 per annum to maintain. I think the figure for the Department of Prisons was of the order of \$39 000, so if we take the Youth Remand Centre, which has an average occupancy of only 17, with a capacity for 51, the cost is \$120 000 compared with the prisons establishment cost of approximately \$39 000. The Auditor-General has seen fit to comment on that.

I have also noted from the program report that there will be a continual endeavour to decrease the number of people who are placed in the youth remand and assessment centres. However, the costs have risen and, if we reduce the numbers, that means that the average cost, by my calculations, for example for the Youth Remand Assessment Centre, could be as high as \$140 000 per annum per inmate, which I think would be totally unacceptable to the community at large. Can the Minister explain to the Committee what real attempt is being made to come to grips with the cost of this, particularly in view of the large numbers of staff involved? The number of staff appears to outweigh the number of inmates in this situation.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I thank the honourable member for raising this issue, because it is important that it be clarified. I can excuse the honourable member for coming to those conclusions after reading the statistics to which he has referred, although I note that the Auditor-General does not refer unfavourably to these. This is a table that he has used over many years. I refer the honourable member to the comments that I made to the Committee last year in relation to drawing the conclusions that he has drawn and, indeed, the honourable member for Glenelg in this place often draws the same conclusions by using those criteria.

We could in fact reduce dramatically the average annual net cost per offender by increasing the numbers of offenders in the institutions. That is what the community is asking us not to do and we do not want to do that, either. There are some structural limitations in those institutions which were designed and built for another era and for other purposes. We are using them in a different way and that places some costs in our way. That has to be taken into account.

In the current year a 38-hour week has also been introduced in our institutions. That has also increased costs, but you will notice that there has also been a reduction in the numbers of persons in institutions, and that factor has contributed, as I said, to the net cost per offender figure increasing. I intend to talk to the Auditor-General about the way in which this has been presented in his report almost as a matter of course, because I think it is not really a comparison that is helpful to honourable members and indeed to the community and does not fairly judge the effort of the Government in this area. The figures that I prefer to quote (and I will ask the officers at the table to expand on this) are the actual costs of running the centre as a whole, and some assessment has to be made of our effectiveness in delivering rehabilitative services to young offenders. That has to be matched up to see whether the honourable member and other members believe that that is a justifiable expenditure.

In the 1983 to 1985 period costs per centre increased—SAYTC by 6 per cent, SAYRAC by 5.5 per cent, and Lochiel Park by 5 per cent. Honourable members will realise that those increases are well below the inflation level despite some of the other factors to which I have referred. As I explained to the Committee last year, the department has been involved in a substantial study of the activities conducted in those centres, and in some long-term planning so that we can get purpose built centres that may well reduce some of the unnecessary expenditures associated with the programs we conduct at the current centres.

It should also be considered that some of the staff in those centres, apart from the shiftwork involved, are involved in programs outside those institutions. That is an important element of the department's programs. As I explained previously, we are involved in some more imaginative constructive rehabilitative programs, for example, the wilderness program, where some young offenders went to live and work in a rural community. That is seen as part of that detention program, which was quite successful. That takes a considerable staff effort. Nevertheless, in recent years some 20 staff have been taken from institutional work to community based work with young offenders. That has also had a tremendous effect on the effectiveness of many programs that are going on in the community dealing with young offenders. I will ask Ms Mann to clarify these expenses and to put them into a proper context.

Ms Mann: One of the difficulties in comparing the treatment of young people with that of adult offenders is the quality of care component. We pride ourselves on the quality of care and on the small number of young people coming into our centres. However, once they come in we have a responsibility to provide the maximum possible potential for rehabilitation, for the picking up of deficits that they have had in their early childhood and, later on, the reme-

diation and rehabilitation programs, survival skills, and so on.

Our staff to child ratio is a very different ratio from that found in the adult system. We have a very small staff to child ratio in order to maximise the opportunity we have when these young people come into our care in that secure situation to provide the utmost benefit. Our experience is that the learning that can take place in secure centres can be quite negative in terms of contamination of offending and other factors, so we have to work doubly hard to keep children out of these centres. However, once they are in we must ensure that they gain the most positive rather than most negative learning. That is an important comparison to make when comparing adults with children in this kind of facility.

The Minister's comments were very full. However, I add that one of our problems is that we are working in two institutions (SAYRAC and SAYTC) that were not purpose built. They were built for different purposes at a different point in time and were designed to cater for a much larger number of people. Coming with those older buildings is a very high maintenance cost and a structure of staffing that, even though we are reducing our numbers, we cannot get away from: it is a fixed cost component. To overcome this we are now looking at changing the whole of the building program.

We have established a planning committee to look at changing SAYTC and SAYRAC in particular, and at developing a program of three small secure centres that will be purpose built, designed for a maximum of 24 young people (operating hopefully at only around 20) which will, in the longer term, allow us to make quite significant staff reductions. The structure, shape and design of the buildings, as well as their age, adds a significant component to our staffing costs.

[Sitting suspended from 12.58 to 2 p.m.]

Additional Departmental Adviser:

Dr A. Graycar, Commissioner for the Ageing.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I introduce another officer who is now at the table: Dr Adam Graycar, Commissioner for the Ageing in South Australia, who was appointed earlier this year.

In reply to an earlier question concerning the use of a departmental vehicle that was reported as being in the Victorian snowfields, I have further information that may enlighten the Committee. The vehicle was from one of our community houses (the Hay community unit) and the trip was undertaken by two staff members and two female children who were in care of the department. The trip was a reward for good behaviour and was also a learning experience for those children.

The party left on the afternoon of Friday 6 September and, after spending a night at a caravan park, arrived at Mount Hotham on the Saturday. The return trip was also broken by a night at a caravan park. Obviously, in those circumstances, many social skills, cooking and the like, are experienced. The girls raised much money toward the cost of the trip by holding stalls and the like, and the balance of the cost was met by a Schools Commission project and through the efforts of local social workers. Parents, departmental regional officers, and other officers were involved in planning the trip. Before the vehicle was taken interstate, the approval required under our regulations was given by the Director-General of the department.

Mr BAKER: Earlier, we were discussing the cost associated with the youth training centres, and explanations were given by the Acting Department Director. From visiting the

training centres concerned, I am well aware of their limitations and their background and realise why they are probably not suitable for today's needs. I shall make an observation on which the Minister may comment. The capacities of these institutions are as follows: South Australian Youth Training Centre, capacity 80, average occupancy 42 (a reduction over the past two years from 60 to 42); Youth Remand and Assessment Centre, capacity 51, current occupancy 17 (two years ago it was 25); Lochiel Training Centre, capacity 16, occupancy 10.

I understand that there are inbuilt costs in respect of staff, as well as fairly heavy maintenance. With the significant fall-off in numbers over the past two years, an appropriate adjustment of staff does not seem to have taken place, and I understand that there are difficulties in this area. Perhaps the Minister can explain the lines of secure care. Do they include officers who are involved in other activities besides security and the training associated with those establishments? Perhaps the lines themselves undersell the wide diversity of the work.

For example, when I visited the Youth Remand and Assessment Centre about eight years ago, just after a youth had stabbed a worker with a pair of scissors and the inmates had burnt all the mattresses, I got a real appreciation of the working conditions there. However, with these sorts of numbers I should have thought that there would be more contract staff in areas where skills must be taught and that the number of security staff would be kept to a minimum, but that does not seem to have happened.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: As the honourable member has inferred, it is difficult to reduce the number of units. The two larger institutions are divided into a number of units. It can be clearly seen that there is advantage in having groupings of inmates in that way rather than dormitory type care. There is an optimum size for each unit, and each unit requires certain staffing ratios, there being minimum requirements.

The honourable member's figures represent average capacities, so at times they can fluctuate well up and well down. We must address the question of what is the maximum capacity required at any one time. If there is a situation where we need to take into secure care a larger number of young offenders, we must always have that opportunity available to us, although we do not wish to maintain large institutions without their being used. That is a difficult question. Obviously, the community requires us to maintain that capacity and to have it if it is needed, although hopefully it will not be. That is one of the difficult questions. Much work has already been done and much is being done in developing a whole new physical approach to this area, and that will bring about most desirable changes in staffing and an improvement in the programs run in these institutions.

I believe that there will, in fact, be substantial cost savings, although that is not the criterion. However, I believe that an efficient secure institution system can be run in that way with new buildings, hopefully, and new programs, and that some savings can be diverted into other areas of Government activity that are under resourced. I would ask the officers to comment on some of the specific questions concerning staffing.

Ms Mann: The numbers were sufficiently reduced last year to enable each of the centres to reduce the number of units operating. Originally, we had five units at the Youth Training Centre, whereas now there are four. So, a complete unit of staffing was reduced. At SAYRAC, we had four units, whereas now there are only three. From 1 January 1985, we were able to redeploy 16 staff positions from the front line residential care worker positions referred to and reduce the staffing establishment of the two centres by about

16. Those staff were re-employed in community programs for young offenders.

Regarding the number of other staff in the centre who are not responsible for the day to day secure care of the young people, we have in each centre two assessment social workers and workshop instructors in the area of trade skills, such as motor mechanics, woodwork, metalwork, and printing. They offer programs. That is quite separate from the staff provided by the Education Department, who are not included in our costing. We have staff whose prime responsibility is to prepare groundwork for young people leaving the centre. Our release staff negotiate with the family, organise accommodation, arrangements with employers, and so on. They are outward looking from the centres. In addition, we have a matron of each centre responsible for medical care of the young people, and kitchen and ancillary staff, etc.

At times the units have a very low number of people in them. We have a separate youth remand and assessment centre for girls which at times in the past 12 months has had only one or so young girls in it. During that time we could allow the staff from that unit to go out and provide relief at our other units for sick leave, workers compensation, long service leave and, in some instances, staff went out to have professional development experiences. They were able to go into Community Welfare offices to broaden their own skills so that they were not sitting around just observing the weather when we had very small numbers.

Mr BAKER: My last question in this sequence relates to the Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program, referred to at page 153 of the yellow book. There is a revenue item shown which indicates that major funding for this area comes from the Commonwealth. For the edification of members, the SAAP program received from the Commonwealth \$1 million in 1984-85 and there is close to \$3 100 000 estimated for 1985-86. Can the Minister describe the actual disposition of these funds?

Some weeks ago I attempted to reconcile what had happened to certain moneys. Under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program there are things such as child-care and women's shelters which, I presumed, would be a child-care item and subject to children's services. Obviously, there is difficulty in some of those areas in defining them explicitly. Can the Minister provide a breakdown of exactly how that Commonwealth money is being spent between various components? If he cannot, will he take the question on notice?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I will get that detailed information for the honourable member rather than reading it into *Hansard*. I briefly explain that as part of the Commonwealth-State agreement with respect to the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program we have devolved a number of advisory committees involving people in the respective areas of supported accommodation in the community. They are involved in advising on the allocation of those funds through the Women's Supported Accommodation Program Advisory Committee, the Youth Program Advisory Committee and the General Program Advisory Committee.

I can also give details of membership of those committees and the overall program advisory committee. There was a total State effort last year of \$2 024 100 in this area. In this budget that has been increased to \$2 300 000, which has allowed there to be some increase in programs in each of those areas. The support of the Commonwealth in this area has been sadly neglected in all programs—women's shelters, crisis youth accommodation and homeless person's accommodation.

Whilst the State Government, in the past few years, has increased its support in this area quite dramatically it does

not have resources to provide the assistance required. The Commonwealth's intrusion into this area is most welcome. I appreciate very much the support that the whole spectrum of community organisations involved has given to the program. I also appreciate their participation in those advisory committees. However, I will obtain the breakdown for the honourable member and other members of the Committee.

Mr PLUNKETT: I refer to page 18 of the yellow book. In the last Estimates Committees the shadow spokesman criticised the Minister by claiming that he was not advocating a full benefit for South Australian citizens from the Commonwealth Government. Can the Minister explain what action has been taken on the question of getting the Commonwealth to accept responsibility for emergency financial assistance?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: There has been a considerable response from the Commonwealth Government in providing assistance for persons in need in the community. There have been increases in social security budgets and community service programs: division of the old Social Security Department into two departments—social security and community services—and development of programs such as HACC, SAAP and a number of other welcome initiatives.

However, one area that continues to concern me and the State Government remains. All State welfare Ministers are most concerned that the Commonwealth Government has not moved to assume responsibility or to provide greater assistance for those persons in need of emergency financial support. In this State, that is quite a burden to carry in financial terms, but also in administration within the Department for Community Welfare. This payment is made on an *ad hoc* basis around Australia. Some \$15 million is spent in New South Wales, I understand, by the State Government in providing this assistance whereas no budget allocation is made in Victoria.

In Western Australia a large sum is available, as is the case in this State. It is causing problems in some other States. New South Wales has recently announced some drastic cut backs in this area. At the last Welfare Ministers Council all States urged the Commonwealth Government to assume responsibility for these payments. We believe that of persons in need of financial assistance over 90 per cent are Department of Social Security clients.

Rather than having to go from one agency to another they should be able to receive this assistance from social security offices. We are causing greater distress and cost to persons who could well do without that burden being placed on them at a time of crisis. Further, the money is being used in almost all cases to buy food in family situations.

This further indicates that the matter is a responsibility of the income maintenance provisions that are now well established as a Commonwealth responsibility. I have recently written to the Minister for Social Security, having discussed this matter with him on a number of occasions, as well as the discussions that I actually instituted at the Ministers Council, and have urged that there be a further meeting of Ministers to try to resolve this matter. Whilst I can give an undertaking to members of the Committee that the State Government does not intend to diminish its responsibility to persons in need in the community in those circumstances, clearly the money that we spend could be liberated for other programs if the Commonwealth would accept its responsibility in this area.

Mr PLUNKETT: I refer to page 29 of the yellow book concerning the aged. The State Government appointed Australia's first Commissioner for the Ageing. What progress has been made in fulfilling the aims and objectives of the legislation?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The Commissioner for the Ageing Act was passed last year, and earlier this year Dr Graycar

was appointed our first Commissioner for the Ageing—indeed, Australia's first Commissioner for the Ageing—an office that will be established in a number of other States and at the Commonwealth level in the near future. It is interesting to note that most States in the United States have a similar office and have developed wide-ranging programs around them. As Dr Graycar is with us I will ask him to describe some of the work in which he has been involved. It is quite appropriate that he is here as this is Seniors Week, and he has been involved in a very direct way in establishing a comprehensive program in conjunction with SACOTA—the South Australian Council on the Ageing—and other organisations in ensuring that the aged community plays a more active role in the community and that their needs are brought home to us all.

Dr Graycar: I will start by outlining the objectives of the office, which are essentially to act as an advocate for elderly people and also to provide policy advice on matters affecting the ageing. So, the office is established to act as a focal point within the Government for elderly people and their organisations and central place within government. When establishing a new office there is always a difficulty in getting the office physically established, and a great deal of effort has gone into that. The main tasks with which we have been faced recently have been to consult as widely as possible within the community with four types of people: the elderly; Government planners; service providers; and the main operators of services. So, we have set up a network of consultative mechanisms, mostly informal, and I have met on occasions with people in various seniors groups and with some of the providers, such as the AMA, the Voluntary Care Associations or the Private Nursing Homes Association to try to work through the complex web of service provision.

With regard to the way the office is structured, we have tried mostly to let people know that the office is there and, if there are problems, we can take them to the appropriate Minister or authority, both go out and seek the problems and try to sort them out. The biggest problem we are facing is essentially one of coordination, because there are many activities in the ageing field which are developed sometimes by Government and sometimes by the non-statutory sector, sometimes formally, sometimes informally, sometimes by the Commonwealth or by State Governments, and working our way through this very large complex causes a lot of confusion for a lot of elderly people and their organisations and not less confusion in government. That is the background structure of what we are doing.

In the beginning we appointed a consultant on ethnic aged issues, so we have someone oriented towards the ethnic communities. That is required in the Act and we are pleased that we were able to appoint somebody with a high standing in the ethnic community. We are in both an information gathering exercise and an information dissemination exercise. We have just launched our first set of information kits for elderly people, a series of what we have called 'aged pages'. All honourable members would have received them in their boxes yesterday and they can pass them on to people or organisations with whom they are dealing. Those pages contain demographic information and also basic, down-to-earth information on how to look after one's eyes, teeth and feet and what to do about high blood pressure, and so on.

We have been dealing with the Commonwealth Government on matters relating to freezes on private nursing home benefits in South Australia. We are dealing with local government and trying to work our way through the community, both to give out information and act as a focal point and advocate within the community for elderly people and their organisations.

Mr PLUNKETT: I thank Dr Graycar for the kits that I received, as did every member. It has been of great assistance. He has answered the three questions that I intended to ask. The Minister would be aware that my electorate has a large number of elderly people, especially those of non-English speaking background. I have a large number of Greek and Italian people in my electorate. I thank Dr Graycar for his information. I also refer to page 38 and the reference to the Support Accommodation Assistance Program. Can the Minister comment on the impact on wages in the youth and general area following the introduction of SAAP? I do not think that that question was answered.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: There has been a substantial increase in support for staff in shelters. One of the things that worried me, upon becoming Minister for Community Welfare, was the pressure and, indeed, the burn-out of young people living in youth shelters, hostels, and the like. There had been a 50-home project which provided a number of physical facilities to develop these programs, but no financial support for people working in those services. This was something which, over the last couple of years, we have given high priority to. With SAAP coming onstream it has meant that we can provide a considerable fillip.

For example, in the first six months from 1 July this year we have been able to provide a substantial increase in the industrial conditions experienced by people working in all areas of support and accommodation in the women's area, youth and in general services. In youth we have provided funding for 10.5 new staffing positions and upgraded salaries to \$18 000 per annum plus 17 per cent on-costs on top of that and have also provided for six new services in that area. The full year effect of that in the youth area alone is \$541 000.

The CHAIRMAN: I just point out that perhaps if we leave personal tributes out of the questions we will make more progress. The member for Peake seems to glory in tributes.

Mr MEIER: I refer to pages 18 and 20 of the yellow book. Page 18 refers to 35 000 requests per annum being received for emergency financial aid by the department. Half way down page 20, under the heading 'Issues/trends', it states:

... many individuals and families in South Australia are still under pressure which reduce their wellbeing. By providing support to individuals and families under such pressures, the department can not only alleviate distress but also prevent more serious problems and the need for intervention in areas such as child protection, substitute care for children and young offenders.

Without concentrating on the youth aspect so much, I am wondering what accountability is required of individuals who receive assistance. A case that came to my attention last year, just after Christmas, probably illustrates the point that I want to make. Two men in their thirties arrived at my place at Maitland, and they were very irate that the Department for Community Welfare had not given them sufficient emergency financial assistance over the Christmas period when they had run out of money. They told me that they had received only \$10 each. I asked why they were without money, and I was told that they were on sickness benefit pensions, that they had overspent, and therefore were finding it very hard to manage.

At the time I happened to be having some cement work done at my place, and I told those two men that I would see if I could arrange some work for them. I asked whether they were averse to working, and they said that they were quite happy to do it. The person doing the cement work told me that he would need a couple of extra workers in two days time, and he told the men to ring his place the night before to ensure that they knew where to go. They

said that that would be quite all right and that at least it would get them out of their financial predicament.

However, unfortunately, they did not turn up for work two or three days later. I suppose that at least I saved the Department for Community Welfare some money, in that I was unsympathetic. In this regard, anyone who is fortunate enough to be employed tends to overspend at times, and one knows that when that happens one has to go without or go into debt much more than one would like to, and thus one learns from one's mistakes. I imagine that departmental officers would often encounter this sort of situation, with people saying that they had overspent because they had purchased an extra television or a video tape recorder that they should not have bought, although perhaps the department would give them some money to keep going. To what extent does the department have to handle that sort of problem?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The honourable member's question raises a number of issues. In relation to a question asked earlier about emergency financial assistance I referred to the time that it takes departmental staff to assess those applications. In 1984-85, 36 369 applications for emergency financial assistance payments were approved, and the average payment was \$31.73. Therefore, one can understand the enormous demand for that type of service from the department. There is always a risk that people will try to get money by providing false information or that they will not explain all the circumstances of the case. Checks and balances are built into the system and we can prosecute for fraud: after all, this involves public money which must be distributed according to proper procedures.

In relation to the honourable member's comments, two things ought to be pointed out. First, Christmas is a bad time for poor people, and I think that poverty is more evident at Christmas time than perhaps at any other time of the year. There are those subtle pressures on people on fixed incomes to buy Christmas presents, to go out for a meal, or whatever at that time, and that often consumes a fixed income. The other point is that the people who approached the honourable member were sickness beneficiaries, and the health aspect involved may have had a bearing on their ability to do work. Often sickness that might be involved complicates the circumstances of a case. I ask Mr Beattie to explain the procedures established in our office for the distribution and income ability with respect to payments made.

Mr Beattie: The offices all have a duty social worker on duty during office hours, and when an applicant comes into an office an appointment may be made with a social worker, who in fact assesses the application for emergency financial assistance. Most applications for EFA relate to people seeking assistance in relation to food. In fact, 79.7 per cent of all EFA money is for food. As a general rule, people who come back on two or three occasions are referred to the budget adviser for advice and assistance in relation to working out a domestic budget. However, only a very low percentage of applicants come back a second or third time. Most people come only once for assistance. Most of the applicants for food would receive about \$2.50 a day per adult. The average payment for food is \$3 per day per adult, which is minimal.

Mr MEIER: In relation to the Crisis Care Service, page 20 of the yellow book indicates that 25 new volunteers were recruited and trained to assist staff of the service. What sort of training do those members of the staff undergo, and are they paid staff?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I call on the Director-General to answer that question.

Ms Vardon: There are 30 volunteers who are active in the Crisis Care Service. A significant amount of the service

provided involves volunteers, who come mostly in the evening and sit by the telephones. That allows the highly paid departmental officers to go out and do the at home case work, on the doorstep. The volunteers are supervised and trained on site. We have a very professional team at the Crisis Care Service, and they watch over the volunteer training significantly. There is a training program in conjunction with staff development in the department. The volunteers provide mostly a telephone answering service. I have been very impressed with their efforts. They are probably about the most professionally oriented volunteers that I have ever seen in practice in Australia. In relation to whether they get any compensation, I ask Ms Mann to comment on that.

Ms Mann: On rare occasions they are asked to go out or assist with transport, in which case reimbursement is provided for expenses involved. Otherwise, they are volunteers in all aspects.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: In relation to statistics on the Crisis Care Service, last year there were 40 000 telephone calls to Crisis Care, and 2 071 callouts, involving officers going out to individual families calling for crisis assistance. Of those callouts, 13 per cent were for marital discord situations; 11 per cent were for runaway children; 9 per cent were in relation to parent-child discord situations; 9 per cent were for children at risk or child abuse situations; and 8 per cent were due to accommodation problems. That gives an indication of the spread of work done in the crisis program. At the moment, it is centrally located, but we are working on a program to further decentralise that service.

Mr MEIER: Again, under the heading '1984-85 Specific targets/objectives (significant initiatives/improvements/achievements)' reference is made to the reallocation of six health care social worker positions from metropolitan to country areas. Where did those social workers go and in what capacity are they working in the country areas?

Ms Mann: We undertook a survey of where the health workers were and we found an inequitable distribution between city and country. That is why we undertook the reallocation. Of the six vacancies, only three positions have been filled, and there is a health worker at Port Pirie, Whyalla and Port Lincoln. There are other health workers in the South-East—Mount Gambier—and at Berri, so there are three vacancies.

They do a range of work. They do individual counselling related to health issues, but they also do community health education-type programs. For example, in some localities there are ADARD programs for families of ADARD sufferers where health workers work with the group. There are other programs where they work in a group situation for parent education training. Our health workers are involved in that area as well as STEP programs, and so on.

Mr MEIER: At Maitland, on Yorke Peninsula, a new centre was established, obviously through the Health Department, with, I think, two workers, one on Southern Yorke Peninsula and the other on Northern Yorke Peninsula. To what extent would these people be duplicating the work that the paid workers from the Health Commission would be doing; in other words, is there any clash of interest?

Ms Mann: At the moment, not that we are aware of, but we are monitoring the situation very carefully. As our community health program expands, there is the potential for the work appearing to be in parallel, but we are monitoring it very closely and looking at restructuring our health workers into areas of our highest priority so that they would focus more intensely on areas of child protection and disrupted family life, leaving the community education health programs more clearly to the community health programs. So we are reorienting our staff where we see there is this

potential for duplication, but we are very aware of the problem.

Ms LENEHAN: The member for Mount Gambier asked the Minister to comment on whether he would see the department moving towards a policy of deliberate State intervention or (and I hope I am not being too simplistic in quoting the member) a policy where there was almost total support for the children remaining the prerogative of the family. I do not see it in those black and white terms, because I do not believe it is a black and white issue: I believe there is a considerable shade of grey.

Having attended the seminar with a large number of people involved in both child abuse and the fostering of children, it became abundantly clear to someone who is not involved in the Department for Community Welfare, someone such as myself, that it is far from being a black and white issue. In fact, it was raised at this meeting that care givers and foster parents are very concerned that, when children are taken from a family where there is severe (and I am not talking about minor) physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse of those children, the department's goal and aim is to eventually reunite the children back with the family.

Some people who have been involved in fostering for many years (I am not talking about those who have just come into it) have said that they are really concerned to see that children are removed from a situation where they are subjected to extreme abuse (and they listed some of the symptoms, which I found quite horrifying, relating to children's behaviour, their perception of themselves and their reaction to other people) to a situation where the foster parents give them as much attention, love and support that they can. The children are often undergoing psychiatric support and counselling and ultimately are put back into the former situation. The foster parents believe that in many cases these children are being put back into a situation where they have been abused and will be abused again.

In supporting that theory, foster parents said that, when the parents have taken the children back for home visits, the parents have said, 'This is my child and I have the right to sexually abuse this child if I want to.' I am sure that every member of this Parliament would be absolutely horrified by such a statement, but nevertheless that thinking exists, and there are many families where members seem to feel that the children are their possessions and that they have the right to physically, emotionally and sexually abuse those children.

What sort of consideration is being given to determining, not just in the short-term but in the long-term best interests of the child, his or her ultimate permanent placement? Does the Minister see the whole discussion in a kind of black and white context involving either deliberate State intervention or the absolute sovereignty of the family right; or, as I suppose as I would be seeing it, is it regarded much more as an issue that has a shade of grey to it and we have to look very carefully at the best interests of the child?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The honourable member raises a very broad issue indeed which we have discussed before and I think that my impression of the member for Mount Gambier's earlier comment was that he acknowledged the complexity of this matter and the difficulties relating to the decisions that departmental officers, and ultimately the courts, have to take in dealing with the placement of the children who are victims of abuse. The comment that I made earlier was that there are changing community attitudes and the policies and approaches taken need to be assessed regularly in order to ensure that the department is meeting those prevailing community attitudes.

I think we need only look back to the turn of the century where probably the most prevalent form of child abuse was

in the industrial sense: children were working in harsh conditions in mines, on farms, in factories and the like. There was little industrial protection for children in those circumstances. As a society we now utterly reject that situation. We have developed laws to protect children in situations of employment. I suppose that in the future we will develop a network of laws and services surrounding children in other situations.

I think that, in relation to the protection of children within the family situation, that is now occurring to a much greater extent than ever before. We are understanding more about some of the subtleties of that form of abuse. It is not so much to set up a network of interventions but, rather, to try to support families where there are genuine difficulties, and the lashing out and behavioural problems that are expressions of those underlying problems need to be tackled.

There can be a no more vulnerable situation than a small child who cannot even look to its parents for protection. Obviously when that occurs the State needs to step in. There are no clear rules on either side of that black and white analysis. We must always look at every case on its merits and its individual circumstances to work out the most constructive response. That is why this is a vexed question; it is time consuming and multifaceted.

The issue of having a replacement parenting situation for those children then raises another spectre. Inevitably those families are caring families and provide a sharp alternative to the family life from which many of those children have come. As a result, bonding takes place. The department is looking at a number of facets of this situation. I will ask the Director-General to comment on the concepts of placing children in alternative care situations that are being looked at not just by the department but right around Australia and overseas.

Ms Vardon: Sexual assault against children is a criminal offence, and officers of the department are required to deal with it as such. Our officers are not allowed to return a child under ordinary circumstances to a place where they cannot guarantee continued protection. However, there is a problem about that in that many of our rights to have a child away from its parents are often subject to a rule of the court. Sometimes a court makes a decision that a child should be returned, and often we have not been able to establish sufficient evidence that assault is there. That is why we look forward with great enthusiasm to the impact of the child sexual assault task force.

In relation to the development of a concept of permanency planning, while not being totally obsessed by this, it would be our wish that we do not string children along for, say, two years and even up to six years, in a situation where, once they are with foster parents and go back home to abusing parents, the contrast between the two situations is so great that many of the symptoms referred to (a child pretending to be sick and not eating, having bizarre behaviour) are often caused because the child is confused about where it belongs. We are aware that children, even from abusive families, really hunger for their original family. Foster parents often do not like letting go of those children. We are urged to get children back to their families as fast as possible so that they do not get caught up in this bind.

We will be concentrating on and working to that point in the first year, or at the most two years, to get a child home before it bonds to someone else. If, after a time, the child cannot be guaranteed protection—where it is still likely it will be abused or grossly neglected—we would be looking for a much more permanent situation for the child where it can be free and not threatened, or be a ping pong ball for the next couple of years. Any work in the area of guardianship (which we will talk about later) in this State would be a great advance to us.

Ms LENEHAN: I am totally supportive of the role and function of the family that provides the ideal situation: I am sure that every member of the community aspires to this. It seems to me that the people doing the abusing, in whatever form, need just as much support and, if one likes, intervention to help them change the behaviour they have exhibited to their children. From reading I have done, very often these people may be, on the surface, perfectly normal outside the house (I am now not talking about just the sexual abuse of children but the whole area of domestic violence which has implications for children).

Page 48 of the yellow book, under '1985-86 Specific targets/objectives', indicates that crisis care will conduct a phone-in, aimed at actual or potential abusers, in response to the very low current rate of self-referral. Although this is only a beginning, it seems to me to be an exciting beginning in relation to doing something to support the people involved in this abuse. In relation to violent men, I am aware of a support group operating in Adelaide, and I believe it is the only such group operating in Australia. I recently saw a video program that was not shown in South Australia but in other States. It seems that this is the way to go to really help people who are not happy with their behaviour. When is this phone-in planned? How widely will it be publicised so that people who feel they might be able to obtain help will not feel threatened by telephoning? Obviously, it is the intention of such a proposal that people ringing in will not feel threatened, there being a degree of anonymity and a phone-in being easily accessible.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I will obtain the specific information about when the phone-in will be conducted. Obviously, there will be a program of publicity surrounding it. We will work with a number of agencies to ensure that it is an effective exercise for the department.

Ms LENEHAN: In relation to the program on young offenders (page 155 of the white book) I know that there has been quite a lot of discussion centred around the costs and efficiency of whether or not these programs for young offenders have a degree of accountability to the community in terms of costing. I have had occasion to request that more facilities be provided for young offenders. Is there provision for drug counselling—and I am not talking about the assessment of a person's needs but about ongoing counselling—for young offenders who are in protective custody (or whatever the term)?

One constituent told me that if her child was not in protective custody then, because of the severity of the drug problem that her teenager had encountered, that child would not be alive today. She requested that the counselling and support services I have just outlined be provided for her son. I would like to know about the support and counselling for young people who have a drug problem and who are in these institutions.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: This raises a number of important issues that the Government is currently addressing. One is the coordination of human service programs. Here the honourable member is referring to health, education and welfare. All of us have had circumstances in our electorates where a school has expelled a young person involved in drug abuse, or a family has come to us and said that they need help in a situation. It requires all the forces we can marshal to resolve the situation, at the same time working to support that family structure.

We also need to discern very carefully between the justice issues—where an offence has been committed and a person is moving through the criminal justice system—and the health/welfare program to provide a rehabilitation course for a young person who is abusing drugs. They raise complex issues for us in designing effective programs. Nonetheless, they are important. In terms of expenditure, if a life can be

saved one cannot put a money value on that and, unfortunately, in this area, we are talking about the life and death, in many cases, of young people.

I recently visited a family in my district that had lost two sons, 22 years and 20 years old, both of whom had died from an overdose of drugs within a fortnight. The father of that family is an invalid pensioner as a result of an accident at work and another child in the family was permanently injured in a motor vehicle accident. The tragedy and anguish of that family cannot be expressed, and I am sure that other members know of situations, albeit perhaps not so dramatic as that, where young people have died or their whole life has been ruined as a result of drug abuse.

The National Drug Summit and the drug strategy developed from that, as well as some of the law reform programs carried out, will bring about a deterrent to the trafficking of drugs in particular. The structures developed in the health sphere, as well as the effective work of the Police Department and the support given by our own department, are all aimed at dovetailing together to provide these protections. However, much more needs to be done and this problem is not diminishing rapidly in our community. It will assume much more of our resources. I ask the Acting Deputy Director-General to comment more specifically.

Ms Mann: Certain new initiatives have recently been undertaken in this area. One is the result of the Act, which aims to control the use and abuse of drug substances and which was proclaimed on 1 July. The Children's Aid Panel, which we have presently constituted with a police officer and a community welfare worker to deal with offending in the general community, has been expanded so that a health representative joins a social worker and a police officer. So, a child who is a first offender coming before the panel will now come before a community welfare worker and a health officer to discuss the issues surrounding that child's offending and drug taking. That is a new initiative that is just coming in now. Recently, with funds from the Drug Education Council, a large number of our staff (I think 35) did a three-day training session at Raywood Education Centre, where they spent much time looking at counselling techniques and learning new skills in working in the whole area of drug abuse.

So, some of our staff now have additional expertise in working in this area. Thirdly, we work closely with the Drug and Alcohol Services Council, which has an officer specialising in working with adolescents. He runs groups in our centres, does one-to-one counselling and works with our staff in training sessions. They are three initiatives that have been undertaken in this area.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: A matter that causes supporting mothers much concern arises from the fact that, although divorced husbands may acknowledge before the courts that they have a debt because they are responsible for the maintenance of their children, they subsequently fail to pay maintenance. At page 20 of the yellow book, under the heading 'Delivery mechanism', the following statement appears:

... help provided regionally and from central office for separated spouses and single parents to obtain maintenance payments due from the other spouse or parent ...

I refer also to *Government in Focus* (February 1984), volume 1 number 1, a publication sponsored by the Commonwealth Government, in which a former Attorney-General (Senator Gareth Evans) released for public comment a report of the National Maintenance Inquiry. The statement in *Government in Focus* is as follows:

The major recommendations of the inquiry were: (1) The establishment of a single national maintenance agency modelled on the South Australian system. It should be set up as a single Commonwealth authority with its own network of regional offices.

Will the Minister explain the model referred to in that document and the efficacy of the South Australian system? This is an area about which I have received many complaints from South Australian mothers who say that their husbands, having been called before the court, have missed attending, although they themselves must attend. Further, they say that the husbands receive little or no censure from the courts. The mothers return to DCW officers, who are already under pressure for many other reasons.

These mothers ask the DCW to initiate court action or to pursue or locate the husband. Generally, the plight of these ladies is that time is of the essence. Very often the husband escapes for three or four years and very little help seems to be forthcoming. This may only be in a minority of cases, but we see these ladies because we are the people who receive complaints from the public.

Is South Australia really a model for the Federal Government to adopt? If it is, how effective are we in pursuing spouses for maintenance money? Can we allay the fears of people who come to us saying that nothing appears to be able to be done?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: There are problems in this area although, as indicated by the article referred to, the South Australian system is the best in Australia. The historic reason for this is that in the DCW for many years there has been a section of persons performing *quasi* legal duties. Indeed, there have always been people there with legal training, although it is essentially lay persons who appear before the appropriate tribunals to pursue maintenance actions and advise and help women who, as is their right, seek maintenance payments.

That is not the procedure in other States, where women in those circumstances must pursue such actions themselves or seek legal advice privately or through legal aid structures. In South Australia, it has been possible to build up an efficient service with much expertise so that we have a system whereby maintenance can be received and paid out. Often, undesirable circumstances exist concerning the transfer of money, the conditions attaching to it, the right of access to children, and the like, and the department, through its actions, can defuse some of the tension in such circumstances.

Nevertheless, any pursuit of rights through the legal system takes time and has its frustrations and disappointments. That is not the most efficient way of trying to resolve these disputes, although inevitably that course of action must be taken to recover such moneys. Unfortunately, many fathers of children refuse to meet that obligation, meet it only sporadically or even evade it, and that makes the work of our officers that more difficult.

I agree with the findings reported in the publication referred to: the system here is highly developed and works well with the limitations that I have mentioned. If we could establish such a system across Australia, and especially if we could transfer this jurisdiction to the Federal Family Court so that it would be in the federal jurisdiction, we could simplify these procedures and get better results. I ask Mr Beattie to advise the Committee of further details.

Mr Beattie: I make a couple of points about the family maintenance system that we operate in South Australia. As the Minister said, it is unique for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that it is based on a computer system that allows officers of the branch to keep a very close check on whether maintenance payments are made regularly. They can then follow those up with a great deal of speed.

The system in South Australia is decentralised. We have officers based in Mount Gambier, Christies Beach, Tea Tree Gully and Port Augusta. We plan to decentralise further. We have currently a study under way to upgrade the system and to make it more effective. Unfortunately, given the

complexity of the cases these officers are handling, we will always get situations where something goes wrong. Those are the minority of cases.

We have very good rapport with the courts and with the other authorities that help us enforce the system. I point out that the general matrimonial and maintenance cases we handled in 1984-85 totalled 2 180 with 211 affiliation cases. We act as a post office, and maintenance payments in the year were close on \$6 million. We received \$5 800 000 and paid out \$5 800 000 to families.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: My next question relates to page 25, at which is mentioned the contact register. As we all know, if an adopted child wants to make contact with his or her natural parent the name is placed on a contact register and, if a natural parent wishes to make contact, he or she can place their name on the register. If in the event of an inquiry the two match, the department is happy to facilitate contact. Can the Minister advise whether such a happy coincidence has occurred often? How many contacts have been made? I would think that the number would be minimal, but I may be wrong.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: This is an interesting and important area of our work and one in which there is considerable interest in the community. South Australia was the first State to establish a contact register. Unfortunately, there is a great deal of movement of people from State to State and that makes it difficult to conduct a contact register effectively. Queensland refuses to establish a contact register. There were 265 adult adopted persons and 173 natural parents, brothers and sisters, who placed their names on the adopted persons contact register last year. That brings the total to 1 839 persons, which is an increase of 438 on the previous year. Of those, 25 adopted people made contact with their original families during the year. So, it is pleasing to see that those 25 people were reunited in that way.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I have been invited to attend a number of meetings, including one only a couple of months ago of the Jigsaw organisation in Adelaide which is pressing on the matter of open adoption. As the Minister will be aware, there is increasing pressure to open the records even in regard to past adoptions. I know that this is a difficult area. Many parents who have adopted in the past consider that they entered into a contract with a court and that they took the child in absolute confidence. They would consider it to be a breach of contract if there was any revelation of names if contact were permitted between the child and natural parents.

I believe that the Minister put out a press release sometime in June or July to the effect that he was currently investigating the possibility of opening up this whole field to make it much easier for children—adults over the age of 18—to contact natural parents. Can the Minister comment upon that? I am supportive of it. I do not oppose the idea. I also point out that the adoption registers in the United Kingdom have been opened for the adoptive child when he or she reaches the age of 18. I understand that in quite a number of other countries open adoptions are the norm. What progress are we making towards such a more open register?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: This has concerned me for some time and I have put a great deal of thought into reform of adoption law. That is what is required in order to bring adoption practice into line with prevailing community attitudes. I, too, would like to see reform in this area. The department has been reviewing what has been happening in the Eastern States, particularly in Victoria, where there has been law reform. It is wise that we should watch what is happening there before proceeding quickly into changes ourselves, and also watch what is happening in other jurisdictions. There is a very real concern in the community about

adoptions that have taken place, the sacrosanct nature of that adoption procedure and undertakings at law that were given to parties to an adoption.

For that reason, I have had discussions with senior management of the Department of Community Welfare and, through them, with the adoption panel, lawyers in private practice and others. I hope to be able to make an announcement in the near future with respect to a more formal review of adoption law in South Australia. I think we can proceed, knowing that we are developing a law which will bring us into more prevailing community attitudes, yet we want to take due account of what has happened in the past, particularly the nature of adoptions and those secrecy provisions.

Additional Departmental Adviser:

Mr J. Moriarty, Director, Office of Aboriginal Affairs.

Mr PLUNKETT: The Minister will be aware that I am interested in this section, as I was on the Committee with the Minister and was pleased that eventually it was agreed that the land be returned to the Aboriginal people. Since Parliament passed the Maralinga Tjarutja land rights legislation, what progress has been made by the Aboriginal people in establishing themselves on the land?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I appreciate the work that the honourable member and others put into that select committee, which has served the Parliament and the community very well and will continue to do so. I advise the committee that a number of people have moved back on to the land, that is, those parts of the lands that are safe from any form of contamination. They have established a permanent camp site at Oak Valley. A number of buildings have been erected there, including some shed tanks, that is, shelters where water can be collected into tanks. Water is one of the great barriers to permanent residency on the more remote areas of the Maralinga lands. The community at Yalata has continued to provide services to the people who have moved back to those traditional lands and the Maralinga health service has now been established with assistance from the Commonwealth and State Governments. Other services are provided from Yalata.

The Aboriginal Housing Board is continuing consultation on housing needs and has assisted already with some constructions on the lands. They are considering the type of structures that will be erected. The community will receive further funding this year from the Commonwealth Government. Traditionally the Commonwealth Government provides this sort of infrastructure funding to Aboriginal communities throughout Australia, that is, funding for essential services such as power, water, transport links, communications, and the like. The Education Department is also in consultation with the community in regard to children's education needs. I cannot advise honourable members of the exact numbers, but it has been up to about 80 people—men, women and children—who have moved back to the lands.

Some time ago I spoke to a medical officer who had been on the lands and spoken to a number of these people. He remarked that he had never seen these people so healthy and happy and that there was no incidence of the alcohol consumption, petrol sniffing and the like that has bedevilled the Yalata community. People, indeed, were very happy. We have conducted a number of programs, through the Department for Community Welfare, with young offenders and they have gone on to the Maralinga lands. The community there has been incredibly supportive of those young people and has helped them to sever some of the undesirable habits that they have picked up in other places.

Mr PLUNKETT: I refer to the Estimates of Payments, pages 150 and 155. In past years there have been expressions of concern over roads in the Pitjantjatjara lands which have

been reported as being dangerous and deteriorating. What action, if any, has been taken to improve those roads?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: There has been a problem with roads on the Pitjantjatjara lands. It arose at the time of the passage of the Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act during the administration of the previous Government where the Highways Department, which had previously maintained those roads, declared that it no longer had jurisdiction, as they were declared private roads. The roads deteriorated rapidly and are an important network for communication between those communities and certainly as emergency routes to reach airstrips for evacuation of persons who are ill.

A proposal was put in conjunction with work done by the Highways Department in South Australia and the Commonwealth and State departments responsible to apply for CEP funding to purchase equipment to train young Aborigines in road maintenance programs and dovetail this into an on-going maintenance program. We were successful in obtaining \$900 000 for the project. Equipment was the largest expense, amounting to over \$500 000. This has enabled us to employ and train Aboriginal workers in the care and maintenance of that equipment and in road-making methods. All honourable members can see the great value in having people who are living in those communities having the responsibility to maintain and care for those roads. If they fall behind they will know to whom to target their criticism—not an authority based 1 000 miles away.

Already there are signs that the program will be successful, although the work to be done is substantial indeed. Work commenced at Indulkana in February. The emphasis in the program is on employee training, so progress will be somewhat slower than if done by commercial operations. However, we believe that already there are signs that the training aspect will be successful. By the end of next month it is expected that the Indulkana to Mimili road will be upgraded. Having travelled on a section of that road of about 100 kilometres about 18 months ago I found it was absolutely appalling, and there have been a number of serious road accidents on the Pitjantjatjara roads. The Office of Aboriginal Affairs is playing a monitoring role in this project and we will be receiving reports from time to time on its progress.

Mr PLUNKETT: Page 155 refers to Aborigines and correctional services for young offenders. Over many years there has been a high number of Aboriginal inmates in our juvenile institutions. Can the Minister give the figures of young Aboriginal people in departmental institutions?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: This raises an important issue. I have been most concerned that we have been able to deinstitutionalise our youth institutions for European children, but have not been as successful with Aboriginal children. At times half the inmates in our youth institutions have been of Aboriginal descent. A very clear problem exists and there are a number of reasons for that. The Aboriginal community comprises 1 per cent of the population, although we know that in adult correctional institutions almost 20 per cent of the inmates are Aboriginal. The Aboriginal Coordinating Unit, a Commonwealth funded unit within the Department for Community Welfare, has been addressing this issue, as have a number of staff of the department. We have already had favourable results for those programs. I would ask the Director-General to comment briefly on some of these programs.

Ms Vardon: About 18 months ago the department appointed a gentleman, Arnold Fewquandi, to Berri. We used to have a high turnover of young Aboriginal people from Berri in our institutions. Because of Arnold's work with the young Aboriginal people—and I am not sure what he does with them, but he spends a lot of time working

with them—we have not had any young offenders from Berri for ages. As well, a number of other Aboriginal youth workers spread throughout the State have had a major impact. At Murray Bridge our Aboriginal staff as well as our non-Aboriginal staff have taken children over to Camp Jungai in Victoria and they have had amazing success with young Aboriginal people who might otherwise have come into the lock-up. We have noticed a significant drop in real terms in the past year.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I also add that there has been a continuation of institutional life for Aboriginals going from the children's institutions to the adult institutions, particularly prisons, and it is very important to break that cycle during the formative ages of young Aboriginals.

Ms Vardon: I can provide some figures in relation to the drop in custodial remandees. In 1983-84, 243 young Aboriginal people were locked up; in 1984-85, that number dropped to less than half that number, to 153. In 1983-84 there were 234 young Aboriginal offenders in SAYTC, the long term secure institution, while in 1984-85 there were 138. So, the numbers are dropping radically. We hope that we can continue the community based programs so that we can eliminate the necessity to remand Aboriginal children altogether.

Mr BAKER: Further to a point raised in relation to a question by the member for Mawson, will a Department for Community Welfare officer substitute for a police officer on a children's aid panel in cases involving drug abuse?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I understand that that is the position, under the controlled substances legislation. Perhaps the honourable member might like to take up that matter with the Minister of Health when the health budget lines are being examined.

Mr BAKER: Children's aid panels were designed as a filtering process, to deal with children who had committed offences but where it was not appropriate for them to appear before the Children's Court, not only because of the nature of the offence but the circumstances associated therewith. This curtailed the number of children appearing before the Children's Court. The figures that came from the dispositions have been quite heartening, and I presume that that will continue to be the case.

One of the objects of the children's aid panels was to obtain guarantees from a child and his or her parents as to certain modes of behaviour that were required in future. If in fact such guarantees could not be obtained a case may proceed to the Children's Court. This is necessary because a child may be at risk and the children's aid panel might not be the appropriate forum to proceed with the matter. The children's aid panels have been designed to provide almost a counselling service to get youngsters back on the straight and narrow—and we must remember that as juveniles we all committed some form of 'harakiri'.

Is the Minister now telling us that the legal backing for the juvenile aid panels has changed to the extent that there will not be a police officer on that panel, which will mean that therefore the air of responsibility that has existed in the past will change? I do not know how the rules have changed over the years because I have not been associated with these matters now for almost 10 years.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: They have not changed, as I understand it. We are talking about some new provisions under the Controlled Substances Act relating to minor drug offences and how those offenders are dealt with in the criminal justice system. With respect to juvenile aid panels, there is no alteration to the relevant legislation. There is a police officer present—and that is the modified version of the 'cuff behind the ear from the senior sergeant'. We have a very successful juvenile aid panel structure in which the

police play an important role, as do members of the community and community welfare officers.

Indeed, since 1972, 39 206 young people have appeared before community aid panels in this State. It has been a very real success story and it has brought the police and the department together in a very real way in serving the community.

Mr BAKER: Just to clarify that point: a young person on a drug offence who comes before a children's aid panel will come before it in the presence of a police officer.

Ms Mann: Yes, and a health worker, under the Minister of Health.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I shall have to check this matter for the honourable member, because the Controlled Substances Act is not legislation vested in me. In relation to offences under that Act, I will have to check whether in fact there is a substitution of a health worker for a police officer or whether the health worker is in addition to the police officer.

Mr BAKER: I will be pleased to receive that information. I would have some severe reservations if there was a substitution, given the historical relationship between the children's aid panels, the Children's Court, and that sort of thing. I do not want my next question to be misunderstood, so I will make some preliminary remarks. On the surface at least the area that I represent does not have a large number of problems involving child abuse, sexual abuse, etc., as well as difficulties resulting from marital breakdowns. There is certainly still a percentage of those, many of which of course are under the surface.

Very occasionally I hear some comments about the usefulness of community welfare officers. On more than one occasion the comment has been made to me that, while there is no doubting the commitment of the officers concerned, it has been found that the officers do not have sufficient life training, if you like, that they have never had any kids of their own or been in the same difficult situations, that they encounter. People have said to me that for difficult situations even when they have asked for someone with far more experience to help out, that request has not been met.

This is not a reflection on the officers themselves, because one cannot have life experience at 23 years of age: officers at that age cannot be expected to have the wisdom of a 40 year old. But how does the department monitor the progress of community welfare officers? What sort of practical back-up is provided for them in those situations where perhaps training at university, on the job training and practical experience, if you like, is not quite sufficient to bring them up to the mark in relation to finding the right solutions in very difficult situations?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The honourable member raises an interesting point. There is a misunderstanding in some quarters of the community that the recruitment within the department has influenced the age profile of the department, whereas in fact it is quite the opposite. The heavy recruitment made to the department occurred in the early 1970s. So we are now finding that, in relation to the age profile, the department has a quite experienced staff structure.

Indeed, that is causing problems, because large numbers are taking long service leave. We have a very experienced staff, but many young staff members will be coming into service in the department. There has been a policy (although I understand it has just recently changed) that preference was given to mature age students in social work at schools.

Mr BAKER: Somebody came to see me about that same scheme.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I think that is something that the department valued, but there are also the supervisory structures that have been developed within the department, and

I think that staff always need to be conscious of the inhibitions placed on people when a particularly young officer is dealing with sensitive subjects in which members of the community are seeking assistance. In that respect, the profession of social work is no different from that of law or medicine or any of the other caring professions. In fact, I once took one of my children to the Children's Hospital and a very young medical officer asked my wife and me whether that was our first child. I was somewhat taken aback by a young person indicating my lack of experience in parenting. I suppose that is not an uncommon feeling when a young professional person is dealing with something which is all important to the client. Nevertheless, we need to be conscious of that in the department and try to be sensitive to it in delivering services.

Perhaps if I can take on notice the matter of providing to members of the Committee an age profile of the department. If we have statistics in terms of their experience in the department, I think it would give a better understanding of the staff structure.

Ms Vardon: We were a little concerned about that issue. As the Minister said, many of our people are experienced, but we have some young people and some people whom we do not think have training which is up to scratch. We have asked for a very experienced social worker in this town to undertake a complete analysis of the tasks, knowledge and function of the job of community welfare worker, and she is about to pull apart the characteristics that are required when recruiting, so that we can then target our skills and knowledge a little tighter.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: In response to the question asked by the member for Micham about the composition of the panels under the Controlled Substances Act, those panels consist of a police officer, a community welfare worker and a health officer, and all three in fact comprise those panels.

Mr BAKER: I note that the actual payments for transport concessions in 1984-85 were \$3.65 million and the estimate for 1985-86 is \$3.78 million. I went through all the concessions that were given and most seemed to be in line with what I would have expected, given that the number of pensioners is not decreasing, and of course water and sewerage rates have a very high pensioner component; so we would therefore expect them to continue to increase. From my understanding, the concessions seem to be fairly well estimated. However, when I came to the transport concessions for the unemployed, I queried the small increase, given that unemployment has in fact reduced in the past 12 months due to the change in economic circumstances at the national and international level.

On what basis was the calculation made for 1985-86, given the announcements by the Prime Minister and the Premier suggesting that at the meeting there was a holding situation, but that the most likely situation was that the number of people in receipt of this benefit would decrease in relation to 1984-85 levels, which were quite high?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I will ask Mr Beattie to give an assessment of how these figures were arrived at. First, however, I will quote some interesting statistics: in 1984-85, 145 387 transport concession cards were issued compared to 183 235 for the previous year, which indicates a substantial reduction.

Mr Beattie: The transport concession card figure and the figure that one sees in the estimates do not correlate. Treasury estimates the cost of transport concession cards, which is related to the deficit for the State Transport Authority. We do not check the number of times someone with a transport concession card uses transport. There is no way we could do that without instituting a cumbersome administrative system: we just estimate that cost. Apart from that, I would have to refer the question to Treasury officers.

Mr BAKER: Is there an assumption that there is a hidden factor that would indicate that the cost of public transport will increase during 1985-86?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The honourable member is moving into the realm of the unknown. The answer given by Mr Beattie is the position: it is a contribution made to the State Transport Authority to cover these situations.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Page 55 of the yellow book, referring to the provisions of specialised services for Aboriginal young offenders, indicates that group activities will be conducted designed to combat petrol sniffing. The Opposition applauds any initiative along these lines. Recently the Minister of Health announced the release of, I think, about \$350 000 towards a program to combat petrol sniffing addiction among Aborigines. The Minister indicated that this money was to be handed over to Aboriginal communities, ostensibly for them to work out their own salvation. We have here the Department for Community Welfare conducting group activities designed to combat petrol sniffing. Will the department have substantial input into the control of both the DCW and Health Commission funds? Visiting outback Aboriginal areas, I am repeatedly asked by senior members of the communities if and when the Government will take control and do something about the petrol sniffing problems.

Those communities do not want this problem put back on their doorstep and for them to be given responsibility for it. They acknowledge that they were unable to take the necessary steps and regard the solution as a problem for Government. A case in point is where families took young petrol sniffers (their children) 50 or 60 miles away from the townships in the Pitjantjatjara area, only to be confronted, after two or three days, with unhappy squealing youngsters who said they wanted to get back to where the petrol bowlers were so they could once again enjoy the fumes.

Those parents were very reluctant to discipline their children; they do not like to discipline children severely and do not like to see children unhappy. What followed was capitulation. The parents returned the children to the stations (Amata, Fregon, Mimili, Pipaltatjara, and so on) and the problem is as severe as ever. Will the Minister advise the extent to which his officers and Health Commission officers will be closely supervising these programs, rather than for them to devolve on the Aboriginal people themselves.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: Funds have been allocated in the budget for the employment of a project officer to coordinate an interdepartmental approach to solving the petrol sniffing problem among Aboriginal young people in those traditional areas. That person will be attached to the Aboriginal Coordinating Unit of the Department for Community Welfare. We have developed all these projects, to which the honourable member has referred, in an approach to bring together all the authorities working in the area. There are very real difficulties in making decisions in Adelaide in relation to those communities and allocating funds in Adelaide to initiate those programs. Hopefully, we will reach some balance between proper supervision, a direction for those programs and a planned approach, but allocating the overall majority of those resources in those communities. While there is frustration among those communities, their elders and leaders, the solutions must be found in the communities themselves. We must keep asking ourselves what is the cause of these children sniffing petrol and behaving in this way, and try to seek that out.

There have been a number of ministerial meetings. A while ago Ministers from the Northern Territory (Hon. Barry Coulter) and Western Australia (Hon. Keith Wilson), the Federal Minister and I met in Perth and discussed this

matter. A number of different approaches are being taken to try to minimise petrol sniffing in those communities.

The Northern Territory Minister has developed a program at Yundemu, where petrol sniffing has been eliminated in a strong cohesive community. This development has been based on a strong educational program working with the children of the community and getting the support of parents. We are looking at that carefully. Although it may not work in other areas, we want to try every approach possible.

Many people have said that the problem of petrol sniffing is related to boredom, lack of sporting activities, camps and the like, so that approach is being developed in some of these programs. The reinforcement of the out-station movement by taking whole families together into a different environment has helped in some communities. This is a worrying matter: it is a multi-faceted problem. We have put perhaps more resources into this problem than has any other State. I hope that the Commonwealth will also contribute. Indeed, I understand that the Commonwealth Government and the Northern Territory Government have indicated that they will assist financially with some of these programs.

I have written urgently to the Commonwealth Minister asking him to respond to a detailed submission that we put to him seeking financial support, especially for the training of key personnel in remote communities. There is a clear lack of competently trained personnel in many such communities. I shall be pleased to provide more detailed information about these programs. The program referred to by the honourable member, which involved the \$360 000 mentioned by the Minister of Health, is a three year community intervention program, including Amata and Yalata. That program will have two major components, the first of which involves medical screening. Members will be aware of the medical problems caused by the excessive intake of petrol fumes and the resultant lead poisoning.

All youth at Amata and Yalata who are suspected of being petrol sniffers will be systematically screened. This will be undertaken by health workers of the Amata Health Council and the Maralinga health service with their respective communities. The groups of youth and children considered to be most at risk are those with brain damage from petrol sniffing, those who have had epileptic fits, infants of women who have sniffed and/or continue to sniff petrol, pregnant mothers who sniff petrol, and chronic or heavy sniffers. They will be referred to doctors for assessment in Adelaide to measure their degree of impairment and risk. This will assist in counselling youth and their families about the consequences of sniffing petrol and should serve to heighten community awareness to its dangers, prompt a greater community response to its control and to the preventative health component of that program.

The second part of the proposed program involves the development, within the communities, of controls on petrol sniffing and activities to divert the attention of youths away from it. The exact nature of these activities will be determined within the communities themselves as a means of gaining community involvement and commitment. These activities could include, for example, education and child care as well as health care and work school training, recreation and outstation activities, renovation of derelict buildings, community improvement projects, and community awareness campaigns.

The State Government has also improved court services to remote Aboriginal communities to help ensure that the justice system operates more meaningfully in these areas. I am pleased that the Courts Department and the Police Department have cooperated in developing improved court services and the general administration of justice in remote communities. In some communities the courts have visited rarely, indeed as infrequently as every nine months. It has

been difficult to obtain court sittings at Yalata, for example, but we now have a visiting magistrate, regular police patrols and the like visiting that community.

Some of the acting up and criminal activity associated with excessive petrol sniffing can hopefully be dealt with within that criminal justice context as well. As a result, there will be opportunities for DCW officers to develop rehabilitation programs under court supervision. Further, the Police Commissioner, through the development of his research program into areas of Aboriginal-police relations, has introduced regulations and has started to establish a police aid scheme. That will undoubtedly help in bringing about policing and establishment of controls on behaviour within the communities.

However, it is clear that the only long-term solution to the problem of petrol sniffing and other antisocial behaviour lies in helping communities themselves to exercise effective control over the activities of their members. That is the principle which underpins both the Commonwealth and State Governments' Aboriginal affairs policies of community self-management. So, obviously, there is in this area an opportunity to give that support which is required and to which the honourable member has referred, but to give it in a way that will strengthen those communities and not diminish their responsibilities.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Two or three years ago, one possibility was that of a form of revulsion therapy whereby a commonly known drug was placed in petrol containers, such as drums or tankers, and, when anyone was exposed to it for any length of time, this would induce nausea, vomiting, and subsequent revulsion. I was told at that time that people handling petrol permanently, on a long-term basis, would object because they themselves would be exposed.

Lateral thinking would simply say that, if they objected at the forwarding end of the supply, why not have a controlled quantity of the drug injected through the bung into the 44-gallon drum or the large tanker when it arrived at the outback station so that it would be purely the people who would get the petrol and hang on to it for a long time who would be adversely affected. I am informed that the effects of that drug, the nausea and vomiting induced, were extremely minor in side effects compared to the devastating debilitation resulting from the inhalation of the petrol with the lead fumes and the resultant permanent brain damage at an early age. So, if there is any form of drug known that might be used by insertion into the petrol at the station end rather than at the forwarding end of the journey, could Health Department officers examine it? I understand that it has been effective in some areas but that there is resistance to its use from petrol suppliers.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I shall ask Mr Moriarty to comment on some of the practical problems. We should always pursue that sort of line, even though there are fundamental problems with it. However, we must not overlook the root causes of petrol sniffing by people. Even if diesel petrol could be used exclusively in vehicles on the roads of this State, some other form of abuse would undoubtedly take place. Last year I was visited by a world authority on solvent abuse who had done an enormous amount of research in various Aboriginal communities throughout the world all of which had taken on some form of escapism of one sort or another. So, although a simplistic solution might be to ban a substance that was being abused or to modify it in some way, previous experience tells us that another substance is soon found to relieve whatever is the root cause. Nevertheless, we should still be looking for means to minimise the effect in this way.

Mr Moriarty: The additive referred to by the honourable member was used in the North-West. According to our

information, it induced vomiting and so on. However, the sniffers overcame the additive problem by leaving the petrol out for some time so that the substance evaporated and was no longer effective. So, the effects of the additive were quickly overcome.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Would the petrol evaporate, thus removing the problem?

Mr Moriarty: Apparently not.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Petrol is highly evaporative.

Mr Moriarty: Apparently the Senate investigation team, according to our information, will have its report on inhaling of volatile substances in by the end of this year.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: At page 36 of the yellow book, I see under 'Services to Aboriginal Persons' that there will be counselling by DCW Aboriginal community workers. Can the Minister advise what proportion of Aborigines are currently employed by the department in such roles?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I thank the honourable member for his interest in this area. It also concerns me that every opportunity is given for these workers to operate effectively within the structure of the department. I was in Point Pearce the week before last where we have an Aboriginal worker. These are Commonwealth funded positions, in the main. The community there is very appreciative of that worker's activities. I also received praise for that worker's efforts within the community at Maitland. The honourable member referred earlier to the Maitland community's attitude. One can see there the effectiveness of those workers in community relations, and in dealing with young offenders, health and other related problems where there is a conflict between the Aboriginal and European communities.

The southern and central Yorke Peninsula model that has been established, and its working relationships, recently received recognition during NADOC week. Some very effective work is being done by those people, many of whom are operating in very difficult circumstances. Sometimes I suspect that the importance of their work is not understood by some officers within the department or by members of the community at large, so they need to receive proper support. For that reason, the Director-General has chosen to take a direct responsibility within the administrative structure of the department for the Aboriginal Coordinating Unit to give special emphasis and support to the work of Aboriginal community workers in the department. I ask the Director-General to give further information in relation to this matter.

Ms Vardon: The honourable member asked about numbers of staff. In the Aboriginal Coordinating Unit, which is a central office unit, there is a coordinator, four senior Aboriginal community workers and a clerk—a total staff of six. Also, there are 28 Aboriginal community workers located in district offices and youth project centres, plus four part-time liaison officers in remote northern communities. The grand total is 38. We are very keen to get Aboriginal people into community welfare positions within the department. Recently, an Aboriginal woman was appointed as a community welfare worker. That made history and we hope to make many more such appointments within the next year or two.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Again at page 36, under 'Service to Aboriginal Persons', there is mention of locating potential Aboriginal in need of care parents and foster parents. I know that the Minister and several others have received communication fairly recently from an Adelaide based Aboriginal community group, which alleges that the department has almost been derelict in its duty because, while having this as an aim and objective, very little has been achieved. I do not know how realistic those allegations are. I am to attend a meeting with that group to discuss this problem. I know that they have asked to see the Minister. Can he

advise both on the difficulties of locating satisfactory Aboriginal parents—I mean 'satisfactory' by departmental criteria—and whether there is such a shortage of appropriate Aboriginal parents that the criteria themselves, if relaxed, may prove to be more damaging to the Aboriginal children than if they were placed with alternative white foster parents? I do not know how massive the problem is, but the allegations seem quite serious.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: We obviously have to work very closely with the Aboriginal community to ensure that the principles we have recently laid down with respect to placement of Aboriginal children are adhered to and always operate in the best interests of children, families and the community that we are serving. A case has been raised publicly—a controversy—where a child was placed with a non-Aboriginal family some time ago, bonding has taken place and the natural parents cannot be located. There are very real difficulties here.

We want to make sure that we eliminate or minimise these sorts of cases in the future by using the principles we have now laid down. I welcome the interest and concern within the Aboriginal community in this area, because the history of removal of Aboriginal children from their families is a disgrace to this nation. I have been told that one in 12 Aboriginal children in this State were removed from their families by officials. If one watches such television programs as that produced by Pilger recently on the ABC one sees how dramatically and harshly European settlement destroyed the fabric of the Aboriginal community in this country—particularly the Aboriginal family structure. It was done by missionaries, Governments and individuals, who were no doubt well motivated but often with a paternalism and missionary zeal that turned out to be not in the best interests of those for whom they were caring. We now have to try to reverse that situation. Undoubtedly, there is still great hatred and feeling in many families in the Aboriginal community about the actions taken by those who have passed before us.

That is a piece of history, hopefully, in the life of our department. I do not attach blame to officers. They operated in a contemporary milieu in doing that. Hopefully, we will learn from that period of our history. I certainly do not want to be in conflict with those who seek to change that. But, we must face reality: children are caught up in the system. We have to deal with those cases that appear before the courts, whether they relate to adoption, custody or guardianship of children: we must work out what is in the best interests of the children and those who care for them.

They are not easy decisions. We have created a position of Aboriginal foster and adoption consultant in the department. That has been created out one of the Aboriginal community welfare positions and has already facilitated a better working relationship with organisations such as the Aboriginal Child Care Agency and has enable smoother implementation of the Aboriginal child care principle to which I have just referred. A second training program for Aboriginal foster parents was conducted jointly by the Aboriginal consultant and child care agency. It resulted in 30 new families being approved. Further recruitment programs will be conducted in the near future.

We are also trying to attract more Aboriginal families to act as INC families (the Intensive Neighbourhood Care program) whereby we can take young offenders into families who will provide support and care for them at that crucial time. We have only five Aboriginal INC families and we desperately want to recruit more families in that category.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Five in the young offenders program?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: Yes, that is out of a total of 60 INC families in the State. Obviously we need to locate some

of those families in rural and remote areas. This is something which I know causes the administration of the department and me considerable anguish and we have a lot of building to do between ourselves as a department and the Aboriginal community.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I do not acknowledge, in responding to the letter, that everything is grim. Miss NADOC herself, during the NADOC week, was an adopted child in the care of European parents. Quite a number of young Aborigines whom I have taught and who have been fostered out to white parents have had admirable academic, sporting and other cultural records. There is not an open inference that the adoption of black children to white parents is essentially a bad thing. However, I share the concern that as many opportunities as possible should be given to Aboriginal children to be fostered out to Aborigines if they so desire.

Mr BAKER: I wish to follow up the question asked by my colleague. As the Minister is well aware, I asked a question in the Parliament not so long ago relating to foster care of Aboriginal children. I received a letter from an Aboriginal agency. It was asking for an undertaking from the Minister that all Aboriginal children would be fostered within the Aboriginal community. I did not know whether it was appropriate to respond to that letter, because my limited knowledge of history (and I try to gain a little extra knowledge each day) said that many of the people who are upwardly mobile in the Aboriginal community and the people who have the capabilities to foster the future wellbeing of the Aboriginal community are those who have been exposed to white influence during their childhood.

It is a difficult question, but I also realise that many of the Aboriginal families who would offer themselves for foster care would have their own difficulties in terms of economic circumstances. We have been edging around the topic. Is the Minister going to give an undertaking that, where possible, Aboriginal children who are destitute in some shape or form because of abandonment or other problems will be placed within the Aboriginal community or, where we have suitable parents of non-Aboriginal descent, will those children be placed in that situation?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The Aboriginal placement principle to which I referred gives that undertaking to the Aboriginal community. We have instructed all our staff in this area, and the training programs to which I referred involve the implementation of that principle. It will generally be only where the natural parents of the child have agreed and instructed the department that a particular family not of Aboriginal descent should care for the child or where there are rare circumstances that that would occur.

The general undertaking and direction of the department, which we expect to be followed in all cases except for those rare instances, would be the placement of children with Aboriginal families. That is where the recruitment of INC and other families is proceeding. The honourable member refers to upward mobility in the Aboriginal community. That must be a contradiction in terms, in my experience, and that is one of the very real problems: we do not have a lot of families who are in a position to participate, as we do in the European community, in such programs. We should be more aware of the aboriginality and the way in which Aboriginal families and communities approach these problems. We deal with them not in the European context as such, but within an Aboriginal context. That is where the Aboriginal workers in our department are giving us the opportunity to develop more authentic approaches to the care of children in those circumstances.

Mr BAKER: We could discuss the merits of the various approaches all day and perhaps not reach a conclusion. I can understand why the Minister has embarked on that

policy, but there are other sides to the question. Returning to the problem of glue and petrol sniffing, yesterday I heard on the radio that in one community children as young as two or three years of age were sniffing petrol. I presume that the Minister is acquainted with the impact and the diminution of the brain that takes place with petrol sniffing. What information has the Minister as to the impact? If someone spends five minutes a day sniffing glue, how long does it take for there to be some permanent loss of faculties?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: One of the problems is that we do not have that sort of information at hand. Detailed research has not been done. A recent Ministers meeting was attended by a number of senior medical officers who were looking at research projects and trying to assess some of the health aspects of petrol sniffing so that we could work out more effective responses to it at particular stages of its progression. There is a paucity of evidence of that nature.

Mr BAKER: I guess there is a lack of objectivity in talking about this problem, but from various comments in the media and other strains of information available it would appear that we are in danger of creating (and in fact have created) a significant proportion of people who, although not vegetables, are getting to the stage of being unable to lead a full adult life. The information I have gleaned from various sources suggests that one Aboriginal child in five within the space of the next five years will be incapable of taking their place as normal human beings—and I make that comment as a broad generalisation.

There have been some enormous problems, and I appreciate that money is now being distributed. However, if the problem is as serious as has been suggested to me, it should have been looked at yesterday rather than today. Is there any information available to suggest where we are heading in this area to help the formulation of priorities for funding and programs? Perhaps it is being a little alarmist to suggest that the problem is exceptionally large, but I would like the Minister to comment on this matter.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I appreciate the priority that the honourable member gives this problem, but unfortunately that is not the case generally in the community: there is a general disinterest in the health and welfare of the Aboriginal community. Perhaps if there was a deeper and more genuine interest in the welfare of members of the Aboriginal community, particularly those in remote communities, the problems that we have now could have been alleviated. Community attitude is one of the greatest barriers to overcoming this very real problem. In many communities people are torn between two societies, two cultures, one of which is incredibly disadvantaged compared to the other and feels that acutely.

The Government is acting as responsibly and with as much haste as possible in this area. We now have five separate funding sources from the State and Commonwealth spheres, each with its own guidelines and trying to tackle this problem. I referred earlier to the problems with respect to the appointment of a coordinator at the State level to bring the various levels together to help the communities involved to take advantage of some of this activity that has been generated at Government level in recent times.

More than 10 organisations, both Government and non-government agencies, are actively or occasionally advising communities in this area. Lack of appropriate coordination causes problems in that it dissipates effort, confuses communities, and is highly inefficient for Government. To overcome such problems and to stimulate community initiatives, the State Government has appointed a coordinator, and the has approved the establishment of an intergovernmental committee, comprising Commonwealth Government, State Government and community organisation representatives to coordinate and simplify funding, organise consistent sup-

port and advice for Aboriginal communities in their endeavours to control and eliminate petrol sniffing and to disseminate information on successful approaches.

In the South Australian Riverland I think petrol sniffing has been eliminated in the Aboriginal community. We want to know how that was achieved and how other communities can be helped in that way. Further, the intergovernmental committee will advise both Commonwealth and State Ministers on the appropriate allocation of resources. I have explained to the Committee earlier how those resources are being allocated at present. However, there is a very real problem. I doubt the figure of one in five. It is my experience that young people move into and out of petrol sniffing. It does not seem to have the addictive element that other drugs have, although there is certainly some addictiveness associated with it. But there can be some intervening forces that just take that practice out of a person's life. We must look at the reasons why people are flocking to such an escape mechanism, particularly children, and try to eliminate the causes of it.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: A specific target/objective of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs for 1985-86 (page 60 of the yellow book) is to:

Review the Aboriginal Lands Trust legislation and processes, in consultation with Aboriginal groups.

Can the Minister say at this stage what alterations, if any, he proposes, to the Aboriginal Lands Trust legislation?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: A review of the Aboriginal Lands Trust Act was undertaken, I think in 1979. The review was not acted on, and when I became Minister of Aboriginal Affairs I told the Aboriginal Lands Trust and indeed a number of Aboriginal groups, that the legislation would be reviewed in light of an earlier report provided, as well as the land rights legislation that had been passed through the Parliament granting the Pitjantjatjara peoples their traditional lands. I said that once the Maralinga lands rights legislation had passed the Parliament the Government would look at some of the other problems that the trust had raised with me, one of which related to the effectiveness of the trust's own legislation.

Honourable members would know that the Aboriginal Lands Trust Act was designed in the early 1970s to perform the functions of an Aboriginal Development Commission, to provide that type of approach to the collective ownership of Aboriginal lands, formerly held by either Government or church authorities, as well as having some economic capacity arising from the ownership of that land to advance Aboriginal communities. That has not eventuated. I say that not in an unkind sense, as I think that the Aboriginal Lands Trust has not had a clear direction to follow within the ambit of the Act. I think that it is now appropriate to review that legislation. As two major pieces of legislation have passed the Parliament since the Johnston review in 1979, I think that the Aboriginal Lands Trust legislation should be thoroughly reviewed, and that we should be aiming for a new Aboriginal Lands Trust Act by perhaps next year or shortly after that. Therefore, I hope that we can undertake that review in the near future.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: On page 30 of the yellow book under the commentary on major resource variations we note that the Community Employment Project for Pitjantjatjaraku roadworks, costing \$235 000, does not compare with the figure of \$900 000 that the Minister gave to us a short while ago. There is a tremendous difference in those two figures. The last time I was in the region I noticed that the roads were in very bad shape, but that was after a wet season. Has another very substantial Commonwealth grant been made, or is it a long-term quote?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The figure that I quoted was for the overall project. I think that the figure referred to is the

allocation in the current financial year. Substantial expenditure occurred in the last financial year on equipment, for example. The figure of \$235 000 does equate with a figure that I gave the honourable member earlier. If there is some confusion I shall seek clarification.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: In 1978, when the roads were in a very bad state of repair following very heavy flooding. There was heavy capital equipment in the area. I think at least two graders were there, both in a sorry state of repair—I think they were bogged on rough stretches of road. The question then arose as to whether equipment could be provided in the longer-term so that Aborigines could be trained. I am pleased that this project has commenced because it resolves a quite critical problem in relation to road maintenance in areas hundreds of miles from Adelaide. But this also begs the question, now that the equipment is there and Aborigines are being trained to operate it, of whether there are training programs and long-term funding available to keep the equipment in a good state of repair. That equipment will see some extremely hard work, as it must be used in difficult terrain. Repair and maintenance of the equipment is of vital importance if the roads are to be kept free and passable.

Mr Moriarty: The object of the exercise is to train the Aboriginal people in conjunction with TAFE, and of course the Highways Department is also involved in the supply of expertise in this area. As the Minister mentioned, there is a proposal whereby we hope to obtain ongoing funding to continue with the employment of people in these areas in order to maintain those roads which, as the honourable member stated, are in a deplorable state most of the time.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I think that exhausts the questions which I had relating to the Aboriginal area and, if Mr Moriarty would like to leave, we thank him very much for his attendance.

Returning to page 8 of the yellow book, under the heading 'Corporate/Management Objectives' the seventh point involves the promotion of the dignity of the individual 'by encouraging or assisting any section of the community to develop its own welfare services': can the Minister say if in fact any sections of the community have asked for special assistance in order to engage in self-help programs?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: Yes, groups are continually coming to the department and seeking assistance in the development of one program or another. I think that this is one of the most encouraging aspects of our work—that people in the community are not looking to another person, authority or government to resolve a problem or a need: they want to get on and do something about it themselves in conjunction with others. They then come to us looking for support, advice or assistance in one form or another.

Whilst that raises some difficulties in relation to an orderly planning process, it is something that we very much seek to encourage in our activities. It is one of the reasons I have worked quite strenuously to cement relations between the Government and non-government welfare sectors, with the development and proper involvement of volunteers in the delivery of welfare services throughout the community. I think that this partnership is essential. There is an enormous pool of very talented and generous people in the community who are often waiting to assist in some way or another. I realise that the Government cannot develop these services alone, so it is important that that goal exists in our corporate management objectives as a department.

The proof of our commitment in this area is indicated by the very substantial increases that we have allocated for purposes such as the Community Welfare Grants Committee's recommendations, and in this budget there is an additional \$680 000 in that line, which is the largest increase

ever in that line. That has been very welcome news to this group of people.

The other interesting aspect is the number of community and neighbourhood houses and self-help programs that have been established that embody all sorts of services relating to local communities, whether they be for adult unemployed, the provision of meals, or legal or counselling services in disputes with neighbours, and the like. There is a lot of energy in the community in this sector and we need to support that wherever we can.

Mr BAKER: I have not had a look at the departmental statistics in recent years, but the department always had some guide as to the recidivism of young offenders. It was mainly confined, of course, to offenders whilst they were still juveniles. Has the department been able to upgrade its information to enable it to establish the percentage of juvenile offenders who move into the adult system? Is the department able to provide any information, for example, on juvenile aid panels and the extent to which their effectiveness may have changed over the past two or three years?

Ms Mann: In relation to the juvenile children's aid panels, according to the latest analysis that we have undertaken (and the Senior Judge of the Children's Court recently quoted these figures), there is still an 87 per cent non-return rate, and that is during their juvenile years. As you mentioned, there is a problem in research, and we are looking forward to the justice information system correcting that problem. At the moment, our research capacities are reasonably good, but the Department of Correctional Services has a lot of difficulty in tracing for us the juveniles who have been in our care and proceeded on. The best figures that we have (and they were obtained some years ago) are that only 3 per cent of those juveniles who come before us actually move on to the adult system. That is the figure that was quoted in a paper, once again, by the Senior Judge of the Children's Court. I am not sure that they are accurate as of 1985, but I have no reason to believe that there would be a great variation. However, with the justice information system, our records, together with those of police and correctional services, will enable this kind of research to be adequately tapped, and we will have a much better information system to enable us to answer those questions.

Mr BAKER: Yesterday, when discussing the Attorney-General's lines, we asked about the future of the justice information system. The Attorney-General said that there had been some extreme reservations about the courts entering into the spirit of this by putting their records on to an all-embracing system which would be executive controlled. In relation to the courts, there is some question about the total jurisdiction right through down into the Children's Court, for example. What is the department's policy on the information which is collected in the aid panels and in the courts and the availability of that information to other parts of the system?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I think that non-availability of the full thrust of the courts' operations in the justice information system will have only a minimal effect on the benefits that will flow to departments such as ours. However, it is believed that, in time, the difficulties that have arisen in bringing together the whole system can be overcome, so the JIS is being designed so that, at some future time, the courts can be brought into that system. I am hopeful that those problems can be overcome by designing safeguards that will provide for the separation of powers argument advanced by the courts' administration.

The benefits that will flow to us as a department as a result of this system will be very substantial. The linking of our department with correctional services and the police will enable us to obtain that sort of information much more speedily and accurately, and that incredible amount of infor-

mation can help us in assessing and planning our work. Mr Beattie, who has been involved in many of these negotiations, can explain some of the benefits that will flow to the department. In certain record sections in our department employees manually go through card index systems and the like to obtain information about offending. That is no longer appropriate to the needs of the community that are being addressed by the department.

Mr Beattie: The development of the JIS has got to the stage where we have gone to tender for the software and hardware. The courts' requirements have been allowed in those tenders, even though there may be some question about the courts' involvement immediately. Planning is that the courts will not be involved for two years, because we had to stage the introduction of the system. The main benefits to the department from JIS will be twofold. First, there will be an electronic communications system between our offices in the Far North and the South-East. We do not have this system now, and it will mean that all offices will have all known information and access to it immediately. Secondly, it will improve management information and provide management with up-to-date information on all activities in the department. The system has been designed to provide that.

Mr BAKER: The system cannot work to its full potential, because there will be no unique identifier in the system that can trace matters through. It will not work in a number of instances, because of name changes and hiccups in programming, poor input and various other things (I went through this 10 years ago). For the system to work, it must be possible to run data against other data frames. I appreciate that management benefits will be quite substantial, however. In fact, the report suggests that there will be some \$18 million savings in relation to staff and ancillary costs associated with this development, and for that reason it commends itself.

However, one has to be able to run these files against other files, and if the courts do not come to the party it will provide a fairly solid brick wall. I presume that the Children's Court still comes under the Chief Justice and will be encompassed in the courts section, which is at risk at this stage. Given that a children's aid panel is not a court, what is the department's policy on information from the panel as far as it fits into the system?

Mr Beattie: The children's aid panel is part of the JIS. To elaborate, there are two aspects of the JIS that will apply to every department. While the JIS will provide computer hardware for each agency, it will also act as a host so that a lot of the data that will be on the JIS will be agency specific; so there will be capacity to process welfare information matters that will relate to no-one else. Secondly, the data model that has been designed is quite unique in South Australia and probably in Australia. It is not based on the traditional way of going about data modelling and data design, where each agency has its own file: there will be an integrated data base that can be expanded. The operation of that data base depends very much on certain information being put in immediately. That can be done without affecting the operation of the whole system, and certainly without affecting the operation of the children's aid panel or anything else that has an interface later with the courts. It is a unique system. I can provide the honourable member with further information if he requires it.

Mr BAKER: The question was not about that: it related to the department's policy on the children's aid panel data going into the system which would allow, in an integrated form, a cross-flow of data between police and correctional services, given that the courts are a separate entity. What is happening with the children's aid panel?

Ms Mann: My understanding is that individual data will have a security bar on it, but aggregate data will be available. Our information on individual children will not be freely available.

Mr BAKER: I understand that. For you to get aggregate data of a cross-sectional nature, you have to run the files held in an integrated data base against other files existing in the system. Is it the policy of the department that that should happen?

Ms Mann: Yes.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Page 11 of the yellow book, in relation to 'Funding to other organisations', shows an increase in the proposed recurrent expenditure for 1984-85 of \$4.1 million to a proposed \$7.1 for 1985-86. The proposed recurrent receipts for 1984-85 were \$443 000 and the proposed receipts for 1985-86 are over \$3 million. That indicates a \$3 million difference between the two years both on expenditure and receipts. Will the Minister explain the substantial increase in funds and name the organisations to which those funds will be disbursed?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: The single largest factor in that increase is the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP). The asterisk refers to the partial Commonwealth funding received in those lines.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Page 15 of the yellow book under 'Broad objectives' states:

To reduce the financial pressures on pensioners and others able to demonstrate financial hardship . . .

Attached to that are the qualifications. How many applicants have been removed from the department's list of eligible pensioners as a result of the federal assets legislation? I know from personal experience that a number of people who formerly held health benefit cards are now no longer eligible for them. To what extent has this affected the department?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I will ask Mr Beattie to interpret those figures, but the simple answer is that it is difficult for us to ascertain that at this time because many of the concessions relate to annual or longer term expenditure and we will need a full financial year to assess how many persons have dropped out of the system. The number of persons who are no longer eligible for our concessions is small.

Mr Beattie: We rely heavily on the Department of Social Security to provide data. The only information that we have indicates that the growth in the numbers of pensioners who are eligible for social security pensions has decreased significantly and that the number of pensioners with health benefit cards has decreased. For example, on 29 June 1984, 172 000 PHB cards were issued, which was a 3.5 per cent increase on the previous year, whereas on 29 June 1985, 173 000 were issued, which was only a 0.42 per cent increase on the previous year. The same sort of growth figure applies to the number of pensioners. In fact, the number of pensioners eligible for fringe benefits increased by 3.5 per cent since last financial year, which gives us some feeling as to the impact of the assets test. We are relying on the Department of Social Security to provide further information over the next month or so.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: In view of the projected steady and considerable increase in the number of aged in South Australia year by year, there would be an indication that the impact is being felt with the slight increase in the number of PHB cards. Can the Minister give an extension of the figures that appear on page 15 of the yellow book, in the following statement:

The average length of unemployment increased from 53.8 weeks in February 1984 to 57 weeks in February 1985.

How do those figures compare with the current unemployment position?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I do not have the figures that would enable me to answer that question, but I think we can assume that there is in the South Australian economy an employment growth factor that has directly diminished some of the demands that are met by my department. Further, programs such as the CEP program have taken people out of the long-term unemployed category because the criterion for CEP employment is nine months unemployment, and such schemes have assisted those persons and their families considerably. However, I have not the precise figures with me, but the figures referred to by the honourable member indicate that there is a group that is difficult to employ. Such people show up in the statistics as people who have been unemployed for two years or longer and that is a most concerning statistic.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I asked that question because the figures for July-August, according to the ABS statistics that were released only three weeks ago, show an extension from 8.2 per cent to 8.7 per cent unemployment, and I wondered how the unemployment situation affected the more employable rather than this substantial pool of long-term unemployed total.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: Officers of my department are monitoring situations such as this. As a department, we have produced a series of papers on the problems being faced by the unemployed in our community. So, this matter is of special interest to our department and has formed the basis of our representations to the Federal Government regarding the restructuring of the way in which unemployment benefits are paid in the community.

I believe that there is an urgent need for a rethink of the way in which unemployment benefits are paid to the long-term unemployed (that is, those who may be classified by some as unemployable). There needs to be an assessment of the payment of benefits to that group of people and also consideration of a different structure of benefit which would be more helpful in their situation and more in tune with their needs. There also needs to be a rethink of the way in which unemployment benefits are paid to young people, who want to participate more fully in the economic life of the community and in the workforce and who, wanting to engage in some constructive form of activity in the community, find it demeaning to receive a dole cheque in the way that they do.

The work done by my department indicates that that is so and I hope that we, as a State, can influence the Commonwealth Government to radically rethink the form of unemployment benefit payable to young people. We all want young people to have more opportunities and to have a much more meaningful youth in their life span, which is something that has largely been denied to many young people in our community. The unemployment benefit was designed to tide people over during brief periods of unemployment. Indeed, it was meant to be a disincentive to stay out of work in periods of full employment. As recently as 1970, only 13 000 Australians were receiving unemployment benefits and the average period of unemployment was less than six weeks. Unemployment was costing the Federal Government about \$8 million, whereas today unemployment benefits cost the Federal Government \$2.8 billion. The average period of unemployment is now over a year and about 600 000 Australians (perhaps somewhat fewer on recent figures) are receiving that benefit.

Therefore, for many Australians the unemployment benefit has become the sole source of their income: it is, in fact, an income maintenance payment which is pitched at a much lower level than pensions and in the main it prevents recipients from receiving fringe benefits and many other State concessions. It is time for a rethink by the Federal Government of the whole structure of the payment

of unemployment benefits and, indeed, of the role of the CES in times of sustained high unemployment.

Mr BAKER: Regarding the HACC scheme, I made representations to the Minister on behalf of a certain organisation in my district in respect of the provision of a family aid scheme. I have noted that about \$3 million of HACC scheme money is being paid to the State Health Department by the Commonwealth Government. What relationship will the Minister of Community Welfare share with the Minister of Health, given that we are talking about the division of responsibility in this area? Both areas have a legitimate right to regard the HACC scheme and the principles behind that scheme as theirs. What process has been set up whereby officers of both departments can ensure that the moneys made available under this scheme go to the appropriate areas, given that most of the identification process will be through the Department for Community Welfare?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: Regarding the honourable member's representations on behalf of the organisation in his district, I was either naive or foolish enough to try to help that organisation and the honourable member out of their predicament, because I had considerable sympathy with them. However, the Federal Government of its own volition decided to reduce the temporary funding that it had given that organisation and I probably learned the lesson that the person who sticks up for an organisation is the first to get his head kicked, and I had a sore head for some time.

I was pleased that at least I could try to clarify that situation and bring some pressure to bear with respect to future Commonwealth funding. I hope that in the HACC program we can pick up some of the programs in the community that have had funding. Nevertheless, many programs may have to take a change in direction in services that they deliver—different emphases. This is the first stage of a much broader program and direction in HACC by State and Commonwealth Governments, local government and the non-government sector.

Our department has been very heavily involved. The Minister of Health and I have met quite often on development of this program. One of the senior officers of our department is being seconded as administrator of the HACC program. There is that close cooperation, but the Director-General has been involved in discussions at the policy level on this matter now for some time. I ask her to comment further on this very worthwhile development of those services in the community.

Ms Vardon: I am on the State negotiating team for HACC. It is of great concern to us that a community based organisation should get a lot of the HACC funding and that it should not be absorbed into the hospital infrastructure in this State. I think that there has been agreement with health. Certainly, the Department of Community Services in Canberra has supported our line that HACC funding should go into community based organisations as much as possible so that we can promote self help and also the whole concept of people being kept at home rather than in high cost institutions.

Our people will be involved in a program with the health people all the way. I am on the policy committee with Professor Andrews and Dr Graycar. At the regional level there will be joint meetings with non-government, health and welfare people. If it works, it will be a very cooperative program, but the emphasis would be towards a type of community group rather than a hospital. That is what we are fighting for, anyway.

Mr BAKER: The reason the Minister said he lost his head in the process was that bureaucratic delays resulted when the Commonwealth removed itself nicely from the arena and there was a very poor response at the time. That is what the files show. Whilst we were not critical of the Minister we were critical of certain things that happened at

about that time. I value the fact that the Minister took time out to speak to the group concerned, but I will not obviate him from the responsibility of some of the delays that preceded that.

Ms Vardon: I do not think that Wanslea or family support groups should be covered under HACC. It is our wish that we develop a low key home support service, *a la* Wanslea, because we know how important it is. Our officers are reaching out, seeking the Wanslea type of support.

Mr BAKER: I cannot pick up the line, but I have noted that there was underexpenditure of Commonwealth moneys provided to the State Government. During 1984-85 were all the Commonwealth moneys expended? I believe that one line was not, but what happened to the money?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I think that the honourable member may be referring to senior citizens funding, which is a Commonwealth matter under Commonwealth legislation. It may be related. Our department is the conduit for that money. It is whether community groups—and local government is usually involved—have actually expended the money. Some of that money is in the pipeline. I assure the honourable member that if there is money available to be spent from the Commonwealth for a purpose in my area, it is spent. I suspect that that would be the reason why the building program has not developed to the stage where the money allocated has been spent. Those moneys are held in reserve.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: On referring to page 18 of the yellow book I noted that the Police Department and the Women's Information Switchboard issue local orders in emergencies. On studying that and other pages of the yellow book I wondered whether numbers such as those for the Women's Information Switchboard and Crisis Care might be given the 008 prefix for remote and isolated areas. This matter was raised during discussions in the South-East when officers of the department held a conference on the problems of women. I am not sure whether the 008 question was raised, but I certainly submitted it through another person who went along. I did not receive any response, so it may be that the matter was missed.

Ms Vardon: It is one of the issues that we have been trying to fix up. The Minister was most keen that Crisis Care services should extend all over the State, and certainly be decentralised from the metropolitan area. There are high costs associated with the first stage of decentralisation, but the one thing we believe we can introduce soon is the 008 number. Only this week we had a quote for changing the telephone system at the Crisis Care office so we could introduce the 008 number as soon as possible.

We thought that we could do it almost automatically, but the switchboard would not take it, so we have to replace the whole of the switchboard. However, we will give it priority and hope to get it going as soon as we can. I cannot talk for the Women's Information Switchboard because that comes under the Premier's Department, but certainly Crisis Care would be given priority.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: In view of problems of decentralisation across the huge outback areas, the installation of 008 services would mean that possible emergencies could be relayed back to local police stations which are already there. It may prove much cheaper and probably just as efficient an option. Mount Gambier is rather well served, so I am not asking from a local point of view.

Ms Vardon: We are looking at a Canadian system for Crisis Care, particularly with children, which allows us to patch the phone back to the country location to our contact point. That person does not have to ring. For instance, if they ring the 008 number from Mount Gambier that can actually be switched back to the helping person on duty that night in Mount Gambier without the person having to be referred.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: A redirected call.

Ms Vardon: Yes. Crisis Care would keep a list of a number of people. The system allows one to check who is home. If someone is on the phone while someone else is talking they can be patched through. It works well in British Columbia.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: The system would work if there were duty staff rostered.

Ms Vardon: Yes, volunteers, non-government sector, the local priest or minister, church people or whoever. It allows one to patch back into the whole network.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I refer to page 20 of the yellow book. I note that there is some reference in today's edition of the *News* to a similar potential problem. The bottom paragraph on the left-hand side of page 20 relates to objectives, and states:

To increase public understanding of domestic violence, and awareness of the full range of services of the Unit, Crisis Care Supervisors appeared on *Open File*, *State Affair* and *Nationwide*, participated on talk-back radio, and provided articles published in the press.

Talking at personal levels with people who are just as concerned as the Minister and his staff would be on the whole problem of domestic violence, one question emerges in some people's minds. I believe it was Dr Partington, of Flinders Medical Centre (and apparently he is not the only one, although he is probably one of the more extreme proponents of the idea) who has been struck by the possibility that, if we press this matter too strongly, we may get into almost a Hitlerian situation when we get the Hitler *Jugend*, who were turned against parents and were encouraged to report them. That is the extreme.

What steps are being taken within the Education Department and the Department for Community Welfare to ensure that the fears of people such as Dr Partington and parents are not fulfilled and that children will not develop a paranoia about the possibility of parental attack? It may seem a ridiculous point, but a number of people in the community fear that officers with more than the requisite amount of zeal may go over the bounds of delicacy and turn children against parents and the very people who may help them.

There is an increasing trend in more recent publications to make children aware that it is not necessarily the stranger who will molest them but, in nine cases out of 10, it is a close friend of the family or possibly a relative. With that swing in attitude and the realisation that it is somebody close, children are increasingly in danger of becoming paranoid. Is the department aware of that possibility and will officers treat the matter with extreme delicacy so that the fears of the Partington supporters are not able to expand?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I would share that concern. The honourable member rightly refers to Partington's views as extreme in this area. Nevertheless, we do need to maintain a balance and certainly the perceptions that children have of violence are very much in the forefront of our thinking in developing programs. This section of the yellow book refers to some of the ways in which the department is trying to get across that message.

The Police Department has done a good deal of work in this area in alerting children to 'stranger danger'. That program has been very effective in schools and the like, but we may need to expand that type of program in conjunction with all the relevant authorities in the educative process of the dangers within the family circle also. There is nothing more vulnerable than a child who cannot turn to its family for that support. The matter of domestic violence is dominated to some extent by violence between adults in the family circle, adding another dimension to the fear of the children. The Director-General was recently appointed Chairperson of the Domestic Violence Council in this State. I ask her to comment further on the work we are doing in that area.

Ms Vardon: This part does relate to the adult violence, and about 97 per cent of all violence between adults is between husband and wife, with the husband usually being the perpetrator. We are concentrating on publicity which says to a woman that she does not have to continue to be criminally assaulted, that there are other choices and options in her life, and that she can learn not to take that: she can escape until such time as the perpetrator has reformed or redeemed himself in some way. However, we find that women get very powerless and do not have the capacity, because they have been beaten down so much, to get out and cope with living in poverty or saying aloud—as it is not socially acceptable yet—that her husband bashes her up regularly. That is the kind of education we are forcing on women who are powerless to escape.

What is a criminal assault? We do not want to go overboard, but we are focusing on where crime has occurred. We have a responsibility to dig that up wherever we can. We do not want children to be dobbies either, but people should be free from that kind of assault. There must be a reasonable balance. The chances of going to the extreme point, as raised, are a long way off because we are so far back down the other end that we have not even moved yet.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Will the Minister also comment on the extent of the problem in so far as there is still fear on the part of women and children to report any sort of violence or dispute in the house, not simply because of fear of being further ill treated but because of the fear of having no home, being impoverished, and having no source of income. That tends to keep groups together when more satisfactory alternatives might be reporting and some form of separation. Is that a major issue or one of a whole range of problems?

Ms Vardon: A lot of people do not want to leave home—they want to sort out the problem. Very generally, there are many kinds of violence. The simplest one is recent domestic violence where usually something has happened to that person to cause him only to be violent now. It may be instant unemployment or some other thing with which he cannot cope. Under those circumstances women often do not want to leave. They say that there is a problem in the marriage and that they want to sort it out. Often it is a case of finding help. By this stage there is a lot of social cover-up associated with that and the help may be directed at solving financial or budgetary problems. With other people chronic abuse has occurred for a long time.

Over 5 000 women a year pass through women's shelters, a majority of them being victims of domestic violence. Women's shelters are a major strategy in this State, with community welfare workers helping people escape from what is usually chronic year after year abuse. Some of these women go home, but they go home a little bit stronger, more able to cope and escape when the pattern starts again and they cannot stop it.

We work very closely with the shelters. In fact, Crisis Care finds that about a quarter of all its calls relate to domestic violence. It had 500 call-outs last year on domestic violence alone. They work closely with the police, and most use of the shelters is in the middle of the night, as an escape route. They have to cope with poverty, but the shelter women help them tremendously to find their way around the court system, the income system and the housing system. This State has a good emergency housing system. There is tremendous co-operation between the police and welfare agencies and if a person can make the first step they can be moved on to someone who is helpful. Referral systems are not bad here—they could be better—but we are working with anyone who wants to better them.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I refer to page 25 of the yellow book, and to the question of adoptions. There is still a high incidence of legal abortion in South Australia—I think the figure is now at over 4 000. Another interesting statistic is

that an increasing number of unmarried young women are keeping their children, partly because of the increased opportunity it gives them to obtain accommodation through the Housing Trust, and partly because of the counselling which is encouraging women to retain their children rather than put them out for adoption. For whatever the reasons, there has been an absolute dearth of young Australian children up for adoption. I think the Minister gave me a figure a few months ago that somewhere between 50 and 80 children would be available for adoption next year, although hundreds of people are looking for children to adopt. To what extent does the Minister intend to revise the staffing of the department to provide increased assistance to people seeking to adopt overseas children? I know that there are the questions of vetting overseas children and interstate negotiations, but one of the questions that I have raised with the Minister over the past few months concerned the shortage of staff to deal with the number of adoptions of overseas children.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: This matter always causes me great concern. Many people would like to adopt a child, but very few children are available for adoption. The circumstances surrounding adoption do touch me, and the department is the place in the community where people come for assistance. The work of people in the adoption area has become more complex and often requires a much greater degree of counselling than was the case previously. During 1984-85, 240 couples applied to have their names placed on the Prospective Adoptors Register. They are people who actually applied formally, not those who made general inquiries, and there are many more in that category. There are very strict eligibility criteria in relation to being eligible for adopting a child.

One hundred and twenty five couples applied for an Australian-born child, and 116 couples applied for an overseas child; 57 Australian-born children and 60 children from overseas countries were placed for adoption (and so one can see how few children are actually available for adoption); 290 applications to adopt a child were received from parents/spouses, foster parents and relatives; 265 adult adopted persons and 173 natural parents, brothers and sisters placed their names on the Adopted Persons Contact Register, bringing the total to 1839.

There was a further drop in the number of healthy babies relinquished for adoption, from 69 last year to 57 this year. A result of this is that the waiting time for prospective adopters has increased to around 4½ years. This has meant that couples who sought to adopt a new born baby for the second time have been informed that placement under the present criteria (no more than four years age difference between children), unfortunately is no longer possible.

The number of couples who first sought to adopt an Australian born child but subsequently transferred their application to be considered for an overseas born child has increased. Most applicants wishing to adopt a child from overseas have nominated the department as the agency to arrange the adoption. Subsequently, the department arranged the adoption of 43 children from overseas, the AAC Adoption Agency (previously ASIAC) 14 children and the ICA Adoption Agency 3.

Although the number of new born handicapped children relinquished for adoption was small the request for assistance in finding families for older handicapped children increased. The increased interest in inter-country adoption and the work associated with the Adopted Persons Contact Register did place great pressure on the staff in the branch who have found it impossible to respond as quickly as they were previously able to do.

I might also point out that the department is currently reviewing the staffing of the Adoptions Branch, and as a

result of an inquiry that we had into the staffing resources allocated to that area of the department, we are hoping to improve that service in the coming year.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: The Minister referred to the number of handicapped children adopted. The figures that I have are that in 1981-82, 10 were adopted; in 1982-83, 24; and in 1983-84, 12. What was the figure for 1984-85?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: Five handicapped children were adopted. I have the statistics here relating to the various disabilities of those children, and I can provide that information to the honourable member if he wants it.

Ms Vardon: That is the group for which we are building a special needs placement unit so that we can do more sophisticated work and increase the numbers. We see the adoption of those children as being of paramount importance.

Mr BAKER: More inquiries have been made, although the numbers have been falling steadily.

Ms Vardon: That is a different problem. This is in relation to a special group of children, some of whom have been relinquished for adoption, but who, because of a disability, have been deferred, and it is a reflection on the number of resources that we have in this area. These are the children it takes about a year to place, because we have to find very special parents. Many of these children are profoundly disabled. Because of insufficient staff in this administration area there has been a decline. But across the board, as part of the explanation of the matter just raised, many adoptions are getting more and more difficult now; whereas before they used to be fairly routine, they are now fairly complex, with parents wanting to have more say about where a child goes, and often children are relinquished at a later stage when they are no longer just babies. There has been a significant change in the nature of the children available for adoption. It takes more time for each one.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: There is a question in relation to the capital line.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no capital line as such, but the member is quite at liberty to ask the question.

Mr BAKER: I have looked through all the capital items, and I note in the report of 21 March 1985 that the estimated cost of the Department for Community Welfare's Woodville office is \$1.395 million and that it was expected to increase to \$1.5 million over the period of its construction. I note that when the Estimates of Payments was produced, the estimated cost had escalated to \$1.7 million. Can the department explain that increase?

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: I do not have any specific information in relation to the increase. The project has been before the Public Works Standing Committee. I undertake to refer the honourable member's question to my colleague, the Minister of Housing and Construction, who I presume can provide those precise costs in relation to the escalation.

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

The CHAIRMAN: I place on record my appreciation of the cooperation that the Committee has had, particularly from the Opposition, and on behalf of the Committee I thank the departmental advisers who made themselves available to reply to questions.

ADJOURNMENT

At 5.55 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Tuesday 1 October at 11 a.m.