

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 8 October 1986

## ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A

**Chairman:**

Mr D.M. Ferguson

**Members:**

The Hon. H. Allison  
 The Hon. Jennifer Cashmore  
 Mr M.R. De Laine  
 Mr R.J. Gregory  
 Mr E.J. Meier  
 Mr D.J. Robertson

*The Committee met at 11 a.m.*

Education, \$677 457 000

**Witness:**

The Hon. G.J. Crafter, Minister of Education, Minister of Children's Services and Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr T. Barr, Acting Director-General of Education.  
 Ms H. Kolbe, Director, Education Resources.  
 Mr T. Starr, Assistant Director, Finance.  
 Mr W. Marsh, Deputy Director, Resources.  
 Dr P. Tillett, Director, Education (Planning).

**The CHAIRMAN:** I declare the proposed expenditure open for examination. Questioning will be relatively informal. If the Minister undertakes to provide information to be inserted in *Hansard*, it should be submitted no later than Friday 31 October. I will allow the Opposition spokesman and the Minister to make an opening statement if they desire. There will be a flexible approach to questioning, but in the main I will allow three questions from each member. If a member outside the Committee wishes to ask questions, I will permit that when members on both sides have completed their questioning on that line. The questions should be based on the estimates, and they are to be directed to the Minister and not to the advisers. The Minister may make an opening statement.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The Aboriginal affairs lines are included under the Education Department lines, and so towards the end of the examination of the various components of the Education Minister's lines, recurrent, capital and miscellaneous. I will be happy to answer questions on Aboriginal affairs matters. The final lines relate to the Children's Services Office. It was the practice of the former Minister of Education to provide the Committee with additional information, and I will circulate copies of statistical and supplementary information.

The information relates to the services provided by the Education Department in the five regions that have been established to deliver educational services throughout the State. It is interesting to see the geographic outlines of those regions, the lists of the schools and the funding that is applied to them, a breakdown of cost per student and the teaching staff allocated to each of those schools. I draw the attention of the Committee to the introduction and some of the warnings about simple interpretations of those figures

when comparing school to school. A whole series of factors relate to the application of funds to a school, and they are referred to in the introduction. I hope that the information will be of interest to members, and it will be circulated for identification and use.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I express concern that a document of such obvious statistical importance as this has been provided to the Opposition only at the commencement of the Committee, which puts us at a grave disadvantage in using the information contained therein as a basis for questions. In similar circumstances when I was Minister of Health, such documents in relation to the health portfolio and additional to the estimates were provided to the Opposition a fortnight before the Estimates Committees commenced. That courtesy should be observed in future. I note that we have also not received a copy of the annual report of the Director-General of Education, which apparently is available, but which has not been provided to the Opposition.

Generally speaking, the Opposition and the education constituency are deeply concerned about a range of areas, are concerned overall about the lack of consultation by the Minister with the education constituency (the professions and the parent organisations), are very deeply concerned about the breaking of critical election promises by the Government, the abolition of 230 teacher positions and the reduction in education funds, which is contrary to the pre-election promise. We are also concerned about the failure to administer funds in the most cost effective fashion, notably in such areas as a reorganisation of the department, the Youth Music Festival, overpayment to teachers, and the failure to pursue as vigorously as the Auditor-General would like the possibility of cost savings of \$2.5 million on contract cleaning. These matters will be pursued by way of specific questions.

On page 64, the Auditor-General said that salary overpayments had been a matter of concern for many years and that average overpayments per fortnight were now \$47 000—that is up from \$34 000 in 1984-85, a very significant sum. Is it true that all leave calculations are done under a manual system and that this is one of the reasons for errors? If that is so, when will an automated system be introduced and what measures will be introduced this year to reduce overpayments?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I thank the honourable member for her indication of some of the matters that the Opposition wishes to raise.

With respect to the information that I have brought down this morning, I understand that it is simply supplementary information, whereas with the health budget lines my recollection is that very little information in the past was provided and that it was almost a single line. Successive Governments saw that additional information should be provided, and that has now become a matter of course. Very substantial information with respects to the education lines is provided to honourable members by way of the yellow books. This supplementary information is further factual information that is made available for all honourable members.

With respect to the comment in the Auditor-General's Report relating to overpayments, this matter has been of concern to the department. I think there has been some misunderstanding by those who have chosen to comment publicly on it of how the department operates, bearing in mind that the Education Department is the largest single employer in this State and has a very large number of salary payments—about 25 000 I understand—each fortnight.

When comparisons are carried out with education authorities and other large departments throughout Australia, the Education Department compares quite favourably. Nevertheless, the Auditor-General has raised some matters, and they require explanations. The Education Department can explain how these have occurred and what steps have been taken and are still being taken to reduce errors where they are occurring. I will ask Ms Kolbe to give the Committee the specific information on this matter.

**Ms Kolbe:** Two matters need to be recognised when one talks about overpayments in the Education Department. The system that the Education Department runs, namely, a fortnightly pay system, requires, as is industrial practice, that a certain number of days are anticipated days for most employees. In the case of the Education Department that is 6.5 days, so whatever happened during the 6.5 days—for instance, somebody taking sick leave or leave without pay for a day—would not be registered in the system. We also have, unlike many other pay systems, automatically identified variations which occur and which are therefore identified as overpayments. So the overpayments that we show through the system would, in the normal course of events of a pay such as ours, not be identified as overpayments because sick leave, and so on, would then be transferred into the system in the following pay week. However, during that fortnight and the two runs that are affected by it, we actually show those payments and overpayments.

As the Minister indicated, we have been concerned about the level of overpayments. We have undertaken a considerable amount of work, and we have now been able to reduce the level of overpayments permanently to approximate by 0.1 per cent of the payroll. That is quite an achievement from previous levels before the reorganisation. Further work is going on, particularly in relation to the transfer of documents which, with the distributed system we run from schools, some in very far outlying country areas, means that it is very difficult to get the information into the payroll system, which is located in six locations in the metropolitan area and in two country areas, before processing within the pay period in which the transaction really occurs. We have made some progress and with the location of area offices closer to schools the documentation flow is being increased, and the understanding of the various components and the difficulties of overpayments are also being worked on very successfully.

The other thing that may have caused some concern in the past is the negotiations about repayments. There again, we have introduced new processes and procedures, and the reflection that we can now show by way of success is that the negotiations are much better and overpayments are recovered rather more quickly.

In relation to the automation of the leave system, I indicate that the department has worked on that for some months now, and we have now reached the point where we are testing transactions and an automated pay system. If those tests are successful, we will tender for an automated pay system; we expect to automate the leave records within the current financial year.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I would like to correct a statement made in the press that the amount of outstanding overpayments at 30 June 1986 was \$1 million. In fact, the amount is \$534 000, about \$450 000 of which relates to employees who are currently employed by the department; as a consequence, recovery is almost 100 per cent in those circumstances.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I am pleased to learn about the imminent prospect of an the automatic system. This question could be regarded as a supplementary

question, Mr Chairman, because neither the Minister nor his officers answered it. Is the fact that the department operates on a manual system one of the reasons for errors? That was the question I asked.

**Ms Kolbe:** It is one of the contributing factors because long service leave calculations are very complex and we have CO1 clerks working on some of those calculations. There is greater potential for errors when one makes calculations manually as opposed to automatically. Yes, it is a contributing factor.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** In further explanation, the information required under which salaries and the like can be calculated comes from about 1 000 locations throughout the State. That is part of the difficulty in communicating that information to a central point, or a number of central points, and then making those calculations. Undoubtedly, mechanisation of that procedure would minimise errors.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** My other questions on that subject are interrelated. What is the estimated cost of the department's resources engaged in the follow-up and recovery process, and what procedure is adopted in the follow-up and recovery process? For example, is the department still pursuing overpayments made three or four years ago? Will the case of the teacher now living interstate overpaid by \$8 000 be pursued and the money recovered? What are the guidelines for writing off overpayments?

**Ms Kolbe:** We do have procedures in place and we have varied them since the establishment of the area organisation. To a certain extent we have left it to the individual area organisation that actually follows up the negotiation of overpayments. In general, the practice is that automatic recovery of overpayments (in other words, very small overpayments that can be easily recovered) are dealt with between a low level officer and the person to whom that overpayment has been made. However, if the overpayment is of a higher level or is of a particular type, senior officers can become involved, including the area directors. In many cases, because of the closer nexus of the operations now to the school, the school principal also gets involved because in most instances it affects his staff.

The procedures are varied. In general the guidelines are that senior officers should be involved where the amount is of a significant value. That is the process that we are now following and have implemented, and it is starting to work very successfully. In regard to old overpayments, where repayment patterns have been negotiated, in many instances we contact the person again and try to renegotiate. One must realise that an agreement has been reached at a certain point in time and it is with consensus between the two parties that those old arrangements are being changed. So we are going over the old overpayments as well and we are attempting to renegotiate more quickly the repayment pattern.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** How far back do you go—three, four, five years?

**Ms Kolbe:** The ones still on the books could go back several years. I am not sure how old the oldest overpayment is. In the past overpayments have been renegotiated and some were also on the books—a very small number—where the pay-back pattern goes back a number of years. I do not have on hand information as to the oldest overpayment and when that, under the current arrangement, would be recovered. In general, with overpayments occurring at the moment in situations where the person is deemed to have received the overpayment in good faith, the longest period of repayment is about two months.

One should recognise that one month of that is really part of the way the system operates—by the time the over-

payment is identified and the lag that will occur at the other end in recovering it. It is from the time the transaction is input into the system to the time it actually shows in the ledger which identifies the overpayment level, where it has actually been subtracted. We have a fortnight at the beginning and a fortnight at the end. Taking those times into consideration, the longest overpayments for existing employees is approximately two months.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** In relation to the \$8 000?

**Ms Kolbe:** One should note that overpayment repayment negotiations are very much of an individual nature. The situation of the individual would be taken into account. I could not say offhand what time may be involved if somebody were overpaid by \$8 000—it depends on the nature of the overpayment and the financial situation of the employee at the time. I think it would be incorrect for me to say, because we do not have a repayment period related to the level of overpayment or the amount that is involved.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Another point that the honourable member referred to was the write-offs, and that is a matter about which I have just recently corresponded with the Treasurer in developing perhaps more stringent guidelines with respect to people who have left the State or cannot be located and considering whether, for instance, they should be put in the hands of debt collection agencies. That is a matter being reviewed by the core agencies and advice is being taken on that. The level of write-offs and overpayments in 1985-86 was estimated at \$10 000. That is in a payroll of \$550 million, so there is not a substantial amount of overpayments being written off. I guess the teaching force is basically stable and locatable, comprising upright people who do in fact repay money that is incorrectly paid to them. So, from the point of view of write-offs, that matter is under constant review to see if we can improve our system even further. That matter should not raise a great concern.

**Mr De LAINE:** Can the Minister outline the additional ancillary staff that will be appointed in 1987 and indicate what this will mean in terms of additional assistance to schools in coping with enrolment declines?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The matter of ancillary staff has occupied a lot of energy within the department over recent years. It emanates from decisions taken in the early 1980s with respect to reductions in ancillary staff time available to schools and subsequent industrial action taken as a result of that.

As honourable members will know, we have satisfactorily and at last resolved this ongoing dispute with respect to ancillary staff, the very important role that they play in the delivery of education services and, indeed, the rights and status of that sector of our education community. In this budget the Government has provided a sum to employ an additional 100 full-time equivalent ancillary staff from the beginning of 1987, and it is estimated that as many as 150 ancillary staff will be involved, most of whom work about two-thirds time in our schools in a wide variety of functions. That will be a very substantial fillip to our schools. There has been an undesirable situation whereby there has been a lack of mobility of ancillary staff and as a result of negotiations with the Public Service Association, the South Australian Institute of Teachers and the Education Department there is now an agreement on mobility of ancillary staff between schools in our system.

There is also provision in the budget for the replacement of staff who are absent on long service leave, thus ensuring that schools are not disadvantaged during such staff absences, and 13 average full-time equivalent positions, in addition to the 100 positions, have been provided for the first time.

It is anticipated that this will be the first of similar increases in the provision of resources for ancillary staff in our schools. I think it is recognised that at present we have the best equipped education system with respect to ancillary staff, and these measures will enhance that greatly. Indeed, I hope that they will entrench the quasi-professional role that ancillary staff are playing in the delivery of education services.

The focus of the additional 100 full-time equivalent positions is intended to cater for the special needs of students and also for our primary schools. We are now embarking on a program to separate ground staff from other ancillary staff, because there have been difficulties in relation to the allocation of ground staff to our schools and that has brought about inequities and hardships for individual schools. We hope that the work that is currently being undertaken in the department will alleviate a great deal of that stress on school communities.

**Mr De LAINE:** What is the projected decline of enrolments over the next five years, and what strategies are planned to deal with projected enrolment decline in secondary schools in particular?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** This matter has been raised in Estimates Committees for many years and certainly it has been the subject of considerable activity in school communities throughout the State for a number of years. Once again, South Australia has taken action to try to ensure that students, particularly in the senior secondary area, can maintain an adequate curriculum component of their studies despite the declining enrolments in the schools that they attend. The department has developed a series of strategies (which is ongoing) to minimise these effects.

For example, in Port Augusta there is a great deal of cooperation between government and non-government secondary schools so that students, staff and resources are interchanged, and thus there is a very substantial improvement in the curriculum offering and quality of education services for those secondary students than would otherwise exist if each school was doing its own thing. Similar programs are being developed in other parts of the State. There is a good deal of support and cooperation between parents, students, staff and the leadership in schools to ensure that this occurs.

The enrolment decline in this State has been substantial, and it is anticipated that secondary enrolments alone will decline by 17 500 students over the next five years. In the last decade, from 1975 to 1985, there was a decline of 34 000 student enrolments in our schools and during the 1980s that trend will continue. It is interesting to consider a few secondary schools (and we can see some of the more substantial declines): from 1981 to 1986 enrolments at Mitchell Park diminished from 862 to 550; Elizabeth West, from 619 to 362; the Parks, from 722 to 523; Thorndon High, from 966 to 738; Kidman Park, from 790 to 467; Marden, from 961 to 650; Para Hills, from 975 to 670; and Ingle Farm, from 930 to 630. That shows substantial declines in secondary enrolments across the metropolitan area. I have said that clustering and innovative attitudes to the provision of services will be necessary if these schools are to remain viable and provide the balanced curriculum that is so important for students.

**Mr De LAINE:** Workers compensation premiums for the Education Department have increased significantly in past years. What is the cost of these premiums which reflect claims made on the Government insurance fund for 1986-87, and what policies, if any, have been adopted to reduce the incidence of affliction and claims of employees?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The cost of workers compensation has increased dramatically in the Education Department,

and I guess that that is mirrored in many other sectors of activity throughout the State. That has resulted in a revision of the legislation (which is currently before the House). In 1984-85, the cost to the Education Department in this regard was \$3.030 million. In the last financial year, 1985-86, the cost was \$5.993 million, and it is estimated that \$9.5 million will be the cost this year. When one assesses the breakdown in the nature of the claims lodged against the department, one sees a wide variety of reasons why the number of these claims is increasing, apart from the increased payments provided under the legislation over those years. The department, in response, is strengthening its organisational structure in the area of occupational safety and health so that it is in a position to mount preventive programs and identify emerging trends of areas requiring attention and to provide schools with procedures and guidelines aimed at reducing the incidence of injury, thus reducing the upward trend of workers compensation payments. Ms Kolbe will outline the action being taken.

**Ms Kolbe:** In line with the Premier's direction on occupational safety and health some 18 months ago, we have established the committees that were prescribed. At present we are developing, and we have preliminary approval for, a structure that will take us further into the preventive field rather than the analytical field of what has occurred already. This structure is being put into place and will work to identify areas of particular risk to the individuals in our organisation. We will also analyse, as a matter of course, the workers compensation statistics as well as any reports that come to us from the school community in relation to injuries or potential areas of injury. In that way for the first time we will be able to move into a preventive mode.

We also expect to implement a system that will provide more detailed reporting of each situation that has resulted in an injury or has the potential to become an injury area, so that in the future the department can identify changing trends and injuries which one, from a manual investigation of the various claims, may not be able to detect. We are moving towards a preventive mode in the future, and the budget embodies provision to carry out that initiative.

**Mr MEIER:** Is it possible for staff on accouchement leave to be paid for up to 10 days sick leave per year?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I am advised that that is possible.

**Mr MEIER:** What is the estimated cost of this to the department?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I can try to ascertain those figures for the honourable member, but while there is a right for a teacher, for example on accouchement leave, to claim against the sick leave entitlement, that consequently reduces the claim against the quota of days at any future time. It is not a bonus, if that is the inference of the question. I do not know the incidence of that occurring, but I shall try to obtain the information.

**Mr MEIER:** If staff take one year accouchement year and one year parenting leave, do both years count towards the calculation of long service leave entitlements?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I have to obtain that information. As I understand it, it is only the first year that counts for those purposes, but I shall need to confirm that for the honourable member.

**Mr MEIER:** I would regard this as a supplementary question, as I was waiting on a 'yes' or 'no' answer. Are such arrangements—perhaps the Minister might have to investigate this—more or less generous than the arrangements applying in the Public Service generally?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** In general terms there is parity between the services, although there are some differences

in holidays, and so on. I shall try to get that information during the day.

**Mr MEIER:** Is it correct that for many years the department had not been paying the required 20 per cent loading on long service leave entitlements accrued by certain ancillary staff? If this is the case, does this mean that all ancillary staff are entitled to make claims on the department? If so, what is the estimated cost to the department of such claims?

**Ms Kolbe:** There was some confusion as to whether ancillary staff, who are usually recruited locally, would be entitled to that allowance, particularly as most do not work full time, and in some instances have special working conditions, considering that they work not predetermined fractions of full-time but sometimes hours at the convenience of the school. We were advised by the then Public Service Board 18 months ago that ancillary staff could claim that allowance, and it is correct that the allowance was not paid from the day when it was due because negotiations to determine whether there was an entitlement took some time. We are in the process of assessing the exact costs because one needs to look at the profile and because some records are still manual. We need to look at the history of the employment record of some employees, and what their entitlements are. We do not have an exact figure for the cost.

**Mr MEIER:** But it means that ancillary staff are entitled to make claims?

**Ms Kolbe:** Yes. The cost is not substantial in terms of the payroll but we do not have an exact dollar amount. Investigations have been made and are under way.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** The Minister has recently announced an intention to review and introduce various leadership and promotional positions in schools. What are the principal benefits of this proposal and the projected cost? What relationship might that bear to the Endersby proposals of the early 1970s? Does any promotion 'within the classroom' entail a guarantee that teachers who receive that form of promotion will have time in lieu for their organisational duties?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** This is an important matter. A paper which has been circulated contains a series of negotiating points or options. It is currently up for discussion within school communities and has now been the subject of discussion for many years in the department. That has occurred with respect not only to the Endersby report but other papers prepared over the years. The problem is that this debate has been going on for so long that some of the people involved were not involved in the beginning and people are forgetting who has and who has not been consulted. Some people have forgotten that they are talking about the same issues.

It is important generally to ensure that the management practices that are applied by the Education Department are relevant and up to date, and that we apply our resources in the most efficient way that we can in terms of our ability to deliver education services. That is why it is important that leadership positions be relevant to the school and community in which they are working, and that consideration be given to the involvement of parents in the selection panel on leadership positions. That is why there needs to be some flexibility by way of contract appointments so that, as circumstances and skill requirements change, there can be that flexibility within our management style and consequently changes can be made.

It is important to develop incentives so that our most successful and highly skilled educators have those incentives to stay within our schools. It is a shame that so many of the incentives for our best teachers are outside the schools.

Hundreds of highly skilled teachers have been lost to classroom teaching. It is hoped that this paper will return some of those incentives to allow and provide for the retention of those skills in our classrooms.

I might add that already through our principal class A positions, we have the highest salary ranges in the country for both primary and secondary principals. I think that is the beginning of a whole series of initiatives that I hope we can implement over the next few years to provide that fillip to keep those people whom we most need in our school community.

With respect to the costing of these proposals, there has been some work done by the department. It is not possible to finalise the cost of these proposals until we actually have a firm set of principles that have been negotiated on which we can then carry out final costings. This certainly is not an exercise, as some have suggested, in saving money. I have not found very much in education where one can actually save money by bringing about this type of reform. I think it obviously will require some additional expenditure. However, I would argue that it would be money very well spent in the community. It will cost some additional amount to provide for participation of parents and the broadening of the selection panels, particularly in country areas; and that is accepted. How much extra will depend on circumstances in relation to the way in which our leadership scheme is phased into the system. There will be costs associated with people whose salaries are maintained when they are moving through the leadership bands in the system. However, they will be costed as we come to the point of conclusion.

With respect to consultation, the leadership paper has been circulated to every school community, and I hope that school councils and individual parents take some time to discuss this important issue and have their say. I will value very much what they have to say. Of course, as has been occurring over many years, there has been consultation with the principals associations and other members of staff of the Education Department, those who will be directly affected and those indirectly affected. There is already a considerable analysis of the paper going on amongst those groups, and I welcome that scrutiny. I will ask Mr Barr to comment on some of the further points raised.

**Mr Barr:** I think it needs to be said that in a situation of enrolment decline, which is a relatively new phenomenon for the Education Department, there is a need to provide opportunities for staff which were not there in a state of enrolment increase where new promotion opportunities became available readily. That needs to be taken into account in order to ensure that the education system is dynamic and that people do not get locked into positions for a very long period of time and hence possibly stagnate as a result of that.

The paper which, incidentally, has a closing date of 28 November 1986 for comment from parents, teachers, school councils and other groups, will be subject to consideration before a final position is taken, with an expectation of that being with the Minister by April 1987. Exactly what might be the final cost will depend on the results of the consultations currently being undertaken and the comments that might come in over the next two months from various interested parties. Part of the proposal for the changing leadership structure has an expectation of additional positions of responsibility but also a reduction of current positions, particularly from those schools that have more than one deputy principal at present. The paper postulates a reduction in deputy principals to one per school.

What the final cost profile might determine will depend on arrangements that can be entered into and it would not be necessarily expected that those arrangements can be put in place quickly. There may need to be a phasing of the introduction of the new scheme. Certainly, and as a result of the enrolment declines in secondary schools that the Minister alluded to earlier, there is expected to be a shift of resources from secondary to R-7 schools, but the expectation of the department in relation to primary schools is that we would expect to be able to make those provisions from within existing departmental resources because the excess (if I can use that term) of seniors within secondary schools and the additional deputies who are largely found in secondary schools may need to be relocated; and this is linked with attrition in those categories. It is difficult at this time to be precise in relation to costs, but I would hope that by April 1987 we will be in a much better position to be able to answer the question more precisely.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I have a supplementary question. Is it seen as a viable option to give time in lieu to classroom teachers who take on additional organisation and coordinating duties? Do you regard that as a feasible management objective to be able to take effective teachers out of the classroom for coordinating roles, allow them to do the coordinating and not have what was previously their teaching load fall on their shoulders when they come back in? I want some sort of assurance that that management objective is achievable.

**Mr Barr:** I would have thought that what the final outcome might be cannot be laid on the table today. Certainly the expectation is (and many teachers are already undertaking additional tasks of responsibility away from their classroom duties, and doing those extremely well) to provide recompense for those responsibilities additional to classroom duties. Teachers may take turns, because part of the leadership proposal suggests that they hold a post of responsibility for a period (whether that is one, three, five or seven years is part of negotiating) and then other teachers may replace that teacher to carry out that particular responsible task. Inherent in that is the extent of responsibility out of classroom that is involved in particular schools and the management of that, given the other work that needs to be done with the children in classrooms. Part of that is school management, but part of that we would hope to be able to include when we have a final map of the new leadership scheme.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Presumably the recompense mentioned would involve the alternative of doing it as an additional payment or increment on salary, or doing it by way of relieving classroom teachers of other duties. Presumably you have not got to the point of deciding which of those options to take or whether you want to take another one. I would value any ideas on your thinking up to this point. Do you see a salary increment as being a viable way of doing it, or do you prefer to do it per medium of time in lieu?

**Mr Marsh:** It is a matter of balancing them off, and it would be equally favoured.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Both those options are under consideration.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** My third question relates to a matter that was raised earlier, that is, workers compensation. I want to address the issue of teacher stress. Presumably the major part of that workers compensation payout in the past 12 months or so has been related to teacher stress. Is it envisaged that the proposed promotional scheme will have a significant impact on the level of stress and that, by doing

this, we will be able to decrease the level of compensation premiums required?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** One has to differentiate between the increased incidence of teacher stress related claims and other claims because the payout figure in teacher stress related claims is higher than it is for physical injury type claims in most cases.

So, a disproportionate emphasis can be given in terms of the statistics and looking at the dollar figures and the number of persons. Nevertheless, it is of considerable concern to the department and the Government that there is this increase in the incidence of stress being experienced by teachers and the consequences of that not only for teachers but also for the schools. This matter is being looked at in a number of areas, as Ms Kolbe has indicated, in the implementation of various strategies throughout the department.

Obviously, the question of leadership in schools and the support that can be given to classroom teachers in particular is important, and certainly it is important to those in leadership positions. It is a matter of concern, and one hopes that coming out of the negotiations with respect to the leadership paper we can develop a management structure that is very sensitive to the needs of those who are providing very important services.

Schools are under ever-increasing pressure from the community. The changing nature of families and communities in Australia does transfer additional pressures to our schools and brings about a requirement for teachers to possess skills and attributes for which they are often not trained and for which they have not prepared themselves. For example, a member of Parliament told me that the other day he visited a school where one of the first tasks undertaken by staff was to provide breakfast for a large group of children who did not have breakfast at home. Before the children can participate in classroom activities they are hungry and require that nourishment.

In so many cases teachers take on those functions in conjunction with the community and other concerned parents. They are some aspects of the problem related to stress. It is of concern. It is something that needs to be dealt with not only by the core authorities having that responsibility within the Education Department and in the regions but also within the school community itself. I hope that the school community and parents can play an ever-increasing role in supporting and understanding the work that teachers carry out.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** At pages 5 and 6 of his report, the Auditor-General referred to housing for Government employees. Elsewhere, the Auditor-General indicates that the accumulated operating deficit for the Teacher Housing Authority is \$7.2 million. On pages 5 and 6 of his report the Auditor-General highlights a number of areas that he believes should be reviewed, including a more commercial approach to rental determination and the principle of the 20 per cent subsidy not being an appropriate strategy for equitable provision of a country incentive. I suppose he is relating that to the fact that only people in THA premises would have that subsidy; and others who are in privately owned or leased premises would be on a different basis.

The authority should provide only housing where the housing market is unable to provide suitable leased accommodation. Has the Minister contemplated any definite action towards addressing those four or five issues?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I seek cooperation from the honourable member. As I thought we would deal with THA matters later under the miscellaneous lines, can I take the question on notice until the appropriate officers are here,

and can the honourable member provide me with the specific information that he obviously wants?

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** Yes. An alternative question is that I have had a cursory glance through the green book that has been provided to members by the Minister this morning. In the Auditor-General's Report the average cost per student in the primary area is stated to be \$2 522 per head last year, and in the secondary area it is \$3 495 per head. I wonder whether the basis of the calculation used by the Auditor-General and that used in the green book are one and the same or whether there is an inclusion of a number of separate factors other than straightout recurrent salary in one or both. There is no indication in either book. Do those figures include some capital costs, for example, which is possible but unlikely?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I will ask Mr Starr to explain.

**Mr Starr:** The basis of the calculations in the two books is quite different. The green book provides a figure that does exclude many of the overheads associated with schools. We put a qualification in the front of the book indicating that we have not sought to spread those charges at this stage. In respect of the green book, we have tried to indicate that the costs related primarily to those schools and are not spread to other administrative overheads. The Auditor-General uses an entirely different calculation and takes into account other factors. In the longer term it is intended to try to introduce an all-encompassing cost for schools, but we are not at that stage yet.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** The introduction of the two documents, and the lack of background evidence to show that there is a considerably different basis for calculation, is really more misleading than helpful. Still relevant to the green book, I note that Christie Downs Special School has probably the highest cost of special schools of \$9 209 per student; Mount Hill Rural School has \$11 436 per student; Parafield Gardens North West Primary School is down to \$1 019; Ebenezer Primary School with about 17 students, has a cost of about \$5 970, and Elizabeth West High School has one of the highest figures for high schools with a cost of \$4 589 per student.

I wonder whether those figures include some capital. I assume that they are mainly recurrent costs—the cost of staffing. What was the Minister's intention in introducing this document at a very early stage in the budget debate but too late for members to have a really close analysis of it? Was it that he would subsequently justify the closure of some of those smaller schools; do the Minister and his staff intend in the longer term to use those statistics to try to achieve some averaging of effort throughout the Education Department; or was it purely for information of a questionable value that we see today?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** First, when I tabled the document, I said that it was not a simple attempt to spread information to achieve any of the results to which the honourable member has referred. It is simply for more information and, as I understand it, the previous Minister tabled a similar document last year. I do not think it was as comprehensive as this one, and I thought that it was worth while for all members to have the information available. It is merely appropriate, as we have the Estimates Committee at this time, for this information to be made available. It is the sort of information that I would like to see made available to schools, perhaps in a more comprehensive fashion, and maybe associated with the receipt of the Education Department's Annual Report, so that schools or school communities are in possession of information as to how much it costs to run that specific school and how it is comprised.

My warning when tackling this involved precisely the issues that the honourable member has raised. One needs to look at the introduction, where it says that the expenditure is historical for the 1985-86 financial year and excludes inter-agency services not charged to schools, for example, superannuation, debt servicing costs, payroll, etc. It also excludes any intra-agency expenses not charged to schools, for example, central office and area administration of support services, terminal leave, etc., and of course payments made by parent organisations to schools for materials and the like, to bring it into a more realistic area, as Mr Starr has said. The department and agencies such as the Auditor-General eventually will come to an agreement on how one will most accurately describe the true cost of running a school.

It should be noted also in this introduction that, when one tries to compare cost per student figures (and I guess that is the initial reaction—it was certainly mine when I went through it: to carry out the sort of comparison that the honourable member has done), one should note that variations occur between schools of a similar size. Some of the reasons for this are special programs and supplementary funding for disadvantaged and multicultural groups, to which the honourable member has referred already, staffing age profiles (they are paid different salaries at different stages in their careers and with different qualifications), building structures and types of grounds which reflect in utility, fuel and energy usage and the like, and remoteness, with respect to extra freight costs and allowances in some locations in remote areas.

I refer also to the enrolment fluctuations that occur within a year and between years and foundation grants for new or growing schools and the like. They are some of the reasons why there are substantial variations in these figures from school to school. I hope that this information is of interest and use, and we certainly welcome matters that need to be clarified. It is intended basically to give members information which I think may be of use to them in the contact that I know many members have with their schools.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** The second question arises from a comment made by the Acting Director-General a few minutes ago when he highlighted the long, continuing problem of declining student numbers in secondary schools, with staff allocations having to remain the same over a number of years. Therefore, the entitlement to seniors and deputies would have declined in schools whose numbers had come down considerably. Those people are still within the department, obviously, having permanent status, and the Acting Director-General said that at some time around April next year he anticipated that the problem might be solved.

I wondered whether I heard that correctly, because I had borne in mind that only three or four weeks ago the Minister made what I took to be an ad hoc decision (I may have misjudged the Minister, but I assumed, rightly or wrongly, that the reorganisation of the Education Department was completed) when he announced that he intended to reorganise again the head office by reviewing 140 positions at very senior level with some 70 of those being redeployed in one way or another back into the school interface. If the Minister does that, and if he takes out 70 very senior officers and puts them back into a teaching situation or in direct contact with students, obviously the Director-General's problem will be further compounded rather than eased by next April. I see a situation where his problems will really appreciate again.

Does that mean that those 70 people from head office will still remain on some senior status drawing senior salary or will they be demoted and placed back into the teaching

force compounding the problem right down the system with, say, 70 fewer teachers being accepted into the department from teachers college? I do not really see in the longer term that the Minister's speedy decision will do anything other than exacerbate an already difficult situation. I know that it is a complex question, but can the Minister or the Director-General give me some relief?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I think there are fears that a number of the positions to which the honourable member refers will hinder the promotional opportunities of others in the system. The actual number of those senior staff who will return to schools is not yet determined. Discussions are proceeding about the career paths of those persons. They are certainly not being demoted. In fact, I would not see those who take on leadership positions in schools as being demoted at all. Certainly, the salary, conditions, length of holidays, and the like, for those persons will be enhanced. As I said before, some of the finest educators that we have in our system have been encouraged to work outside our schools. When one takes the total number of persons in leadership positions in the department compared with this number, one sees that a very minute number indeed will return to our schools. So, any fears that the honourable member expresses are without foundation. I certainly hope that that is so.

The thrust of these issues is to return our resources that we have to the schools, and all the effort that goes on within the bureaucracy of education should always be directed towards serving the schools and school communities. We need to constantly remind ourselves of that thrust. We have substantial resources that are outside the department, and perhaps in the past it has been seen that, in order to support teachers and schools and to develop curriculum, we need to take people out of the school communities. In fact, reform was achieved by people leaving the classroom as teachers, albeit that many of those people certainly spend some of their time back in the schools. So, we have developed a very highly sophisticated structure in our curriculum development section of the studies directorate, within the advisory service that we provide, and with a whole range of other support services that the department has.

We want to direct at all times those resources to schools and this is one way of doing it. Another measure announced at that time was the assignment of advisers (that is, teachers who have in fact left the classroom situation or the schools as their point of employment and who have gone into an advisory position in the department—and there are 300 of those positions) and to ask those seconded teachers to spend the equivalent of one day a week back in the classroom situation. That is the thrust and thread, if you like, of our direction for education.

**Mr Barr:** As the honourable member would be aware from his time as Minister, very often officers were removed from classroom duties to be advisers, seconded teachers in a variety of tasks, so there has been a trend over the years for officers from the teaching service employed under the Education Act to be removed from schools and, in the case of advisers, while still perhaps having a close association with those schools, for them to do various kinds of tasks outside the schools. While that has been the trend, as a result of the declining client base, in effect what is occurring at the moment is what one might call a reverse secondment. If the situation were that all employees of the Education Department were employed under the same Act as occurs with education authorities elsewhere, then possibly the concern would not be so great as it is at the moment, because some employees are employed under the Government Man-

agement and Employment Act and others under the Education Act.

The Minister referred to the retention of salary of those officers currently employed under the Government Management and Employment Act who may be required to undertake duties in schools, but the expectation of the department in relation to those officers is that they will be required also to undertake duties commensurate with their salary level. Their salary level is not merely maintained and they undertake a lower level of activity but, rather, if they are working from a school base, possibly in relation to a cluster of schools, they have additional duties and responsibilities, or they have a particular Statewide emphasis directed on them to ensure that the officers are carrying out tasks in accordance with the applicable salary levels.

In relation to the final effect, the only point of agreement with the honourable member is that it is conceivable that, with an Education Act staff of approximately 15 000 full-time equivalents, as a result of persons employed under the Government Management and Employment Act undertaking work that was perhaps undertaken by advisers hitherto, those persons whose contracts as advisers may have concluded may go back to a classroom situation. The end result of that may very well have the effect of the department requiring a smaller number of recruits coming straight from a tertiary institution than would otherwise be the case had those officers under the Government Management and Employment Act not moved from their position. That is expected to be relatively small. The final effect is not yet known, because the Minister indicated that negotiations between the staff and area directors are still continuing and the final effect will not be known for some time.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** I agree with everything that the Acting Director-General and the Minister have said: there

is no dissent. I simply say that the Minister's recent statement seemed to be hailed as reorganisation mark 3, with considerable savings attached to it. When one looks at the fine print, all the Minister said was that we are looking at 140 positions; that some of these may be redeployed (it was only some); and there was an indication that probably 70 would undergo very close scrutiny in the press release of the day. The main question is: are the Minister's claimed savings and the impact that they will have on administrative charges more imaginative than real? If no one is to be demoted; if we leave staffing ratios the same; and if we do not reduce the salaries of any of those principal officers, the only savings are the differences between the number of new intake teachers that we do not take in and the number put back into the school phase. If everything remains equal, the only real saving is the difference in salaries between 70 new teachers and 70 very senior people. As I said, one is still faced with the chiefs and indians situation where we have a top heavy section, whether it is in the schools or, as stated recently by the Minister, within the administration—it is still there.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I think that the honourable member has misconstrued the reality of the exchanges. Certainly, there will be a substantial reduction in the establishment of the senior positions in the Education Department and that will be about 60 positions that will no longer exist. That is where the savings will occur. A number of members have referred to enrolment decline and I have some statistics which I seek to have incorporated in *Hansard*. The table refers to the actual enrolments that occurred in our schools between 1979 and 1986 and our projections for the period 1987 to 1995.

Leave granted.

#### ACTUAL ENROLMENTS 1979-1986 AND ENROLMENT PROJECTIONS 1987-1995.

##### South Australian Government Schools

Year	Primary ('000)	Change ('000)	Secondary ('000)	Change ('000)	Total ('000)	Change ('000)
1979	142.7	—	82.5	—	225.2	—
1980	139.3	(3.4)	79.9	(2.6)	219.2	(6.0)
1981	134.1	(5.2)	78.5	(1.4)	212.6	(6.6)
1982	128.7	(5.4)	78.8	0.3	207.5	(5.1)
1983	122.7	(6.0)	81.5	2.7	204.2	(3.3)
1984	117.8	(4.9)	83.0	1.5	200.8	(3.4)
1985	113.6	(4.2)	82.4	(0.6)	196.0	(4.8)
1986	111.8	(1.8)	79.7	(2.7)	191.5	(4.5)
1987	111.4	(0.4)	76.9	(2.8)	188.3	(3.2)
1988	111.1	(0.3)	73.4	(3.5)	184.5	(3.8)
1989	112.3	1.2	69.5	(3.9)	181.8	(2.7)
1990	114.1	1.8	65.7	(3.8)	179.8	(2.0)
1991	117.6	3.5	62.2	(3.5)	179.8	0.0
1992	121.8	4.2	59.2	(3.0)	181.0	1.2
1993	124.9	3.1	58.3	(0.9)	183.2	2.2
1994	126.1	1.2	60.1	1.8	186.2	3.0
1995	127.5	1.4	62.1	2.0	189.6	3.4

Note: Actual and Proposed Enrolments are as at February.

**Mr De LAINE:** In the 1986-87 budget there is a line for the upgrading and redevelopment of the Alberton Junior Primary and Primary Schools. Will all this work be carried out in the 1986-87 financial year, or will the work be carried out in stages?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Funding has been provided for the redevelopment of the Alberton Primary School. The redevelopment was given a high priority and the estimated total cost of it is \$1.76 million. Some funds have been expended in the past financial year on the preparation of plans, and the like.

It is proposed that substantial work will commence this financial year and that \$582 000 will be expended during the latter part of this financial year. It is hoped that the redevelopment will be completed by November 1987, ready for the 1988 school year.

**Mr De LAINE:** The Commonwealth recently abandoned its computer education program, which played an important part in ensuring that children gain an appreciation and understanding of the importance of technology in the work and education environment. Will the Minister give an assurance that the State Government will not abandon this initiative?



**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I can express extreme disappointment about the Commonwealth's decision in this area and in what I consider to be high priority areas of education. It is simply not possible within the resources of the State to meet Commonwealth Government cutbacks, whether in education, children's services (as occurred last year) or a range of other areas. This is particularly important in our schools. I have visited many schools where computer education has been given a high priority. There is a substantial commitment by parents to raise funds to purchase equipment, and indeed staff who do not possess the basic qualifications in that area put in considerable effort towards obtaining the necessary teaching skills. Many schools are proud of the progress they have made in this area, and that makes the Commonwealth decision all the more disappointing. The influence in society of technology, particularly computing, is significant and plays an important part in preparing students to enter a rapidly changing and increasingly technological work environment. Undoubtedly, all school communities are recognising that.

The State Government has recognised that fact and has increased its support for computer assistance. Funding to support the computer assistance scheme, which is aimed towards assisting smaller, socio-economically disadvantaged schools and communities, has been increased in this budget from \$100 000 to \$150 000. The Government has retained its technology program in primary and secondary schools, but I must say it is unlikely that the State will be able to make up the loss of Commonwealth funding in this area.

**Mr De LAINE:** Commonwealth funding decisions reflected in the Federal budget have affected a number of education programs, including English as a second language, computer studies, professional development, special education and multicultural education. What action has the State Government taken to ensure that education in South Australia is maintained in these areas?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** There has been considerable activity in the education system as a result of these decisions (as I have explained to the Committee). Indeed, there have been substantial representations particularly from the ethnic communities of South Australia who have expressed disappointment with the decisions taken by the Commonwealth Government, notably in relation to the English as a second language program. As a result of negotiations with the Commonwealth Government, we have been able to secure resources to maintain the existing level of services to schools.

The Commonwealth Government has announced, since the budget was brought down, that \$4 million has been allocated across Australia for a program of a similar nature to the ESL program, but final details have not been announced, and we will negotiate with the Commonwealth in regard to its application. South Australia expects to receive \$300 000 under that program, and that will allow us, in the light of the announcement I made last week about maintaining the school and classroom effort, a level of funding equivalent to that which applied this year. Commonwealth funding is secured until the end of the school year, but reductions will be made in the 1987 school year.

With respect to other programs, we are involved in discussions within the department, with the Government and the Commonwealth Government to see what additional resources we can apply to these very important areas. The reduction of funds for professional development is substantial indeed and, while the State Government provides significant resources for professional development through TRT days, advisory services and a number of other programs, once again it is very difficult to make up the Common-

wealth shortfall, and I anticipate that only a fraction can be made up from State funds. It is very important that we review our effort in this area and, along with the ESL program, we will conduct reviews to ensure that the increased State commitment is in a direction that is most beneficial to those whom we are committed to serve.

Regarding multicultural education and the work of the Multicultural Education Coordinating Committee, the Commonwealth has abandoned its commitment to that area totally, and there are no funds available for its activities. A sum of \$392 000 was provided in a full year, and that is a very substantial hole to fill. I am committed to maintaining that advisory committee and as many of its activities as possible, but once again that will have to occur within a very reduced budget. The advances that have been achieved in multicultural education in this State have been outstanding in recent years and, in fact, we lead Australia in a number of areas of multicultural education, and I do not want to see that momentum lost.

Special education is also a very important area within our system, and we will make every effort to maintain programs, but one can see that the package of cuts as a result of the recent Federal budget is really quite devastating for us. One would hope that they are one-off cuts, but in the past these cuts have been part of an ongoing trend. It is even more disturbing to see substantial responsibilities hitherto accepted by the Commonwealth now being vested in the State in this involuntary way. It is further disappointing that we now have patchwork quilts of service delivery across this country. I understand that the Victorian Government is meeting some of the costs associated with the ESL program and can maintain at least a substantial part of that program. However, the New South Wales Government says that it does not believe it can meet any of the costs—300 teaching positions are involved in that State. And so on around Australia. Therefore, in a way the level of that service and the advantage for those students who come from homes where English is a second language depends to some extent on the State in which one lives, and that is most undesirable.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** Is it correct that the number of staff in offices in the personnel section of the department after the reorganisation is now 10, that is, two in each area office, as compared with three prior to the reorganisation? If that is the case, what is the reason, and what is the estimated increased cost to the department? If it is not the case, what is the correct comparison pre and post reorganisation in area offices?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Mr Marsh, the Director of Personnel, will provide information.

**Mr Marsh:** I understand that prior to the reorganisation there were about seven staff in offices, four in the primary area, one of those dealing with special education, and three in the secondary area. The move to reorganise led us to place two in each area, making 10, an increase of three. The reason for doing that was to provide an equitable and balanced service to the areas, and the judgment was made that that could not be done by spreading the existing seven across the five areas. It also needs to be borne in mind that there was a change in emphasis in their duties. In the previous arrangement, some of the staffing officers concentrated exclusively on primary schools and some on secondary schools whereas, in the area structure, staffing officers would take on a broader brief, covering a range of schools. That was a further factor that led to the increase in the number of staffing officers.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** Page 65 of the Auditor-General's Report shows his concern at the level of

unnecessary vacancy rental costs being incurred. What have been the vacancy rental costs in 1984-85 and in 1985-86 and what is the estimate for 1986-87?

**Ms Kolbe:** We had identified at some stage during the reorganisation that the vacancy rental was rather higher than it would be historically or a level that was desirable, and considerable effort has been expended in this area. We have just had a report from the country areas that the problem of vacancy rentals has been solved. Part of the level at any one time, because at the end of the year it is a snapshot at a given point in time, resulted from the move of area functions from central office to an area location. During the transition period some of the transactions have not been processed, and they came together and created a bulge in the snapshot idea on 30 June. Considerable work has been done, and everything that it is possible to do has been done. The Housing Authority may wish to report further on that later. I do not have the levels of vacancy rental and we would need to supply this figure if that is desired.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** Is it correct that officers in the Auditor-General's Department have expressed concern to the department that the staffing figures in the program performance budgeting yellow books are not accurate and that the department does not have a clear idea of how many staff it employs? If that is the case, why?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** From my reading of the records of the Education Department, this debate has been going on for some time. Ms Kolbe will give an explanation of the ways in which the staff employed in the department is calculated and how some of the discrepancies have arisen.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** And whether the Auditor-General has expressed concern.

**Ms Kolbe:** We would like to mention how the yellow book figures come into being. Before 1985-86, and for the 1985-86 financial year, we did not budget in programs at the departmental level, but on a line estimate and then extrapolated to the programs the appropriate figures, so that it was not a number worked out from the bottom to form the program estimates, but rather that we had expenditure levels allocated to larger organisational units and these were extrapolated into programs. In 1985-86 we introduced the Treasury Accounting System, which will enable us to track in program format the resources being used, and the budgetary process is following that. For 1986-87, for the first time, we are building our estimates on the basis of programs. If one takes the line estimates and then creates the program estimates, there will be some discrepancies. The estimates were as good as they could be made then. However, that has changed because we have different tracking and budgeting systems.

As to the number of the staff, we have accurate counts at the time and our official reporting process to the Treasury for staff employed in education in the various areas is based on records that come from the payroll, so that we do not any longer, as was the situation in the past, work in an establishment but rather by agreement between the core agencies and the department. The most accurate counts that we can provide and the one that has a clear nexus to the budgetary allocation is the number of people being paid each pay, and that figure is absolutely accurate.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** Is it correct that these same officers from the Auditor-General's Department expressed considerable concern at the department's budgeting and debiting arrangements and gave some consideration to the qualifying of the department's accounts for 1985?

**Ms Kolbe:** We have a transitory situation in special education. When that category was created, people were or were not in special education. The integration of handicapped

children into the mainstream of education has led to a situation where a number of persons are carrying out special education tasks. In terms of the count that is being shown in the financial statement, only people who work in special schools or are in receipt of a specific special education allowance are being counted. A booklet is available in the department against which the auditors tried to create a reconciliation. That is a working document of the special education area. It tries to estimate and project forward the number of resources that will be operating in a wider sense in special education, including those areas and staff not in receipt of special education and therefore for financial purposes not counted in this category of our budget and financial statements. There is a discrepancy because of the transition period and I think that will vanish as we go through to the program estimates, because that category will disappear.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** Is it correct that new staff in area offices, with no experience in financial management, have not been provided with basic Treasury documents to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in regard to financial management?

**Ms Kolbe:** We have, particularly because of the creation of the area offices in country locations and because we have injected a new level of resource managers into the organisation, needed to deal with new staff who often come from other organisations and are not familiar either with Public Service processes and procedures or particularly with education processes and procedures. We have attempted—and I think we are succeeding—to train these officers while they are carrying out their work. We have also injected into the organisation a special procedure writing team that documents procedures and alters them in terms of the new organisation where they vary from the old ones. We have trained people and we are training people.

Of course, it does take a considerable amount of time for a new officer coming into the organisation to become familiar with Public Service processes and procedures and, in particular, with Education Department processes and procedures. We have moved, and I think we are coming to the end of that, through a period where people worked against a learning curve which sometimes was very difficult to deal with.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The establishment of the area office at Whyalla has been the subject of some criticism, and I visited that office some months ago and met the staff working there. It is interesting to note that a large number of staff were school leavers who have been recruited locally and had undergone a training program. Some staff were seconded from the head office of the department to assist in the training of those staff. The schools that I visited in the remote areas of the State have told me how much they appreciate this ability to contact someone much closer, someone with whom they can identify, and how the service that they have received has improved in recent times.

A great deal of credit is due to the initiative taken by the management in that western area of the department. When I first became Minister I asked managers in the department to visit schools, wherever possible, and to speak to parents if that was also possible when they visited the schools. I also asked that whenever they went out they invite their staff to go with them, so that people preparing payrolls, leave records and doing other work in the department had contact with schools and some understanding of what occurred in them.

I was very pleased to receive a copy of a notice that a pay clerk had sent out to those persons for whom the pays were prepared. It had a photograph of that person and it

said, 'This is me; this is my interest; this is where I work; this is my phone number. Please contact me if you have any problems.' This brought it down to a more personalised contact relationship, which I think is very important, rather than people simply working through numbers and telephone lines and the like. While the situation may not have been desirable with such a huge payroll in the past, very real progress is being made in this area.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I have a supplementary question. Notwithstanding the learning curve to which Ms Kolbe referred and the Minister's assurances, is it correct that, as a result of staff not being familiar not only with Public Service procedures but, I venture to say, with basic accounting procedures, an officer in one area office was filing computer print-outs outlining incremental pay rises to teachers instead of actioning them because the officer did not know what to do with the computer print-outs? That is a very serious situation when people are simply filing material that is supposed to be actioned.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I do not think any of my officers have actually heard of that example. If the honourable member would like to provide us with some information we could follow that through and see whether there was some break down in supervision of staff. I began my working career as a clerk in the Public Service and was given responsibility to file the very important court documents and other material. From time to time I guess I was responsible for some misfiling of information, and so were those I worked with. When one reflects on that one can see weaknesses in a system or in supervision, or in simply human error. However, if the honourable member has some specific information that she would like us to follow through I would be pleased to ensure that that occurs.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I turn briefly to the question of the new proposed promotion scheme. It seems to me that one of the sticking points, if we are in the business of providing options to elderly deputy principals who are about at the stage where they may retire, is the potential problem of people tending to have a little bit of inertia about them at that point in their careers. Has the option of early retirement been looked at for some of those people? Is it possible to slot that into the proposed scheme?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** It is not a matter that is the subject of the discussion paper or negotiations that will proceed, although it could well be a matter that is considered at some later stage. There is already in existence a *quasi* early retirement scheme in the department. I must say that that is an option that is taken by many persons who have spent a very long time in the teaching service, who have prepared and looked forward to an active career in one form or another after teaching service. Mr Barr might add some details to that, but it is an interesting point and obviously we are always prepared to discuss those sorts of options.

**Mr Barr:** I do not have the actual details. The arrangements are that if a deputy in the teaching service retires at 55 years of age then they can enter into an arrangement whereby a certain amount of teaching time can be made available to them after retirement. Therefore, they can have a much reduced workload but still be in the classroom for a portion of the time while drawing superannuation. Mr Marsh assures me that that is the essential element of the proposal.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** It has recently been announced that a number of senior education officers would be redeployed from the central office back to the various areas and also into the schools. In addition, advisory teachers would be required to possibly have up to a 20 per cent teaching load.

What effect will that proposed relocation have on the people presently tenured in those advisory positions? Is there a likelihood of the people coming back out of central office effectively displacing people who are presently advisers? Will the Minister outline a time frame for the achievement of those proposals and spell out some of the benefits which might accrue to schools as a result of the proposal?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Advisory staff are in contract positions, so there is an option there that some of the senior officers to whom we are referring will choose to occupy some of the contracts that may become available. How many is yet to be determined. The initiative of the transfer of some of the time available to advisers into a classroom situation has resulted in much interest, and I have been interested to hear the reactions from the education community as I have moved around the State since the announcement. I suggest that many benefits will flow to advisers, to schools and, in particular, to students. As I have said, the advisers are often very highly skilled and successful teachers who have a great deal to offer. To link them in this formal way to schools will ensure that, as their career develops, they will not detach themselves from what is occurring in the classroom and with students.

For those teachers who spend many years away from the classroom, that is a danger, and it is contrary to their own professional interests and those of our education system. Within school communities this allocation of 20 per cent time is not limited to many periods per week because it is very flexible. I have heard it suggested that perhaps a group of advisers could go into a school to allow the whole staff to spend some time together out of classrooms on a program while others embarked on, say, a professional development program that might last for some days or weeks. An allocation could be provided in that way.

In others, an adviser may be developing a particular program, and that could be worked in over a year with sensitive programming and timetabling in the school. A myriad of options are available to benefit advisers and school communities. It is being taken in that very creative light, and is not resulting in a deduction of resources from schools. Indeed, it involves a direct increase in resources available to schools. Given the cutbacks by the Federal Government in the area of professional development, this may well provide a new range of opportunities for professional development for teachers, and I hope that we as a department can continue to evolve more programs and professional development areas and progressively allocate more resources to this area. It is one of the most fundamental areas of responsibility that we have in which to maintain and develop the skills of our teaching service.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Again on the question of increasing material resources to teachers at the coalface, and thereby the students and their classes, the present Government has come in with an undertaking to convert a number of contract teaching positions to full-time positions in the general teaching area. What progress has been made so far and how many positions is it envisaged will be converted during the 1987 academic year?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I have just recently announced that an additional 114 positions will be made permanent. The decision to provide permanent jobs to teachers currently on contracts will provide greater stability in schools and to the teaching work force. It is always a matter of concern to the teachers that there is that permanency about their career, and considerable progress has been made in recent years in conversion of contract positions to permanent positions.

I think some 500 positions have been converted during the period of the Bannon Government. Since the introduction of contract employment to provide the necessary management flexibility, contract positions have been converted to permanent positions wherever possible, and the level of permanent teachers has therefore increased over the years and is now at its highest level since the introduction of contract employment.

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

**Mr MEIER:** The 1985 report of the Director-General of Education for the first time in many years has not provided a number of significant statistical tables relating to the finances of the department: in particular, the table on salaries and allowances of executive staff and expenditure, goods and services. They are not included in the 1985 report. What is the reason for the removal of the tables from the report?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I am sorry that the Director-General cannot be with us today. Had he been here, he could have provided an answer himself on that because it is the Director-General's report to the Minister. I understand that there is an explanation for the change.

**Mr Barr:** I may need to get back to the member about this. I understand that the tables in the report have been subject to review generally as a result of discussions which have gone on with the Australian Education Council over the production of comparable statistics. Unless Ms Kolbe can help me out further in relation to the salaries and allowances of executive staff tables, I think we may have to take the question on notice and supply a specific answer later.

**Ms Kolbe:** Because of the requirement of the Government Management and Employment Act to produce three months after the close of the financial year an annual report which has a certain financial content, it was the department's intention to do this. Indeed we had reached a point where we had two annual reports and could not retract one of them. One was the school year report, which is what we are looking at at the moment. That report deals primarily with educational matters. The other report is the annual report in the form that we have known it, incorporating the requirements of the Government Management and Employment Act. Because of the introduction of the Government Management and Employment Act after 30 June, the 1985-86 report will not be forthcoming in that way.

**Mr MEIER:** I refer to the program estimates for 1986-87 under 'Interagency Support Services' and the heading 'Executive, Professional, Technical, Administrative and Clerical Support'. In previous years there were three separate headings: 'Executive Management, Director-General, Deputies and Directors'. What is the reason for the change and what is the comparative figure for this heading in 1986-87?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I think the reason for this restructuring is the same as the answer just given to the member by my officers. I do not think an answer can be found in the documents, so we will take the question on notice and obtain a figure for the member as soon as possible.

**Mr MEIER:** As part of the settlement of the ancillary staff dispute this year the Minister said that some of the 100 new ancillary staff positions would commence in 1986. Has the Minister been able to keep his promise in this regard?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I do not think I have ever said that any of those positions would commence in 1986. I think an offer was made that of the 100 positions a percentage could have been advanced into the 1986 school

year; so, in fact, they could have been phased, if you like, into operation. I understand that that did not occur and did not form part of the final negotiations that resolved the dispute. I do not think there was any undertaking that I can ever recall about a certain number of those positions being provided for in 1986.

**Mr MEIER:** Would the Minister say that it is a matter of words, whereby the Minister uses the words 'could have been advanced' rather than 'would start' in 1986?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Perhaps Ms Kolbe may be able to clarify this for the honourable member in terms of the specifics.

**Ms Kolbe:** In the context of the transfers which took place early in July from schools that were overstaffed on account of a formula, and subsequent to the successful negotiations between the unions and the department of the new conditions to be able to transfer ancillary staff, mention was made of a situation where there would still be shortfalls after transfers had been worked through and where additional positions might be drawn from the additional ancillary staff available. As events turned out, that was not necessary, and I believe it was in that context that the 1986 commencement date would have been mentioned.

**Mr HAMILTON:** I indicated to the Minister's office that I intended to ask a particular series of questions today. I have come in specifically this afternoon to do that. The Seaton High School Council Incorporated seeks further information on the statement:

... the building of three new schools will commence. Major work will continue at eight others, and additions and upgradings at seven more will begin.

That is from a lift-out guide in the *Sunday Mail* of 31 August 1986 entitled, 'A guide to the State Budget 1986'. The letter from the Seaton High School Council Incorporated states:

1. With regard to the three new schools to commence this financial year we ask:

- (a) Location of these three schools.
- (b) Primary or secondary
- (c) Total estimated cost of each project
- (d) Amount of money allocated to each of these projects this financial year
- (e) Estimated starting date of each project
- (f) Estimated completion date of each project
- (g) To whom have these contracts/tenders been awarded

2. With regard to the major works being continued at eight schools this financial year we ask:

- (a) Name of each school
- (b) Specific nature of the work to be carried out in each school
- (c) When work commenced in each case
- (d) Total estimated cost for each school
- (e) Amount of money already spent on each of these projects
- (f) Amount of money allocated to each project for this financial year
- (g) Anticipated completion date for each project

3. With regard to the commencement of additions and upgradings at seven schools, we ask:

- (a) Name of each school
- (b) Specific nature of the work to be carried out in each school
- (c) Total estimated cost for each project
- (d) Amount of money allocated to each project for this financial year
- (e) Anticipated completion date of each project

4. What major works are programmed for the next three financial years in the Adelaide area?

- (a) Name of schools
- (b) Specific nature of the work to be carried out in each school
- (c) Estimated cost of each project
- (d) Estimated commencement date of each project
- (e) Estimated completion date of each project

5. What minor works are programmed for the next three financial years in the Adelaide area? (Minor works, as we understand it, cover works up to \$100 000 in cost).

- (a) Name of schools
- (b) Specific nature of the work to be carried out in each school
- (c) Estimated cost of each project
- (d) Anticipated commencement date of each project
- (e) Anticipated completion date of each project

It is not our intention to burden the Budget Estimates Committee with frivolous questions. This information is vital to us and, as we understand it, available through you.

If answers to questions 4 and 5 are unavailable to this Committee, we ask that they be referred to the appropriate authority. I thank you in anticipation.

The letter is signed by M.A. Phegan, Chairperson of the Seaton High School Council Inc. That was dated 29 September. The Minister would be aware, from his visit to the school this year (which was greatly appreciated by the Chairperson and representatives of the high school council), of their concerns about the sale of the land in that area and the upgrading of the library resource. He would also be aware of the considerable correspondence in this matter and the concerns of the school council, this matter having been, if you like, on the agenda for some 12 years. Understanding the frustrations of the school council in this matter, I would appreciate any information the Minister can give with regard to the questions asked by the Chairperson of the school council. I appreciate that the Minister may not have that information with him, but I gave an undertaking that I would raise this matter in the Estimates Committee; hence my reason for contacting the Minister's office approximately a week ago.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I thank the honourable member for giving me notice earlier this week of his intention to ask this question. I have some information which may be of assistance to him and the high school council to which he refers. I did in fact visit that school earlier this year, as a result of an invitation from the honourable member, and inspected some of the facilities. There is no doubt that the school does require some attention. As a result of my visit and an offer by the school that some of the excess land at that school be sold and those funds returned to the school to assist it in carrying out some works (they informed me that a library facility was their priority), arrangements were made and approval was granted for that to occur. Just in the past few weeks, that land has been disposed of and those funds will soon be made available.

I was disturbed to receive a somewhat out of sorts letter from a person associated with the school council who misinterpreted the meeting I had with the council wherein I stated very clearly that I would not overrule the area priorities for works needed to be carried out at schools, and that it would require our raising some resources within the school community, as has been done, and then the school making some decisions in conjunction with the area on how those funds would be expended and whether they would wait until that project came to the top of the list. The school has in fact demanded, if I can put it that way, in the letter I read that \$400 000 be provided for that project. That simply is not the way in which the system works. We must have an orderly approach to our works program. I hope that the answer I can give to the honourable member will clarify this matter for the school council and their efforts can bring about the improvements urgently required at that school. They must always be realistic in their endeavours, as I hope I was in my discussions with the parents and school staff involved.

The answer to question 1 is outlined in the capital works program. With respect to question 2, there are two schools in the Adelaide area where works will be carried out—the

Black Forest Primary School, which was burnt down, and the Alberton Primary School. I will list the details rather than go through them:

- (a) Black Forest Primary School
- (b) Redevelopment and Fire Replacement
- (c) April 1986
- (d) \$1.15 million
- (e) \$63 197
- (f) \$1.087 million
- (g) April 1987
- (a) Alberton Primary School
- (b) Redevelopment and upgrade of primary and junior primary schools involving an amalgamation of facilities
- (c) November 1986
- (d) \$1.760 million
- (e) \$53 752
- (f) \$582 000
- (g) November 1987

With respect to questions 3, 4 and 5:

3. One school in Adelaide area
  - (a) Stirling East Primary School
  - (b) Construction of a multipurpose hall
  - (c) \$260 000
  - (d) \$150 000
  - (e) June 1987
4. Only Adelaide area projects are those listed against questions 2 and 3 above.
5. Funds for minor works are only allocated and committed on a year to year basis, hence the minor works are only programmed annually.

All work programmed as minor works is certainly less than \$100 000 per project, the average cost of minor works projects being less than \$50 000. Commencing from a survey of schools March 1986 the Adelaide area has established a list of minor works needs for all schools in the area. This list will be reviewed annually, in consultation with the schools and will be used in determining the annual minor works program.

Minor works are programmed under three categories:

1. Jobs under \$2 000 of which most arise at short notice to meet operational changes or emergencies needs and are approved and actioned by the Department of Housing and Construction, District Building Officer in consultation with the Facilities Manager.
2. Work which schools apply to undertake under the community involvement scheme where the department meets part of the costs (usually \$1 500 maximum) from the program and the school provides the balance in voluntary labour, money or kind. A total of \$60 000 has been set aside for the program for this work.
3. Projects for minor work upgradings over \$2 000 but less than \$100 000.

I have listed the 40 schools connected with the community involvement scheme and the 72 schools involved in the minor works scheme, and I will provide that information to the honourable member.

**Mr HAMILTON:** I would like to thank the Minister and his staff for the time and detail provided. I am sure that the school council appreciates the information provided to the Committee. During the Minister's inspection, as he mentioned, at the Seaton High School some months ago I drew to his attention the proposition put to me of an amalgamation of facilities or the joint use of facilities with the Seaton North High School, the Seaton North Primary School and the Seaton North Community Child Care Centre. Could the Minister indicate his attitude towards a joint campus, if you like, for those three separate bodies, to make them into one entity, because there is no doubt in my mind that there could be room for the joint usage of many of those facilities in that area? The Minister may be able to provide some information on the Government's attitude to this issue.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The clustering of schools, whether it forms one school with several campuses or whether it is several schools having common programs and the use of facilities, is very much a matter under discussion. I am not sure of the state of the discussions occurring within the schools that the honourable member refers to, but that is

certainly occurring throughout the State. I would very much encourage that. I know that members of the department certainly encourage that discussion and I hope we will be able to provide some resources for those programs to come together. I am not sure of the precise enrolments at the schools to which the honourable member refers but, as we said earlier in this Committee, where there are rapidly declining enrolments, particularly in the secondary school area, then in order to maintain the curriculum offering to particularly senior secondary students this is a real opportunity to maintain those standards and offerings that are so important to those students.

It is now well accepted that one of the areas of Adelaide that is suffering from a significant enrolment decline is the western suburbs. That discussion, if it is taking place in those schools, is very welcome: it is something that we support.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I refer to the recent Commonwealth funding cuts for education. It is fairly well-known by now that the State has undertaken to step into the breach in relation to English as a second language where positions in that area are threatened. How have the Federal cuts affected computer studies, special education, multicultural education and professional development? What action will be taken in those areas? Is the department able to cover the gaps in those areas in the same way as in relation to ESL.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The department is not able to fill the breach in those programs, but they will continue until the end of the school year. As I said earlier, we are involved in discussions with a view to establishing what commitment the State can make to continue all or part of each of those programs. We hope that they will not be discontinued altogether, although that is a possibility. It is a difficult situation, because it involves establishing priorities and programming resources for schools next year. In a number of cases we will have to review the operations of those programs in consultation with various interest groups in the education community. Once they become substantially State programs, I think that we have an obligation to ensure that we target them to the groups for whom we have special responsibilities and align ourselves with our policies. If that has not already commenced, it will commence in the near future. Decisions can be taken in each of these areas quite quickly, and they cover a diverse range, such as special education, computer studies, professional development and the like.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** Will the Minister advise the Committee whether he has approved any of the recommendations of the School Council Review Committee, what recommendations have been approved, and when does the Minister expect to implement them?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I think I saw a document in the past few days that indicated that a paper would be available for me within three weeks: that paper could then be circulated to schools and school councils in particular outlining the proposals of the review that we intend to implement and those on which further comment is required, and seeking the comments of the school communities. One of the problems in the education system is how many of these papers we can circulate at a given time, and that was a matter that concerned the former Minister of Education. School councils require a fairly substantial turnaround time to discuss these papers, so I trust that we do not minimise the ability for discussion when this paper is circulated, hopefully later this term.

Some of the recommendations require changes to regulations and, as the honourable member would know, that involves an elaborate procedure particularly for secondary

school councils, in considering the number of members, how they change that, and how they add to it. There are fairly cumbersome procedures. Subordinate legislation rearrangements are required in that regard and this matter will be taken on board at that time.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** I refer to the difficult area (compounded a little by the split in Ministries) between the Education Department and the Department of Technical and Further Education. The Director-General of TAFE, Mr Fricker, has made certain proposals that the interface between the two departments should be the subject of change. Has the department put together a response, and to what extent is there a mutual agreement about the nature of future changes?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** This is an important issue and it was referred to during the Estimates Committee that examined the lines of the Minister of Employment and Further Education. That Minister indicated that he and I have had a number of meetings and there have been meetings with senior officers. A paper is being prepared which will be distributed by Mr Arnold and me later this month or early in November and which will clarify some of the uncertainty that has arisen not only since the division of the Ministries in this area but also over recent times as programs have been developed. There is substantial interface between the Education Department and the Department of Technical and Further Education.

Some of the difficulties arise outside our jurisdiction, because they relate to national accreditation procedures and requirements, and some frustration has been experienced from that quarter, and we hope to be able to clarify that. As I view the situation around Australia, this is not peculiar to South Australia. There is a lot of activity around Australia in developing this interface and ensuring that it serves the community in the best way possible. We must be aware constantly of the need to work closely together in this area, and certainly my colleague and I are working to ensure that there is a close working relationship and bridge that extends down through our respective departments.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** What was the amount of rent paid by the department for office space in each year from 1981-82? What is the estimated amount of rent to be paid this financial year, 1986-87? These questions may have to be taken on notice, because they involve retrospective statistical information. I am not sure what expenditure line is involved: I do not know whether I have been remiss in researching, but I could not find the allocation. I believe that there may be specific problems in the northern area. Is the cost of rent \$207 000 a year and, more importantly, has the Minister been advised by the inspectors of the Department of Labour that those premises are overcrowded and, if so, how will that be corrected? For example, will the Minister move staff to the Para Hills High School, which is not too far away?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Obviously, I do not have that specific information in front of me, but I will obtain it for the honourable member. Regarding the last point, I understand that discussion is occurring in that region to ascertain whether some of those people who are located in that area office cannot be located in schools where there is vacant space and perhaps even a more pleasant working environment. I will obtain specific details for the honourable member. I undertook to obtain information on several matters that were raised this morning. Mr Barr will comment further.

**Mr Barr:** The answer to the question, 'Can teachers on accouchement leave claim sick leave?' is 'Yes'.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** Is 10 days the entitlement?

**Mr Barr:** There is an entitlement of 10 days a year. We were asked whether that was debited against the sick leave accumulated entitlements, and the answer is 'Yes'. There are not many claims in this category. I am not sure whether a detailed check needs to be made, but the statistics are not readily available and we would need to search examples to try to pull that together. If the honourable member wanted that to happen, we would undertake to do it.

**Mr MEIER:** The main thing that I want to know is the estimated cost to the department. I felt that that should be ascertainable within the next few days or weeks.

**Mr Barr:** We will undertake to do that. We need to know how many examples before we work out the cost. We were also asked whether teachers can gain credit for long service leave while on accouchement or parenting leave, and the answer is that the first 12 months of each would count because each is regarded as a separate stand-alone leave.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** There has been a good deal of controversy, certainly in this place—I do not know whether the public at large has been concerned—about the department's participation in the Jubilee 150 Youth Music Festival. What was the department's involvement and what was the final upshot of the criticism?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** This has been the subject of a number of questions in the House and I undertook to provide further information to members. Since the festival I have received a number of reports from the Director-General of Education, who is also Chairman of the Jubilee 150 Education Executive Committee and I have asked him to provide me with a summary of the present position with respect to that aspect of the whole education program in the Jubilee 150 year.

That committee was formed in 1981, having as its Chairman Mr Steinle. The executive officer was an officer of the Education Department, Ms Ho and Mr Harris, also a departmental officer, was Secretary. The committee comprised a representative group of people from educational sectors throughout the State: from the Education Department, the South Australian College of Advanced Education, TAFE, the University of Adelaide, the Catholic Education Office, the Institute of Teachers, the Independent Schools Board and the History Trust of South Australia. It developed a program which included 1 100 Jubilee events of an educational nature, most of which occurred within the education system and many within schools. It has been a successful program. A great deal of work has been put into it throughout the education system and I am sure that members will have participated in one or another of the many events that resulted from the work of the committee.

However, some problems have been associated with one of the most comprehensive and ambitious projects attempted, the Jubilee 150 Coca-Cola Youth Music Festival. It is clear, in hindsight, that this project was extremely ambitious, comprising events about 60 per cent or more the size of the Adelaide Festival of Arts. It obviously lacked proper management skills and budgetary planning and the cost got away with the committee. The structure to manage and develop this festival came from an initiative of the Jubilee 150 Education Executive Committee, which is a subcommittee of the Jubilee 150 Board. To provide support to it, the Education Department seconded a number of persons to the project, and provided assistance in kind. There was substantial and generous private sponsorship.

The festival took off with a life of its own and established its own books of accounting and entered into certain contractual arrangements to stage functions. The agreements were entered into with the authority of the Jubilee 150 office, and a number of contracts were signed by authorised

persons in that office. Just before the festival started it came to light that there were financial problems associated with the festival. The Director-General spoke to me and said that he had asked the finance section of the Education Department to step in and assist in the financial management of the festival and provide whatever advice and practical expertise it could to ensure that any cost overruns were reined in and brought to a minimum. I am grateful for the work of the officers of the department and the many hours that they spent on this matter.

However, the result has been a disappointment, and substantial additional funding was required. That was provided generously, initially by Coca-Cola, the major sponsor, by the Jubilee 150 Board and the Education Department. Only a few minor financial matters need to be clarified: they should not amount to too much and should be finalised within the next month. I have asked the Director-General, as Chairman of the committee, to provide me with a summary report. He has done so and I should table that report and the attached statement of the final cost to the State, which is likely to be the final cost of this festival. All of the books of accounting and the information that the Director-General gathered on this matter will be forwarded in due course to the Auditor-General, who will carry out an audit of this and other Jubilee 150 events.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** What additional provision is being made for the education of Aboriginal students, particularly those in the remote north-western areas of the State and, I guess, especially students on the Pitjantjatjara and Maralinga homelands?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Substantial additional resources have been provided for Aboriginal students in South Australia, but we would all agree that there is still a long way to go to break down the inequality that exists in our system and the lack of opportunity for Aboriginal students to progress through the education system. Only three years ago the first Aboriginal graduated from Adelaide University, and still only a handful of Aboriginal students undertake the matriculation year in our schools.

However, considerable progress is being made and the State in this area is very appreciative of the assistance given to our education programs by the Commonwealth Government. There is very substantial commitment by the Commonwealth Government in the field of Aboriginal affairs and Aboriginal education programs, in particular. The programs that we are undertaking are diverse because they relate to diverse situations: from the Aboriginal schools on the Pitjantjatjara lands and other remote schools to those in urban areas, and they require different responses and different development of programs.

Part of the additional ancillary staffing will be provided to Aboriginal schools to supplement Aboriginal education workers. In 1986 the department initiated special courses for teachers being allocated to remote Aboriginal schools, and this process will continue in 1987. I think there was a considerable effort put into training programs, and providing assistance to teachers who were appointed to remote Aboriginal schools to spend some time in those communities prior to taking up their appointments. That was very much appreciated by those teachers I have spoken to during this year, and that will be repeated next year.

A coordinator of Aboriginal education will be appointed to the western area of the State—a position that is very much needed. Work will continue on the construction of the Aboriginal school at Elizabeth and new works will be initiated at Indulkana, at Lake Dey Dey (where the Maralinga people are), and at Oodnadatta under a Commonwealth sponsored program. The Lake Dey Dey mobile education

facility is an important initiative for the provision of better homelands schooling, because that is not a static community, but a community that is likely to be nomadic. Completion of the Pipalyatjara and other out-station facilities are expected this year. Although quite a comprehensive range of initiatives are taking place in this important area, I admit we still have a great deal of work to do.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I note with some approval that this is the year of Parents and Students in Schools, which goes by the acronym PASS (and I note that it was intended to call it the Year of Parent Involvement in the Schools System, but the acronym was rejected as being unsuitable). What progress has been made to date in the year of PASS? What concrete actions have been taken place so far to encourage the participation of parents in schools attended by their sons and daughters?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I thank the honourable member for his question because it is very important. We are developing in our education system a great deal more sensitivity to the important role that parents play in the education of their children, the role that the wider community plays in the betterment of our education system, and the role that students themselves play in the life of school communities and in the wider community.

The aim of this year was to listen to what parents and the community were saying to us, to develop a number of strategies for that to occur, and then, over the next few years to respond to that, not simply with the central administration of the department listening to the people, but that change would come about within the school communities; and that a climate would be developed that would bring about those changes rather than that being done as a result of administrative acts or the like from above.

This year has certainly been very interesting for me. I have deliberately set about a pattern of visiting as many schools as I can, and I think I have visited some 80 schools since I have been Minister. I have asked, when visiting schools, to meet, if possible, parents as well—and this has occurred in many cases—and to listen to what they have to say about their schools and education. I have asked, as I said earlier, that senior officers of the department to do that as well, and that other staff in the department see it as an obligation to visit schools from time to time and to make that contact with school communities.

Earlier this year we conducted a telephone hot line which was really a public audit of the Education Department. The report of that hot line has been released and that document is the subject of discussions throughout the education system. It is a most interesting resource document and indicates great interest in the community about our education system and a good deal of support and, indeed, pride in what is happening in our schools, and support for our teachers and those who are working in the education system.

There is also such advice available on how we can improve our system and make it more sensitive, and how we can improve communications within the many and varied sectors and schools that comprise our education system. That hot line was a very encouraging experience, and I hope that it can grow and develop. It indicated that many people in rural areas of South Australia do not have an opportunity to comment on the wider education system; and more than half the calls received were from country residents. In fact, the lines were jammed for most of the time and we were able to take details of about 1 200 phone calls during that exercise. About 160 members of the department—most of the senior staff—and some parents and students staffed those telephones and listened to the responses over that weekend and on the Monday. I know of no other Govern-

ment authority that has had such a public audit of its activities.

A series of conferences have taken place as a result of additional funding provided to organisations, particularly parent bodies, to allow for greater participation of parents in seminars. I have attended some seminars at various conference centres, and some held in conjunction with other authorities, for example, the Community and Neighbourhood House Movement—those who are involved in student counselling roles in schools—and the WEA and other organisations conducted one of those conferences. A number of seminars during the year have provided very valuable feedback to the department and schools and have provided a voice for parents. Much progress has been made with respect to student involvement in schools. Indeed, the State Council of Students has been established and has developed, and funding has been provided to that organisation.

The very valuable role that students have played this year in a wide range of activities in the education system has been encouraging indeed. The review of school councils to which the member for Mount Gambier referred will be released later this year and recommendations on that will be implemented as we move through the discussion process on the implementation of some of those recommendations.

There is then the matter of the leadership paper that is very much the concern of parents and school councils, and the role of parents in this is very important and one for which I believe there is a great deal of support in the community. That is one of many initiatives that I hope we will develop in the next few years for much more formal involvement of parents in the department's decision taking processes.

With respect to parents bodies, additional funding has been provided in the budget for them. I have met with them all and had close working relationships with a number of people who were involved in parent organisations, whether in the tertiary entrance requirements review or in one of the other dozens of activities in which parents are involved in committee advisory structures of one sort or another in the department.

I must say that I appreciate the contact and support that parents are able to give and the attendance and commitment that they show through their presence in so many forums and advisory bodies within the department. Hopefully, as this is the focus that has been brought about this year, it will grow in the department and will become more firmly established in the years ahead.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** The Minister referred to the education hotline and the involvement of 160 members of the department. Can the Minister advise the Committee of the estimated cost of the hotline, including the compilation, production and analysis of the report? In particular, was the staff paid for working over the weekend and, if it was, what rate was paid?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** It appears that all the staff who worked out of hours over the weekend gave their time voluntarily to the project. The costs associated with it would have been those of the telephone. There was a toll-free line for country people, and it was much appreciated. I refer also to the cost of the paper involved in the preparation of the document, which was undertaken by departmental officers. I will try to gather some estimate of the cost for the honourable member.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** This question relates to the Minister's reply to an earlier question about the Youth Music Festival. I understand that the Minister tabled a document, and I wonder whether members of the Committee could have a copy of that document.



**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Yes.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** Does the Government have any plans to alter significantly the operations of the Correspondence School? If it has, what are those plans? Do they involve any proposal to split off the senior secondary section of the school and give that responsibility to each of the areas?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I understand that consideration is being given to the desirability of the present location of the Correspondence School in the Education Building in Flinders Street. Personally, I find that an undesirable location for a school. I also find it undesirable for access for those people who come to the city to make contact with the school staff. An increasing number of resources are available to us because of enrolment decline, and we are searching for more suitable accommodation for the Correspondence School. It is a large entity comprising about 90 staff, and another home is not easy to find.

The cost of accommodation in the Education Building is quite prohibitive. Because it is a Government building, the rent calculation is negative but, if one was to rent out to private enterprise that Education Building space (putting a calculation against it) it would be an enormous expense—certainly over \$1 million in rent. There is also an economic incentive to transfer it elsewhere in order to provide a better environment for teachers and for those who want to make contact with the school. I will ask Mr Barr to advise on the more detailed specifics relating to that.

**Mr Barr:** It is fair to say that the operations of the Correspondence School have changed over time and are still changing. A distance education committee was formed and has reported recently, and we are looking at that report now. The question of the provision of educational services can no longer be regarded entirely for persons who are remote from the Adelaide metropolitan area. With the shrinking secondary population, there has been a tendency towards increasing calls on the Correspondence School to provide services for secondary subjects for persons located in the metropolitan area.

Our growth pattern within the school (and it is a very significant growth area), whilst its traditional primary base has remained relatively static, is for secondary subjects being delivered to persons who are rather more in the metropolitan area than in country locations. It was reasonable to examine that growth because it was a considerable growth; the expectation was, and is, that with the decline in enrolments, and possibly in some locations with the requirement for secondary schools to reduce curriculum offerings at the upper secondary level, that many students might wish to undertake particular subjects that were no longer provided within the campus and get assistance for those offerings off campus.

One way to deal with this, as the Minister indicated earlier, is by way of clustering so that schools in close proximity can share those resources. Another way, particularly with increasing technology advances, is to do that from a centre which is more remote than just the immediate cluster. So, a subcommittee of that distance education group was set up specifically to look at the Correspondence School. That is in train at present and various options are being looked at.

One of those options, which is not yet firm by any means, is the possibility of looking at the secondary component in a different way and seeing whether or not it may be more appropriate to deal with it on an area basis rather than from a central location. The end result is not yet finalised. That is the extent of the answer to the question that can be given at the present time.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I regard Mr Barr's answer to the question as containing some very significant policy implications for the future of secondary education in South Australia. A great deal more could be read into what Mr Barr has said than is overtly or immediately apparent from those statements. Now is possibly not the time nor the place to pursue them, but obviously there are profound implications for secondary education in the turning towards distance education as a means of supplementing the declining resources in secondary schools. On that same subject, is the Minister aware of considerable concern within the South Australian Correspondence School that the work being undertaken on the senior secondary project is in danger of grinding to a halt because anticipated funding levels have not eventuated and, if so, what is the Minister's response to that concern?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I am not sure whether the member is prepared to explain where that information was obtained and the details. The budget provides for additional staffing for the Correspondence School, so I would have thought that quite the contrary situation obtained.

**Mr De LAINE:** Does the department have a definite policy on the introduction of the Montessori concept of education in South Australian schools and, if so, what is the policy?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** A number of programs and various models, if you like, have been established over the years with respect to the Montessori method. Some occur within the State schools system and others occur outside. I will ask Mr Barr to provide the member with additional information on this teaching method.

**Mr Barr:** The only supplementary information that I can give is that from time to time requests are made of the department for a re-examination of the method of delivery of education. The late Dr Maria Montessori was concerned with young children—junior primary and primary children. In this State we have a history of various aspects of Montessori education being introduced into our junior primary schools going back to the early 1920s. However, times have changed. The Montessori method, as it was then known, has been adapted to take into account the different advances in education since that time. At Alberton there is a Montessori approach in the junior primary school, and it has extended through to the primary school.

There are other aspects of Montessori education in other schools. The departmental approach is that, if a community wants to look at this method and see whether it can be beneficial to a particular program being operated in a certain school, there are officers within the department who are prepared to talk about that with the school community and its teachers. We have an absolutely open mind about its introduction. Certainly, we are not at a point where we believe that a particular educative process should be imposed in a general way. However, we are happy to deal with it on a one-by-one basis with particular communities.

**Mr De LAINE:** Recent reports highlighted proposals to sell Wattle Park Teachers Centre, the special education centre at Kings Park and the Raywood In-Service Centre. However, I understand that Raywood is not among the properties which State Cabinet has decided to sell. What is the situation with regard to Raywood's future?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I was somewhat staggered to read on the front page of the *Advertiser* recently an announcement by the Opposition spokesman on education that there would be a sell-off of education properties, including Raywood. It was a most ill-informed and destructive comment to make about that institution and indeed about the activities and management of the Education Department. How-

ever, it is only one in a series of ill-informed and destructive criticisms of the education system that have been made by that spokesperson, including statements referring to the closure of one half of the schools in the State; the call for the spending of another \$150 million in the education sector; and comments about budget overruns in the department. All these statements are simply not true: they are inflammatory and do little credit to public spokespersons who hold office. I think the matter referred to by the member is another in this series.

It has been widely known now for many months that the Beasley Committee is looking at the future options for the Raywood In-Service Centre. Members of the committee include private sector representatives with special expertise in management and persons from the public sector. The committee is thoroughly investigating the future options for Raywood, which forms a very important piece of the heritage of South Australia. My concern is that the Education Department (and indeed the education community) is asked to provide a very substantial subsidy for the maintenance and running of the centre. In fact, every user of the centre, whether they are from within the education sector or outside (and a substantial number come from outside), are subsidised by the Education Department. As I said, that in turn means that less resources will be available for the education community as a whole and in relation to what happens in our schools. So the committee is looking at the management and future use of, and options for, Raywood.

As I said, following the public statement that appeared on the front page of the *Advertiser* about its being a device to have some influence on our budget or whatever, the chances of Raywood being transferred from public ownership are quite remote. However, I believe that we can manage and have the use of that resource for all users in a much more efficient way that will not place a burden on the education community. That is being investigated at the moment, but it has not gone any further than that. I suggest that very substantial costs are associated with the management of this quite huge estate in the Adelaide Hills.

The other properties mentioned by the member were the subject of a Cabinet decision last year—a decision which is also widely known in the education community and in the wider community, that is, the proposal that we sell the Kings Park and Wattle Park centres. The Wattle Park centre in particular requires very substantial expenditure, and it is proving to be a financial burden. Decisions have to be taken in the near future on whether we should spend substantial money on upgrading it. As I have said, it was decided last year that the property would be disposed of and that the functions previously performed there and in some other centres would be continued and performed in a more suitable venue.

There was a proposal that we would develop the former Enfield Receiving Home site as an education centre to provide this function, but a number of factors militate against establishing another education institution of this type. It would be a substantial institution and require substantial funds at a time when there is an excess of buildings and properties within the education system itself. I can say that neither of those properties will be disposed of until we have found suitable alternative accommodation for those programs.

The Wattle Park centre has provided a very valuable service over many years to the education system. We would like to see that service continued in hospitable surroundings, and perhaps better than are currently provided. So, that search is on at the moment. None of those proposals relate to this budgetary process; they do not amount to a fire sale

or a sell-off of our properties. Indeed, they are being managed and decisions will be taken with respect to them along the lines of proper and responsible management procedures.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I am particularly interested in the question about Wattle Park because, as the Minister would know, it is within my electorate. I note with interest, despite the Minister's denials, that these are financially inspired decisions—I would say that they are—and in fact the Government appears to have intentions, as one constituent put it, of flogging off quite a few parcels of land in my electorate, namely the Magill Home, the South Australian Youth Training Centre, and now Wattle Park. The Minister described the comments of the Opposition spokesman on education as ill informed and destructive, yet in relation to Wattle Park they appear to be highly accurate.

I certainly had the Wattle Park decision confirmed by a senior officer of the department when I rang in response to deep concern from advisory staff located at Wattle Park that the Government may intend, when transferring staff from the site to another site, not to maintain staff as an entity. The staff there, and certainly at schools that I have been able to contact, regard the function of Wattle Park as absolutely critical for the professional development of teachers and for curriculum development.

I have been asked to seek an assurance from the Minister that the function of Wattle Park will not be in any way dispersed and that the advisory staff will remain as a team, together with the considerable and valuable amount of archival material that has accumulated over the past decades at Wattle Park; and in the transfer to another site—possibly a school site made available through declining enrolments—that there will not be any dispersal of the function. It is seen by the staff there that the coordination that has built up over the years and the close relationship between the advisers and between the advisers and staff in metropolitan, country and non-government schools, is critically important. The high standard of education in South Australia is due in no small part to the influence of the Wattle Park centre.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** There is no doubt that Wattle Park has played a very valuable role in the development of the high standard of education that we enjoy in South Australia, and it is in fact the envy of other States. It is people like Colin Thiele and Garth Boomer and many others who have headed up Wattle Park who have given that leadership and vision to so much of our education system that has permeated right across this State. Of course, we do not want to lose that momentum, that vision and enthusiasm, that has come from Wattle Park. Wattle Park consists of a number of groups of people who form disparate services in the education system. If the honourable member is seeking on behalf of the staff an assurance that there will be a cosy coterie of staff forever and ever in one structure, then I cannot give that. I do not think that is what the staff would want, either. I think they are seeking a working environment that is conducive to the work that they carry out and in the best interests of the overall activities of the department, and we share those goals.

It is not possible to say that that body or group of people working there in the way in which they are currently structured will continue forever and ever, but obviously that matter will be considered sympathetically, and with the importance that is due to it, dealing in the decisions that will be taken. Indeed, no great rush of decisions is about to occur here. A lot more work is still to be done in this area and, obviously, there will be consultation with the staff. So, I am a little at a loss to know what the undertaking is that

the honourable member is seeking on behalf of some of those staff. Mr Barr might be able to add a little more.

I do not know whether the honourable member has an understanding of the groups that are situated at Wattle Park and what they actually do. I might say that it has been put to me very forcefully by a number of individuals, and certainly by the Burnside council, that that is an inefficient use of that property, particularly if it requires very substantial additional expenditure to maintain it. It is in the overall community interest that a different use be made of that property. I am also advised that that is a valuable property and the resources obtained from its disposal could well provide facilities of a much higher standard and much more appropriate to today's usage in another venue. So, that is something that the department is looking at. It has assessed it very carefully, so I think a very attractive proposal can be brought together on this matter.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I would like to turn to the paper which the Minister provided on the J150 Coca-Cola Youth Music Festival. On page 3 of that paper, it states:

The J150 Board provided a total of \$202 000 to the festival and the Education Department \$322 000 plus costs borne by the department in terms of accommodation and staffing.

Can the Minister advise what is the breakdown of staffing costs which should be added to that \$322 000? It looks as if it would be significant when one looks at the staffing time of the Education Department members of the committee—the Director-General, Mr Harris, Mr Barr, Mr Brown from TAFE, Ms Buxton, who was full time, and also Mr Fricker from TAFE. All of those people are on the public payroll. I would appreciate, if not immediately at least on the *Hansard* record, an indication of the costs borne by the department in terms of accommodation and staffing. Does the Minister have either of those cost breakdowns and, if not, could he provide them?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I am not sure whether it is possible to provide that accurately, bearing in mind that the penultimate paragraph in the report states:

On a positive side the program drew together acclaimed international youth groups and provided a focus on music education for youth audiences. The experiences of 3 500 billeted students from country schools and the unique experiences of many students have resulted in letters of commendation from many school principals . . .

Literally thousands of officers of the department throughout the State, and I imagine in other areas of the Public Service, were touched by this festival in some way, and one could add into the costs the time and effort of schools throughout the State. I will obtain information on the physical accommodation and the time for which seconded officers left the department to work in that area.

**Mr MEIER:** Why has there been a 14 per cent increase in expenditure on departmental bus services in 1985-86 when the comparable increase in the cost of private bus services was only 2 per cent? What action is the department taking on the recommendations of the Transport Review Committee to increase the use of private bus contractors?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Where in the papers is the 14 per cent increase referred to?

**Mr MEIER:** I did my preparation before the Committee hearing, so I will have to come back to that.

**Ms Kolbe:** I was not aware that the increase in the private sector was only 2 per cent last year. We monitor the comparisons rather closely, and from our assessments we believe that we are very much in line with the increases in costs in the private sector. Of course, we run a bus service that is very much dependent on movements in the market. We run a number of bus services with contractors rather than providing services ourselves. We also have work carried out

on the buses in workshops, mainly in country areas: we do not have our own workshops, and thus we use private labour extensively. Increases in our costs are totally dependent on movements in the market, because only a few staff are involved in the provision of that service, mainly in a supervisory or inspectorial capacity. Cost increases are determined very much by movements in the private market.

The analysis of the year's expenditure in relation to increases in comparison with previous years revealed that the major increase related to movements in maintenance costs. Of course, that is dependent on increases in the cost of labour and parts. The honourable member may be aware that a number of parts are imported, as most of the buses or parts of them are imported. Thus we are very much dependent on the costs that prevail in the market at large. The recommendations of the Bus Review Committee are currently under consideration in the department, and one or two of them that did not have significant cost implications but were educationally desirable have been implemented. During the process of the review we suspended contracting to outside bodies, and that is being reinstated. At this very moment the department is preparing to let tenders in the first instance to outside bodies, and the final result will be known once the cost of those tenders comes back to us.

**Mr MEIER:** My previous question referred to page 517 of the yellow book. I do not know that I can fully accept that answer in relation to cost increases. I assume that Ms Kolbe was making the point that inspection services added to the cost of departmental bus services: is that correct?

**Ms Kolbe:** The department provides only administrative and inspectorial services. Three inspectors check our buses to ensure that safety measures are in accordance with the legislation. However, I am not quite sure where the figure of 2 per cent originated, because our contracts show increases significantly beyond 2 per cent. On average, costs are about 7 per cent higher than in the previous period.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I point out that the Education Department's bus service is larger than the STA.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I refer to participation rates for students aged between 16 and 19 years. Everyone would be aware that the participation rate in Australia is increasing fairly rapidly, but we have a long way to go in comparison with the Japanese and the northern Europeans. I note on page 530 of the yellow book that detailed development of policy for the education of 16 to 19-year-olds is to be finalised in the coming year, and I refer to the document that was circulated earlier today which shows that actual enrolments for 1979 to 1986 are tabulated and projected enrolments for 1987 to 1995 are shown.

I note from that document that a vast increase after the low point in secondary enrolments in 1993 is not anticipated, and the take-off rate after that is not as great as I would have expected. The turnaround point does not occur as early as I would have thought, given the expected increase in participation rates. Were increasing participation rates considered when that document was prepared? Secondly, could participation rates and even enrolments in secondary schools turn around and go up rather than down by 1991?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The honourable member has raised a very important issue, and one that is of concern. We use every incentive to ensure that young people stay in our school system to year 12. Indeed, the Federal Minister for Education has said on numerous occasions that the Federal Administration is committed to ensuring that young people see it as a right to stay at school until year 12. Figures shown in the green book (which I tabled earlier today) relate

to retention rates. Dr Tillett, who has been monitoring retention rates, will comment further.

It should also be pointed out that a great deal of consideration is being given across this country to ways in which young people can be provided with incentives to stay within the mainstream of society, and I refer to young people who would otherwise simply drop out of schools and hence be on the unemployed list. Those teenage years are important years in the development of young people, and there are limited opportunities for those who are not attracted to continuing in secondary education. There are limited opportunities in TAFE, vocational training generally, and in the work force and entry into the tertiary sector is limited.

The decisions taken by a number of States and the Federal Government to bring about parity, for example, between TEAS payments and unemployment benefits and to remove from the system some of the disincentives are now being implemented, and I hope that very imaginative programs will evolve over the next few years to provide such programs as youth guarantees, and the like, so that in those important years young people have choices between full-time or part-time employment, participation in an educational or vocational training stream, or the opportunity to transfer between them. In that way we can minimise or eliminate the dole as an option for teenagers in Australian society. I understand that this has been achieved in places such as Sweden, and a lot of work is being done around the world on youth policy. There is real hope that we can make some progress in this area in Australia in the next few years.

**Dr Tillett:** I point out that enrolment projections refer to government schools, and that is a factor that influences the projections. It is difficult to judge what proportion of the age group concerned will attend government schools and what proportion will attend non-government schools in any particular year, but that is a significant factor in determining enrolment levels in the government sector.

While it is true that participation rates in senior secondary and Government schools have been increasing, it is also true that the relative proportion of the total population in non-government schools has been increasing in recent years. While it is difficult to project what might happen in future to retention rates, it is also difficult to project what might happen to the participation of students in non-government schools. When one makes enrolment projections, one is caught in a bind between being too optimistic and too pessimistic. Whichever way one goes, penalties might occur for the system.

The enrolment projections are based on fairly conservative estimates of what future retention rates will be. I agree that if they increase in response to the various initiatives that have been taken, the low point of secondary enrolments would not be as low and the take-off thereafter might be greater than is shown. It is probably also worthwhile pointing out that participation rates tend to be influenced considerably by the current situation of youth unemployment. Were youth unemployment figures to change dramatically in the next seven or eight years up to 1993, that would significantly affect participation rates.

*[Sitting suspended from 3.35 to 3.50 p.m.]*

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I move:

That the Committee time be extended to 6.5 p.m. due to the failure of the Committee to resume at 3.50 p.m. as a result of the lack of the Chairman and the Minister.

The Committee divided on the motion:

Ayes (3)—Mr Allison, Ms Cashmore (teller), and Mr Meier.

Noes (2)—Messrs De Laine and Robertson (teller).

Majority of 1 for the Ayes.  
Motion thus carried.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** My question concerns disabled children, particularly the intellectually disabled, going into the mainstream of Education Department schools. On page 531 of the yellow book there is an undertaking to continue to improve structures and mechanisms to optimise the provision of services to those students. How much help in terms of hours per week can be expected for intellectually disabled students who are mainstreamed into Education Department schools in the areas of junior primary, primary and high schools? Is the process of mainstreaming intellectually disabled children into schools more 'cost effective' than placing those students in special schools? In other words, what is the cost effectiveness of mainstreaming as a general policy?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The honourable member has asked some important questions. I do not have that specific information and the results of any analyses that may have been conducted about cost effectiveness, although that is only one of the considerations in designing programs for disabled children when considering mainstreaming particularly intellectually disabled children. It has been the subject of much debate not only in the education system but in the human services sector generally for the past decade or so. As a result of that we have a wide range of options available for children in South Australia although there are programs that are evolving, and certainly there is a substantial thrust to mainstreaming not only for intellectually disabled children—and the problems there are often complex—but for all children who have a disadvantage of one form or another.

I was at Woodville Primary School a while ago, and that school has a special program for the hearing disabled. I was pleasantly surprised to learn of the extent to which mainstreaming was taking place in that school, where many of the staff are literate in sign language, as are many of the students. At the school assembly a song was sung using sign language, and there is a high degree of integration of those students throughout the school. I spoke to parents that day and have done so since that time, and there is a high degree of satisfaction with the progress that those children are making in that school environment as currently constructed; whereas in the past there would have been a discrete class of children who suffer hearing disabilities, and they would have been dealt with under a program and had specialist teachers who would have related to that class alone, then it would have been the exception to join with the rest of the school. That trend has been well established now in many areas of the education system. We still maintain a number of special schools, and once again the programs of those schools are also evolving. I will be pleased to obtain more specific information on those points and provide it to the honourable member.

**Mr GROOM:** My question concerns page 148 of the white book and the line 'Property services'. The Hectorville Primary School, for about the past four financial years, has been trying to get a sloped bitumen area remedied. Presently at the end of the schoolyard the bitumen suddenly goes down into a steep decline and is in a very dangerous condition. This has been so for a number of years. On my information from the school council, children have fallen into what really amounts to a steep ditch, have fallen over backwards and have been injured.

Every year since 1982, as I understand it, the school has been told it is in the highest category. Certainly for the past two years this has been so—and I understand this is supposed to be a priority category. Needless to say, this work

has not been carried out. The Minister is aware that I have written to him in relation to this matter. The reply I received was essentially the same as the reply I received from his predecessor, that once again we have to reapply through the system. I know it has been classified once again as a high priority. The school community is fed up with the the delay.

As I understand it, the resistance on the part of the department is that it will cost much money and that the school has a falling enrolment. About five years ago the school had an enrolment of about 300 children. This year the enrolment was down to 201, and next year its peak drop will be about 185, from which base it is expected that enrolments will increase.

That is well above the criterion set by the Minister's predecessor that, if a school continually dropped in numbers to below 100, it would be earmarked for closure. There appears to be no risk of the school's falling into that category where it might be considered for closure. If the departmental officers look to see whether it will be done this year, they will be looking at it from the point of view of the cost and the fact that the school has had some declining enrolments. In my view this would be a heartless approach.

I can say that if this problem is not rectified and some child is seriously injured when playing in the school yard and falling into a steep ditch, it would amount to negligence on the part of the Education Department. This matter has reached a point where it is a serious issue in the school community, and I ask the Minister to take it up and give a definitive commencing date for the work on this sloped bitumen area.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I thank the honourable member for his question. I think I wrote to him just a short time ago about this matter and by chance, I have discussed it also with the chairperson of the school council whom I met some months ago and who also made similar expressions of concern to me at that time. I must say from the outset that the maintenance line is not within the Education Department's vote but is in the estimates of the Department of Housing and Construction. The priorities are set between the Education Department's area office and officers of the Department of Housing and Construction.

There is an elaborate mechanism for reaching those decisions. I suggest that it is a very fair one, albeit that it establishes what is quite a frustrating process for school communities that want to maintain adequate facilities for their school. The department is very concerned about the state of some school grounds, and it does raise those very questions of safety and responsibility for the maintenance of safe play areas.

Whilst it is a little easier to deal with potholes and dangerous ridges in the asphalt, and the like, major reconstructions are another matter and do take more time because of the increased costs associated with reconstructing those play areas. I can assure the honourable member that I will have the matter reviewed again and seek further discussions with the Department of Housing and Construction as well to ensure that every proper consideration is given to the situation at the Hectorville Primary School.

**Mr GROOM:** In the past when I have spoken or written to the Minister he has been most sympathetic about the plight of the school. I hope that the Minister understands that my responsibility is to ensure the elimination of danger for the 200 children at the school.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** Concern among teaching staff in schools has been brought to my notice relating to the directive issued by the Director-General at about budget time indicating that Superintendents of schools would no longer be involved in the assessment of candidates for

promotion to positions below principal level. Are the Minister and the Director-General aware that many teachers are concerned about this—that their assessment will be harmed in some way? I am not sure what is the rationale behind their concern, but it has been put to me that there may be some prejudice against them because of the loss of an independent and more impartial figure in the Superintendent of schools. These people were always feared when I was in education, but apparently they are wanted back now. It involves an about-turn.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I will ask Mr Marsh to comment.

**Mr Marsh:** That matter has not yet been resolved. It is an item for discussion. In the past where a principal applied for assessment to a higher level of promotion, Superintendents and other officers outside the school would have been involved in that assessment. However, in the past where a teacher sought to be assessed for a position of deputy, senior or principal, a panel made up of a Superintendent and the head of the school was involved.

As to the question whether equity or impartiality will be affected by the new arrangements, it is difficult to say until we have actually resolved who will sit on the new panels. I believe that we can come to an arrangement where matters of equity and impartiality can be resolved to the satisfaction of the teaching service and in line with the needs of the administration to see that a fair deal is done all round.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** I have a couple more questions on the same matter. In the same memo relating to the Superintendents of schools, the Director-General indicated that many responses to ministerial and other inquiries would now be handled at the school level. Does the Minister believe that that is readily achievable? I understand that there is mounting opposition to this from the principals association.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** If there is, it has not been expressed to me. It sometimes surprises me how reluctant some persons in leadership positions are to change and to improve the delivery of services, particularly to the wider community. There is a very convoluted process whereby a member of the public makes a formal complaint to the Minister or writes a letter about one matter or another, and it proceeds up through the department and down again to get some information to enable the Minister to reply. It then comes back to the Minister and is prepared and the reply given.

It seems that a much simpler way is for the person who has that information within a local school community to pick up the telephone and ring or see the person in the schoolyard to try to sort out that matter, and then provide a report to the Minister. If it cannot be resolved, other action can be taken. Similarly, a matter can work its way up through the system but rather than there being long delays in the process, matters can be dealt with when they are matters of the moment.

I suggest that probably less time is involved if the principal or other person at the school who has carriage or responsibility for the matter is able to deal with it in that way rather than his having to go through much paperwork in preparing detailed responses, and for that to go through the bureaucracy. That is the intention of that process: it is not to create a huge central bureaucratic structure and to deal with those matters in an Ombudsman-like way. Certainly, where matters should be the province of the Minister, they should be, and indeed are, dealt with in that way. Where matters cannot be resolved other than by ministerial intervention, that is done. In such a diverse department such as education, with about 200 000 children in our schools, it seems that many of these matters can be dealt

with at the school level, and that is where at least the initial resolution process of that should begin.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** Does the Minister see the position of Superintendent of schools, the old inspector's role, gradually being phased out altogether? Within that same memo is the intention to reduce substantially the number of visits of Superintendents to schools? In former days, about 15 or 20 years ago, it used to be a martinet of a person who used to come—male or female—to ride roughshod over the principal and staff, if necessary. Gradually the role became more fatherly or avuncular, and that of a friend and adviser to the staff in need. We now see the Superintendent being phased out of school visits. Is this part of a rapidly accelerating pattern towards disposing of superintendents altogether?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** There are more than 60 Superintendents of schools at present. A small reduction in that number is proposed, and that is also an area of review. To some extent the role of Superintendents will be touched on in that review. No, there is no strategy to phase out the role of the Superintendent—it is an important function. I guess what can be questioned from time to time is how many there should be and what their duties should be. It is important that that information is assessed and settled. If one reads the doctoral thesis of the now Dr A.W. Jones, former Director-General of the Education Department, one can see the historical role of inspectors and now Superintendents of schools in the development of the department. Their role has been very important, and that function will obviously continue. Hopefully, it will be strengthened by this process. Mr Barr will add to what I have said.

**Mr Barr:** As far as the Director-General is concerned, we do now (as has been the case) view the Superintendent of schools as a key person in the department: a person who bridges the administration and schools, who cannot be removed, who in many cases is a leader in curriculum development, who is required to assist when problems emerge in some schools in matters of school management and with sensitive personnel matters, and in helping schools to look at staff development programs for whole of school staffing. While a small reduction can be countenanced at this time, the suggestion that this is but the first phase in successive phases towards elimination is, I believe, incorrect and not in the minds of the Director-General nor, I suspect, the Minister.

**Mr De LAINE:** There have been various rumours suggesting that reorganisation of the Education Department has cost taxpayers some \$8 million, a substantial part of which is an ongoing cost. Can the Minister comment on the reorganisation, the costs relating to it and the benefits that have been derived from it?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I guess there has been controversy about reorganisation of the reorganisation as it was conceived in the period of the Tonkin Administration in the early part of this decade. That has continued in the department. There were 10 regions in the department, but there are now five under the reorganised structure. Each region has an area office. As has been said in answer to questions throughout the day, the bulk of the department's services are provided through those area offices. Clearly, the major aims of the reorganisation and a great deal of the impetus for it came out of the reviews that have been carried out and the reports which were later expanded by the report of the Keeves inquiry.

The aim was to bring services closer to schools and to increase the quality of resource management. While it is still a process of implementation, and it is not yet complete, the educational effectiveness of the establishment of area

offices is becoming clearer as time goes by. Schools are better served through their closer identification with area offices. In particular, the availability of personnel, administrative and financial services at area level, I believe, is beginning to show success. The department has met its budgetary targets, and the injection of resource management and expertise at area level have been an important facet of the overall management of a very complex and dynamic resource profile in the department.

It has been said that the department has blown its budget, and various figures have been suggested with one degree of authority or another. The department has not blown its budget because of the reorganisation, nor indeed for any other reason. The department was directed by Cabinet to effect the reorganisation within the budgetary provisions made available to it, without any addition of either financial or human resources. With the exception of the use of a small amount of capital to establish area offices—and that was the subject of an earlier question—this has been achieved. It should be noted that the department is vacating a number of floors in the Education Centre in Flinders Street, and that will represent a substantial saving to the Government.

It is also important that members of the Committee are aware that the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee is looking at this matter and that the department is pleased to cooperate with whatever information the PAC requests, so that this matter can be clarified. In fact, I have challenged the Opposition spokesman on education and others to provide the PAC with factual information on which they base their allegations so that that information can be scrutinised by the PAC, as well. Really, these are direct attacks on the administration of the Education Department over recent years and on the way in which it manages its budget. No more damaging statement can be made against administrators than to allege that they have mismanaged their budget responsibilities, bearing in mind that those officers cannot defend themselves in forums such as this. I am pleased to put at rest the rumours that have been peddled around the education community and in other places in recent times. Hopefully they will be put to rest once and for all.

I think the current management practices indicate very clearly that we need to break down very large bureaucracies such as the Education Department into manageable and workable units. To a large extent the regionalisation and establishment of area offices does that: it brings those sections of the department into better managerial control. While talking about this, I have an answer to a previous question about the cost of office accommodation for the northern area office. The cost of accommodation was \$242 800 per annum, and for the eastern area office the cost was \$200 000 per annum. The cost of the hot line that the member for Coles sought information about is approximately \$12 000, including telephones, postage, advertisements and the cost of secondment of an officer for a period of time to organise it.

**Mr De LAINE:** Will the introduction of the regionalisation of South Australian schools into five areas affect in any way the level of priority projects funding for any schools presently classified as priority project schools?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The simple answer is 'No, it will not affect it.' It is hoped in fact that there will be some improvements in the delivery of services in this way. If the honourable member would like more information about that, we could certainly provide it.

**Mr De LAINE:** Will the Commonwealth fringe benefits tax have any significant impact on the costs or operations of the Education Department?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The short answer is 'Yes, it will.' They are yet to be accurately determined. Indeed, it is with some interest that I noticed yesterday that the Commonwealth announced there would be a review of certain aspects of the fringe benefits tax. Whilst it is welcome, it makes it a little difficult to actually calculate its implications for a department like the Education Department with such a substantial payroll and indeed a system whereby, for example, the calculation with respect to teacher housing rents and use of motor vehicles and the like all have potential impact on the application of the fringe benefits tax. I think the Premier explained to the Committee yesterday that Cabinet has established a committee that is considering all of these aspects and is monitoring the situation. As yet, no final decision has been made on respective departmental liabilities for payment of the tax. Treasury has set into motion initiatives to reduce the impost of the tax, which I think we (as are all employers) are beholden to do, to see whether some savings can be made.

As I have said, the liability of the Education Department is expected to be quite significant, particularly due to the provision of housing in country areas and subsidised rentals. I guess there is a lot of debating yet to be done about the precise nature of that subsidy and whether it is viewed as such, or whether there is an incentive and what are the connotations of that.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** On page 519 of the Program Estimates is a reference to the expenditure associated with administrative and clerical support. The proposed expenditure for 1985-86 was \$2.2 million but the actual expenditure was \$4.1 million. What is the reason for the increase?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** This was to be considered under the miscellaneous line. I will try to obtain that information for the honourable member during the afternoon. I will not hazard a guess at this stage.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** Is it true that the position of Coordinator of Priority Projects has been vacant since February this year and the position was abolished at that time?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Yes, that is correct. The position was previously held by Mr Hayden and he resigned from the department.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** As a supplementary question, what was the justification for the abolition of the position?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** This is a Commonwealth funded program. In answer to a question a moment ago from the member for Price, it was explained that the proposal currently under consideration is to place these services in regions where they are closer to schools and the community rather than in a central position, so that there can be greater involvement of the community and parents with decisions taken in respect of the implementation of that proposal. That has been the strategy adopted with respect to that position.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** It is interesting that a number of these Commonwealth positions that have been abolished now appear to be more appropriately fulfilled at area level. One wonders why they were created in the first place, if that is indeed the case. However, I am not asking the Minister that: that is a rhetorical question. Is the Minister concerned about the operations of the appeal mechanism under the Education Act and is he considering changes to those appeal mechanisms?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** With respect to the gratuitous comments about regionalisation, the honourable member

seems to be joining many others who want to cast some aspersions on that approach.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I was wondering why the coordinator was necessary in the first place.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** This is one example of many that are currently under way. Much has been achieved from a highly centralised structure, often closeted in buildings that are inaccessible, but we are now moving these programs out into the community. This is just another example of that occurring. With respect to appeals, I have had no representations made to me from within or without the department about this matter, so I have nothing to add to that. There is certainly nothing on my desk to indicate that there is a need for a review, restructuring or reappraisal of the appellate structure.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I refer to the Government's decision to phase out corporal punishment in schools. What provision has been made in the budget for support to schools that face difficulty in taking on the task of phasing out corporal punishment? What steps have been taken so far, and what is proposed for the remainder of the year?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** This is a very important question, which should be dealt with in the context of the maintenance of discipline in our school communities, and it is of concern to all parents, students and staff that an orderly learning environment be established. To achieve our aim of abolishing corporal punishment within five years (that is, before the early 1990s) it is obviously important that support and additional resources be provided for those school communities in which the maintenance of an orderly learning environment is difficult to achieve.

Many schools have taken initiatives in this area. Recently I received correspondence from some 20 principals who supported the moves in that area. There is provision in the budget for the establishment of a position so that a person will be available to assist schools that are developing programs along these lines. Effective and innovative programs are being established. That project officer, at the ED2 level, will be responsible for student behaviour in schools and a child protection program. Hopefully, an appointment will be made quite soon, and there will be associated correspondence with the schools in both the government and non-government sectors to develop programs and to share experiences in this important area.

From the correspondence I have received and discussions throughout the education community, it appears that corporal punishment is used rarely indeed. Many schools, parents and teachers see the retention of corporal punishment as having a deterrent value, and that has been the strongest factor. There is a very real opportunity to provide constructive incentives and other changes to the learning environment rather than deterrents to ensure the standard of behaviour that is important in our schools. I hope that we can change from practices of the last century to relevant and positive programs that can assist those children and adolescents in the school system who act out.

It was certainly my experience as Minister of Community Welfare that many of those young people come from environments where there are many facets to the reason why they misbehave. Often, resources beyond the school community are required to tackle some of those problems. I hope that in our work over the next few years we can bring about a sharing in a more coordinated way so that these resources can be focused on the modification of the behaviour that is offensive to school communities. I hope we can make real progress in this very important area over the next few years.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** The yellow book (page 537) refers to services for preschool children with special needs. The Kent Town centre aims at integrating disabled children into schools. Apart from providing funds for the Kent Town centre, the Government also provides funds for developmental learning programs at both the Sturt and Salisbury Colleges of Advanced Education. Those programs are run by the Downs Syndrome Association, a parent administered group, with staffing being funded by the department.

Has the Minister received feedback on the effectiveness of those programs in terms of the way in which they are administered and the results they produce? I understand that without exception children who have gone through those programs have been mainstreamed successfully into schools, thereby fulfilling the aims of the integration policy of providing as normal an environment as possible for disabled children. It is hoped that greater cost effectiveness would be a side effect.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I thank the honourable member for his comments. I can only confirm that those programs are very valuable indeed and are effective. The feedback I have received from the Kent Town centre is very positive indeed, and that is reflected by people in the community who as parents have contacts with that centre. Obviously, assessments of the programs are carried out and those who serve those special centres could comment in more specific detail. If the honourable member would like further specific information about this or any other matter, we would be pleased to obtain it.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I refer to the provision of early childhood family service centres and the desire to make toy library facilities and playgrounds available where appropriate to preschool children of all ages, but particularly those with special needs in the under five years age category. What has been done to open up the toy libraries and to extend the network of toy libraries to children in the under five years category? What provision has been allocated to ensure that those facilities are available to disabled children and their parents? Will that area be pursued in the future, and to what lengths is it possible to go?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** This matter relates to the lines of the Children's Services Office.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** The provision of early childhood and family services is referred to at page 538 of the yellow book. There is a reference to the toy library system and the need to make those services available to children with special needs.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Regarding services for preschool children with special needs, provision has been made in the education lines for services for preschool educational programs in Aboriginal schools. Educational programs will be developed and implemented for disabled preschool children to facilitate their integration into local schools or other special facilities, and the cost of that service is recharged to the Children's Services Office. That is how it fits into the program. The honourable member would be aware that considerable work is being done on the toy library, and he might like to raise this matter under the lines of the Children's Services Office when I can provide more detailed information.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I refer to the ageing of accommodation stock and plant and equipment in schools. Under the line for educational facilities, reference is made to the problem of maintaining aged and dispersed building stock and to the need for a flexible approach to new facilities so that they are moved around as and when required according to population levels. It also points to the need for new places in the outer metropolitan area, the declining enrolment

levels in the inner metropolitan area and the concomitant need for transportable accommodation. In planning for the eventuality of increasing enrolments in the outer metropolitan area and shrinking enrolments in the inner metropolitan area, what steps has the department taken to introduce the flexibility outlined in the budget papers? Will the department perform more effectively in future in relation to building spaces that can be folded up and moved as and when the occasion demands?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** A great deal is being done in this area, and some positive progress is being made. The Aberfoyle Park High School is an example. It is designed in such a way that when there is a minimal requirement for use of that school—it is in a young area and has a growing use, but perhaps in 15 or 20 years' time there will not be such demand—it can be used for aged persons' accommodation and parts can be discreetly removed for that purpose. Many other schools are built with a core of solid construction and temporary buildings or relocatable buildings are built around it, so that there is flexibility.

There is a problem not only for the Education Department but for the health service and other major areas of Government service delivery which require substantial capital in the form of buildings. Those buildings can become rundown and costly to maintain. Experience has shown that in other cities and overseas, where it has been tempting to sell off some of those assets, at a later stage they have been required again, so a much more sophisticated approach needs to be taken to interim economic use of the buildings. That is under way by the department. The budget stringencies that we are experiencing and an explosion in our population in the post-war years have left us with substantial responsibilities to maintain buildings and air-conditioning plant, furniture, and so on. That is a real concern and the department has been active in developing strategies in conjunction with the Department of Housing and Construction, and ensuring that other core departments, such as the Treasury, are aware of on-going costs in this area and that the work is done in conjunction with other departments, such as the health service, so that our on-going budget strategies take into account this real and huge responsibility. The Education Department has about \$1.5 billion worth of buildings within its responsibility. Mr Barr has been involved in some of these activities, and might be able comment.

**Mr Barr:** It is a question not only of maintenance but of ensuring that the capital stock that we have is properly managed and that the space is used for appropriate purposes and not only for educational use. Parts of the Adelaide metropolitan area are under intense scrutiny to see whether the education capital stock can be used for other purposes—Government purposes first, or private purposes. As the Minister has said, the simple solution that some people have put forward of selling off stock can be very much a short-term solution. We would not want to get into the position that has occurred in Victoria, where schools that suffered enrolment declines were sold, but now the Education Department there has been obliged to buy back space in the same immediate vicinity, at a very much inflated cost, because of the demographic change. We want to be as flexible as possible while maintaining a responsible approach to public finance and the management of our assets.

**Mr MEIER:** In late 1984, the department commenced the implementation of the strategic computing plan after endorsement of the plan by the Data Processing Board and Cabinet. On page 70, the Auditor-General notes that the departmental reorganisation had changed significantly the information processing needs of the department and the plan was to be reviewed. As the departmental reorganisation



was approved in 1982-83 why were adjustments not made to the strategic computing plan before its implementation?

**Dr Tillett:** The strategic computing plan developed by the department in 1984 took into account the reorganisation proposals of the department and a major feature of the computer strategy plan was the undertaking of actions that would allow computer systems to serve the department effectively in its new organisational structure. That process is virtually complete, and my perception is that the needs of the department in its new structure, with much of the operational activity occurring at area level, is well served by the computer systems which the department has developed and which in particular have been modified to generate information on an area basis for the use of area staff.

**Mr MEIER:** I am not sure that the full answer came out, but I accept what was said. What then are the real reasons for the review of the strategic computing plan? I fail to see that. Which firm has been appointed as a consultant to review the plan? What is the estimated cost of the consultancy and when will the report be available?

**Dr Tillett:** As I think is well known, computing is an area in which advances occur rapidly in these days, and it would be foolish to suppose that a computer strategy plan, especially one with a five-year time horizon, could survive that period without the need for some revision in the light of developments in technology and computing software. I would have thought it a responsible thing for any organisation to be constantly alert to the necessity to review its strategy plans in the computing area. Certainly the Education Department is of the view that its strategy plan needs to be reviewed and it is developing at this time specifications which will be used to call tenders for the engagement of consultants to assist the department in undertaking that review.

The review would be undertaken by a team which is drawn approximately equally from a consultant firm and from within the department, as was the case when the strategy plan of 1984 was developed. The expectation of the department would be that the cost of the consultancy to undertake such a review would be about \$80 000, but it is difficult to be certain until the tenders have been received. The further expectation is that the review will occur during the 1986-87 financial year and a reporting date for the review would be towards the end of that financial year, that is towards June 1987.

**Mr MEIER:** How many additional salaries have been allocated to implement the Government policy of a second language option for all primary students by 1995? What is the required number of additional salaries in each year up to 1995 to implement this policy?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** As I understand it, there is an ongoing commitment to that very important strategy. There were 43.8 positions in place prior to 1985-86, and 20 positions were added that year. There is provision for 10 additional positions in 1986-87 for the ongoing development of that program.

**Mr MEIER:** Is the Minister able to answer the second part of that question concerning the required number of additional salaries in each year up to 1995? Is such forward planning available?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** We obviously cannot commit money in advance of budgets. It is a matter of working out priorities each year and seeing what resources can be allocated to that program. It has and continues to have a high priority in the department.

**Mr MEIER:** The Minister has identified 78 salaries to the end of 1987. Obviously when the policy was announced there must have been a figure in mind as to how many

salaries it would require by 1995. Will the Minister identify that figure?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Perhaps I can give some insight into the department's planning to meet this strategy.

**Ms Kolbe:** A management plan was developed when the policy was developed and a number of salaries, which I cannot quite recall at the moment, were proposed as necessary to implement the policy over the period of time that was indicated. However, at present that proposal is being reviewed. The final outcome may be quite different in the end, because the method by which the salaries are being deployed and the method by which the languages are being provided at individual schools, taking into consideration the possibility of clustering, is being reviewed at present and the original plan may be reviewed.

**Mr De LAINE:** Over the past few years the Auditor-General has indicated that substantial savings could be effected by use of private contractors in areas such as school transportation and cleaning. Will the Minister comment on this?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** A review of the costs of transporting students to Government schools throughout the State has been undertaken and the department has, as has been said earlier, been reviewing the recommendations of that review. While tendering was suspended during that review I reiterate that tenders are being offered again to private contractors so that we can ensure that efficiency is achieved in this area. The department is already engaging industrial and petty contractors to carry out its cleaning programs.

**Mr De LAINE:** Earlier this year the Minister applauded schools that were developing facilities, such as gymnasiums, etc, for the benefit of both the community and students. Are there any plans this year for the specific development of joint community-school facilities?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** A substantial program has been established and is on going with respect to Government-community joint funded programs, basically to build multipurpose halls, gymnasiums, and the like. This very successful program has been brought about by the good planning and generosity of school communities and the allocation of funds, so that the Government picks up some of the costs associated with the development of these facilities.

I undertake to get a list of the projects that have been achieved in this area, because they are substantial, and those currently in the planning and building process. I am sure that that information will be interesting to all members, because this has meant that sorely needed facilities in many communities can be provided and it brings the school into focus with the community. It also gives an opportunity to raise additional funds for use by the school community as a result of the hiring and letting of those facilities. Indeed, there is a very highly developed program of letting of classrooms, not only the multipurpose halls but other recreational facilities associated with schools.

I am very pleased to see that encouraged. Indeed, one of the real ways in which vandalism, arson and the like have been reduced in many school communities is by that relationship with the community, with a substantial number of people coming in to use properties after hours and at weekends, and a philosophy of community responsibility for the maintenance of school properties.

**Mr De LAINE:** Page 519 of the yellow book, in relation to employment, indicates that the full-time equivalents for 1985-86 were 13.4 and that the proposed full-time equivalents for 1986-87 will be 15.4—an increase of two full-time equivalents. However, the actual recurrent expenditure in 1985-86 was \$770 000 and the proposed expenditure for

1986-87 is \$769 000—a reduction of \$1 000. Will the Minister explain the increase in full-time equivalents and the reduction in proposed expenditure?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** This relates to the splitting of the Ministry. In fact, we have met costs associated with the servicing and staffing of the office of the Minister of Employment and Further Education for a period until that office was established. That is the explanation for the difference in the headcount. In fact, a review was conducted by the then Public Service Board of the Minister of Education's Office. There was a reduction of staff to that office and a change in some of its operations. Obviously, that will be reflected in next year's budget estimates. I assure members that that has actually occurred: we have met some of those costs, I think the Minister's salary and other contingencies associated with the establishment of that office.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** In relation to page 517 of the yellow book, I notice that one of the things that the department was looking at was the extension of service of school buses. I mention to the Minister in passing that I thought that that issue had been put to rest several years ago when the life of school buses was extended from seven years to about nine years, with the result that it was found that buses deteriorated much more quickly in those final two years. Having made that comment, I ask the Minister how many school departmental buses there are and, more importantly, how many school buses are currently held in reserve against repair maintenance and that sort of thing?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I do not have that specific information, but I certainly undertake to obtain it. Mr Starr may be able to provide some information.

**Mr Starr:** While I cannot give the exact figures, we have changed the policy in respect of buses. At one stage we held a large number in reserve. In many cases it had to do with the state of the roads and the types of buses that we used. The buses that we now have are standing up much better to country roads, and some of those roads are much better.

The net result is that over a period of time the number of replacement buses being held has dropped to about 15 in the city and a number in country areas. In terms of the maintenance of those buses and their retention, it has been much better since we have changed to diesel. The buses have stood up much better in country areas. We can get the exact figures on that. The current replacement program is a little over nine years. In other words, buses, particularly the larger buses, last about nine years, before they go up for replacement. Some smaller buses remain for around seven years.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** I recall that recommendations were made that diesel would be a better bus to use in remote country areas but that that advantage was offset by the difficulty in getting qualified diesel mechanics to carry out the work as and when buses broke down. Do I understand that the maintenance of diesel buses in those remote areas is now much easier?

**Mr Starr:** Yes, that is correct. Although some buses are brought back to the city, minor maintenance is carried out in country areas, and the increased incidence and use of diesel in the country generally has meant that mechanics in country areas can handle that type of technology.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** Can the Committee be told how many buses the \$3.2 million allocation of funding last year and the \$3.62 million capital allocation for 1986-87 would be expected to purchase?

**Mr Starr:** We would need to get those figures.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** My third question relates to speech therapists and other officers. The Director-General recently indicated that the positions of Chief Speech Pathol-

ogist, Chief Guidance Officer and Chief Social Worker will be abolished. I am particularly interested in the consequences for speech therapy, since that always seems to be a pressing area of shortage in schools. I notice that in the childhood services area, which we will handle later, six speech therapists are currently allowed for on complement. How many comprise the complement of speech therapists currently within the Education Department and how many are on the payroll? There has often been a difference—sometimes a substantial difference—between the number on complement and the number who were actually appointed or available.

There has been a long-term difficulty in obtaining qualified speech therapists in South Australia, partly because the Bedford Park—now Sturt CAE—program initiated in 1974 never seemed to have provided sufficient speech therapists for the department and private practice. Can the Minister in a general response say whether the training position has been alleviated, whether the department can obtain staff to meet the full complement, and whether the complement of officers is still around the 20 mark that it was three or four years ago?

There is no indication of this in the lines, other than a breakdown at page 527, where it shows staff in special education actually reduced from 84.3, which was the estimate last year, to 66.1, which was the actual last year. I wonder whether the actual was partly speech pathologists in short supply. The figure for 1986-87 is that bottom figure of 66.1 and it has not gone up to 84.3. It seems on the surface that special education is suffering from a downturn in staffing.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The honourable member's experiences are still true to some extent today. There is a problem not only in recruiting staff, particularly those who are to serve in non-metropolitan area, but also in retaining staff in this area. It is perhaps a specialist area and staff do want to broaden their experience. There are lucrative offers in private practice and other institutions in the public sector that take away staff, particularly those who are more experienced, from our service.

That does cause problems, and several problems are associated with training. We are having to send staff interstate to be trained with guarantees of employment and the like when they return. Those difficulties are ever present, and I am sure the department is making every effort to minimise them but they are real, practical and to an extent structural.

As to the positions of chiefs, to which the honourable member referred, it has been an ongoing matter related to the reorganisation of the department. That was done some years ago and is nearing resolution now. Mr Barr has been involved in some of the negotiations on the relocation of some of those positions and the restructuring of the administration of those services, and I will ask him to comment.

**Mr Barr:** First, in regard to the position of chiefs, that is, Chief Speech Pathologist, Chief Guidance Officer and Chief Social Worker, the department's decision in its reorganisation several years ago required those positions to be abolished because the delivery of service in line with the delivery of other services hitherto undertaken from central base were to be under the reorganisation undertaken from an area base.

This is not a result of any recent changes in the senior structure of the department. The position of Chief Social Worker is no longer part of the department's organisation; that person is not there. The two positions of Chief Speech Pathologist and Chief Guidance Officer are still establishment positions within the department, and since the begin-

ning of the year negotiations on that matter have been undertaken with the Public Service Association.

However, the Director-General's resolve is that the officers involved with those positions must be relocated and that there really is no place for the chief positions within a central Education Department establishment. Speaking more specifically about the speech pathologists, I can only reiterate the comments that the Minister has made. Whereas at present many professions are suffering from a surfeit of graduates—perhaps with speech pathologists it is because there are a smaller number of people in that profession and there is difficulty in obtaining local training because of the small number—the department has problems in retaining speech pathologists, because they may still be swallowed up in private practice relatively easily. As to the exact number that are now on strength within the department, I would need to check and provide that information for the honourable member. One of the further difficulties of speech pathologists is to provide services within country areas of this State. That is particularly bedevilling to the department. We use our every resolve to attempt to keep those positions up to strength, and we deploy services where they are most needed.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Early this year the Minister publicly applauded skills for developing facilities such as gymnasias for the benefit of both the wider community and parents of students at schools. Are there any plans this year and next year for the development of similar joint use facilities—and I would extend that to gymnasias and a whole range of other skill facilities such as libraries which can be potentially of use to the community?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** As I understand it, there is already considerable effort in relation to joint community and school use of school libraries. Indeed, there are some jointly funded libraries of that type. I am particularly keen to pursue the potential for this in a range of areas. I think it is a very fruitful exercise which can enhance the range of facilities and services provided to students in our schools, and at the same time bring together students and their families in the school environment.

I think we have a responsibility to ensure that school facilities are used as much as possible. While we certainly do not want to hinder school programs, we must admit that for a large part of the week and the year those facilities are not fully utilised. I think there is a great deal of potential for joint community/school use. Recent examples of joint community/school library resources are at Tailem Bend and at Mannum, the latter having recently been opened by the Governor, if I remember rightly. I think it is particularly interesting in many instances that this has been achieved in the country.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** Kingston is another one. It was opened last Friday week.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Yes, Kingston is another one that was officially opened recently. I think there is a great deal of benefit in pursuing that style of joint proposal.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I have a supplementary question. I refer to the specific case of the new Hallett Cove R to 10 school where a comprehensive computing facility will be installed. Does the Minister regard the prospect of joint use of that facility as a viable option? In a relatively closed community such as Hallett Cove it might be possible to bring local retailers, local sporting groups, community groups, churches and everyone else onto the same central information storage facility so that anyone in the community who wished to tap into it might have access to the computer not only as a calculating device but also as a means of providing their own closed circuit vitel, as it were, so that

they can see what facilities are available, the prices at supermarkets, and so on. Is it possible to explore use of that facility in that way for the greater good of the community and not just for the school itself?

**Mr MEIER:** On a point of order, Mr Chairman. I know the member for Bright asked that that be a supplementary question and that he has the right to ask a further two questions, anyway. However, I feel that that question was not supplementary. While it dealt with a similar area it was a completely new line of thinking in that it introduced Hallett Cove as a specific example. I do not think that that question is what we have come to regard as a supplementary question.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I have been very generous to members on both sides with supplementary questions. I have been particularly generous to the Opposition spokespersons not only with this Committee but with Committees earlier this week, giving them not only three questions but sometimes four and five. I think in this instance I am prepared to allow it as a supplementary question. However, I ask the member for Bright to take note of this point.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I think the member has raised something that is really quite exciting. It is very much a matter for the local school community and the local community itself to come to some arrangement, if that is possible, to explore this. Indeed, much of the computer resources in our schools have been obtained by the efforts of schools to raise funds which form part of the cost of the purchase of this equipment. I thoroughly recommend that the member contact Mr John Cusack, the Director of the southern area of the Education Department, and raise this matter with him so that it can be formally considered in the development of the new school.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I refer to the line dealing with the introduction of a program of maintenance of plant and plant replacement in schools. As most people would be aware, primary schools and high schools in South Australia had built into them some 15 years ago closed circuit air-conditioning systems. Of course, many of them are now beyond repair. I guess a succession of Governments have not devoted a great deal of resources to replacing them. We have now reached a point where some of the units need to be replaced urgently. What plans does the department have in mind for the coming year to either replace air-conditioning units, upgrade them or possibly structurally alter school buildings in which they have been placed so that alternative ventilation can be arranged?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The member raises a very important matter which I think we touched on earlier with respect to the ability of the department—and indeed the capacity of the State Government—to maintain the building capital stock that it has invested in buildings. A series of estimates have been carried out as to the cost of renewing and replacing inefficient air-conditioning plants, and a figure of somewhere around \$14 million has been quoted to carry that out. So, the costs are very substantial. As the member would be aware, in the 1970s in particular a number of school buildings were constructed with fixed windows and with air-conditioning. When the air-conditioning breaks down it is not possible to provide the ventilation that is required, so in certain types of weather the buildings are uninhabitable. Once again, the cost of restructuring some of those buildings to provide windows that can be opened is also very expensive indeed.

The department has developed a strategy with the Department of Housing and Construction for an ongoing repair program. It has been discovered that some of the air-conditioners installed in the 1970s are deficient to the extent

that the parts within them cannot be replaced economically, so one has to replace the actual air-conditioning plant, particularly in evaporative systems where rusting out is a particular phenomenon: this could be attributable to some extent to the water quality in South Australia. So, we have very substantial problems in this area that require substantial resources. The department is acutely aware of that, as is the Department of Housing and Construction. An ongoing strategy will be established to try to minimise the disruption and hardship that this causes to school communities.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I refer back to special education. Mention is made of the implementation of policies relating to educational services for children with severe and/or multiple disabilities. What does the department envisage doing in the coming year to meet that objective? Would it be possible in that short time frame to go very far down the path of mainstreaming into the education system children with multiple disabilities?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** This matter is receiving substantial attention in the department. As we discussed earlier, there is a move to mainstreaming but also to bringing under Education Department auspices a number of institutions that have been outside the education sphere, I guess, based on the philosophy that education was not appropriate for that group of young people. That attitude has now changed, so negotiations are taking place with, for example, the Autistic Children's Association and the Spastic Centre of South Australia, and the like, with respect to the educational programs provided by those institutions and to see whether there could be a greater involvement by the Education Department in the provision of those services. There are substantial cost implications if we move down that track very far.

There is also a fear that the existing Commonwealth funding may not be absolutely secure with the greater entry of the State Education Department and departments around Australia into this area. So, negotiations are proceeding to clarify this matter with the Commonwealth Department of Community Services. There is a good deal of cooperation and empathy between the Education Department and the providers of those services for that group of young people. I am very confident that we can develop over a number of years some very worthwhile programs in this area and indeed raise the educational input into the lives of those children.

In recent years, the Education Department has provided resources in the form of teachers to assist students with severe disabilities. For example, at Ru Rua and a number of other centres, there have been additional resources in recent times, and obviously we will continue down that track.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** Prior to the 1985 State election, the Government announced a joint working party to look at the problems associated with declining student numbers in schools and staffing decisions which related to that problem. Will the Minister release that report and, if not, why not?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** This is a matter that raised some concern prior to the last State election, if my memory serves me correctly, and I guess each year there has been a problem with the displacement process. The then Minister established a working party primarily between the Institute of Teachers and the Education Department to review the practices that occurred at the time of displacement each year to see whether the systems operating could not be modified and improved in some way to minimise the disruption caused to schools and individual staff members. That ensued, and I understand an interim report was prepared earlier this year and a number of steps have been taken within the

department's practices to modify the displacement process that will occur this year. There is ongoing monitoring of this process to see whether we can improve it. It is not an easy process at all for any of the parties involved, but I will ask Mr Marsh, who has been involved in this more directly, to give some information to the honourable member.

**Mr Marsh:** The only additional point to be made is by way of reinforcement. The interim report was prepared by a working party on which the Institute of Teachers was represented. The agreement with the institute is that we will now go on and take up the more detailed matters that the interim report did not address. Of those matters, the major one will be a new look at the staffing formulae, at both the secondary and primary levels. That was accepted by the working party in preparing its interim report, but that was not a matter that could be resolved to have an effect on the 1987 school year. It will take a longer time but I hope that it will be prepared so that it can be considered by the Minister for possible implementation in 1988.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** The Minister did not take up the question: will he release the report?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** When a final report is prepared and duly considered, I will give that matter consideration. I do not expect there will be any problems associated with that, but I will wait until it actually occurs.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** Following the statement made earlier in the Committee this afternoon by the member for Hartley that the previous Minister had indicated that a school would face closure if its enrolments fell below 100, and the table that the Minister circulated today indicates that that is likely to happen in a number of cases, can the Minister advise the Committee whether his policy reaffirms that of his predecessor and, if so, which schools, if any, is the department considering for closure in 1987 or 1988?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** That was never the policy of the previous Minister or the Government. It may have been a benchmark that someone used about viability of schools, but to my knowledge there has never been formulated a specific policy that became the policy of the Government on this matter. Of course, if that was the rule, many schools, particularly in the country, would be closed down. That is the simple explanation to the matter. Obviously, one needs to consider some benchmarks or some assessment in terms of viability of a school and its ability to serve the community, but there are no hard and fast rules. As I have said a number of times publicly, there is a school in South Australia with as few as four children. There are schools in the metropolitan area with fewer than 50 students, but each requires a decision to be taken with respect to the particular circumstances of that school.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I actually asked the Minister, what schools, if any, the department is considering for closure in 1987 or 1988.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I will ask Mr Barr if he would answer that.

**Mr Barr:** I think it would be preferable to take that matter on notice and provide a response later. I do not have a list of those under consideration. My memory is that a couple of schools in country areas are being examined, and the Education Department has for many years looked at the viability of country schools with the intent that where transport is available and where it is reasonable for students to be brought by bus to an area school or to a larger country centre, that should happen, with the agreement of the school community involved. Many a country school community is anxious that students have the widest options of curriculum provided for them.

Inevitably, this is available only from larger schools. I am very happy to indicate to the member for Coles what is being examined, although I should say that the information should be considered on the basis of not alarming particular communities that closure will inevitably follow. It is perfectly proper for the Education Department to review schools regularly, but that does not necessarily mean that action must follow leading to closure.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** Has the department made a decision not to approve the formation of separate junior primary schools on existing primary school campuses even when there are sufficient numbers of students to justify such a move? If that is the case, why has the department made such a decision and, if it is not the case, will the department approve applications for formation of any such junior primary schools this year?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I think I have recently approved formation of new junior primary schools where that has been seen as desirable in the growth of the schools concerned. I believe that a junior primary school was disestablished because of a reverse enrolment trend. If the honourable member can cite a school about which she is particularly concerned, I would be pleased to obtain specific information.

**Mr De LAINE:** Before the State budget was brought down, concern was expressed about funding levels for student sport, particularly SAPSASA and the South Australian Secondary School Sports Association. What is the impact of funding in those important areas?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I thank the honourable member for raising this question. Fairly destructive rumours were being spread concerning reductions in this area, and that resulted in ill informed comment in the press by some people who I would have thought would check their sources a little more thoroughly before rushing into print. We have a very highly developed program of sport in our schools, and that has been illustrated and heightened this year during the Jubilee celebrations. Many national competitions and events have been held in South Australia, and our schools have been involved in those events, not only as participants but also in billeting those who have come from interstate and providing other services for them. It has been a very successful and enjoyable year right across the sporting spectrum in schools. South Australia has been very successful in those competitions.

They are the grounds from which the future champions of Australia emanate, and a very proud history is associated with those national school sports programs. For that to occur, additional resources were provided in the budget for the release of teachers to participate in those programs, but we have undertaken to maintain the traditional level of support, particularly through the TRT days, to ensure that our sporting effort is maintained. It has been interesting to note that abuses of that system have come to light, and that is being reviewed. We will ensure that that system operates efficiently and effectively and that the resources put in go to the very best possible use for the maximum number of young people to participate in those sporting competitions and activities throughout the school year.

**Mr Barr:** I think the Minister has done the question proud. I am not sure that I can add anything further, except to say that the calendar year 1986 was a special year and the South Australian Secondary School Sports Association received additional allocations in this calendar year because of special events that were held in South Australia as part of the Jubilee 150 activities. It is expected that in the 1987 calendar year there will be a reduction. The association was fully informed that the increase in 1986 was specifically for

the purpose of the Jubilee 150 national competitions being held in this State. Certainly, the department does not intend to reduce the extent of normal effort provided to both associations.

**Mr De LAINE:** I refer to the resistance to daylight saving in some remote areas of the State. What is the department's policy in terms of the flexibility given to schools to individually adjust their days to suit the needs of their community?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I thank the honourable member for this question, because this matter has been the subject of comment in the community, and it is of real concern to people living in the remote areas in the west of South Australia. No final decisions have been taken on this matter. The flexibility that exists within school communities to adjust the hours during which a school must operate in a day or a week is misunderstood to some extent. There is a degree of flexibility and that is an option that school communities have to minimise the effects on schools which it is alleged result from the transfer of time zones or daylight saving, such as children having to rise very early in the morning or travel long distances in the hottest periods of the day.

School communities have the option to alter the hours during which the school operates to minimise the effects. That has been put to a number of school communities which I know will consider it and are considering it in the context of impending daylight saving this year. Basically, the requirement is that the school provide to its students a certain number of hours of teaching, and that is a very real option that has been taken up by many schools to minimise the effects of daylight saving in those areas. It is a problem that is recognised.

**Mr De LAINE:** The Minister has said on a number of occasions that the State Government is encouraging a back to school approach in budgetary and policy decision making regarding education. Will the Minister elaborate on the principles behind this approach?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I have been interested to see the statement by the Western Australian Minister in recent weeks: that State has adopted a similar policy. This is nothing substantially new, but it puts a new focus on what has happened in South Australia in recent years. It is important that we as a department sharpen our focus on school communities because, after all, our effort is about serving school communities and ensuring that those who attend our schools and the school communities generally receive the best service we can possibly provide. There is a redirection of our resources, as has been described throughout this Committee session, whether in the redirection of people in senior administrative positions back to schools, their expertise and experience also being redirected into school communities in one form or another, or in the allocation and redirection of some of the activities of advisers within the department and the special skills and attributes they have to offer schools.

In a myriad of other ways we can develop that focus so that it is turned always to what is occurring in our schools. When we are faced with difficult budgetary choices of where we would place our emphasis as a Government, it has been my intention that we should place that emphasis on schools, in improving the capacity of our schools to provide the service that the community expects and, in my experience, appreciates that our schools provide. That philosophy is appreciated by the community, and we shall build on that. Already, we have made substantial decisions and progress in that area.

A question was raised earlier by the member for Mount Gambier about vacancy rentals in the department, which was answered to some extent by officers of the Education Department. Mr Burrowes, who is here to represent the Teacher Housing Authority as its General Manager, will comment in a little more detail on vacancy rentals and the position in that area.

**Additional Departmental Adviser:**

Mr K. Burrowes, General Manager, South Australia Teacher Housing Authority.

Mr L. Drew, Accountant.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** As I said at the outset of the Committee debate, the attention of the Auditor-General was drawn to a number of issues that have been alive for a while. On page 5 of his report he referred to a more commercial approach to rental determination being adopted and the principle of a 20 per cent subsidy not being an appropriate strategy to the equitable provision of country incentives. Matters relating to country incentives should be considered, he said, as an industrial matter rather than as part of the normal rent determination. He was referring there to the fact that people in THA houses have the advantage of a subsidy, but people in private accommodation therefore were disadvantaged in country areas. He said that the authority should provide housing only where the housing market was unable to provide suitable leased accommodation.

I suppose that the Minister and his officers are attending to those remarks. In particular, I was concerned about the impact that the Education Department reorganisation might have had in addition to the THA accounts. Has the reorganisation of the Education Department substantially increased the cost of the THA? If so, what is the overall effect that the reorganisation has had? I have been unable to find a line where the cost of housing assistance is debited to the Education Department. Was that cost debited to the THA itself?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I shall return to the matter raised earlier, the vacancy rentals, and I ask Mr Burrowes to comment on that and the other matters.

**Mr Burrowes:** The matter of vacancy rentals has been of concern to the authority and the Education Department for some time and the average vacancies during the year as reported in the Auditor-General's Report and the schedule provided to the THA annual report for 1985-86 indicated periods when advice regarding occupancy had not been received by the authority. The figures included in the Auditor-General's Report and the authority's statements reflect periods when the authority has charged the employing education bodies a holding charge or rental for times when the authority's records show that the properties were not occupied. There have been substantial delays in processing information to the authority from the area officers of the department, and the Auditor-General referred to that in a section of the report on the Education Department (page 65).

Those delays have provided some distortion in the amount paid. The authority is in the process of issuing substantial credits back because we have only just been receiving advices of properties occupied in February and March. The authority has been most concerned about what it considers to be an unreasonable delay in the processing of tenant occupancy and vacating advice by the area and district officers of the education bodies, as such delays frustrate tenants because of the necessity to collect rental in arrears and delays in terminating rental payments, and create extensive clerical work in the office of the authority and payroll services.

Extensive work has been done on that since the end of the financial year and an assessment as at 18 September indicates that the number of properties that are completely vacant statewide total 35, and some of those were held for particular reasons by the department. That is out of a total housing stock of about 1 800. A large percentage of the vacancies are an additional subsidy, whereon property designated for occupancy by two people is occupied by only one person as a result of a person transferring. Perhaps two single teachers transfer out and one single teacher transfers in or a married teacher transfers in. That means that accommodation provided on a shared basis has only one tenant. Under the current agreement between the department and the Institute of Teachers, the sole tenant or a tenant in shared occupancy, if he is there by himself, pays half the rent and the Education Department pays the balance of the rent to the authority. The only time that varies is when a person goes into sole occupancy and agrees to pay the full rental as a sole tenant. A large number of the costs shown under vacancies are costs being borne by employing education bodies for the other half of the rental of accommodation occupied by one person when the property has been considered shared accommodation.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** That answer was to a question asked much earlier. I asked about the extent to which the Education Department reorganisation had substantially increased the costs of the THA and whether those costs were logged somewhere in the departmental lines (I have been unable to find them), or whether they are part of the overall cost to the THA and lost in THA accounts, in which case they would be an additional charge to the Education Department which is seen to be borne by the THA.

**Mr Burrowes:** The THA, as a separate statutory authority, is required to account for its operations, both moneys received and moneys expended, and is required to operate on a break-even basis. In other words, the authority has a certain budget line to meet the requirements placed on it by the education bodies. That means that the provision of housing for reorganisation of the department was included within the normal annual requirements placed on the authority.

That meant that in determining the housing priorities reorganisation was given a high priority, those houses were provided and the authority then continued to provide the remainder of the housing requested under the program until its capital funds were extinguished. There was no additional cost to the authority in the fact that we did not incur any more capital debt than was allowed to us by Treasury in the first instance.

It did result in a change of priorities and money away from some other areas. The amount of money that the authority has spent for the reorganisation so far in the western area is \$562 000; in the eastern area it is \$515 000, totalling \$1.077 million. The maintenance of reorganisation of housing once again is funded out of the authority's repairs and maintenance program, a self-balancing account, and the authority did not incur any additional cost as a result of the reorganisation.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** The Director-General, in his memo dated 22 April 1985 concerning 'Reorganisation Update No. 12', referred to further costs of the reorganisation to offset costs such as stamp duty, conveyancing, agent fees, etc., by a grant of up to \$6 500. What has been the estimated cost of that assistance? Is that \$6 500 grant payable to any public servant, including one who might have sold out at Bridgewater and gone to Nairne, a local move, or was it for a much bigger move from, say, Adelaide to Murray Bridge?

**Mr Burrowes:** That scheme was a one-off scheme that applied specifically for employees relocating in country areas as a result of reorganisation. It was administered by the Education Department, not by the Teacher Housing Authority, and as far as I am aware, because I was involved in the working party within the department looking at it, only one application was received to 30 June this year. Presently there is consideration, following pressure from the Institute of Teachers, to expand the scheme to meet a similar program for teachers relocating elsewhere in the country. That scheme is still currently under consideration.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** The 1984-85 report of the Teacher Housing Authority, at page 38, states:

Payments for the purchase or construction of houses for Education Department staff relocated under reorganisation programs were \$624 000 with a carryover commitment at 30 June 1985 of \$88 000. While estimates provided to the authority indicate that many more houses will be required, the authority's submission to the Government for funding assistance has been unsuccessful.

What are the estimates provided to the authority of the total number of houses that will be required? What are the estimated costs of that additional number of houses required to be purchased or constructed? Is there evidence that public servants are being given priority over teachers in the provision of housing as a result of the reorganisation?

**Mr Burrowes:** In addition to the payments made in 1984-85, the 1985-86 payments for purchasing or construction of houses for Education Department staff relocated under the reorganisation programs were \$590 000, with a carryover commitment at 30 June 1986 of \$84 000. The reorganisation housing is given priority over other housing because it is needed for specific transferees and appointments. The authority, in conjunction with the education bodies, has been able to manage its housing provision such that to the best of our knowledge no teacher is without housing because of the reorganisation.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I note again with approval that there is special support for hearing impaired children within and without the normal education system. I have been fortunate enough to have had two of my children go to Townsend House as hearing children in mixed classes, and that is one example of the mainstreaming that is going on amongst hearing impaired children. What future plans does the department have for implementing policies with respect to the improvement of the lot of hearing impaired children? Specifically, what are the long-term plans for Townsend House and the children who attend there?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I met a deputation just this week from the Better Hearing Association (its education subcommittee) and it raised a number of matters of common interest with me. There is a good deal of support for the progress that is being made in this area in our schools. I cannot give specific information about Townsend House and what is happening there. I will take that on notice and obtain current information. As I said in answer to an earlier question, I think the program at the Woodville Primary School is one of many varied examples of real initiatives taken in this area to assist that group of young people in the community. Indeed, one of the members of the deputation had a child at that school and could give me a parent's viewpoint of the programs there.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I note in the plans for 1986-87 the development of a transition program for secondary aged special education students. In the past I have worked with a number of students who went to Daws Road Special Education Centre. What work has been done to develop that transition program for graduates of special education schools, that is, graduates who reach the age of 16 years or 17 years and want to leave the school? How much has been

achieved to date? What are the department's future plans in that area?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I do not have officers here who have specific working knowledge of that. I have had some contact with those transition arrangements with respect to the Kensington Special School, which is in my electorate, and which has done a good deal of work in that area. Indeed, I was interested to read correspondence from parents, former teachers and others who have maintained a very strong interest, once their children have left special schools, in assisting those schools and working through particularly these areas of transition, which can be traumatic and which have the potential to undo a good deal of the very real benefits of those senior years in the schooling of those young people. There is also the relationship with a whole range of other institutional organisations—sheltered workshops and the like. I will take this matter on notice and provide more specific information for the honourable member. I thank him for his interest in this area.

*[Sitting suspended from 6.5 to 7.30 p.m.]*

#### Membership:

The Hon. P.B. Arnold substituted for the Hon. Jennifer Cashmore.

The Hon. T.M. McRae substituted for Mr Gregory.

#### Witness:

The Hon. G.J. Crafter, Minister of Education, Minister of Children's Services and Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

#### Departmental Advisers:

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

Mr G. Knill, Chief Administrative Officer, Office of Aboriginal Affairs.

Mr T. Starr, Assistant Director (Finance), Education Department.

Ms Helga Kolbe, Director of Education Resources, Education Department.

**The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD:** I do not intend to make an opening address, because time is somewhat limited. We have decided to allow one hour for the examination of the accounts of Aboriginal Affairs. First, I refer to page 216 of the Auditor-General's Report, where note 5 relates to an interest free loan of \$3 507 to the Mallee Park Football Club to assist with payments for water rates. What is the amount of the club's outstanding account? I take it that the money made available was to assist in the payment of that account. How long overdue was that account? What was the term of the loan? Has the Government approved interest free loans to other sporting bodies for the payment of outstanding E&WS water rates or any other departmental charges? Finally, what arrears by the club, if any, currently exist that might still be owing to the E&WS Department?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** There is a history of involvement by the Aboriginal Lands Trust, which organised the interest free loan to the Mallee Park Football Club. There is an historic involvement of the trust in that land. I understand that the trust was the previous owner of the land. It reached agreement with the club to establish an oval on that site. It is now a superb oval and other facilities there are very much in use by the Aboriginal community and indeed the wider community. However, it is used for all sorts of pro-

grams during the week as well as for recreational purposes. I do not have the specific details on the terms of the loan and how much is outstanding, but I undertake to get from the trust that information and the details surrounding it.

**The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD:** Will the Minister provide the answer to the four questions that I asked in regard to the Mallee Park Football Club? Secondly, again in relation to the Auditor-General's Report, the Lands Trust accounts show that during the year 456 sheep were purchased for Camp Coorong. Have any other purchases of sheep been made and what is the current livestock number being carried on the property? In other words, is there an increase in carrying capacity and will it develop into a greater operation?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The Camp Coorong property was purchased during the year by the Aboriginal Lands Trust. It is an important acquisition by the Lands Trust. The property adjoins other Aboriginal Lands Trust lands in that area of the State. It is a very interesting project that is being developed by the trust. The member would be aware that the original intention of the legislation was to provide for an entrepreneurial function for the land-holding body. In effect, the trust has done very little of that, and I guess one reason for that is that the Aboriginal Development Commission, which took over the function, is a Federal body. The Aboriginal Lands Trust has never been able to marshal substantial resources to be the entrepreneurs with respect to the property that it owns. However, with respect to the Camp Coorong property, which will be used primarily as a camp site for children, programs and facilities are being developed in conjunction with the Department for Community Welfare, the Education Department, the Lands Trust and the local Aboriginal community.

Quite a large number of Aboriginal young people attend Meningie school, where they undertake a very successful substantial agricultural studies program. In fact, I understand that they are showing some of their cattle at the Melbourne show as well as at the Adelaide show. It is hoped that the purchase of the livestock will not only add in some way to the viability and the financing of the property but also be used as part of the program for the school. As I said, it will also be a fillip to the income of the property. Eventually, it is hoped that the property can be managed in conjunction with other properties that are currently leased as individual parcels of land to various people around the area.

A report has been prepared by an agricultural consultant who has advised the Lands Trust to acquire livestock. As I understand it, it is not intended that there will be any great aggregation of stock on the property; I think that is about the number that it will carry. The agricultural consultant has advised that some work on rejuvenation of the land is required, and that will be undertaken, also. I guess it is early days yet in the management of the property, but it was seen as a prudent purchase to make and one that could reap profits of the trust, albeit of a small nature.

**The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD:** Is there in existence a camp livestock trading account that could be incorporated in *Hansard* giving us details up to 30 June so that at this time next year we will have something on record to compare with what has happened at Camp Coorong?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I will certainly ask the Lands Trust to provide some information at this time next year to see what progress has been made. A local management body has been established to manage the property, so I will be interested myself to see what involvement can be arranged with, for example, local schools (as I have mentioned) and

with other people in the community. There is a good deal of interest in the community about this project.

**The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD:** Do you have information that can be incorporated in *Hansard* so that we have on record something with which to make a comparison next year?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I think that information will show that this is the first purchase of this type to be made. I undertake to obtain that information. It will be interesting to see this time next year what developments have taken place.

**Mr De LAINE:** What progress has been made in relation to the cleanup of nuclear waste at the Maralinga atomic test sites?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** A great deal of activity is being undertaken. There have been public statements by the Commonwealth Minister for Resources and Energy (Senator Gareth Evans) about a recent agreement reached between the British and Australian Governments to provide funds for a very substantial program to ascertain the nature and extent of the pollution resulting from the atomic bomb tests that took place on those Maralinga lands in the 1950s. That is currently progressing. In fact, the parliamentary committee that is to report on the Maralinga land rights legislation received evidence just recently from an officer of the Atomic Energy Commission who is involved in that. South Australia's interests are represented on that committee by Mr Knill, and he might like to add a little on the program that is being undertaken at the present time.

**Mr Knill:** The Federal Government has established two committees to survey the needs of the Maralinga atomic test sites. First, the Federal Government has established a technical advisory group which is a group of scientists that have prepared an interim report for the Federal Government on the options available to the Government for the cleanup of the affected sites in that area. The Federal Government has also set up a consultative committee to advise the Government on those options and particularly as they relate to the Aboriginal people in that area. Last week the consultative committee met with the traditional owners at Oak Valley, and it was determined that six studies would be undertaken in the next two years.

Those studies will involve surveying the area by air and land to determine whether there are any contaminated areas as yet unknown so that they can be discovered, an assessment made of the cleanup needs, tests carried out on the lifestyle of people to see how it would be affected by living in the Maralinga lands, and also a study made of the fauna and flora of the area to determine the level of contamination in and around the former bomb sites. Last weekend, the Federal Minister for Resources and Energy was in London, and an agreement was reached that the Australian and British Governments will share \$3.2 million to provide funds for those six studies that will be conducted over the next two years.

**Mr De LAINE:** In respect of Aboriginal involvement in Aboriginal heritage and site protection, how has increased involvement been achieved and, in broad terms, what real progress has been made in this area?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Substantial progress has been made in drafting the Maralinga legislation. Considerable attention was paid to issues relating to Aboriginal heritage and sites of significance to Aboriginal people on those lands. Work is progressing initiated by traditional owners in a number of parts of the Aboriginal lands in this State with respect to preservation and identification of the heritage of those areas. Some of that has been brought about as a result of applications by mining companies to enter onto lands to carry out exploration programs.



In conjunction with those companies, such surveys have had to be conducted. The Government is also preparing legislation relating to Aboriginal heritage, and a consultation process is occurring at this stage. That comes under the lines of the Minister for Environment and Planning, and a section in the Department of Environment and Planning specialises in Aboriginal heritage matters. That unit is very active, and it works in conjunction with officers of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Aboriginal rangers are employed in that service. For example, there is a very important program being conducted in the Coorong, involving Aboriginal rangers, in an effort to preserve and supervise that area.

A good deal is happening in the important area of preservation of Aboriginal heritage, but I must say that in terms of historical context a very substantial collection of Aboriginal items, artifacts and other materials is stored within the South Australian Museum. It is said to be one of the largest collections of Aboriginal materials of any Aboriginal group in the world. The Government has provided funds in the redevelopment of the museum to have chambers restored at the museum so that there can be greater public display of that material. Mr Moriarty is a member of the museum board.

**Mr MEIER:** Why are people with homelands in the Pitjantjatjara lands not allowed to develop an economic base on their land for their families? I cite the example of a gentleman called Johnny Miller, a tribal elder, who was given homelands on the Pitjantjatjara lands by the tribal elders and asked to go back and live on the lands. He wanted to establish what we could refer to as a cattle station, and he also wanted to explore for minerals in his section of land, but he was told by the Anangu Pitjantjatjaraku council at Alice Springs that he was not allowed to do that.

He has since ascertained that the Alice Springs council has signed an agreement with a mining company to carry out exploration on what was Johnny Miller's land without Mr Miller's agreement. One feels that that is very much against the Aboriginal tribal agreements and certainly the sentiments that were supposed to be incorporated into the Pitjantjatjara land rights.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I refer the honourable member to the Pitjantjatjara land rights legislation and the incorporated decision-making body established under that legislation. That body is vested with powers and authorities with respect to the decisions and rights of the traditional owners of that land. There is a sophisticated structure of decision making, and the mining and exploration program to which the honourable member refers is very important indeed. It took a number of years to develop that proposal. It is an important aspect for the Pitjantjatjara people but it is also important for the people of Australia.

This is a very large exploration program, and it has come about as a result of a substantial agreement between the miners and those people. I commend all the parties who have achieved that result. The honourable member makes representations on behalf of a person who, I understand, wants to provide for an alternative mining venture. He claims to have authority vested in him that seems to have some basis outside the legislation: such issues have traditionally been sorted out within those communities, I understand.

The decisions finally are arrived at as to how they shall proceed as a result of that. It is not within my province either to give a solution or hazard a guess on respective rights of the parties to such a dispute, although I understand that they have occur from time to time and they have to be worked out in accordance with tradition and the legis-

lation that provides for the ownership and management of those lands.

**Mr MEIER:** I do not know whether the Minister directed his comments at the first part of the question, namely, that the gentleman wanted to raise cattle for his own commercial use and was told that he could raise one or two and could kill and eat them himself but he could not do that on a commercial basis. If we have legislation that deprives people of that right, we need to change the legislation accordingly. It seems as though we have given people lands and the authorities overseeing it are saying that although it is their land it cannot be used for commercial purposes. That will be a negative way of advancing the Aboriginal people's cause.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** That is not the truth. There is a large commercial enterprise on the lands, the Everard Park cattle property, and there are other cattle properties at Mimiili and other places on the lands. There is substantial investment in cattle properties on those lands that have been created and are funded and established through various authorities and procedures, and that has been done in a formal way by the people.

**Mr MEIER:** Why has the Government refused to recognise the Antikirinya Incorporated Group—an incorporated body—when its case regarding legal claims to land in the canegrass swamp area and the area around the Roxby Downs has been proven through the tribal courts and from discussions they have had apparently with Government officials? This Antikirinya Incorporated Group consists of some seven groups or tribes that have come together and been acknowledged, at least by the Aboriginal communities, as having a traditional right over the lands in the area.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The State Government has specific responsibilities for two communities: the Maralinga and the Pitjantjatjara people. That has occurred as a result of legislation passed by this Parliament. With respect to any other groups, clans or tribes of Aboriginal people there is not a mechanism in terms of recognition. Those groups are as free to form as any other group or association of people in the community.

If the honourable member means recognition in terms of giving some hand-out or grant to that group for whatever purpose they would be seeking it, then I suggest that the State Government is not the appropriate authority to do that. As I said, we do not have a mechanism for that or a tradition of it. That source should be to the Federal Government for a specific program.

**Mr MEIER:** What is the Minister's and department's official view regarding Government grant money provided to Aboriginal communities being used by those communities for the prosecution of other Aborigines?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Will the honourable member give me an example?

**Mr MEIER:** Concerning the Pitjantjatjara lands—and this goes back more than a year or two now—I believe that the Aboriginal community used money provided by the Government to launch a case against Pastor Bob Brown, who had sought to enter those lands, and then they put up a legal challenge. One may remember that that was overruled eventually by Justice Millhouse. Apparently it was a case where Government moneys were used. What is the Minister's and his department's view with respect to such moneys being used for the prosecution of others?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** My recollection is that some Government funds—and I may be incorrect on this, because it occurred some time ago—were paid to Pastor Brown or his defence with respect to some costs associated with the matter. I am not aware of what funding sources were avail-

able to the Pitjantjatjara people with respect to their representation in this matter. This was a prosecution that the State took against an alleged breach of the Pitjantjatjara land rights legislation, and that was tested in the courts, and eventually before the High Court. It was an important case and raised a lot of issues with respect to legislation such as land rights legislation, and matters were clarified as a result of it.

In fact, there are some very famous dicta in that case. Mr Justice Brennan will go down in history for a statement in his judgment when he was comparing, as do so many conservative people in this country who argue against Aboriginal interests and land rights in particular, the system of apartheid in South Africa and land rights. He said, very vividly, that the difference between land rights and apartheid was the difference between a home and a prison. It was a very important judgment, wide-sweeping in its comments, and I think the honourable member will find that the parties who were out of pocket as a result of that test case were to a large extent compensated.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Given the fact that the local Kurna culture on the Adelaide Plains was largely extinguished in 30 years of European settlement, what steps have been taken recently to preserve the culture of the few remaining members of minor language groups, such as the Ngarundjeri in the area of Lake Alexandrina? What efforts have been put into retaining the remaining language and tribal law of those groups? Will it be possible to maintain a permanent record of those cultures?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** There is renewed interest in the Adelaide Plains people, and the Aboriginal school at Elizabeth takes its name from them. Recently—it may have been 12 months or so now—I attended a display at the conservation centre which also brought together a lot of information about the Adelaide Plains Kurna people. That is an illustration of growing interest in the broader community, but there is also quite specific interest by the Aboriginal community itself. I will ask Mr Moriarty to comment.

**Mr Moriarty:** Underdale College of Advanced Education has received through the Aboriginal Jubilee 150 Committee an amount of money to establish a unit within the college to deal specifically with the language and be a resource centre for the redevelopment of Aboriginal language and culture. It is specifically established for that purpose.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** One of the few remaining pieces of culture belonging to the Kurna people that I have been able to discover, at least, is the legend of Tjilbruke, the dreamtime legend surrounding the Tjilbruke. What assistance has been given to the Tjilbruke Trail Committee which was set up to celebrate the creation trail during the Jubilee 150 by establishing a series of markers to commemorate the creation path taken by Tjilbruke? What assistance has been given to that group? Is it envisaged that that group will successfully complete the project?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I will ask Mr Moriarty to give some details.

**Mr Moriarty:** The sum of \$9 995 was provided through the Jubilee 150 Committee specifically to the Tjilbruke committee to promote and establish the Tjilbruke trail, which is an old legend first recorded by Norman Tindale, one of the great anthropologists of this State. That project is almost completed. Ten monuments will be completed on that track, which will end at the Bluff at Victor Harbor. The project, which is running a little behind schedule, was to be opened a few days ago. There will be an extension to that time. The trail is specifically established to bring to the notice of and promote to the general public Aboriginal

heritage, and so on, and we hope that that will be completed shortly.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** My third question relates to the habit that early settlers had of extinguishing Aboriginal cultures, either intentionally or otherwise. Have any steps been taken to document some of the more shameful frontier episodes associated with white settlement in early years and to publicise some of the more genocidal events which hitherto have been overlooked?

I point to the fact that the policeman Tolmer, who is currently being celebrated as the great hero of the gold escorts, was apparently somewhat negligent in his care of Aboriginal people and that an early pastoralist in the Flinders Ranges, Mr Hayward, after whom Mount Hayward is named and who set up a station in the Aroona Valley, was also said to be fairly harsh in his treatment of local Aboriginal people. Edward John Eyre, whom we all revere as one of our more successful explorers, was also supposed to have had occasional lapses in treatment of Aboriginal tribes with whom he had contact. Have any steps been taken to document those episodes, and has any thought been given to making that kind of information more publicly available?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I do not have any specific knowledge of work that has been done in a formal way, although I understand that in a less formal way individual research projects are being conducted in tertiary institutions and the like by individuals who are showing a greater interest now in that part of this State's history. I guess that that has in some ways been spurred by this sesquicentennial year.

We will probably find some definitive works, to the extent that that is possible, coming to the forefront in the next few years in this area, particularly as more Aboriginal people themselves enter into tertiary institutions and are able to do the research that they have not been able to do in the past. Some important work is being done. For example, the Graham family is preparing a detailed family history, and work like that is so valuable to future generations of South Australians and indeed Australians.

When we bear in mind that the most recent massacres of Aboriginal people were within the lifetime of many people in this country—and certainly as recently as the 1930s—in some other parts of Australia quite a deal of information is probably available to researchers. It is a very sad piece of Australian history that has to a large extent so far been hidden from the great bulk of Australian citizens. I can only hope that the truth and the reality is out and understood by future generations and that some of the wrongs of the past can be righted and that reparations can be given.

In another way the tragedy associated with the Maralinga atomic bomb tests was perhaps an institutional way of destroying the culture of a very important group of people to us in South Australia. We have now come to realise the insensitivity associated with that period of history in this State and indeed in this nation. We are thankful that some reparation has been forthcoming, but a great deal of further work will be done. We are learning as a nation through that process. While I have no specific information, I do encourage research of this type.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** I recall when the Minister and I were on the Maralinga lands a couple of years ago that there were schedules within the police station stating that the safe time for remaining camped on the Maralinga lands near the bomb sites was somewhere around 14 days continuously before one was advised to move on. I also recall that not long after we returned to Adelaide there were reports of nodular remains. I am not too sure how big they were, but there were radioactive remains quite extensively across the bomb site.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Plutonium.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** Yes, plutonium. Is it possible that it was Aeolian or wind blown dust or was it simply residual dust on the ground and therefore much safer? When we were on the Maralinga lands it was very windy, and clouds of dust were blowing everywhere. I recall thinking that it was probably just as well that the whole of the Maralinga lands were still declared unfit for permanent habitation. Since the discovery of the plutonium nodules on the site, has there been any revision outwards for the safe time for which people can remain camped on the Maralinga lands?

**The Hon. G. J. Crafter:** Yes there has. I refer the member to the evidence that the parliamentary committee has been taking on this matter. There is now fairly clear evidence, I think, that there is an area on the western boundary of section 400 of the lands called West Street where the plumes of pollution are believed to have contaminated that area. Mr Knill has mentioned the survey work that has been done in the joint British and Australian Government's survey program. I think that will identify more precisely the areas that should be declared unsafe.

That committee is looking at how a clean-up can take place. There is some suggestion that there will have to be the actual physical removal of a certain depth of soil in that area. Other areas can be cleaned with a vacuum-type cleaning instrument. We are talking about fairly substantial sizes of area. When that information is available, it would be prudent for us to review the actual boundaries of that land which should be so declared, supervised and sign-posted, etc. It is, I think, quite frightening. I know that a team of journalists went on to those bomb sites, including Taranaki, one of the most polluted areas. I understand that there are some 21 burial grounds in and around that area.

Those journalists were flown immediately to Melbourne where they all received medical examinations and were given some assurance about their ongoing health. It is substantially as a result of these particles being picked up in the dust and blown for some distances that fragments of contaminated material enter the body. Another way they enter the body is through hunting and gathering, through leaves and eating animals. As the Hon. Mr Arnold, Mr Gunn and I seem to have been going on to these lands quite regularly in recent years, we perhaps ought to have some medical examinations as well.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** I notice on page 542 of the Program Estimates a claim that in 1985-86 the Office of Aboriginal Affairs assisted the Minister to set a target of 1 per cent employment of Aboriginal people in the State Public Service. Now that that target has been set, does the Minister have any longer term target for when that would be achieved, and has any definite training program for people to enter the Public Service been entered into?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Yes, quite a deal of work has been done in order to arrive at a structure whereby this employment policy could be implemented. A committee has been established across departments to assist in this matter. Also, an officer has been appointed within the employment and management section with specific responsibilities in this area. It is not simply a matter of saying to every authority, "You shall have 1 per cent," because it just is not possible in some areas, so quite a bit of work needs to be done on this matter. However, progress is being made.

In earlier years, I was a little frustrated. There was some tardiness in changing employment policies and creating opportunities, particularly when substantial Commonwealth funding incentives were available for the employment of

Aboriginal persons, involving trade training and apprenticeships, for examples. Indeed, a good number of Aboriginal persons employed in the public sector are in fact employed directly as a result of Commonwealth funding. We do have some work to do in this area, but I can report that substantial progress has been made, particularly in remedying faults within personnel practices and instructions that will facilitate implementation of this policy.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** A final comment, Mr Chairman, and not a question: I believe that the Minister will take substantial satisfaction from the claim made by the Director-General of Education at page 66 of the annual report for 1985 that 'there are more Aboriginal people in administrative, advisory and teaching roles in the South Australian school system than ever before'. More importantly on that page (2.1), a very significant number of Aboriginal children are being retained in various schools and continuing to higher levels, so that a logical sequence of that would be the higher qualification rate for entry into Public Service, which is a very pleasing feature.

**Mr De LAINE:** What is the current position in relation to assistance for the development of self-management policies for Aboriginal committees?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** A good deal of thought is being put into the way in which services are delivered within Aboriginal communities, and I guess there has been a great deal of frustration about the vast number of agencies that actually provide services to Aboriginal communities. In one community 67 different agencies and authorities were involved. There is an incredible burden on limited resources, particularly in remote communities, to respond to the bureaucracy that is required to obtain funding or develop programs, and the like.

A committee has been established in Adelaide to carry out a consultation process with communities throughout the State to try to remedy some of these problems, and it covers the human services area, such as health, education, welfare, housing and construction, and the like. That is battling along with this problem. There are no easy solutions, but I hope that we can find ways around some of the very real problems that communities face so that there can be a much clearer voice to government on behalf of Aboriginal people and so that we can respond much more quickly to specific needs within Aboriginal communities. This is a very important exercise. I do not for one minute think that we will come up with the absolute answer, but we can certainly bring about improvements.

**Mr De LAINE:** What encouragement is provided for European students in the course of teacher training to undertake courses in Aboriginal language and culture? Specifically, how many non-Aboriginal people are studying the Pitjantjatjara language in South Australia?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** There are a number of programs, and perhaps the honourable member's question should be referred to the Minister of Employment and Further Education for more specific information. However, I can say that a substantial number of students are studying Pitjantjatjara at the Torrens campus of the South Australian College of Advanced Education. Mr Bill Edwards, who is involved in that course, has travelled with various parliamentary committees throughout the State. I have watched him contact many of his students in schools and communities throughout the length and breadth of the State. I know the importance—of the capacity to communicate with those people—to those who work particularly in the human services area, such as health, education and welfare.

Courses are being conducted by the South Australian Institute of Technology and the Aboriginal Task Force, and

work is being carried out by a number of very dedicated and key people. There is also the work that emanates from the Wattle Park teachers centre through our schools. A good many people in our services now have a working knowledge of the Pitjantjatjara language, and that certainly facilitates the delivery of important services. But that should not be seen as an end in itself, and obviously skills other than language skills are required to improve understanding and the ability to work with the people whom they seek to serve. That is becoming very clear in the education sphere where people are now certainly appreciative of those who can communicate in their language. Those people have the confidence to assert their own skills in teaching the language and maintaining the culture. I believe that that assists those people to work in with communities to a much greater extent than has been possible in the past. We are in an evolving climate, and it is certainly a very encouraging one.

**The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD:** The Auditor-General's Report refers to Colebrook Home at Eden Hills. In the second line, the report states:

The question of future use of the land was raised with the trust in October 1985 and the trust advised that a subcommittee had been appointed to examine the issue.

Has that committee come up with any conclusions in relation to the property?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I am a little mystified. I had intended to wait until the Aboriginal Lands Trust had provided the Auditor-General with its report on that matter. I find it surprising that he commented on a property that is vacant land. There are no buildings, although there was a house, the Colebrook Home, where many Aborigines have lived over the years. That is one of the problems about resolution of its future use. There is nothing inherently wrong (if that is what the Auditor-General is suggesting), improper or contrary to best management principles, in leaving that land. There is interest in the land, although it is not zoned residential. It is a special use zoning, so I suspect that its future use depends to some extent on the consent of the council and the community. It is zoned for institutional and special use.

The property is appreciating rapidly in value over the years, and I understand that the Lands Trust is carrying out thorough consultation because of the large number of Aborigines who lived there from time to time, have an association with the property, and do not want it lost to the Aboriginal people. If the property is to be disposed of at some future date, decisions will have to be taken about the vesting of the proceeds of that in some other enterprise that would satisfy many of the people who have a particular interest in the land. That is precisely the function of the Lands Trust.

That is the situation with that land. There is interest in it. The member for Davenport has made representations on behalf of constituents of his who are interested in buying it, and I know that an adjacent bowling club has made representations about acquiring additional property, and the like. The urban environment is encroaching on that property, so there is some pressure for a longer term resolution of its ownership and future use. I see it as constructive that a thorough review of that has been done before any decision is taken.

**The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD:** The report mentions approximately 486 000 hectares of land that the trust holds. Can the Minister provide a brief description, in the form of a report that can be incorporated in *Hansard* and prepared by his office? There might already be a prepared report which would give a brief description of the current use of each of the properties contained within the total inventory

of land held by the trust so that we have a record of what the 486 000 hectares is made up of.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Before Parliament there is a description of all those pieces of land in the annual report of the Aboriginal Lands Trust which I tabled recently in the House. I can obtain another list if the honourable member would like it. This land, in the main, was previously vested in the Protector of Aborigines, then the Community Welfare Department, and has basically been Aboriginal reserve land, such as Gerard, Nepabunna, Point McLeay, Point Pearce—

**The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD:** In that 486 000 hectares?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Yes. It includes not the Pitjantjatjara and the Maralinga lands, which are subject to separate Statutes, but what the community would know as Aboriginal missions or reserves, and areas like Yalata.

**The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD:** Within the trust?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Yes.

**The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD:** The Minister mentioned Gerard. What is the latest information in relation to the yabbe project at Gerard? While the bulk of the finance has been Federal funding a significant amount of State funds have gone into that project.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I cannot add to the statement on this matter made in the House recently by my colleague the Minister of Employment and Further Education. I do not know of any further progress since that time. There may well have been, but it is not directly within my responsibility or knowledge.

**The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD:** At that time there was a fair bit of criticism of the consultants as to the management of that project. Can that project be put back on the rails? Does it have the potential of being a viable project?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I think some consideration was given to it some time ago—around the time that the Minister made that statement—about whether this project was not a proposition that could be taken up by some entrepreneur who wanted to develop a potential in this and was prepared to invest in it. I am not sure whether that is a practical proposition and how far that was pursued. All too often Aboriginal communities are the victims of exercises such as this, where it seemed a good idea at the time and there was evidence to show that it had the potential to succeed. I guess that many people will see the failure of such a project as a failure of Aborigines to manage a project as such. Certainly, that is not the truth or the reality. Unfortunately, all too often that is the public perception of such exercises.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** What encouragement has been given to involve Aboriginal people in the management of national parks in South Australia, referring specifically to the Gammon Ranges National Park and the Unnamed National Park that abuts the Maralinga lands in the western portion of the State? Is anything in prospect for allowing Aboriginal people to manage those areas? What encouragement will be given to them to do so?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** There is a good deal of Aboriginal participation in the National Parks and Wildlife Service and a very successful training program exists to train Aboriginal rangers to join this service. As I mentioned earlier, that is commencing in the Coorong area and certainly in the Gammon Ranges and parts of the Flinders Ranges generally, and in other parts of the State. It is hoped that we can use that model and develop similar programs. There were discussions at the time of the passage of the Maralinga legislation that there should be established a joint management program for those lands and that Unnamed Conservation Park in particular. There are some important areas in that

park for the traditional owners, and they want to ensure that they are able to fulfil their obligations for the preservation of those areas. The National Parks and Wildlife Service is keen to develop that relationship and program. It is to some extent dependent on funding from both State and Federal sources to achieve that, but that, I understand, is a possibility and it is certainly something to which, next year, the Parliamentary Committee will be turning its mind to see how practical that is and what progress has been made to that end.

#### Membership:

The Hon. Jennifer Cashmore substituted for the Hon. P.B. Arnold.

Mr T.R. Groom substituted for the Hon. T.M. McRae.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Following my original question, I wonder what exemptions would be necessary under the National Parks and Wildlife Act to enable Aboriginal people to sustain a traditional lifestyle within national parkland. Obviously, exemptions would be needed for the use of firearms and various other things. Has that problem been looked at preparatory to the exercise of encouraging Aboriginal people to manage those lands?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** In the existing legislation are certain rights for Aborigines to enter onto lands for purposes of hunting and gathering. Although practices today have changed somewhat from traditional hunting and gathering practices, it may well not stand the test. Consideration is therefore being given to redrafting that legislation in more appropriate terms to enable those people who are seeking a more traditional lifestyle to continue to hunt and gather as they have done in the past but, for example, using a rifle to shoot kangaroos rather than other more traditional methods and the like. This matter is currently under consideration by the Minister for Environment and Planning.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I preface my third question with a story that I believe to be almost apocryphal in nature. I once drove through the Northern New South Wales village of Myall Creek, which is famous in the history of settlement in this country for the massacre that was perpetrated in about 1839. I drove through what used to be a settlement but which is now simply a bridge over the river. There was a fingerboard pointing to something that said 'Myall Creek Memorial'. My wife said that we should stop and look at what was obviously a memorial to the massacre that had occurred. I said that she should not be stupid, and that it obviously would be a war memorial. We drove down and for once I was right, because it was a war memorial. It is symptomatic, I think, of the way in which Australians have swept that episode of our history under the carpet. In the light of that, I ask whether any consideration has been given to consulting Aboriginal people in South Australia with a view to establishing a series of such memorials to mark the site of some of the more shameful events in the history of settlement? Is it likely that the Aboriginal people would support that project, or would they, too, rather see it swept under the carpet and forgotten?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I ask Mr Moriarty whether he would like to comment.

**Mr Moriarty:** You mentioned earlier the need for Aborigines to record accurately the history of this country. The Underdale college unit, as we stated earlier, represents an attempt to begin to have Aboriginal people write about their history. It is important, we believe, that Aborigines should portray an accurate account of what happened in this country as part of the history of all Australians. Massacres are

one of the sad parts of our history which should be accurately recorded, not to apportion blame but to give a bit of balance to how this country was developed.

Back in the 1960s, as Chairman of the Aborigines Progress Association, I suggested that I would like to raise a cairn in memory of the 264 Aborigines who were driven over a cliff near Elliston. I received a great deal of irate comment as a result of my trying to resurrect that incident. However, when I returned to South Australia in 1981, I received, after all those years, a request from Elliston council asking if we could produce accurate evidence because the council would assist in erecting that cairn. If a council can do that, this State and its people will go a long way.

We consider that all this type of history should be recorded. There are not enough Aborigines who are able to take up such grants. Although funds are short and there is not too much available in this area, I think that many Aborigines could use the grants. Usually, funding comes from Federal coffers such as the Institute of Aboriginal Studies in Canberra. We would like the opportunity to develop this area and to provide an accurate history of this State.

**Mr MEIER:** Will the Minister provide some details about the situation in relation to the school at Point Pearce? I am aware that those involved in this area are seeking the provision of perhaps a solid structure. Is there any possibility of that occurring? Secondly, what sort of cost is the department looking at to replace the school that was burnt down earlier this year?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I hope that this matter can be resolved fairly quickly. Discussions are proceeding about the practicality of the aspirations of the Point Pearce people. Obviously, funds are limited for the replacement of the school that was destroyed by fire. Whilst the department is sympathetic to a number of requests made by the Point Pearce people, the Government simply cannot provide a building that does not meet the budgetary restrictions under which we operate. I have met a deputation of the people from Point Pearce and I invited them to inspect some school buildings in Adelaide so that they could see at first hand the type of building that the department was offering to construct at the Point Pearce community.

People in that community have suggested that they may be prepared to construct or take part in the construction of a building. They have already successfully tendered for the erection of a number of houses—some through the Teacher Housing Authority, which, I understand, has done an excellent job in that area. Further, they have local skills that could be used. This is another important aspect, and I understand that it is being considered. I hope that we can resolve this matter, that the expectations of the community at Point Pearce can be realistically met, and that something can be provided as soon as possible, certainly for the 1987 school year.

**Mr MEIER:** I know that we have had some positive dialogue and action in relation to the problems that have occurred over the past two or three years. An unsatisfactory situation applies in relation to the recreational complex and oval at Point Pearce, and I wonder to what extent this comes under the jurisdiction of the Department for Community Welfare. I believe that the building of this complex was part CEP funded and also that it was virtually built by outsiders for the Point Pearce community. I have not been there for some months, but the last time I was there I noticed that it had never been used. Brand-new unbreakable windows had been pushed in and things were not too good inside. The oval had deteriorated to such an extent that it could not really be used. Does the department provide

assistance to communities such as that at Point Pearce, to improve these facilities so that they can be used?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I have also seen the building and the oval there. I think the complex was built without any involvement of the State Government at all. It is disappointing that the recreational potential of the oval and adjacent clubrooms is not being met.

The maintenance and development of facilities of that type is vested in the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs. However, in the State Department of Recreation and Sport we now have for the first time an officer who is taking a particular interest in the involvement of Aboriginal communities in sport and recreation. I will be pleased to refer the matter raised by the member in this context to Wilbur Wilson, who works in that office, to see whether he can make some assessment. I am sure that he is well aware of the matter and will make the necessary representations to the community and to the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs to see whether some resolution of finality can be brought to the development of the complex.

**Mr MEIER:** I believe that one of the Minister's departmental officers will be visiting the area next week not in relation to this matter but on other matters: perhaps he can consider this while he is visiting the area.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I declare the examination of the vote completed.

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Works and Services—Education Department,  
\$5 000 000—Examination declared completed.

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Works and Services—South Australian Teacher Housing  
Authority, \$400 000—Examination declared completed.

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Minister of Education and Minister of Aboriginal Affairs,  
Miscellaneous, \$45 202 000

**Chairman:**

Mr D.M. Ferguson

**Members:**

The Hon. H. Allison  
The Hon. Jennifer Cashmore  
Mr M.R. DeLaine  
Mr T.R. Groom  
Mr E.J. Meier  
Mr D.J. Robertson

**Witness:**

The Hon. G.J. Crafter, Minister of Education, Minister of Children's Services and Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr M.J. Pederson, Executive Officer, Office of Minister of Education.

Dr V.G. Eyers, Executive Director, Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia.

Ms S. Chee, Senior Administrative Officer, Office of Minister of Education.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I declare the vote open for examination.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I am aware that the Teacher Housing Authority staff have left the Chamber but, nevertheless, the debt servicing item under the miscellaneous lines is an important one and shows a significant increase from \$385 000 actual payments last year to a proposed \$482 000 this year. Can the Minister indicate whether that increase in debt servicing results from an increase in the number of houses, an increase in interest rates, or what is the reason for that significant increase?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Perhaps the term 'grant' is a misnomer. In 1985-86 the authority was paid \$385 000 to offset the increased interest payments resulting from the amalgamation of the authority's outstanding loan balances by the South Australian Financing Authority two years prior, in the 1983-84 financial year. The transfer to SAFA resulted in a loss to the authority for which it is—very correctly—reimbursed, as this loss would not have occurred otherwise.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** So, the increased funds are to compensate for the larger loss? Is that what the Minister is saying?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** It is an equivalent of the loss that would not have occurred without the intervention of SAFA.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** That begs another question: will the Minister explain the precise impact of the intervention of SAFA on the increase in this debt servicing arrangement?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The arrangements were entered into, obviously, prior to my becoming the Minister and, so that I have the correct information put on the record, I will obtain the details of the arrangements entered into between the Teacher Housing Authority and SAFA which resulted in the loss factor to the Teacher Housing Authority and which brought about an amalgamation of the authority's outstanding loan balances, and then brought that under the purview of SAFA.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** We would certainly appreciate the information, because it is our understanding—and, I believe, that of the community at large—that SAFA was designed to advantage various Government authorities in their borrowing, and if it has had the effect of disadvantaging one, namely, the Teacher Housing Authority, then we will certainly need to know the reasons why. I look forward to that answer when it comes.

Under the heading 'Grants to organisations', it is now not possible to determine the increase, decrease or the sum itself allocated to the organisations listed under that heading, because they are now aggregated into a single line. Could the Minister indicate the sums provided for the organisations listed under 'Grants to organisations' from Aboriginal Education Foundation down to the Downs Syndrome Children Incorporated, so that members may have an indication as to whether those grants have been increased, decreased or have remained static? Could the same information be provided for the consultative committees, grants for which are now aggregated under one single line?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I will provide them in *Hansard* for the honourable member.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** Can the Minister indicate whether the sum of \$327 000 in the line 'Multicultural Grants—Grants to Ethnic Schools' represents an increase to all or any of the existing schools or the grant of funds to new schools to be established this year which previously have not received grants?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** With respect to the additional funds to be provided in that line, provision has been made this financial year for preschool children attending ethnic schools, and the research shows that the preschool years are

a very important time in the development of a child's language. That has been accepted for the first time as an additional function of the ethnic schools network. Generally, preschools do not have the facilities or resources to provide for this language and cultural support for preschool children. In this year, provision is made for the payment of grants for 350 places in ethnic schools for preschool age children.

Furthermore, per capita grants to ethnic schools have been increased by 4 per cent. That figure is used consistently throughout the budgeting process this year. Provision is also in that sum for an additional 200 places to be funded for primary and secondary age children in ethnic schools. The number of places receiving grants for the first semester in 1987 will be 8 200 primary and secondary age children and the 350 preschool age children that I have referred to, so overall there will be an increase of 550 places provided as a result of that funding for ethnic schools for the coming year.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** There was an underspending of \$36 000 in non-government schools per capita grants last year, whereas there was an allocation of \$512 000. Why, and on what basis does the Government project its allocations to non-government schools? I notice that the amount for the forthcoming year is greater. Does that projection arise from information that enrolments are likely to be greater?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** There are several factors. An increase in enrolments is one, and compensation for the national wage increases in 1985-86, which is built into the funding arrangement, is another. It is based on the 23 per cent factor. I understand that the explanation for the small residual amount remaining in the line at the end of the financial year is that there were some administrative hold-ups in payments of grants which are being carried over into this financial year.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** The Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia has been operating now for two years. Does the sum allocated for the current financial year reflect an increase in staffing for the board? What is the reason for that increase from \$2.8 million to \$2.9 million?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** That is an increment in salaries. There is provision for substantially the same level of effort as is provided this year.

**Dr EYERS:** These are substantially unavoidable increases—provision for the national wage increases, additional accommodation costs as a result of the Department of Housing and Construction renegotiating rentals, an inflation contingency and a national wage increase for the examiners, who are not staff members in the normal sense. There are additional classes to be moderated for the school assessed subjects and some additional teacher in-servicing. Those are the major components of the increase.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** Why are the headings 'Grants to organisations' and 'Consultative committees' now given as gross totals rather than as individual allocations as before? Does the change show that some may have disappeared completely, such as the South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee, and that grants will be substantially changed for other previously individually noted allocations?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** There have been some changes in this area. I suppose that this is an evolutionary process. Grants to a number of organisations have been amalgamated to allow maximum flexibility in the handling of funds. While organisations which are funded carry on worthwhile functions, there is a need to review the criteria for funding

in terms of their need and priorities of education, and whether some of the funding should be provided through the education lines. To achieve that, there will be some reviews. I have written to several organisations advising them that there will be reviews of this funding source. We may transfer some or all of the funds, along with the function, to a more appropriate provider. It may be in health, welfare, or some other area.

Also, I am keen to see the various advisory bodies in the Education Department consider what degree of cooperation can be achieved, particularly with respect to the resources that are provided to them (such as back-up research, secretarial, use of computers, and the like) so that we can achieve a greater degree of cooperation and efficiency. After all, they all advise the one Ministry in the one Government. They have had different histories and they have grown up with different terms and conditions associated with their terms of reference. I think it is appropriate that we review those, so that is reflected in the way in which they are presented in the lines, but in the main there is a continuation of the existing effort in the great majority of these areas.

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

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Children's Services Office, \$35 464 000

**Chairman:**

Mr D.M. Ferguson

**Members:**

The Hon. H. Allison

The Hon. Jennifer Cashmore

Mr M.R. De Laine

Mr T.R. Groom

Mr E.J. Meier

Mr D.J. Robertson

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**Witness:**

The Hon. G.J. Crafter, Minister of Education, Minister of Children's Services and Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr B. Wright, Director.

Mr G. Haberfeld, Assistant Director (Resources).

**The CHAIRMAN:** I declare the vote open for examination.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** You, Mr Chairman, in particular, and many members of the House of Assembly are acutely aware of the very extensive need in the community for child-care which is yet to be adequately recognised by State and Federal Governments. There is a particular need for occasional child-care to give relief to the full-time mother who, perhaps for the first time in history, now has the more or less sole responsibility 24 hours a day without much, if any, assistance from extended family, neighbours or friends to give her a much needed break which is essential for physical and mental health. What has been and what is the response of the Children's Services Office to this community need, recognising that Governments invariably lag behind a very extensive need which

arises perhaps without everyone adequately anticipating it, and also recognising that, in these circumstances, it is better to provide a level of care to the greatest possible number of people rather than perhaps super care to a relatively small number of people?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** There is no doubt that there is a very real need in the community for children's services to provide additional child-care, family day care, occasional care and the other services that are included under that heading. I think that we as a nation have realised only recently how important this is as a strengthening factor for the family unit and our community. In a way, we are paying for the neglect in the past or, at best, I suppose an inability to grasp the importance of this matter.

In 1972, as a result of the work of the late Sir Phillip Lynch, we saw the formulation of important Federal Government legislation and that created the Office of Child-Care. At that time, in a period of full employment, that legislation was designed to provide child-care to encourage women to enter the work force.

We have seen things change since that time. We went through the Whitlam period, when there was a very substantial commitment through the Office of Child Care to the expansion of children's services and we saw a number of programs develop in this State and around Australia. We then saw a freezing of funds for the whole period of the Fraser Administration, and under the Hawke Administration we have seen the creation of some 20 000 child-care positions under way.

That has shown to the Australian people that there is an alternative to many of the unsatisfactory ways in which many people go about caring for their children. Although those 20 000 child-care places are most welcome, and certainly when we see the number of child-care centres and other programs being developed in South Australia, we know that in this nation it will take the facilities available to only about 10 per cent of those who potentially could be using them, we have an enormously long way to go.

Only yesterday or the day before I released a statement that the Commonwealth had approved an additional 245 places in South Australia for occasional child-care, and we are currently negotiating on this. I raised this matter with my Federal colleague at a Ministers' meeting last Friday to enable us to participate in the drawing up of the guidelines for the placing of those positions in our community. We have a community infrastructure that can well absorb those positions and ensure that they are spread throughout the community and used well.

I know that the Commonwealth Government is keen that some of those places be provided in shopping centres and the like. I hope that we can provide that in a number of instances, and that we can provide for some of those places to be used through community neighbour houses and other types of community based services, where I know that they are much needed by parents who are seeking occasional child care. That is one area where there has been a gap in the provision of service in the past.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** While I agree with the general philosophical thrust of what the Minister said, it does not give me any specifics as to the response of the Children's Services Office. One of the ways in which occasional child-care, to which I referred particularly, can usefully be provided is through family day care. Is the Minister satisfied with the guidelines under which family day care is provided? I am prompted to ask that question because a constituent came to me a short while ago and gave me an outline of what she had observed at a family day care giver's home in my electorate. It was in late summer. She called

at the home to collect her child. There were 15 preschool-aged children being cared for by two elderly women, one of whom was on a walking frame and could not have responded promptly to a child in potential danger or to one who needed quick care or comfort.

When the constituent left with the child whom she was taking away, she left with another mother who had been in the back garden supervising preschool children in a swimming pool. When that other mother left, the only people left supervising those children were the teenage children of the care giver who was out chauffeuring other children to their homes. There was a potentially very dangerous situation, both inside and outside the house. It is quite clear that no-one would regard that arrangement as satisfactory.

My constituent contacted the Children's Services Office and was told that the matter would be investigated and that she would be informed of the outcome. That was more than six months ago and she has not heard a word since. In the light of that circumstance, which I do not imagine is unique, can the Minister advise the Committee whether or not he is satisfied with supervision of family day care, whether he has any plans to revise the regulations, whether the situation that I have just outlined is known to him or his officers, and whether it is likely that this is occurring elsewhere?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I would be interested to know whether the honourable member made any representations about that situation.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** No: it has just been brought to my attention, and I am asking the Minister about it now.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I would be pleased if the honourable member would obtain some specific information because, obviously, it is important that every one of these instances is followed up. We have several thousand care providers in the State, and I guess that one can draw up all the guidelines that one can imagine and they will never control human behaviour.

In a program of this type we depend so much upon the propriety of people involved in the program. I must admit that it has been my experience over a number of years to see just how successful this program is. Nevertheless, it does need constant supervision. This program is wholly Commonwealth funded and, as such, the State Government Children's Services Office is not the body that is ultimately responsible for the supervision of care providers.

Obviously, we are interested, because we are the regulator of those services; that is why I think that instances such as this should be identified and followed up, so that we can make sure that regulations that require care providers to care for only a certain number of children in certain age categories are adhered to. If that does not occur, then certain action should follow.

Certainly, with respect to swimming pools and the like, there are rules and guidelines. If the honourable member can provide that information, I will be pleased to ensure that it is followed up. I must say that I believe that the family day care program has been a godsend to many families in this State. I know through my experience as Minister of Community Welfare just how important that program was to so many families who were at risk as a family, and that intervention and care of their children meant much to them.

The tasks that are taken on by the care providers are often very substantial and in excess of what would normally be required of them. Therefore, it is disappointing to learn of instances (isolated instances, I would suggest) where there is less than a satisfactory situation. I can assure the hon-



ourable member that I will be very keen to take up this matter.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** The present Government made a commitment to provide preschool education for a period of 12 months prior to a child commencing school. At Tumby Bay for the past 12 months, and for future projected requirements, there is an insufficient staff allocation to meet current requirements for four year olds and there is no staff allocation for 3½ year olds. When will the Government honour its commitment in regard to kindergartens, and what exactly will it do in the next financial year with regard to the Tumby Bay kindergarten, about which my colleagues have received a very large number of representations?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I have also received representations from the community there about the matter to which the honourable member refers. I will ask Mr Wright if he can throw some light on it.

**Mr Wright:** The Tumby Bay situation is well-known to me. As members would be aware the procedure that we adopt is to review enrolments in preschools about this time of the year and on the basis of those enrolments we determine staffing levels for the beginning of the following year. The figures have come in from Tumby Bay and other kindergartens across the State and we are in the process of reviewing those figures and making decisions about the best use of our resources. I would hope we can let Tumby Bay kindergarten know the outcome of that review very shortly.

**Mr De LAINE:** In view of the anticipated shortfall of approximately 200 trained child-care workers to 1988, will the Minister indicate how the effect of this serious shortfall can be minimised?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** This matter is important and it is worth recollecting that during the early part of the decade steps were taken to decrease the effort put into the tertiary sector for the training of child-care workers. When I was a member of the Opposition during the period of the Tonkin Government there was substantial agitation in the community and representations were made with respect to the discontinuance of a number of TAFE programs for training child-care workers. Now we are paying the price for that downturn in effort and we are having to run a series of courses. We have received Commonwealth support for that and to employ other than fully trained persons in a number of our child-care centres and children's services programs.

We have to monitor this situation substantially and continue to emphasise the training of qualified personnel to staff the rapidly increasing number of centres that we are providing. I will ask Mr Wright to comment further.

**Mr Wright:** We are aware of the possible problems that are around the corner in terms of the availability of trained child-care workers. A committee has been established with input from our department and TAFE to examine various ways of increasing the output of child-care training courses in the TAFE sector. Members are undoubtedly aware that TAFE trains all the qualified child-care workers in the State.

The three TAFE colleges are running child-care courses at present and they will have full quota intakes at the beginning of next year. A skills and demand program was conducted during 1985 that provided a very welcome injection of partly trained child-care workers at the end of 1985. That program was run in cooperation with the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, and the effects of that short course are now being examined by us in the sense that those graduates are now in the workplace and we are able to assess the effectiveness of the shorter courses. Our efforts, in conjunction with

TAFE, are directed very squarely at ensuring we can meet the future demand for child-care workers in this State.

**Mr De LAINE:** Will the Minister list the child-care centres that have been completed under the joint Commonwealth-State agreement since this program commenced?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I am very pleased to advise the Committee on progress in this area. I will not go through the complete details but refer to the following centres about to be completed or completed: Seaton; Diagonal Road, Para Hills; Mary Street, Salisbury; the Laura Community Child-care Centre at Modbury; Elizabeth West; Hallett Cove; Conyngham Street, Glenside; Happy Valley; the Queen Elizabeth Hospital; Morphett Vale; and at the Flinders Medical Centre. To be opened within the next few months are centres in the following areas: Gilles Plains; Aberfoyle Park; Coober Pedy; and Whyalla. Another two are to be opened, one in the city sponsored by the Public Service Association (to be opened next year) and also a Polish child-care centre at Enfield (also estimated to be opened early next year). Specific information about them I am pleased to make available to the Committee.

**Mr De LAINE:** Will the Minister say if and when a child-care centre will be established in the electorate of Henley Beach?

**The CHAIRMAN:** That is an extremely good question.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** All areas of the State are under consideration and, in accordance with established criteria between the Commonwealth and the State, needs of particular areas are determined and put into priorities. There is currently a further list of child-care centres to be established with the Federal Minister for Community Services for his approval. I cannot reveal the identity of them, where they will be or whether the electorate of Henley Beach or other electorates are covered by the list. An ongoing program is being established and in time we will cover, according to need, a very substantial part of this State.

**Mr MEIER:** The shadow Minister of Children's Services has been provided with a submission for claims for extra staff time from the McKay Memorial Kindergarten at Penola. I can make it available to the Minister if he does not have one himself. Will the Minister bring back a report on the current attitude of the Children's Services Office to those claims?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** There are real pressing needs associated with that centre; that is recognised by the office but the process that Mr Wright explained to the Committee that applies in the Children's Services Office with respect to anticipated enrolments for the coming year is being undertaken at this time. We will arrive at a decision which will be conveyed to the management of the kindergarten with respect to additional resources to be made available to them. Certainly their situation is well known to the Children's Services Office and obviously to all honourable members.

**Mr MEIER:** In the early part of 1986, when the Commonwealth Government introduced new guidelines for funding child-care centres, much concern was expressed at the effect of these changes on the level of fees to be charged and the quality of staff employed. Has the Minister or the Children's Services Office conducted a survey or analysis of child-care centres to see what has eventuated?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** When that decision was taken by the Commonwealth Government, in the appropriate forums I expressed the concern of the South Australian Government and indeed of many people involved in children's services in South Australia to the Federal Minister.

Largely because of representations that he received from South Australia, he undertook to carry out some further

review of the effect of the implementation of those guidelines. At the meeting last Friday to which I referred earlier, the Federal Minister indicated that he had just received a report from consultants on that matter and that he would, as soon as he was able, make it available to the States for consideration. I will ask Mr Wright to comment.

**Mr Wright:** We did undertake a survey in February this year specifically looking at the staffing question that the member raised. We obtained baseline data on staffing at that time in child care centres, which was obviously before the new funding guidelines had come into effect. We will be conducting a further survey this month, which will be about six months into the operation of the new guidelines and we will be in a position, therefore, to compare the staffing arrangements now with the staffing arrangements that were in place prior to the new guidelines. That is obviously one of the questions that concerned us a great deal, and we have gone to some length to ensure that we have good data that we can discuss with the Commonwealth.

**Mr MEIER:** What progress has been made toward the implementation of a national standard for child care centres in Australia? Is the Minister planning any changes to those standards? If he is, when?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** We do not propose any changes in South Australia. We would hope that others would fall into line with some of our standards. This matter was also raised at the Ministers' meeting last week, but there is not a great deal of consensus about uniform standards in Australia. Further work is being undertaken to tease out the feasibility or possibility of our achieving at some stage uniform standards.

**Mr MEIER:** Why is there not a deal of consensus on such standards?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Mr Wright might like to comment.

**Mr Wright:** There are substantial historical standards from State to State about how child care services have been regulated by State Governments. Some State Governments have only recently moved to regulate child care standards, whereas in South Australia there have been standards in place for over a decade. Those historical differences, combined with some differences in the level of involvement by local government—for example, those historical and regional differences—have tended to make discussions about common standards difficult. I think there is general agreement that uniform or some closer degree of alignment of minimum standards across the country would be desirable.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I wish to record the enormous trouble that many community management committees encounter in establishing child care centres. You, Mr Chairman, would know about that. Mention is made of provision of support to management committees. Knowing how difficult it is for management committees in the first couple of years in establishing a new centre, what form might that support take under the Commonwealth funding arrangements, and what practical help can community management committees look forward to in establishing new child care centres and in regard to their ongoing maintenance and care?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** It is important to consider the activity and support that can be provided for agencies to assist communities which are accepting substantial responsibility for the management of child care centres. It is a very valuable philosophy that the Commonwealth has adopted with respect to the creation of community based child care centres, so that those centres are owned by local communities and form very much a part of the *milieu* of that local community. There is a range of support given. Indeed, some come from within the State, the Children's

Services Office and other Government agencies, but there is a more specific Commonwealth funded program of support for those communities. Perhaps Mr Wright would briefly explain that to the Committee.

**Mr Wright:** Essentially, as the Minister said, support comes from two areas: the Commonwealth Office of Child Care located within the Department of Community Services; and, probably of more interest to members of this Committee, the Children's Services Office. The Children's Services Office is regionally administered. There are six regional offices—four in the metropolitan area and two in the country. It is the job of the staff in each of those regional offices to support the development of new services and to provide ongoing support to existing services. Some of the regional services advisers have direct experience in the establishment of child-care centres specifically and they are involved in close detail with newly established centres.

I think it is important to stress just how much a person is called upon to do in establishing a new child-care centre. It is a very large undertaking. A child-care centre represents a sizable business, if you like. We are very concerned that they should have the right support in matters of finance, budget expenditure management, personnel matters, hiring, firing, and programming. We regard the establishment of these centres as being a very crucial part of our work. I might point out that we regard as being equally important the support of the kindergarten management committees which have a similar range of duties to perform, although members of those committees do not have quite the same level of financial responsibility that members of child-care centre committees have. However, the community base of all children's services, be they in relation to child-care or kindergartens, is one of the great strengths of the early childhood services arrangements in this State.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I note the statement on page 552 of the Program Estimates that there is increasing demand for child-care facilities to be available for occasional care, respite care, overnight care and work-based care. I draw to the attention of the Minister a survey that was carried out in the Noarlunga council area, I think in October last year. Those categories were identified as being the most sought after in terms of child-care facilities. Basically the survey, conducted, say, at shopping centres, asked people what they thought were the major requirements for child-care. So, it was a fairly *ad hoc* kind of survey, but I think it highlighted the point made in the Program Estimates. From memory, I think some 28 per cent of people indicated that occasional care was their primary need in relation to child-care. That category is not really catered for in the existing system. As was pointed out, only 10 per cent of potential users get to use the system.

In relation to the second category, respite care, the needs of disabled children in that area have been taken care of with the provision of a HACC grant provided in the last few weeks, and that ought to diminish some of the needs of those people. But the system still does not cater for able children. In relation to the work-based care area, obviously there are centres in the area such as Flinders Medical Centre, the Sturt CAE, Flinders University, and so on. Those places have their own work-based care centres but, again, they do not provide for the majority of working people who want and need to use that service. In short, my question is as follows: what provisions are being made for catering in future for those specific demands, that is, occasional care, respite care and work-based child-care outside the areas that I have isolated?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I guess that the honourable member's comments could apply to any of the newer suburban

areas in Australian cities, in relation to which there is a great need for children's services. I have referred to the list of 'just established' and 'to be established' child-care centres in this State, and a great many of those have been placed in the suburban areas which I have mentioned. But, as the honourable member has pointed out, there is still an enormous unmet demand in the community, and we endorse the Commonwealth Government's strategy in this area to meet those respective needs. Whilst we still have such a high level of unmet need, any facilities that are provided will still to some extent be just pebbles in a very large pond.

It will take many years to further develop that strategy. There is in this design an allocation of family day care, occasional child-care places, work based child-care and community based child-care. I guess that is the strategy that we will now follow. Hopefully the Commonwealth commitment will be maintained or even extended. There is now a growing State commitment in this area. There are additional resources, more than has been provided ever before, for the establishment of these programs. In the Children's Services Office we now have a coordinated approach to the delivery of children's services. So we as a Government and indeed the community are able to get a much clearer picture of needs in the community. There is a stronger voice to Government about needs in the area of children's services.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I refer to the integration of intellectually disabled children into mainstream services. I draw some attention particularly to the area of preschooling rather than child-care. I point to the case of my own daughter, who was placed in a kindergarten with the aim of graduating from there to the local school. We found, to our cost I guess in some respects, that the teachers at the kindergarten were not really capable or concerned enough to give our daughter the additional support that she needed. Some support was derived from the developmental learning program at Sturt College, which she had previously attended. The wash-up of the whole exercise was that, unless people within the kindergartens (and I presume the child-care centres) are trained to integrate intellectually (and presumably physically) disabled children, some of them will find the question of going to mainstream child-care and kindergartens a dubious proposition.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The honourable member raises an important aspect to children's services. I will ask Mr Wright to give some details of the approach that is being taken in this area by the Children's Services Office.

**Mr Wright:** We regard this as an extremely important area of our work. We have taken steps to boost our effort in this area since our establishment 15 months ago. We have created four additional special services positions at regional level. Those special services staff, along with those who are already employed, are able to provide some support to those kindergarten teachers and directors mentioned by the honourable member. However, I think we have a lot further to go. I agree, if the member was suggesting this, that our efforts should be directed at ensuring that our ordinary teaching staff have the skills to cope with children who have special needs. Obviously not every teacher can become an expert in these areas. There is no need for them to become an expert, because the distribution of children with special needs is not of that magnitude. Every member of staff should have a good understanding at least of what help is needed and where to get it. That is the basic thrust of our development in this area. Funds are set aside for our integration program to allow for special staff to be employed for individual children to enable them to be integrated into the kindergarten program. Unfortunately, those funds are

limited and there is a greater demand on them than there is availability.

The third area that I will comment on before leaving this topic is the area of pre-service training and teachers and child-care givers. We believe there is not sufficient emphasis given to the management and teaching of children with special needs in preschool training courses. We are advised by curriculum advisory committees at the colleges. That is a consistent area of input from our point of view. We hope that the end result will be a greater emphasis on children with special needs, with developmental delays on those preservice training courses.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** A little while ago the Minister gave a brief historical survey of child-care funding from the Federal Government, but I believe he stopped at a critical point. He made a political issue of the fact that the Fraser Government had frozen child-care funding. My recollection of that is that, yes, Fraser froze the child-care allocation to South Australia at about \$3.8 million in, I think 1978, but when the Hawke Government came in Bob Hawke must have thought what a good idea that was, because he, too, carried on with the same allocation of \$3.8 million for the next three or four years. I believe he did a greater disservice to South Australia because, after all, the dollar was devalued very substantially during that time, too.

Admittedly, in March or April 1975 the Minister, along with the Federal Minister for Education, made an announcement saying 'Look: we are going to build 20 new child-care centres in South Australia over the next two years.' The State Minister agreed that he would also enter into a staff training agreement whereby South Australia would fund some of that cost of training the staff, but what the Minister did not realise was that, while the Federal Minister was standing by his side, she had also picked his pocket. From that time, within two or three months, the \$3.8 million was not just frozen but removed completely from South Australia's allocation.

So, really, the Federal Government, with tremendous largesse, is funding the new child-care centres and the staffing with \$3.8 million which South Australia would previously have had for its own child-care programs. In view of the fact that the Federal Government has done that to South Australia over the past, say, 10 or 15 years, what safeguards has the Minister that the same trick will not be played again; that, some few years down the track, the Federal Government is going to withdraw from the child-care field and leave a whole heap of new child-care centres in the Minister's hands and say 'You cannot very well close them now, but we are not going to carry on funding them'? It has been perpetrated once, not simply by a conservative Government—it was the Labor Government which took that \$3.8 million away.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I think I should first clarify the matter of funding. The honourable member is talking about \$3.8 million which the Commonwealth withdrew from the preschool area in the whole bucket of children's services funding. The Hawke Government in fact has doubled the resources there, and I think some additional \$90 million—I cannot be quoted on this, but an enormous amount of additional funds—has been placed into the children's services area which dwarfs the money to which the honourable member is referring.

There has been across this country a transformation in children's services in the past three years, and the whole of the Australian community recognises that. That is not a couple of million dollars but tens and tens of millions of dollars which have been put into this area. Commitments have been made in terms of recurrent salaries, in terms of

capital expenditure and of training those who will work in those programs and those who will support them, the administrators and the like.

As long as the community expresses this strong support that there is for the delivery of that service and the strong support there is for the Commonwealth Government's initiatives in this area, the Commonwealth will continue to meet that need and, certainly in the last budget, that support was indicated. I am confident that they will continue to provide that support. I think there has been a debate now over many years about the preschool area and whose responsibility that was, but I think that child-care is and has been seen very much in a different light.

**Mr De LAINE:** In relation to the implementation of the family day care restructuring program, could the Minister outline the guidelines and method of this restructuring process?

**Mr Wright:** The family day care scheme, as previously discussed this evening, is funded by the Commonwealth and administered by the Children's Services Office in this State. The scheme was transferred to the Children's Services Office in October last year. Before that, it was administered by the Community Welfare Department. At the time the Children's Services Office took responsibility for the program, there had been in place a commitment to review the administrative and management structure of the scheme, so we proceeded to honour that commitment in conjunction with officers from the Public Service Board and in cooperation with the staff concerned and their unions.

The end result of it has been that a new structure for family day care has been devised which has meant the amalgamation of some schemes and the streamlining of the positions occupied by staff in the family day care schemes. We now have schemes which are equally close to their communities but which allow us to scrutinise more carefully the expenditure of funds and the management of the individual programs. That restructuring process is still under way and will not be completed until the end of this year. We are at the point now where senior positions have been called and interviews will be conducted between now and the end of this year.

**Mr De LAINE:** At the local government level, it has been my experience that applications for the establishment of child-care centres have been submitted to local councils and refused on planning grounds. Quite often these applications have been submitted after the particular property has been purchased by the applicant. Is it possible for some sort of system to be set up to liaise with all parties involved to

ensure that applicants are not disadvantaged and in fact child-care facilities are established in the most appropriate locations?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Perhaps before I answer that question, in answer to an earlier question—and Mr Wright's response jogged my recollection of what I said earlier—I may have misled the Committee in respect of what the member for Coles said about supervision of persons in family day care centres. Whilst it is a totally Commonwealth funded program, we do have that regulatory responsibility vested in the State sphere. I am not sure whether I expressed that clearly, but I need to put that on record, and that ties in with my comments about seeking further information so that any action that has not been taken can certainly be taken with respect to that particular complaint.

In answering the honourable member's question about the council consent and zoning restrictions on child-care centres, there have been some very unfortunate examples of circumstances which the honourable member describes. Some fears held within communities about child-care centres are unfounded about noise that may emanate from them, parking problems and the like. I think it is unfortunate that people feel that it is an undesirable use, because it is quite appropriate to see child-care centres located in residential areas. That needs to be done sensitively and in accordance with proper planning principles. I guess it is an indication of the newness of this use and function in our community. The Children's Services Office has been involved, in conjunction with the officers of the Department of Housing and Construction, to ensure that those sorts of hiccups are eliminated wherever that is possible. It is also a problem that has been experienced by some providers of children's services in the private sector.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Unfortunately, Parliament has determined that we must finish at 10 o'clock. Therefore, I declare the examination closed.

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Works and Services—Children's Services Office,  
\$350 000—Examination declared completed.

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#### ADJOURNMENT

At 10 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Thursday 9 October at 11 a.m.