

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 19 September 1989

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A

Acting Chairman:

Mr K.C. Hamilton

Members:

Mr H. Becker
 The Hon. Ted Chapman
 Mr M.R. De Laine
 Mr I.P. Lewis
 The Hon. R.G. Payne
 The Hon. J.W. Slater

Witness:

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings, Minister of Housing and Construction, Minister of Public Works, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

The **ACTING CHAIRMAN**: I outline various matters for the information of members of the Committee. If the Minister undertakes to supply information at a later date, that information must be in a form suitable for inclusion in *Hansard*, and two copies must be submitted to the House of Assembly Clerk no later than Friday 6 October. I propose to allow the lead speaker for the Opposition and the Minister to make opening statements of about 10 minutes but no more than 15 minutes, if they desire. There will be a flexible approach to asking questions, with three questions being asked alternately from each side, although members may ask supplementary questions. Subject to the convenience of the Committee, members outside the Committee will be given the opportunity to ask questions once questioning on a vote has been exhausted by the Committee.

Questions must be based on lines of expenditure as revealed in the Estimates of Payments, but reference may be made to other documents such as the Program Estimates and the Auditor-General's Report. Questions will be directed to the Minister and the Minister can refer those questions to his advisers for a response. Will the lead speaker for the Opposition indicate the timetable of matters to be discussed today?

Mr BECKER: Our understanding was that Housing would be first, then Housing and Construction, followed by Aboriginal Affairs. That is how our program was drawn up some weeks ago. I understand that may have been done in conjunction with the Government Whip. Certainly the two Whips conferred. The Whip has told me that the Government Whip was not aware that Aboriginal Affairs was to be first on the program this morning, so we are not prepared for Aboriginal Affairs.

However, we can accommodate the Minister and his advisers because we do not want to waste their time. It is disappointing. In the past there have been phone calls between the Minister and me under the shadow Minister arrangement. I did not change that. Obviously something is not working. We are trying to find out from the Executive Officer whether he has received this letter and why we have not been advised. I am prepared for Housing, and Housing and Construction.

Although the Aboriginal Affairs advisers are here, it will make it a little difficult for us. Most members generally deal with certain issues, but I have not been deeply involved in Aboriginal Affairs. I do not know where Peter Arnold is. I am and always have been interested in the subject through Housing and Construction. I shall seek quite a bit of information and will treat this as a general knowledge lesson. I appreciate the assistance that we will be given. It may probably work out for the best.

Mr LEWIS: I spoke to the member for Bragg late last night. He had no communication at that time, because we discussed the order of march today. As far as he was aware, and indeed Opposition members, Housing and Construction was to be examined first. In view of that, with your indulgence, Mr Chairman, and for the sake of avoiding loss of time, may we commence to examine the vote on Aboriginal Affairs and then, as soon as the Minister's advisers on Housing and Construction arrive, adjourn that examination and proceed with Housing and Construction?

I have two reasons for asking you to grant this request. The first is that the member for Chaffey, who is the Opposition lead spokesman on Aboriginal Affairs, is still on the road, as he has not yet arrived from the Riverland. He had not expected this vote to be considered until this afternoon. The second reason is that we do not have the benefit of the analysis of this year's proposed expenditure that he has done in some detail. We have some ideas, about which we would need further information, but it would mock the process of the Estimates Committee to deny that member in particular, and the Committee in general, the opportunity for him to participate in the examination of the vote.

It would not be for us to accede to this request out of order. The Sessional Orders on Estimates Committees are silent on that point. We can arrange our own agenda. All we need to do is to ask the Minister, in view of the circumstances, to have his advisers and departmental officers come to Parliament as quickly as possible so that we can adjourn examination of this vote, take up the vote on Housing and Construction, and then resume consideration of Aboriginal Affairs.

The **ACTING CHAIRMAN**: The Chair is in an awkward position. I am in the hands of the Committee and it is a decision that the Committee will make. The Minister may wish to respond, or there may be other speakers—

Mr LEWIS: But he is not a member of the Committee, is he? With respect, the Minister comes before the Committee. However, the Committee consists of you and the other six members of the House of Assembly.

The **ACTING CHAIRMAN**: Indeed. I thank the member for Murray-Mallee for that contribution. Nevertheless, I am trying as best I can to resolve this matter. As I have indicated before, I am in the hands of the Committee. It is true that I am a member of the Committee, as Acting Chairman, but I would hope that the matter can be resolved without the Chairman having to become involved.

The **Hon. R.G. PAYNE**: We have just heard from two members of the Opposition with two different approaches to the matter. With respect to the contribution of the member for Murray-Mallee, the Minister does not have to answer any questions whatsoever from the Committee if he or she does not want to. Clearly, the Minister is a key player in the functioning of the Committee, irrespective of whether or not he is a member. At least we ought to hear from the Minister before we proceed any further.

The **Hon. T.H. Hemmings**: It has always (as the member for Hanson will attest) been my practice when appearing before an Estimates Committee to write to the spokesman and provide a suggested timetable for the hearing. I will

read from a faxed copy of the letter that I sent to the member for Bragg some weeks ago in regard to the proposed format of the Committee. One of the reasons I suggested that Aboriginal Affairs matters be put first on the agenda is that, unfortunately, one portfolio must be relegated to the end of the day and, because the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio is a very important part of this Government's policy, it was decided that it should proceed first. That is an indication that the Government sees Aboriginal Affairs as a major part of its policy under me as the responsible Minister and Mr Rathman as the Director. The letter, addressed to Mr Graham Ingerson, M.P., member for Bragg, 357 Greenhill Road, Toorak Gardens, states:

Dear Mr Ingerson,

I wish to advise that the Estimates Committee hearings A for the Housing and Construction, Public Works and Aboriginal Affairs portfolios will be heard on Tuesday 19 September 1989. The suggested format for these hearings is as follows:

- 11 a.m.-1 p.m.—Aboriginal Affairs budget lines
- 1 p.m.-2 p.m.—Lunch
- 2 p.m.-4.30 p.m.—Housing budget lines
- 4.30 p.m.-4.45 p.m.—Afternoon tea

I understand that the time for afternoon tea this year will be changed from that of last year. The letter continues:

- 4.45 p.m.-6 p.m.—Housing budget lines
- 6 p.m.-7 p.m.—Dinner
- 7 p.m.-10 p.m.—Public Works budget lines

Discussion on Public Works budget lines may commence earlier than the above time if all other Housing items are completed. If you have any query concerning the suggested format for these hearings, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Terry Hemmings, M.P.,
Minister of Housing and Construction,
Minister of Public Works,
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs

A copy of this letter went to the Hon. Diana Laidlaw, MLC, who, I understand, is the Opposition's super spokesperson for Aboriginal Affairs. I received no response to that and, as in the past, took it that, there being no response, the format suggested in my letter would be agreed to. If there has been a communications breakdown between the office of the member for Bragg and his colleagues (whilst I have every sympathy with the member for Murray-Mallee in what he said previously), that is unfortunate, but I did my part as Minister. In the past, I have always written to the Opposition spokesmen, and the member for Hanson will verify that. I see that he is nodding his head.

My officers are here, prepared to assist me in answering questions from the Committee. The officers for the Housing portfolio and from Sacon will be available at the appropriate times. They have fitted in with the times stated in the letter sent to the member for Bragg. I cannot be answerable for the member for Bragg—I would like to be, but I cannot be—but I insist that, as I received no alteration to my letter (which I will gladly table) I suggest that we proceed with the questioning on Aboriginal Affairs.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Before calling on the member for Murray-Mallee, I point out that it is the intention of the Chair to proceed with the examination of the Aboriginal Affairs matters unless there is an indication from the Opposition that it does not wish to proceed. I understand that the member for Hanson has indicated that he would like the Committee to proceed along these lines, and I intend to do exactly that unless the other members of the Opposition oppose that proposition. The member for Murray-Mallee.

Mr LEWIS: I regret that. I want to make several points: first, on all other Committees the two Whips have consulted and agreed as to the order under which the votes are to be considered. That was done in this instance and an agreement was made by the Whips as to the Housing and Con-

struction lines. Secondly, the member for Mitchell, in his remarks following the remarks made by the member for Hanson and me, noted that the two Opposition members of this Committee who were present had differing views as to what might be best in the circumstances.

I would say to the member for Mitchell and the other members of the Committee that that is understandable. Only 40 seconds before the Committee sat did we realise that Aboriginal Affairs was the vote that the Minister intended should be examined first. It is understandable that we had not consulted one another about our attitude to the matter. It had been left to me to ensure that everything was in order last night, and I checked with the member for Bragg.

The third point I make is that the Minister's letter, although containing information, is undated, which throws its credibility into doubt completely, to my mind. I have not yet received an undated letter from the Minister—not once since he has been a Minister. I find it amazing that neither the member for Bragg nor the Honourable Diana Laidlaw has received that letter. Somewhere or other it went astray in the Minister's office.

So, I would not rebuke the Minister but advise him of the manner in which I would have proceeded in the circumstance, that is, that I or one of my staff would have called the people to whom the letter was addressed before the said day, to ensure that they knew that the letter had been sent, and to discover whether they had received it, since no acknowledgement of receipt had been given by either of the two people to whom it was addressed.

Finally, I say to the Minister, with the greatest respect, that if all other Ministers can make the arrangements for these Estimates Committee proceedings through the Whip of the Party with the Whip of the Opposition, I do not see why the Minister of Housing and Construction should see himself as an exception to that procedure. The Minister, by inference, chided me and perhaps the member for Hanson for putting the view that if we were to leave Aboriginal Affairs to a position in the examination other than the first (he implied the last when in fact the arrangement was for it to be second), it would be somewhat of an insult to that department. He is being trite and petty. If the Government really sees Aboriginal Affairs as the most important department, why are we examining today, at the beginning of the second week? Why was it not the first department on the first day? If he wants to be stupid, I remind him that two people can play silly games.

The Aboriginal Affairs portfolio is just as important as any other portfolio—all members of the Opposition believe that. We are now caught short at 40 seconds notice and expected to examine a vote without our lead spokesman present and with the questions he has prepared for the Minister on a careful analysis of the proposals. It is therefore galling to us to have to comply with the whimsical inclinations of the Minister in this regard. I will not use other adjectives to describe what I believe has been an unfortunate passage of events.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I agree with the honourable member's last expressed opinion: it has been an unfortunate situation. It is the intention of the Chair to move now to the examination of the proposed payments.

Minister of Housing and Construction and Minister of Public Works and Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Miscellaneous, \$2 307 000.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr D. Rathman, Director, Office of Aboriginal Affairs.
Mr G.J. Knill, Chief Administrative Officer.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to page 98 of the Estimates of Payments and pages 221 to 224 in the Program Estimates. As I indicated, the Opposition lead speaker will be given 10 minutes if he wishes to make an opening contribution. If the member for Chaffey arrives before the completion of the examination, the Chair will be amenable to allowing him to make a statement if time permits. The Committee will find the Chair most flexible, given the difficulty that has arisen.

Mr BECKER: I apologise to the advisers for any misunderstanding in this matter.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I regret the misunderstanding. If it is suggested that I may have caused it deliberately, you know that I am a very open person, Mr Acting Chairman, and I am happy to defend the Ministry and the Government's policy on all portfolios for which I am responsible.

Mr BECKER: I note that at page 249 of the Program Estimates a 1989-90 specific target/objective is to implement an Aboriginal land management program in response to the Aboriginal Lands Trust Review. What did this review consist of, and how will the programs be implemented?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: Some time ago the Government decided that a committee should be set up to review the Aboriginal Lands Trust Act. It was established in 1987. The committee has consulted widely with all the Aboriginal communities that lease land from the Aboriginal Lands Trust, and it has prepared a very comprehensive report on Aboriginal land management. The report is now with me. I have met with the review committee. It has agreed to await the outcome of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Bill which is currently before Federal Parliament. This will enable the committee to frame its recommendations in line with the Commonwealth's administration of Aboriginal affairs, which will be determined under the new Act.

I congratulate the review committee on that attitude. It is the most reasonable approach to take. It will ensure that the State and Commonwealth Government policies and administration are complementary and coordinated. The ATSIC Bill currently being considered by Federal Parliament is of some magnitude, and I understand that some 120 amendments have still to be debated in the Senate. It would be unwise of the Government to implement recommendations from the Aboriginal Lands Trust Review before being fully aware of how the provisions of the ATSIC Bill will affect Aboriginal communities in South Australia, not only those which lease land from the Aboriginal Lands Trust but also those other communities which are governed under the Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act and the Maralinga Tjarutja land rights legislation.

I do not know whether Mr Rathman would like to enlarge on this aspect of the review. However, the Office of Aboriginal Affairs is taking an active role in this, so that we can coordinate all the different aspects of how the review will affect the Aboriginal communities in South Australia. We place a lot of importance on the review, and it is hoped that we can implement as many of the recommendations as we can, following the passage of the ATSIC Bill through Federal Parliament. I invite Mr Rathman to comment further.

Mr Rathman: When we consulted with the committee it agreed to await the outcome of the ATSIC Bill, and this is in line with the Aboriginal community's confusion at times about its outcome. It would be unfair to continue to have consultations regarding the Lands Trust Review and the interim report if it causes further confusion.

Mr BECKER: There have been recent calls by the Police Association and Correctional Officers' legal fund officers to scrap the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. According to these groups, the funds spent on the commission would be better used taking preventive steps to reduce the chances of further deaths in custody and to reduce the chances of Aborigines coming to the attention of the justice system. Page 249 of the Program Estimates under 'Major Resource Variations 1988-89/1989-90' states:

The variation in program expenditure of \$177 000 is due to:
—increased funding in response to the Interim Report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

When I was shadow Minister of Correctional Services I had quite a bit to do with some of the people in the community, trying to work out ways of overcoming this tragic problem. When will the findings of Commissioner Johnston be handed down on the last 10 of the 12 Aboriginal deaths in custody?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: The member for Hanson should direct that question to my colleague the Attorney-General. As the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, in line with the interim recommendations of the Muirhead Commission, I am charged with the implementation of the Aboriginal visitors scheme, which this Government has embraced whole heartedly in an attempt to alleviate some of the problems with Aboriginal deaths in custody. Also, a considerable amount of money has been put in the budget under the social justice strategy to overcome some of the problems confronting the Aboriginal community. So, questions about the Johnston inquiry or recommendations should be directed to my colleague the Attorney-General.

The visitors scheme has been a worthwhile part of the program coordinated by the Office of Aboriginal Affairs. From all indications, that program has been well received not only by individual police officers but also, and more importantly, by the Aboriginal community. I remind the Committee that responsibility for the Aboriginal visitors scheme rests jointly with the Minister of Emergency Services, the Minister of Correctional Services and me. The visitors scheme is a community-based scheme designed to provide a means of reducing Aboriginal deaths in custody by giving approved Aboriginal visitors access to police cells, prisons and youth detention centres to ensure that detainees receive support and are dealt with justly and humanely.

It would be fair to say that the Aboriginal visitors scheme and the money spent by the Government in its capital works program to upgrade police cells will not necessarily prevent attempted suicides by those in police custody. However, it is an attempt to meet the problem, and was one of the recommendations of the Muirhead interim report that we picked up with enthusiasm. The success of this scheme is still very much subject to effective cooperation among the Police Department, the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement and, most importantly, the Aboriginal community.

Mr Rathman: The Office of Aboriginal Affairs has staff to develop the Aboriginal visitors scheme, with the major portion of resources coming from the Commonwealth. There is a coordinator for the Aboriginal visitors scheme; a coordinator to assist with Aboriginal visitors scheme training; and a project officer has the role of liaising to ensure the implementation of the scheme at a community level. We have successfully completed that task in the Adelaide metropolitan area and have recently moved to country areas to ensure that the scheme can be introduced satisfactorily in the communities to support those people who are held in police cells, in particular.

Mr BECKER: Page 249 of the Program Estimates, under 'Issues/Trends', refers to self-management in Aboriginal affairs: the budget this year is increased by \$170 000 and it is anticipated that average full-time equivalents will be

increased from seven to 13.7. Will this increase in staff allow the department to achieve greater self-management of its own affairs?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: The member for Hanson has highlighted the role that I as Minister see in the Office of Aboriginal Affairs. In the past—and I do not mean recently: I am talking about quite a few years ago—there was unfair and unkind criticism that Governments, of whatever political persuasion, tended to treat Aboriginal Affairs in a rather hotchpotch manner. That may have been an unfair comment, but I think it is fairly close to the truth. When Mr Rathman was appointed Director of the office and when I picked up the portfolio of Aboriginal Affairs, we agreed that there should be a greater coordinating role in the office itself.

In the short period that Mr Rathman has been Director and I have been Minister, we have managed to bring to fruition some of the aspirations of not only the office but also the South Australian Aboriginal community. That is a generalised view of how I see the role of the office. I am sure that Mr Rathman would be pleased to give the Committee a breakdown of the present staffing in the office and outline the direction in which he, as Director, sees Aboriginal Affairs going in this State.

Mr Rathman: The Office of Aboriginal Affairs is not a direct service provider in its own right. Specific program responsibilities, as members would be aware, are held with other departments. However, we have an important role in monitoring the progress of programs that are directed to Aborigines in South Australia. I believe that this becomes even more critical with the proposed changes to the Commonwealth's administration of Aboriginal Affairs. These new arrangements will see the establishment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) to replace the existing Department of Aboriginal Affairs, which has a State office, and the Aboriginal Development Commission, which also has a south-eastern presence and covers South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania.

A key element of the ATSIC proposal is the establishment of regional councils throughout Australia, five of which will be in South Australia. These councils will effectively control expenditure in their regions and be the focus for improvements in the economic, social and cultural status of Aboriginal people. To support these important changes it is essential that the Office of Aboriginal Affairs be strengthened as the focal point for Aboriginal Affairs in South Australia and that a coordinated approach to policy and programs development be adapted and put into place.

Major policy and program coordination will need to be undertaken by permanent staff in the Office of Aboriginal Affairs supported by agency staff seconded to it on a project by project basis, funding for these seconded employees being met by the sponsoring agents. To achieve these ends it will be necessary to develop a program to increase the number of permanent employees in the Office of Aboriginal Affairs and to identify the Office of Aboriginal Affairs as the focal point on Aboriginal affairs issues.

We have expanded the office by three employees from the Minister of Education's budget to administer the responsibilities of the South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee, which was previously housed with the Education Department. We hope that these arrangements will enable us to have a more productive use of available resources. To enhance these opportunities further, we suggest that a part-time chairperson be appointed and that the position held by that full-time chairperson be turned over to an executive officer. The resulting vacancies will create a management position in the Office of Aboriginal Affairs.

We have also identified a trainee position, and it is intended that this be an opportunity for an Aboriginal person to gain experience in financial and administrative responsibilities. We mentioned earlier the two Aboriginal visitor scheme officers. There will be a coordinator for the Royal Commission into Aboriginal deaths in custody who will be responsible for monitoring the agency's responses to the interim recommendations. It should be noted that the major proportion of staff in the Office of Aboriginal Affairs is Aboriginal, as there are only two non-Aboriginal officers in the office. It is pleasing to see the expansion. It will allow us to develop Aboriginal affairs further as an important portfolio within the Government.

Membership:

The Hon. P.B. Arnold substituted for Mr Becker.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Following the request by the member for Hanson to be discharged from the Committee and for the member for Chaffey to be his substitution, the Chair intends to give the member for Chaffey the opportunity to make an opening statement of up to 10 minutes but no more than 15 minutes. The Minister may respond, if he wishes to do so. Then the member for Price will ask the following three questions. I thank the Committee for its cooperation.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: I do not intend to make an opening statement, but I should like to pose three or four broadly based questions in relation to the Maralinga and Pitjantjatjara lands, and perhaps the Minister might like to respond to those broadly based questions that really do not fit into the program performance as such.

What has happened to the request of the Maralinga people to enable them to invest for future generations some of the compensation money that they have received from the Commonwealth Government? This question has been posed to us on one or two occasions when we have visited the Maralinga lands. It appeared to us that the greatest benefit was not being obtained from the money that has been made available in the form of compensation to the Maralinga people. The use of that compensation on a more broadly based approach would help them far more than the strict limitations and guidelines set down by the Commonwealth. Rather than race in and have to spend that money, they should be allowed to invest it and use the income for further development of roads, shed tanks and so forth, as they see fit.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: As a newly blooded Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, as yet it has not been my pleasure to accompany the parliamentary committee into the Maralinga lands. We intend to visit the lands in November, after which its report will be tabled in Parliament.

The Committee will be aware, as is the member for Chaffey who is a member of the Pitjantjatjara parliamentary committee and of the Maralinga parliamentary committee, that they are two very good committees. They work very well and there is a bipartisan approach to the issue of there being consultation with the communities on both those lands. I was pleased that Parliament recently agreed to extend the life of the Maralinga-Tjarutja parliamentary committee for a further five years.

One issue that will require consideration is, as the member for Chaffey said, the compensation claims against the Commonwealth regarding the British atomic testing program. The member for Chaffey is correct in what he says about any moneys resulting from claims being used wisely. I am not in the habit of giving uncalled for praise to Opposition members, but in this case I should like to praise

the members for Chaffey and for Eyre for their attitude towards this matter. Of course, the views of the community in regard to this matter should be taken into account by the parliamentary committee.

It is not my role as the Minister, or even the role of the department, of which David Rathman is the Director, to say to the Maralinga community, 'This is the way that you should spend any money that comes from any claims against the Commonwealth.' I am glad to know that that view is similar to the view expressed by the member for Chaffey and by the Maralinga community: that there should be wise investment of any moneys that may come from the claims. We need to consider making the lifestyle of these people better. Thirty years ago their lifestyle was completely uprooted, and they were driven from their lands so that Governments could experiment with weapons of war in those lands with scant regard for those people.

We, as a white society, are now paying the price. I assure the member for Chaffey that the Government and the Office of Aboriginal Affairs will be pleased to give the Maralinga people any advice in regard to any claims for compensation. Much work is still to be done. I understand that the Federal Government is saying that it is unable to set up a fund under the Commonwealth Audit Act, and the Government has requested an opinion from Crown Law as to the validity of such a statement. I assure the Committee that we will pursue that matter. I am sure that, when the parliamentary committee visits the Maralinga lands in November, we will have further discussions with the Maralinga people as to how we can assist them in proceeding down the track concerning their claims.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: What moneys, if any, have flowed from the Federal Government at this stage in the form of compensation? If they have, must those moneys be spent strictly in line with the guidelines?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I will ask Mr Knill to answer that.

Mr Knill: I understand that about \$500 000 has been paid to the Maralinga people for compensation, but this money has been tied to specific projects, including roadworks and the airstrip. At this stage, the Commonwealth has tied the compensation money to specific programs and, as the Minister mentioned, this is of concern to the people because it means that each year they must draw up a shopping list, and the compensation money is tied to particular projects.

However, they are very keen—and this has been supported by the former Minister as well as the present Minister—to establish a trust fund so that future generations will benefit and so that the money is not simply used up in projects that are quickly planned or that may have no relevance in days to come. The Minister has taken the view that this is not to be seen as another Government grant but as a compensation payment for wrongs and disadvantages that occurred 30 years ago. As the Minister said, we are seeking an opinion from Crown Law on the answers we have received from the Commonwealth.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: For the people, obviously the logical thing is that they have access to that money and that it be paid into a fund, even if the expenditure from that fund has to be approved by either the State or Federal Minister. While we were in the area, we looked at the roadworks which will require continuing ongoing maintenance once constructed. We also looked at some of the road development. What progress has been made in the construction of a road through the Unnamed Conservation Park, an extension of the road under construction to the boundary of the park to go through that park so that the people have direct connection with the community in Western Australia?

Mr Knill: The Maralinga people are keen to connect the two major communities—the one in South Australia and the Maralinga community at Yakadunya in Western Australia—by a connecting road. These people live several hundred kilometres apart, but they are part of the same tribal and family groups. Since the days of the Maralinga atomic tests, these people have been isolated from each other. They have negotiated with the Department of Environment and Planning in South Australia and with other authorities to have a road constructed through the conservation park on the South Australian side of the border to connect the two communities. I understand that that has had the support of the Department of Environment and Planning in South Australia, but there are still some difficulties in obtaining approval for the road to go through conservation parks on the Western Australian side. That matter still has to be finalised with the Western Australian Government.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: I understand from the response that there is no problem with proceeding with the construction of that road through the Unnamed Conservation Park in South Australia?

Mr Knill: That is my understanding of the situation at present.

Mr De LAINE: Referring to page 249 of the Program Estimates under 'Self-management in Aboriginal Affairs' in relation to the Dunstan report, what is the status of the Report into Aboriginal Community Self-management Initiatives conducted by Mr Don Dunstan?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: Mr Dunstan was employed as a special consultant in the 1988-89 financial year under contract to the Commissioner for Public Employment. I understand that questions have been asked in previous Committee hearings on that aspect of Mr Dunstan's role, such as the cost, etc., so I will not go into that aspect. Mr Dunstan's report was primarily focused on Aboriginal community self-management initiatives as a follow-up to the comprehensive Review of Aboriginal Communities in the Pitjantjatjara Lands conducted by former Senator Neville Bonner. The consultation part of Mr Dunstan's brief has been completed, and his report has been submitted to me as Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. The report and its recommendations will need to be further evaluated pending the passage of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Commission Bill now before the Federal Parliament.

Without repeating the information I gave to the Committee in respect of the Aboriginal Lands Trust Review, because the ATSIC legislation is yet to be finalised by Federal Parliament, with about 120 amendments still to be debated, it will be a long and tortuous debate in Federal Parliament if its progress in the past on matters that break new ground, such as this, is anything to go by.

It is the Government's view that until we know how that Bill will leave the Federal Parliament, how it will affect the Aboriginal community here in South Australia and how it will affect our two historic pieces of legislation (the Pitjantjatjara land rights legislation and the Maralinga Tjarutja land rights legislation), there will need to be further evaluation. The ATSIC Bill proposes a new basis of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander administration nationally with new regional administration, policy initiatives and priority setting.

Inevitably, the Dunstan report and ATSIC will need to be complementary. ATSIC will have to be complementary to the Aboriginal Lands Trust Review or, at least, to be reassessed in the light of new national policies by the Federal Government. In regard to some of the questions being posed, in part by the media, because of Mr Dunstan's

previous role as Premier (and a great Premier, I might add, of this State) such as whether more money will be spent on consultancies, I can advise the Committee that no funds have been allocated under the Office of Aboriginal Affairs budget for any additional consultancy for this financial year. If further consultancies are considered necessary, Cabinet will have to approve additional fund appropriations.

I intend to have the report examined by the Human Services Sub-committee of Cabinet in the very near future, and Cabinet will consider the recommendations of that committee. This consultancy was part of this Government's ongoing policy and commitment to enhancing and improving the life-style of the Aboriginal community in South Australia and, as such, will be an integral part of our overall policy for the Aboriginal community.

The unknown factor is how ATSIC will affect the Aboriginal communities, and not only in regard to the funding allocation, including funding that comes to the State Government through the many areas where different Ministers have a role and responsibility in discharging advice and assistance to the Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal health is another part of my portfolio, as are the Aboriginal Works Unit and Aboriginal education and training, where there are some pretty exciting and innovative ways of improving the employment and training prospects of young Aborigines. We need to know how the South Australian Aboriginal community is affected in regard to legal areas, how legislation will be effective, and how much funding will go to the Aboriginal communities so that they can dispense services.

It is pretty wide open at present, and we need to be very cautious in regard to the reports. Just because Don Dunstan has finalised a report which is in my hands does not mean that I should suddenly rush through recommendations to Cabinet in regard to that report. That is not my style and never will be. I have the view that I have a responsibility that embraces all aspects of what comes out of the Federal Parliament and what we in this State do, and the bottom line is that initiatives must benefit Aboriginal communities, not just satisfy some sections of the media or other parts of the community who want to question whether Mr Dunstan was paid an exorbitant sum for carrying out a consultancy on behalf of this Government.

Mr De LAINE: In relation to the social justice budget, what will be the total level of funding directed towards improving services to Aborigines in 1989-90?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: It is fair to say that those of us who have read the social justice strategy of the Bannon Government will see that there is a fairly firm commitment to the Aboriginal communities in this State. In the Aboriginal communities there is a recognition that our social justice strategy is not only words but a basic commitment, and the community wants to be part of that strategy. It wants to be involved in a partnership to overcome some of the problems that the Aboriginal community has experienced over the years.

It is fair to say, and I do not think anyone on this Committee would question, that Aboriginal families and communities are the most disadvantaged in the South Australian community, and therefore the main element of the social justice strategy has been and continues to be the development of measures to reduce the poverty which some Aborigines face. The Office of Aboriginal Affairs has the primary responsibility to advise the Government on policies and services which have an impact on Aboriginal people and communities. In 1989-90 the office will receive a significant increase in funding to enable it more effectively to implement its role. In total, funds of \$11.5 million will be

directed towards improving services to Aboriginal people and their communities.

Mr Rathman might care to outline more specific areas, because the office has played the role of providing advice to me as Minister and to the Government as to how that money should be allocated. I place on record my thanks to the office for assisting me to get so much money into that area.

Mr Rathman: One of the major thrusts is to improve essential service provision in Aboriginal communities, particularly in remote communities, and funding of \$2.8 million for the construction of housing and maintenance of buildings in Aboriginal communities is to be provided, with \$69 000 to be spent by the Department of Mines and Energy on exploration for improved water supplies in remote areas, which is a very important issue given the isolation under which many of our Aboriginal communities live.

In other areas the Government will provide an additional \$800 000 to be spent on services for Aboriginal people, including schooling in the arts and the development of services to children. Improvements to community services for Aboriginal people will include \$126 000 for improvements in pre-school and child-care for Aboriginal children; \$123 000 to enable an active involvement of Aboriginal communities in addressing child welfare issues; and \$52 000 to support Aboriginal parents who have relinquished their children for adoption, and Aboriginal people who have been adopted as children.

An important new development by the Ombudsman's office is the provision of a part-time Aboriginal officer based in Port Augusta to address more effectively the needs of the Aboriginal community, and the sum of \$7 000 has been allocated. A sum of \$50 000 is to be spent on curriculum development for Aboriginal school students in a cooperative program undertaken jointly with the Western Australian and Northern Territory education authorities. A sum of \$30 000 will be spent on Aboriginal arts development by the Department for the Arts. The principal thrust of activity in response to the Interim Report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody will be the implementation of changes to policy and procedures in custodial and correctional services to ensure the health and safety of Aboriginal people in custody and to institute more humane and sensitive practices in the correctional system. A total of \$7.7 million will be directed towards initiatives in this area.

Mr De LAINE: Will the Minister advise of progress made in relation to funding of the pilot program at Hendon in the electorate of the member for Albert Park? Has the Minister reached an agreement with the Minister of Health on this important pilot program?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: You, Mr Acting Chairman, in your district have been trying to bridge the gap, the lack of understanding, between the white and black communities, which sometimes receives unfavourable press. Some of the pioneering work you have done in this area has been picked up by our colleagues on the Government benches in an attempt to overcome some of the hostility that exists in the community. The pilot project is a result of complaints which arose from the bias that exists in the community and which are directed towards the offices of members of Parliament or the police.

With the cooperation of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, the Police Department and the Aboriginal funded unit, the pilot program seeks to ensure that where there is any potential problem we have Aboriginal social workers. In some cases they are volunteers, but they have an expertise built up over the years in dealing with people's problems and

breaking down barriers that exist in our society. I have every reason to believe that the project will work and that we will be able to extend it. Everyone must be fairly open to suggestions of how we can best bring about an amicable understanding.

It is really a mobile mediation service, which entails funding from the Government. The member for Price referred to the Minister of Health and the Health Commission. There must be recognition that many of the neighbourhood disputes, whether between whites, blacks or black and white, have to be talked through. One of the factors that came out of the Muirhead royal commission was that many of the problems relate to excessive use of alcohol. The Aboriginal Visitors Scheme was recommended. This problem is not solely the domain of the Aboriginal community. The questions are: what is the cause and what is the effect?

I have made clear to my Cabinet colleagues and to Caucus that we must look at some form of educating people so that we can get at the root cause, which in most cases is alcohol: we will then not have problems further down the track. I am having ongoing discussions with the Minister of Health in regard to the allocation in the social justice budget for a pickup service, which also stems from the recommendations of the Muirhead royal commission.

We are having ongoing discussions in that area but the most important part of the general question relating to the Hendon area is that there must be cooperation from all agencies not only the police and the Office of Aboriginal Affairs but also the Department for Community Welfare, the South Australian Housing Trust and the Aboriginal funded unit, which houses the Aboriginal community. There must be a concerted effort, with goodwill playing a major role, to break down the barriers to get a better understanding of the problem rather than people falling into the old trap of generalising and putting the blame unfairly on one section of the community or another.

It is early days in the Hendon experiment, but I hope it will be a success and we can extend it into the District of Price. I know that the honourable member has concerns also about problems in his district, the principal problem being excessive drinking. If we can overcome that problem, we are well on the way to resolving a factor that is causing concern not only to me but also to you, Sir, to the member for Price and to the Office of Aboriginal Affairs. Mr Rathman referred to the role of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs. We must coordinate better the services available in the community so that we come to the end result—a better lifestyle for the urban Aboriginals and a better understanding of the problems by whites.

Mr LEWIS: I refer to the work done by the Hon. Don Dunstan as consultant to the department. When the Government decided to seek information from an expert, what qualifications did it consider that expert should have? What was the brief?

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: To help the Minister and the member for Mitchell, I point out that, whilst no-one doubts the sincerity of the views and opinions of the former Premier of South Australia, they are nonetheless the views and opinions of a former politician. It was not the Hon. Don Dunstan who introduced the first land rights legislation in this Parliament but rather former Premier David Tonkin subsequent to the departure of the Hon. Donald Dunstan. To imply that by some means or other there is something on the record from a political career that constitutes competence over and above that which came from a man of outstanding intellect and sincerity is a bit facetious.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: As referred to in my reply to the question from the member for Price about the role of Mr Dunstan in the consultancy that he undertook on behalf of the Government, the unfortunate thing is that questions that the Government has been asked—and this relates to the Estimates hearing last year, and references in the press, and so on—have related not to whether the consultancy was necessary for Aboriginal people and whether benefits would derive from it but to the consultant himself.

Mr LEWIS: On a point of order, Mr Acting Chairman, I asked the Minister whether he could tell the Committee about the brief which the Government had. I did not want to waste the Committee's time having the Minister rake over old ground.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: The Minister can respond to questions in any manner that he sees fit.

Mr LEWIS: Even if it involves waffling away and wasting the Committee's time—and ignoring the question altogether?

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: It is not the intention of the Chair to get into debate with the member for Murray-Mallee.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: It is not my role to respond to interjections or points of order. I have been in this place long enough to know my role, and your role, Mr Acting Chairman. If I consider it necessary to provide some preamble which puts a question into perspective, I will do so—and I will continue to do so as long as I am a Minister in this Government. As I say, the questions that have been posed to the Government have not related to the benefits or otherwise of the consultancy. They have been based on two things—costs and who did it. They hound the man, not the policy; they have always done that and they will continue to do so. The previous Minister of Aboriginal Affairs (Hon. G.J. Crafter), for whom I have a lot of time, summed up the position very well. He was referred to in the *Advertiser* of 15 June 1988 as follows:

Mr Crafter said Mr Dunstan would bring a wealth of experience in the area necessary for this important consultative process. Mr Dunstan is highly regarded by South Australia's Aboriginal communities, he said. It is vital that Aboriginal communities, like all other local communities, are given the responsibility to run their own affairs. All Aboriginal communities are seeking to improve their living conditions.

That is what it is all about. The brief was to consult with the Aboriginal communities so that they could have their say to the Government to establish a better lifestyle and a better way to run their affairs and to have more chance to be a part of overall community government. Whether that upsets some members of this Committee, I care not a jot. Depending on the eventual outcome of the ATSIC Bill currently before Federal Parliament, the recommendations from the consultancy report focus primarily on the Aboriginal community self-management initiatives, as a follow up to the comprehensive review of the Aboriginal communities in the Pitjantjatjara lands, conducted by former Senator Neville Bonner—who I think was a member of the same political Party as the member for Murray-Mallee. He is a great man. I have read many of Senator Bonner's works. He was a great contributor to Aboriginal affairs in the national Parliament. It is a pity that some of his counterparts at the State level do not take a leaf out of his book.

Mr LEWIS: I am saddened that, in response to my inquiry about the Government's brief and how it fitted in with the relevant qualifications of former Premier Dunstan, the Minister chose to make comments about as relevant as the fact that Olaf the Great circumnavigated Greenland some time in the eighth century. They were not relevant to

my inquiry at all, and the Minister knows that. He is the one who has abused the process of the Committee.

I simply put on the record on behalf of those graduates of the Department of Anthropology in the Arts Faculty of the Adelaide University their dismay that graduates from that faculty neither knew about nor were invited to comment upon the appropriateness or otherwise of what the Government was setting about doing. They wondered why the Government simply came out and made an announcement that it was giving a job to the former Premier, costing so much in the cause of discovering from the Aboriginal people what it was that they felt the Government should better understand.

On another matter altogether: will the Minister and/or his advisers give us a breakdown of the localities in relation to expenditure of the funds referred to by Mr Rathman in response to the question before last? The detail does not necessarily have to be provided to the Committee now. I will be quite happy if it is incorporated in the record.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I appreciate the member for Murray-Mallee's forbearance in relation to the fact that we might not be able to give him the exact breakdown now. However, to make it easier for my officers to provide that information at a later date—and bearing in mind that they are hard working, and perhaps even over worked, public servants—could the member for Murray-Mallee be more specific? Is the honourable member talking about the whole of the \$11.8 million that has been allocated in the social justice area? Does he want the specifics on child-care, on education, or on where the police cells will be upgraded? Can the honourable member be more specific rather than generalise? My officers will have to spend considerable time and effort over the next week to provide the information for incorporation in *Hansard*, and so it would be appreciated if the member for Murray-Mallee could be a little more specific in relation to the localities.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I invite the member for Murray-Mallee to ask a supplementary question to assist the Minister.

Mr LEWIS: Yes, to help the Minister—I am sure his officers understand. Localities means geographic areas. Of course I understand that in relation to those funds there is a substantial component related to the cost of staff administering the programs in the central administrative services—the department. However, apart from that, my question related to where the funds are being spent in specific geographic locations, such as Port Augusta, Gerard or Point McLeay. What was spent on administration in each of the categories that Mr Rathman provided to the Committee? How much of it will actually go into the Aboriginal communities and into which Aboriginal communities will it go?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: That gives us enough clues to provide that information to the Committee. Last year the Aboriginal Lands Trust spent \$81 000, and this year the proposed allocation is \$92 000. Last year in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands we spent \$1 348 305, and this year it is proposed that we spend \$1.4 million. Last year on the Maralinga Tjarutja lands we spent \$170 000, and this year it is proposed that we spend \$180 000. What we spent on Point McLeay, Point Pearce, Gerard, Port Augusta, and other places we will provide to the Committee in line with the 6 October deadline.

Mr LEWIS: Is the appellation of the Minister's portfolios contained in the letter he sent to the member for Bragg a ranking of the way in which he sees the seniority of his portfolios? If it is not, why did he choose to place them in that order?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I signed my letter 'Terry Hemmings, MP, Minister of Housing and Construction, Minister of Public Works, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs'. I hurt the member for Murray-Mallee's feelings in writing to the member for Bragg, and the member for Murray-Mallee is implying that there is something wrong in the way these portfolios are listed. It is opportune that I now incorporate in *Hansard* a note I received from my office, which states:

Terry, Marion [who works in my office] has contacted Graham Ingerson's electorate office. That office has confirmed that the letter from you dated 4.9.89 was received on 6.9.89. D. Laidlaw was also sent a copy for reasons of courtesy.

We have now established that the member for Bragg received the letter. The fact that he did not pass it on to the member for Murray-Mallee means that they are either not speaking or that he is very lax—

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: It's the factions.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: Yes. I put 'Minister of Housing and Construction' first because that was the first portfolio allocated to me; I put 'Minister of Public Works' second because that was the second portfolio allocated to me, as a Minister of seven years in this great Bannan Government; and I placed 'Minister of Aboriginal Affairs' last because that portfolio was allocated to me in May. I will not ask the two departmental officers here to tell the Committee the importance I place on Aboriginal Affairs. My activities to date, and the way in which the Aboriginal community has received me, show that I place it very highly on my agenda.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: Page 98 of the Estimates of Payments shows the Office of Aboriginal Affairs under 'Miscellaneous'. To me that seems to be an unfortunate listing that could lead to a connotation being wrongly placed. Will the Minister consider whether in future there is some other way of listing the Office of Aboriginal Affairs?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: It relates to the unfortunate way in which the Office of Aboriginal Affairs is funded. The office is responsible to me through the Director of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Rathman. Sacon provides the office with general accounting and pay-roll services, but in all other circumstances the office operates as an independent unit. The point that the member for Mitchell made is valid: the ill-informed do not understand the way in which Treasury accounting mechanisms work. The Committee has to look at the increase in staff and the greater role that the office plays in advising the Minister and the Government on Aboriginal Affairs. I will take up this matter with the Treasurer so that in future the Office of Aboriginal Affairs will not be put under 'Miscellaneous'.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: Page 246 of the Program Estimates states that in 1988-89 the employment average of full-time equivalents was proposed at 7.3 but the actual was seven. For 1989-90 full-time equivalents are proposed to be 13.7. It is important that the progress of Aboriginal females be considered. How many of these Aborigines are females?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: In line with this Government's policy, the Office of Aboriginal Affairs has a fairly good record in relation to the employment of women in Public Service positions. The number of women employed in the office has increased by 50 per cent since 1988. In 1988-89 there were three women in the department. In 1989 there are six, and only one of those is a non-Aboriginal person. That is in line with the breakdown that Mr Rathman gave to the member for Price about the importance of coordinating all aspects of policy in regard to the Aboriginal community and the importance that we place on it in the office.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: It is gratifying to have that answer. Referring to page 98 of the Estimates of Payments, below the heading which I abhor we find, 'Office of Aboriginal Affairs'. I note that operating expenses last year amounted to \$531 000 and it is proposed that for this year the amount will be \$1 031 millin. How will those additional operating expenses be used?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: In the main the increase is due to the review of the role and function of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs and approved additional positions. A sum of \$130 000 was transferred from the Minister of Education for the Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee and \$350 000 was Commonwealth funding for the Aboriginal visitors scheme. Again, it is so that we have a greater role within the office to coordinate those functions. That is how the sum of nearly \$500 000 is made up.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: What progress has been made in establishing the Anangu Pitjantjatjara (AP) on the Pitjantjatjara lands? It is a question that is always raised whenever we visit the lands. I understand the legislation envisaged that AP would be based on the lands, not in Alice Springs. It is registered in Adelaide but it operates from Alice Springs. I understand that the Government intends that AP should operate from the lands, but I am not certain that any progress has been made towards that move.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: There was a move by AP to locate on the lands, and I understand that it will be somewhere near Ernabella. As it is, we are waiting for funding from the Commonwealth Government in regard to this, but we are pursuing the matter with AP with some vigor. It was on the agenda the last time I saw my Federal counterpart in July.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: Another matter that was raised at length when the committee last visited the Pitjantjatjara lands was the future of the Mintabie opal fields. The Minister has a copy of the letter that was sent from the Mintabie Progress Association to the Premier. I note that the Minister of Lands also received a copy. The Secretary, Mr Barry Lindner, in his letter regarding the future of Mintabie, says:

Continuing failure by government to address basic issues relating to the future of Mintabie has resulted in a continuing poor quality of life for local residents, complete uncertainty as to our future livelihood from opal mining in this area and a drain of manpower, expertise and equipment away from this opal field with a resulting economic disadvantage to the State.

The letter sets out the problems at Mintabie, and on page 2 it states:

On 12 May 1989 the Mintabie Review was discussed at a meeting of the Mintabie Consultative Committee. AP representatives readily agreed that the continued lack of progress was totally unsatisfactory and undertook to do what they could to get some action. No results are evident.

It would appear from that letter that AP supports what the association is trying to achieve—better facilities at Mintabie and an extension of the precious stones field. Where does that currently stand? It was discussed at length while we were there on our recent visit.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: The Pitjantjatjara parliamentary committee was under considerable pressure from the association about the delay by the Government in resolving these requests. Apart from the rather terse meeting that we had in that regard, the hospitality was very good. On return to Adelaide, I wrote to the Minister of Lands about the view expressed by the association.

A review was set up by the Minister of Lands to make recommendations on the future of the Mintabie township. Under section 28 of the Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act 220 hectares are leased to the Crown for 21 years ending in the year 2002. The area constitutes the area set aside for occupation for residential and business purposes by the Minister

of Lands. The review is the responsibility of the Minister of Lands. The review committee consists of representatives of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, the Anangu Pitjantjatjara and the Mintabie Progress Association. I understand that both AP and the association are developing submissions to the review. The Department of Lands has circulated a discussion paper to all parties for consideration. It is planned that the review committee will meet in October and submit its report by mid-1990. Agreements have been signed by all parties for the development of a medical centre at Mintabie and consideration of proposals to establish a town electricity supply will be the top priority of the review committee.

One thing that came out of the meeting I had with the progress association is that the association feels frustrated and it had no joy from the Government in its request for consideration about extending the area where its members could mine. As the member for Chaffey will recall, during my meeting with the progress association, I said that I would take its concerns back to the Minister of Lands. I did that, and I also undertook to send it copies of correspondence that we had on file so that its files would be as up to date as ours. I have discharged that responsibility. I am sure that this question will be relayed to my colleague the Minister of Lands for her consideration, and perhaps that will speed up any form of consultation that needs to take place.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: The sheer frustration of the Mintabie Progress Association revolves around the conditions under which the families have to live in that part of the State. There are benefits with respect to the extension of the field for both AP and the miners. Many Aboriginal people in the area earn quite a bit from the opal fields. If it eventually fizzles out because there is nowhere else for them to go, everyone will be the loser.

Page 249 of the Estimates of Payments refers to affirmative action programs: these were referred to in the 1988-89 Estimates, with the goal being one per cent employment of Aboriginal people in the public sector. Does the Minister have figures representing the one per cent employment target; what progress has been made towards achieving this target; and what specific affirmative action programs are proposed this year and in which sections of the Public Service?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I am sure that the member for Chaffey will applaud the policies of the Bannan Government in trying to achieve the one per cent target. Whilst this area of responsibility is under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Labour (and when questioned on these lines I understand that he answered quite adequately), perhaps Mr Rathman has some information about actual figures.

Mr Rathman: The program is to try to support the Aboriginal employment development policy of the Commonwealth. In that regard, the State Department of Personnel and Industrial Relations has an agreement with the Commonwealth for a public employment strategy. As I understand it, that strategy has reached the level of .95 per cent in terms of the one per cent target that was recently announced by the Minister responsible.

It is intended that there be increases in terms of senior management scholarships being put in place; in the development of CEO seminars for Chief Executive Officers to understand the needs of Aboriginal officers; and in the development of a program to train officers in training mechanisms for Aboriginal people within the public sector. A supplementary school leavers recruitment program was commenced in January 1989, and the interesting aspect from the statistics was that 26 Aboriginal people were recruited through the general vacancy filling process.

There were five Aboriginal cadets in various agencies at the beginning of the 1989 academic year. One Aboriginal graduate was recruited in February 1989, and 24 Aboriginal people were recruited in the weekly paid employment sector. The former Office of Employment and Training had 10 apprentices recruited, with three funded by the Aboriginal Employment Unit. A total of 13 young Aboriginal people were recruited to the training scheme in January 1989, with seven Aboriginal people released from the Children's Services Office to undertake further studies. Six of the subsequent vacant positions were backfilled with Aboriginal employees, five of whom were existing employees.

The plan is to increase the number of Aboriginal people in 1989-90, and the results being sought are the recruitment of 15 supernumerary school leavers; the recruitment of 15 Australian trained in the State Public Service; the recruitment of two graduates, four cadets, 10 technical trainees, 13 weekly paid employees, and 10 apprentices through the Office of Employment and Training; and to implement strategies to effectively meet the needs of Aboriginal communities in new demands for employment. It is intended to look beyond just the public sector into the corporations of government for further employment, and to seek a strategy from local government with respect to Aboriginal employment.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: Does the Office of Aboriginal Affairs have any association with the Commonwealth office that provides funds for the Commonwealth Aboriginal Housing Fund Program? For instance, does the Commonwealth seek the advice of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs in regard to criteria for the purchase of homes and for the tenants who occupy the premises, and so on?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: Apart from the consultation and coordination role that the State office has with the Federal office of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, it is just a loose arrangement. The State Office of Aboriginal Affairs argues convincingly with the Federal office and the Federal Minister to ensure that we get the best treatment for the South Australian Aboriginal community. With respect to housing, whilst funding for Aboriginal housing comes from the Federal Government as part of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, that funding is administered under my portfolio through the Aboriginal Housing Board, which is an elected body of Aboriginal people and which also operates the Aboriginal Funded Unit that has the responsibility of the day-to-day administration of housing. The role of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs with respect to Aboriginal housing is one of coordination, but with no charter to play a part in the allocation and type of housing for Aboriginal people. That is the responsibility of the Aboriginal Housing Board and the Aboriginal Funded Unit.

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

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

Housing and Construction, \$86 129 000

Acting Chairman:
Mr K.C. Hamilton

Members:
Mr H. Becker
The Hon. Ted Chapman
Mr M.R. De Laine
Mr I.P. Lewis
The Hon. R.G. Payne
The Hon. J.W. Slater

Witness:

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings, Minister of Housing and Construction.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr P.B. Edwards, General Manager, South Australian Housing Trust.

Mr J. Luckens, Director, Housing, Sacon.

Mr B. Griffin, Manager, Office of Government Employee Housing.

Mr A. Larkin, Manager, Office of Housing.

Mr G.D. Storkey, Manager, HomeStart Finance.

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

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I have discussed with the member for Hanson the housing lines, and agreed that, whilst the budget papers may show Government employee housing in the Sacon papers, any questions regarding Government employee housing will be taken during this afternoon's session.

Mr BECKER: What is the income and expenditure budget for the South Australian Housing Trust for the present financial year? In the Estimates of Payments, this Committee is being asked to approve the following for the Housing Trust:

	1989-90 Proposed \$
Aboriginal housing	2 060 000
Contribution to interest costs	22 554 000
Emergency Housing Office	5 104 000
Housing improvement and rent control	530 000
Managed Housing Program	399 000
Mortgage and rent relief—	
Administration expenses	681 000
Rent relief	5 819 000
Contribution to rent relief	nil

A sum of \$29 900 000 was actually spent in 1988-89 on contribution to rent relief. We are not aware of any finalisation on details of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. What will be the impact of this agreement on trust finances for this and future years, bearing in mind that the State received from the Commonwealth \$28 028 000 under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, which is down \$11 653 000 from last year, and \$75 235 000 in specific purpose grants which is an increase of \$49 751 000 for the same period?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: The honourable member is quite correct: the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement is still being negotiated, and there is an article in today's newspapers regarding the funding the States will receive. The member for Hanson spoke about Commonwealth support, but I do not think he referred to State funding. The Commonwealth support for housing programs was as follows: untied grants in 1988-89, \$530.6 million; in 1989-90 that figure is \$777.25 million. Tied grants in 1988-89 totalled \$169.4 million; in 1989-90 the figure is \$223.154 million, giving a total for last year of \$700 million and for 1989-90 \$1 010.4 million.

South Australia will receive an allocation of \$102.326 million under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. However, in 1988-89 South Australia also received \$39.584 million in Loan Council nominated funds and a Loans Council capital grant of \$12.195 million, used for housing purposes. The total CSHA and Loans Council funds in 1988-89 were \$118.435 million. The funds available for 1989-90 represent a reduction, as the honourable member said, in nominal terms of \$16.109 million.

This results from the loss of the Loan Council grant in the movement towards the distribution of CSHA funds on a *per capita* basis, but we also need to give the Committee the following distribution of CSHA funds allocated to South Australia in 1989-90 as well as 1988-89, which were as follows for last year: untied grants, \$52.053 million; Aboriginal housing, \$6.391 million; pensioner housing, \$2.819 million; mortgage and rent relief, \$2.302 million; local government and community housing programs, \$1.391 million; and crisis accommodation program, \$1.7 million.

In 1989-90 for the programs I have listed, the figures were as follows: untied grants, \$82.060 million; Aboriginal housing, \$8.341 million; pensioner housing, \$3.849 million; mortgage and rent relief, \$2.630 million; local government and community housing program, \$2.075 million; and our crisis accommodation program, \$3.372 million, therefore we have an allocation this year (as opposed to last year's \$65.656 million) of \$103.327 million. This excludes the additional allocations for mortgage relief and additional crisis relief funding included in the Federal budget, because we have not had details of the allocations yet to be finalised.

I will ask Mr Edwards to outline the Housing Trust program for the current financial year regarding the properties we will build or purchase in order to reduce the number of people on the waiting list.

Mr Edwards: The intention regarding the funds available for our capital works program is to commence and complete approximately 1 500 new dwellings and to purchase approximately 450 dwellings. The nature of the program is such that priority has been given to the development and purchase of housing in the areas of greatest demand, namely, areas closest to the metropolitan centre—between Gepps Cross and Daws Road. That is where a significant proportion of the new dwellings and purchased houses will be located. Due to the demand for smaller forms of accommodation, a high proportion of housing provided will be one or two bedroom accommodation.

Mr BECKER: What is the income and expenditure budget for the South Australian Housing Trust for the current financial year?

Mr Edwards: The Housing Trust budget for the year is approximately \$400 million in and out. That includes not only capital funds provided via the budget papers under funds provided for recurrent programs but also the income from rents collected from tenants and moneys received from the sale of assets, in particular the sale of homes to tenants and the disposal of other assets. The trust's budget includes income and expenditure not specifically identified in the budget papers.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: The Committee will be well aware that we had a successful program of house sales to tenants because we marketed it well through the real estate industry and encouraged people in public rental to purchase their homes. We made 1 012 sales last financial year. It would be remiss for me to say that we expect a sales program of the same magnitude this year. We have put an estimate of 500 sales on this financial year. HomeStart is being geared towards people in public rental accommodation who might not have considered purchasing their Housing Trust home under the two available options last year—the concessional loans program (the Government closed the list, although some people still on the list can make themselves available for such) or the trust shared ownership program.

In conjunction with HomeStart, that may well produce a figure in excess of 500 sales, but it depends on how well HomeStart is received in the South Australian community. On all indications it has been well received. It depends on

whether a group of people in public rental this year decide that they want to realise the dream of owning their own home. That may boost the amount of money available to purchase or build additional homes.

As I have said previously in different forums, we are out there to encourage people to get into home ownership, but any money we raise through this method of house sales will be ploughed back into providing further accommodation, through building or buying, for people on the Housing Trust waiting list. It fits in well with our social mix policy of building and acquiring homes for trust tenants throughout the metropolitan and country areas.

Mr BECKER: What is the reason for the delay in completing the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement? When will the agreement be completed and signed by all States? What impact will the new agreement have on Housing Trust rents and finances in this financial year and in the future?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I will get out my crystal ball to answer that question. Members would be aware that negotiations with other States have not yet been finalised. We are unaware of the outcome of Federal Cabinet's deliberations yesterday on the proposed new agreement. South Australia has sought improvements to the proposed funding under the agreement. South Australia offered to chair negotiations at the State level on behalf of the authorities of all States, which demonstrates that South Australia has a commitment to public housing. I refer to both Parties: we may have different aims and aspirations but the attitude of the member for Hanson regarding public housing is well known. He may not be representing his Party's policy, but I am sure he will do his best to persuade it that there is a role for public housing in this State.

We will continue to argue for a better deal for South Australia. Because of our commitment and use of Loan Council funding over the past six years, this State, along with Tasmania, will lose if there is no change in the agreement. I am not here to outline the viewpoints of the New South Wales or Queensland Governments, but I understand that both have made noises about the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. We do not share the concern, particularly that of New South Wales, with regard to a perceived threat to the State's autonomy in determining how public housing moneys are spent by the States. We have always done the right thing. When other States have been procrastinating about the use of Loan Council funding, over the past six years we have picked up that funding, built the houses and put people in them. The new agreement, given the discussion stage, is not to the benefit of this State. I made that point perfectly clear to the housing lobby in this State and to all South Australian Federal politicians.

Just prior to the pilots' strike, I went to Canberra and addressed Federal politicians and I also met with Minister Staples. We have written to the Federal Minister and advised him that certain changes are needed in the agreement, especially in the area of recurrent spending. The Committee would be well aware that a housing program involves not just bricks and mortar but the running of all the other recurrent programs that are so necessary to provide alternative forms of housing for the people of South Australia. We will continue to make that point very clear.

We are looking for additional funding to redress our per capita funding reductions, and I am sure that when we have looked at exactly what the Federal Cabinet agreed to yesterday, at the end of the day, benefits will flow from that. I am sure that in lots of areas our point of view will be picked up, and I refer to matters such as indexing and increasing the percentage that can be used for recurrent programs.

Also, in line with, and with the encouragement of, the Federal Government we have undertaken programs to the benefit of people who wish to get into public housing in South Australia, and we will continue that right through to the very end. I am very optimistic that, ultimately, it will be to the benefit of the people of South Australia. However, until I know exactly what the Federal Government agreed to yesterday and until officers of my department and of the South Australian Housing Trust have looked at what is being offered, I will keep my options open in regard to what my recommendations to my Cabinet colleagues will be.

Mr De LAINE: I refer to the wonderful new initiative of HomeStart. I know that it is early days, the program having been introduced only recently, but will the Minister tell the Committee how successful so far the HomeStart program has been?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: Perhaps I can first talk generally about HomeStart and then ask Mr Storkey, the manager of HomeStart, to make more specific comments. At the close of business on 18 September 1989, HomeStart had been inundated with requests for information and for application registration forms. Some 5 988 inquiries have been received—made up of 5 320 telephone calls and 668 coupons extracted from newspaper advertisements placed in the *Advertiser* and the *News*. We have received 1 978 registrations, and the breakdown of that involves 1 041 standard registrations, 890 concessional loans, and 47 refinancing registrations. As a result of the interest that has been generated in the community we have had to provide further hotline numbers and to extend our answering service to a 24-hour service.

At this point I will try not to, in effect, make any comments about some of the rather negative reactions of some members of Parliament. I hasten to add that there have been no negative comments from the member for Hanson. I think he realises that we have something to offer those people in the community who cannot get a traditional and conventional loan and that there is an unmet expectation and demand in the community on the part of those people who would otherwise be condemned to live in private rental accommodation or to put their names on the Housing Trust waiting list.

There has been a lot of confusion about what HomeStart is all about. In effect, it is increasing the borrowing power of some of those people who at the moment are in private rental accommodation. Instead of being able to receive only 1.8 times their household income, as far as a mortgage is concerned, under HomeStart, people can receive 2.8 times their household income. That is the whole point of HomeStart: it is to assist people who, because of their income, cannot obtain a conventional loan.

For two-income families living in Toorak Gardens, with a family Porsche, who want to go to some of the private banks and get a mortgage in the traditional way, good on them. That is all well and good. We are not out there to provide help for those people. For people who live at Burnside who want to play the real estate market as a means of acquiring capital gain, again, good on them. We are not there to look after those people, either. However, we want to assist people who are trapped in private rental accommodation to get into home ownership, people who want to realise the great Australian dream of owning a house and who want to bring up their children and have a basic secure family unit. By using 25 per cent of their income, which is very affordable for many low income people, this can be achieved. They are the people we are out to assist.

No Government subsidy is involved, such as there was with the concessional loans scheme. One can say that, as a

result of the deposit gap and the fact that our maximum loan was only \$48 000, no matter what the rate of interest being charged, people could not bridge the deposit gap and were therefore unable to obtain conventional mortgages offered by the private banks. They are the people that HomeStart can help.

Judging from the response we have had so far, the scheme has been well received. I have been accused (and I do not mind this, as politicians are accused of many things) of being too honest with the people of South Australia in the fact that the HomeStart brochure really lays on the line exactly what HomeStart is all about compared with a conventional loan. However, the people of South Australia are not fooled by the negative attitude expressed by some members of Parliament and by some commentators. They have been prepared to look at our brochure and to come to a decision about HomeStart. The decision that people are making is that they want to be part of HomeStart. I now invite Mr Storkey to talk about some of the more specific areas of HomeStart, which might be of some benefit to the Committee and which will enable members to pass on this information to their constituents.

Mr Storkey: The Minister mentioned that 6 000-odd inquiries were received on the telephone in the two weeks to date. The people who are staffing the telephones say that the majority of those who ring are genuine in that they meet the criteria we are looking for—that is, people who find it difficult to obtain access to home ownership through a traditional loan. The product, contrary to what has been suggested, is an inflation capital index loan not a deferred interest loan.

Those who take advantage of the scheme do not have to be first home buyers but can be buying their second or third home, provided it is their only home; and the scheme can assist in refinancing existing mortgages. There are no income restrictions and no house price restrictions, except that the interest rate increases on loans where a house is priced above \$125 000.

Mr De LAINE: Page 230 of the Program Estimates under '1988-89 Specific Targets/Objectives' states:

Continued emphasis on developing community participation in decision making.

I assume that that refers to tenant participation, which I believe to be one of the most exciting initiatives that was ever put forward by the Housing Trust. I know of the good work that has been done in this regard in the southern metropolitan area and that groundwork has been done in the northern metropolitan area. How is this concept progressing throughout South Australia?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I know that the member for Price is interested in tenant participation. I would like to give it another title, and that is tenant management—Housing Trust tenants running their own affairs. This reminds me of the early days when dentists supported fluoridation which was seen to be something that would do them out of a job. The South Australian Housing Trust in both its managerial initiatives and corporate plan, after setting up very efficient regional areas which, in effect, is part of the decision-making process that is not based in Adelaide but in the regions, encouraged regional managers, along with the board and the executive of the trust, to get tenants running their own affairs.

I suppose there is some form of cynical response when we talk about tenant participation in that it lets tenants decide where the trees will be planted or what colour to paint the exteriors or roof. I am pleased to say, without any directive from me, that tenant management has always been part of the trust's policy; the Housing Trust was running

with it before I became the Minister, which is nearly seven years ago now, and the Trust has encouraged it all that time. Mr Edwards will give the Committee more information about this. A lot of credit should go to him for the way in which he has encouraged tenant participation and management. He has seen the pitfalls that have occurred in other States which paid lip-service to tenant participation, and has ensured that it has worked in South Australia.

Mr Edwards: I welcome the Minister's invitation, because I am able to affirm the complete support of the Housing Trust, from the board level right through management and staff, to the principle and practice of tenant participation. There are a whole variety of reasons for that: a purely philosophical stance that we should regard the tenants as members of the community who have a right to expect some degree of control over their own destinies and the management of their own affairs; and that they be encouraged to be independent in their decision taking and not be dependent on a service being provided.

Practical advantages are to be derived because the more tenants are involved the more certain one can be that the kind of services delivered to them are services they need and can afford to pay for. One can look forward to there being financial benefits flowing from this in due course, because of the certainty of efficient use of funds with the tenants being involved. The forms taking shape are many and varied, and are determined by the individual tenant groups.

Some tenants have become involved in contributions of the design of houses they will occupy. We have had a successful project running at Golden Grove where tenants can choose the location, the type of house, and the interior arrangements. We are seeking to develop on that basis. Other tenants are exercising responsibility for the management of landscape development in their immediate vicinity; some are contemplating taking over responsibility for the general maintenance of the properties they occupy. They are also involved in developing community initiatives that will improve the services to all the residents in their particular locality. Many residents are giving advice and opinions on policy issues. There are regional advisory councils of tenants in most regions, and they are forming a State advisory council, and shortly I will meet representatives of the tenants and talk with them to get feedback at that level.

One thing that gives me great pleasure is that all trust staff, irrespective of whether or not they are directly involved with tenants, are given training in relation to the purpose and significance of tenant participation. It is a particular pleasure that amongst those who give the training are tenants; we have invited the tenants to do this. We are only scratching the surface in what I think will be a very substantial community development movement that will impact on the total operations of the trust. Also, the evidence to date is that we are extremely successful in how we provide service to tenants and the degree of satisfaction that tenants enjoy.

Mr De LAINE: Page 231 of the Program Estimates concerns the interest rate protection plan. How successful has this program been?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: The interest rate protection plan was introduced at a very opportune moment by the Government to cover people who experienced problems as a result of increased interest rates. It was a valuable adjunct to the mortgage relief scheme that had been operating in this State since 1983. Also, lending institutions had to play their part in relation to borrowers with problems as a result of increased interest rates. When interest rates were around 13.5 per cent or 14 per cent members will recall that local

banks had big adverts painted on their windows along the lines: step inside for a home loan. One can argue that the would-be borrower was encouraged to come in; and there was no talk about interest rate fluctuations because interest rates always have moved up and down. Some critics of the Federal Labor Government and this State Labor Government seem to think that rising interest rates are the result of the Federal Government's monetary policy.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: It is the good old capitalist system.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: The member for Gilles in his final appearance in an Estimates Committee—he is due for a well earned retirement—points out that it is the good old capitalist system. That is the way it is. When I got married 32 years ago in the United Kingdom—long before Thatcher—I ventured into home ownership. As I could not get one of the standard loans being offered by the banks, I obtained a loan which was not regulated and within a year I was paying 19 per cent. That was in the 1950s. Therefore, interest rate fluctuations, high and low, have been with us for a long time. There was no mechanism available to enable me to get any relief.

In that regard, the State Government has introduced its home guarantee interest rate protection plan, which is designed to help people who are having short term problems. The eligibility is very generous. I have a very good memory. At that time Opposition members were, in effect, saying that it was too generous and we were tapping into those middle income people who were having problems. The South Australian Government, in its efforts to provide relief, aims not only at what I might call its own constituencies; it is here to serve all the South Australian public and it will continue to do so.

As regards income tax, families with dependants, including single parent families, with a household income of more than \$515 gross per week, plus an allowance of \$50 per week for the first dependant and \$25 per week for each additional dependant, but earning less than \$620 gross per week, were eligible on income grounds. Couples without dependants with a household income greater than \$515 gross per week but less than \$620 gross per week and single people without dependants with incomes greater than \$390 gross per week but less than \$465 gross per week were eligible for relief. The relief that we were giving was up to \$50 a week.

That was a generous scheme. It was used by people in need. It also ensured that the lending institutions, which only 15 months earlier were urging Mr and Mrs South Australia to come in and get a mortgage, had their role to play. We had 2 600 inquiries. So far 545 people are benefitting from that innovative scheme, and I am pleased that the banks have accepted their responsibility towards borrowers. The scheme has been a magnificent success. Whenever there is an upward movement in interest rates, that scheme will be there to help those in real need.

Mr BECKER: What is the estimated cost of concessional rent rebates for Housing Trust tenants this financial year? I note that, in the Auditor-General's Report and in recent reading in relation to the Housing Trust, about 75 per cent of new tenants will require concessional rents.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: We cannot be sure what the figures will be for this coming financial year. Mr Edwards might have some comments to make soon. In 1988-89, the sum of \$88.97 million was forgone in rent reductions. That was partially offset by an allocation of \$19.493 million from grant funds provided under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. The balance of \$69.48 million was borne by the Housing Trust from internally generated funds. I recall

many times when the member for Hanson and I have spoken privately about this matter, we have said that we are not in the business of extracting maximum rents from people who, through no fault of their own, can ill afford to pay our rents. Looking at our market rent compared with the private sector, we are still well below that figure. I imagine that the figure for this year will be about the same as for last year.

Mr Edwards: It is difficult to forecast the level of rebates, because it depends on changes in the income characteristics of trust tenants as well as rent levels. Experience in recent years is that an increasing proportion of tenants are on lower incomes. Their average income is steadily falling as a proportion of average weekly earnings, so one would assume that increased numbers of tenants will qualify for rebates, but one cannot be certain.

There is a further matter to which the Auditor-General gave some attention in his report. The trust, in defence of the interests of all the other tenants who pay their full and fair rent, has taken steps to ensure that rebates are received only by those who qualify for and can justify them on legitimate grounds. Rebates are reviewed on a regular basis, depending on the circumstances of the individual, which may be a three, six, or 12 monthly review. We have officers whose job it is to investigate cases where there are grounds for believing that an applicant may not have presented all the facts. When such cases have been followed up, we have generated a significant flow-back of concessions which perhaps should not have been awarded in the first instance, and protected future income from the kind of activity to which the Auditor-General referred in his report.

Mr BECKER: The Housing Trust must have some idea of what will be the level of rental rebates. I have now twice asked for the Housing Trust budget for this financial year, but have not received an answer. I understand that the number of tenants of the Housing Trust increased last year by about 1 200 and, if the majority of those tenants required a rental rebate, the trust must be looking at about \$100 million?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I appreciate the persistence of the member to try to get a figure. We estimate about \$90 million for this financial year. The way the funding has been allocated in the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, one must take into consideration that we cannot put in an estimated figure. I do not like to single out people, but I see that the member for Elizabeth is in the Chamber. It is one of his criticisms that, at the start of the financial year, certain aspects of the Housing Trust program are not included in the budget papers, but we are gradually educating the honourable member with respect to that.

About 67 per cent of our tenants are now on rent reductions, and we know that about 70 per cent of new applicants will automatically receive a rent reduction. As people obtain employment and their circumstances change, we require existing tenants to justify their need for rent reduction. We have held firm on this, despite criticism about the ways that we demand information, but I make no apology for that. If tenants are to receive a rent reduction from the South Australian Housing Trust—in effect, from their fellow tenants—we will therefore know what that level of rent reduction will be.

I recall being criticised in this Chamber by members saying that I was being too draconian in supporting what the trust was asking, that people provide permission for the trust to verify their income through the Department of Social Security or their employer. The General Manager has alluded to the compliment paid by the Auditor-General to the trust for our taking on two additional officers to inves-

tigate the circumstances of those who apply for rent reductions but seem somewhat suspicious. There has been a paying-back of about \$250 000, and we estimate that we will not have to pay rent foregone of about \$400 000, and we will continue to do so. I make no apology for supporting the Housing Trust policy in that regard. Only those in real need receive rent reductions.

If all of that is taken into consideration, as a result of improved economic conditions and as a result of the Government's policies both at State and Federal level, more people residing in South Australian Housing Trust accommodation will go off the unemployment list or get better paid jobs, and thus pay the full market rent. That is no different this year to previous years. It is only at the end of the year, either in the Auditor-General's Report or when the Housing Trust's annual report is tabled in Parliament, that we will show the rent foregone in the rent reductions. An estimated guess—and I emphasise 'guess'—is about \$90 million.

The trust rarely has been wrong in giving forward estimates to me as Minister, so in next year's Estimates Committee (subject to both the member for Hanson and I withstanding the whims of the electorate at the next election) I would say about \$90 million if he asks the same question.

Mr BECKER: I hope it does come down. What was the reason for the \$12 980 000 reduction in rental supplement grants to the South Australian Housing Trust for the year ended 30 June 1989? In the financial year 1987-88, rental supplement grants of \$32 473 000 were given to the Housing Trust, and last financial year that was reduced to \$19 493 000. Those figures are taken from page 349 of the Auditor-General's Report on the income statement. At page 231 of the Program Estimates, under 'Issues/Trends' it states:

The proportion of Housing Trust tenants on rent rebates is growing (75 per cent of new tenants are now entitled to a rebate). The funding of these levels of rebates continues to be a key issue.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I will ask Mr Edwards to respond to that.

Mr Edwards: We always have a difficulty in estimating this because the Commonwealth had a formula which determined how much of the untied grant could be applied to offset the cost of rent rebates. That formula only allows for certain elements of income and expenditure which are in the trust accounts. In our financial statement we cover a broader range of issues. We are not able to reach a precise determination of the amount of money that can be applied to this purpose until the end of the financial year, because of the variations of this formula, which is why it is difficult to get the precise figure early, notwithstanding the Minister's praise for the figures given.

Our best understanding is that that arrangement no longer exists, and from this year forward, while funds from the Commonwealth may be applied to offset the cost of interest and principal repayments, they may not be applied to offset the cost of rent rebates. The difficulty that arises in estimating and calculating the amount to be applied is now a matter of historical interest.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: Referring to 'Government Employee Housing' on page 226 of the Program Estimates, and in particular at 'Property Management', it states that in the previous financial year \$3.697 million was proposed, with actual expenditure totalling \$3.711 million. The amount proposed for this year is \$2.721 million, even though an increase of one person in the employment average of full-time equivalents is shown. Can the Minister explain those figures? Why will it be done at much less cost on the face of it? Is it that property management is becoming less of a cost by nature?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: The reduction in the cost of lease payments by the Office of Government Employee Housing reflects the reduction of houses previously leased from the South Australian Housing Trust, but this decrease is offset by a corresponding increase in the interest payment and maintenance costs. Mr Griffin might like to enlarge on that answer.

Mr Griffin: During the past financial year, about 440 houses which had been subject to long-term leases from the South Australian Housing Trust were purchased by the Office of Government Employee Housing. Consequently, there was a reduction in our lease cost to the Housing Trust that was offset by an increased cost to us in maintenance of those houses and the cost of interest. It was considered appropriate that houses that were part of the employee housing stock should be located within this operation rather than under the South Australian Housing Trust.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: Tidy bookkeeping and a number of houses being purchased caused leasing costs to be reduced?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I could not agree more. Perhaps one of the unsung successes of the whole area of Government employee housing is the creation of the office itself. When I introduced the Bill into the House, I recall that we received much criticism that we were undermining an organisation (the Teacher Housing Authority) which had served its purpose very well and replacing that with this organisation which has the unfortunate acronym of OGEH. We like to think that we are not ogres but a generous and compassionate group. Under the able management of Mr Griffin, we are creating an organisation that is able to supply good quality housing to Government employees, whether teachers or employees of any other department, who have to work in country areas and provide a service to the country people of South Australia.

That service is being administered in a very cost-effective way, and we have managed to set a rent formula with the complete agreement and cooperation of the many trade unions and associations that cover employees who work in the country. We are upgrading our stock and providing a common level applicable to all sections, so that a teacher does not receive better quality accommodation than someone working for the Department for Community Welfare, for example. It is a long job and will not be resolved overnight, although we are working at it.

We are getting rid of poor quality stock and making that available for sale to the private sector. With the money generated from those sales, we are providing additional accommodation where necessary and upgrading existing properties that are being used. Some rather unkind statements have been made during other Estimates Committee hearings, with talk about vacancy rates, etc, but the criticism we are receiving is from those people who usually write to me as the Minister responsible and ask me to make housing available in country areas for 52 weeks out of the year, in effect, to have a home available if a Government employee happens to move to that country area.

We cannot have it both ways. If we want to provide that service, some flexibility must be given to the organisation that administers those properties on behalf of the Government. Those people who tend to criticise the Office of Government Employee Housing should look before they leap, and realise that there is a price to pay. When we look at the overall cost of applying that service, some of those vacancy costs are minimal.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: My next question is really supplementary to matters raised by the member for Hanson. As members of the Committee we are required to look at lines and examine the expenditure proposed therein, satis-

fying ourselves as to the reason for it being there. I confess that this aspect is difficult to follow. On page 93 of the Estimates of Payments we see 'South Australian Housing Trust—contribution to rent rebates'. The figure for the previous year was \$29.9 million, and it was actually spent. I am not worried that the two figures come out exactly: I can see reasons for that.

If one then looks under the 'Proposed' column, there is nothing, nor is there any qualifier on that line. On page 231 of the Program Estimates, one comes across the following statement:

Under the new Commonwealth-State housing agreement proposals, funds can no longer be used for rent rebates.

And it refers to the figure I have just been talking about. It continues:

Instead, these funds will be used to a similar extent for repayment of Commonwealth debt.

If the Commonwealth is reducing South Australia's public debt at the Commonwealth level, that sounds reasonable. If not, why does the Commonwealth no longer provide this money?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I assure the member for Mitchell and the Committee that the fact that \$29 million was spent on rent rebates last year and the fact that nothing is proposed this year does not mean that there will not be any rent relief program because we have no money. It is a part of the new agreement, which I am sure Mr Luckens will be able to explain better than I can.

Mr Luckens: Under the new arrangement being proposed by the Commonwealth, which was debated in Cabinet yesterday, the State is to establish a rental capital account. Commonwealth funds for the CSHA will come to that account, which will mean about \$100 million for this year. Those funds will allow a certain proportion of funding, proposed at 10 per cent, to be able to be used for recurrent purposes, but that account will also be able to use funds provided by the Commonwealth to repay interest and principal repayments before there is a distribution of funds for recurrent and capital purposes. That differs from the past when the CSHA allowed funds to be used for payment of rent rebates. In the past, the Housing Trust was able to use CSHA funds from the Commonwealth at \$15 per head to cover the cost of rent rebates. That is what the \$29 million represents in last year's accounts.

This year that cannot be provided and instead those funds will come from within the resources of the Housing Trust so that there will be a balancing of the rent account in the trust. Essentially, that explains the difference between the two figures on pages 93 and 94. The rent rebates will still be provided by the Housing Trust but will be shown differently within the accounts of the Commonwealth and the State. They will certainly show up in the Housing Trust accounts at the end of this financial year.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: I cannot see any qualifier as to the line on page 93; the money disappears into infinity. Among other things, this is an accounting exercise, and we have limited training. There is no indication of how the money is to be provided or under which line it is shown. On page 231 it is stated that one of our aims is to secure a favourable outcome for South Australia from the negotiations on the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. Are we progressing favourably or otherwise in this area?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: We have made perfectly clear to the Federal Government that, whilst we appreciate and applaud its decision to maintain a public housing presence in the whole of Australia, those States which have in the past failed to live up to the spirit and letter of the agreement (in the main, Queensland), as a result of the new directions

of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement will be the major beneficiaries. I refer in that to the States of New South Wales and Victoria. The two States that will lose the most are South Australia and Tasmania. I have made perfectly clear to my Federal colleague and to the Federal Government that we will fight and bitterly oppose any decision by the Federal Government that results in a lack of real funding for South Australia. I have made that decision perfectly clear to the housing lobby.

To those of my political opponents who say that we are selling the State down the river in regard to public housing, I say two things: first, that is patently untrue, as our record shows that within this State we have a real commitment to public housing and will continue that. It is on public record that the very people who are criticising me are committed to walking away from that agreement. I have consistently asked my parliamentary colleague, the member for Hanson, to join with me in pursuing a better deal for South Australia. I do not know what has come out of the Federal Cabinet's decision yesterday, but we made certain points to the Federal Government and stated that we would be prepared to make a commitment in terms of matching to ensure a continuing real presence of public housing in this State. We want indexation; we do not want a once-off situation, being unsure what is to happen in the next three years. Until we can be sure of that, my recommendation to my Cabinet colleagues is that, if those things are not clearly understood in the agreement by the Federal Government, we will be loath to enter into any form of agreement with the Federal Government. This State has a good story to tell on housing and we will continue that involvement.

I will not see this State suffer at the expense of the States which in the past have turned their backs on public housing, have used Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement money quite wrongly to promote home ownership and deliberately turned their backs on the agreement in regard to involvement in public housing by single parents, youth and the aged. I will not be party to those States reaping the windfalls of the new agreement at the expense of South Australia. I will continue to fight for justice and equity in terms of public housing.

Mr BECKER: Good on the Minister, because he is not getting a good deal from the current Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, according to my information. I support any efforts to make the Commonwealth Government do the right thing by this State. Other States should lift their standards rather than this State having to reduce its standards—that is not on. Why did the Government take over the financial responsibility of the State Bank for the Home Ownership Made Easy scheme of concessional loans and what benefit will flow to borrowers in this State? At page 117 of the Auditor-General's Report for the year ending 30 June 1989 a lengthy explanation of what has happened is shown and the amount transferred is cited. The Auditor-General spells out clearly that the scheme has now been transferred.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: The move was to bring the scheme under my control as Minister of Housing and Construction so that we could better implement the HomeStart program. It did not mean that money was not going into the concessional loans scheme for people who applied before the cut-off date. It was done to make it easier for me to implement the HomeStart program.

Mr BECKER: I wondered whether the Minister had got hold of our housing policy, because I suggested it should go to tender. It costs about \$700 000 a year to administer the program and I was looking for a cheaper way of doing it. What is the arrangement for the organisation and admin-

istration of the Home Start program? How will it be funded? Total interest charges on HomeStart loans will be the current rate of inflation as measured by changes in the CPI plus a real interest rate. The real rate charged will be based on the cost of funds to the program. What funds have been raised for the program so far, what is the cost of raising such funds and what is the estimated cost of raising these funds for the whole of this and next financial year?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I am sure that the member for Hanson, and other members of the Committee, would have read the speech that the Premier gave at the launch of HomeStart, wherein it was detailed that SAFA will be raising the money in the private sector, mainly through superannuation funds, on their capital indexed loans. That is where the superannuation funds find it most attractive to invest their money. This will then be on lent to HomeStart Finance as a part of the HomeStart loans. We have raised about \$60 million so far to meet the requirements of those people who wish to partake in HomeStart.

As the Premier said at the launch, SAFA will be in a position to raise more funds through this mechanism. As I said, the point was made at the launch that superannuation funds are finding this more and more attractive. As more and more superannuation funds get off the ground, they find this form of investment very attractive. It is because they do not need the money now; they need the money in the future, and that meets the requirements of HomeStart very well. Also, one of the good things about using SAFA is that those involved with SAFA are experts in the field. They get the maximum rates out there in the community. That is why we can make the HomeStart program so attractive to those people on lower and middle incomes who wish to partake of it.

Further, as the Premier has said, in addition to the 2 500 concessional loans that will be available this financial year, we have earmarked 1 500 HomeStart loans. This makes a total of 4 000 that we will get into home ownership this financial year. As the concessional loan program is run down and where those people who are on the existing list either choose to take a concessional loan or transfer over to HomeStart, in the next financial year there will be 4 000 HomeStart loans on our program, and I am sure that SAFA will be able to raise sufficient finance to meet that need.

Mr BECKER: I quote from the brochure publicising HomeStart:

In the first year of the loan, payments are set at 25 per cent of assessed income.

Sometimes reference is made to family income and other times it is household income. It continues:

Payments then increase each year by the same amount, as the increase in the consumer price index (CPI). But given that incomes generally keep pace with the CPI, payments should remain at approximately 25 per cent of your income for the life of the loan.

Between January 1983 and June 1989 pay increases for employees covered by wage indexation amounted to 37.5 per cent. Over the same period, the CPI was 54.3 per cent for Adelaide. That is a difference of some 17 per cent, and it really means that workers are 17 per cent short. I am wondering whether, in the consideration of the whole scheme, any consideration was ever given to looking at average weekly earnings, rather than HomeStart's using the consumer price index, so that the average working family would not be disadvantaged, as we have seen in past history with wage indexation.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: First, can I say that when promoting a new product one cannot put out everything to suit every particular person. It may well be that some of the examples referred to by the member for Hanson in relation to the movement of wages in line with the CPI for

a certain period might be correct. However, we are talking about repayments at 25 per cent of household income. In the brochure that we sent to all members of Parliament it is explained that, where a person's income does not move in line with the CPI (and it may well be that in some cases this will occur), provision has been made in HomeStart to meet those circumstances. We use the term 'consumer price index' for ease of understanding in the community: I am sure the member for Hanson would appreciate that. Also, within HomeStart we link the borrowings to repayments.

Examples were given in the brochure, and in relation to one of those we were told by a well informed commentator—and one who was not criticising the thing—that we were being too honest. However, in the brochure and in the lift-out sheet that we give to all applicants or people who wish to register, where we show examples, we take it that people will be borrowing the maximum, such as in the case that we quoted, which, with all due respect to the member for Hanson, the member for Bragg totally ignored but put forward a red herring, a furphy. The situation was that the person was on an income of \$22 000 and wanted to borrow \$61 000. We have found that what many of the people who want to take advantage of HomeStart wish to borrow is nowhere near the maximum that they are allowed to borrow. As I said earlier, the difference is that one can borrow 1.8 times household income under a conventional loan but 2.8 times household income under a HomeStart loan.

I was fortunate to be given some time on 5DN to take inquiries, together with Gary Storkey, from people who wished to take advantage of HomeStart. When we started talking to the people who called about what they wanted to borrow, what their income was and what type of house they wanted to buy (and in two cases they wanted to buy their trust home), we found that, with the amount of borrowing available to them, they would not even have to use the maximum amount available.

The point is that we can give only a generalised example. I am sure the member for Hanson understands that. At the same time, those people who want to get into home ownership, who are currently in the private rental market and who are on low and middle incomes do not want to buy a house in Toorak Gardens, Burnside, Unley or Norwood: they want to buy in the areas that are represented by, say, the members for Hanson, Mitchell, Gilles, Price, or Elizabeth—or by me. In fact, the bulk of inquiries are coming from people in the electorates represented by the members currently on this Committee, including you, Mr Acting Chairman. These people have no wish to get into the capital gains market. They do not want to buy a house to tart up and sell at a profit: they want to get into permanent home ownership. Their ability under HomeStart to borrow at 2.8 times their household income would be more than offset by any slight reduction that might occur in their wages moving in line with the CPI.

Under the accord, wage movements have been in line with the CPI, and the pilots' strike has caused such chaos because people have been trying to go outside the accord.

workers represented by the members currently in this Committee are people who have moderate incomes and whose wage and salary increases have occurred in line with the CPI. Mechanisms are outlined in the HomeStart brochure to pick up those people. Mr Storkey will go through the mechanisms involving people who obtain a HomeStart loan, to show that we can satisfy their problems.

Mr Storkey: If payments on a mortgage get to 30 per cent of gross household income and cause financial hardship, an application can be made to HomeStart for payments to be brought back to 25 per cent or 27 per cent of

gross household income, and the loan would then be extended. In addition, if a double income is taken into account for borrowing, we allow borrowers to borrow up to 2.5 times the combined income and not 2.8 times the single income. This gives us some protection if one income is not available to the household for a period of time. The loan is sufficiently flexible to absorb periods of decreased income and to allow for extended terms.

If it is contemplated that there be a long-term drop in income, the facility exists for a 'top-up' loan which creates an interest-free component of capital, and that is an indexed portion of the total value of the house. If the 'top-up' loan is \$10 000 and the total value of the house is \$60 000, it would be one-sixth of the equity after a five-year period. That can assist people who are looking at a long-term drop in income or at income not keeping pace with the CPI.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: I have read the brochure that was sent to members of Parliament about tenant participation. I represent an electorate with a significant number of trust houses. I believe that significant changes in Housing Trust activities are brought about by significant changes in tenants. With 67 per cent of tenants at present receiving some form of rent rebate, I understand that it is expected that 75 per cent of all new tenants will receive some rebates. Also, I have observed that tenants are becoming more demanding, even though taxpayers generally subsidise them in relation to maintenance.

If tenants are to have the opportunity to participate in the affairs of the Housing Trust they should have more regard to the costs of maintaining ageing housing stock. I know that this is occurring in my electorate, in Klemzig, Windsor Gardens, Gilles Plains and Hillcrest (although it is slow-going in redeveloping Hillcrest). Are the demands of tenants having an effect on Housing Trust staff morale, perhaps not at the high management level but at the middle and lower levels and out in the field, where staff have to deal directly with the good, bad and indifferent tenants?

I am not being critical; I have always been a supporter of the trust. It has operated over 50 years and has done a magnificent job in housing families—and that was its original intent. However, those who are now becoming trust tenants are different—perhaps this reflects a change in society—in that they think the world owes them a living. It does not; the Housing Trust is not a welfare organisation. The Housing Trust does exactly what its charter states—that is, provides housing for middle and low-income earners. What is the proportion of tenant participation in relation to maintenance costs?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: The member for Gilles has about 30 per cent Housing Trust tenants in his electorate. It is true that the make-up of trust tenants between the time he entered this Parliament and now has changed dramatically. It is also true that when the Housing Trust was set up its charter was to cater for the working people—those with low and middle incomes. One can advance various reasons for the change, including economic conditions, change in families, and more young people seeking accommodation. The trust now houses more disadvantaged people and this results in more rent rebates. It may well be that Housing Trust tenants are, in the main, now more demanding than they were when the member for Gilles and the member for Mitchell entered this Parliament.

Trust tenants will make six or seven phone calls and trips to electoral offices and to the Housing Trust regional office to complain about minor maintenance that they could carry out themselves. The General Manager does not need me to place on record my concern about the strain that is placed on Housing Trust officers when dealing with those people.

On the one hand, I have demanded a 4 per cent productivity improvement in the trust's operations at administrative level and it has been achieving it and more in certain cases; and at the same time I am aware that those who are in the front line dealing with tenants undergo a lot of stress and strain, but, to their credit, they never complain.

One of the spin-offs from tenant management and participation is that tenants develop a sense of ownership—not in money terms—of the property in which they live. One area where I saw that working was in Glasgow last year. That was caused by the Thatcher Government's desire to run down public housing and sell it to the Rachmanns of this world. Rachmann was a most notorious British landlord who made a fortune out of slum premises. The Thatcher Government is in the process of selling off some of this public housing to people like him.

The Glasgow Corporation decided to go into tenant management in a big way. The tenants of a group of what are called council houses were made responsible for their maintenance. They were given a realistic allocation—no pinch-penny type of allocation—to run their maintenance programs. The idea was that if they were allowed so many thousands of pounds to maintain their properties, they would be more likely to spend a bit more of their own time not only in keeping the properties up to scratch, but spending the money wisely. A few Labor members have advocated that we should move down that track, and I think that we will be going down it more so in future. I will ask the General Manager to give more specific answers to the member for Gilles.

Mr Edwards: There has been a significant change in the community which has created a significant change in demand on the trust and the way in which it must operate. There are a variety of reasons why tenant participation appeals to us. It is a vehicle by which tenants can educate themselves on where their money goes. The more they know about the trust, the more they know about the amount that goes towards interest on the debt and the amount that goes on maintenance. When they are aware of such matters, their concern is heightened to ensure that issues which give rise to maintenance expenditure are controlled so better care is taken of the property and of the landscape that surrounds it.

We have not got many experiments in this area yet, but they are starting. When tenants have control of maintenance, they can satisfy themselves that the contractor is satisfactory and, because they are on the spot when the work is being done, they can satisfy themselves that the work is being done properly and they can indicate what kind of work needs to be done. Tenants see the benefit because they realise that, by controlling that kind of expenditure, they can control the level of rents. They can also exercise neighbourhood influence over other tenants who may not be as responsible as the majority would wish them to be. The evidence from our own experience and from overseas shows that it works.

The major changes taking place are putting significantly increased loads on trust staff, although I do not think that those work loads or any pressures on morale come from tenant participation. From my observation, the trust staff who are engaged in tenant participation activities find it an uplifting and positive experience in which they are pleased to be involved. It creates a lot of work (and often out-of-hours work) but the experience boosts morale even if it reduces their free time.

There are pressures which affect staff, because we try to run a very lean ship and we have tried to cope with increasing work loads with much the same number of staff as we

employed 10 years ago. There are problems that the staff encounter in the field because of there being more difficult tenants—people who have great difficulty in shouldering their community responsibilities and behaving as good neighbours in the general community. That can often arise from physical or mental disability. However, the trust staff have a 'can do' approach to their work. If somebody comes in with a need, they will do their best to resolve it. They will often find themselves engaged in shouldering responsibilities for an individual in a personal support or social welfare role, which is beyond their duty specification. However, as human beings they try to give this assistance, and many of these cases can be very trying.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: What was the cost to the trust of the maintenance of housing stock last year, and what is the anticipated cost for the forthcoming year, because it will grow significantly due to ageing stock?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I will ask Mr Edwards to answer that question.

Mr Edwards: The actual amount spent on maintenance in the year just concluded was \$43.5 million. Our expectation is that the amount to be spent this year will be about the same. Although rental stock will increase somewhat, and there will be some inflation in maintenance costs, we are achieving some productivity improvements in the maintenance area through different practices. We therefore expect to be able to hold the cost, and hold the pressure on the demand on rents for the next year. Because the stock is ageing, there are increasing pressures for maintenance work, which means that the maintenance expenditure in the years after this year will be likely to increase.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: In relation to Aboriginal housing, I understand that the Housing Trust administers the Aboriginal Housing Board. Does the trust have any communication with the Aboriginal Housing Board with respect to the choice of tenants and the houses that are purchased by the Commonwealth in relation to the housing of Aboriginal families? It is a very sensitive and difficult issue but, as members of Parliament, we have all had difficulties with some trust tenants because of their activities and, as a consequence, it has created some difficulties with other members of the community who live in the neighbourhood. What sort of influence does the Housing Trust have in the selection of tenants and the areas where Aboriginal families are housed?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: To a certain extent, we touched on this matter earlier when dealing with matters relating to the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio and, in particular, in relation to a question from the member for Price concerning the pilot program that we are running in the Hendon area. I am the Minister responsible for the Aboriginal Housing Board in which is incorporated the Aboriginal Funded Unit. The South Australian Housing Trust assists the unit to run its programs. The Aboriginal Housing Board and the Aboriginal Funded Unit are responsible for where housing is supplied, its standard and its tenants. We have spoken about self-management and all the things we are attempting to do as a Government in relation to the Aboriginal community, so it would be improper for the South Australian Housing Trust to have the final say on the allocation of the funded unit homes and where those new homes will be allocated.

From time to time we are contacted by either members of Parliament or members of the community concerning a house that has been allocated to the Aboriginal community under the auspices of the Aboriginal Housing Board and the Aboriginal Funded Unit. If there are neighbourhood problems or disputes as a result of those allocations, the

funded unit will use all its expertise and mediation services to overcome those problems.

I do not think there is an easy solution as to what we can do about it. In widening this issue to include Housing Trust tenants, we often receive complaints—and in the main, most are unfair—where, as part of the Government's social mix policy, the South Australian Housing Trust has tried to get away from the 'ghetto-type' congregating of Housing Trust properties in an area. The electorates of both the member for Elizabeth and me encompass a Housing Trust built city.

There are areas within the electorates of the other members of this Committee in which the South Australian Housing Trust, as part of the social mix, is building or purchasing units for Housing Trust tenants. Unfortunately, in today's society people sometimes have preconceived ideas that Housing Trust tenants are not the best of neighbours. Most members will agree with me that even in the fair city of Burnside the number of neighbourhood disputes is at the same level as it is in Elizabeth Grove or Gilles Plains.

I would be foolish to say that, because of the role the Housing Trust has to play in housing these people who, for many and varied reasons, end up in public sector accommodation, there are not some problems. As a result of some of these complaints, the Housing Trust with my blessing has set up a working party to look at difficult tenants. So, it is not just in the area of Aboriginal housing. I do not have any overseeing role in who goes where as decided by the Aboriginal Housing Board, or where it purchases particular homes—nor should I.

In my own electorate, which borders that of the member for Elizabeth, there was an area that had been considered somewhat up-market accommodation, where the Aboriginal Housing Board purchased two blocks and built homes on those blocks using Aboriginal apprentices. I had a series of deputations as, perhaps, the member for Elizabeth did. I spoke to those people, and said 'We just cannot segment a group of people and say that they will give certain problems if they live alongside you.' Perhaps what I said bore fruit, because I never heard from those people again.

The homes the Housing Trust built were good quality homes. I take the member for Gilles' point: in his electorate we have received complaints from people that, in some cases, the funded unit in certain streets has had more than its share of housing. I have relayed that information to the Aboriginal Housing Board and have been assured that the board is well aware of its responsibility to provide a social mix component, but also well aware that its tenants have responsibilities to the rest of the community, just as South Australian Housing Trust tenants in general have a responsibility to their neighbours.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: Personally, I do not care what colour people are, but it is a sensitive and delicate issue which has come to my attention. The police do their best, but it does not seem to be enough. On occasions I have received petitions, and am concerned with one case at the moment about which I have had to write to the Housing Trust, the Minister or the board because of people's behaviour. The race or colour of people does not matter: the important thing is the behaviour of the individuals occupying the premises. In most cases, the problem relates to alcohol.

I was not suggesting that the Minister or the Aboriginal Housing Board should oversee the Housing Trust, but they should ensure that tenants are responsible and do not upset the rest of the community. My concern also relates to people who visit tenants—and, indeed, stay with them. It only happens occasionally and I do not know the number of

times. In one or two cases only have I had to seek the support of the board or the Minister over the behaviour of those tenants. That is the important factor.

Mr Edwards: At 30 June there were 1 317 dwellings under the Aboriginal Housing Program. The Aboriginal Housing Board, the Aboriginal Housing Management Committees for the various regions, and the staff of the Aboriginal funded units are well aware of the need to locate tenants carefully and to ensure that tenants understand their responsibilities in respect of looking after the property and behaving as good neighbours. The same tenancy agreements exists in most cases as there is in other trust accommodation. The natural tendency, obviously, is to try to make decisions that will minimise difficulties in the ongoing administration in the future.

With some Aboriginal tenants, as with other tenants, no matter how carefully the allocation process is carried out, some do not live up to their obligations. Every effort is made, through visits by tenancy officers and from pressure within the Aboriginal community, to ensure a better standard of behaviour. Frequently that is successful, but on some occasions it is not. Eventually those tenants move on or are moved and attention is given to ensuring that the next selection is particularly appropriate.

Mr BECKER: How does the Minister reconcile the misleading statement made by the Premier in Parliament on 24 August 1989 in his budget speech when he said (and I quote from p. 14 budget speech 1989-90):

Since 1982 we have provided 16 000 additional houses through the Housing Trust . . . Funding is provided in the budget for an additional 1 950 dwellings through the Housing Trust. This will bring the total number of rental dwellings built or acquired by the trust to almost 18 000 since 1982—the largest increase for any comparable period in the trust's history.

I seek leave to have inserted in *Hansard* two tables for the years ending 30 June 1952 to 1959 and for the years ending 30 June 1982 to 1989 for dwellings constructed, purchased or leased.

Leave granted.

Year ending 30 June	Dwellings Constructed, Purchased or leased	Net increase
1952	3 118	1 467
1953	4 486	2 042
1954	3 555	2 842
1955	3 268	2 154
1956	3 238	1 468
1957	3 140	1 630
1958	3 032	1 247
1959	3 142	1 282
	<u>26 979</u>	<u>14 132</u>

Year ending 30 June	Dwellings Constructed, Purchased or leased	Net increase
1982	1 759	1 660
1983	2 476	2 203
1984	2 843	2 448
1985	3 014	2 367
1986	3 107	2 747
1987	2 861	2 856
1988	1 940	1 771
1989	2 057*	1 045*
	<u>20 057</u>	<u>17 097</u>

*Yet to be confirmed.

Mr BECKER: Therefore, under a Liberal Government between 1 July 1951 to 30 June 1959, 12 847 families were supported through the trust into home ownership, whereas from 1 July 1981 to 30 June 1989, a predominantly Labor period, only 2 960 families have been assisted into home ownership through the trust: 1 099 under a Liberal Govern-

ment in one year and 1 012 last financial year. This means that, until pushed by the Opposition, the Government was not encouraging home ownership, nor can such an ideal be guaranteed in the future, or can it?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I accept those figures as read, but take the member for Hanson to task on the dangers of comparing figures from a Liberal Government with our program since coming to office. I do not believe that the honourable member has deliberately ignored a couple of points, but he fails to understand that most of those houses built under the auspices of the Liberal Party were built for sale. I came to South Australia because I was offered a house to purchase. That was part of the trust's program.

The Premier is correct in saying that, in that period of Government when 16 300 homes were built, they were built to rent and to be available to South Australians. Finance has been provided in conjunction with the Federal Government to provide housing for those who wish to rent. The figure that the member for Hanson quotes was for housing to cater for people like myself and many thousands of other migrants who came to this State from overseas or interstate to be part of a very good high quality building program to give people access to home ownership. I am thankful that I was given the opportunity of coming to this State, as it enabled me to get into home ownership straight away. I was sponsored by the South Australian Housing Trust under its home purchase arrangements.

Property developers around the Para Hills area—and Reid Murray was one—were enticing migrants from the UK into home ownership. When that firm went bankrupt, new migrants were left high and dry, having thought that they were getting into home ownership. We had good housing, good prices and minimal deposit as encouragement and support from the South Australian Housing Trust, and those who had gone to private developers were picked up by the trust. The figures given by the honourable member do not tell the full story.

It was the Tonkin Government that stopped the successful home purchase sales program that was running successfully at that time. That Government decided that it would get out and not interfere with the private sector. The trust was running a good program using private builders, good developments, and all the infrastructure. The Liberal Government stopped that, but we have tried to bring it back. Another arm was working well in conjunction with the trust, namely, the Land Commission.

The Tonkin Government abolished the Land Commission, and ensured that when we got back into power in 1982 and attempted to resurrect the Land Commission, the honourable member's colleagues in the Upper House watered down the legislation that resulted in stopping the South Australian Urban Land Trust fulfilling its role in providing a secure land bank. Yet, we are still successful in keeping down prices to a minimum in making homes available to South Australians, whether they purchase through a mortgage mechanism supplied by the State Government or otherwise, because the land bank has ensured that prices are still reasonably low.

I would caution the member for Hanson against quoting figures in relation to a certain period under a Liberal Government and then comparing those with figures under the Bannon Government. In the main, his figures relate to houses which were available for rental but which at the same time were built purely and simply for sale. It was a very successful program and one for which the Housing Trust should be congratulated. However, in this regard the member for Hanson is not comparing apples with apples; he is comparing apples with pears, and I would advise him

to rethink that line. I am not taking anything away from the previous Liberal Governments which encouraged home ownership—these were Governments prior to the Tonkin Liberal Government. However, the honourable member is not comparing apples with apples.

Mr BECKER: The point I am making is that the Premier makes these statements, but we must remember that we are now back in a period where the trust is encouraging tenants to buy their houses. That is part of the trust's program, and it is still one way of assisting people to get into home ownership at a moderate price, and that is what it is all about today. If people cannot do it through private enterprise, the existing tenants can do it through acquiring their own properties. So, we can come up with all sorts of philosophies on the whole issue; it is a matter of how many houses were built and what the needs and demands were. Of course, we would like to go back to the 1950s when we had that influx of migrants to boost our population—it would be great.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: 1964 was a vintage year.

Mr BECKER: That was about when I bought mine. I refer to this matter because it is an interesting comparison of what the trust has done for the housing industry and the people of South Australia. Many South Australians acquired their first home through the Housing Trust. It was a very successful program for first home buyers, and it should still be that way to some degree. At page 231 of the Program Estimates, a 1989-90 specific target/objective is:

The Rent Relief Review will be completed, and better targeting introduced.

When did that Rent Relief Review commence, when will it be completed and who is conducting such an investigation?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: The review was to look at the relative benefits provided by rebates to public tenants and rent relief to private tenants, which commenced early this year. The review has involved representatives of State and Commonwealth agencies, peak welfare organisations, the finance sector, the Office of Housing and the South Australian Housing Trust. The work of the committee was suspended some time this year, in about July I think, following the announcement of the Commonwealth's intention to renegotiate the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. We did this because of the three possible impacts of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement on rent rebates and rent relief; namely, the withdrawal of the facility of using grant funds to offset the cost of rent rebates (referred to earlier), the possibility of introducing a common formula for rent rebates, and the constraints on the use of grant funds for recurrent purposes, such as rent relief. They were the three main areas involved.

This approach is similar to what I was talking about earlier today in relation to the Aboriginal Lands Trust Review. Because the ATSIC Bill that is currently before Federal Parliament could have ramifications on the whole area of funding for Aboriginal communities, it would be pointless to go down one path when a path taken by the Federal Government could have a significant impact. So, once again in relation to this situation, when we know exactly where we are in relation to the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, appropriate action will be taken. Again, I make the point that, if all aspects of the negotiations are not satisfactory to South Australia, I will not recommend acceptance to my Cabinet colleagues.

My recommendation would be that we demand renegotiation. This would not be due to any Party political dogma; it would be simply to get a better and fairer deal for South Australians. There is no point in our continuing down the

path of review before those negotiations have been finalised. When they have been finalised, I will get the committee to look at the whole area again. I have made the point in relation to the finance sector. The Real Estate Institute is involved in this review as well. So, we are using all areas. When the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement has been finalised and I have evaluated exactly what the Federal Government is proposing, I will reactivate the review.

Both the member for Mitchell and the member for Hanson have written to me about war veterans' pensions. This is an area that we will pick up in relation to the review. This is my response to all members of Parliament who have written to me about this matter. When the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement has been finalised and we are happy with it, we will reactivate the review, and possibly take into consideration the representations that have been made to me as Minister in relation to war veterans' pensions. I am sure that the General Manager of the Housing Trust has received many letters in relation to this matter also. We will then get the matter going fairly quickly so that we will have some equitable way of looking not only at rent rebates in the public sector but at rent relief in the private sector.

Mr BECKER: This financial year which specific housing organisations, and at what locations, will be assisted to meet the needs of youth, the aged and the disabled? How much will be spent under this program? I refer to page 230 of the Program Estimates and to the following 1988-89 specific target/objective:

Significant housing services projects have been achieved for special needs groups, including youth, the aged and people with disabilities.

I understand that that will be continued. I was concerned to read on the front page of today's *Advertiser* the prediction that we could end up with ghettos in Adelaide, and so I consider that this program is quite important. Will it continue?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: Yes, I read the article on the front page of the *Advertiser*, and I referred to it on radio this morning. The Adelaide City Council is to be congratulated for recognising that there is a need for local government (and this was talking not just about the Adelaide City Council but about local government generally) to become involved in providing programs or to work in partnership with the State and Commonwealth Governments in providing for housing not only for youth but for people with special needs. The member for Hanson listed them specifically, namely, youth, the aged and people with disabilities.

In that regard I congratulate the Adelaide City Council. Unfortunately, councils have been reluctant to come forward in relation to the Local Government Community Housing Program under which it has been possible for local government to become involved with the State Government, through the Housing Trust, and it has been possible to use LGCHP money from the Federal Government. However, the Adelaide City Council, under Lord Mayor Steve Condous, has started to redress that problem.

I am not sure whether the member for Hanson was at the opening of the Gilbert Street complex, but the member for Bragg, I think, criticised us for providing Rolls Royce accommodation for youth and the disabled that was within 10 minutes walking distance from the GPO. He said that Rolls Royce housing, such as that provided in Gilbert Street, should be for the wealthy, not for the disadvantaged, poor and weak. We like to think that they, too, have a place in the sun as well as those who drive Porches.

The Housing Trust has plenty of programs. In fact, we were congratulated by Mr Burdekin, and his report recommended that long-term accommodation be provided for

homeless youth rather than the bandaid shelters that presently exist in Adelaide. The evidence is that while there is a sufficient number of youth shelters for short-term accommodation—one, two or three nights—there is no long-term accommodation. That situation has been corrected in South Australia. In Elizabeth (my electorate), in Noarlunga and in other parts of Adelaide four projects with space to house 34 young people have been approved under the Local Government and Community Housing Program. One could argue that places for 34 young people is insufficient, and I would be the first to agree. However, it boils down to the question of how much taxpayers' money we spend on public housing?

As Minister I always argue that our priorities should be such that we should consider it a blot on our society if, through no fault of their own, people—and there are varied reasons why they leave family households—are not provided with secure, affordable housing. The Emergency Housing Office has youth housing officers to deal mainly with the problems of young people. Currently, we fund Whereabouts and Trace-A-Place, which find private rental housing for young people. In 1988-89 we funded the Youth Housing Network to the tune of \$66 000. The commitment of the Housing Trust to providing accommodation for the aged is unparalleled when compared with what occurs in the rest of the country. Under the Jubilee 150 program we provided an additional 2 000 aged accommodation units in conjunction with local government, churches and other organisations.

The Housing Trust has played a part in and fully supports the de-institutionalisation of those who wish to get out of institutions and become a part of the neighbourhood network. Under our crisis accommodation program for inner city Government sponsored developments in 1987-88, the Housing Trust funded, primarily for youth accommodation, the Red Cross Society, Joyce Schultz House, South Terrace, \$5 800; the St Johns Youth Centre, \$100 000; the Salvation Army, \$125 000; St Vincent de Paul at Whitmore Square, \$55 000; and WestCare, \$130 000. During 1988-89 we allocated the St Johns Youth Shelter a further \$22 000 (for youth) and the Nunga Miminis Shelter a further \$200 000.

Under the LGCHP funded projects, last year St Lukes Mission was funded \$180 000 in conjunction with the Co-Op Foundation as part of our International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. The story of our involvement goes on and on: it is a continuing involvement. I make the point that the projects we fund are, in the main, recurrent; they are not capital.

That is one of the arguments we are presently having with the Federal Government. This State has a two-pronged attack on homelessness: first, provision of the bricks and mortar (involving capital funding) that we provide by way of rental accommodation for those who wish to get into public sector housing; and, at the same time, the responsibility to those who have other housing needs, for example, through the Emergency Housing Office, Trace-A-Place, Whereabouts or the Co-op program. We maintain all those areas. I know that the member for Hanson would not argue that we have a role to play in providing recurrent support, and we have consistently argued that the Federal Government should pick up more of that support. We reserve the right to use a significant proportion of our housing allocation on those programs, and we will not be dictated to by the Federal Government in terms of abandoning the programs and concentrating only on bricks and mortar. We need a balance. In relation to the particular matter that the member for Hanson raised, it is an ongoing program and we will continue to maintain it.

Mr De LAINE: Page 232 of the Program Estimates under 'Issues/Trends' states:

Residential construction activity was at a high level in 1989-90 ... the major slump in activity experienced in other States due to high interest rates is not being experienced to the same degree in South Australia.

Why is that so?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: There are a variety of reasons. In the main, South Australia tends to experience a time lag in relation to the eastern States. If one looks at building activity in this State from, say, 1984 onwards, which was when we maximised our use of concessional loan funding for public housing activity (which is one of the bases of our major argument with the Federal Government) and when we cranked up the concessional loans scheme and encouraged the banks to spend more of their housing dollar on lower income groups, one sees that South Australia tended to be high in those areas and that, in turn, tended to help us weather the storm when effects were being experienced in the eastern States. Also, banks in South Australia were still prepared to give loans with a fixed interest rate for the first year as interest rates started rising, which again tended to encourage people to go into home ownership.

Because of our land bank holdings, because of cooperation between the South Australian Housing Trust and the Urban Land Trust and because the Housing Trust was prepared to use some of its reserve land, as it knew its forward projections due to restraints under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement (the trust was able to sell good quality land in some of the urban fringe areas which was picked up by people who were prepared to build for low and middle income earners) we managed to weather the storm. I am confident that, as regards any slackening off that we might have had as a result not so much of high interest rates as the deposit gap that was suddenly looming, under HomeStart many people will be encouraged to get into home ownership and we will continue to play a unique role in providing housing.

Of all the mainland States, South Australia still provides the cheapest house and land package than anywhere else in Australia. That is not by accident; it is by design. It is the result of cooperation between the Department of Environment and Planning and the Department of Housing and Construction in partnership with the private sector. I pay tribute to the Housing Industry Association, because it sees itself as playing an active role in providing housing for low and middle income earners in South Australia. The last announcement that we made related to the Seaford area. There is a classic example of cooperation between two Government agencies in conjunction with the private sector building houses in that part of metropolitan Adelaide at a reasonable price over the next 10 years. All in all, that is a potted example of how we have managed to withstand the slump that has been affecting the eastern States.

Looking at forecast approvals, in South Australia in 1988-89 there were 10 300 approvals. For 1989-90 the forecast is 9 600, which is a 10 per cent drop. Australia wide, for 1988-89 there were 180 000 approvals and the projection for 1989-90 is 130 000 which represents a 40 per cent drop. I have tried to tell as many people who are prepared to listen as possible over the past six months that South Australia has no crisis. As a result of the Federal Government's monetary policy, to a certain degree interest rates are having an impact, but we have mechanisms in place to help people through our mortgage relief scheme and interest rate protection plan, but we certainly are not experiencing that drop. I am convinced that under the stewardship of this Government we shall continue to have reasonable projections for

many years to come not only in the private sector but in the public sector.

Mr De LAINE: Will amending legislation be introduced to Parliament to ensure that when land is purchased by the Government, and in particular when land is purchased by the Housing Trust on which it intends to build houses, soil tests are carried out prior to the purchase of the land to make sure that, because of previous uses of the land, it is not contaminated with chemical or other residues? I cite the example of Hendon where recently there were problems with arsenic contamination because of previous use by the skin processing industry.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I am sorry that you are in the Chair, Mr Acting Chairman, and cannot ask a question on this matter, but the area that springs to mind is the arsenic contaminated soil at Albert Park. I suppose one could put forward the proposition that someone was deliberately out to make life awkward for me as the Minister and for Mr Edwards as the General Manager, because, when we wanted to carry out a design and construction project in that area, we purchased the houses and land in all good faith. Of course, history tells us that a tannery was operated in that area until September 1984.

The member for Price makes the point that there was no mechanism to have any Government agency, developer or local council document previous usage of housing sites. It is perhaps my luck holding true that I can always have a minor crisis and out of it develop some mechanism which ensures that hopefully—no-one can ever guarantee what will happen in future—it will not happen again. The people who were living in those houses had every reason to be thankful that they were in trust-owned houses. If the houses had been built by a private developer, there would have been no recourse. Obviously we were able to take corrective measures.

We have ensured—and the trust did not need a directive from me—that any land that we propose to purchase, especially infilled land, in the metropolitan area will be soil tested. We will also attempt to obtain a record of the usage of the land in the past to ensure that it will have no detrimental effect on any tenants. We sealed the surface of the area and gave the tenants who lived in those premises an opportunity to transfer away from that site, if they wished to do so. Nearly all the tenants moved away. There was a cost that the Government had to bear, and that was estimated to be \$300 000. That was not only for sealing the properties that the trust had bought but for the two adjoining privately-owned properties. Again, as in all cases, the Government has to face its responsibility and ensure that those sites, if they were to be used subsequently, would not be detrimental to people living there.

As a result of the Government's decision to pick up the cost of sealing, in connection with the areas dealing with planning procedures, the Minister for Environment and Planning is issuing a Planning Practice Circular to councils, planners and consultants. This circular will inform them that the Advisory Committee on Planning and the South Australian Planning Commission will need to be satisfied that land which is zoned or used for industrial or commercial purposes, and which is subject to a rezoning proposal or a prohibited development application, does not contain contaminated soil likely to create a hazard relative to the proposed use. The circular will also strongly urge councils to retain existing information on previous land use and possible sources of contamination and to refer potential public health problems arising from soil contamination to the Public and Environmental Health Division of the Health Commission.

With no mechanism previously in place and the South Australian Housing Trust the innocent party, we have hopefully set in place a mechanism that will ensure that it will never happen again. In those areas in which the trust will have some involvement in the State Government's future opening up of residential land previously used for industrial purposes—and the areas of Wingfield and Gillman spring to mind—those procedures will be set in place by the South Australian Housing Trust and the private sector. We will also carry out those soil tests where the trust will have some involvement at Seaford. It is a small price to pay for the environmental health of our tenants. Without trying to curry favour with you, Sir, I place on record the way you argued the case for the tenants in your electorate when it first came to light that the soil could have been contaminated. You did it with a degree of enthusiasm for which you deserve the plaudits of members of your electorate.

Mr De LAINE: As a supplementary question, does the Minister intend to enshrine in legislation those matters he has outlined?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: That responsibility lies with my colleague the Minister for Environment and Planning but, as a result of Cabinet's decision to allocate money to seal the Albert Park site, I am sure that, with her usual efficiency, she will ensure that it never happens again. It will be looked at. Local government realises it has a responsibility to document the history of land use. If we are to maintain our cost advantage of being able to build in inner city areas and reuse the land, our whole urban consolidation program depends heavily on being well aware of the previous use of the land, so it is imperative that we do the types of things for which the member for Price has asked.

Mr De LAINE: Has there been much opposition to the present policy of the trust's buying into strata title units from private unit owners whose units are situated in the same block? Does the Housing Trust intend to continue with this policy; and/or does the trust intend to concentrate on the purchase of complete blocks of strata title units?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: At the risk of the Leader of the Opposition's saying that I fed the member for Price with this Dorothy Dix question, it is a coincidence that, when Cabinet was at its metropolitan meeting at Campbelltown yesterday, I had the good fortune in the morning to be taken to see some of the many Housing Trust developments in the Campbelltown area. It was pointed out that we picked up strata title properties to augment our accommodation stock in that area. I might add that some of the private stock that we picked up paled into insignificance when one looks at the quality that we ourselves provide in the way of medium density inner city development, but perhaps I am prejudiced. I like the product that we build as opposed to what is being built by private developers. Perhaps Mr Edwards could provide some figures and comment on the attitude of the private sector in respect of our purchasing private strata title properties.

Mr Edwards: Last year the trust purchased 214 individual strata title units. We adopted that program because they were available in the right locations and at the right prices to meet the needs of trust tenants. We intend to continue with that policy. There have been one or two cases of resistance being raised to the trust's intervention in this way, which was new last year but, as in most instances, the objections were raised in anticipation and the reality of having tenants living in those houses and participating in the local communities has proven to be very satisfactory for the residents.

It is not our intention to purchase complete strata title groups because the purpose of the program is to intermingle

public housing tenants with the rest of the community. Therefore, having one or maybe two in a group is perfectly acceptable. Further, this is another area where we can apply tenant participation. We will nominate the trust tenant of that strata title as the trust representative on the strata title corporation. Again, that is a good boost to tenants taking control of their own environment and demonstrating, by working with the rest of their strata title group, that they are vital and contributing members of the community.

Mr BECKER: Who is managing the HomeStart program and how was the company selected? Were tenders called and, if not, why not?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: We are using three retail outlets—the State Bank, the Hindmarsh Adelaide Building Society and the Co-operative Building Society. They were not selected by tender because, as the Committee is well aware, we intend this to be one of the most progressive and workable arrangements that we can possibly have to enable people who are currently trapped in the private rental market to benefit from home ownership. Apart from being South Australian based, those three organisations were also the leaders in their field as lending institutions. We also wanted that part of the HomeStart operation to work efficiently, for the benefit of not only those people seeking HomeStart loans but also the South Australian Government. There will be an evaluation after about one year or when it is appropriate to see whether we can enlarge the number of outlets so that people who wish to take a HomeStart loan can go to the retail outlet of their choice. We know that some people have always dealt with the State Bank, Hindmarsh Adelaide or the Co-op, and they have a preference.

So, we will try to cater for that. We have received letters from institutions that wish to participate, and I congratulate those people on wishing to be part of this exciting new program. On the one hand, we have the Leader of the Opposition saying it is a fraud but, on the other hand, we have all these other organisations with a proven record of providing facilities for home ownership to the general public—albeit through the conventional loans scheme—applauding this scheme and wanting to be part of it. That is why I think that the Opposition's attitude to HomeStart is more one of sour grapes than of any logical evaluation of the scheme.

I judge the success of the scheme not only by the lending institutions wanting to be part of it but also by the South Australian public registering its approval. I do not think that it can be put in any better terms than that of the South Australian manufacturer of motor cars: 'They love it'.

Mr BECKER: I do not think that the Minister has answered the question. I asked: who is managing the HomeStart program? How was the company selected? Were tenders called and, if not, why not? The reason I ask those questions is that I have in front of me a document entitled 'National Mortgage News', and headed 'A further step towards a national mortgage market', which states:

National Mortgage Marketing Corporation Limited has been appointed manager of the HomeStart loan program. The HomeStart program is a South Australian Government initiative designed to provide 16 000 'affordable' loans over the next four years to households unable to save a large deposit or to afford a conventional loan. Based on a 'low start' principle, a HomeStart loan allows lower payments in the first years when other expenses of establishing a home are most pressing.

It goes on to explain the program as follows:

In its capacity as manager, NMMC will be responsible for the training of retailers, documentation of procedures, loan settlement and management, and accounting systems. The South Australian Government became a shareholder of NMMC (via South Australian Financing Authority) in June 1987. It is represented on the board of NMMC by Mr Bert Prowse, Under Treasurer and Chair-

man of SAFA. NMMC is now involved with Victoria's Home Opportunity Loans Program, Western Australia's Keystart Loan Program and with South Australia's HomeStart loan program. It is fast becoming a truly national operation, promoting the development of the Australian secondary mortgage market.

Lucio E. Dana,
Managing Director, 5 September 1989.
National Mortgage Market Corporation Limited, incorporated in Victoria.

What is the paid up capital of the company, who are the directors and how many shares are owned by the State Government through SAFA?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I apologise to the member for Hanson: obviously, I was dealing with the retail end, although I am sure that the Committee wanted the information I gave, anyway. HomeStart Finance, as the member for Hanson obviously can see from the Premier's speech, has a board on which Sacon is represented by the Director of the Division of Housing, and on which SAFA has a nominee, because SAFA is the funding organisation that will raise the necessary finance. The National Mortgage Market Corporation has a place on the board through its expertise in management and, as the member for Hanson pointed out, through its connection with the other successful schemes operating interstate. I refer the question of the funding of the corporation to the Director of the Division of Housing.

Mr Luckens: HomeStart Finance Limited is being incorporated very soon, but at this stage the details about the share capital, etc., have not been resolved. Those bodies the Minister nominated will be on the board and structure of that organisation.

Mr BECKER: What were the findings of a major national study on urban consolidation and methods for reducing the costs of new residential stock? How did South Australia fare in this national study?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: There is a review committee which is funded by the Commonwealth and the New South Wales, Victorian and South Australian Governments in relation to urban consolidation. That study has just been commenced, but I am sure that South Australia's input will be significant, as it is recognised that we lead the field in this area of urban consolidation. One of the reasons why this study has been commenced stems from the housing summit which was held in Canberra earlier this year. Also, there has been a growing demand not only from State Governments but also from private developers for more flexibility and cooperation between all levels of government, in particular, local government.

Without singling out any particular groups, it is desirable to obtain a greater degree of cooperation from those local government bodies representing the western suburbs than from those representing the eastern suburbs, and to a certain extent this is borne out by the difference in the types of housing and the types of people seeking accommodation in those two sectors. The view has been put very forcefully at many Australian Housing Council meetings by the urban developers (in the main, the large private developers) that the only way to contain costs is to look seriously at urban consolidation. The private developers have often charged that Governments only play at urban consolidation. To a certain extent, that accusation has some validity.

In the main, if local government does not want it and the zoning regulations do not allow it, State housing authorities such as the South Australian Housing Trust can do very little about it. In the Eastern States (in particular, Queensland) there is antagonism towards the better utilisation of existing inner city areas, because it is much more profitable to build luxury town house accommodation in those areas than provide the good quality, medium density type of housing which the trust does very well.

The strength of urban consolidation in this State has been due to the good relationship that the trust has with some local government authorities that are prepared to go down that track as they realise that the trust produces good quality infill building. The BIRDAC (Building Industry Research and Development Advisory Council) program will run for one year at a total cost of \$200 000, of which our contribution will be \$30 000. When that survey and report is finished, I will make it available to the honourable member. In the main, it covers the issue of cost of major elements of new build-construction with scope for cost savings.

The relative cost takes in construction infrastructures, social and fringe development and urban consolidation. The land may be cheap, but the cost of providing roads, sewers, wires, schools, and so on, may far outweigh the relative cheapness of the land on the outer fringes, as well as the factors that affect price movements of established houses. That is something about which Victoria and New South Wales will have more expertise as there have been savage fluctuations in house prices in those States.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: In the trust publication 'Corporate Strategy 1989-93', under the rental housing management program heading, the statement is made that regional advisory boards will be established in all trust regions during 1989. That relates to tenant participation which, as has been clear from our discussions today, is supported by all members of the Committee. It also states that a public housing advisory group will be formed by December 1989 and made up of representatives from the regional advisory boards. Can we have some detail on what progress has been made in that regard?

Mr Edwards: Regional advisory councils of tenants are now in all metropolitan regions. They are not so well established as groups in country regions, but there are at least some people who can be identified as being the nucleus of a regional advisory council. It is intended to arrange a meeting of representatives from each of the country and metropolitan regions, possibly in October. They will provide a forum whereby the trust (which would be at its first meeting with this kind of group) can disclose its intentions and be educated by the tenants as to their expectations and arrangements for the future.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: I commend the Minister and the Government on the HomeStart scheme and what it will do for many people with aspirations of home ownership. Regrettably, it will not assist some people who do not have the income level to borrow a sufficient amount to get into the home ownership scheme. In the past the trust had a rental-purchase scheme to meet the needs of some of those people, perhaps more particularly in the past when house prices were not at the level at which we now find them. Is there any intention to pursue a scheme which could help people on lower incomes who require a greater degree of assistance through subsidisation or some other innovative scheme?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I thank the member for Mitchell for his congratulations. I place on record that the success of HomeStart, whilst it is the success of this Minister and this Government, is also due to the hard slog by the Office of Housing over the past 12 months in getting up a program which not only has been successful (shown by the inquiries) but also it shows once again that South Australia can be innovative in adapting to a changing climate, while still providing home ownership for those people who desperately seek it. I thank the Director of the Division of Housing, John Luckens, and the Manager of HomeStart, Gary Storkey. It is their baby and they produced the goods for me and the Government.

However, some people's income is still insufficient, despite the top-up loan that we can provide to those people, for reasons that the member for Mitchell did not mention. There are still people who are somewhat wary and they need some authority to help them along their way. That was the strength of the South Australian Housing Trust rental-purchase scheme. When the Government of the day decided to abandon the rental-purchase scheme it made a wrong decision. Many of my constituents got into home ownership through the rental-purchase scheme with a minimum deposit. They had to stay for seven years before selling on the open market, and very few decided to sell. They had a place in which to bring up their family; the children could all go to the one school; they could hang a picture on the wall or have a dog. Some of us tend to take those things for granted. The program was designed to help those people.

Whilst the rental-purchase scheme does not exist, HomeStart is very adaptable. Based on the success of what we have now, there may be many ways that we can use that product to get people involved. One only has to look at the trust's home shared-ownership scheme where, in partnership between the Housing Trust and the tenants, we can encourage people to get into home ownership. They can buy a 25 per cent, 50 per cent or 75 per cent share. There is a gradual change from living in rental housing to eventually having their own house.

We have some exciting programs under way. Obviously, I cannot inform the Committee about some programs, but when the Premier decides on an election date we will announce a housing policy which will incorporate some of the many things which the member for Mitchell has mentioned and which I know he holds very dear.

Mr LEWIS: How does the Minister or the trust decide who to put into the Rolls Royce accommodation that it buys—and I refer to reading about that sort of accommodation being purchased at a cost of as much as \$180 000 per dwelling unit? Why are the funds not spent on providing more shelter for the needy rather than on providing Rolls Royce accommodation for so few?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I have been the Minister of Housing and Construction for some seven years, and I have heard many stories in relation to public housing. There have been claims that some 250 houses have been vacant for six months, that single mothers have been paying a reduced rent of \$10 a week, and that half the semitrailer drivers living in an area have been residing in a house. These have all been anecdotal and all rubbish. We now have the member for Murray-Mallee talking about trust homes costing \$180 000 to build. If the Standing Orders of this Committee allowed it, I would say to the member for Murray-Mallee 'Put up or shut up'. However, I cannot do so; I have to attempt to answer the question in the best way I possibly can.

Mr LEWIS: The *Sunday Mail* in May this year.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: That is it, is it! Let me say that the member for Murray-Mallee will long be remembered for his contribution to this Estimates Committee. As to the comments that he made about the consultancy undertaken by former Premier Don Dunstan when we were discussing the Aboriginal lines this morning, I can assure the Committee that any future Government will never call on the member for Murray-Mallee to do a consultancy for it. Housing Trust homes have never been built for \$180 000. I am sure that following the comments that I have to make the General Manager of the South Australian Housing Trust will be able to confirm that.

The allocation system for people seeking trust accommodation is very fair. It is done without fear or favour. It has a very good priority system. Any letter that I receive from a member of Parliament seeking a sympathetic hearing from me as Minister (as has occurred on many occasions) is referred to the South Australian Housing Trust and it is dealt with in a fair manner. In the normal course of events, we ensure that people on the Housing Trust waiting list wait their turn and then receive allocation. In cases of priority, the Housing Trust can be a very compassionate body and will house accordingly. Perhaps the member for Murray-Mallee does not believe me because I am a Minister in this Bannon Government, but I am sure he will believe the General Manager of the South Australian Housing Trust, and so I pass the question over to him.

Mr Edwards: In addition to being compassionate, the Housing Trust is a very mean organisation also and is very reluctant to spend its money. I can assure members of the Committee that it is not in the business of providing houses that cost \$180 000. In fact, when the trust's annual report is tabled in this House, which will be fairly shortly—and I do not have the information here with me at present—included in that will be a table which is drawn from the Australian Bureau of Statistics figures and which shows the comparative cost of new trust construction compared with the private sector. The average cost of trust construction is well below \$100 000 and well below the average cost of construction in the private sector.

As to the member's question, if I remember correctly, at one stage there was a mistaken suggestion that the trust had purchased, on behalf of the Hindmarsh housing cooperative, a property for a figure around \$180 000. In so far as there was any truth in that story, the trust had in fact purchased a block of three units which had cost a figure of that order, and thus the average cost per dwelling was \$60 000, which is much nearer the average level of our purchases.

In regard to allocation processes, unless someone is allocated a property on priority grounds, due to medical, financial or social circumstances, or a combination of all of those, which priority is validated by an external committee, houses are allocated on a wait turn basis. Obviously, some judgment is made: if a small household is near the top of the list, it gets the smaller house, while if a household has four or five kids, that household is offered a larger house. But it is basically on a wait turn basis.

Mr LEWIS: I would be grateful if the Minister and his officers could provide a table setting out details of the number of dwellings that the trust has taken over the past couple of years and the locations of those dwellings, in the various cost categories, perhaps going up by \$5 000 increments. So, this would involve dwellings of the value of say \$15 000 to \$20 000 per unit, \$20 000 to \$25 000, \$25 000 to \$30 000, and so on—perhaps up to, say, \$70 000 plus, if there are any such dwellings. Could I have the first of how many such units were procured by the trust and where they are located, in terms of either country towns or suburbs in the metropolitan area—not the specific address, just the general location?

Further, how much has it cost the trust to provide housing units, detached dwellings or semi-detached dwellings, from converted stock of the State Transport Authority homes, in places like Tailem Bend—that is, in country towns outside the metropolitan area of Adelaide and outside the major urban centres of Port Augusta and Port Lincoln, or wherever, where populations are in excess of 10 000? How much has it cost to provide dwellings that have been converted from STA stock to Housing Trust stock? Is the Minister

willing to give us that information? I realise that the Minister might not have that information to hand right now.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I will be only too willing to provide the information that the member for Murray-Mallee desires. I will also provide details of the price that the private sector would have paid for the dwellings. As the General Manager of the Housing Trust has said, as well as being a compassionate organisation the trust is very mean in the way that it spends its dollar. One of the things that will always stand the test of time (and many Auditors-General reports will validate this) is that the South Australian Housing Trust does spend its money very wisely on behalf of the Government. It does not need this Minister to stand over it to do that. We will be only too pleased to get that information for the member for Murray-Mallee.

Mr LEWIS: Further to the point that I just raised, I sincerely believe that the cost of providing dwellings in country towns, whether converted from STA stock or, as is more likely, constructed on existing blocks that become infill, is very much less than in the metropolitan area. Indeed, this is for several reasons, one of which is that the infrastructure of services is already there. They do not have to be extended. The cost of land is so much less than where services are otherwise established in the inner urban areas, where infill is taking place with medium density or higher density housing.

An even greater benefit to the State Government—and therefore to the population of South Australia at large—relates not only to the fact that the dollar will go further in providing housing for those in need but that it locates families, who might be in unfortunate circumstances, in a community atmosphere in which their children can grow up without being anonymous, indifferent and subject to the unfortunate influences of ghetto suburbs, such as occur in some places in the north and south, where cheek by jowl there are hundreds upon hundreds of trust homes and people with similar problems living in the same locality, causing social mores to develop as part of a certain subcultural attitude that is less than constructive by comparison to what might have otherwise occurred had these people had the good fortune to live in a caring rural community, like Meningie or Lameroo.

In relation to the trust's factory construction and lease policy, are any limits placed on where the trust will construct such a factory? What is the minimum term of lease that the trust will accept from a prospective client? As with all my questions, these questions have no mischief or malice aforethought; I merely wish to establish whether or not it is feasible for factory premises to be erected outside metropolitan Adelaide in order to assist in the decentralisation of industry to localities where costs can be, in total, much less than they would otherwise be if such facilities were located within the metropolitan area. What is more, it assists in the decentralisation of the population.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I am a little confused by the preamble to the question, which had nothing to do with the question.

Mr LEWIS: It was comment on the last answer.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: Then I reserve my right to comment on the comment.

Mr LEWIS: You will answer the question?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: Yes. The member for Murray-Mallee, like many country members, periodically makes accusations that the trust sends people out of the metropolitan area to nice little country locations and that, in sending them there, we export the misery, and so on, that they seem to think exists in trust housing. That is an insult to the kind of areas that the members for Elizabeth, Gilles,

Mitchell, Price, Albert Park and I represent, inasmuch as with one glib sentence it implies that this involves people who live cheek by jowl in trust ghettos with all the accompanying problems that the member for Murray-Mallee and others of his ilk seem to conceive in the middle of the night.

I know that the member for Elizabeth lived in a trust home from the tender age of two and one could not meet a better adjusted person, despite the fact that he lived 'cheek by jowl' with all these horrible Housing Trust tenants who cannot exist without the trust looking after them. I say with some modesty that I, along with the very able assistance of my dear wife, brought up four very well adjusted children in a Housing Trust area, living 'cheek by jowl' with the unemployed, the sick and the disadvantaged—as the member for Murray-Mallee so glibly describes those people.

This afternoon we have talked at length about the real problems that exist in some Housing Trust areas, but this was always tempered with an understanding of the trust's role. I would like to think that members of Parliament would foster aid and assistance for those people, not dismiss them like the member for Murray-Mallee. I shall cut out that little piece of the *Hansard* pull and keep it on my desk. The next time the member for Murray-Mallee writes me a whingeing, carping, critical letter about me transporting single mums and other 'wasted' (in his words) groups—the dregs of society—to Lameroo or Tailem Bend, I can give it to him both barrels. Mr Edwards can inform the Committee about the building of factories outside the metropolitan area.

Mr Edwards: The trust will build factories in the preferred locations when they are approved by the Industries Development Committee, and that certainly includes some country centres. In the recent past the trust has engaged in such development activities at both Murray Bridge and Mount Gambier. Subject to the approval of the appropriate parliamentary committee, the trust would be prepared to do that on any future occasion where that would create employment and where there is an industrious wish to create a factory which would provide more work for people living in this State.

The mortgage arrangements are tailored to meet the needs of the particular industry or concern involved; so, there is no minimum but, typically, leases run longer than 10 years. However, there may be occasions where someone enters into a lease and decides to buy it out early in the lease term, because of different policy arrangements.

Mr M.J. Evans: As the Minister is aware, the question of the budget of the South Australian Housing Trust is one that I have pursued for some time, in fact, since the last Estimates Committee. I was very pleased to see in the current Program Estimates document quite significant information from organisations like the Health Commission, the State Transport Authority, and the Woods and Forests Department. It was of some concern to me to note that the Housing Trust did not provide similar details in the program performance documents. Therefore, one misses out not only on documentary information in respect of finances and employment but also on the objectives, forward planning, proposals for achievements in the past 12 months and in the future 12 months which accompany any such information, and the performance indicators that might otherwise be available (and which I have been pleased to see incorporated in other areas).

The Minister said that he was pleased with the accuracy of the forward estimates provided to him by the Housing Trust. I wonder whether in future the Parliament might also benefit from the accuracy of those forward estimates in terms of brief information on the proposed annual budget

for the trust along the lines of that provided by the Health Commission, the STA and the Woods and Forests Department.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: The member for Elizabeth has long put forward the suggestion that the South Australian Housing Trust could in its forward estimates provide the same kind of information as the Health Commission and other statutory authorities provide. I will undertake to look at that, but I make the point that the corporate strategy for 1989-93 covers many of the points to which the honourable member referred.

The member for Elizabeth raised a valid point that I discussed with the South Australian Housing Trust only recently. There is an argument for and against it. It is not an attempt to hide information from Parliament. We work on a planned number of commencements or acquisitions in the coming financial year. I am talking about the building program. The member for Elizabeth has often said that we need to know where, when, and so on. I am sure that he realises that the program, especially the acquisition program, depends very much on what is available at any time and how we can get involved with any subdivisions, of which we will have a certain percentage in our building program. That is still very much up in the air, but I will look at ways in which we can take up the points he has made and see whether we can incorporate them in next year's Estimates.

Mr M.J. Evans: Will the Minister also look at the performance indicators? Many other departments and, for example, Sacon, which we will discuss later, have attempted to incorporate a number of performance indicators in line with the Premier's commitment in the House about 12 months ago. The Government Employee Housing Authority is one area where we could look at this kind of thing. Will the Minister consider setting out in the Housing Trust legislation a possible charter for the trust? There has been a review of the corporate plan and that would seem to put us in an ideal position to incorporate it in the Act. That would give it real credibility in the community in future years and guide future Parliaments in their thinking about the Housing Trust charter. Since the Act was first proclaimed, people have lacked a degree of certainty about the charter of the Housing Trust. Now that we have completed the corporate review, I think this is an ideal time to consider legislation to set it out, because the goals and objectives of many similar authorities are set out in their Acts.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: Again, I will take on board some of the points made by the member for Elizabeth. However, I draw attention to page 1 of last year's annual report by the Housing Trust. That refers to legislation and funding and the role and objectives of that body. I would love to read them out and have them incorporated in *Hansard*, but time is limited.

The problem raised by the member for Elizabeth in regard to the South Australian Housing Trust relates to its information process compared with that of other statutory authorities. That is not seen in the Estimates or other budget documents, because it is conveyed to the Parliament and the community via another vehicle. That is perhaps an area at which we can look. It means that there will be duplication. As the member for Elizabeth is aware, this document has received a couple of awards in the past for its in-depth information to the community. It may be that we can incorporate in the Estimates what is in the report. We will look at some of those areas.

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

[Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.]

Works and Services—Department of Housing and Construction, \$310 107 000

Acting Chairman:
Mr K.C. Hamilton

Members:
The Hon. P.B. Arnold
Mr H. Becker
Mr M.R. De Laine
Mr I.P. Lewis
The Hon. R.G. Payne
The Hon. J.W. Slater

Witness:

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings, Minister of Housing and Construction.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr R.F. Power, Acting Chief Executive and Director, Professional Services.

Mr G.T. Little, Director, Support Services.

Mr R.D. Lambert, Director, Policy Planning and Property.

Mr C.J. Bowden, Acting Ministerial Liaison Officer.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I declare this vote open for examination.

Mr BECKER: How did the department allow inaccurate information to be held on the department's management information system and what was the inaccurate information? Page 105 of the Auditor-General's Report for the year ending 30 June 1989 under 'Project management' states:

An audit review of project management revealed: inaccurate information was held on the department's management information system . . .

At page xviii the Auditor-General also mentioned this problem when he talked about audit issues. He undertook quite a review of the management information system and then commented on the review.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: The member for Hanson is quite correct: the Auditor-General has commented on the department's management information system and the effect on the efficient and effective operation of the department. Following a review of our systems, consultants Urwick International presented a report in April 1983 recommending that our management information system be replaced and that asset-based information systems, a general ledger system and personnel management system be developed. It also recommended use of database software technology, use of IBM at the Government Computing Centre, and reorganisation of the Systems Branch be carried out and a long-term strategic plan prepared.

During the intervening seven years the Systems Branch has been reorganised and a Data Administration section established with a data model prepared. The Software International general ledger was installed followed by the Treasury Accounting System. In 1985 the department was reorganised and requirements were reviewed with priorities being placed on the establishment of improved information systems for the operating divisions of the department.

In 1987 an information management strategic plan was prepared and a review of hardware requirements saw the installation of DEC microvax equipment and Oracle relational database software technology to meet the new systems requirements. A new word processing system with office

automation facilities was installed; two systems were installed in the Professional Services Division and one in the Maintenance and Construction Division.

These new systems were all operational by 1 July 1988 and reduced the reliance on the outdated MIS to the extent that they enabled the project to replace the remaining components of MIS with a new set of financial management packages to proceed. International consultants, Price Waterhouse, were engaged in February this year to manage the replacement project and their report and recommendations have recently been completed.

Their recommendations included the implementation of a well recognised set of financial software packages and the interfacing of those packages to the existing departmental systems and central systems such as the Treasury Accounting System (TAS). The recommendations are currently being appraised by the Information Technology Unit of the Government Management Board and implementation is planned for completion during the current financial year.

It is in this regard that the Auditor-General made those comments in his report. Whilst I apologise for the rather long-winded response, I thought it was relevant to have it incorporated in *Hansard* to highlight that in the department we recognise the inadequacies of our systems within the department. Over the years the department has recognised the problem and has taken steps to correct it. I think that the Auditor-General's comments reflect that view of the department.

Mr BECKER: Why did the department allow a high level of variation orders to be issued for reasons over which the department is able to exercise influence or control? What was the cost of such variations on each job? Again, I refer to page 105 of the Auditor-General's Report and, in particular, 'Project management'.

Mr Power: The Auditor-General is referring to the variations that are issued during the construction of projects. The department has instigated a method whereby every time a variation is issued, a reason is stated as to why that variation has been issued and the Auditor-General has monitored that particular process. The Auditor-General was especially concerned about the number of changes as a result of client request and documentation. The building process is very complicated and on a national average the variations across Australia, as a percentage of the project, run at about 5 to 5.5 per cent. In Sacon the figure on a national scale is about 4 per cent so, in terms of industry norms, the amount of variations in the Sacon projects are below the average.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I am sure the member for Hanson will agree that those comments in the Auditor-General's Report are not a reflection on the department inasmuch as, in effect, one could, even without drawing the long bow, come to the conclusion that there is a recognition by the Auditor-General that the audit review undertaken within my own department has been designed to overcome any possible shortcomings.

In the area to which Mr Power referred, such as any variation of orders at a high level, the department is now able to have some influence and the long-term benefits not only to the department but also to the Government and the taxpayer in general are that we are in a better position to know what is coming and to act accordingly. The department should be commended for the review that took place.

Mr BECKER: At the same time, the Auditor-General has picked up areas where the department can exercise its influence. No doubt the Auditor-General is looking towards the department to do that. I was hoping that the Minister might be able to provide information of the cost of variations on

each job. It can run into many millions of dollars on large construction projects.

Referring to the same page and the same section, I ask: which abandoned projects have not been written off by the department since 1985, and why? What was the estimated cost to taxpayers of the amounts written off? The Auditor-General stated that an audit review of project management revealed that abandoned projects had not been written off since 1985.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I will explain to the Committee the term 'abandoned projects'. It has connotations of massive amounts of money being spent by the Government on particular projects and, at the whim and fancy of individual Ministers or of Cabinet collectively, these projects are suddenly abandoned at massive cost to the taxpayers. Putting it into perspective, I point out that abandoned projects are those projects for which feasibility studies have been carried out but for which preliminary investigation and design is unlikely to proceed. The feasibility costs incurred on these projects are capital works budget funds and, as such, incur interest charges.

The feasibility costs should be written off to the recurrent budget annually so as to minimise the interest charged. Because of the nature of many projects in Government, projects are deferred or delayed pending consideration for inclusion on future construction program. Some projects have been alive on the department's books for up to 10 years before proceeding. At times this has resulted in deferred projects which have to be cancelled, or projects being overlooked and remaining within the financial system instead of being written off as abandoned. A procedure has been introduced to ensure automatic provision of project listings to program managers every October and April to allow identified abandoned projects to be written off in the appropriate financial year.

When one looks at the 1988-89 figures, one sees that the following abandoned projects were written off: the South Australian Museum meeting shop, at a total cost of \$28 104; collective abandoned projects (which are very small), \$11 389; Port Augusta High School hall conversion proposal, \$4 401; Enfield Primary School internal modifications, \$3 608; Paralowie High School additional accommodation, \$2 002; Wilunga High School hall upgrading, \$2 550; and the cost of advice given by the department to the Office of Children's Services for child-care centres collectively, \$3 180. The all up total was \$55 234. That brings into perspective the fact that abandoned projects are not projects of such magnitude that they would add a significant cost to the department's capital works budget or even its recurrent program. In effect, it is good housekeeping. It is a way in which to keep on top of all of those projects. The Auditor-General, in highlighting the audit review that we carried out on project management, has signalled those areas where small amounts of money can be taken out of the system to, in effect, stop interest charges reflecting against the department.

Mr De LAINE: Referring to page 234 of the Program Estimates, I ask: why is the West Terrace Cemetery administered by the Department of Housing and Construction rather than by the way in which other cemeteries are administered?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: The West Terrace Cemetery is a significant part of our heritage and, as such, has always been the responsibility of the old Public Works Department, formerly the Architect in Chief's Department. In the early days of the establishment of the colony of South Australia, the Architect in Chief's Department was responsible for building some of the marvellous public buildings that we see today, including the building we are presently in. Sub-

sequently, we have always maintained that cemetery under the responsibility of the Minister of Housing and Construction. There has been much activity in relation to the West Terrace Cemetery. A heritage study of the cemetery has been undertaken, and there has been a conscious effort to ensure that that part of our heritage is maintained. I recall the member for Hanson saying at one of the Estimates Committee hearings that he has a grandfather buried there.

The cost of operating the West Terrace Cemetery is significant. It reflects this Government's view that we should spend money not only on burial activities but also on the maintenance of such a significant part of our history. It does not operate as a commercial enterprise and it is not intended that it should, given the Government's decision to progressively restrict burial rights and move to complete closure by 2032. Some of the costs to maintain that cemetery are currently offset by revenue from the burial activities which are commensurate with those of other commercial cemeteries in South Australia.

It is an interesting part of my portfolio, and one in which I take a lot of interest. Every now and then stories emerge about the West Terrace Cemetery. Members may recall that some time ago in the House I was accused of carrying out some diabolical acts, but we very easily convinced the Parliament, perhaps with the exception of the Hon. Mr Stefani, that we were carrying out a very worthwhile job down there, and we will continue to do that.

Mr De LAINE: At page 240 of the Program Estimates under '1988/89 Specific Targets', it is stated:

Assisted industry in joint venture negotiations both here and overseas.

Could the Minister detail to the Committee what type of assistance this consisted of?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: When I became the Minister responsible for the old Public Buildings Department, I held the view that some of the expertise that we had built up in this State should be exported, not only interstate but overseas if possible, and I think it would be fair to say that we have achieved some major successes in this particular area. This brings to mind the assistance we have given the Bahraini Government, inasmuch as we have had coming from Bahrain people engaged in the Bahraini public works areas. Their mission has been to provide their country with expertise when they return. Being in positions of responsibility in their own areas, they can then teach fellow Bahrainis the skills they acquired here.

On the island kingdom of Tonga we set up an equivalent type of public works department. We were offering considerable assistance to the Burmese Government prior to the unrest that took place there, but we are quite hopeful that, when things settle down and a democracy is reinstated in that country, we can get involved. That was in the area of providing advice to the Burmese Government as to attracting more tourists, and it included the area of hotel design and building. Our heritage unit was involved in heritage work in Singapore and, in fact, whilst there were no real worthwhile financial gains for us in that area, our expertise was being used in that part of South-East Asia, and we hope that at some time in the future we will be able to gain some work there, especially in joint venture enterprises with the private sector.

I was pleased to announce over the weekend, that one of the officers of my heritage branch, Mr Bruce Pettmann, has been granted an overseas study tour to attend a summer school involving, I think, the restoration of York Minster (or York Cathedral, as most people in Australia may know it). It is the Summer School Conservation of Historic Structures at the University of York, Kings Manor. As part of that program, Mr Pettmann will look at the ways that York

Minister is being restored. As the Committee will be well aware, some two years ago there was a disastrous fire in that particular cathedral, and much restoration work is being done. So, Mr Pettmann will have first-hand knowledge of that restoration work on York Cathedral, and that added knowledge he gains will be used in the continuing program of heritage work being undertaken in this State by the heritage unit.

Mr De LAINE: My third question also involves page 240, namely, 1989-90 specific targets, and relates to the development of a framework for the introduction of total asset management. Being a member of the Public Accounts Committee, I am only too well aware of the problems of the ongoing and increasing maintenance requirements and/or asset replacement of ageing Government assets. Could the Minister give an overview of the framework for the introduction of the total asset management policy to be developed?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I am sure that this is of interest not only to the member for Price but also to the member for Hanson. Asset management is an integral part of an organisation such as the Department of Housing and Construction, enabling us, in effect, not only to get greater use of the dollars available for maintaining that asset but to correctly identify what assets we have under our control, and whether those assets are being utilised to the full. I refer, for example, to some of those large country mansions on the metropolitan fringe which are owned by the Health Commission and which were perhaps suitable 10 to 20 years ago but concerning which, with today's modern needs, and in terms of representing a better way to run the Health Commission, there has to be a better means of managing such assets. Indeed, there have been movements within the Health Commission, in particular, and within certain other agencies wherein we look at a better way of managing the assets under our control.

As I say, it is an ongoing process which involves virtually all the functional areas of an organisation such as Sacon. Total asset management requires consideration of the utilisation of each asset in conjunction with the business requirements of the agency which the asset is intended to serve. That is the underlying principle under which we operate, and we have had a lot of support from the Public Accounts Committee in that particular area.

Total asset management is about effective working relationships within the asset management agency, for example, division working with division, branch working with branch and employee working with employee. One of the spin-offs is that it establishes a sense of identity within the department as a whole wherein it sees itself as being a part of the ownership process and it ensures that our money and our expertise are put to best use not only in pure maintenance terms, but also in serving those Government employees working within that particular asset. It also applies between the agencies, with the agency within my department working with the client agencies, involving also working with Treasury and the public sector structure. Again, one of the spin-offs is that, if we can argue a better case as to which assets should be maintained and which are of benefit to the State—not to the Government but to the State—there is a better chance that within our budget process, we can receive more money from Treasury to maintain those assets.

Total asset management is about commitment to the principle at the most senior levels of management, and commitment to the performance by all employees. We find that within our construction and maintenance work force there is a sense of ownership of a particular asset. A case in point concerns our assets on North Terrace which, in the

main, are historical buildings. The group of people who maintain those assets, many of whom can be seen around Parliament House at different times, have a commitment to make these places stand out and function properly. The crowning glory was achieved earlier this year with the final work done on Parliament House.

Mr LEWIS: I was prompted by the last answer the Minister gave to draw his attention to a statement he made last year in *Hansard* (page 348) and to ask him a question arising from this year's budget papers. The Minister said:

A final initiative in which we are involved is accommodation space charging. Through the Government Office Accommodation Unit, the cost of agency office accommodation is charged directly to the budgets of clients and is subject to agency management. Sacon is currently working with Treasury to determine ways in which this approach can be extended for all accommodation users. This has the potential for considerable cost savings to Government and has a high priority in my department.

Will the Minister tell us the answer to a question arising from information provided on page 15 of the Capital Works Program under the heading 'Other—Government office accommodation (\$11.645 million)'? The major items in this program are the contribution of \$2 million to the commissioning of the South Australian Housing Trust's accommodation in Riverside and \$1.05 million to commence construction of the Woodcroft Community Centre. What is the cost per square metre per annum of the floor space for the Housing Trust in its new accommodation in Riverside, and how does that compare with the cost per square metre per annum of the floor space of the building it has just left? What is the anticipated cost per square metre per annum for the Woodcroft Community Centre's offices when they are completed? Will these figures give comparable returns to the investment of capital by the Government in the facilities occupied by those various agencies?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: Although I know the Chairman allows pretty much a free-wheeling use of the budget papers on which members may hang a question, I would have used a basis a bit different from that which the member for Murray-Mallee used. One of the major items of the Government Office accommodation budget of \$11.645 million is the contribution of \$2 million by Treasury to assist the Housing Trust in commissioning the accommodation at Riverside and to enable the trust to move into the building. What the member for Murray-Mallee fails to understand—although I suspect that he does understand—is that we cannot compare the cost of the floor space of Riverside with the trust's present accommodation in Angas Street.

Mr LEWIS interjecting:

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I hope that I will not have to call upon your assistance, Mr Chairman, to stop supplementary questions coming through to me as I am attempting to answer this question. The trust-owned accommodation in Angas Street was substandard, and representations were made by the Public Service Association on behalf of its members who work in Angas Street. Therefore, moves had to be made by the Housing Trust to find alternative accommodation. At the same time, a rather attractive offer was made to the trust by a developer for the building as it stood. The cost of refurbishing that building would have been astronomical, so it was easier to consider either demolishing the building and building anew or finding alternative accommodation.

After much searching and with much entrepreneurial flair by the South Australian Housing Trust, it struck a very favourable agreement with the owners of Riverside. Because the trust had managed to obtain this very generous offer, the Government as part of its commitment under the ASER redevelopment agreed to provide \$2 million to assist the

South Australian Housing Trust. I am sure that the member for Murray-Mallee (if not the remaining members of the Committee) is aware that the South Australian Housing Trust is a statutory authority and as such did not come under the Office Accommodation Unit in 1988-89. The honourable member is taking a comment I made during that time, so he is using a comparison rather unwisely.

In relation to the Woodcroft Community Centre, the Minister of Public Works has been given the overall responsibility for the carriage of that community centre on behalf of the Government and all other agencies that will use the centre. Its planned completion is in December 1990 and as yet, because it is that far ahead, no work has been done on setting the rents for the community centre. One of the things about which I ought to enlighten the Committee is that the Minister of Public Works, on behalf of many client agencies, undertakes the carriage of quite a lot of building activity using clients' money, and ensures that the building projects are carried through to fruition in a very professional way.

The member for Murray-Mallee is implying in some of his little asides that if we have a building required by the Department for Community Welfare we should set up within the framework of that department, and we would therefore have a massive amount of duplication. Opposition members have not really learnt any lesson during the seven years I have been a Minister. One central agency must undertake that work on behalf of other Government agencies. The rents are set by the Valuer-General for all Government-owned buildings. That information will be forthcoming after completion in December 1990. I hope that I will be able to give the information on rents we are charging at the Woodcroft Community Centre.

Mr LEWIS: Will the Minister provide figures on rent costs of that part of the Housing Trust that has been shifted from where it was to where it is going in the Riverside ASER development?

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: The Minister has said that he and officers of his department have negotiated that rental deal. I do not know what the cost of that accommodation will be. Is there a Government subsidy for the departments involved?

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE interjecting:

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! There will be no cross-chat across the floor.

Mr LEWIS: I want an apples with apples comparison, so I asked for the cost per square metre of accommodation to be occupied by the Housing Trust from where it is to where it is going. I can think of no better way of doing it. If the Minister has a better way of giving the figures, I am happy to receive them, so that we can make a judgment about the comparative costs of the accommodation, substandard or otherwise? Times change and what used to be suitable may no longer be suitable. At the time we did not have typewriters and now would not be seen dead with simply a typewriter to do the office work. I am asking for comparison's sake what are the all-up costs of the rental accommodation. Will the Minister incorporate the figures into the record?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I have given most of the information. The South Australian Housing Trust is a statutory authority and is nowhere referred to in the rent-setting procedures in relation to what rents are agreed on between the South Australian Housing Trust and the people who own Riverside. That question should have come before the dinner break when we were dealing with housing because a matter pertaining to the Office Accommodation Unit was dealt with previously, when I said that the South Australian Housing Trust is a statutory authority and therefore not

subject to the control of the Office Accommodation Unit. I understand that the rent agreed to between the South Australian Housing Trust and the letting agents is a very generous one: the South Australian Housing Trust got a good deal.

As with all private bodies, the South Australian Housing Trust, as a statutory authority, is out in the market place getting the best deal that it and the letting agents are trying to get the best deal that they can. It would be improper for me to give that information to the Committee—even if I had it—because we are dealing with letting agents whose livelihood depends on a deal being made between themselves, on behalf of the owners of the building, and the lessees. It is therefore confidential information. If I was acting on behalf of, for example, an organisation such as the National Trust, and a member of this Committee asked me what rent the National Trust was paying for a building it occupied in the central business district of Adelaide, similarly, it would be totally improper for me to disclose such commercial arrangements.

The deal that the South Australian Housing Trust came to with the letting agents was very favourable to the South Australian Housing Trust and is generous to the trust with regard to market rents being paid for equivalent locations in Adelaide. Also, the price and deal it struck with the developer with the sale of the Angas Street site could only be described as an entrepreneurial coup.

Mr LEWIS: I seek further information, based on the answer given last year, which implied that the Government had a good whip hand on the whole situation. Do we have to wait for the Auditor-General to give us a report on it next year or in three years time? If the Minister does not know the answer, I am happy for him to incorporate the details on how many and which Government agencies and parliamentary committees are to take up office accommodation in the ASER Riverside Building and at what expected annual cost.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: The South Australian Housing Trust is a statutory authority and is under my responsibility in regard to implementation of Government policy. The Office Accommodation Unit relates to that part of my responsibility for Sacon as Minister of Housing and Construction. It has no dealing with the South Australian Housing Trust acting as an agent in setting or negotiating the rent. That was carried out by the South Australian Housing Trust in its own right. I would not like the member for Murray-Mallee to think that I am hedging the question, but neither I nor Sacon have any responsibility for the ASER Riverside Building: it is as pure and simple as that. If I did, I would be only too pleased to provide the information sought. I am not in a position to give it now or in the future.

With all due respects and bearing in mind the generous way in which we allow questioning under the lines and figures before us in the budget papers for which I am responsible, I have no reason to give that information. The only point that the honourable member made in his opening comments and to which I responded is that, as part of the Government's commitment to allocate rental space, because the Housing Trust, a statutory authority, decided, totally independent of Government, to get involved in taking up space at the Riverside, the Government decided to allocate \$2 million to assist it in the commissioning of that building. The \$2 million is identified in the budget papers, and I have answered that question.

Mr LEWIS: As part of my supplementary question I sought information on all Government agencies and all parliamentary committees which will take up accommoda-

tion in ASER. Will the Minister tell us what will be the expected annual cost of accommodation in the Riverside Building of those Government agencies and parliamentary committees? I am not asking the Minister to split them up.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: To my knowledge the following arms of Parliament have been selected to take up a commitment in relation to Riverside: the Public Accounts Committee which is taking 130 square metres; the Public Works Standing Committee which is taking 150 square metres; and Parliamentary Counsel which is taking 550 square metres. Negotiations are still taking place in relation to the most favourable deal that Parliament can obtain, and I think it would be improper for me to hazard a guess of the final cost. I would have thought that the member for Murray-Mallee would applaud not only what I say now but also what I said last year: that we are committed to getting the best dollar-for-dollar term that we can in relation to those parts of the parliamentary system that will go into this building. Of those three, Parliamentary Counsel has agreed to move from the SGIC building, and that move will result in savings. The move is programmed for January 1990 and the department estimates the fit-out cost to be about \$200 000 for Parliamentary Counsel.

Mr LEWIS: As a member of the Joint Parliamentary Services Committees and of the Parliament I find it incredible that committees of the Parliament and services provided to it for its members and its functions are at the whim and behest of a Minister of Executive Government who has the gall to tell me, as a member of the Joint Parliamentary Services Committee, which foots the bill in a number of instances, that I cannot know and must trust him. That sounds like Richard Nixon all over again.

My question concerns information that was given last year about the restoration of prestigious buildings. This year's Estimates indicate that \$1.2 million is to be spent. Which buildings will that money be spent on? How much will be spent on each of them and for what purpose will it be spent?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I have been called many things, but never Richard Nixon. I briefly touched on the historical buildings conservation program in answer to a question from the member for Price. We are all very proud of that program. The following projects are nearing completion or are to commence in 1989-90: the cleaning and repair of all facades of Parliament House; Struan House at Naracoorte; Wallaroo police station; Yarrabee House at Botanical Gardens; Turretfield Holland House; Carclew; the South Australian Maritime Museum; Tandanya, the Aboriginal Institute; Robe police station; and the Institute Building on North Terrace.

The costs of those projects in 1989-90 are as follows: Yarrabee Botanical Gardens stage 1, \$30 000; Struan House \$100 000; Turretfield Holland House \$194 000 (plus \$250 000 from the Department of Agriculture); completion of Wallaroo police station \$95 000; Glenside Hospital \$20 000; night floodlighting of historic buildings \$70 000; the State Library, Jervois Way \$200 000; the Goodwood Orphanage \$10 000; Martindale Hall \$20 000; the Magistrates Court \$163 000; Parliament House \$90 000; repair to the footpath at Government House \$10 000; Torrens Building \$20 000; minor repairs to the Treasury Building \$5 000; monitoring process at Cummins House \$15 000; Old Parliament House \$4 000; Fort Largs \$12 000; Fort Glanville \$7 000; and the Adelaide Gaol interim management plan \$10 000. That totals \$1.075 million and is money well spent. One can see that we are not only restricting ourselves to the main core of Adelaide but that we are moving out into the country and the outer metropolitan area.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: Page 234 of the Program Estimates under 'Issues/Trends' states:

The level of information sought from The West Terrace Cemetery Management by the general public in tracing their genealogy is increasing each year.

I understand that the genealogy, as it were, would be stored on the headstones which are part of the cemetery appurtenances, and record books are kept in the cemetery office. In view of the importance so clearly attached to this matter by the fact that it is included in the Estimates, has a back-up system, such as microfilming the records, been considered? One assumes that the record books and headstones could be destroyed either by fire or vandals.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: As a result of our bicentenary, there was a renewed interest in genealogy not only at the West Terrace Cemetery but in all other areas; people wanted to trace their ancestry. No specific records are currently being maintained at the West Terrace Cemetery of individual inquiries in relation to genealogical information. Therefore, I have no statistical data to give the Committee. However, I understand that we receive about 10 to 15 inquiries per week. The general perception from my officers is that the rate of inquiry is gradually increasing.

I referred earlier to Mr Stefani who made some outrageous comments about the West Terrace Cemetery. It became news and, therefore, the rate of inquiries in the area of genealogy took an uplift. If something is in the news, people think, 'I may have some connection with West Terrace.' The rate of inquiries is gradually increasing. The cemetery is in the process of transferring its archival records onto computer files, which will provide an enhanced service to the public seeking genealogical information. The heritage study that was undertaken in regard to the West Terrace Cemetery has given us much additional information that we might not otherwise have. I have instructed my officers to cooperate to the best of their ability with those seeking information. The member for Gilles, in a rather flippant aside, said that some people might wish to forget where they came from, but others are interested in their roots. It is something that we will encourage. I am a sucker for history. That may be why my heritage unit always receives a lot of enthusiastic support from me.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: The Program Estimates (page 234) under 'Major resource variations 1988-89 to the current year' states:

Expenditure for 1989-90 reflects the introduction of a new management structure.

Looking at program 6, 'Public cemeteries and crematoria', there does not appear to be a great difference between the expenditure last year, \$428 308, and the expenditure which is mooted for the year under consideration, \$450 000. I am looking for the significance of the new management structure. It may be that costs would have risen considerably and we do not need to make that provision. I am looking for guidance from the Minister.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: As I said earlier, the current costs of running the cemetery are a combination of the operating costs for burial activities and costs associated with the maintenance of significant heritage items for South Australia. The Government decided to increase the costs of burial services in line with those of other commercial enterprises. We have tried to provide a service to those wishing to bury their loved ones in the cemetery at no real cost, but we are in the business of running an efficient organisation, subject to the Auditor-General's placing us under his magnifying glass. Therefore, the costs of burials have increased over the last couple of years in line with costs in commercial cemeteries, and we shall have to continue to do that. That

is why there is no significant increase in the proposed expenditure for this year compared with last year.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: Supplementary to that, there is a reference (page 234 of the Program Estimates) to the number of graves restored and the average cost of each site restored. I note that the chronology goes from 1985 to the current financial year. It shows that 214 graves are to be restored at an average cost of \$280. I have no quarrel with the figures as they stand, but I note that there was a dip in 1987-88 to 74 graves being restored which led to a higher cost per unit for the restoration work. I understand that this is part of a continuing plan to bring the cemetery to a state of repair befitting its position in the community. How much longer will the restoration need to proceed? Is there any estimate of the ultimate overall cost before the cemetery is in a good state of repair?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: The member for Mitchell has really answered the first part of the question. Various graves are in different degrees of dilapidation and therefore there are differences in the costing. From 1985-86 to 1989-90, there is a fairly consistent average figure for restoration per headstone. It is difficult to hazard a guess as to how long it will take before the whole cemetery has been restored to an acceptable standard. I made the point in the Estimates Committees—I am not sure whether it was last year or the year before—that the Government had made a one-off contribution to overcome some of the criticism within the community that we were letting the West Terrace Cemetery go to rack and ruin.

In fact, I told the member for Hanson that, if his grandparents are buried at the West Terrace Cemetery, the Becker family has a responsibility to maintain graves. I am not asking the member for Hanson to do that on his own: I am really saying that many families have a responsibility to maintain the graves and assist in the restoration work if they have ancestors buried in that cemetery. I would say that on our current program and allocation of funding it will take about 10 years to complete that work. I remind the Committee that restoration is an ongoing process.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: My final question relates to a matter which is not listed by definition in the lines although we are still talking about the West Terrace Cemetery. Have approaches been made for the use of above-ground or out-of-ground interment at that cemetery? By way of background, I point out that Centennial Park is in my electorate. There is concern about a proposal for the construction of a mausoleum at Centennial Park, that is, an above-ground or out-of-ground burial place which is favoured by some religions, and obviously people have a right to their beliefs in these matters.

I understand that Enfield Cemetery has now been approached by the Centennial Park Trust to see whether a joint study might be undertaken to ascertain the level of demand for interment in a mausoleum. I have learnt quite a bit about this, because the matter arose recently in my electorate. There are mound burials and total mausoleum structures; there are side by side burials and three in a row; there are all sorts of interesting connotations. One cannot help smiling at times, although this is a serious subject. It may be useful to gauge the demand for this method of interment at the West Terrace Cemetery.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: It is a very interesting question because, when the Government decided to close the cemetery to burials by the year 2032, it was aware of some of the early graves. Over the years there has been a tendency by some communities, in the main the ethnic communities, to want the type of burial or the type of headstone that was common in their country of origin but perhaps not so

common here in South Australia. The Government's way of dealing with the demands of some of the ethnic groups has been sympathetic and compassionate; it has considered people's needs. One could argue that the headstones of the 1870s or earlier are now seen as having historical significance and that the gravestones of the Italian migrants will, in the year 2050, be considered to have historical significance.

As a result, I requested the Ministers who have responsibility for other cemeteries in South Australia, mainly the Minister for Local Government, to consider this matter in conjunction with my department. We are trying to work out some way whereby we can satisfy people's desires in relation to the way in which those near and dear to them are buried.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: I think the important point is persons are interred in mausoleums: they are not buried. There is no soil at all.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: That is right. The answer to the question of the member for Mitchell is 'Yes.' Currently, they are not permitted, but this matter must be considered in terms of the general disposal of human remains. There will be ongoing work not only within my own department but within other Government agencies, in particular, the Health Commission. Members may recall that the Health Commission and local government have a role to play. We must satisfy ourselves as a community that certain standards are maintained but at the same time try to satisfy people's desires as to the final resting place of those who are close to them.

Mr BECKER: What action is being taken to stop the desecration of graves particularly in the Catholic section of West Terrace Cemetery and, if none, why? Several graves have once again been damaged by vandals, and one suggestion is that the gates should be locked at sunset and opened at sunrise. I have also been advised that perhaps the construction of a higher and stronger security fence should be considered for the area. I went to visit that part of the cemetery after I was told that graves had been damaged. Apparently a group of about five people get in and dance on the graves and carry on with all sorts of activities. This was reported to me by a person who parks his mobile home in that area and virtually lives there in the capacity of an unofficial observer of these people and their rituals. Does the cost of the damage warrant something being done about the gates and the consideration for better security fencing?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I can well appreciate the honourable member's concern about this problem of desecration and vandalism, whether it be at the West Terrace Cemetery or wherever. The simple process of closing the gates at sunset and opening them at sunrise would not stop those types of people from entering the cemetery after hours. I am sure the member for Hanson understands the layout of the cemetery, and he would realise that access is also possible over the railway line.

The kind of louts who would desecrate property in that way have no scruples as to what they damage or how they affect people's feelings. So, really, I cannot give a simple answer. No specific action has been taken to overcome that particular problem but, if necessary, we will take action. It is interesting to know that the police have requested that the gates be left open to provide easy access: if they receive a call that there are disturbances in the cemetery, they want access to get their mobile patrols into the area. Access via the railway line is their usual way of entry.

We also have the problem that people enter the cemetery with no intention to damage but just want to have a look during the summer evenings. Some people who have no

place to stay at night actually go into the cemetery to rest, but I understand that the person to whom the member for Hanson is referring with the mobile home has taken to keeping the new curator informed. It is hoped that that will overcome some of the problems we have. As to the cost of a security fence, one must bear in mind that the West Terrace Cemetery covers 68 acres. I recall the member for Hanson, during one of his speeches in the House, referring to the graffiti at the rear of this building. He may be interested to learn that removing that graffiti has created problems. One of the problems—and I see that we have one representative of the media here tonight—is that publicity given to such matters does not do the cause any good because of the copy-cat effect it has.

When the member for Hanson made that reference in a grievance debate, I think it was, I was rather fearful that it might be picked up by the media and make the rear of Parliament House, with all the work going on there, an easy access for the graffiti experts in our community. But, fortunately the speech was good, I must admit the media did not pick it up, and I would like to think they do not report on this vandalism. We will undertake to monitor that situation closely, but I repeat that the police have requested that the gates be left open to make their access easier in the event that they receive calls that vandals are desecrating the cemetery.

Mr BECKER: Why was the department's asset information, which is fundamental to its management information system, held in three separate data bases, and why was information up to two years out of date? I refer to page xviii of the Auditor-General's Report as follows:

Consultants engaged by the department in December 1982 identified that an asset data base was fundamental to the department's management information needs; and that the department's current management information system was unsuitable for satisfying that purpose. . . . Asset information, which is fundamental to the department's management information needs is held in three separate data bases and in one case the information can be up to two years out of date.

The department recognises the need to integrate its individual systems into an overall Management Information System and engaged a consultant on 23 February 1989 to advise and assist with this task.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: In some ways I answered that question earlier this evening. The department is continually upgrading its data base to ensure that in the areas of asset management we are using the best systems available for use by the department. Perhaps Mr Little can provide the Committee with further information.

Mr Little: At the present time there are three separate systems: one is a financial system which records the historic value of the assets. The second is what we call an asset information system, which details the lay-out of the assets and their physical components. When the Auditor-General says that some parts of the asset information system are up to two years out of date, he is referring to that asset information system, the physical attributes of the particular assets.

The reason why they are up to two years out of date is that the process we go through is to go round progressively and inspect the assets to see what changes have been made. With the number of assets recorded in the system, that can take up to two years and can mean that the average would be more likely to be less than one year. The third system is one which relates to the asset information maintained in our district systems, the system which relates to the maintenance carried out on the assets in the various districts.

All the assets are maintained by different areas of the department, which also record the assets. Those three systems are part of the current project to revamp our systems. Part of the process will be to integrate those three systems

so that in future they will all be in line with each other. That in itself is a major job. The financial information is completely up to date: it is the physical attributes which can be a bit behind.

Mr BECKER: How many staff and with what qualifications are sought to undertake a review of Government asset holdings and when will the review commence? On page 105 the Auditor-General's Report under 'Asset maintenance' states:

Last year I reported that a submission was made to the Resources and Physical Development Sub-Committee to undertake a state-wide review of Government asset holdings. Cabinet approval was granted in December 1988 to undertake a review of asset holdings of the Minister of Works. Recruitment of suitably qualified staff has delayed the commencement of the review. It is now expected to commence in September 1989.

A departmental review of building maintenance practices and procedures was completed in November 1988. Issues identified have been considered by the department and included in the Strategic Plan for the Maintenance and Construction Division. Recommendations which have been implemented relate to: the appointment of a committee to consider regional involvement at the design stage of projects; the analysis of work force age profiles; a review of standards of service required by clients; the expansion of service van operations; a review of delegations of authority; and the development of performance indicators.

More importantly, I am concerned about obtaining considerable staff to undertake a review of the asset holding.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I think I heard the honourable member correctly when he mentioned two staff. Two staff are directly employed as valuers, one with a classification of AO-4 and the other AO-1. Mr Lambert may be able to add something more specific.

Mr Lambert: The two staff involved are qualified valuers. Their task fundamentally is to go through an audit of Government properties and in so doing they refer those properties to other professionals within Sacon, looking at feasibility studies for utilisation. That process can involve architects and engineers. We also have close links with the valuation staff of the Department of Lands. The short answer is that two valuers are directly involved but within the resources of the department.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: I do not have the same interest as does my colleague the member for Mitchell in the West Terrace Cemetery, but I do have an interest in another mausoleum—Parliament House. I understand that the Minister, in answer to another question, mentioned an amount of \$90 000. Was that the cost for the cleaning of the outside of the building? This year this part of the building celebrates its 100th anniversary whilst the other part celebrates its 50th anniversary. As a consequence a deal of work was undertaken both internally and externally, the cleaning of the granite being undertaken over some time. What was the cost to the Government of both exterior and interior cleaning and general work undertaken with respect to the 100th anniversary of Parliament House?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: The figure I cited was the breakdown of just over \$1 million to be spent on heritage this financial year: \$90 000 was the remainder to complete the work this financial year. A total of \$372 000 was approved for the cleaning of the facade of Parliament House. I am sure that most members will agree, despite the reference by the member for Gilles to this building being a mausoleum, that it was money well spent. I place on record my congratulations to the contractor, Brilliant Cleaning Services (I think it is called), which carried out the work. I assure members of the Committee that, although this contractor is based in my electorate, there was no pork-barrelling.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER interjecting:

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: No, I made it perfectly clear that in no way was I a part of the tendering process, so it

cannot be viewed with suspicion. That contractor has been called upon to do similar cleaning operations on some of the historical buildings in Melbourne. The method of cleaning is unique. I suggest that all members of the Committee look at the photographs that my department took to see the way in which the massive piping was erected with spray jets going in all directions—one only saw water running down the walls. Gradually the water washed away the grime caused by the continuous traffic and steam trains of the early days of the railway station, which affected the western wall and part of the main face of this building.

That cleaning process has been an outstanding success. Because of the techniques used in the building of Parliament House, minor water penetration occurred. I do not wish to be unkind, but some members of the Upper House—and we should be gracious and allow them their little flights of fancy, I suppose—claimed that their offices were being flooded by water. I did not hear a whisper from House of Assembly members.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER interjecting:

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: That is true: the member for Gilles said that they are a more mature group of people. As soon as the pipes were moved over to the Legislative Council side we heard horrendous stories of members not being able to open their door because, if they did, water would gush out and they would have to swim for their lives. I confess that I had a hard job biting my tongue. Mr Acting Chairman, you are well aware that sometimes I let fly, but in this case I was very diplomatic.

Remedial work of a minor nature will be carried out. Walls as thick as these gradually have an ingress of water and minor repairs will be carried out after summer when the heat will dry out the walls. Also, some carpet cleaning will be undertaken. A report is to be prepared on the water penetration that is caused by the long-standing problem of poor drainage in this building. So that Parliament House can be restored to its former glory, work is required on the strips of garden around its perimeter. I am sure that more attractive shrubs can be planted. Far be it from me to criticise the types of plants already growing there, but I think that the department will plant decent vegetation.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: Supplementary to that, I am aware that smoke and grime from the old steam trains had to be cleaned from this building, but what about the pigeon problem? We have spent a fair amount on cleaning the outside of the building (I do not know whether or not this is a Sacon prerogative) but what has been done about the pigeons?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I would not want the member for Gilles, who is coming to the end of a long and honourable career as a Parliamentarian, to get out a ladder and climb up to some of the fancy stonework on the building. However, if anyone does get up there they will see some very cunningly designed pieces of wire. Devious departmental brains have devised an arrangement that will stop pigeons from roosting there and dropping the bits and pieces that tend to blemish the facade. That will not stop all the pigeons, but it will deter many of them. It may be that they will go to the Casino or to the new Gateway, but that is their problem, not ours. Mechanisms have been put in place which will do the job. It is an improvement on what was done on the Torrens building. If one looks closely, one will see very thin gauge wire all over the place which tends to deter pigeons from perching there and doing their dastardly deeds on the building.

Mr LEWIS: Is the Minister aware that he, or officers in his department, may inadvertently have invited members to break the law? I refer him to section 49 of the Consti-

tution Act which, paraphrasing it, provides that any person who directly undertakes any contract for or on account of the Government of the State shall be incapable of being elected, or of sitting or voting as a member of the Parliament during the time he executes, holds or enjoys any such contract or any benefit or emolument arising from the same. Then section 50 states that if any person, being a member of Parliament, directly enters into any contract, his seat in the Parliament shall be and is hereby declared to be void.

I was concerned to learn that some members have been invited to buy photocopiers from the surplus of the department. By doing so, they may inadvertently commit a misdemeanour which would set a precedent for worse misdemeanours if we let these things go unnoted. Therefore, I invite the Minister to tell me whether I am mistaken and, if I am not mistaken, to give the Committee an assurance that the department will not go on doing that but will find other means more in keeping with the usual ways of disposing of Government surplus equipment. I am not seeking to score points. I just want to place on public record something which I thought ought not to happen and of which I became aware only recently.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I understand what the member for Murray-Mallee is saying and I also accept the point he is making that he is not in the business of point scoring because I think he is referring to one of his own members. What has happened, is that members of Parliament—and I do not know when the exact change took place—can go down to our salvage department and put a price in for a particular item which may be up for sale to the general public. I will get the full details for the honourable member. I went down there once as a private citizen and purchased a very battered filing cabinet for which I paid the price being asked. I have the receipt—I think I still have the receipt because I thought one day someone might ask whether I was going against the rules.

In the area of photocopiers, the Committee will be well aware that, after a certain life, a photocopier is replaced when it is considered by my departmental officers that it has outlived its useful life—that is, the cost of maintenance far outweighs the cost of maintaining a particular photocopier.

We have a very good program of replacement of photocopiers. In fact, this year we have completed the whole run of the 47 electorate offices in the State. Because of the use of these photocopiers—let us face it, Mr Chairman, we are all well aware of the use you make of your photocopier—their resale value is almost negligible after they have been taken out of the electorate offices. Most of them go to the salvage store and, in effect, get dumped because they have no real useful life. The cost of providing toner and all the other things to maintain them is too high and therefore they have no value.

It had been put to me by two members of Parliament—one from each side—that they wished to retain photocopiers for their own personal use. I checked up on this and I asked them to make an offer which would be considered to be in excess of what we would get for salvage on those items. Both members put in offers that were in excess of what we would have received under our normal salvage and in their role as private citizens they purchased those items—one is actually in the process of purchasing a machine; there will be a cheque sent and receipt issued and then it will become his responsibility.

It is the same if members wish to go down to our salvage yard and purchase an old chair or old desk. Members of Parliament are no longer restricted by those rather outdated rules that used to exist. You, Sir, can, as a member of the

South Australian community, go down to our yard at Netley and, if you see something in the salvage area which takes your fancy and you are prepared to pay the price, you receive a receipt and you can take it away under your own steam.

I will obtain further information for the honourable member, if he so wishes, as to when the regulations were changed, but I assure him on good advice that I have received that it is possible to do this. If by chance that advice is wrong (I do not think it is) and if, to use the member for Murray-Mallee's words, we inadvertently create a situation under the Constitution Act, I will swiftly make sure that that situation is corrected.

Mr LEWIS: What is the reason for the increase of \$439 000 to \$3.199 million for the year ending 30 June 1989 for members' electorate office expenses, compared with \$2.760 million to 30 June 1988? On page 235 of the Program Estimates under 'Major Resource Variations—1988-89—1989-90', it apparently explains that \$100 000 is for the purchase and installation of personal computers and printers, but that does not make up for the \$439 000. Then appears the curious sentence:

Provision for extra casual employment has been increased to deal with expected increases in demand for service in an election year.

I did not know that we shovelled out more electorate assistance to those people who cried 'Can't cope' in an election year. Where are the four extra electorate office staff employed who are referred to on page 223 of the Program Estimates?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: The operating expenses of electorate offices against budgeted operating expenses are referred to on page 235 of the Program Estimates. There has been a slight increase in the actual expenditure from 1985-86 through to 1988-89. This can be broken down into many areas. For 1988-89, proposed recurrent salaries, wages and related payments amounted to \$2.159 million with actual expenditure at \$2 489 586. The increase in actual expenditure for 1988-89 reflects the costs associated with the employment of additional electorate secretaries (2.2 FTEs) and casuals to fill in for electorate secretaries whilst they are on leave, and also the flow-on from the 4 per cent productivity increase and national wage increases.

Proposed expenditure for 1989-90 provides for funding at the same levels as 1988-89. I take issue with the member for Murray-Mallee when he says that that increase of expenditure is to cater for more people to work in the election year. I may be wrong.

Mr LEWIS: I am referring to: 'Provision for extra casual employment has been increased to deal with expected demand for increases in demand for services in an election year.' I was quoting from the Program Estimates.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: May I just remind members that this year, in particular, I have had numerous requests by members of Parliament on behalf of their personal assistants to allow them not to take their leave this calendar year and have it held over for the next financial year. I believe in agreeing to those particular requests because I think that personal assistants, no matter which members of Parliament they work for, are entitled to, in effect, have the same flexibility as other public servants so that they can, in effect, amass some extra leave to go, say, overseas or have an extended holiday. That would, again, reflect in some of our increased expenditure.

As I say, the flow-on from the 4 per cent productivity increase and the national wage increase has some effect on our recurrent expenditure for each year as to what is voted and what the actual payments are. When one looks at the actual figures for 1985-86, the increase was very minimal. For 1986-87, again the increase was very minimal, and also

through 1987-88 to 1988-89. Also, we would have to take into account the increase in the cost of rents that occurs from time to time for electorate offices. Those offices are rented from within the private sector and they are not in the business of giving us rent freezes forever and a day.

I know in my own area, where the member for Elizabeth and I share the same building, along with the Education Department, Department of Labour and the Motor Registration Division, one can make the point that the owners of that building charge an arm and a leg for us to be in that building. But they do know that there is no other area where the member for Elizabeth and myself can go to find accessible offices so that we can service the constituents of both our electorates. One can also argue the same in relation to the Motor Registration Division. As for the major resource variation 1988-89, 1989-90, as it says, the proposed expenditure for 1989-90 includes \$100 000 for the purchase and installation of personal computers and printers.

Again, that is a case of this Government responding to many requests over many years for additional resources. I have heard members from both sides of the political spectrum argue in this Chamber that, if we are to service our constituents, we need to, in effect, provide an adequate service to them. Whilst I have no personal desire to own a computer or to put my name on a computer list, I do know that there are others in this Parliament who feel that a computer is an integral part of the whole business of providing a service to their constituents.

We look at the whole area of electorate offices. One can argue that we have created a monster. I say this as the Minister responsible. A comment was made earlier today when we were discussing demands that are made on the South Australian Housing Trust by tenants; it was generally agreed in the Committee that there is an expectation by tenants for the Government to provide services. One can also argue that there is an expectation by members of Parliament that the Government should provide the ultimate in facilities for individual members of Parliament. To a certain extent, I have no quarrel with that argument. I am an old fashioned member of Parliament in the way I maintain my marginal seat—I get out there and talk to people.

I will take on notice the point made regarding page 235 of the Program Estimates. I can say with a very straight face and with the air of an injured Minister that in no way would I be party to putting on additional staff to ensure that the Bannon Government was re-elected. Our policies will ensure that, not the fact that there are only a few people in electorate offices. However, I will take that question on notice and get back to the honourable member.

Mr LEWIS: I have 1.6 full-time equivalent electorate assistants to service my large area, and I know that the member for Eyre has two full-time equivalents. I am asking not only which members have electorate assistants but also whether they are legitimate allocations for staff purposes; whether it is for compensation reasons, or whatever; who has or does not have a computer; how much is paid for the rent in each office; how much is paid to clean each office; and so on, so that it is on the public record, no-one can gripe about us trying to hide anything from anybody. It has been there in all previous years. Let us have it again this year. If the Minister would do that for us I would be grateful.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: It will take a fair degree of work to incorporate what the member for Murray-Mallee is requesting, but I am sure that, with the diligence, devotion and commitment, of which I have an abundance in my department, I will be able to make that information avail-

able. I make the point that it may be a problem to meet the timeframe, but we will endeavour to do our best.

Mr LEWIS: I hold the view that the Minister—indeed any Minister of the Government and the Government itself—should not be responsible for the provision of services to members of Parliament. I believe that a Committee for Parliament should do that. That committee might properly be the Joint Parliamentary Services Committee, because it has the presiding officers and representatives from both Houses on it. They might therefore more effectively and sensitively, in keeping with what they perceive the electorate would tolerate as being a legitimate expense incurred by the State in servicing the needs of members of Parliament, absolve the Government of an odium that might otherwise arise as a result of the sorts of criticisms that we all hear from time to time; all that would disappear.

As members seeking the assistance of volunteers and other people we pay from our own pockets to work in electorate offices, what is the position with respect to any injury they may sustain while being so employed or if, technically, a volunteer is not employed for reward but so occupied in a member's electorate office doing that kind of work? Can we put on the record once and for all that the Minister and the Government presently have that policy?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: Briefly, it is the responsibility of the individual member if he or she wishes to employ any extra staff. I will gladly undertake to look at whether there can be any change to meet the concerns that the honourable member has.

Mr LEWIS: We would have to pay WorkCare then?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I will take that on notice.

Mr M.J. Evans: On the subject of the Para District courts complex and the Elizabeth police station, that combined building structure has served the people well for many years, but the Minister is well aware that it is starting to show signs of its age and is now in many ways quite inadequate for the purposes it serves, both as to the courts and the police. I refer to the question of deaths in custody, to police occupational health and safety, working conditions and overcrowding in the court areas. What is the future works program for updating that complex? Can I be given an assurance that consideration has been given to the upgrading of both the police and court complex jointly, so that planning is being undertaken in both areas in cooperation, and they are not being looked at in isolation?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: I would like to thank the member for Elizabeth for, in effect, giving us notice that he has an interest in this area, as I have an interest in the area. The two projects that the honourable member refers to involve the redevelopment and major extensions to the existing police station on Oxenham Drive near the city centre at an estimated cost of \$3.5 million and construction of new courthouses opposite the police station at an estimated cost of \$3.5 million also. It is anticipated that the buildings will be joined by a tunnel underneath Oxenham Drive. The programmed construction will commence in December 1990 and it is intended to coordinate the projects under a single project manager in a similar manner to the recently documented police and courts complex, which is a magnificent project earmarked for that area.

Two other forthcoming projects will be handled in a similar fashion. These are the redevelopment and extension of the police facilities and courthouses at Christies Beach, and the redevelopment of police and court facilities at Port Augusta. All projects include secure prisoner transfer between cells and courtrooms by way of underground links, similar to that now in operation in the recently completed Holden Hill complex. Of course, any upgrading of the police station

will also incorporate the interim recommendations of the Muirhead Royal Commission, which dealt with Aboriginal deaths in custody.

The **ACTING CHAIRMAN**: I thank the Minister and his staff for their cooperation. There being no further questions, I declare the examination completed.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Wednesday 20 September at 11 a.m.