

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 25 September 1991

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A

Chairman:
Mr M.J. Evans

Members:
Mr K.C. Hamilton
Mr C.D.T. McKee
Mr W.A. Matthew
Mr R.B. Such
The Hon. J.P. Trainer
The Hon. D.C. Wotton

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

Road Transport, \$18 267 000
Works and Services—Department of Road Transport,
\$66 733 000

Witness:
The Hon. Frank Blevins, Minister of Transport.

Departmental Advisers:
Mr R. Payze, Executive Director, Road Transport.
Mr J. Ledo, Director, Planning.
Mr T. Delaney, Manager, Management Accounting.
Mr D. Gerke, Supervising Engineer, Programming.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the lines open for examination. Does the Minister have an opening statement?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes. Mr Chairman, I have pleasure in bringing to the Estimates Committee for debate the recurrent budget of \$18.267 million and the capital budget of \$68.733 million for the Department of Road Transport. I would like to point out that these figures do not represent the complete budget of the department. Fuel franchise collections are transferred to the Highways Fund via the Special Acts provision of the budget documents. The department has other funding sources which are banked directly into the Highways Fund. I refer members to appendix 1, on page 189 of the Estimates of Payments, for a complete overview of the department's funding sources and a summary of estimated expenditure. A total program of \$264 million for the department is proposed.

A significant change has occurred in the area of Federal local road funding as a result of the Special Premiers Conference late last year. These funds are no longer treated as specific purpose grants, that is, they are not earmarked for expenditure on local roads. As a result those funds that were previously allocated to local government authorities will now be distributed by the Local Government Grants Commission. Those funds previously allocated for the unincorporated areas of the State will be treated as general purpose grants.

Consistent with all other Government agencies, the department has accepted a reduction of 3 per cent in real terms in the State funded component of its 1991-92 budget. This will be achieved in part by implementing Government Agencies Review Group initiatives. Furthermore, by carefully directing expenditure into high priority areas such as asset management and road safety, and by deferring projects which do not have this high level of priority, the effect of

this reduction on the road user has been minimised. Now, I would like to highlight significant achievements of the Department of Road Transport during 1990-91 and the major initiatives for this financial year.

During 1990-91 the department substantially achieved its work program. In the project area the following were completed: the north-west ring route through the completion of the Park Terrace rail overpass; the widening of South Road from Daws Road to Anzac Highway; the penultimate section of the Gawler bypass; roadworks in the Golden Grove infrastructure; and the on-line registration and licence system was completed and is operating effectively. In the management area the following initiatives were undertaken; structural efficiency including a management development program; a strategy for the management of risk was developed; a road maintenance management information system was implemented; and a continuation of the adoption of quality management principles.

During 1991-92, in line with the more outwardly focused role of the department, stronger inter-agency links with the State Transport Authority will be developed. Greater liaisons with outside bodies such as the transport industry, the planning review group and the transport hub group will also be fostered. Productivity gains are expected from the implementation of GARG proposals, continuation of quality management and structural efficiency principles and other management initiatives. Major projects being undertaken are: commencement of the upgrade to Tapleys Hill Road between Anzac Highway and the Sturt River; continued upgrading of Flagstaff Road; commencement of construction on the major new link between Salisbury Highway and South Road bypassing the congested Cavan/Gepps Cross area; considerable progress on the finalisation of the Salisbury Highway project; and works for the duplication of Port Wakefield Road between Dublin and Two Wells will commence.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: How many departments is the GARG committee examining in detail; what reports have been issued as a result and how many are still pending; and will the Minister supply a list for each department of targeted reductions in positions and numbers of employees and of the functions that will cease by 30 June 1992? I am happy for those questions to be taken on notice.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Do those questions relate to road transport, which is the appropriation under consideration, or are they being asked of me in my capacity as Minister of Finance?

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: These questions are directed to the Minister in his capacity as Minister of Finance.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am not sure whether that is in order. I will leave it to you, Mr Chairman, to make that decision, and I will happily accept your ruling.

The CHAIRMAN: One matter that the Chair must take into account is that when similar questions were directed to the Treasurer in this Committee he referred them to the Minister of Finance with the clear expectation that they could be addressed in this context. The Chair acknowledges the technical difficulty in relation to the lines in the budget, but is prepared, in view of the Treasurer's earlier request, to allow the Minister to take those questions on notice or he may discuss them now. The Chair would agree with that procedure. If the Minister wishes to decline on the grounds that these questions do not come under his lines, the Chair would have no way of disputing that because it is true.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am happy to take those questions on notice. I point out that I am somewhat disappointed that an allocation of time was not required by the Opposition to question me as the Minister of Finance. I

was quite looking forward to one or two hours of that. Of course, the offer was made to the Opposition, but it decided that it did not want to question the Minister of Finance. It seems to me that members of the Opposition want their cake and eat a little bit too. Nevertheless, I will certainly respond to the question on notice.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I thank the Minister for that. My second question relates to the police line. According to the Minister responsible for the police, a special deal was arranged through GARG to find cuts in other areas to pay for that particular deal. When was this deal determined by Cabinet—at which meeting? What specific cuts will pay for the police pay, and are there any other similar deals? If not, what consideration has GARG given to possible pay increases above the national wage increase in other areas and how will they be paid for?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The question certainly is one that I would prefer to answer now, despite there being no line for it. It may well be that next year there ought to be some time set aside to question the Minister of Finance.

The CHAIRMAN: That would seem to be perfectly reasonable.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: The questions have been asked.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister is free to answer the questions now, as he sees fit.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Thank you. The extraordinary pay rise—and I do not mean in terms of the amount but in terms of a pay rise outside the national wage case—for the police has been on the agenda for very many months. The Government decided at the start of the budget process many months ago that the police would be treated as a special case—that the Police Department would not have to fund an extraordinary wage increase out of its own resources. That was agreed with the officers of the Police Department who were dealing with the police budget at the time. So, for many months—I cannot tell the honourable member how many months, but certainly for many months—this so-called deal was agreed and was well known to probably dozens of public servants, if not hundreds, and it was certainly of no great moment.

Of course, one of the principal reasons is that we had no indication of how much this particular pay rise would be, whether it would be phased in or when it would apply from. So, there was no way a firm figure could have been given to the Police Department—no way at all. One way we could have handled it would have been to give it to them and take it back if the police did not get that much, or vice versa—to give them extra. It seemed that the best way to do it was to treat it as a quite separate item. That was readily agreed by the Police Department, Treasury officers and Cabinet. It was a run of the mill decision that had no particular importance in the eyes of the Government.

That pay rise will be funded through general efficiencies in the public sector over the rest of the financial year. I point out as a matter of interest that the total departmental take from the budget last year actually came in under budget to the tune of about \$32 million. So, approximately \$4 million for the police pay increase is not a huge amount. As regards any other pay increase, I know of no particular claim that would have a very significant impact on the budget. If anyone knows of a claim I would appreciate their telling me. The expectation is that the only wage increases will be general wage increases for which the departments have had a provision. Unless there are any extraordinary circumstances, they will be expected to live within that

provision. I know of no other claims before the Government of the size of the police claim. What was the third question?

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: There were three questions, and the one to which the Minister has not replied was: when was this deal determined by Cabinet?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Very early in the process of putting the budget together—months ago—and in discussions particularly with the Minister of Finance and probably to some extent with the Treasurer, the Police Department and Treasury officials, the arrangement was made. It was a perfectly normal arrangement. I do not think that there is anything further that I can add, unless the Committee feels that I have not fully covered it.

I would point out that what we are discussing today are the budget estimates. I emphasise that they are precisely that—estimates. If any of us had the power to foretell the future with any precision, I doubt whether we would be here; we would be doing other far more interesting and lucrative things and not telling people about them. Budget estimates are precisely that. By the end of the year some are up and others are down. The broad framework of the budget is given on budget day, but it is emphasised, and confirmed by the very name of this Committee, that they are estimates.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I would be pleased now to take up the matter of road transport, particularly as it relates to the resource summary. What departmental efficiencies and savings were identified as part of the GARG process, in particular in the areas of total or part agency amalgamation, the reduction of middle management, the potential for privatisation and commercialisation; what is the estimated cost to be borne by the department due to award restructuring this year; and has any reserve been established to assist with award restructuring projects?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: To answer that question in the detail that it warrants would take at least 15 to 20 minutes. I would appreciate a list of those questions.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I am happy for them to be taken on notice.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will do that.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: In regard to employment levels, as average full-time equivalent positions declined last year by 30.2 from a proposed level of 2 971 and are estimated to decline by a further 59.7 this year, what is the breakdown of these reductions between salaried and waged staff, how many officers are currently on the redeployment list, what is the cost to the department and, finally, what provision has been made for separation packages for both salaried and weekly paid staff this financial year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I assume that the honourable member would also like those questions taken on notice.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I am quite happy for that to be done.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I would point out and confirm some remarks that I made earlier; in the budget estimates last year the staffing levels in the Department of Road Transport were clearly stated. As the honourable member pointed out, the FTEs were considerably lower than was estimated, which I think confirms that we are dealing with estimates.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I refer to road responsibilities under 'accessibility enhancement'. (Program Estimates page 203); at the last Special Premiers' Conference it was agreed that the Commonwealth should more clearly define its road program by removing ambiguity in terms of which tier of Government is responsible for which roads. Has the Government submitted a proposal to the Commonwealth nominating proposed roads of national significance in South

Australia that could become the Commonwealth's responsibility, in addition to national highways? If so, which roads have been proposed; and, if not, does the Government intend to make such a submission prior to the next Special Premiers' Conference in November?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: No, we have not made a submission. That work is being done through a working party looking at the various roads, the categories and the matter of where responsibility more appropriately lies. We are represented on that committee.

Mr HAMILTON: I have a particular interest in bicycle tracks and the construction of the Westside bikeway, which was substantially completed last financial year. Will cycling as a transportation mode be further encouraged by the building of similar facilities? It has been put to me that there is a proposal to run a bicycle track adjacent to the Outer Harbor line through to the city. I do not know whether or not that is correct or whether the Minister intends to run a bicycle track down Port Road itself. Members will recall that years ago a bicycle track ran down the middle of Port Road and much interest has been expressed on this matter in my electorate. In his reply, will the Minister comment on that aspect as well?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: As the member for Albert Park suggested, it is an important program and the State Bicycle Committee examines proposals and recommends the distribution of funds to us. The Westside bikeway is a result of the Government's asking that committee last year to beef up its work. We gave it additional funds—about \$250 000—and it was an expensive increase in the Government's funds allocated for this work. A number of proposals are under consideration. The Port Road proposal is one of them but it is not the immediate priority. Three others primarily on road routes linking Adelaide CBD with Henley Beach, Mitcham and The Levels are being examined for development in the 1991 financial year. Certainly, we will continue to examine proposals and, where feasible, implement them, including the one for Port Road.

Mr HAMILTON: Down the middle of Port Road?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That depends. That would be a recommendation for the State Bicycle Committee and we would not have to agree with that recommendation. I am sure that the members for Albert Park and Semaphore, as well as other members would have comments to make on that, as would everyone who lives adjacent to or uses the Port Road. These can be vexed circumstances. If we put a cycle track at kerbside and cut out parking, we get local businesses on our back. If we put them in the middle of the road there is some danger in certain areas and it is not a simple proposition.

Mr HAMILTON: As a supplementary question, can the Minister advise whether the question of running a bicycle track adjacent to the Outer Harbor railway line has been considered? Is that one of the options that has been put to the Minister and/or the committee? What options are being considered?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am not aware that that specific option has been considered. I would be surprised if it has not been considered but I am not personally aware of it. I will get back to the member for Albert Park on that.

Mr HAMILTON: I refer to the reduction in the State's open road speed limit from 110 km/h to 100 km/h. My understanding is that the State speed limit is 100 km/h unless prescribed otherwise. However, a number of people have approached me on the issue, stating that the Adelaide to Port Augusta road, still has a speed limit of 110 km/h.

Can the Minister advise whether there is confusion amongst motorists in relation to this issue? If that is the

case, how is that confusion being addressed, or is it just that a number of my constituents are seeing something that is not there?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not know that I would go so far as to use the word 'confusion' but certainly some questions have arisen about it. I refer to the Prime Minister's road safety package of December 1989. One of the conditions that was laid down by the Federal Government for funding for the rectification of black spots was that States with a speed limit in excess of 100 km/h would drop that limit to 100 km/h. Of course, some States already have that limit.

I believe that conditions vary considerably in Australia and what may be appropriate in one part of this country is not necessarily appropriate in another. For example, the conditions on a stretch of road between two small towns in Tasmania do not have much relevance to the conditions on the Stuart Highway or the Eyre Highway in South Australia; there is a clear difference. The Federal Government was persuaded by my argument that that was realistic and we came to agreement that South Australia would make its limit 100 km/h, because that was the condition, but that South Australia would retain the right to zone up to 110 km/h. The effect of that has been that we have had to change a few signs. We have changed very few speeds on the roads; indeed, the speed limit has not changed except in a few areas.

Where a road is not zoned, the maximum speed on that road is 100 km/h. All the State's principal roads are now zoned to 110 km/h where that was thought appropriate beforehand. Some roads may have been varied downwards, but I can think of only one at the moment and I am having that investigated. Apart from that, it has not made a great deal of difference. I suspect that on unmade roads in the outback where a speed zone has not been designated, the speed has been dropped from 110 km/h to 100 km/h, because that is the State limit. I do not think too many people do 110 km/h on those roads, and they are used so infrequently that the cost of putting signs on them is not warranted, given that people in the outback tend to drive at a speed appropriate to the road conditions.

There may have been some queries but I do not think there is a great deal of confusion. The alternative was to say to the Federal Government that we would make the State limit an absolute limit of 100 km/h, but I think that would have disadvantaged a great number of people—not many in the metropolitan area but certainly those in the rural areas of the State. I am very pleased that the Federal Government saw the wisdom of our argument.

Mr HAMILTON: The Minister mentioned the black spot program and I refer to page 204 of the Program Estimates which refers to the implementation of the Prime Minister's 10 point safety package. How is that \$11.9 million allocated to South Australia for acceptance as a package to be spent? I express my appreciation on behalf of my constituents and the many people attending Football Park because, shortly after the money was allocated to this black spot program, roadworks from the Department of Road Transport were undertaken to overcome the black spot area on the corner of Frederick Road and Brebner Drive. I put on record my appreciation not only of the work carried out so efficiently but also of the promptness with which the money was spent in addressing one of those difficult areas in my electorate.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I thank the member for Albert Park. The black spot program has been particularly worth while. Already we are seeing the results of spending that money. South Australia was the only State that was able to spend all of its funds in the past financial year. The Depart-

ment of Road Transport was in there with well thought out proposals and the Federal Government was pleased to oblige us with the funds. Given the decrease in the number of road deaths and serious accidents so far this year, it is clear that the black spot program and a number of other things have had a very favourable impact on those statistics. The black spots money was used on a variety of occasions throughout the State and, if anyone wishes to contact me, I can give details of where the funds have been expended. I will not bore the Committee with a list at the moment.

Some of the road safety measures undertaken at black spots have included traffic signal installations and improvements, median and guard rail installations and improvements to street lighting under the safety enhancement measures. The Federal Government is allocating the money over the three year period from the 1990-91 until the 1992-93 financial year. Since funds are not indexed, the department negotiated for a cash flow of \$5.4 million, \$3.8 million and \$2.7 million over this period to achieve the best value from the scheme. Current indications are that South Australia will be the only State to fully expend its allocation in the first year of the program. The program of 70 projects for the 1991-92 financial year is currently with the Federal Minister for approval. If anybody would like a copy of the list of black spots that have received attention, I will be pleased to supply it.

Mr MATTHEW: I refer to the online computer system and to pages 187 and 188 of the Auditor-General's Report. I briefly draw the Minister's attention to relevant statements in that report. I am aware that in 1981 a feasibility study for the motor registration online computer system was completed by Touche Ross Services. In June 1985 Cabinet approved the development and implementation of a computerised online system. In October 1988, following a number of delays and extensions of the implementation date, the Government Management Board reviewed the status of the project and recommended changes in its management. In August 1989 Cabinet approval was given to complete the project with assistance from the private sector. At that time it was estimated that an additional \$2.5 million would be required to complete the project.

I note that the \$2.5 million approved by Cabinet was exceeded by \$207 000 and, as at 30 June 1991, the cost of implementing the drivers online computer system for motor vehicle registration and drivers licensing cost \$9.913 million. I also note that in July this year a further \$581 000 was spent on the computer to upgrade its processing capacity. With all that in mind, when and at what final cost does the Minister anticipate the problems associated with the drivers system will finally be resolved?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That was more like an adjournment debate than a question. I will ask the Executive Director of the Department of Road Transport to give a detailed answer. The member for Heysen was party to the original scheme as proposed in 1981, along with the decision to have a JIS in this State. The member for Bright for many years, I understand, was involved in the implementation of those decisions, particularly as they affected the JIS. The Opposition has an intimate knowledge of it. I congratulate the member for Heysen and the Tonkin Government on taking those far sighted decisions and I have made that comment before. The decisions were certainly aimed not only at improving services to clients but also at a little State building to develop expertise in those areas in South Australia. They were worthwhile decisions, albeit over ambitious as regards the ability of the public sector to implement those decisions and to cost and develop the level of expertise, which was inadequate. It has taken many years to get

the projects going and to get the level of expertise up so that the proper costings could be made and proper estimations of benefits given. The end result in both areas, particularly in the motor registration computer system, has been more than worth while. I congratulate the previous Liberal Government on its farsightedness. I ask the Director of Road Transport to supplement my response.

Mr Payze: With regard to the figures quoted from the Auditor-General's Report, Cabinet approved in August 1989 a significant sum of money—in the order of \$2.5 million—to complete the introduction of the drivers system. That work was completed at a cost of \$2.483 million. In the figures supplied by the Auditor-General \$224 000 was included as part of the upgrade to increase the computer capacity as approved by Cabinet in addition to the \$2.5 million. In fact, the system was implemented at a cost of \$2.483 million and upgraded in two stages at a cost of \$224 000 for stage one and \$581 000 for stage two, giving a total of \$805 000.

Those two figures amount to what is contained in the Auditor-General's Report. When is it likely that the drivers system and associated costs will be completed? The drivers system became operational in July 1990. As with every large operational system, one can say that there is never an end to it; one can always make enhancements to such a system and there are always associated costs. I can say that the system is operating and that from a customer or user point of view it is operating very effectively.

At the moment, the department is in the throes of negotiating the management of overall facilities with the Justice Information System to take the operation of the drivers system out of the Department of Road Transport to operate on an agreement basis with the Justice Information System to run drivers on an agency or agreed basis. I do not believe that there is an answer to when it is likely that the drivers system will be completed. It is an ongoing system, which we will continue to be forced to enhance in order to provide what it was designed for: service to the customers as far as registration and licensing are concerned.

Mr MATTHEW: I would like to clear up any misunderstanding that may have been entered on the record. The Minister referred to my computing employment history. I wish to place on the record that I have never been associated with the motor registration system. My supplementary question relates to the history of bungles—and I do not use that word lightly—associated with the drivers system. Regardless of whether or not the Auditor-General has placed some financial lines against the wrong item, the fact of the matter is that, shortly after the drivers system become operational, according to the Auditor-General it became 'apparent that the processing capacity of the computer was inadequate resulting in the computer being upgraded in January 1991 and further upgraded in July.' I put to the Minister that this should never have happened and ask whether he can guarantee that all of the problems associated with that system have now been solved and that we will not see the recurrence of this sort of bungle.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am sure the record will show that I referred to the member for Bright working with the JIS. The member for Bright is well known for his work with the JIS. With regard to the question on the motor registry computer, I am not sure what else one can do in these areas other than obtain the best advice available, which is what the department did, and the best advice was made available to the Government. However, on discussing that advice later with people involved in the industry, I was told, 'Don't worry about it; it's only a minor variant from some of the things we do.' Whilst quantity surveying has become almost

state of the art where people can easily and quickly and with great skill give one an estimate for a particular quantity of material, I am told that that is not the case with computers, that assessing how much power is needed for a particular system is a relatively new science.

With the greatest of respect for the member for Bright, the people with whom I have spoken about estimates of required computer power have, to my knowledge, worked in the industry far longer than he and at a much higher level. It was certainly not the case that the Government obtained advice to the effect that it needed X amount of computing power and it said, 'No. We will pay half the price and get only half the computing power.' That was not the case at all. We acted on the best advice available, which frequently turns out to be little more than a reasonably educated guess. However, we believe that we have enough computing power for what we are doing at the moment. If we choose to ask anything further of the system, obviously we will have to upgrade the computing power. I say that strictly as a lay person, but it makes common sense to me. I do not think that we have any particular plans at the moment for major enlargement of the system. It does what we want it to do and it is working very effectively. Indeed, there is sufficient power and speed for the needs of the customer and the operators, and it is a much better system than the previous one.

Mr MATTHEW: I have one further supplementary question which I hope, this time, the Minister will answer with appropriate brevity. In his answer the Minister mentioned the Justice Information System taking over the management of the motor registration facility. What will be the cost of this change in management and over what period will that cost be incurred?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: With regard to the honourable member's comment about appropriate brevity, the previous question asked by the member for Bright was one of the longest questions I have ever heard in eight years of appearing before the Estimates Committees. I am only too delighted to be brief, and I expect the member for Bright to be brief with his questions and not to make speeches. I suggest that he adopt the practice of his colleagues who have been here for a considerable time, particularly the member for Heysen whose questions are short, incisive and desire to seek information rather than to make political points. If questions are asked in that form, the answers will be as brief. The issue of cost has not been dealt with by Cabinet, so I cannot supply a figure.

Mr MATTHEW: Would the Minister like to take that question on notice?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There is no point in taking that question on notice because the matter has not been to Cabinet, so I cannot supply a figure. If I am not aware of the date, there is no way I can supply that information. The matter has not been before Cabinet; it is only at the preliminary discussion stage.

The CHAIRMAN: For the Minister's future reference, the date is 4 October.

Mr MATTHEW: My next question relates to online computer systems within the department. As at August 1991 what system incident reports relating to the inaccurate performance of functions remain outstanding, which Government agency remains liable to receive inaccurate disbursement of money because of inadequacies in the drivers system; and what is the possible financial range of such inaccurate disbursements, if any?

Mr Payze: A number of outstanding system incident reports are being dealt with in order of priority. I assure

the honourable member that none will result in an incorrect disbursement of funds.

Mr MATTHEW: Associated with that, and as a supplementary question, I note that page 187 of the Auditor-General's Report states:

In August 1991, the department advised that a large number of outstanding system incident reports and enhancements existed and were being created at a rate greater than the correction rate.

With that in mind, has the correction rate now improved, or has the number of problems reduced so that this difficulty can be eliminated?

Mr Payze: The difficulty we had was with the allocation of resources in trying to introduce the Special Premiers Conference initiatives relating to a national heavy vehicle driver's licence system and heavy vehicle registration system. We now have those two programs up and running and a reallocation of resources should see this situation in relation to incident reports effectively ameliorated.

Mr MATTHEW: As a brief supplementary question relating to the mention of the heavy vehicle registration scheme, does the department intend to recoup these costs?

Mr McKEE: Mr Chairman, under Standing Orders is a member allowed to ask several supplementary questions to every question?

The CHAIRMAN: No, the Committee normally adopts a practice of allowing three major questions with some supplementary questions. It depends how brief the questions are, how brief the responses are and whether the supplementary questions can be closely linked to the primary question. It has been the normal practice of this Committee over the past two sessions to allow supplementary questions to complete a line of questioning. Of course, that practice extends to both sides of the Chamber and has been exercised by both sides of the chamber. So, in this case the replies have not been unduly long, the questions have been relatively brief and are confined to a single topic. However, I am sure that this question will conclude the member for Bright's line of questioning on this matter until his turn comes again.

Mr MATTHEW: After my third question, Mr Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN: If the honourable member completes his brief supplementary question, I am sure the Minister will have a brief reply.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The issue of recouping costs does not arise. It is a cooperative venture between the States and the Commonwealth for the greater good of the nation in this area. Obviously, each State will be responsible for its own costs in this area.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Gilles.

Mr MATTHEW: Mr Chairman, I still have a third question.

Mr McKEE: Mr Chairman, that is the point.

The CHAIRMAN: It is the recollection of the Chair that the member for Bright has asked three questions.

Mr MATTHEW: With respect, Sir, I think the record will show that I have asked two questions plus supplementaries.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair's records do show three questions. I think that in all fairness, given the supplementary questions, it is probably not unreasonable at this point to change sides. Our records show a clear three questions. I really have no alternative but to go by the record kept by the Chair.

Mr McKEE: I refer to page 203 of the Program Estimates in relation to the third arterial. Congestion and the associated demand for new infrastructure to the south of Adelaide are recognised by the department in the issues relating to the accessibility enhancement program. I do not see any

reference to the third arterial in the capital works program. Is work still proceeding on the project?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: At last year's Estimates Committee I extended an invitation for interested members to view plans and discuss the proposal with departmental officers. That briefing indicated that initial works to be carried out would include the upgrading of Main South Road and its intersections from Seacombe Road to Ayliffes Road, and at Marion Road, and its intersections from Main South Road to Sturt Road. Since that time the department has developed a number of alternative options for these works. These are presently being discussed with officers of local councils and will enter the community consultation stage in late 1991. Field costs for these works, which are scheduled to commence in late 1993, are expected to be about \$14 million.

Mr McKEE: On page 52 the capital works program makes reference to Flagstaff Road. What progress has been made on the widening and reconstruction of Flagstaff Road?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Construction of Flagstaff Road between Bonneyview Road and Black Road has commenced. Construction will complement the recent improvements to the South Road/Flagstaff Road intersection and the reversible flow lane system between South Road and Bonview Road. The project will cost \$5 million in field costs and will take about 12 months to complete. We will be funding that from our own resources given the commitment we have in this area.

Mr McKEE: On page 53 of the capital works program there is reference to Tapleys Hill. I note that there is a lot of activity on Tapleys Hill Road between Anzac Highway and the Sturt River. The Minister made remarks about this in his opening statement. When will the road works commence on this section of the road, how much will it cost and when will it be completed?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Road works are scheduled to commence in early 1992 and are to be completed about 12 months later at an estimated field cost of \$5 million. To enhance the environment, and in keeping with the character of the local area, ETSA services are to be placed underground and any land purchase that is in excess of road widening requirements will be redeveloped with appropriate landscaping. That again indicates the care that the Department of Road Transport is taking when it undertakes road works. No longer do we just push the bitumen through and take no notice of the damage that is done or the effect it will have on the environment, including the visual environment. We care about the character of the area and we attempt to build roads sympathetically to that character.

Mr SUCH: I would like to put on the record my appreciation to the department for its prompt response to questions I have asked via the Minister. In my experience, it is a very efficient department. I do not always get the answers I want, but the department responds promptly. I refer to bicycle tracks and, in particular, to the Torrens River Linear Park track. It has been reported that over the past year almost 40 per cent or 29 of the 80 bicycle accident victims treated in casualty departments were hurt when using the Linear Park's 30 kilometre dual use track. I understand the 12 councils through which this track runs have concerns in relation to councils' liability. Some have called on the Minister to establish a central management body to oversee maintenance of the tracks and others want an urgent review of the track's design. Has the Minister or his department investigated the safety of the track and what action, if any, is to be taken to address the sharp turns, blind spots, dangerously located holes and the rough surfaces along the

length of the track? What costs and time frame would be involved if these issues were to be addressed?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I take the compliment paid to the Department of Road Transport as also a compliment to the Minister and the Minister's office. I am sure that the member for Fisher would want me to take it that way, because it is a cooperative effort between the staff of my office and the staff of the Department of Road Transport. From memory, I think the member for Fisher is probably the greatest user of the resources of the Minister's office and of the Department of Road Transport of any member of Parliament. I have had as many as six letters in one day about various matters. Of course, I keep a casual eye on the cost of all the proposals put forward by the member for Fisher and I think it would require the entire resources of the department or a huge increase in taxation even to scratch the surface of some of the schemes that the honourable member proposes.

As regards this particular bicycle track, I will have to take the question on notice because I am not sure whether it is a bike track on a road for which I have any responsibility; I am not sure whether it belongs to the E&WS or to local government. I will have that clarified for the member for Fisher and get back to him.

Mr SUCH: I appreciate the interest of the member for Gilles in my electorate, so, in terms of roadworks, I will ask a question related to someone else's electorate. Has the department estimated the total cost of roadworks associated with the MFP site and has the Commonwealth Government indicated what proportion of these costs it would be prepared to meet?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The answer is 'No' to both questions.

Mr SUCH: I would ask a further question in relation to the north-south motorway. A report earlier this year prepared by the department estimated the cost of the north-south motorway at about \$550 million. What level of design standard was employed in coming to that figure and will the Minister indicate any other relevant matters relating to that suggested costing?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In case there is any confusion, this was not a proposal of the Government: it was a proposal of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The Government has no intention of putting a freeway through Adelaide. We understand the desire of the member for Fisher for his constituents to have a north-south freeway, but I must disappoint him. There certainly will not be one emanating from this Government. First, we do not believe that it is necessary. We feel that better use of the existing road infrastructure is what is required. In any event, we are not prepared to decimate the western suburbs of Adelaide by pushing freeways through. It is an old-fashioned response to traffic problems. I know it is something that the Liberal Party supported and certain members still do. I can assure anybody who reads *Hansard* that this proposal is from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, not from the Government. As regards the quality of building that was estimated when the costings were being done, I will ask Mr Payze to comment on that.

Mr Payze: As the Minister said, the proposal was not initiated by the Department of Road Transport: it was a proposal put before the Minister by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The proposal was identified on a map in route only. In order to give it some sort of cost assessment, we chose to select the unit rate based on a limited access arterial in an urban environment that would probably meet an 80 km/h design speed. In all fairness, it was a very rough approximation of the cost of that proposal.

The Hon. N.T. PETERSON: There has been considerable discussion in Port Adelaide about another river crossing to supplement the present bridges. I believe that the proposal is to run straight off Semaphore Road across the river adjacent to No. 1 dock Port Adelaide. Has any work been done on this by the department?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The short answer is 'Yes'. The Executive Director will give the details about that proposal.

Mr Payze: The Government has been examining a number of initiatives associated with development, be it residential, commercial or any other development in the Outer Harbor, Port Adelaide, MFP area. Taking into account a broad concept of Adelaide developing as a transport hub and looking at the interface between road, rail and shipping in particular for the efficiency of freight transport in and out of the port of Adelaide and in the context of developing an arterial road network that would associate with the MFP, whatever form that might take in a structural sense, the department, in liaison with the council, has been looking at another crossing of the Port River on the Outer Harbor side of the Birkenhead bridge. It is only in its conceptual planning stage. To be definitive about its location and scale would, in my view, be premature.

The Hon. N.T. PETERSON: Is it proposed that it should be a road and rail crossing; has that been raised in the initial discussions?

Mr Payze: It has been examined on the basis of its being primarily a road causeway that could be expanded to accommodate an additional rail crossing.

The Hon. N.T. PETERSON: Is the proposal at this stage that it will be a causeway with access for river traffic?

Mr Payze: I would prefer not to elaborate on such details because I think it would be premature.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I am sure that the Minister would be disappointed if I did not ask a question about the Mount Barker Road. When will the design work on the Mount Barker Road be completed by Maunsell and Partners; what have been the costs so far regarding studies into the future upgrading of that road; and has the Commonwealth Government advised whether and when it is prepared to support the commencement of work on this road to bring it up to national highway standard?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will obtain those costs before the end of the day and give them to the honourable member. I would be guessing at something in the order of \$5 million to date. However, the member for Heysen deserves a better answer than that, so I will get the precise details that were requested.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I turn now to Commonwealth capital grants. I appreciate that a direct comparison between Commonwealth capital grants this year and last year is difficult because funding for the local road category is now provided through untied general assistance grants. However, if local road funding of \$24.3 million is deducted from last year's total grants to gain an appropriate comparison, it appears that South Australia's capital grant this year has been cut by 7.2 per cent. Will the Minister confirm that 7.2 per cent is the extent of the cut in Commonwealth capital road grants to South Australia this year and, if so, will he explain why South Australia has been hit harder than any other State or Territory in terms of cuts in Commonwealth capital grants?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I thought I made that clear in the opening statement. As regards comparisons with other States, it is not really profitable in road transport to make such comparisons. They are not allocated on a per capita basis; that would be ridiculous. The very nature of road building and financing of roads is a very lumpy business.

When South Australia was engaged in the construction of the Stuart Highway and the Eyre Highway, for example, it would have appeared to have a far more generous allocation than one would have imagined, but that is not the case. It depends on national priorities. Since I have been the Minister, I have not heard any real differences of opinion about the share of the cake between the States and the Commonwealth. The size of the cake is a continual matter of agitation from the States, but to my knowledge the actual allocation amongst all the States has never been an issue. The honourable member will have to take up with the Federal Government why it has reduced its amount. I cannot speak for it.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Is the Minister aware whether the Commonwealth intends to distribute capital roads grants according to the same formula in the future, ignoring the fact that, based on population and road length, South Australia is already receiving a lesser share of Federal road funds?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: A significant debate is going on in Australia about road funding and the way funding is allocated for roads. Referring to the principal question, the argument of the eastern States has been that the western States have always obtained too great a share. New South Wales has had its eye on the road funding that comes to South Australia for the past two or three years. The Greiner Government has always attacked bitterly the amount of road funding that we are able to raise in South Australia and also the efficiency with which we do it, as it enables us to have a fairly low rate of road charges compared with New South Wales.

The whole thing is in the melting pot. As the member for Heysen would know, the Special Premiers Conference involves a process which I expect at the end will deliver significant differences in the way funds are raised for roads and the way they are distributed. To try to anticipate the Federal Government's intention in this area is extremely difficult. The final outcomes will be determined by the Special Premiers Conference.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: As to driver testing, I am advised that the current waiting time for a practical driving test can be up to four months at some metropolitan branches of the Motor Registration Division. Last year the department had an approved staffing level of 33.5 FTE licence examiners and the salary budget was \$873 000. Clearly, the examiners are falling further and further behind in meeting the demand for examinations.

I am also advised that a proposal has been developed for the Minister's consideration that would get rid of tests by a departmental examiner if a learner fulfilled a State established standard of competency to the satisfaction of a professional driving instructor but that the tests would remain an option for those learners who did not opt to undertake a course of instruction. When does the Minister propose to integrate driver testing and licensing with road safety education and training? What staff and savings are likely to flow from such a new testing and licensing system?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Those matters are still under consideration by the Government. It is fair to say that the waiting time for driving tests is unacceptable and we will be taking a number of measures to deal with that over the current financial year.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Last year the composition of receipts between the Commonwealth and State sources was \$107 million for the Commonwealth or 38 per cent, and \$167 million for the State or 59 per cent, with land sales amounting to \$9 million or 3 per cent. What is the composition of receipts in dollar and percentage terms this year,

and what level of funds is the department to receive this year from fuel franchise charges? What does this figure represent as a proportion of the estimated total fuel franchise charges to be collected this year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: To respond to that would require our doing percentage calculations, and I am sure that the member for Heysen would not want us to pause to do that, but we will certainly get back to him by 4 October.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: As a supplementary question, given that the Minister will seek that information, last year \$5.5 million was advanced from the Consolidated Account to supplement the shortfall in receipts for the department's program of works amounting to \$131.18 million. As this year the works program is to be cut by \$15.6 million, or 12 per cent, will the Minister also indicate what, if any, additional funds will be advanced from Consolidated Account this year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The answer is 'Nil'.

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: I raise a matter about which I have been concerned for some time and as to which I have corresponded recently with the Minister. Who actually determines the standards that are applied for access ramps used by the disabled at pedestrian crossings or crossings over major roads? How does the Minister ensure that those standards are implemented by the Road Traffic Board and relevant local government authorities? I understand that there is some overlap of responsibility inasmuch as ramps off the footpath are the responsibility of local government but, where the cutaway has to be put into median strips or traffic islands adjacent to the footpath, they are the responsibility of the Road Traffic Board.

If I am not correct, I am sure the Minister or his officers can set me straight. I am particularly concerned about the intersection outside my office on the corner of Beckman Street, Anzac Highway and Grey Street. One of my constituents who is active in respect of access for the disabled, so that they can get across the road to do their shopping and so on, has run into a great deal of difficulty in her wheelchair.

My constituent has pointed out that, when that intersection was altered a while ago, insufficient allowance was made for the peculiarities of that intersection. For example, such things as the location of a tree close to the intersection mean that it is almost impossible for someone in a wheelchair to press the 'push button', roll their wheelchair back, get into location so that they are facing the ramp, be ready when the lights change and have some chance of getting halfway across the intersection before the lights reverse.

Apparently the standards also set out the way in which the ramps have to be at a particular angle in relation to the intersection itself, but these standards do not allow for the intersection being offset, as this one is. It is not a 90 degree intersection but one that is at a different angle. Furthermore, the degree of slope in the ramp is such that a person going down it in a wheelchair finds, as the slope levels out to join the road surface, such a sudden transition in angle that the wheelchair is likely to tip forward.

For someone in a wheelchair trying to get up the ramp, it is too steep and a jerk that is sufficient to force the wheels up the ramp is just as likely to tip a person out of the wheelchair. My constituent is most concerned about this. About 1½ years ago she had difficulty at an intersection further down Anzac Highway trying to negotiate a median strip; her chair went backwards into the traffic and, as well as her existing difficulties, she suffered two broken legs to add to her problems.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There are standards, as was mentioned by the member for Walsh. I cannot say imme-

diately just how those standards were developed or what consultation took place. I will certainly have the question examined to see whether the department can get any further information on the history of that matter. I would be surprised if the standards were not developed after consultation with local government for example and disabled people, but I do not know that and I will find out for the honourable member.

I will have this particular intersection examined. If it is dangerous or extraordinarily difficult for people in wheelchairs, then it is clearly not satisfactory and may require some remedial work. I will get back to the honourable member on the question of the development of the standards and I will ask the Department of Road Transport to look at this problem.

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: Two officers of the department examined the intersection in my presence and that of my constituent. They were of the view that regardless of what the standards might be, there was a rigid adherence to those standards by the contractor that did not make sufficient allowance for the peculiarities of that intersection. That problem might need to be addressed in a subsequent review. Can the Minister advise when the department intends to commence the widening of South Road north of Anzac Highway? How long is it intended that will take?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I know that this stretch of road is close to the honourable member's heart. Subject to the availability of Federal funding, it is planned to commence widening from Hale Street, Everard Park to the Torrens River at Mile End in 1992-93. Some relocation of services will be carried out prior to that time. The field costs of the widening of this section will be approximately \$16 million. Following the widening of the above section, it is proposed to widen sections of the road further north. It is an ongoing program and I am sure that everyone who drives down South Road and along the new sections will agree that it is a very worthwhile project.

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: I compliment the Minister on the adjacent widening of part of Anzac Highway. As a preliminary to that, a lot of work is being done by the E&WS and I compliment the department on the way it has handled the very difficult traffic situation, including the excellent way in which witches hats have been placed on the opposite side of the road so that the non-peak traffic bearing side of Anzac Highway is reduced to two lanes and the third lane is used for traffic coming from the other direction, to compensate for the lane that is lost by the E&WS work. My next question relates to the proposal to widen Cross Road, and I drew this matter to the attention of the Estimates Committee last year. Obviously, the environmental amenity program recognises the importance of the environment in this widening process. Can the Minister say what is the department's intention regarding the existing avenue of trees lining both sides of Cross Road?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I thank the honourable member for his kind remarks about the department. I will see that they are passed on to the appropriate officers. A key issue arising from a recent community consultation program was the high value that a large part of the community places on the existing trees on Cross Road. The department is awaiting final comment from the city of Mitcham before all issues are dealt with and a decision is made on the preferred option. There are currently two options for Cross Road: widen now or defer widening for up to 10 years. This choice is available as the existing road has sufficient capacity to cope with projected traffic volumes for up to a further 10 years, although obviously with increasing difficulty.

If option one—widen now—is selected, the existing trees will be removed prior to reconstruction and widening and then advanced growth replacement trees will be planted. If option two—deferred widening—is selected, a different approach not previously used by the department will apply. This process involves acquisition of all remaining land and the undergrounding of overhead power lines and some other services in common trenches in the footpaths. Groups of existing trees will be removed and replaced by advanced growth trees of a species yet to be selected. They will be behind the future kerb alignment. This method of replacement will occur over a number of years until a new avenue of semi-mature trees will line the road prior to actual widening.

Cross Road is one of the roads about which I receive considerable correspondence. A large number of people want the road widened and want it widened immediately. Their arguments are the congested nature of the road and the adequate, but only just adequate, quality of the pavement. Many people who contact me believe that the trees are less than a thing of beauty. They are allegedly exotics and not very good ones, and, given the skills of the Department of Road Transport in landscaping, Cross Road could be made far more attractive if the existing trees were taken out, new ones put in and the widening took place forthwith.

There is also a dispute between the two councils with ratepayers who use Cross Road. I know that the Mitcham council appears to prefer the second option of delaying the proposal for 10 years. I think that is its preferred option but we are still having discussions with the council. On the other hand, if my memory serves me rightly, the Unley council appears to want to go ahead with the widening of Cross Road now. At this stage I cannot give a favoured position in all fairness to the Mitcham council. I would like our discussions with that council to be completed but there is no doubt that the decision has to be made fairly soon on which option to take and I will be recommending a proposal on that within the next few months.

Mr MATTHEW: I refer to page 191 of the Auditor-General's Report. I notice that an amount of \$3.941 million is expected to be received from plant sales in 1991. For eight months last year a ban imposed by a joint union council under the auspices of the United Trades and Labor Council and involving the Australian Workers Union prevented the department selling almost \$500 000 worth of equipment from its Northfield depot. What is the estimate of revenue lost to the department last financial year because of this protracted dispute? What is the estimate of revenue from plant sales this financial year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There has been no estimate of loss, if there is any loss. I will examine the question with regard to plant and equipment this year.

Mr Payze: I suggest that there was no direct loss.

Mr Delaney: The estimate of plant sales this coming year is \$4 million.

Mr MATTHEW: As a supplementary question, what changes has the department made to its equipment purchasing policy to accommodate the concerns of the United Trades and Labor Council?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not think that the policy itself is the issue; therefore, the answer is that we have made no changes to our policy. That was not the issue. The issue was unrelated to that.

Mr MATTHEW: I refer to page 190 of the Auditor-General's Report, note 3, referring to construction and maintenance support. I refer in particular to the business unit Asphaltic Concrete. As the Auditor-General notes, the plant's total cost last financial year was \$11.24 million. Will

the Minister outline the breakdown of these costs with regard to salary and wages, overheads, capital, materials and total output?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I cannot give those figures off the top of my head.

Mr MATTHEW: So, you will take the question on notice?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will certainly be happy to do that.

Mr MATTHEW: Still referring to Asphaltic Concrete, what was the total capital works budget expended on the expansion of this plant over the past three years?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Off the top of my head, I do not have those figures, but will obtain them for the honourable member.

Mr MATTHEW: On the same subject, as I understand it on at least five occasions the department, operating the plant, and the private sector have tendered against each other; the private sector won each tender, being cheaper on four out of the five tenders. Is the Minister satisfied that the plant is cost effective and operating at full capacity, with the paving equipment being fully utilised? If not, has the Government considered selling the plant and rationalising the asphalt laying crews?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: My information and advice is that the plant is very cost effective. The issue is rather the other way around: ought we to be out there tendering in the private sector using our plant and equipment as it is so efficient and effective? It would certainly have an effect on private sector plants. I am not sure where the honourable member's question is leading. I assume that there was some criticism of the plant contained in it. If the plant gets any criticism from the private sector it is because it is so efficient.

Mr MATTHEW: I refer to page 202 of the Program Estimates, in particular to ferry services. Which, if any, of the Murray River ferry services are to be wholly or partially closed? If services are to be closed or curtailed, what is the date for the introduction of the changes and what savings would result?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The level of savings depends on what we do with the ferries and how much we continue to keep them in service. There is a very real problem in that some of the ferry services run 24 hours a day, during the period midnight to 6 a.m., not used at all. On occasions nobody crosses, but we must have an operator there, which is very expensive. Some of the ferries during the midnight to 6 a.m. period run at a cost of about \$50 per car. For people who live in those communities, to take the ferry out of service between certain hours would make them feel somewhat neglected. The fact that they do not use it now is a separate issue, and I constantly point out to delegations on this issue the paucity of 'costimates'. Society has to make choices in these areas.

The member for Bright (not to the same extent as the member for Fisher) writes to me demanding this and that. If the criterion for determining a local member's worth is the number of letters he or she writes to the Minister, no one is as good as the member for Fisher and not in the same league as the member for Albert Park. It is a case of priority as only a certain amount of funds can go around and the way we use them most effectively is always a matter for debate. At the end of the debate it is a matter for judgment and the Government makes those decisions. I am not unaware of the feelings of people living in those areas. I am sure that if I lived there I would have the same view. However, I might make a point of setting my alarm at 1 a.m. for a while and driving across the ferry to get the numbers up a bit.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am pleased that the honourable member has asked a question: it is one of the more interesting questions we have had so far. I was beginning to think that he was a one-trick pony and could only ask questions on a computer. I had hoped that he had advanced from his previous employment into his current employment. I answered the question earlier: it depends on how much is done—how much is saved.

Mr MATTHEW: Which, if any, of the Murray River ferry services are to be wholly or partially closed?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The issues are very real particularly with the rural downturn. On purely economic grounds, there is no question that some of the ferries ought to be closed at certain times as \$50 per car is too high, having employees on full-time where no cars have to cross. We have to make those judgments and we are in the process of so doing. As soon as the Government's decision has been made, it will be conveyed to the people of the Riverland first and to the member for Bright somewhat later. I thank him for his question.

Mr McKEE: I refer to the transport hub mentioned at page 421 of the Program Estimates. The Department of Marine and Harbors refers to the need for infrastructure associated with the proposed transport hub. Will the Department of Road Transport be involved?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I thank the honourable member for his question. We have touched on this issue in answering a question from the member for Semaphore. The infrastructure requirements for enhancing Adelaide as a transport hub are currently the subject of investigations by a group of State officials. Indications are that Adelaide's arterial road network already provides a relatively good level of service for existing freight vehicles. This service will be further enhanced by some projects already planned, including the new Salisbury Highway/South Road connector and further widening of South Road north of Anzac Highway. The concept of a transit hub involves the integration of road, rail and sea links. The Outer Harbor container terminal—the key element of the transport hub—in conjunction with the new MFP, could mean the possibility of constructing a new northern crossing at the Port River as a bypass of the Port Adelaide centre. I referred to that latter aspect in more detail in response to the member for Semaphore.

Mr McKEE: The rural arterial roads unsealed problem is referred to in the Program Estimates at page 203. The possible upgrading of rural arterial road links is mentioned. What is the department's policy on the sealing of these currently unsealed rural arterial roads in South Australia?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Department of Road Transport has developed a strategy for the maintenance of and improvements to unsealed arterial roads. The department's prime objective is to seal these roads; however, due to limited funding, the first priority is to maintain them in a safe and trafficable condition by grading and re-sheeting. The strategy for improvement is based on upgrading the physical condition of the roads to overcome flooding or drainage problems, to correct road alignment problems that constitute a traffic hazard, and to undertake sealing works with priorities determined on the basis of road function importance and traffic volume.

The department's current five-year program for improvements includes: sealing of the Mount Torrens-Tungkillo Road, the Port Wakefield-Auburn Road, the Spalding-Burra Road, and the Orroroo-Carrington section of the Hawker-Orroroo Road but, as always, this program is subject to the availability of funds.

I believe that the network of roads in this State, given the sparsity of population outside the metropolitan area, is quite remarkable when one travels through other States and sees the number of unsealed roads that connect relatively significant clusters of population. Everyone in South Australia who has had the doubtful pleasure of travelling on interstate roads would appreciate the fine network which we have in this State and also the way in which it is maintained by the Department of Road Transport.

Mr McKEE: A major activity of the department is road planning. What is the contribution of the Department of Road Transport to the Adelaide planning review?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Considerable. Prior to the release of the 'Ideas for Metropolitan Adelaide' report earlier this year, staff of the Department of Road Transport attended a number of workshops relating to transport and urban planning matters. Submissions were made to the review to assist in the preparation of a transport position paper, which formed the basis for the access and activity section of the ideas report.

The planning review is now preparing a metropolitan strategic plan, which will be a community shared vision and which will guide the development of Adelaide for some considerable time. This plan will contain strategies to deal with a wide range of issues, including transport. Under the auspices of the review, the department is working with the STA and the Office of Transport Policy and Planning in the development of integrated transport strategies that will contribute to the goals set down on the plan. To give credibility to the metropolitan plan, these strategies will be supported by appropriate action plans that will guide the department's research, planning and construction activities over the next three to five years.

Mr SUCH: Will the Minister say when he proposes to produce amendments to the Motor Vehicles Act to accommodate additional elements of the national drivers licence scheme, the compulsory carrying of the heavy vehicle drivers licence, the zero alcohol limit, enhanced log books, and the nationwide monitoring of demerit points?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Some of those matters have been dealt with already; others will be introduced as required. I think that notice has been given of some of those matters, but I would have to examine the question to be perfectly precise. They will be introduced as required, but I will provide that information to the honourable member.

Mr SUCH: When is it proposed that the heavy vehicle registration scheme will become operational nationwide?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I cannot provide a precise date. I think there are some proposals for part if not all of the new scheme. I assume that the honourable member is speaking about the new scheme proposed by the Federal Government, which I understand is to be phased in between 1992 and 1995. The question is not clear to me, but I will examine it and if the member for Fisher wishes to clarify the question that would be of assistance.

Mr SUCH: When does the Minister plan to introduce an amending Bill to provide owners of historic vehicles with an alternative registration scheme, and what will be the estimated impact of this scheme on the collection of registrations for the remainder of this financial year and the next financial year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: 'Very soon' is the answer to the first question; and the answer to the second question is 'Not very great'.

Mr SUCH: Does the Minister agree with the statement by the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment (Ms Kelly) that old cars that do not meet existing anti-pollution

standards should be phased out or taxed off the road by adopting a high accumulative tax on the registration?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: No.

Mr SUCH: Many members of the public would be surprised to learn that the department plays a key role in flood mitigation and control. At which sites and in which council areas are the 21 high priority projects that have been identified to be in need of stormwater and floodwater control measures; what is the estimated cost of ensuring that all 21 projects are designed and constructed to satisfactory standards; and what is the proposed completion date of each project?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will take that question on notice.

Mr SUCH: As a supplementary question, I ask whether the Minister is confident that our urban areas are adequately protected from stormwater and floodwater, and will he comment on the recent problem of litter and other debris in the Torrens River and the Patawalonga, indicating what role, if any, his department is playing to reduce those problems?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That is more properly a question for another Minister. My department supplies technical services and funds to local government. It may well be that arrangements, particularly with respect to funding, will alter in the near future. As to whether I think it is satisfactory, I am not a stormwater expert. Those questions ought properly to be directed to the Minister of Water Resources and the member for Heysen.

Mr SUCH: Is the Minister indicating that responsibility for stormwater is likely to be transferred to another Minister?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: No, only the responsibility for some of the funding. It is a question of how appropriate it is that the Department of Road Transport should give out funding for stormwater drainage. Certainly technical assistance is an area in which the department has a great deal of expertise and which it will continue to supply, but I can think of no rational reason for the funds to go through the Department of Road Transport. It may be more appropriate for funds to be supplied through the Minister for Local Government Relations or the Minister of Water Resources, but that is an accounting matter and will not affect either the amount of funds or where they are distributed.

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: What works has the department programmed for this financial year to address the major problems of traffic congestion to the immediate north of the metropolitan area at the Gepps Cross intersection and on the Port Wakefield Road through Cavan?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The department will commence work on two major projects this year, which will directly deal with these particular problems. They are, first, the Salisbury Highway/South Road connector, which will be a significant new link in the arterial road network serving this area and which will re-route traffic away from this congested area; and, secondly, the widening of Port Wakefield Road through Cavan to six lanes. It is also intended to undertake minor works on the Gepps Cross intersection, which will assist the operation of this important intersection. All of us who use that area from time to time—some on a daily basis—will welcome any improvements that can be made. It has been put to me on numerous occasions that the best thing to do with the Gepps Cross intersection is to have either flyovers or tunnels. I suppose that, in a perfect world, that is something we could do. The disruption to that location, leaving aside the astronomical cost, means that really is not a practical solution. So, some further modifications will be made and we expect that that will give some

relief and assistance to traffic using our roads and intersections to the north of Adelaide.

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: As a supplementary question on the subject of traffic congestion in that immediate area, is anything being done as a result of the developments in surrounding suburbs to alleviate traffic congestion on Kings Road and McIntyre Road?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes, there certainly is. Kings Road is to be reconstructed and duplicated between Main North Road and the Salisbury Highway. Construction is scheduled to commence in the 1992-93 financial year and field costs are currently estimated at \$3 million. McIntyre Road is to be widened and reconstructed between Bridge Road and Main North Road. Construction is scheduled to commence in the 1993-94 financial year and field costs are currently estimated to be \$3.2 million. Both projects are State funded and, of course, are subject to the availability of funds.

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: I refer to the ecological impact of transport matters. On page 205 of the Program Estimates, reference is made to a program entitled 'Environmental amenity'. I understand that the Executive Director of the department is a member of the Commonwealth Ecologically Sustainable Development Working Group, which is considering the transport sector. How is the Department of Road Transport responding to this issue?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will take this opportunity to ask the Executive Director of the department to outline the extent of South Australia's involvement.

Mr Payze: The ecologically sustainable development (ESD) debate is being dealt with under a national agenda, and currently nine sectoral committees are examining ESD in the context of each of their areas. Transport is being dealt with by one such committee. I represent the Australian Ministers of Transport on that committee. The working group's objectives were to identify the most important areas and some priorities for achieving changes that are desired in the way in which we utilise transport and transport efficiency to achieve greater ecologically sustainable development in that area. The working group has, in fact, completed its report and put forward suggested policies and recommendations at the national level. That report is now out for public comment. The period of public consultation closes at the end of September. The working group will then reconvene to consider comments and is expected to report to the Federal Government at the end of October this year.

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: A departmental sick leave reporting system was to commence in the 1990-91 financial year and was referred to in last year's Auditor-General's Report. What information is available for the past three years in regard to sick leave for the department?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The statistics are quite pleasing. If one looks at the statistics for weekly paid employees, one will see that the average number of days taken in 1988-89 was 8.53; in 1989-90, it was 8.05; and in 1990-91, it was 7.65. So, the trend is all in the right direction. Likewise for GME Act employees, the respective figures show that in 1988-89, 7.26 days sick leave were taken per employee; in 1989-90, it was 6.66; and in 1990-91 it was 6.65. So, again, the trend is all in the right direction. I suggest that we have probably reached a plateau in these figures. Any comparison with the private sector demonstrates that to get the incidence of sick days lower than 6.65 per employee per annum is extraordinarily difficult for the simple reason that, by and large, people are sick that number of days a year.

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: Being human.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That is correct. If a worker is sick, and particularly if a worker has an infectious disease—

even if it is only mildly infectious—the last place we want that person is at work infecting everyone else. I am very pleased with the statistics. It is a great effort from the people in the Department of Road Transport who have had the responsibility of managing sick leave; they have managed it very well indeed. However, I do not expect in the future to have any staffing reductions; we are getting pretty close to the bottom now.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Last year funding for road safety publicity and promotions received \$30 000 above the voted budget line. This year funds are to be increased by a further \$50 000. Last December I note that there was internal division in the South Australian Office of Road Safety over the spending of money allocated for promoting road safety. The particular issue of contention at that time was the decision to spend \$160 000 on the production of a drink drive advertisement, with \$104 000 to be provided to Great Southern Films to make the commercial and a further \$569 000 to be allocated to a Melbourne based company for post-production work. What assessment procedures are in place in the Office of Road Safety to determine whether or not taxpayers' funds spent on television productions are being prudently spent? What additional funds were required to pay for the screening of the drink driving commercial and why was an Adelaide studio not used for post-production work? Further, what formal arrangements, if any, are utilised by the Office of Road Safety to encourage the joint funding of promotions, publicity and productions between all or some State and Territory Governments or with SGIC or the RAA? Finally, what is the itemised budget for road safety publicity and promotions this financial year?

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: A point of order, Mr Chairman. When a member has several questions of that nature, would it not be better if they were asked in the form of supplementary questions which, in the past, you have tolerated?

The CHAIRMAN: At one minute to one, the Chair is prepared for the Minister to answer in any way he sees fit.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: If the question is not a question on notice, it is clearly unreasonable. I will take it as a question on notice.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Having set the precedent with Australia Post riders, why has the Government refused exemptions for both Sikhs who ride bicycles and for passengers of motorcycle sidecars?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will take the question on notice.

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

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

Office of Transport Policy and Planning. \$5 901 000

Chairman:

Mr M.J. Evans

Members:

Mr K.C. Hamilton

Mr C.D.T. McKee

Mr W.A. Matthew

Mr R.B. Such

The Hon. J.P. Trainer

The Hon. D.C. Wotton

Witness:

The Hon. Frank Blevins, Minister of Transport.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr D. Scrafton, Director-General of Transport.

Mr P. Tregoweth, Manager, Support Services.

Mr L. Oxlad, Manager, Transport Planning.

Mr P. Skene, Research Engineer.

Mr M. Philipson, Manager, Economic Research.

Mr P. Duldig, Senior Economist.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: As the proposed National Rail Freight Corporation is now to be called the National Rail Corporation, has the Minister determined whether the new corporation will incorporate South Australia's intrastate freight and passenger services and, if not, what will be the fate of these services in future? Is there any possibility that, with the establishment of the National Rail Corporation, the Commonwealth Government may seek to close all our intrastate passenger and freight services, offer them for sale or seek to return them to the jurisdiction of the State?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am not sure to which intrastate passenger services the honourable member is referring. I thought that some decisions had already been taken by Australian National that dealt with that. We are vigorously contesting the decision of Australian National to close those services, with some success particularly in relation to the Blue Lake service. The National Rail Corporation is in the process of being established. We have not as yet signed the agreement. South Australia's position has been reserved to ensure that we are not disadvantaged *vis-a-vis* the rail transport agreement that was signed in the mid-1970s. We will continue to pursue South Australia's interests in all matters pertaining to rail.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: As a supplementary, will the Minister indicate when an announcement is anticipated naming the members of the board of the National Rail Corporation and when it is likely to be determined whether or not the headquarters of the corporation will be in Adelaide?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The board has been named.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Is the Minister able to provide the names?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I can certainly supply one. The Hon. Gavin Francis Keneally is a member of the corporation. As regards an announcement about the headquarters, that would have to be referred to the board of the National Rail Corporation.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: When will the Minister nominate members to the committee to oversee the reinstatement of the Bluebird passenger rail service to Mount Gambier as recommended by the arbitrator, David Newton; and is it correct that the Minister and the Federal Minister for Land Transport, Mr Brown, have agreed that the Bluebird service be replaced by a permanent rail service rather than under the terms of the arbitrator's decision to reinstate the rail service?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: As regards the Blue Lake service, we clearly stated from the start that we would take it to arbitration, as we have the right to do. We did, we won the arbitration, and the arbitrator refused to allow the Federal Government to close that line. Clearly we did not agree with the Federal Minister. I should have thought that was self-evident, or we would not have taken it to arbitration. The arbitrator also made a number of recommendations. Unfortunately, they are just recommendations. The Federal Government does not have to take notice of them. However, I think there is a moral obligation on the Federal Government to do so.

The arguments that apply to the Blue Lake service, I believe, apply equally to the Silver City and Iron Triangle

services, in fact more so, because both those services return a higher passenger contribution to the Federal Government than the Blue Lake service. I pressed that view on the Federal Minister and he has acknowledged that is the South Australian Government's view. At my request, he has undertaken to have the recommendations of the arbitrator costed for the three services, not just the Blue Lake service, so that people within the South Australian community who are affected by those decisions can judge for themselves the figures on which the decisions have been based. I believe very strongly that people in the Iron Triangle, Broken Hill, Mount Gambier and various places in between along the railway line are entitled to a service. In simple dollars and cents terms, I concede that that service is expensive to operate. Nevertheless, there are many other services outside the metropolitan area which are very expensive to operate. If the only criterion were cost, very few services would be supplied in South Australia or in any other State, and I think that would be unacceptable. Those of us who live outside the metropolitan area are aware of the need for services, whether rail or any other services, to be placed where we live. I believe that all Governments have an obligation to do that as much as possible.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Is the Minister aware that on 31 October 1991 all Australian Wheat Board road contracts with carriers will expire, as will the board's three-year rail agreement with Australian National; also that in negotiating the grain transport task by road and rail for up to three years from 1 November 1991 the board, together with numerous country councils, is concerned about strong hints by Australian National that up to 24 silos currently served by rail may be phased out over the next couple of years? Has the office made any assessment of the impact on rural roads of increased road usage if Australian National closes 24 silos currently served by rail? What action has the Minister taken to alert Australian National and the Federal Government to the terms of the rail transfer agreement in respect of the closure of the lines?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I can assure the honourable member that the terms of the rail transfer agreement will be adhered to to the letter. We are talking about a commercial transaction between grain growers and carriers of freight. I should have thought that Opposition members would not want the Government to interfere in contracts between commercial organisations. Certainly farmers would not want us to do that. Farmers, through the cooperative bulk handling, generally choose not to use rail. They choose to use road because it is cheaper. If the honourable member is suggesting that the South Australian Government ought to attempt to legislate to ensure that this product travels by rail, he should say so. I am sure that Opposition members, who, amongst other things, produce cereal crops, would vigorously argue that they ought to be able to continue to do what they do now, and that is choose to go by road. Obviously there is cost to the South Australian Government for additional wear and tear on the roads, and we regret that. The only thing the South Australian Government can do is to attempt to legislate, if it is within our constitutional power to do so, to compel the transportation of cereal crops in this State by rail. I would assume that members opposite, having thought about that question deeply, would oppose it.

There is also the question of the quality of installations at sidings. There is some obligation on Cooperative Bulk Handling, if it wishes to continue to use rail, to attend to some of its facilities, but I understand that it has refused to cooperate with AN in many areas in upgrading its own facilities. Again, the commercial decision it has made on

behalf of members of its cooperative is to transport produce by road. I can assure the honourable member that any rights we have under the Rail Transfer Agreement will be exercised.

Mr HAMILTON: Can the Minister advise what were the findings of a study on the impacts on South Australia of standardisation of the Adelaide to Melbourne railway line (page 159 of the Program Estimates)? What is the likelihood of the gauge conversion taking place, and is the Government in favour of standardisation?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I gave a fairly full answer to this in the House three or four weeks ago. The question is of critical importance to South Australia and its future, particularly as a transport hub for Australia. I shall be pleased to go through again some of the points that were made in that answer.

The broad gauge railway between Adelaide and Melbourne remains the last inter-capital rail link to be incorporated into the standard gauge network. While AN and V Line have undertaken a number of studies into the financial and technical feasibility of converting the line to standard gauge, the emphasis has been on the narrow commercial implications for the agency concerned. Australian National has also been unable to generate sufficient capital internally in accordance with its charter to undertake the work. To date it has been difficult to justify the project.

However, consideration of the broader social costs and benefits emanating from the project produce a different result. This has been recognised by the consultants employed to investigate the national freight initiative, Travers Morgan and Booz, Allan and Hamilton, who specifically identified the Adelaide to Melbourne gauge standardisation as one of two major investments in strategic infrastructure upgrading—the other being the Sydney to Melbourne fast freight train—required during the 1990s for the long-term business success of the National Rail Corporation.

The National Rail Committee confirmed that detailed evaluation of the project should be a priority task of the proposed corporation. The Commonwealth Government has also included in its 1990-91 budget an amount of \$21 million for track upgrading on the line, which explicitly provides for future standardisation.

Given the need to consider the broad social costs and benefits of the project and the implications for the State, the Office of Transport Policy and Planning undertook a study with the aid of consultants Pak-Poy and Kneebone on the impact of gauge standardisation on South Australia. The study completed the review of the effects on the State of the proposed Alice Springs to Darwin railway.

The study established that the standardisation project has significant potential benefits to South Australia, but the extent of the benefits depends on the extent of upgrading that accompanies standardisation. The more extensive the upgrading to increase clearances and straighten alignments and gradients, the faster the transit times and hence the greater potential to attract freight traffic from road transport.

Standardisation is also an integral component of Adelaide as a transport hub concept. However, there may be some dis-benefits to South Australia. Unless mixed gauge track work from Tailem Bend to Adelaide or conversion of the Murray-Mallee lines to standard gauge also occurs, both of which will be extremely expensive, standardisation of the Adelaide to Melbourne railway will result in the abandonment of the Murray-Mallee lines.

The broad gauge link between Wolseley and Mount Gambier would also be affected. Despite this, the Government is in favour of standardisation. It will have a positive impact

on South Australia by giving better access to markets in the eastern States, and is an essential component of the transport hub. If the National Rail Corporation proceeds as envisaged and if the standardisation recommendation is accepted by the National Rail Corporation, gauge conversion will occur.

Mr HAMILTON: With reference to transport planning, how many country rail lines were closed in South Australia in 1990-91? Did the Minister oppose any Australian National proposals for closure during the year and, if he did, what were the results?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In 1990-91 the Commonwealth Government did agree to a State Government request made in 1989-90 to retain the standard gauge Snowtown to Wallaroo line until 1995, at which time AN will again assess its viability. The Commonwealth did not, however, agree to retain the Balaklava to Gulnare line. The Rail Transfer Agreement did not give sufficient grounds for the State to oppose this closure.

In December 1990 the Federal Government sought State Government approval to close the broad gauge Brinkworth to Snowtown line and the Port Pirie to Merriton line that had been bypassed during standardisation. Again, the Railways Transfer Agreement did not give sufficient grounds for the State to oppose these closures. In February 1990 the Commonwealth Government sought approval to close the lines from Millicent to Snuggery, Robertstown to Eudunda, Karoonda to Galga and Karoonda to Peebinga.

The State Government pointed out that, as the grain contracts on the Galga and Peebinga lines did not expire until the end of October 1991, it suggested that the request for the closure of these two lines was premature. The request for closure of these two lines was subsequently withdrawn. Under the terms of the Railways Transfer Agreement, the State could not oppose closure of the Millicent and Robertstown branches.

Mr HAMILTON: Can the Minister provide me with details of or a comparison between the closures of country rail services and the lines between 1979 and 1982 and which have occurred since this Government came to power in 1982? I expect that the Minister will take that question on notice.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It is an interesting question. I have to smile at times about complaints about closures from members of the Liberal Party in this House. It is interesting to look at the list of closures between 1979 and 1982, because it is an extensive list. It is worth having a list of those closures included in *Hansard*, and I will be pleased to supply the member for Albert Park and *Hansard* with that information before 4 October.

Mr HAMILTON: With reference to the studies completed in 1990-91, what progress has been made in reducing the amount of economic regulation over the taxi industry in South Australia?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: During 1990-91 there has been a significant reduction in the amount of economic regulation of the taxi industry. A complete set of new regulations under the Metropolitan Taxi-Cab Act 1956 has been drafted to achieve the reforms recommended by the May 1990 regulatory review panel. The following changes were recommended: the board to stand back from the commercial dealings of taxi owners; to streamline the operations of the board; daily work cards to be removed; Government vouchers must be accepted by drivers; multiple hiring to be freed up; discounting to be allowed on the taxi meter; driving and owning age to be reduced; residency requirements to be relaxed; sole or principal occupation requirement to be removed; driver dress schedule removed; driver conduct

requirements to be relaxed; and regulations covered by common law to be removed.

To achieve all these reforms, the Minister of Transport was advised that the Metropolitan Taxi-Cab Act would need to be amended to make the regulations and the Act fit together on a more coherent scheme. These regulatory amendments, which did not require amendments to the Act, were gazetted in June 1991 and recently tabled in Parliament. The following amendments were made: the removal of daily work cards; allowing multiple hiring of the taxi to be driver initiated; allowing fare discounting; reducing the driving and owning age to 18 years; removing the sole or principal occupation requirement; relaxing the residency provisions; removing the driver dress schedule; relaxing driver conduct requirements; allowing joint holders of the taxi licence; and requiring drivers to Access Cab vouchers.

A Bill to amend the Act will be presented to Parliament in late 1991 and that will enable all the recommendations of the review panel to be achieved. The reform of the community transport industry, including taxis, hire vehicles, minibuses and car pooling, is also a major objective of Government transport policy. The reform of taxi regulations is only one part of the process. The futures paper on the taxi and hire vehicle industry prepared by the Office of Regulation Review in consultation with industry was released for public comment on 16 July this year. The futures paper canvasses broader options for reform of the community transport industry outlining four models: the *status quo* with minor changes; common licensing under a Community Transport Act with only taxis remaining restricted in number; open entry into community hire transport including hire vehicles under the Road Traffic Act with taxis remaining restricted in number under the Metropolitan Taxi-Cab Act; and open entry into all forms of community transport, including taxis.

Dr Ian Radbone, seconded from the University of South Australia, has been retained to mediate the community consultation process. Dr Radbone has been consulting widely with consumer, union and industry groups. A telephone hotline has been operating for two months and many written submissions have been received. Dr Radbone will report his findings next month.

Mr MATTHEW: I refer to the Program Estimates (page 195) and a statement concerning the initiation of a transport brokerage project to meet transport needs of people in the western metropolitan region and in the southern suburbs. What transport brokerage projects were initiated in those regions and what has been the progress of those projects?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The database of community-owned transport resources, for example, buses owned by councils, charitable organisations, welfare agencies and institutions, indicates there is no shortage of transport resources, yet there is a general feeling within the community that transport needs, particularly for the transport disadvantaged, are not being adequately met. Rather than providing additional hardware in the form of buses, there is the alternative option of making more effective use of the equipment that is already available but not fully utilised.

One possible solution is to establish community-based transport brokerage. The concept of transport brokerage is similar to a share broker. A transport broker would be a facilitator between buyers of transport services and the sellers, that is, between users and providers. The broker would try to match transport demand with the supply of transport and suggest ways by which transport resources could be used more effectively. The brokerage service could be pro-

vided free or a fee could be charged to either users or providers.

Discussions have been held with councils, local interest groups, service providers and the owners of vehicles in the western suburbs of Adelaide. Although there has been general support for the concept and there is considerable potential for brokerage in the area, the institutional problems appear to be too difficult to make the western suburbs suitable for a pilot or demonstration program. The Barossa Valley and South Coast district—Goolwa, Port Elliot and Victor Harbor—appear more promising and activity will be focused in these regions. A consultant study will examine transport resources available on the South Coast and make recommendations about establishing a brokerage.

A joint transport policy and planning council working party has been established in the Barossa Valley. If the councils in the Barossa are prepared to provide accommodation or support services for a broker it may be appropriate for the Government to fund the broker's salary for a maximum of, say, two years by which time the effectiveness of the project would be evaluated. If successful, the Barossa and South Coast experience could provide a guide for other areas, both rural and urban.

The first stage of a Home and Community Care fund is studying the Munno Para area to assess the needs of the transport disadvantaged. The second stage of this study in the Noarlunga/Willunga area has almost been completed. The study involves the development of pilot local community transport services designed to specifically solve the local community transport problems that have been identified. Within the areas being examined, there is considerable potential to improve local accessibility, particularly for the transport disadvantaged. By making more effective use of the existing transport resources, this can be achieved at little or no additional cost to Government, although the solutions to mobility problems will be site specific, which is why a variety of approaches is being used and why the local community and community organisations are being involved. We expect that will help generate a feeling of ownership to any scheme that may be introduced.

Mr MATTHEW: The Minister made a number of comments which I can tie into one supplementary question. He said that discussions had been held with councils, that institutional problems prove too difficult to implement some of these schemes, particularly in the western area, and that there are moves to pilot local community programs. I understand that one of the councils that was approached with a view to piloting a program was the city of Marion and that that approach centred on a taxi service to supplement its 381 bus service. I am reliably informed that negotiations with the taxi industry seem to have come to a standstill with regard to that program and that is largely because of union opposition to taxis moving into that sort of service. Can the Minister verify whether there have been problems and whether union opposition is proving to be one of those institutional problems that is causing difficulties?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There is no union opposition, to my knowledge. However, this is a matter that has been organised and, if funding from the STA is required, and the member for Bright wishes to pursue it, he can pursue it after 4 p.m.

Mr MATTHEW: Does the Minister state categorically that there have been no union problems?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I stated what I stated and I assume that everybody in the Chamber, including *Hansard*, heard clearly what I said.

Mr MATTHEW: That is interesting; I will not pursue it any further. I refer to transport for people with disabilities

(page 214, Auditor-General's Report). I notice that mention is made of vouchers for reimbursement. What is the estimated value of voucher reimbursements this financial year and the estimated payment to Access Cabs for operating subsidies?

Mr Tregoweth: We estimate that the voucher reimbursements to Access Cabs or for all transport subsidies under that scheme will be \$1.8 million this year and the amount of operating subsidy payable to Access Cabs will total approximately \$500 000.

Mr MATTHEW: With respect to the operating subsidies, I notice an increase of \$239 000 or 42 per cent last financial year. Did the Minister consider, as part of the GARG process, seeking a contribution from the other radio companies towards the operating costs of Access Cabs as distinct from the voucher subsidy system?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The increased costs in this area are particularly pleasing. It is part of the Government's philosophy that more public services will be provided in areas where the need is increasing and where funds will allow. I am pleased to be part of the GARG process, which allows us not only to operate as a simple razor gang but also to suggest to Cabinet changes in programs that will increase funding in certain areas, and that is appropriate. Whilst that is much more difficult to operate than a razor gang, it certainly gives a great deal more satisfaction. No other area of government has given me greater satisfaction than this area. The fact that the popularity of the scheme is increasing, because we have widened the eligibility criteria quite considerably, is something that the Government warmly welcomes.

Mr Tregoweth: The Government has not asked for any financial contribution from the taxi industry but recognises the significant extent to which it maintains credit facilities for the Government. It handles 80 per cent of all voucher reimbursements and at any stage the Government would owe the combined taxi companies close to \$250 000. That cost could be seen very much as a contribution from the taxi industry.

Mr MATTHEW: As a further supplementary question, the Minister mentioned a widening of the eligibility criteria. Will he confirm whether or not he is proposing to change those eligibility guidelines for travel by Access Cabs by lifting the ceiling of \$30 for any single trip and by allowing an unlimited number of trips for a maximum value over a monthly or quarterly time frame?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Not at this stage. As anybody who looks at the budget estimates will see clearly, we have put a lot more money into this area. When it is appropriate and when further funds can be found, this is one of the options at which we will be looking.

Mr MATTHEW: I again refer to Access Cabs; I note from page 214 of the Auditor-General's Report that the balance in the deposit account as at 30 June 1991 was \$752 000. Does the Government intend to increase the number of special purpose Access Cab licences this year, and has consideration been given to the use of alternatives to modified vehicles for acceptable Access Cab purposes?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes and yes.

Mr McKEE: I refer to the north-east busway. Within the objectives of program 3 (page 195 of the Program Estimates) we note the promotion of economic and efficient transport. Will the Minister advise the Committee of the final cost of the north-east busway project?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The busway was a very successful project.

Mr SUCH: Who thought of it? Certainly not Frank!

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am not sure who thought of it, but it was the Labor Government that did it.

Mr SUCH interjecting:

The Hon. Frank Blevins: You did not get past the thinking stage, and that is typical. Over the past 10 years you have not been in a position to do anything but think about your inadequacies. We do these projects. They are very successful and I think the member for Gilles for asking me about it.

The total final cost was \$97.3 million, the breakdown of which may be of interest to the Committee. The preliminary design amounted to \$1.3 million, land acquisition \$6.1 million, construction of the busway \$54.4 million, landscaping \$4.5 million (and very successful landscaping it is, as anyone who uses the busway will attest), administration \$9 million, giving a total of \$75.3 million. An amount of \$22 million went towards bus purchases for the busway, making a final cost of \$97.3 million. It was a very successful project indeed.

Mr McKEE: What were the recommendations of the Seaford Transport Review Report completed in 1991 and referred to on page 195 of the Program Estimates?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Seaford Transport Review is part of the Government's commitment to assess transport needs in the burgeoning southern suburbs of metropolitan Adelaide. It identified the long-term transport infrastructure required to serve the Seaford development south of the Onkaparinga River. The Seaford development is a residential fringe development, which will eventually accommodate approximately 30 000 people. The development is being undertaken as a joint venture between the public and private sectors. In authorising the Seaford supplementary development plan, the Government gave a commitment to undertake a detailed traffic, engineering and environmental assessment of alternative arterial road options south of the Onkaparinga River, excluding Murray Road, which may or may not include a new river crossing, with the aim of accommodating the anticipated travel demand generated by the Seaford development.

In accordance with that commitment, the Department of Environment and Planning initiated the Seaford Transport Review in collaboration with the Office of Transport Policy and Planning, Department of Road Transport and the South Australian Urban Land Trust. An independent consultant, Pak-Poy and Kneebone Pty Ltd, was engaged to review and reassess the various investigations and studies that had been carried out in the past into alternative arterial road and railway extension options south of the Onkaparinga River and to recommend a number of feasible options for consideration by the Government. The various arterial road and railway extension options identified by the consultant were placed on public exhibition in the Noarlunga area during June and July 1990 to obtain feedback from the local community on the preferred options. Over 200 responses from the public were received and, following collation and analysis, form the basis of the recommendations in the Office of Transport Policy and Planning report, Seaford Transport Review summary report, which was presented to me in December 1990.

The report's recommendations were that the authorised transport corridors comprise an arterial road route extending southwards from Dyson Road to Commercial Road across the Onkaparinga River and a rail route extending southward from the Noarlunga Regional Centre to the Seaford District Centre, also across the Onkaparinga River. A preliminary design for road and rail alignments was prepared jointly by the Department of Road Transport and the State Transport Authority for the purpose of clearly defining the land requirement boundaries. The E&WS

planned to decommission the sludge drying lagoons and release the subject land as required, consistent with the Government's intention to provide transport facilities within the authorised corridors.

The Department of Road Transport and the State Transport Authority jointly investigate various design options within the authorised corridors to establish: first, compatible horizontal and vertical alignments to minimise the combined construction costs; secondly, environmental safeguards and guidelines for design and construction operations; thirdly, the threshold traffic demand that would economically justify the construction of the road link; and, fourthly, the threshold travel demand that would economically justify construction of the railway.

Following consideration of the report's recommendations by Cabinet, the land requirement boundaries for the authorised transport corridors were defined and the South Australian Urban Land Trust proceeded to acquire land to preserve those corridors. The State Transport Authority and the Department of Road Transport jointly commenced an investigation of the design options within the authorised corridors and prepared preliminary designs for the arterial road and railway extensions. STA and DRT undertook to jointly prepare an environmental impact statement for the road and rail options.

Mr McKEE: With respect to road user charging, are heavy vehicles paying their way in South Australia?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That is a vexed question. A comprehensive report on road cost recovery in South Australia prepared by Travers Morgan was publicly released in May 1990 coinciding with the release of an interstate commissioned report on road use charges and vehicle registration—a national scheme. The study reviewed recent cost recovery studies identifying key differences between the Travers Morgan approach and those of other States. Updated cost recovery estimates are presented. Broad orders of magnitude for registration fees for heavy trucks including B-doubles and road trains are provided.

On the basis of a broad definition of revenue and costs for arterial roads and national highways, the study found that, at the combined Government level, six-axle articulated trucks—the most common type of heavy freight vehicle—had a positive contribution ratio of 1.36 excluding Commonwealth crude oil levy receipts; that is, they were paying their way. However, at the State Government level, six-axle articulated trucks were estimated to achieve a cost recovery level of only .56; hence a deficit at the State level.

Relevant data was not available for B-doubles and road trains. Travers Morgan estimated levels of cost recovery for these vehicle combinations by inference from costs imposed on the roads system by six-axle articulated vehicles. The results imply under-recovery of \$2 950, \$4 800 and \$7 950 for B-doubles, double trailer road trains and triple trailer road trains on a separable cost basis at the State level. The registration charge for a typical six-axle articulated vehicle has increased from \$2 082 in July 1988 to \$3 101 in July 1991, an overall increase of \$1 119 or 49 per cent. This increase, together with the 1991 State budget announced increase in the diesel franchise rate of about one cent per litre, suggests that, on the basis of a very broad definition of costs and revenues, as a class, six-axle articulated units are likely to be close to cost recovery at the State level.

This issue will receive more attention by the National Road Transport Commission, which was set up following agreement reached at the July 1991 Special Premiers Conference and which as its first task will recommend zonal charges for road transport. It was on the basis of the development of cost recovery estimates that South Australia was

successful in arguing for a zonal charging system. Significant charge increases are not justified in South Australia.

Mr SUCH: Is the Government still committed to the concept of a bus-rail interchange at Tonsley?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes.

Mr SUCH: How much has been spent to date by the Minister's office and the STA on developing design plans for the construction of a bus-train passenger interchange at Tonsley?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Approximately \$28 000.

Mr SUCH: Have other locations been considered and, if so, what has been decided?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: As I mentioned earlier, Mr Lindsay Oxlad is the Manager of Transport Planning in the Office of Transport Policy and Planning. I will ask him to respond to that question.

Mr Oxlad: The State Transport Authority recently investigated six alternative sites for the Tonsley interchange mainly in the old Sturt triangle site—the site of the southern science park—in addition to the site that was examined in more detail by Transport Policy and Planning some years ago. The result of that examination was that the site originally chosen—the site of the existing Tonsley railway station—was considered to be the most suitable for the interchange. However, it would be possible to build a carpark for passengers in an old Department of Road Transport depot adjacent to Sturt Road.

Mr SUCH: As a supplementary question—

Mr McKee: On a point of order, Mr Chairman, the honourable member has asked two supplementary questions and now wishes to ask a third. That will be four questions he has asked. How many bites of the cherry do people want?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no provision in the Standing Orders in relation to the precise number of questions that may be asked by individual members. The guidelines read out by the Chair earlier in the proceedings of the Committee provide that 'about' three questions may be asked with appropriate provision for supplementary questions. Clearly, on some occasions, members ask what might be regarded as a substantial number of supplementary questions, but, if they are designed to pursue a line of questioning and if the answers to the questions are reasonably brief, the Chair thinks that is conducive to the workings of the Committee.

It is often preferable for members on either side to ask questions in that form rather than a single continuous question with multiple parts, which is probably the alternative to which members would resort if the Chair rigorously divided questions word by word. I do not consider that at this stage members are being disadvantaged in any way. If the honourable member feels that that is preventing him from asking an appropriate number of questions, the Chair will take that into account.

Mr SUCH: My supplementary question is: has the department ever consulted Westfield on the basis of a jointly funded interchange proposal for the Marion Shopping Centre?

Mr Oxlad: To my knowledge, there has been no consultation with Westfield Marion about a joint venture proposal. As I understand it, that proposal was thought about some years ago but was dismissed because it would require the construction of a new rail line from the existing Noarlunga Centre rail line to the Marion Shopping Centre, which would inevitably lead to the acquisition of houses and the disruption of local families.

Mr SUCH: I ask two further supplementary questions.

The CHAIRMAN: The honourable member should take account of the fact that there are limits to the Chair's generosity in respect of supplementary questions and not announce two in advance but take them one at a time.

Mr SUCH: What is the latest estimate of the cost of the interchange?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That depends on which option is adopted.

Mr SUCH: I refer to an earlier answer from the Minister and to a letter I received from him this week in respect of the new transit link bus route service from Aberfoyle Park to the city, which will start next year. In that letter the Minister indicated that the transit link service will be as quick if not quicker than a service involving the Tonsley interchange, the time for travel to the city being given as 36 minutes as against 36 to 38 minutes for the Tonsley interchange. In view of that recent letter, does that make the whole proposal redundant?

The CHAIRMAN: That is a question, not a supplementary question.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: So, we can look forward to six supplementary questions on each question.

The CHAIRMAN: No, I said that that constitutes a question, not a supplementary question.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I was looking forward to the next five.

The CHAIRMAN: You will not have to. Continue with the answer.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The answer is 'No.'

Mr SUCH: My second question—

The CHAIRMAN: That is now the honourable member's third question. If he wants to ask a brief supplementary question in relation to that, the Chair will allow that. Does the honourable member have a supplementary question?

Mr SUCH: It seems rather strange that I should receive a letter this week suggesting that it would be quicker to travel from Aberfoyle Park via the transit link bus route—36 minutes—than it would be to travel via the Tonsley interchange, involving 36 to 38 minutes. There seems to be a contradiction that would challenge the assumptions underlying the interchange project.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That was not actually a question. It was a comment and I will respond likewise. It does not do anything of the kind. It depends on how far one looks into the future and what one's predictions will be in relation to increases in traffic. In addition, not everyone will travel from Aberfoyle Park onto the Tonsley interchange. For the benefit of the member for Fisher, people other than his constituents live in the south. So, this certainly in no way contradicts or underlines the basic premise. I concede that the decision, if taken, to build an interchange at Tonsley is an 'on-balance' decision; it is not 100 per cent one way—very few things in life are. Given the breadth of the catchment area for people who potentially would use the Tonsley interchange, on balance, it looks worth while at this stage.

Mr HAMILTON: Page 195 of the Program Estimates, under 1990-91 specific targets and objectives, refers to the 'continued major involvement in transport component of Metropolitan Planning Review, Transport Hub Project and MFP Adelaide project': what are the transport implications of the proposed MFP at Gillman?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The MFP concept involves a major urban development on the Gillman MFP site, with a population of 100 000 people on a 3 500 hectare site. It will consist of a series of villages or settlements ranging in size from a few thousand to as many as 10 000 people. It involves the integration of workplace, place of education,

recreation areas and domicile. Up to 30 000 people may work on site, distributed evenly between MFP core activities and support work. The site is well chosen because of the good passenger and freight transport services that surround it, which suggests that the key priority will be good MFP access to the existing transport links with some improvement to the links also necessary.

The site is 13.5 kilometres from the CBD, 15 kilometres from Adelaide International Airport and 2 kilometres from Australian National's freight headquarters. The Port of Adelaide is on site. The MFP will present a unique set of transport opportunities and problems. The villages will need to be interconnected via roads, pedestrian and bicycle ways, while the settlement will need to be adequately connected with Adelaide CBD, the northern suburbs and the airport for the movement of people and freight. The export generation activities on site will need specialised transport for high value-added freight, which suggests the airport will be a key link with overseas markets. The MFP will be an urban development without any quantifiable precedent. West Lakes has similar urban density, but is of a more traditional design. Such a scale of urban development so close to existing services and the CBD presents new problems and opportunities.

During the formative stages of the MFP, the Office of Transport Policy and Planning provided advice on a range of transport options for this greenfield development. The practicalities of integrating with the existing infrastructure were outlined together with some more innovative transport options for the village development. Advice was provided to the MFP project team on the use of automated transport systems for internal movement within the MFP site and linking the MFP to existing transport nodes. In keeping with the MFP concept of innovative, efficient, state of the art development, the suggestion was made that the MFP should be essentially a car-free environment with perimeter garaging of motor vehicles. The latter idea was incorporated in plans for the MFP. The Office of Transport Policy and Planning has also been involved in the preparation of an energy specification for the first of the MFP villages. The first village will house about 5 000 people on an area of about 600 metres square if the suggestions made in the specifications are adopted. The MFP village and subsequent villages will be significantly more energy efficient than existing urban areas.

In order to reduce the use of energy by 40 per cent relative to existing urban areas and the consumption of non-renewable fossil fuel by 70 per cent, it has been proposed that within the village priority be given to pedestrian and bicycle movements, with adequate security and safety provisions; the need for in-village vehicle journeys be minimised by clustering activities in a hierarchy of activity nodes; there be significant reductions in the use of conventional internal combustion engines within the village itself; the use of fuel-efficient vehicles be encouraged; and the use of vehicles fuelled by alternative fuels be encouraged. To reduce the consumption of energy in transportation between and beyond villages, it has been suggested that alternative non-fossil fuels should be used for travel between villages; public transport use should be encouraged for travel to and from Adelaide via feeder services to existing system modes, such as Port Adelaide; and traffic on main routes to and from Adelaide should be managed for optimal traffic flow, with coordinated traffic lights and high-occupancy vehicle lanes.

Mr HAMILTON: Can the Minister indicate whether there will be a system similar to the O-Bahn? As I recall, it was mooted in the media just recently that such a system run down the middle of Port Road to connect up with the

MFP. Will the Minister also indicate what impact is likely on the existing rail and bus networks in and around the MFP site?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will ask the Director-General of Transport, Derek Scafton, to respond to that supplementary question.

Dr Scafton: As the Minister said, the links to and from the Adelaide CBD will be an important part of the transport work associated with the MFP. As the honourable member said, there was some speculation in the newspaper about the sort of line-haul systems that might be used, and I think the picture showed a monorail link. Obviously, of the range of options presented to the media, that is the one that always catches the eye. However, the text very clearly pointed out that we would be looking at all of the alternative line-haul options.

The obvious one is whether or not we have a simple link to the existing rail line. However, at the same time as looking at the MFP, the future of the rail line to the north-west is worth investigating. It may be that a more cost effective and attractive solution is to convert the whole of the north-west rail network to LRT over time. That is another option that would be kept open. Obviously the O-Bahn and simple extensions of the existing radial bus routes in the area would be considered. The main point is that all these options can be kept open for quite a while.

Mr HAMILTON: As a further supplementary, the Minister talked about further options in terms of the MFP modes of transport in and around that area. Will he indicate other than those illustrations what other options are being considered for transport in that area? A couple have been mentioned, but I wonder what other options are being considered.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Mr Oxlad will be happy to inform the Committee of even more options.

Mr Oxlad: Several of the options discussed were mentioned in the Minister's reply to the question. They were innovative solutions and several of those are things called personalised rapid transit, which involve computer controlled vehicles moving between and around the village, providing door to door and other environmentally friendly services, because they are by and large powered by electricity. Also there are group rapid transit services, which are like small buses, similarly computer controlled and moving around the villages. These sorts of things are being trialled in Japan at present and the technology is fairly well established. All these schemes will be put before the MFP group as possible solutions to the problem, given the nature of the MFP village.

Mr HAMILTON: What is involved in the proposed study of travel demand management policies and schemes for application in Adelaide?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The management of travel demand is an emerging approach in transport planning which tries to balance the need for travel and the existing transport capacity. Travel demand management is primarily concerned with measures that reduce the generalised cost or impact of travel rather than reduce the total amount of travel; in essence, a more efficient and acceptable use of the community's existing resource. During 1990-91 the Office of Transport Policy and Planning participated in a national debate, initiated by Austroads, on the application of travel demand management measures in Australia.

In the past, mobility, amenity and environmental problems related to transport have been dealt with in isolation, albeit with some reference to a larger scheme. More recently, transport land use, mobility and the environment and amenity have been acknowledged as intrinsically inter-

twined. It is now recognised that significant changes in any aspect of the land use or transport systems will have a considerable impact on other urban systems. The Office of Transport Policy and Planning commenced a consultative development program on travel demand management policies to raise public awareness of the problems and various transport measures that could be implemented to manage better the demand for travel in metropolitan Adelaide.

Mr HAMILTON: A matter in which I think the Minister will have a tremendous interest is on page 195 of the Program Estimates. Under '1991/92 Specific Targets/Objectives' it states:

Initiate study on transport needs of women in rural areas of the State.

I know that many members are interested in this issue. I also know from my travels, particularly in the north of the State, that this question about the need for better modes of transport crops up from time to time. Indeed, there are people in the country, particularly women, who feel that they are being neglected in terms of their needs.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There is no questioning the truth of what the member for Albert Park has just stated. There are considerable difficulties for all people who live outside the metropolitan area, particularly in the more far-flung areas of the State. Of those disadvantaged people there is no doubt that women are additionally disadvantaged for a whole range of reasons into which I will not go. Often they are not the owner of the household vehicle. Unfortunately, their role in life is to a great extent designated for them in a way that makes them more home bound and they certainly receive fewer transport services than the rest of us quite properly expect.

To start to come to grips with this problem is a job in itself. However, in early 1989 the Premier released a report entitled, 'Women in the Home', which was commissioned by the Women's Adviser to the Premier. It included a recommendation that the Department of Transport should initiate a study of transport issues for women in their multiple roles in rural South Australia. It has become evident that the most appropriate course is to incorporate the needs of rural women in the pilot community transport projects presently under way in semi-rural areas and to document the experience of the pilot projects for the benefit of other rural areas. The aim of the pilot projects is to make the best use of existing public and private transport facilities.

It is clear that, even in rural areas, when we start to investigate the amount of transport resources that are available, we find that it is more than we would expect. In fact, in many areas it is quite considerable. One of the problems is that it is being used irregularly. It is being used in the main for specific purposes and, when not being used for those specific purposes, it lies idle. There are real opportunities there, once the resource has been identified, to make better use of that resource for the benefit of women and, indeed, all people who live outside the metropolitan area. As I have just said, the way to test that is in one of the easier areas on the urban fringe to determine whether what we believe is true is true and then use that as an example for other areas.

Mr HAMILTON: As a supplementary, has the Minister or the department considered the utilisation of council bus services? I understand that many councils discontinue their bus services after 5 p.m. I also understand that they could be utilised more effectively after 5 p.m., particularly in rural areas, to assist the needs of country people. It has been put to me that it is an enormous waste if these bus services

operate only between, say, 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. and are not utilised thereafter. Will the Minister comment on that?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I could not agree more with the member for Albert Park. There is no doubt that some resources within the community are under-utilised. One of the problems with some community-owned buses is that overwhelmingly they are operated by volunteers and it is difficult to get volunteers to work in the after hours period. In some areas, it is difficult to get volunteers to work during normal day-time hours, but after hours it is even more difficult. If we get into a position of no longer using volunteers and paying people to do this work, immediately we price those buses out of the range of many of the people who need those services.

It is a difficult problem to resolve. The fact that many of the resources are in the community is relatively easy to identify, but it is much more difficult to put in a program where those under-utilised resources can be used to their full potential. It is something on which we are working and, as I have said, pilot studies will be undertaken to see whether, through transport brokerage, we can get the vehicles used and obtain better use from them.

The member for Fisher would attest to some of the difficulties of a council operating in his electorate that has these resources. It has attempted to provide services on both the urban fringe as well as in the metropolitan area with, as the Mayor of Happy Valley said, mixed success. Sometimes it works and sometimes it does not. In my view, it is always worth a try.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I refer to the registrations of interest for the provision of bus route services, particularly services in Woodside, Lobethal and Goolwa, licences 102, 112 and 120, and realise that it may be necessary for the Minister to take this question on notice. I am aware that following an initial expression of interest applicants were provided with a written invitation to submit a detailed tender proposal. Coming out of that, and particularly in regard to these licences, how many people were invited to register an interest? How many responded, how many were selected from that group who did respond and when were tenders sent out? Specifically, when was Mr Johnson's tender sent out? Finally, how does the Government anticipate that the chartering service provided by Mr Johnson, which I understand involves about 45 buses, will continue to be provided if he is forced to close his business?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Given the sensitivity of some of that information (not sensitive from my side but sensitive in respect of some of the practitioners), I will write to the member for Heysen and incorporate some of the answer in *Hansard* by 4 October. As to who would pick up routes if Mr Johnson was no longer involved in supplying those services, that is hypothetical and it is not appropriate that I should speculate in that manner.

Mr SUCH: Does the Office of Transport Policy and Planning consider it to be still desirable to extend the Glenelg tramline up King William Street to at least North Terrace or beyond?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am not much interested whether the Office of Transport Policy and Planning considers it desirable, but the Minister does. If it is of any interest to the honourable member what the Minister and the Government think, to extend the Glenelg tram at least to the railway station is worthwhile in transport terms. It has to be done carefully because, while it may look nice and give additional transport facilities for some people, we do not want to proceed at the expense of many other people by making radical changes to Victoria Square and to traffic patterns along King William Street and North Terrace. I

still believe the extension is something that can be done and, coupled with the review that is occurring now in the redesign of Victoria Square, I would expect the extension of the tram line to be incorporated into that design.

Mr SUCH: Can the Minister give a time frame to the extension project?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: No. There are plenty of players. It involves Adelaide City Council as well. There are too many players to give a definitive answer at this stage.

Mr McKEE: My question concerns new residential developments, particularly the Northfield development, in my electorate of Gilles. What progress has there been in the planning and design of roads for new residential subdivisions?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Guidelines for planning and road design were published to assist developers incorporating the highest possible levels of safety for residents in the design of residential areas, irrespective of whether residents make their trips by car, public transport, bicycle or walking. Experimentation in the design of new subdivisions is the key to the development of neighbourhoods which match the physical and lifestyle needs of suburban residents.

Planning and design of roads in a subdivision determines where dwellings and other buildings will be located. It also influences the entire pattern of movement within and out of the neighbourhood. The guidelines were designed to minimise the need to install physical traffic control devices on residential streets retrospectively. Other design ideas examined included amenity, attainment of sense of place, neighbourhood, identity and housing orientation for optimum access to solar energy.

While the guidelines are not aimed specifically at achieving the minimum cost for residential subdivision and construction as a total package, they aim to yield the result which is cost neutral or cheaper when compared to the cost of the same development employing conventional design practices. A set of three reports was produced, 'Guidelines', 'Supplement to Guidelines' and 'Planning and Design of Local Distributor', which won several professional awards, including a special commendation in the planning document category in the Award for Excellence in Planning by the South Australian Branch of the Royal Australian Planning Institute.

The report subsequently won the main prize of the national body of the Royal Australian Planning Institute at the national conference held at Darling Harbour in 1990. The project was jointly sponsored with the Department of Environment and Planning and the South Australian Urban Lands Trust. Assistance was obtained from local councils in the northern and southern area of metropolitan Adelaide, and the Australian Road Research Board was an active participant in the project. Ideas and principles outlined in the report are being implemented in the subdivision design projects now under way in the northern and southern suburbs of metropolitan Adelaide.

Mr McKEE: By way of a supplementary question, I understand that the Urban Land Trust has done extensive consultation with people living in the Northfield area. Does the department undertake the same processes and does it plan to consult with local community groups? Have discussions with people living in the area taken place to get feedback from them regarding their requirements?

Mr Oxlad: The Office of Transport Policy and Planning is one of the key players that participates in the community consultation process. In areas such as Northfield we have been involved in the development of supplementary development plans for that area and in the general philosophy. As was said this morning in reply to a question about the

Department of Road Transport's involvement in the planning review, there are many elements in the recommendations in the access and activity section that will be incorporated in the Northfield development and it is as a result of our involvement and that of other people in the transport portfolio that these sorts of thing have been included.

Mr McKEE: I refer to concessions (Program Estimates, page 193). Can the Minister advise what other agencies provide appropriations for transport concessions?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: For 1991-92, the major lines of transport concessional reimbursement are: children (Education Department, Estimates of Payments, page 75); unemployment and sickness benefits; rail freight for charitable organisations; blind people and incapacitated ex-service personnel; seniors subsidy; and pensioner concessions. The last five categories come under the Department for Family and Community Services (page 37). The aim is to have reimbursement for particular concessions identified clearly in the budgets of the Ministers with the functional responsibility.

Mr McKEE: Given the Government's commitment to social justice, what is the status of the Government's plan to extend the pensioner annual free trip to include places on former Commonwealth train lines such as Port Augusta and Whyalla?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: From 1 July 1990, pensioners who were eligible for one free rail trip a year could also travel to Port Augusta and Whyalla as part of the scheme. This meant that the section from Coonamia to Port Augusta and Whyalla was included in the annual free rail trip scheme and was to be funded completely by the State Government, with \$50 000 initially earmarked for the extension. The use of the pensioner annual free trip on intrastate rail services to the north was affected badly by the Commonwealth decision to withdraw intrastate rail services in 1990-91. The Iron Triangle service was most affected.

Following closure of the Blue Lake service, Australian National has continued to grant full rail concessions on a bus service to Mount Gambier operated in lieu of the rail service. Many pensioners also use the annual free pensioner concession to offset the cost of interstate rail travel. Australian National estimated the cost of the concession extension to Port Augusta and Whyalla as being negligible during 1990-91. Australian National does not maintain records detailed enough to determine separately the total cost of the annual pensioner free trip concession. The total cost to South Australia for rail concessions granted in 1990-91 was \$267 852. In 1991, \$346 720 was paid to cover concessions granted in 1989-90. Any expenses incurred in relation to the concessions are debited to the relevant line of the Family and Community Services budget.

Mr HAMILTON: What is the current position in relation to the future of the Indian Pacific train service? There is much concern as to the future of the service and, as a former railway man, I am aware that many pensioners avail themselves of the opportunity to travel on this particularly delightful service to Western Australia or Sydney. What discussions has the Minister had with his Federal colleagues in relation to this matter?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Director-General of Transport in South Australia is also a member of the board of Australian National. Without giving away anything that is commercially in confidence, I know that Dr Scafton would be pleased to give the Committee as much information about this issue as possible.

Dr Scafton: The matter of the future of interstate passenger trains is a very big one. The impact of cheap fares

on airlines has had a drastic effect on revenue on interstate passenger trains. About three months ago a third Indian Pacific train was withdrawn. Initially it was to be a temporary withdrawal pending the stabilisation of air fares and their returning to what might have been considered to be a more reasonable level. However, that has not occurred to date and the adverse impact on interstate passenger trains has continued. As a result, the three rail authorities that operate the Indian Pacific—the Western Australian Government Railways, Australian National and the New South Wales State Rail Authority—have made the withdrawal of the third Indian Pacific *sine die* until the position recovers. They will not even consider the matter.

The member for Albert Park would be aware that the remaining Trans Australian was also withdrawn, that is, the train that runs only between Adelaide and Perth. Instead of there being four trips a week from Adelaide to Perth, we are now down to two trips. The three rail authorities are talking about the potential for the remaining service and the most pessimistic outlook is that the train would be temporarily withdrawn completely. My personal view is that it is highly unlikely, given that the Ghan, which operates only once a week, is holding up quite well against the competition. There is a reason for that. The cheap fares that have accompanied the introduction of Compass flights between inter capital destinations do not apply to Alice Springs, so the Ghan has held its own. Nevertheless, it indicates that there is potential, among the holiday market and the pensioner market, for maintaining at least one service a week.

My personal view is that the two services in place will remain, at least while these discussions go on. At the same time, two complementary developments are fairly encouraging, but they also complicate the debate about the two trains. One is that Australian National has approached the Commonwealth Minister of Land Transport for approval to refurbish the Indian Pacific in much the same way as the Ghan was refurbished.

That is one of the reasons why there is some future for this train. However, the provision of passenger services is essentially a function of the Commonwealth Government: Australian National is merely an agent and does not make decisions relating to those trains, because they involve community service obligations and the Commonwealth Government picks up the tab. It is up to the Commonwealth Government to make a decision about that. At the same time, we have the complication of the Western Australian and New South Wales Governments also being involved in the picture.

My final comment is that at the meeting next Friday in Darwin of the Australian Transport Advisory Council—the meeting of Commonwealth and State Ministers of Transport—an agenda item at the request of the New South Wales Minister asks Ministers to agree to the establishment of a task force to look at the possibility of one organisation being set up to run interstate passenger trains involving everything from, for example, Brisbane to Perth, including the Overland, the Sydney Express, and the Melbourne Express as well as the trains we are offering, such as the IPT the Trans and the Ghan. Whether it will get up at that meeting is a matter for the Ministers to determine. It is a constructive idea. The first step would be to look at the demand and then to determine what institutional changes might be made afterwards and what sort of capital might be involved in restoring some of these trains.

Mr HAMILTON: I have heard rumours that forced retirement of railway workers at the Port Augusta workshops and at Islington may be contemplated by Australian

National. The rumours are strong within the railway community and it has been put to me that, should this happen at Port Augusta, it would have a devastating effect upon that town. Is the Minister able to shed any light on whether these rumours have any basis in fact? If he is unaware of the situation, will he obtain a report for the Committee so that we can allay the fears of those personnel and their families who are reliant on work in those workshops at Port Augusta and at Islington?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have no knowledge of Australian National plans in this area other than what has been available to everybody through the media. My understanding is that forced retrenchments in South Australia have not been contemplated. However, I may be wrong, as in Tasmania I understand that Australian National has given notice of compulsory retrenchment of some 180 railway workers in that State. So, it does not give one any great sense of confidence that it could not happen in South Australia if it is happening in Tasmania. I would be very surprised, because to my knowledge Australian National has always had a policy of no forced retrenchment or forced relocation. It is a good policy, but from time to time we see stories in the newspapers where stations have been closed down but a couple of workers are still attached to them and are being paid because they do not want to relocate and cannot be forcibly retrenched. Whilst one may have some sympathy with Australian National because it has, as it sees it, an excess number of workers, I always dislike seeing forced retrenchments or sackings, however we wish to dress them up. It is standard practice in the private sector, but is not a practice that has traditionally been adopted in the public sector. I will certainly try to find out more information for the honourable member and the Committee.

Mr McKEE: Given the approach that the State Government has taken in relation to the Commonwealth Games, has the Minister's department given any thought to the impact on our transport system if we are successful in getting the Games, given that large numbers of tourists from around the world will want to get from point A to point B in Adelaide during that time, particularly in the District of Albert Park? Has the department given any thought to that?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The decision on the Commonwealth Games is not due until July next year when I believe it will be announced during the Olympic Games in Barcelona. No doubt it will have a significant impact on transport in Adelaide. If we were fortunate enough to get the Commonwealth Games, we would have a couple of years to draw up our plans. Adelaide is very well suited, as are the various venues, to being serviced by public transport. The compactness of Adelaide, the relatively close location of West Lakes, the village (which will be in the District of Gilles), and the Gepps Cross facility means that we could cope easily, and it will be a pleasure to do so. We have two years to plan for any additional services that would be required. The whole city of Adelaide will be right behind the Commonwealth Games. If we had to make some alterations for the period of the Games, we would do so, as we do during the Grand Prix, whether to the road system or to the traffic light system. I know that the people of Adelaide will be very happy to assist in making those adjustments for the period of the Games. I do not see a huge problem. It would be a huge challenge and one to which we would rise very easily, particularly given the extensive public transport facilities that go through the District of Albert Park.

Mr HAMILTON: What about the widening of the West Lakes Boulevard?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I assume that is a supplementary question. The widening of West Lakes Boulevard is something we are considering but I cannot see it happening for a little while yet.

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

State Transport Authority, \$136 100 000
Works and Services—State Transport Authority,
\$17 956 000

Chairman:

Mr M.J. Evans

Members:

Mr K.C. Hamilton
Mr C.D.T. McKee
Mr W.A. Matthew
Mr R.B. Such
The Hon. J.P. Trainer
The Hon. D.C. Wotton

Witness:

The Hon. Frank Blevins, Minister of Transport.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr Kevin Bengler, Executive Director.
Mr John Brown, General Manager, State Transport Authority.
Mr Ian Fitzgerald, Director of Finance.
Mr Bob Heath, Director of Operations.
Inspector Malcolm Schluter, Transit Inspector.
Mr Warren Fairlie, Management Accountant.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I wish to make an opening statement. The goal of providing an efficient and effective public transport system is being achieved. Over the past five years operating costs have fallen in real terms, despite the introduction of new services and facilities. The net cost of recurrent operations between 1985-86 and 1990-91 decreased in real terms by 10.5 per cent. The recurrent funding level in 1991-92 of \$136.1 million represents only a 4.7 per cent increase over the funding level of \$130 million in 1990-91. The 1991-92 funding includes additional funding of \$7.9 million for depreciation and amortisation provided as a consequence of the State Transport Authority's adopting current cost valuations.

The State Transport Authority's vehicle fleet is presently being upgraded and a contract has been awarded to Clyde Engineering for the supply of a further 50 3 000 class railcars. This highlights the Government's intention to maintain a fast modern rail system for the outer suburbs. A contract has also been let for the supply of 307 new MAN air-conditioned buses. The trial utilising 10 CNG buses proved their effectiveness in service and as a result a portion of the replacement buses will be CNG powered. In addition a number of low floor buses will also be incorporated in the program for trial purposes.

One of the reasons that CNG powered buses are being considered is the fact that such vehicles are much kinder on the environment having considerably lower emission levels. The authority proposes to continue with its tree planting program to complement the trees presently growing on its properties. These trees will eventually have the ability to absorb all the carbon dioxide produced by the authority's vehicles. The STA engaged in a number of new initiatives in the 1990-91 financial year to improve its efficiency while

effectively maintaining its level of service. Amongst these were the following:

The labour productivity review. Indicators were prepared for bus and train operations based on a format adopted by the recent Price Waterhouse and Urwick recent review. Productivity improved in almost all categories with the greatest improvements in overhead costs per kilometre, which fell by 27 per cent over a two-year period.

Decentralisation of decision making: In keeping with the Fielding report, the move to decentralise decision making to depots is almost complete, as a new networked system of small computers will be installed in all depots by the end of the 1991-92 financial year.

Transit link: Plans are well advanced to introduce this program throughout the metropolitan area in corridors where it will be most effective. A trial program is expected to be operational by February 1992 between Aberfoyle Hub and the city.

Social justice initiatives: Strategies have been designed to support the use of public transport for the socially disadvantaged and disabled groups in the community. Policies that have contributed to this aim include more efficient services to the outer suburbs and the trials of low floor and kneeling buses in the current fleet replacement program.

Relocation of the Hackney bus depot: It is expected that the Hackney bus depot can be released for other purposes following the completion of the new Mile End depot and the relocation of services in early 1992.

The aim of all of these initiatives is to provide services that are affordable, efficient and meet the majority of the travelling public's needs.

Mr MATTHEW: On page 85 of the Estimates of Payments I note that the total STA subsidy will be \$136.1 million for the 1991-92 financial year. I draw the Minister's attention to a memorandum sent to all occupational health and safety committees on 11 September 1991 by Mr P. Bedford, Director of Human Resources, in which he states in part:

As you know, the STA is under considerable pressure to achieve large budgetary savings during the next three financial years. The dramatic improvement in our safety record if continued through the year and the consequent reduction in costs will go a very long way to help us avoid both cutting essential services and making draconian reductions in employee numbers.

What targets for net cost savings to the Government have been set by the STA or predetermined by the Government for the operations of the STA over the life of the current corporate plan from 1990 to 1994? Further, what cuts in essential services or draconian reductions in employee numbers have been forecast if the STA is unable to meet a reduction in administrative and operating costs?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will examine that question to see whether we can provide any forward projections that are not just vague speculation. The question of so-called draconian cuts does not arise. The cooperation of our work force in areas of occupational health and safety is absolutely exemplary, and we are very pleased with the improvements that have occurred in these areas. We can see or foresee nothing that would give rise to any concern. I congratulate Mr Bedford and the employees on the way in which they have dealt with the issue of occupational health and safety—it has been quite exemplary.

Mr MATTHEW: I note on page 422 of the 1989-90 Auditor-General's Report reference to the objectives of the business plan that was then in operation. There were targeted savings of \$24.1 million per annum in 1988-89 dollars to be achieved by 1991-92. Has the Government implemented or required any savings plans to reflect that statement by the Director about draconian staffing reductions?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The estimates before us indicate the level of subsidy that will be provided to the STA for this financial year. I am not sure that there is a lot more I can say about the level of employment, or anything else: that is the level of subsidy that has been indicated and we expect that those targets will be achieved. It is very early in the financial year, but we have no reason at this stage to expect that they will not be achieved. However, as I said, estimates are estimates.

Mr MATTHEW: That same memo to which I referred earlier also contains the following statement from the Director of Human Resources:

If the present performance is maintained for the 12-month period it would represent a saving of \$4 405 560 approximately if we maintain [and the 'if' is underlined] the present standard.

Quite clearly the Director is worried about some target. He talks about the need to avoid cutting essential services and making draconian reductions. What could cause the Minister's Director to be so concerned and what sort of cuts is he expecting to be made in departments if the new cost saving targets are not achieved?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Forgive me if I feel as though I have answered the question. It seems to me that it was not a supplementary question at all; it was restating the question. I can only say again that the way the work force has responded to the management program for improvement in occupational health and safety has been exemplary. We have no reason to believe that that will deteriorate to any significant degree or, in fact, to any degree at all. The way that the Manager of Human Resources emphasises that with the work force is, again, to be commended. There is a grave danger here of falling into the practice of repetition, which I find unavoidable as the question has been asked probably three times. Try again.

Mr MATTHEW: I was trying to drag out a satisfactory answer, but I will let that matter lie at this stage. I refer to page 214 of the Program Estimates and, in particular, the following statement under Broad Objectives/Goals:

To ensure that effective public transport is provided for the people of metropolitan Adelaide by matching services to the travel needs and patterns of the Adelaide population.

With the provision of services in mind, I refer to the recent rail dispute. Will the Minister reveal the cost to the STA of obtaining all the transcripts from the Adelaide media outlets relating to the rail dispute between 10 and 26 June? I understand that there were 71 transcripts in four days. How much did the STA pay the Adelaide law firm Finlaysons for its services during this period?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I cannot answer that off the top of my head, but I will certainly get that information for the Committee. The member for Bright made a comment about dragging a satisfactory answer out of the Minister. The honourable member always gets an answer, even if it is repetitious because the question had been asked three times. I cannot help it if the honourable member does not find the answer satisfactory. I am here to give as much information as I have given to the Committee and I certainly do that. I am sorry if the member for Bright does not find that satisfactory, but that cannot be helped. Perhaps, if the questions were framed in a way that was less intended to score political points and more to get some information from the Minister, the answers would be more satisfactory. I regret the comment from the member for Bright, but I feel that comments of that nature ought always to be responded to.

Mr MATTHEW: As a supplementary question—as we seem to be swinging from one question to another—as the Minister has acknowledged that Finlaysons was engaged to obtain transcripts from media outlets, what savings has the

Government asked the STA to make and what essential services will be cut?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In the previous answer I said I would examine the question and get whatever information was available for the honourable member. That is not in any way confirming that Finlaysons was involved. Off the top of my head, I would say that it was not. However, that answer would be off the top of my head and I would not want to mislead the Committee. That answer in no way confirms that Finlaysons, or anyone else, was engaged.

As regards the savings required from the STA, the STA has been given a target that is before the Committee; it is quite clear and unambiguous and I referred to it in my opening statement. I can give the honourable member the figure again; it was \$136.1 million. I can only repeat that the STA, as with any other body funded by the Government, whether it be a department or a statutory authority, will be expected to live within that estimate.

Mr MATTHEW: Prior to responding to the Minister, I reassure him that it was, indeed, Finlaysons that was engaged for that particular matter referred to in the last question. How much has been saved following the decision not to have guards and assistant guards on trains? What is the cost of operating the transit police squad?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: To deal with the question of Finlaysons, which has been raised again, as I stated I will get whatever information is available for the Committee and supply it by 4 October. Off the top of my head I do not believe that Finlaysons was engaged to monitor the media during the recent train dispute. However, if it was, that will be revealed by 4 October. I cannot quite see why we keep commenting on the same thing. I should have thought that my answer was perfectly clear.

The decision to replace guards with transit officers was taken by the STA and the Government in response to very high fears about passenger safety on our trains. It was also in response to a number of assaults on our staff. I believe that our staff, passengers and property are entitled to be treated with respect. Those people who are working for the STA or riding on STA trains are entitled to do so in safety. I do not believe that the community ought to tolerate anything less than that.

The calls by the Opposition—quite justified in my view; I am not saying they were wrong—and other groups, the media and individuals, including the unions, for greater security were calls that the Government could not ignore. I believe that decision has been vindicated. The operation of the transit squad, which has been greatly enlarged, has been an enormous success on the trains on which the officers operate. It is our intention, as guards phase out, to replace them all with transit officers. I will ask Inspector Malcolm Schluter to outline further to the Committee the operation of the transit squad, the way that the new system has been working and the results to date, even after only three months.

Inspector Schluter: The enlarged transit squad has been in operation for almost three months. During that time there has been a significant downturn in behavioural disturbances on trains. The incidence of assaults on STA staff has virtually been eliminated through the patrolling of the trains by transit officers. The incidence of graffiti on in-service lines, particularly on the Gawler and Port Adelaide lines, has been eliminated. The rail system now operates almost 90 per cent graffiti-free. I believe that this has been brought about by the introduction of transit officers into the system.

There has been considerable community support for the initiative. The visible police presence on the rail system has reassured the travelling public that it is indeed now safe to

travel on Adelaide's trains during the evening and also at weekends. The transit squad has been decentralised in the sense that bases have been established at STA depots at Elizabeth, St Agnes and Noarlunga. Effectively, through that decentralisation, patrols have been able to pay greater attention to disputes and incidents of misbehaviour on the rail system and respond to the problems that transit officers come across in a faster way than hitherto.

Mr MATTHEW: All that was very interesting, but none of it answered a very simple, concise question: how much has been saved and what is the cost of operating the transit squad? We did not get an answer.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The cost of the transit squad will be separately identified if that is what the member for Bright wishes. I would point out that the transit squad, as I thought I said earlier, has been greatly expanded. Many of these positions are at the expense of train guard positions, so we would have to do the calculations. The increase in costs for the transit squad, taken in isolation, could be misleading. Again, I would not want to mislead the Committee. As far as I am concerned, any increased costs, if there are any, in introducing this system are more than justified, because we are not prepared to run a system which people are frightened to use and on which our employees are frightened to work. That, to me, is intolerable. I think it will take many months, if not years, to get confidence back in the train system from the sad state it was in prior to the introduction of the transit squad. It will be achieved and we are determined to see that it is achieved. If it takes many months, or many years, we will still be in there promoting rail and the personal safety of people who use rail.

Mr MATTHEW: I appreciate that the Minister is effectively taking that on notice. Will he also take on notice a request to provide details of how many transit officers are presently employed and the maximum number planned to be employed for this financial year? Will he also advise the Committee of the present status of former assistant guards and guards, how many might have been transferred to other areas, whether they have been paid separation packages and so on?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The answer to the question of how many will be employed in this financial year will depend on how many train guards leave or are transferred to other areas. I am talking about voluntary transfers. We will not compel anybody to transfer. I can tell the honourable member now, without taking it on notice, that there is no answer to that until 30 June next year. If another 30 or 40 guards leave or transfer, it will be 30 or 40 transit officers. If only another 10 leave or are transferred, then it will be only 10 transit officers. It depends on the attrition rate of guards in this area. I will have the question examined, and if anything further needs to be added to my answer I will supply it to the Committee.

Mr HAMILTON: I should like to preface my question by reading some comments from two editorials in the *News*. I will quote in part from those editorials. The first, dated 30 October 1987, reads:

Backbenchers in State Parliaments rarely get the opportunity to do something positive for the good of all . . . his proposal that public transport vandals should be made to clean up their nastiness is just the ticket . . . making an example of these hooligans in this way would be appropriate and exemplary. It is a principle which could well be extended to vandalism in other areas.

The *News* of Monday 13 June 1988 states:

A round of applause today for the State Transport Authority and a Labor backbencher . . . By no means have all the STA's initiatives won favour with the public, but it is doing exactly the right thing in taking up the proposal of [an MP], among others, and pushing for vandals to be required to clean up their messes.

In the same newspaper of 10 June 1988 there is reference to the New South Wales reparation scheme. What is the estimated cost of graffiti removal for the STA each year, and what is the STA doing to reduce graffiti and vandalism? How many community service orders have been utilised for the cleaning up of buses and trains? If people want to make a mess and they are caught, they should be made to clean it up, and that is reflected in the two articles to which I have referred.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There is a place for modesty in life, but Parliament is not the place for it. The member for Albert Park is unduly modest in not telling the Committee that the member of Parliament referred to in the editorial is the member for Albert Park, whose record is second to none in respect of cleaning up graffiti and juvenile crime in general. The honourable member has certainly taken a lead in this Parliament on these issues.

It costs the STA about \$1 million to clean up graffiti. We have had considerable success. We have an STA officer engaged full time in organising our anti graffiti strategy. We attempt to clean up our vehicles within 24 hours at the most, and that program is pretty successful. What we cannot do as is done in New York, which is often quoted, or on the London underground, is have a graffiti free system instantly. In those cities they take the trains out of commission rather than running them with graffiti. We do not have a fleet the size of New York, London or Sydney to give us that luxury, but nevertheless our program of cleaning them up within 24 hours is successful.

We now consider that the O-Bahn busway and the Glenelg tramway are graffiti free. We have a program for almost instant cleaning of any vehicle or any part of the track despoiled by these vandals, which is what I consider them to be. The prosecution of people who offend and the subsequent use of these people to clean up graffiti has been one of the most positive things that has occurred in the past six months. I will ask Inspector Schluter to enlarge on that side of it, because it is dealing with law breakers. That is what they are, they are people who have broken the law, and we make no apology for prosecuting them or assisting the courts to carry out the sentence if it includes helping to clean up the mess that they or others like them have made. I ask Inspector Schluter to further comment.

Inspector Schluter: The recently commenced program of Children's Court orders requiring vandals to clean up the mess they make is proving effective. It occurs at two STA depots. Young vandals are forced by court order to attend the STA installations to carry out cleaning duties as required. From the evidence available there seems to be quite an attitudinal change in the young people who take part in that program, and people involved in the system seem confident that it will be a success.

Further, vandals are being selected by the transit police to take part in the State Government's Blue Light camps on a continuing basis throughout the year. Young vandals who frequent the transit system and who are involved in vandalism are targeted for the weekend programs where police and transit police take up to 25 youngsters for a weekend camp at the Echunga police training school. The Young Adults in Danger Program has also been effective in respect of affecting attitudinal changes in youngsters who get involved in vandalism and other misbehaviour in the transport system.

An interesting program known as 'Adopt a vandal' is being discussed where transit police identify a young vandal involved in vandalism recidivism. Officers pay particular attention to the offenders and visit them at their home, meeting their parents and embarking on a one-to-one pro-

gram in an effort to effect a complete change in the behaviour pattern of offenders.

Mr HAMILTON: I congratulate transit staff on their initiative in taking on vandals in a one-to-one situation, and I am heartened to hear of the attitudinal change of some vandals. I seek the number of community service orders that have been issued since they came into operation. How many hours of weekend work has been occasioned in each case in respect of these vandals? Although the Minister will have to take the question on notice, it is worth while that the public record reveal the number of occasions when CSOs have been issued and also the number of hours worked in cleaning up the mess that angers the overwhelming number of South Australians who travel on public transport.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will get those figures for the honourable member because there is no doubt that the program is working.

Mr HAMILTON: The Program Estimates refer to the STA's commitment to passenger safety and protection. Although this matter has been partly touched on, much publicity is being given to safety of passengers on STA rolling stock and property. What steps has the STA taken to improve security and what are its future plans?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The STA has undertaken several actions to improve security for passengers and crews. The STA transit squad has been increased significantly by 47 transit officers and comprises the following: one police inspector (who is with the Committee this afternoon), two police sergeants, four senior police constables, 23 special STA constables and 47 STA transit officers, making a total of 77 officers. In addition, there are nine security guards engaged in patrolling and monitoring STA depots and stabling areas. A further seven employees are involved in security services administration, inquiry work, prosecution and lost and found property.

During the past 12 months, the Transit Squad made 380 arrests and 838 reports and issued 465 transit infringement notices. Total apprehensions made by the Transit Squad amounted to 1 683, an increase of 400 or 31 per cent over the year 1989-90. A total of 415 juvenile offenders were introduced to the Young Adults in Danger program, a court initiative for children aged 10 to 16 years.

As has been touched on already, in July this year the Transit Squad patrols were decentralised as part of a strategy to more effectively deal with incidents on the transit system. Transit Squad patrol bases have been established at Elizabeth and St Agnes bus depots and the Noarlunga bus interchange. This move has proved very effective as it not only allows greater interaction between Transit Squad members and bus operators at their workplace, creating more opportunities to discuss local problems, but provides an increased uniform policing presence at known trouble spots and on regular problem bus routes.

Through decentralisation with a rapid increase in employment of transit officers, added patrol strength has been made available. On peak tasking, that is, the p.m. shift, seven Transit Squad patrols are now operational in the metropolitan area. Transit Squad supervisors' cars have recently been fitted with cellular telephones for improved communications in an effort to reduce the response time to incidents. Effectively through these changes to Transit Squad operations three additional mobile patrols are now on the road.

To improve security for passengers and employees at interchanges and stations, the following initiatives have been introduced: there is 24 hour monitoring of stations and platforms at Noarlunga and Salisbury interchanges for public safety; a help telephone that connects the public with

the security officer has been installed at Salisbury interchange, and another help telephone will be installed at the Noarlunga Centre in November 1991; use of guard dogs at interchanges on an as required basis; increased security of patrons' cars at interchange and station car parks; and improved lighting at suburban railway stations. Police Band concerts at Adelaide station will be held three or four times a year during which STA Transit Squad constables will distribute pamphlets on safe travel. In addition, subways are progressively being replaced by pedestrian crossings, which are less forbidding to passengers particularly at night. Extensive developments at the Adelaide station and environment over recent years as well as increased security has improved the image of the former gloomy station.

The following initiatives have reduced vandal attacks at depots overnight: security guards and guard dogs patrol most depots and stabling areas; improvement to perimeter fencing at depots; and the installation of electronic surveillance systems at Port Stanvac, Port Adelaide and Glengowrie depots. Other depots will follow. The STA has been working with the bus drivers union regarding the feasibility of installing security screens on buses and it has been agreed that pop-up screens will be introduced on certain buses. Of course, there are covert alarms on many STA buses, which allow operators who may be in distress access to transit officers, field supervisors and the South Australian police.

As has been mentioned, since the introduction of transit officers, the decrease in acts of vandalism, graffiti and assault on trains where transit officers operate has been quite remarkable. It has not cured the offenders but if they see a transit officer on a train they complete their journey quietly rather than play up. We have taken this issue of security extremely seriously. I do not believe there is a more serious issue in the STA or for the community as a whole and what I have outlined shows that the STA and, particularly, Inspector Schluter and his now greatly expanded squad are making a very real difference. The policy decision to increase the number of transit officers has, in my view, proved to be more than justified.

Mr HAMILTON: By way of a supplementary question, can the Minister advise what consultation exists between community groups in relation to their criticisms of travel on STA services? Is there a system whereby members of the public can contact the State Transport Authority? If so, can the Minister indicate that accordingly so I can disseminate that information to interested groups in my electorate?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will ask the General Manager of the STA, who is also its Chairperson, to respond and outline the number of avenues that are available to any of our passengers who have complaints. Before I do so, I point out that we have over 200 000 boardings per day and the level of complaint is very small. We are a mass transit system and, therefore, we will never achieve 100 per cent happiness amongst our clients. However, we do very well.

Mr Brown: The authority is regularly in touch with local councils and we get a lot of feedback from the public through the councils. The Transit Squad is closely involved in Neighbourhood Watch and we have our own Transport Watch, which is just an offshoot of Neighbourhood Watch. There are signs on all buses advising the public on how to make contact with the authority if they have any problems. We have the 'adopt a station' program, whereby one officer is constantly in touch with service clubs and organisations such as Rotary to encourage them to take a large part in advising the authority of what is going on in their area when it comes to public transport, whether it be vandalism, graffiti or complaints about services. The authority's attitude is to be as involved as possible and to be a good neighbour

in the community, which means constantly listening to what the public have to say.

Mr HAMILTON: I refer to page 214 of the Program Estimates and the statement 'the most efficient use of the resources of the authority'. With the need to have tickets prior to boarding trains, has the State Transport Authority investigated the possibility of trialling vending machines? What other steps has the STA taken to improve the availability of tickets to its customers? What proportion of tickets are now bought off vehicle? The Minister will recall my raising this with him in another forum where I suggested there was a need to have more venues for ticket sales, particularly amongst business houses and hotels.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The STA has undertaken a number of steps to trial ticket vending machines and extend the availability of ticket outlets. For assessment purposes, a ticket vending machine was leased from Crouzet Pty Ltd, the manufacturer of the STA ticketing system. The machine was installed at Modbury interchange in January 1990 but was vandalised on several occasions within a very short time. As a consequence of being broken into and suffering extensive damage, the machine was withdrawn from further service and the rental agreement was terminated. Four ticket vending machines from Autelca were delivered to the STA in July 1990 at a cost of \$320 000.

It had been intended originally to operate vending machines in the Elizabeth and Marion shopping centres but, because of doubts about adequate after-hours security in shopping centres following the Modbury interchange experience, the sale of tickets at those locations was later arranged through licensed ticket vendors. A machine has been installed at the Adelaide station concourse, and another will be installed at the customer services centre on the corner of King William and Currie Streets in late September. One or more further sites at interchanges or other city locations is being determined.

Secondly, an extensive network of licensed ticket vendors is now in place. At 6 September 1991 there were 464 licensed ticket vendors throughout the metropolitan and near country areas which, together with 180 post offices and agencies plus other outlets, gives a total of 679 off-board sales outlets. The main features of the LTV network are as follows: LTVs are principally small businesses located at or near bus stops or rail stations. Whilst they are mainly delicatessens or newsagents, each site is considered on its merits. All ticket types are sold by LTVs, who earn 2 per cent commission on sales. The commission covers the LTVs' administration costs of selling tickets and is not intended to produce a profit. The benefits for LTVs include the extra people that ticket sales bring into the shop. The LTVs have reported increased turnover from additional customers making other purchases whilst obtaining tickets. Bulk supplies of tickets are sold to LTVs through official post offices and consignment supplies of tickets are provided to each LTV.

In 1987 only 25 per cent of ticket value was bought off vehicle, thus putting a considerable load on bus, train and tram staff to provide the service. In October 1990 over 60 per cent of tickets were bought off vehicle, and this has occurred mainly since the introduction of Australia Post agencies and licensed ticket vendors. It is in the financial interest of intending travellers to buy their tickets before they board the vehicle—it is so much cheaper to do so. Multitrip tickets are cheaper again. It assists the STA in moving the vehicles rapidly rather than bus operators having to take time to issue tickets and take money. From a security viewpoint, having money on the buses, however small the amount, does attract the unfortunate element that society seems to have around at the moment. They feel that

they rather than the STA ought to have that money and are prepared to go to considerable lengths to get it.

All round, the more people buy off board the better. We have emergency arrangements for anybody who cannot buy off board for a particular reason when using our train services, and we will assist these people by issuing them with a pay later ticket or notice to enable them to pay over the next couple of days rather than not travel at all. If they approach the guard or transit officer on the train, they will certainly be well taken care of.

Mr SUCH: Do any transit police carry firearms whilst on duty?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: We do not discuss who carries firearms and who does not. We do not discuss the issue in Correctional Services either, as it is not an issue that ought to be made public. If any honourable members wish a private briefing, I will be pleased to speak to them.

Mr SUCH: Despite what the Minister says, the transit police do carry firearms and I find it hard to understand why that is necessary. Whilst I am happy to accept the Minister's private briefing, I would have thought it in the public interest for rail and bus passengers to know whether or not transit police carry firearms. I understand that they are armed, and I find it strange that that should be the case.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will respond on this important matter as I know that the member for Fisher is not trying to score points. The necessity or otherwise for carrying firearms by any police officer, special constable or transit officer is open to debate. We all remember with horror the recent death of a police officer at the Salisbury interchange. Certainly STA property is not immune to some extreme forms of violence that take place in our community.

Mr SUCH: I refer to Transit Link—a concept that I support in principle. Given that it is to be trialled first in my electorate from the Aberfoyle Hub to the city next year, how will the system be policed and what will be the penalties for people not carrying passengers in their motor vehicles? I understand that buses, taxis and cars carrying passengers will be allowed to use the priority lanes. What are the penalties and how will it be policed in respect of people who use the lanes designated for vehicles that carry more than the driver?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There has been no decision by the Government to introduce further 'bus only' lanes. I am very keen on it, not only on this route but also other suitable routes. The Department of Road Transport, along with the STA, is investigating all suitable routes. Except for those already established, it would be a very dramatic change. The 'bus only' lanes are exactly that and, apart from a bit of cheating that goes on around North Adelaide, they are generally well respected by drivers. The other serious and important issue is whether we ought to establish lanes similar to those overseas and indeed in New South Wales where not only buses but also high occupancy vehicles have a lane to themselves.

I support the concept in principle and believe that vehicles such as buses, taxis and cars with two or more passengers (beside the driver) could be trialled on a stretch of road to see how it would work in practice in South Australia. My impression is that there would not be sufficient traffic for that lane not to make it very tempting for people banked up and waiting in the other lane to use it. There would have to be a sense of fairness on the part of the motorist, as they would not quietly sit in one lane of a two-lane road whilst the lane on their left was empty. The time will come when it will be worthwhile. I am so keen on it that I am prepared to be adventurous in the not-too-distant future and try it on a suitable stretch of road. I may withdraw it

within 24 hours, but we will have to suck it and see. I hope that when we try it we have the support of everybody in the House.

Mr SUCH: As a supplementary question, I understood that part of the transit link proposal was these high occupancy priority lanes and that Goodwood Road was to be designated part of that in this first operation.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will ask the General Manager of the STA, John Brown, to enlarge further for the Committee.

Mr Brown: The concept of transit link is to speed up existing normal stopping bus services by reducing the number of stops. By allowing buses to move freely with the traffic, not necessarily on their own, we will be able to cut the journey time from Aberfoyle Hub to the city from about 65 minutes to 45 minutes, and that is quite a significant decrease. However, that will not require 'bus only' lanes or high occupancy vehicle lanes along Goodwood Road. We can achieve the same thing by an adjustment to traffic signals at the critical bottlenecks and by allowing the buses to, what we call, queue jump at signals. In Kent Town, in various parts of Hackney and in other parts of the city buses have priority only at signals, and by doing that we will be able to reduce travel time very significantly, as I have suggested. In some parts of Adelaide we will be suggesting the use of high occupancy vehicle lanes, but that is only to allow buses to reduce the overall travel time. It is one option; it is not the only option. There are other ways of decreasing that travel time.

Mr SUCH: Will taxis and cars carrying more than the driver be excluded or included in this proposal?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am trying to clear up some confusion, because I know that the member for Fisher is genuinely seeking information and not trying to score any points. No decision has been taken to have high occupancy vehicle lanes in Adelaide. It will be a very significant step to make that move. I believe it will be made at some stage in the future, but just when I am not quite sure—I suppose when a Transport Minister has the nerve to try it. Do not let us forget that about 80 per cent of the journeys done in Adelaide are done by private vehicles. I suspect that 99 per cent of those drivers of private vehicles see buses as just a nuisance impeding their flow. Do not let us ever kid ourselves that the overwhelming majority of people in Adelaide would give public transport the time of day, and not because they have any particular objection to public transport but they choose to use their car because they have private, comfortable, door-to-door travel reasonably cheaply.

One could be forgiven for thinking that Colonel Light designed this city for motor vehicles. We have a lot of car lovers out there, and I am not sure whether motorists would be prepared to queue for quite a considerable period of time in one lane while a high occupancy vehicle lane alongside them is relatively empty. But, at some stage some trials will take place on that.

Mr SUCH: Has consideration been given, or will it be given, to operating on the Bridgewater railway line a limited tourist school holiday service to Bridgewater?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Not by the STA or the Government.

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: I revert to the subject of graffiti about which questions have already been asked by the member for Albert Park. I might mention that his genuine humility prevented him from reading the additional line of that particular editorial of the *News* which said, 'Mr Hamilton is one politician who is earning his pay'. I am sure that it was only humility that prevented him from doing that.

An honourable member: Was that before or after the pay rise?

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: Well, it may be out of date, but that particular comment came from a source that is normally very hostile to all public figures, and when something like this comes from that direction it is very substantial praise indeed. However, the question I would like to address to the Minister is this: are there any really objective measurements of rates of graffiti here compared to interstate and over a period of time? I realise that it is the sort of data that would be very hard to collect on an objective basis. Most of the information that we have as a community has been gathered in the form of anecdotal evidence and the subjective impressions that we all have as people who use the bus system or who travel around through the community. I would be interested to know whether or not the rates of graffiti in Adelaide are roughly equivalent to those in cities interstate and perhaps overseas of comparable size. If not, can any difference be attributed, as it is in anecdotal evidence, to the free bus travel system? Was there an alteration in those rates of graffiti when the limitation in terms of times within which young people could travel was applied?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not know of any empirical evidence on this. I do know how one makes comparisons as regards overseas—although from looking at the TV news, I have seen nothing in Adelaide comparable to what one sees in some European cities. Whether we are just looking at the bad bits on the news I do not know. My impression is that Sydney and Melbourne have a problem that is as big a problem as we have in Adelaide. I spent a few days in Hobart a couple of months ago and my impression was that Hobart did not have the problem to the same degree as we have in Adelaide.

As regards free public transport for schoolchildren, there is some stronger evidence but it is mainly anecdotal; it was a definite 'Yes' that there was a quite significant increase. Whether that increase would have occurred anyway because it is fashionable at this time it is really not possible to say. There has certainly been an increase, but whether or not we can attribute it to free public transport I do not suppose we will ever know. As the honourable member is aware, free public transport for schoolchildren is being modified quite significantly. I would expect that if free public transport did cause all this increased graffiti, violence, vandalism, and all the other dreadful things that it was alleged to have caused, then we would see a remarkable drop in the crime rates come the end of this year. I will ask Inspector Schluter to give the Committee some evidence that may be more hard-based.

Inspector Schluter: The incidence of graffiti vandalism attacks on stabled railcars and buses at metropolitan bus depots has become negligible since increased security systems have progressively been put in place over the past 12 months. There has not been a single hard core graffiti attack on stabled rolling stock or buses in the past six months, and that has been a significant turnaround in the history of recent years.

Comparing that with the levels of attacks interstate, I am informed from discussion with my colleagues in other States that they face a much larger problem. They have not been able to overcome the very bad attacks in their stabling yards, as it appears we have been able to do in South Australia. In other countries this phenomenon is not yet abating and in Australia it seems that a far greater effort is being made to try to combat the problem than elsewhere around the world.

The link that is sometimes attempted to be made between free travel and graffiti does not seem to follow any reason-

ably predictable pattern. The levels of graffiti flow up and down at various times of the year depending on the climate and school holiday factors; so, it is difficult to draw a conclusive link between the free travel policy and graffiti levels.

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: The worst perpetrator in my immediate environment went around on his pedal bicycle inflicting damage on the neighbourhood. As a supplementary question, do transit guards or STA employees have in mind a personality profile of graffiti vandals who travel by public transport? Do they look out for particular age groups or dress style or anything of that nature that characterises graffiti vandals, and do the majority fit that profile?

Inspector Schluter: There appear to be about 200 to 300 young people, aged between 10 and 16 years, who wear baseball caps and basketball boots, who carry army style khaki knapsacks, and who generally come from a broken home—and by and large, from all strata of society. They are readily identified by their dress and the language that they use. Most of them are well known to the transit police, to whom they refer as 'toys'. They have a language and style of dress that fits in with the New York subculture that has been developing for about two decades.

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: Supplementary to that, what difficulties have been encountered in the past with the transit police not being in a satisfactory position to legally search the knapsacks of suspected graffiti vandals, and are any of the proposals under way likely to help?

Inspector Schluter: Certainly, any legislative assistance that would enable the transit police to search bags belonging to the people I have described on STA vehicles or property would be of great benefit in the reduction of graffiti.

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: I ask a further supplementary question, which would require a subjective opinion by Inspector Schluter but nevertheless would be worth hearing. Inspector Schluter mentioned that the majority of these graffiti vandals form part of a subculture comprised of a particular age group, and involving a dress style and vocabulary. Could a great deal of that behaviour be attributed to the way in which the mass media have carried the 'infection' from the United States to our shores and the way in which some elements of the mass media almost make heroes of some of these individuals?

Inspector Schluter: Certainly the phenomenon is carried on through the media. A number of heavy metal rock bands are admired and pursued by graffiti vandals, and a number of very popular films have been produced that highlight the problems of living in large cities and the gangs that form there. So, music, bands and films have all added to the phenomenon and kept it going. Generally, we find that, when publicity is given to graffiti through television or the print media in Adelaide, there is often a payback within days or weeks after that surge of media publicity.

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: As a final supplementary question, can any measures be taken other than a quick clean-up to try to protect bus shelters, which I gather are the most vulnerable of all targets associated with the STA?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: My understanding is that bus shelters belong to local councils, but railway stations obviously belong to the STA. We have a very successful program in 'adopt a station'. About 10 or 15 stations have been adopted already and many more are in the process of being adopted. That program is working well. I want to say a kind word about the member for Bright, who gave us a great deal of assistance in having one of the stations in his electorate adopted. It was very pleasing to see the way in which the community surrounding that station chipped in

and cleaned it up, and they have kept it clean ever since. So, it is certainly a worthwhile program.

Because bus shelters belong to local councils—and there are at least a couple of thousand of them—that is a much bigger and, in a way, more difficult program. It is up to local councils to try to organise some kind of an 'adopt a bus shelter' scheme or to target bus shelters for quick paint-overs as quickly as they can. One of the areas that gives us some concern, and with which we are having a little bit of difficulty but are overcoming, relates to fences of houses alongside STA property. We generally advise people in the vicinity that we are going to clean up their fence and ask them to contact us if they have any objection. No-one ever contacts us; so, I believe that the notification is a waste of time, money and effort. People are only too delighted to have their back fence painted by the STA. So, visually, from the point of view of our service, the graffiti is cleaned up. We try to keep on top of that problem, particularly along the Glenelg tramline and the O-Bahn.

Again, that has been a successful program, but it is expensive and it involves taxpayers' money. The sooner the fad goes away the better, because it is expensive and it takes up an awful lot of the time and resources that we would prefer to put into services, rather than into cleaning up after these idiots.

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: In relation to the reference in the Program Estimates to the transit ambassador program, what exactly is it? How effective is it? How many staff are still being put through that program?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The STA is implementing a customer service program which will improve its people knowledge, skills and awareness levels so that it will be able to provide a more friendly, neighbourly, effective and responsive service. By 30 August 1991, approximately 1 467 people had participated in the transit ambassador program. Feedback to date indicates that the program has been progressing very well, with the majority of employees believing that the program had assisted their becoming more focused on the need for improving the organisation's customer service image. Approximately 1 900 employees still have to participate in the program. This comprises approximately 900 operational staff, 950 support staff and approximately 50 managers/supervisors. This training will be conducted over the next two years and will be completed by the end of 1993.

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: In the Program Estimates at page 214 it is noted that the Hackney bus depot is to be replaced with a depot at Mile End and the area released for other purposes. What is the progress on the depot at Mile End? When will it be occupied and what will it cost?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Progress is going well. On 4 February this year, Cabinet approved the awarding of a contract for construction of the Mile End bus and maintenance depot to Baulderstone Pty Ltd. The depot is being constructed to provide up-to-date engineering facilities, staff amenities and to release the Hackney depot site for other purposes, as was stated in the Government's policy. Work commenced on site on 4 March 1991, and it has progressed generally in advance of the program. It is envisaged that the depot will be occupied in mid-1992. The total estimated cost of that depot is \$16.275 million. So, at this stage, it is ahead of schedule. Baulderstone and the STA are to be congratulated on the way they have got on with it. It will, of course, enable us to return a lot more land to parklands, which is highly desirable.

The CHAIRMAN: The Government has a social justice initiative in relation to the Elizabeth and Munno Para areas which is representative, in many respects, of the outer sub-

urbs, which are presently in zone 3—and, of course, similar situations would exist down south. In relation both to the issue of the concession fares for tertiary students, which is a slightly different question but which returns to the same fundamental issue and to passengers and commuters in general, there is some concern that those who are in the outer suburbs who, for reasons of social justice, are least able to afford the fares—especially when they are students attending tertiary institutions—are required to pay the highest level of fare because they are in zone 3. Has the Government given any consideration to flattening the fare structure? What social justice criteria are the Minister able to take into account when fixing fares, both for the tertiary students policy, which is to start next year, and also for passengers in general?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have already asked the STA to do some preliminary work on the consequences of flattening the fare structure, at least to two zones as opposed to three. I understand that 80 per cent of travellers are now in zones 1 and 2. I believe it is at least worth a look to see whether we can flatten it to zone 2. The Chairman is quite correct: there are some real justice questions here. A number of people who live in the outlying suburbs are economically disadvantaged—they are poor. I know they are called 'economically disadvantaged' but as we understand it they are poor—whether they are tertiary students or working for low wages or, indeed, whether there are no wages coming into the house at all.

We attempt to target as best we can those sections of the community, irrespective of where people live, to receive the greatest concession. As a base to my answer, I point out that we collect only about 25 per cent of the cost of running the public transport system through fares, so already there is a 75 per cent subsidy for everyone, irrespective of their means, who travels on the STA. If one is employed and lives in an outlying area, again there is a concession for that person. It is likely that those tertiary students who live in the areas to which the Chairman referred would be likely to be receivers of Austudy, so no change would occur in their provision for concession. That is more likely, but I cannot say that as a fact. However, commonsense would suggest that that is the case.

I think the principal point the Chairman makes in his question is valid, and it is one that I have already asked the STA to consider in relation to various options. I will be happy to have a community debate on that matter without it necessarily being Government policy. I have not discussed this matter with the Government, so I am not suggesting that it is Government policy. As soon as those figures are available, I will be happy to distribute details to anyone who is interested.

I think it is a very important point to recognise them—undoubtedly; the people who live in the outlying areas—and I am not suggesting that we take into consideration people who live in areas as outlying as where I live, but people who live in outlying areas of the metropolitan area suffer a disadvantage. Some people go to those outlying areas by choice, because some of them are beautiful and convenient places in which to live and for various other reasons. Those who have to travel into the city are no doubt at a disadvantage compared with those who live in zones 1 and 2. I will make those figures available to the Chair and, indeed, to anyone else who has an interest as soon as the STA has played around with the figures and seen what options are available.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the Minister indicate the statistics on the new tertiary fee proposal in relation to the number of students who will be eligible for a concession

fare as against the total number of students and whether the administrative costs will result in any significant saving for the STA after those costs have been deducted?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The savings are about \$2 million. However, again, these are estimates, and there is no way that we can say for sure. Precisely what it is depends on how many people make alternative arrangements and on how one costs the savings of, say, using fewer buses or whatever. These matters are never easy. Certainly, some savings will be made. I will provide the figures as we develop them, but my best estimate at the moment is \$2 million.

I point out that for 35 per cent—which I believe is the figure of tertiary students who receive Austudy—there will be no change. The 80 per cent of the travelling population who use the STA travel in zones 1 and 2. I suggest that for students the figure is probably higher than 80 per cent. The fare in zones 1 and 2 will still be comparable with concession fares available interstate. So, it is not as though the removal of the concession fare puts them at a significant disadvantage compared with their interstate counterparts, with the exception of Perth, which has a system that I do not understand, but the fares appear to be lower. So, the vast majority of our tertiary students will end up paying pretty much the same as those interstate, except for those who get the concession that we will tie to Austudy, and those students will be paying about half the concession fare interstate. That proves that our STA fares in Adelaide—even our full fares—are very low compared with some interstate fares.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: In relation to the contract that was won by Clyde Engineering in 1989 to build 50 new diesel electric railcars, does the 1989 estimate of the all-up cost of the railcars remain at \$143 million, or has that estimate been revised?

Mr Brown: Yes.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: As the first 10 of the 50 railcars were to be delivered this year, what is the reason for the first delivery being extended to May 1992?

Mr Brown: There was a delay in delivery of components from Europe to the supplier.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Supplementary to that, as the Minister advised the Estimates Committee in September 1989 that the contract with Clyde called for the railcars to be delivered at a specified rate over the period of the contract, does the contract provide for penalty provisions to be exercised against Clyde for the late delivery of the first railcar?

Mr Brown: Yes.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: What compensation or penalties are being sought?

Mr Brown: At this stage no penalties are being sought. That will be dealt with towards the end of the contract. The penalty applies to a specified rate of delivery over the duration of the contract. At this stage Clyde has advised the authority that it will pick up and make up the time that has been lost.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I have a further supplementary question. As the Minister advised the Estimates Committee, again in September 1989, that O'Connor and Son at Gepps Cross would be fitting out the railcars, employing 70 people on the project for five years, is the fitting out now to be carried out in South Australia, recognising that O'Connor and Sons went bankrupt and is no longer operating?

Mr Brown: The authority is negotiating with Clyde at the moment to determine its intentions in light of the fact that O'Connor and Sons is no longer in business.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: With regard to the new MAN buses, which will replace the 307 Volvo buses, are sales and lease-back arrangements being considered as the method of financing these new buses, or have such arrangements already been negotiated? If so, what are the terms and what are the names of the third parties with which the South Australian Financing Authority has negotiated the arrangements?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The short answer is 'Yes'. I will take the rest on notice. The South Australian Financing Authority does not come under me, and before I divulge any information, with an abundance of caution, I will ask the Treasurer to look at the question.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Is any consideration being given by the STA or the Government to the sale of the Aldgate bus depot?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: No, not at all. We have just appointed a new depot manager. She would be absolutely appalled if we sold the bus depot from under her. In fact, Mrs Gerry Clark is the first female depot manager in South Australia.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: What is the specific concern with service delivery leading to the STA adopting the target this year to improve the on-time running of vehicles? If that is a target for this year, does that mean there is a concern within the STA that services are not running to schedule at this stage?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That is a little bit of a parenthetical statement. I would have thought it is the intention of every public transport authority to increase the on-time running of vehicles. However, we do have some problems, particularly in the rail area in relation to track work on the Noarlunga line. I am sure that the member for Bright would be aware of it. So, from time to time, we have to upgrade our tracks, and so on, and it is completely unavoidable that occasionally timetables are disrupted.

It is exactly the same when we are reconstructing a road or when roadworks take place: private motorists and buses have their timetables thrown out. It is unavoidable, but the Noarlunga line is one of our prize lines and we like to keep it well maintained. It is a five-year program to upgrade the line. Our statistics will obviously show from time to time that the on-time running of our trains is not as good as we could hope. It demonstrates our commitment to our rail service that we spend these amounts on upgrading the track.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Is it management policy that drivers may be suspended if they are up to two minutes late?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will ask the General Manager to answer that question: without in any way pre-empting his answer, I would be surprised if it was not 'No'.

Mr Brown: No.

Mr McKEE: I refer to page 217 of the Program Estimates. Reference is made to a trial taxi-bus service in the Hallett Cove area in conjunction with the local council. What does the department intend in that area?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: We are attempting to get a trial under way in that area with local councils, but it is proving fairly difficult. However, it indicates some of the innovation. If we can get a decent trial operating, there is considerable scope for extending that to some other metropolitan areas, where the introduction of an STA bus service is just not warranted. Even the people who have lived there would concede that, but they would like something. I ask about this project constantly and I am always told that negotiations with local government are expected to be completed soon. I keep getting that information. However, as I ask with monotonous regularity, I will very publicly ask the

General Manager of the STA again where this project is up to.

Mr Brown: Only within the last week we have received correspondence from the Marion council enclosing a legal agreement, which we have now sent off to our solicitor for vetting. That is where we are at the moment; we have just received it from Marion.

Mr McKEE: My next question is in relation to the environmental effects of public transport. The Program Estimates state on page 214 that the State Transport Authority is investigating the use of compressed natural gas buses. What else is the STA doing to minimise the harmful effects of public transport on the environment?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I thank the member for Gilles for this question, because it is one that constantly concerns the STA and the Government. The STA has adopted a number of programs to minimise the effects of its operations on the environment. These all relate to a reduction in the effects of exhaust emissions. An extended advertising campaign has been conducted to acquaint passengers and car drivers with the benefits of the use of public transport over private motor vehicles, using the equation of 40 car emissions equalling one bus emission.

An extensive three-year project of tree planting has commenced, with the aim of planting and promoting others to plant sufficient trees to absorb the CO₂ emissions from the STA's fleet, and 75 000 trees have been planted by or for the STA by participating groups in the first year of the project. The present target is to achieve plantings of 325 000 trees over this period. In an effort to reduce exhaust emissions from vehicles, the STA has been conducting trials of 10 CNG powered buses in its fleet. As a consequence of the success of the trial, a significant number of new buses in the rear equipment program will be CNG powered. These vehicles have significantly reduced emissions compared with diesel powered vehicles.

Mr McKEE: My next question is related to page 210 of the Program Estimates. Can the Minister report on the reductions in staff levels that have occurred in the STA within the past two years?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Between 1986 and 1991 salaried staff members have been reduced by using voluntary retirements and separation schemes as well as natural attrition. The reduction in full-time equivalent salaried staff has been from 718 in June 1986 to 645.5 in June 1991, which is a net reduction of 72.5, or 10.5 per cent. The reduction would have been greater, but 32 transit officers were employed late in June 1991 and we are very grateful that they were. In the same period daily paid numbers reduced by 280, from 2 968 to 2 682, a reduction of 9.4 per cent, bringing the total staff reductions to 352.5. Head office staff numbers have reduced by 32.3 per cent since 1986 from 324 to 220. This compares very favourably with an overall staff reduction of 9.6 per cent, from 3 680 to 3 326.

Mr MATTHEW: My first question is in relation to page 217 of the Program Estimates and, in particular, the 'adopt a station' program. This question effectively follows on from a statement from the departmental Director that Apex groups and other community organisations are being approached by the STA to be involved in combating graffiti. With that context, I would like to quote very briefly from *Hansard* of 14 March this year, when the Minister said in response to a question:

The unions tell me about the volunteers from service clubs who want to come in and do another person's job and put them out of work. How would it be if I were to go and do their job and put them out of work? For volunteers, the painting over of graffiti at stations is only a pastime to make them feel good, whereas, for the workers employed to do that, this is their bread and butter. Would people in those service clubs like me to come

in and say, 'I'm volunteering to do your job'? So, we must appreciate the point of view of ordinary workers.

With that in mind and in view of the statements of the Director, has the Minister now undergone a change of mind and is he now prepared to endorse fully the successful involvement of volunteers and the continued involvement in programs such as 'adopt a station'? Further, will he acknowledge that it does not take work away from trade union members?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It is unfortunate that the member for Bright, perhaps due to time constraints, did not read out all the answer I gave. I made clear in that answer that discussions were continuing with the unions and, indeed, those discussions were fruitful. I do not know whether the unions are happy, but they now accept that the program is up and running and that it will continue. As regards taking away from union members, the answer is that, yes, it does. If we were to employ people to do this work, really, they would be paid and they would be union members.

So, the answer is that, yes, it does, and I think we have to acknowledge the cooperation that we have had from the Operative Painters and Decorators Union for this, because there is no question that, if we were to pay for it, it would reduce the number of unemployed and increase the membership of that union. In this day and age of unemployment, who can say that that would be a bad thing? The reality is that unless we have paid people standing by the railway stations all the time, having paid people would not achieve the aim—we would need an army of them.

It is not a question of putting on another six painters. If that would solve the problem, I am sure we would do it. That is not the problem; it is a much larger problem than that. As I said in response to an earlier question, the 'adopt a station' program is very successful. I am not sure whether the member for Bright was in the Chamber at the time, but I actually congratulated him; it will be there in *Hansard*. I would not want the member for Bright to spread it around, but it is a very good program. It is certainly not the practice of this Government to walk all over unions, and I do not believe we should. So, we do not say that we do not give a damn what they think and that we will do this; we do not operate that way. We try to talk through these things with them. We are usually successful—not always—and, at the end, as with this program, the Government has to govern. We try to talk these things through in a civilised way, apparently unlike the member for Bright. I think I should make a personal explanation the week after next and withdraw my congratulations.

Mr MATTHEW: My next question relates to ticket-selling machines on trains. How many of the ticket machines formerly used by guards on trains did the STA purchase; what was their cost; and what has been the fate of those machines? Have they been kept in storage, have they been sold or have they been disposed of as scrap?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The answer to that question is already on the record. I understand that members cannot be in the Committee all the time, so I am not being critical of the member for Bright. He probably had a substitute in at the time, but all that information is on the record.

Mr MATTHEW: In answer to a previous question during this Committee the Minister, or his delegate, identified the number of organisations or shops which are selling tickets. Has the STA undertaken an analysis of those shops compared to the railway stations? The reason I ask is that in my electorate there are eight railway stations and no convenient ticket sales outlets near any of them. One delicatessen near the Seacliff station has subsequently withdrawn the sale of tickets from its premises because it was costing too much.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There is no question but that the introduction of transit officers, who have been an absolute boon to the STA, has a down side; that is, they are security officers, not ticket sellers. As a Government we have been up front about that. We have attempted to have licensed ticket vendors in as many places as we can get them. With the post offices, it is now about 650 or 700, so it is quite extensive. However, there will be pockets in the metropolitan area where at times it can be inconvenient. We have made provision for that through the 'pay later' scheme. A rail traveller who cannot buy a ticket has only to approach the transit officer or guard on the train and in genuine cases arrangements will be made.

I think it is obvious that everybody who travels on a train goes somewhere else. It may be that if they are going into the Adelaide railway station they can buy a ticket or a multitrip, or whatever—it just takes a little thought. On many of the larger systems throughout the world one cannot buy a ticket on the train. Therefore, it is not unique to Adelaide.

I would like to have machines on every train and every station, whether that station is staffed or not. The only problem is that, as we all know, they would not last 24 hours. Even on the train, where there would be some supervision, I could tell the Committee now how to ensure that after I have used the machine nobody could use it. All these people who take great delight in vandalising property know the procedure very well. It is an extraordinarily difficult thing to do, but, as soon as we can get a machine with some degree of certainty that it will not be vandalised and will therefore be cost effective, we will introduce it. I give that undertaking, but I cannot say when it will be, because I do not know when a machine will be available which is both cost effective and as near vandal proof as we could hope for.

Mr MATTHEW: The Minister has stated that machines probably would not last beyond 24 hours. We have also heard answers in this Committee today that possibly screens will be put around some bus drivers, that guards with dogs will be patrolling depots and some car parks and that transit squad officers may be carrying guns, if they are not already doing so. I appreciate that this goes beyond the Minister's portfolio to a considerable extent, but has he been communicating with the Minister of Emergency Services and other appropriate Ministers with a view to looking at extra support for these society-wide problems and ensuring that proper deterrent penalties are put in place to help the STA with these problems?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The short answer is 'Yes'. Cooperation with the Department of Emergency Services is evident by Inspector Schluter's presence here and his squad in the STA. He is a sworn police officer, as are many of our transit squad officers. It is a broader question, as the member for Bright said, and it should more properly be directed to the Minister of Family and Community Services, the Attorney-General or the Minister of Emergency Services. I take the point that it is a society-wide problem; it is not just an STA problem. I regret the comment made by the member for Bright about having heard today of transit officers carrying guns. The only comment we have heard today about transit officers carrying guns has come from his own side. I thought it was a quite unnecessary question and one that could have been directed either to myself or to Inspector Schluter privately.

Mr MATTHEW: I should like to ask one further question supplementary to my second question. How many transit squad officers are from the South Australian Police Force and how many are from the STA?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Again, we are fortunate to have Inspector Schluter to give the information to the Committee.

Inspector Schluter: The South Australian Police Department component in the transit squad is as follows: one inspector, two sergeants and four senior constables.

Mr MATTHEW: I refer to the losses by the State Transport Authority with respect to its rail operations, and further refer to an article I saw in *Australian Business* recently, on 28 August 1991, which provided a table that compared all States of Australia and their metropolitan transport. That table provided me with some concern because it showed the subsidy of different States towards their metropolitan transport systems. For rail, it showed that New South Wales has a 56 per cent subsidy, 60 per cent in Victoria, 63 per cent in Queensland, 71 per cent in Western Australia, 54 per cent in Tasmania, and a comparatively large 110 per cent in South Australia, with an Australian average of 61 per cent. Has the Minister's department been examining methods in other States to determine why our subsidy is so much greater than theirs, and ways that we may in fact be able to streamline our services to make them equally efficient?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It has very little to do with efficiency. As I outlined earlier, the efficiencies over the past five years achieved in the STA have been quite dramatic. It is not the efficiency of the management of the system that is the problem. The problem is the configuration of Adelaide and the competition that rail has in Adelaide, particularly from buses in the STA. We have the absurd situation of some trainlines having buses run down both sides of them.

Mr MATTHEW: Why?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I often ask myself that, but I can assure members that if we make any attempt to remove any of those buses (and the honourable member ought to be on my side on this) or attempt to close down stations where in some cases there is a bus stop at the end of the station—and that would be the sensible thing to do—some of the honourable member's colleagues would object and would object violently, as would some of mine.

Mr SUCH interjecting:

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That is right, against me. It is absurd! If we had *carte blanche* with stations, we could run our trains far more quickly and far more efficiently, particularly from the areas of the member for Bright and the Chairman, and get more patronage. Maybe it will have to be a slow process of gradually running more and more express, with less and less stopping. Some train stations are only 500 or 600 metres apart. It really is asking too much of rail. If the member for Bright will give me a copy of that article, I will attempt to have it analysed, and I am sure that the information will be interesting to all of us.

One of the points to be made is that we recover through fares a very small proportion of the cost of running the STA—not that the STA is any more expensive to run than its counterpart in Perth or any other comparable city, but we do not charge the fares that other areas do. If one compares the fares with those in Europe, no wonder people come back to Adelaide and tell us that the public transport system here is very cheap. Compared with that in the UK, it is extraordinarily cheap. People there boast on the profit they are making on rail, and I am not surprised with the fare charged, but we make a deliberate decision not to do that. It is a socially responsible decision. Nevertheless, I am not quite sure how one could get a 110 per cent subsidy. I would have thought if you subsidised the lot, the maximum

you could go to would be 100 per cent, but I will look at the figures and see whether I can make sense out of them.

Mr MATTHEW: The Minister has been open in his reply, and I appreciate that. He has identified generally that there are some bus services that run down either side of rail services. Have those services been identified and are moves afoot to rationalise those services in the immediate future?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: They have certainly been identified. You have only to sit in the train from Dry Creek and watch the buses running alongside. For somebody who has to try to make the system at least not lose as much, it is quite galling. There is no doubt that people in Adelaide are used to a very high level of service and choice. If they have always had the choice of the train at, say, Ovingham, with buses on either side of the train, they want to keep it that way. If you mention closing down Ovingham station, all hell will break loose, but it is costing time for people coming in from the north.

We are having a proper study done of this, and of the benefits of closing down some of the stations—not taking out the trains but closing down some of the stations—where there is an alternative bus. I can tell members that, when the study is done and finished, essentially these decisions must be taken by members of Parliament, and members on both sides will have a great deal of difficulty if their local station is targeted for closure, even when many times nobody uses it.

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

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

Correctional Services, \$69 396 000
Works and Services—Department of Correctional Services, \$22 763 000

Chairman:

Mr M.J. Evans

Members:

Mr H. Becker
Mr K.C. Hamilton
Mrs D.C. Kotz
Mr C.D.T. McKee
Mr R.B. Such
The Hon. J.P. Trainer

Witness:

The Hon. Frank Blevins, Minister of Correctional Services.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr J. Dawes, Executive Director, Department of Correctional Services.

Ms B. Fergusson, Acting Director, Support Services.

Mr I. Winton, Director, Resource Services.

Mr R. Durant, Director, Community Corrections.

Mr K. Goulter, Chief Finance Officer.

The CHAIRMAN: Has the Minister an opening statement?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes. The Department of Correctional Services is continuing to experience increased client numbers in prisons and in the community correctional programs available as an alternative to imprisonment. The daily average number of prisoners increased by 9 per cent

over the previous year whilst a 10 per cent increase was recorded in the number of orders commenced under alternative programs.

There were a number of continuing changes during the year in prison facilities. The most significant of these were:

The redevelopment of the Port Augusta Gaol continued and by 1994 the prison will be capable of accommodating 192 high, medium and low security prisoners and persons on remand awaiting further court appearances.

Accommodation at Yatala Labour Prison was enhanced with the commissioning of 'F' division, which is a high security prison block comprising 95 cells.

The construction of additional low security accommodation for male prisoners commenced at Northfield Prison complex (20 beds) and at Cadell training centre (32 beds).

In February 1991 a regional officer took up residence at Marla and will lead a team of staff in the provision of services to the Pitjantjatjara lands, Coober Pedy and surrounding areas. The Marla Community Correctional Centre was formally opened in July 1991 and it completes a three-year plan to provide community based programs for tribal Aboriginal people in the Far North of the State. It also marks a major Government commitment to meet recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

Strategies designed to enhance the role of the correctional officer in line with structural efficiency have been pursued during the year. New prison organisational structures have been developed for each prison through consultation with staff representatives, the Public Service Association and local prison management. The development of these new structures was further augmented by the involvement of the Danish prison consultant Mr Erik Anderson. Mr Anderson spent six weeks in South Australia during September and October 1990, meeting with staff to discuss changes which have enhanced the role of correctional officers in Denmark.

Trials of the new structures have commenced at the Adelaide Remand Centre, Yatala Labour Prison and Northfield Prison Complex. It is expected that these changes will achieve more efficient work practices, flatter staff structures and more positive interaction between correctional officers and prisoners.

The processes associated with structural efficiency in the department saw a significant effort toward the redesign of work practices. It is considered that the department is at the leading edge in developing initiatives which are consistent with the structural efficiency principles. These aims are complemented by a corporate restructuring exercise which has occurred in the department's head office.

The final report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody was released in May 1991. It is noteworthy that many of the relevant recommendations referred to matters that are already in place in South Australia. Most significantly, the department has implemented the Aboriginal Visitors Scheme and has introduced cultural awareness training for new recruits.

Workers compensation was an issue of concern to the Committee last year when a premium increase of some \$6 million was levied upon the department. At that time I explained the elements making up the premium amount and identified the unusual aspects associated with the increase. I am now pleased to report to the Committee that significant progress has been made in reducing the cost of workers compensation in the department. From an overall budget allocation of \$7.5 million, the actual result was \$4.7 million—a very pleasing outcome. The department is confident that this result will continue to improve during this financial year and early budget outcomes confirm this.

A number of significant initiatives were undertaken to control the incidence of workers compensation claims:

Two rehabilitation coordinators, a corporate health coordinator and a workers compensation claims administrator were appointed during the year. The primary role of the two rehabilitation coordinators is to assist staff to return to work following a recompensable injury.

The critical incident debriefing service has continued and is a valuable service to staff who have been involved in traumatic events.

A staff visitation scheme commenced at Yatala Labour Prison. This program allows staff who are absent on workers compensation to be kept informed of developments at work and has assisted the return to work process. Attention has been given to the manner in which the department manages its sick leave and these practices were the subject of a report by the Auditor-General during the year. Initial comparisons with other States and agencies suggest that the department's performance in relation to the incidence of sick leave is on a par with, or better than, similar agencies.

The department will continue its development into the 1991-92 financial year. The new head office structure will result in the complete merger of the two operating divisions (community corrections and operations) into a new Offender Services Division.

This new structure will encourage senior operational managers in head office to take a corporate attitude when developing strategies, goals and policies. In doing so, it will ensure close integration between program development and the corporate directions of the department.

Wide consultation with staff is currently taking place and it is intended to implement the new structure from 1 October 1991. The commissioning of additional low security accommodation at Northfield Prison Complex, Cadell Training Centre and Port Augusta Prison will assist the prisoner assessment and placement functions. The brief for the replacement prison at Mount Gambier is to be completed as part of the department's capital works program for 1991-92. Work will continue on the major redevelopment of the Port Augusta Gaol.

It is planned to relocate the Ceduna Correctional Centre to a larger premise which is a refurbished Government-owned building. Efforts are continuing to locate a suitable city building to accommodate the Adelaide Correctional Centre and the Parole Board.

The recurrent budget for 1991-92 provides \$69.396 million for the Department of Correctional Services, while the capital works allocation is \$22 763 million—a total of just over \$92 million. This compares with outlays of about \$83 million in 1990-91 and reflects the Government's ongoing commitment to correctional issues in South Australia.

Mr BECKER: Over the years we have heard many announcements by the Minister about activities within correctional services, but the people of South Australia and taxpayers are becoming concerned about the number of incidents reported from time to time within our prison system. The behaviour of prisoners is not expected to be the behaviour of docile people because their privileges have been withdrawn from society, yet the Government has fallen over backwards to help prisoners in many respects by spending more than \$75 million in upgrading accommodation.

It has engaged additional staff. The Government has provided additional resources in order to combat problems within our prisons, yet I have still to see any worthwhile or meaningful rehabilitation programs. I have yet to see any real attempt by the Government, in this respect, particularly over the past four or five years, during which the incidence

of drugs and alcohol within our prisons has been highlighted. Unfortunately, there have been incidents when deaths have resulted in our prisons. On one occasion prisoners were out in the exercise yard, a circle formed, it went into a tighter gathering and the prisoners withdrew and a body was left on the ground. Nobody really knows what happened. No-one is admitting anything. What an unfortunate incident that was.

Then we have the situation as reported in the media of a prisoner dying from a drug overdose in one of our institutions. There is also the admittance of alcohol at Mobilong Prison a few days ago. There is something wrong within our correctional services system. There is something wrong with the department, there is a lack of administration by the Minister and there is something wrong with his ability to enforce the discipline in the prison system that is expected by the taxpayers of South Australia.

Last financial year some \$84 million was expended on the Correctional Services Department. It is an unfortunate cost to the community for those who will not behave. Of that amount, \$48.5 million went to wages, salaries and related payments. In other words, almost 70 per cent of the budget is taken up in wages and salaries. About 6.5 per cent of that amount or approximately \$3 million goes in call-back fees. Some years ago the Public Accounts Committee reported on the activities of the Correctional Services Department and the high incidence of call-back fees. I believe it was about \$2 million. It is now up to \$3 million. Nothing is being done about it. Nothing is being done to try to curb this additional cost within our prison system, which may reflect the stress on staff. It may also reflect on the behaviour of the offenders themselves.

We cannot expect the taxpayers to keep meeting these costs if something is not done to enforce a greater degree of discipline within Correctional Services. On average it costs \$69 000 a year to look after a prisoner in our system. That is \$1 326 a week or about \$189 a day. That is more than the average pensioner receives in income a week. Is it any wonder that the taxpayers of this State are concerned at the high cost of keeping offenders in our institutions? At Mobilong Prison, the cost is \$66 000 a year or \$1 154 a week for a medium security institution. Yet a few days ago an incident occurred in which the allegations are that the prisoners were able to get hold of alcohol, have a party and, of course, misbehave.

Last year in another incident a mother took her two children to see their father in prison and the children were physically examined by a police officer. The police officer looked inside the children's clothing. On one hand visitors to prisoners are harassed by this type of inspection because someone alleges that they might be carrying drugs; yet on the other hand the prisoners are able to have a party. That is the only way in which people can construe what is going on in Mobilong.

How many incidents involve alcohol or drugs in prisons? Who is bringing them in? What checks are made to prevent the incidence of drug use? On occasions, relatives of offenders are inspected and searched, but what about other people who visit prisons? What about people who bring in supplies? There is also a question mark about the staff, unfortunately, because these incidents are happening too frequently. Indeed, as far as I am aware, they have happened for the past five years within the Correctional Services Department. I do not want to reflect on the staff; they have a terrible job. But something has to be done. In a report to the Select Committee on the Penal System in South Australia, the Executive Director of the Department of Correctional Services stated:

The drug subculture and the money available to purchase drugs has had a major impact on how prisoners behave, prisoner risk-taking behaviour and the development of prisoner gangs. This is leading to many more acute problems of management.

The death of a prisoner at Mobilong this week was attributed to an overdose of drugs. Yet 12 months ago Cabinet approved a three-pronged attack on drugs in prisons similar to what is already in general use in most other States of Australia, that is, random sampling of prison population, on any day, unannounced. It is a blind sample targeting individuals and institutions. The present system used in South Australia, where urine testing is now done in the context of a contract with a prisoner, is archaic and totally unhelpful. Why has the Minister been so slack in allowing a major problem area to drift along without responsible action being taken? As the Minister said yesterday, drugs are brought into the prisons. By whom? What is the Minister doing?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: If that was a question, I will obviously have to spend the rest of the evening answering the nonsense that the member for Hanson—

Mr BECKER interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Chair assumed it to be an opening statement that concluded with a question.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It would take us the rest of the evening to go through the comments made by the member for Hanson, who seems excitable this evening. I think we are in for an interesting night. I will not respond to all the comments made in the opening statement; suffice to say that everybody but the member for Hanson acknowledges that South Australia has the best Correctional Services Department, the best community correction programs and the best run prisons in Australia, at least, and in most countries in the western world. That is not just our opinion, it is the opinion of national and international experts.

The fact that the member for Hanson can remember some incidents occurring in our prisons points to that fact, very clearly, that incidents in South Australia are memorable, and that is because they are infrequent. If the member for Hanson had an interest in this matter, he would be aware of the number of incidents in other jurisdictions. I am sure that his memory is good enough to recall the daily incidents that occurred between 1979 and 1981. My memory is good and, during this evening, I intend to detail some of those incidents to the Committee. Those whose memories are failing will welcome my refreshing them.

The only statement in the opening diatribe of the member for Hanson that was correct was that people take drugs into gaol. Prisoners do not go out, buy them and come back. They are taken in. The only way to prevent that is to strip search and internally search every person who goes into that gaol, whether they be employees, contractors, visitors—male, female, old or young—chaplains, social workers, lawyers, members of Parliament or the Minister. Everyone who goes in would have to be strip searched, including an internal search. Then someone would have to search the searchers. That is the only way we would have any chance of eliminating the problem or at least bringing it down to isolated incidents. The community would not tolerate that, and properly so.

The alternative is to completely isolate prisoners, at least from visitors, whether they be lawyers, family, friends and so on. That means no contact visits, erecting screens and having only telephones as a means of communication between the prisoner and anybody from outside other than a prison officer. I do not believe that the community would tolerate that, so we are gradually moving down the scale of what measures we can take. I will certainly go through some of the measures that we employ to detect drugs in our

prison system. For the member for Hanson to suggest that we can totally prevent drugs going into gaol is something on which I welcome his comments, as they would be helpful.

Mr BECKER: I am waiting for the Minister to answer the question. I asked him whether the present system in South Australia, where urine testing is done in the context of a contract with a prisoner, is archaic and totally unhelpful. Why has the Minister been so slack in allowing a major problem area to drift along without responsible action being taken? The Minister admitted that drugs are brought into prisons. What is being done with regard to urine testing in prisons?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I assumed that that was part of the honourable member's opening comment. I thought that the question related to who brings drugs into gaols. I apologise to the member for Hanson if I got it wrong.

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER interjecting:

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I think so, but clearly the memory of the member for Hanson is different.

The CHAIRMAN: Regardless of the opening question, we have a supplementary question and I ask the Minister to address it.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Quite clearly the Government does not condone drugs in gaol. A number of programs have been undertaken in an attempt to keep drugs at an absolute minimum. I gave notice prior to the Parliament rising for the Estimates Committees that I would be amending the Correctional Services Act to provide for a regime of urine analysis, such legislation to be introduced on Tuesday or Wednesday week. It will give us the opportunity to target individuals who we believe are taking drugs but hitherto have been unable to prove it. It will also allow us to close down a prison and take a snapshot of it at any time to ascertain the incidence of drug use within the prison, which again will be useful.

One of the most useful things about it is that it will enable us to identify more prisoners with a drug problem. They are all released eventually (except for the odd few who die in gaol), and it is in the interests of society to identify those people and try to get them into a drug program so that they use their time in gaol as an opportunity to overcome their drug problem. Urine analysis will be invaluable for that purpose. It has been estimated by the Police Commissioner that about 60 per cent of crime in South Australia is, in one way or another, drug related, so it is not surprising that an overwhelming majority of our prisoners have a drug problem of some kind.

As honourable members know, drug problems are difficult to deal with. There are searches by our prison officers, and their vigilance is our first and primary line of defence. We also have random searches of cells and individuals. The dog squad can suddenly appear outside a cell and the dogs can go over it searching for drugs. The same procedures that exist here apply in all other gaols. Of course, we cannot prevent drugs entering our gaols unless we stop contact visits and take extraordinary measures with our employees.

The Drug and Alcohol Services Council, along with the Department of Correctional Services, has a comprehensive drug program. Probably the best part of 200 prisoners are in the program. We have a methadone replacement program and the doctors who work for the Health Commission have the power to prescribe methadone where appropriate. It is a good, comprehensive and well rounded regime for keeping drugs out of prison, and it also deals with prisoners who have a drug problem.

In South Australia, unlike any other system I know, we have a completely open prison system. Any member of Parliament can enter any of our gaols at any time and look

at what they like. We also have few restrictions on the media. The only restrictions are consistent with security and the non-payment of prisoners for interviews. If journalists want to wander around the prisons, take photographs, record TV programs or talk to whom they like, they are free to do so.

That is a tremendous advantage, although other Ministers do not agree with me and think that it gives the media too much to write about. I do not believe that that is the case. Having an open prison approach whereby incidents are published in the annual report, including details in respect of how many and what type of drugs are found, makes for a very rounded system. I welcome the member for Hanson taking more interest in the system. I can certainly have the department take him around to look at what we do and attempt to do, and the same applies to anyone who chooses to go with him.

Mr BECKER: How many incidents concerning drugs and alcohol, including home brews, were recorded in the prisons in the 1990-91 financial year? What is being done to stop or reduce such incidents? Does the Minister acknowledge that correctional officers are prime suspects in the prison drug trade? Will the Minister introduce legislation to allow for correctional officers to be subject to urine analysis?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The incidence of drug detection in our prisons is contained in the annual report, which is available to the honourable member. As to whether I believe that prison officers are prime suspects: no, I do not believe so, as I have no evidence on which to base such a belief. To the best of my knowledge, in recent years—and possibly never—there has been nothing proved against a prison officer in this State in respect of taking drugs into prisons. I have nothing on which to base any kind of belief that prison officers are prime suspects. Given that, I see no reason for special legislation targeting prison officers for urine analysis: I cannot see the purpose of it. Any crime that they commit in this regard would relate to taking drugs into prison, and we have plenty of laws against that. With regard to the question of what we are doing about it, I think I have covered that matter. I would be happy to go through it again, but I think it might be a bit tedious.

Mr BECKER: I ask a supplementary question. The Minister mentioned that the incidence of drugs and alcohol use, including home brews, was contained in the annual report. When was that report released?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not think that this year's report has been released, but those matters are itemised in graphic detail in every report.

Mr BECKER: It is now 25 September and I am seeking figures up to 30 June 1991. Surely those figures must be available.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: We have the figures, but it is more convenient if the honourable member waits for the annual report.

Mr BECKER: I do not wish to wait for the report. I ask the Minister to provide those figures now. He has them, so he can release them to the Committee.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: If the honourable member feels so strongly about this matter, as a special favour to him I will give him an early preview before the annual report is printed.

Mr BECKER: I want those figures now. I do not understand why those figures cannot be supplied now.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! It is up to the Minister when, how and if he releases the figures but I assume that, if the Minister intends to do that, he will do so before 4 October by way of insertion in *Hansard*.

Mr BECKER: I think the Minister is covering this up. He is holding onto those figures as long as he can. I do not believe that any Minister or departmental head would not have those figures now. I believe that they would be provided on a regular basis. If those figures were not reported to head office by the seventh day of each month, there is something wrong. There is no doubt that the Minister is sitting on those figures for a particular reason, probably because of the incidents at Mobilong in the past few days. How many prisoners were detected with HIV in 1991, and what precautions are being taken to separate prisoners with AIDS so that they cannot spread the virus through the prison population and/or be a threat to correctional officers?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The question of HIV in prisons is a matter for the Minister of Health, who runs the prison medical service. That service is not run by my department, so I think it would be appropriate to direct any inquiries to the Minister of Health.

Mr BECKER: Surely, the Minister knows what is happening in the prisons.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Hanson has asked his question. He must give the Minister an opportunity to respond.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Acting on advice from the Health Commission we have a regime for prisoners with a communicable disease. There is a departmental instruction on that regime, which I will be very happy to forward to the member for Hanson, but I repeat that we do not supply medical services—the Health Commission does that—and, if the honourable member wants to know anything about the health status of prisoners, I suggest that he direct his questions to the Minister of Health.

Mr McKEE: On page 223 of the Program Estimates, details are provided of the number of clients undertaking community correction programs. Will the Minister indicate the types of work undertaken in the community and comment on the effectiveness of the community services alternative to imprisonment?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The scope of community work undertaken must lie within the guidelines set out in section 17c of the Correctional Services Act 1982. The legislation ensures that the community work undertaken by offenders does not displace persons being paid to perform work. The work undertaken ranges from garden maintenance for pensioners, grounds and playground construction, repair and maintenance of kindergartens and schools, community centres and local parks, and similar activities in national parks.

Community service offenders have worked on local museum projects, both directly and with support organisations. An ongoing project, the SteamRanger, is contributing to the tourist industry of the State. More recently, negotiations have been undertaken with the STA to participate in the removal of graffiti from STA property and equipment. This will be a long-term project. The success of the service can be demonstrated by the fact that in most areas requests for offenders to participate in work projects are outstripping the ability of the department to provide labour.

Its second measure of success is that in the 1990-91 financial year 69 per cent of persons on community correction programs involving an element of community service have completed the number of hours ordered by the court. In the 1990-91 financial year, over 300 000 hours of unpaid community work were completed. Based on the gross weekly rate of \$295.60 for unskilled workers supplied by the Department of Labour, the wage value of community work performance for 1990-91 would be in excess of \$2 million.

Mr McKEE: The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody is referred to on page 223 of the Program Estimates. Will the Minister provide details of funding for 1990-91 for each initiative and indicate what progress has been made to address the issues for which funding was provided? What further action has been taken within the department to address the final report of the Royal Commissioner?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Action has been taken on all relevant recommendations of the interim report by the Department of Correctional Services. An amount of \$205 000 was provided in 1990-91 towards the fine default option. Persons who have been directed to pay a fine may choose to pay or apply to expiate the fine by undertaking community service. The department now has a physical presence in Marla, as I mentioned in my opening statement, and will provide a community service fine option alternative to people living within tribal homelands.

An amount of \$135 000 was provided in 1990-91 for Marla. An amount of \$55 000 was provided for specialist training for Aboriginal persons, to utilise outside agencies to increase the number of Aboriginal recruits, and to improve their retention and progression through the promotional ranks. A total of \$530 000 was made available to develop procedures to provide a mechanism to screen existing staff and potential recruits for racist attitudes and to provide appropriate training to eliminate such abuse.

An amount of \$236 000 was available in 1990-91 towards the provision of improved training at induction and updating training of existing staff to identify prisoners at risk of death through illness, injury or suicide. In 1990-91, \$167 000 was available to enable the department to provide refresher training in resuscitation techniques and equipment use. An amount of \$70 000 was available for training in Aboriginal culture to enable the department to provide training and retraining of all officers to enhance their ability to work and communicate effectively with Aboriginal people.

The program is seen as innovative in its field, and other States and Federal agencies have indicated an interest. The next phase is to enhance the ability of staff to work with Aboriginal offenders. An amount of \$55 000 was provided for interagency coordination of medical, psychiatric and dental services to prisoners and to ensure that appropriate records are readily available.

The Aboriginal visitors scheme has been in operation in the department since 1990. An amount of \$60 000 was available in 1990-91 to support the scheme. In relation to the final report of the royal commissioner, the department has implemented 20 recommendations. A further 37 recommendations are supported and can be implemented without additional resources. A further three recommendations have been identified as requiring resource allocation; however, the department will look to reallocate resources from within existing funding levels.

Mr McKEE: My first question related to community service clients and the type of work undertaken in the community. In a similar vein, will the Minister provide comparisons between the cost of supervising an offender on the community service order scheme and the cost of maintaining a prisoner in departmental institutions?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The average cost of maintaining a prisoner in departmental institutions in 1990-91 was \$69 000. This level of cost results from the need to fully accommodate and supervise a prisoner for 24 hours a day, seven days a week in a range of security rated institutions. The community correction option, whereby offenders are required to attend for a limited period of time each week, is a much cheaper alternative. In 1990-91 the total cost of

the community order scheme was \$1.591 million to supervise just over 300 000 hours of community service. A total of 3 158 orders was successfully completed. However, the proportion of these offenders who would have been subjected to custodial sanctions had the program not been in place is unknown.

Mrs KOTZ: In answer to the member for Hanson's question as to whether the Minister acknowledged that corrections officers are prime suspects in the prison drug trade, I believe the Minister said that never, in the history of the State, had it been the case that corrections officers had been suspect. I would question whether the Minister was misleading this Parliament. As was reported in the *News* of 25 January 1991, three corrections officers from Yatala were charged with producing and selling cannabis. I believe that one officer was sentenced to 10 months gaol. Will the Minister comment on that?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am not sure that I am here to comment, other than in response to comment but, if the member for Newland examines *Hansard*, she will find that I said, 'within my experience, and to the best of my memory, no prison officer had been convicted of taking drugs into prison'. The fact that a prison officer may, in his own time, be involved in drugs is unfortunate, and obviously that has been dealt with by the police. If the honourable member is saying that prison officers are prime suspects for taking drugs into prisons—as the member for Hanson did—I think, in all fairness to prison officers, she would have to have some evidence on which to base that. To the best of my knowledge, there is no evidence of any prison officer being convicted of taking drugs into the prison.

Members interjecting:

Mrs KOTZ: Three correctional officers—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister is answering the question.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Given that prison officers, the same as members of Parliament, in my view are entitled to their integrity, if the member for Newland wishes to join the member for Hanson (who already has) in stating that prison officers ought to be prime suspects for taking drugs into the gaol, that is up to her. However, I have no evidence at all before me that would warrant such a statement.

Mrs KOTZ: As a supplementary question, were the three officers (and the Minister believes it is not within his opinion to consider that perhaps there should be a suspicion in this area) sentenced for those particular offences, for how long, and have they all been suspended from the department?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The member for Newland has the *News* report as to what happened to these people: they misbehaved in their private time and they were dealt with according to law. They all resigned from the Department of Correctional Services, and I am not quite sure what more there is to say.

Mrs KOTZ: As a point of clarification, the Minister did say that they all resigned from the department?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes.

An honourable member: Why weren't they sacked?

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Newland.

Mrs KOTZ: What is the Government's policy with respect to the employment of correctional service officers in so far as they may have convictions? Does the department have officers who have convictions? If so, how many, in what areas are they employed, and what sort of convictions do they have?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Certainly, some prison officers have had convictions for various offences. I do not have the details here. If the member for Newland wants me to

get those details and give them to her privately, I will—if it is appropriate. I will check the privacy provisions that apply as regards the dissemination of personal information. However, within that constraint, I will certainly give to the honourable member privately as much information as I have or can find. If, on the other hand, the member for Newland wants me to put that information in *Hansard*, again, subject to all the appropriate privacy provisions, I will do that.

It seems to me that we have been going now for about 45 minutes and there has been a pretty sustained attack on prison officers, which I think is unfortunate. Prison officers do one of the most difficult jobs in our community; overwhelmingly they do it professionally. It is regrettable that the Liberal Party chooses to attack them in this way without any shred of evidence at all—that, first of all, they are taking any drugs at all in the gaol. Now, because a prison officer or any other individual may have a conviction some years ago in their past, they want to parade that through the Parliament. I am not quite sure what prison officers have done to members opposite to warrant such an attack. Nevertheless, if the information is available—subject to the qualification I have made—I will certainly make it available to the member for Newland.

Mrs KOTZ: As clarification of the Minister's answer, as he did state that there were various convictions on the part of various correctional officers, I would be very happy to have that tabled in *Hansard* as a public document rather than looking at any form of secrecy, which I do not believe is necessary at all. The Minister is entitled to his opinion, quite obviously, but, at the same time, I am quite sure the Minister is well aware of the different contacts that I have had with prison officers and correctional officers.

I am quite sure that they realise that there are always those within any system who can cause harm by misrepresenting their own system and their own qualifications in the job they may do, which does make it look rather bad for all the rest. I am also quite sure that the correctional service officers who are aware of my integrity would not consider that the questions being asked at the moment are in any way demeaning to the whole correctional services area. I would also point out that, with the constraints that we have within the limits of this Estimates Committee, it is extremely difficult to ask very few questions with often the lack of brevity in answers we appear to get in some instances.

My last question in this section is again on correctional services officers. What educational standards are required by the Government of persons seeking to become correctional services officers; what qualities are sought; does the department expect officers to undertake continuing education or training; and, if so, what sort, and what rewards are available if this occurs?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: As regards the comment prior to the question on secrecy, it is not my intention, as I think any examination of *Hansard* will show, to have any secrets in the Department of Correctional Services. My answer to the question was quite clear. If the honourable member requires it to be tabled in the Parliament, that is fine; I shall be prepared to do that. If she wants it privately, I would also be prepared to do that. If the member for Newland then chose, having received it privately—which she will not now, but had she done so—to have it in *Hansard*, she would be free to do that. We in the Department of Correctional Services are not interested in any secrecy.

I would have thought the length of answers is very much in the hands of those who ask the questions. If a member

asks a question with three or four parts to it, he or she will get a multiple answer. Otherwise, I would not be answering the question as the Committee has a right to demand. Again, that is very much in the hands of members.

As regards education standards, we have outside consultants to assist us in recruiting and screening. We make continuing education available for prison officers. There are various courses that they can take that will assist them towards promotion. Many of our base grade correctional officers finish up in high positions in the department through their efforts in furthering their education. I can give more detail on that at the risk of being accused of giving too long an answer. If the member is satisfied with the amount of detail that I have given, will she please indicate? If she wishes more detail, I have a lot more that I could give.

Mrs KOTZ: I should like the Minister to pursue the question of education standards required by the Government.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will get back to the Committee on the question of the standards. It depends a great deal on the individual. If a person is totally illiterate, that presents us with a problem. If we believe that a person would make a good prison officer or is from a group in the community that we feel would assist us in running the prisons, the entry standards can vary. We make an assessment before we take anybody in as a prison officer. First and foremost, they must be suitable and fulfil a need that we have in the prison system. I can certainly enlarge upon that later.

Mrs KOTZ: I also asked whether education was a continuing part of the service requirement.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The staff development and training policy in the Department of Correctional Services was developed in close consultation with staff and the Public Service Association. It emphasises the line management responsibilities to assess the training and development needs of staff and take appropriate measures to ensure that they are met in a timely and suitable way. The policy also outlines the part played by all areas in the department, as well as the Staff Development Centre, to facilitate the proper and effective provision of training and development within financial and legislative guidelines.

In 1990-91 the department improved and increased the provision of formal training and development. A new information management system at the Staff Development Centre indicates that some 1 077 staff members participated in training or development activities over the year. The staff development section initiated or coordinated 75 activities during the year. Forty-eight of these were conducted at the Staff Development Centre in North Adelaide; 27 were conducted at departmental institutions; and 63 activities attended by staff were initiated by outside agencies, some in the Government sector and others in the private sector. This figure includes conferences attended by various departmental personnel. The fees for attending activities for the year amounted to \$9 000, which is an average of less than \$10 per participant. This represents significant savings made through activities conducted by our staff development section.

Mr McKEE: Perhaps Opposition members would like to see Robocop running our prisons. My question relates to parole rates. The Parole Board is referred to on page 223 of the Program Estimates. Will the Minister provide the Committee with information on the current number of parolees, trends in parolee numbers and details of rates of offending whilst on parole?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: At 30 June 1991, there was a total of 840 prisoners released on parole. During the period, 156 prisoners had their parole orders cancelled and were

returned to prison for conviction of a further offence. I have a table which provides a breakdown of the offences committed by those 156 persons. The most common offences cancelling parole were break, enter and larceny, larceny, and illegal use of a motor vehicle. The table is available should the Committee wish to have it.

In the same period, 62 parolees were convicted of further offences but not imprisoned. Actions taken were summons for interview, 32; warning letter sent, 24; warrant for interview, 2; no action, parole expired, 2; additional condition imposed, 1; and deferred, 1. A further five breaches were considered due to breach of a no drug condition following conviction for possession of cannabis.

Mr McKEE: Page 222 of the Program Estimates refers to the redevelopment of the Port Augusta Gaol. Will the Minister provide an outline of the facilities that are being built; what progress has been made to date; and when does the department expect to have increased prisoner accommodation available?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Facilities to be approved at the redeveloped Port Augusta Gaol are being constructed over a three to four year period involving four stages of development. The various components of the project and their current status are available as a table, which I will have incorporated in *Hansard*. It is an interesting document:

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION SERVICES
REDEVELOPMENT OF PORT AUGUSTA GAOL

Stage 1	Status
Administration Building	Completed
Stores Building	Completed
Industries Complex	October 1991
Reception Control	Completed
Staff Facility	Completed
Stages 2 and 3	
Female Accommodation Unit (12 cells)	December 1991
Male Accommodation (80 cells)	June 1992
Admissions/Control/Visits Building	June 1992
Infirmary	May 1992
Recreation Hall	June 1992
Perimeter Fence	June 1992
Siteworks, Oval, Landscaping	August 1992
Stages 4 (a) and 4 (b)	
Low Security Accommodation (24 beds)	February 1992
Alterations to Existing Accommodation	June 1993

The small increase in the number of female prisoners will be accommodated at Port Augusta from January 1992. In March 1992 low security male prisoners will be accommodated. However, the main prisoner population increase will be achieved at the end of the total redevelopment some time after June 1993.

Mr McKEE: My third question relates to prison industries and performances. At page 8 of the Auditor-General's Report reference is made to a review of prison industries. What mechanisms are in place to ensure that prison industries provide appropriate training for prisoners and adequately contribute to reducing the costs to the taxpayer of operating and maintaining prisons?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: At the time when the 1990-91 budget was being prepared I asked that a committee be established consisting of senior officers of the Department of Correctional Services and an officer from the budget branch of Treasury to see what could be done to improve the performance of prison industries. That committee, which reported to me at the end of June this year, concluded that prisoner work policy objectives generally are not being achieved totally in prisons.

The significance of prison industry policy objectives to overall prison management is not generally understood by prison staff or management. Until very recently correctional

officers and correctional industry officers were covered by two quite separate awards. They wore different uniforms and they reported to different management structures. There were many unnecessary and inefficient staffing practices.

The department was unable to make maximum use of the skills and knowledge of correctional industry officers and correctional officers, and a fragmented approach was taken to the management of prisoners and industries. These problems are currently being dealt with through award restructuring and the introduction of unit management which will come into effect on 1 October 1991. Over the next 12 months the department has committed itself to developing a system to provide full information on all prison industry costs and to conduct trials and evaluate that system in Yatala Labour Prison this financial year.

The committee has recommended that a study be undertaken using the resources of the South Australian Centre for Manufacturing, with some assistance from private consultants, to identify more appropriate technologies for prison industries generally. Leasing of the productive capacity of prison industry workshops to the private sector has also been suggested but is unlikely to be accepted. I have authorised the release of the report to interested bodies, including the trade union movement and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. I am seeking comment from those bodies over the next month or so before I make recommendations to Cabinet on the range of policy and practical proposals contained in the report.

Mr SUCH: I refer to page 87 of the Program Estimates and an increase of \$2.9 million for salaries, wages and related payments. In 1989-90 costs of salaries and wages for the Staff Training Centre amounted to \$650 000 but in 1990-91, \$1.005 million. Why has the cost of salaries for the Staff Training Centre increased by 55.7 per cent and why has the salaries and wages bill for the dog squad increased by 41 per cent?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will get that information for the honourable member.

Mr SUCH: Page 47 of the Auditor-General's Report indicates that the cost for 1990-91 per prisoner was \$69 000, which represents an increase of 11.3 per cent over the previous figure of \$62 000. What is the reason for the 11.3 per cent increase in the cost per prisoner held in custody in 1990-91 and what is the reason for the 19.55 per cent increase in the cost per offender, including community corrections, etc., in 1990-91?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There has been a general increase in salaries and the provision of goods and services. We have seen an increase in the number of prison officers because, as I stated in my opening statement, we have about a 9 per cent increase in the number of prisoners. The rebuilding program is also allocated to prisoners and, as long as we are giving large amounts of capital works funds to correctional services, these costs will continue to escalate.

We are not willing to have inferior accommodation—accommodation that is not secure or not humane: I believe that the South Australian community would agree with the Government on that. I am sure that the member for Fisher would agree, but it all means increased costs. However, I will examine the question and see whether there is anything I can add and, if I can, I will let the appropriate people have it by 4 October.

Mr SUCH: I understand that at Port Lincoln prison and Cadell private room facilities are available for what used to be known as conjugal visits. When is it intended to extend or provide that facility to other prisons?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: We have no ongoing program to do that. However, let me correct the member for Fisher:

we do not have conjugal visits. We have been through that with the member for Newland and the member for Fisher, who seem to have an interest in this area. We do not have conjugal visits or bedrooms and all the things that seem to interest members opposite, but we do have private family visits at Cadell and Port Lincoln. The scheme would be extended only if we thought it was appropriate, and perhaps it will be provided at the new Mount Gambier gaol when it is built.

I am not sure whether there would be any provision in the Port Augusta gaol for private family visits. I think it is a good program as it gives families some time together. I stress this so that people do not get over excited about it: it is not overnight and it is not in bedrooms. It is none of those things that people tend to get a bit of a fixation about.

Mrs KOTZ: This is a 'Yes' as opposed to the 'No' answer that I thought you were giving. The Minister is now saying, 'Yes, it does happen' in answer to the question.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am not sure what you are talking about.

Mrs KOTZ interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Fisher.

Mr SUCH: I am not asking the Minister to observe what goes on in those rooms, but I understand that they are totally private and that what goes on in them is the business of the people involved. How does the Minister know what goes on?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: They are private family visits and they are not conjugal rights in the sense that the members for Newland and Fisher would imagine. As I say, they are not bedrooms. There are no overnight visits and usually the prisoners who are entitled to private family visits have their families with them, including their children. Yes, they are private. If the members for Newland and Fisher have lurid imaginations, they can conjure up any picture they wish, but we believe that the program is worth while and, as I say, I would possibly like to extend the program to the new Mount Gambier gaol.

Mr SUCH: I did not say that I was against them.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have a certain respect for the member for Fisher, knowing something of his background and of the concern he has shown for people who are less fortunate than we are in the community.

Mr SUCH: How many prisoners escaped from custody during 1990-91? How many of these escaped from police custody? How many have been returned to custody? Can the Minister indicate from which gaols they escaped?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I cannot answer for the police, so that is something the honourable member will have to take up with that department. In 1990-91, 20 prisoners escaped from Department of Correctional Services establishments in 13 separate incidents. Ten of those 20 prisoners escaped from Cadell Training Centre, which is a low security institution and which does not provide a physical barrier to prisoners. Due to the nature of the institution, a great deal of emphasis is placed on prisoner trust. Prisoners escaping from that facility are not considered dangerous to society because they are close to release.

The other institutions from which escapes occurred were Port Augusta Gaol and Mobilong Prison. Once again, no escapes occurred from the State's high security institution, Yatala Labour Prison. In fact, there has been only one escape incident at Yatala since 1983-84. That contrasts with the position prior to this Government's coming into office when there used to be about 20 escapes a year from Yatala alone, leaving aside the rest of the prisons. There were some quite notorious incidents. If memory serves me rightly, they

used to break into Yatala during the period when the member for Hanson sat on the Government benches.

The department has responded to the above incidents by implementing the following changes. At Cadell Training Centre, the prisoner camp procedures have been changed to more closely monitor prisoner movements and activities, but I stress that Cadell is not really a place from which prisoners have to escape. It is a walk away facility. At Port Augusta Gaol, security in the Blue Bush wing has been upgraded. In addition, the prison is undergoing a major redevelopment that will result in improved security and increased capacity. The three incidents of escape that occurred at Mobilong Prison in the last financial year were the first recorded at that institution since its commissioning. That is a remarkable achievement. Certain alterations to the physical environment have subsequently taken place. They have improved security and other measures are to be implemented.

As I said, the incidence of escape in South Australia is lower than one would expect with the number of prisoners and the number of institutions. Experience in similar jurisdictions shows a higher rate than we have. We get criticised for that because a number of people and organisations believe that our security is far too tough, that we keep people in maximum security longer than they ought to be. However, I believe that the department has got the balance right. There were no escapes from Yatala and there have not been any for a number of years. As I said, half our escapes are walk aways from Cadell.

All these people come back; most do not get very far. The last walk away from Cadell was a couple of weeks ago and the prisoner was found soon afterwards walking with his young son in the Riverland. A similar situation applies at Port Augusta. While it is not a walk away gaol, it is a low and medium security gaol with prisoners classified as medium outside. That means they are eligible to work outside. Again, most of those people are picked up at their homes in Port Augusta within a few hours. A lot of those escapes are sad incidents rather than anything to be unduly alarmed about.

We do not like any escapes and I think we have to recognise the nature of some of them. Some of the escapes occur when prisoners have only a few weeks to do, and it makes one wonder what it is that triggers them to walk away from Cadell, for example, when in a few weeks time they will go anyway. One can only speculate on what triggers those kinds of incidents. To the best of my knowledge, but I will have to check this, all escapees are back in custody in one place or another.

Mr McKEE: I refer to the new Mount Gambier prison and to page 218 of the Program Estimates relating to the purchase of land for a new prison at Mount Gambier. Will the Minister outline the current status of the proposed new prison?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: One area was purchased on 15 February 1991 for the construction of the new prison at Moorak, 7 km west of the city centre of Mount Gambier. The revised brief of requirements is being prepared to determine the appropriate prison regime and facilities required to accommodate prisoners and staff. The Government will consider its position on the need to commence work at Mount Gambier on the basis of increasing prison numbers. Once that decision has been taken, the project will need to be assessed for priority within the overall capital works program.

Mr McKEE: How many inmates is it designed to take or does it depend on the current status of other prisons in the State?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It will depend on what we feel is needed at the time and on what is appropriate. We are planning on about 75 inmates.

Mr McKEE: I refer to home detention and to page 22 of the Program Estimates. Reference is made to the continuing accommodation pressures upon prison facilities. What is the average number of detainees held under the home detention program in 1990-91, the breach rate and the cost of the program in comparison with other detention options? Is any further expansion of the program planned for 1991-92?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: During 1990-91, 170 prisoners were released on home detention, contributing to an average of 43 prisoners per day supervised. Approximately 80 per cent of prisoners successfully completed the program. The predominant reasons for breaching were curfew violations and drug abuse. Only five breaches involved driving or property offences. Home detention bail involved only four individuals for the year and two of the four bailees were returned to court for breach. The cost of the program for 1990-91 was \$455 000, or \$29 per day per participant. The average cost of keeping a prisoner in an institution in 1990-91 was \$69 000 per annum. It is anticipated that interest by prisoners in the home detention option will continue and it is expected to increase to a daily average of 60 to 70 prisoners in 1991-92. The program is very successful and I invite any member of Parliament who wishes to have a briefing or to look at the program to do so, as it is something of which South Australia can be proud.

The member for Hanson will be pleased to know that the program is very tough. We do spot checks on people and have electronic surveillance. Breaches are considered to be extremely serious. Any breach of a home detention condition is taken very seriously indeed and offenders are returned to prison for what some may consider to be relatively minor breaches, but for us it has always been designed as a top program and will remain so. Breaches of any significance at all will not be tolerated to the extent that prisoners will not go onto home detention; they feel that the regime is far too tough but, nevertheless, we have no intention of softening the regime.

Mr McKEE: I refer to the Justice Information System (page 224 of the Program Estimates): what progress has been achieved in implementing the JIS in the Department of Correctional Services and what is planned for 1991-92? Will the Minister outline and detail the benefits of the system to the department and its acceptance by the users?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In July 1989 the department successfully completed the replacement of manual registers, which had previously provided the principal system of identification and tracking of offenders. Two fundamental systems which contained essential details on offenders and which enable the replacement of the old manual registers are the prisoner movements and register community correction client systems. In addition the prisoner details application has now been completed and will be gradually implemented during 1991-92.

During 1990-91 the prisoner movement system was enhanced to enable the recording of a prisoner's movements to court, on leave and under escort to hospital. The new prisoner details system was completed in the latter part of 1990-91 and will be progressively implemented throughout institutions during the second quarter of 1991-92. This system will record a prisoner's physical description, preferred contact in case of emergency, home address, and details on whether the prisoner is a protectee and on whom the prisoner claims are his enemies within the general prison population.

Specific details of any prior known escapes, the history of the prisoner's security rating, the medical condition declared by prisoners which could affect their well-being and, finally, general demographic details will assist in research. In 1991-92 work is currently under way to complete the department's remaining two systems as defined in the 1989 review of the minimum viable JIS. These two systems are the client sentence and prisoner sentence systems and, when complete, will provide comprehensive details of actual sentences and penalties handed down by the court. In addition to the details, these systems will allow the department to monitor an offender's progress through each sentence. On the question of benefits, the two positions made redundant in 1989 by the replacement of the department's manual register is in accordance with the stated savings for the department as contained in the final feasibility study on the JIS.

Other benefits of a non-financial nature have also been obtained. An example of these benefits is the ability of the department to screen visitors to institutions and enforce the restriction on past prisoners returning to visit other prisoners. The general acceptance by all users of the system has been very good. For a department which previously had almost no exposure to information technology, the implementation of the JIS has proved invaluable in breaking down the natural aversion that people have towards the implementation of such new technologies.

Mr BECKER: I refer to pages 8 and 43 of the Auditor-General's Report. As far back as 1981, attention was drawn to the high incidence of sick leave and call back costs. Call back costs have a dramatic effect on workers compensation payments because of a Supreme Court decision that back-dated certain payments to September 1987, incurring an increase of \$7 million in workers compensation premiums. I understand that that figure of \$7 million contains a one-off lump sum payment of \$2 million. In the previous year the cost of workers compensation was about \$1.5 million.

In the Estimates Committee last year it was stated that the department was concerned about the high level of workers compensation. It was also stated that the Penstar program had been implemented. In the financial year 1990-91 an amount of \$230 000 was provided for the implementation of that program, which started in October 1989. Last year, the Minister told the Estimates Committee:

It is not surprising that a number of correctional officers are on stress leave.

In 1988-89, there were 362 workers compensation claims and in 1989-90, 388 claims, 47 of which were stress related. Can the Minister provide the figures for 1991 workers compensation claims and the ratio of stress claims? I now believe that, at 30 June 1991, 53 staff members were on long-term workers compensation. As I have said, workers compensation impacts on sick leave and call back costs, etc. For the year ending 30 June 1990, only 39 staff were on long-term workers compensation, so there has been an increase of 14 staff. Why has the Auditor-General had to constantly bring forward the problem of sick leave and call back costs without any action being taken by the department to reduce these costs in the past two years, and how much has been budgeted for call back and overtime in 1991-92?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I thought I had already provided to the Committee the number of stress claims, but it would not be impossible for me to provide that information again if members so desire. While members think about that, I will deal with sick leave. Again, I thought that I had already given some general information on sick leave, but I am happy to provide more. The management of the department recognises sick leave management as an important issue.

The department adapted the standard sick leave reporting system provided by the central pay system to record and report on sick leave from July 1989 in order to satisfy service-wide concern regarding public sector sick leave management.

Following the recent audit review, a task force consisting of senior officers in the department was formed to further develop and clearly enunciate a coordinated strategy. A range of actions has been taken to raise the importance and awareness of proper management of sick leave by departmental managers and staff. All managers are provided with monthly statistical reports on sick leave usage and are encouraged to identify patterns and instances where employers may be abusing sick leave provisions. Where appropriate, managers have counselled staff on the use of sick leave.

Reports on action taken are required to be forwarded to divisional directors on a regular basis. The department believes that formal evaluation of sick leave management has been occurring. As acknowledged in the Auditor-General's Report, the department is committed to the management of human resources through a range of strategies to implement cultural and operational changes in the organisation. Principal among these are award restructuring and structural efficiency measures, including a campaign of consultation with staff to achieve significant operating efficiencies. In addition, unit management and the changing role of the correctional officer along with the development of an integrated prevention plan to support workers rehabilitation and reduce the incidence of injury and illness are further examples of the human resource management strategies of the department.

In conclusion, the department believes that the measures I have outlined are taking effect. The evidence for this is from the most up-to-date comparisons of data available. The benchmark of five days for full-time equivalent employees was determined in November 1988 by the Chairman of the Government Management Board. A survey of Government departments at the time found that public servants took an average of 7.2 days a year sick leave. The average sick leave days per officer in the department has improved from 8.3 in 1989-90 to 7.2 in 1990-91. If the current sick leave rate for the Department of Correctional Services is broken down to custodial (predominantly rostered and shift work employees) and non-custodial (predominantly 9 to 5 Monday to Friday) employees, rates of 8.7 per cent (a decrease from 9.6 per cent in the previous year) and 4.7 (a decrease from 6.2) respectively are revealed. The rate for non-custodial staff clearly achieves the recommended benchmark.

In relation to custodial employees, research indicates shift work and the nature of the work undertaken can contribute to greater ill-health than working Monday to Friday. High rates for custodial staff are experienced by interstate correctional agencies, and South Australia's rates compare favourably with interstate rates. Limited data is available from interstate sources. However, I will incorporate in *Hansard* a table which clearly illustrates a more favourable performance by the South Australian Department of Correctional Services:

Department of Correctional Services Average Annual Sick Days per Officer				
	SA	WA	NSW	Vic.
1990-91				
Custodial	8.7	13.2	9.8	10.2
Non-custodial	4.7	3.5	7.5	N/Av
Total	7.2	10.5	9.0*	N/Av

1989-90				
Custodial	9.6	8.7	N/Av	8.2
Non-custodial	6.2	4.8	N/Av	N/Av
Total	8.3	7.5	N/Av	N/Av

*1990 Calendar Year

The department believes that current activity and statistical trends indicate that sick leave is being properly managed effectively and is being accorded an appropriately high priority in the department's operating strategy.

By far the majority of overtime in the department and all call back expenditure is incurred within the custodial ranks of prison staff. Prisons are complex organisations in which a myriad of activities occur daily with movement in, out and within institutions requiring supervision of some sort. However, the significant costs are those associated with the replacement of staff. Absences due to sick leave, workers compensation and vacant positions account for about 50 per cent of all call back and overtime expenditure. The factors that contribute most significantly to the estimated total of \$3.1 million are: staff replacements, \$1.6 million; late admissions, \$350 000; hospital watches, \$300 000; and escorts, \$100 000. The implementation of structural efficiency principles is expected to reduce the level of call back and overtime in prisons by providing more flexibility in work practices.

Mr BECKER: As a supplementary question, I ask: what is the percentage of staff on workers compensation due to stress?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: From memory, I think I said earlier that the figure has reduced from 86 last year to 76 this year, so the trend is certainly on the right slope. I think it is about 20 per cent. Again, I will examine the questions on workers compensation that have been asked tonight. On the very remote chance that I have not fully covered everything in those questions, I will certainly let the Committee have the information prior to 4 October.

Mr BECKER: As a point of clarification, I said that in 1988-89 there were 362 workers compensation claims, in 1989-90 there were 388, and 47 per cent were stress related. What are the figures for 1990-91? I do not recall their being stipulated.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The figure is 76.

Mr BECKER: It cannot be 76.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Okay, then it cannot be 76.

Mr BECKER: If it is 76, there has been an increase because there were 53 on long-term workers compensation. I want to know the percentages.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: My advice is that the figure is 76. I do not know these people personally to go and count them, and I have no reason to disbelieve the officers.

Mr BECKER: Seventy-six out of what—400 or 300?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Of course, they can make mistakes and, as I have said, I will have the questions examined. However, 76 is the figure that I am being given out of 386—and that is about 20 per cent.

Mr BECKER: Why cannot there be more permanent correctional officer positions? The cost benefit of this surely must be in reduced stress, workers compensation payments and call back fees, in particular. Has any thought been given to increasing the number of permanent staff in an endeavour to cut back on some of these costs, particularly in call backs?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Clearly, thought has been given to it. We give thought to lots of things—some of them less obvious than that. It is found not to be effective. In my view, the only way we will get those figures down is through structural efficiency and running the prisons in a signifi-

cantly different way. That has been the whole thrust of the Australian Council of Trade Unions in forcing structural efficiency throughout industry—things can be done better in other than the traditional way we have always done them in modern times. That is quite a cultural change for employees and employers. However, we believe that with a successful structural efficiency program—and we believe the outcome of ours will be very successful—we will be able to get these numbers down quite significantly. Our assessment is that the appointment of more full-time prison officers would not be cost effective. In turn, those prison officers would be away on sick leave and workers compensation, and that would generate overtime or call backs. If it were as simple as that, I can assure the member for Hanson that we would have already done it.

Mr BECKER: I take it that we have to accept that about 6.5 per cent of the payroll from here on in will always be consumed by payment for call backs. It seems to me that \$3.1 million a year—that was last year and the year before—was paid out on call back fees. The department has no control over the amount of money and it does not appear to be doing anything to reduce this incidence—certainly it has not done it in the past two years. We can have promises of all sorts of things. We had promises years ago that the incidence of drugs would be contained and that the incidence of this would be curbed and the improvement of accommodation would reduce the behaviour problems of prisoners and so on, but nothing of that kind has happened. We are getting a lot of promises but little action. However, the cost of running the prisons is still increasing.

This figure of \$3.1 million is static. The Auditor-General keeps commenting on it, which is a reflection on the administration of the department and on the Minister, because they have not been able to contain or reduce the cost. What annoys me is that the Public Accounts Committee investigated the department and the incidence of call back fees. In some cases the committee was quite concerned at the reason behind the payment of these fees, because some members of staff seem to get quite a good deal—it was able to help them boost their income. So, one often wondered whether the payment of the fees was genuinely necessary.

If there is no attempt to reduce the amount of call backs, one wonders what is really going on with the administration of the department. The Public Accounts Committee went to the trouble of investigating the department, established what was happening and came up with recommendations, and the following year there was a drop in the amount of call back fees. However, after that the figure has gone back up and we are back to where it started. Why go through that process of expending taxpayers' money to try to bring in general efficiency within the department? The Minister is head of the Government review body that is telling every other Government department to cut costs, to save money here and there, yet this is one very glaring example within his own administration where he has been unable to arrest the problem.

I cannot accept the reasons that the Minister has given this evening, and I cannot accept the attitude he has adopted in relation to this. I want to see a more concerted effort in the next financial year in relation to the call back fees. The Minister will either have to come up with a more concerted effort within this current financial year or Parliament will have to consider reducing the budget for the department. It is a pity we do not have the system that exists elsewhere, where Parliament can say to the department, 'This is not good enough—6.5 per cent of your payroll is going in call back fees and you are not making any attempt to remedy

that. We will cut back your payroll and make the department live with the reduced income.' We are going to have to take some dramatic steps to do something or the figure will just keep getting out of control. The other point that concerns the Opposition is that, again, we have been asking for figures—

The CHAIRMAN: What is the question?

Mr BECKER: I am getting to the question now.

The CHAIRMAN: Excellent.

Mr BECKER: Mr Chairman, when you have been here as long as I have—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! When you have been here as long as I have you begin to lose patience.

Mr BECKER:—you are entitled to a preamble to the question. Mr Chairman, you must admit that it is becoming very frustrating when we are looking at the payments of the State and we are not getting any satisfactory answers.

The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps if we ask more questions we may get more answers.

Mr BECKER: That seems to be a waste of time, because the Minister waffles on. Here we are, with the very issue that was raised by the Auditor-General—the principal person to advise Parliament on the finances of the State. That is what annoys me, because we got those figures. Earlier this evening I asked for the figures in relation to the incidence of drug and alcohol use within the prisons, but the Minister cannot give them to me; he said that I will have to wait for the annual report. It makes one wonder what is going on there, too. Does the department have those figures? Have the Director-General of the department and the Minister seen those figures?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: What figures are you talking about?

Mr BECKER: The Minister does not listen—the figures in relation to the incidence of drug and alcohol use and home brewing in prisons. Does the Director-General or his department have those figures for the year ending 30 June 1991 and has the Minister seen those figures?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: If the Committee is to be run on the basis of long political diatribe, that is fine—we can certainly dispense with the officers. I am as capable as the member for Hanson of engaging in that kind of debate, as are all my colleagues on this side. It is extraordinarily difficult. However, if those are the rules, we will play by them. It seems to me to be particularly unproductive to have that kind of ranting and raving, at times incoherent, from the member for Hanson when we are here to supply information. I am not quite sure whether there was a question following that incredible rant by the member for Hanson on call backs. If that is the case, I shall be happy to deal with it and try to get something rational going here. If the position is that we have long, at times incoherent, diatribes which are not followed by a question, it is a different ballgame and we will deal with it accordingly.

I will assume that there was a question somewhere in that extraordinary performance on call backs and overtime and I will attempt to deal with that. As I thought I had detailed, the incidence is approximately \$3.1 million out of a total wage bill of close to \$50 million. It is more than we would like, but when we are talking about 6.5 per cent on the figures that were given by the member for Hanson, if anybody knows anything at all about running institutions, the way they run 24 hours a day, the way that admissions have to be dealt with after hours—people have to be moved around for a whole range of reasons outside the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.—anybody in the private sector who was operating that kind of industry where that happened would be delighted to have an overtime call back bill of 6.5 per

cent of payroll. I assure the Committee and the member for Hanson that many industries that work 24 hours a day have a higher call back and overtime wage bill than that. Almost any industry that works on that basis has.

Nevertheless, I believe that, through structural efficiency and trying to get the staff in prisons to work in a different way, we will be able to reduce that figure. To suggest that the Minister, or the Department of Correctional Services, is not concerned about these things is nonsense. It is unfortunate that at this stage of the Estimates Committees this evening the member for Hanson has decided to adopt that approach.

There was a question on drug figures. We do not have those figures with us. I could probably have them here even tomorrow. If I had known that the member for Hanson was so desperate to have them, I would have had them for him rather than subject the Committee to that extraordinary behaviour. I think unlike any other jurisdiction, we publish our drug figures, and on occasions we illustrate those figures with pictures of the actual drugs. I have seen them reproduced in the press, so it is hardly a secret operation.

As I have stated, I shall be only too pleased to get those figures to the Committee prior to 4 October. They are relatively easy to get together (unlike in relation to one of the other questions) and I will make them available as soon as I can. If I can do it tomorrow, I will make them public tomorrow. We have no secrets in the Department of Correctional Services. I am very sorry that the member for Hanson should be acting as if we are trying to hide something from him. He knows that we would not do that.

The CHAIRMAN: Would the member for Hanson like to ask a concluding question for this round?

Mr BECKER: Just a supplementary to that. I asked whether the Minister or the Director-General had seen the figures that I am seeking. That is all I want. Has the Minister seen the figures?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: With respect to the member for Hanson, if that is all he wants, that is all he should have said, and that is what he would have got. However, he proceeded with a 10-minute diatribe, so he should not complain about the length of answers. From memory, I have not seen them. I assume that the Executive Director sees them on a monthly basis. I have his absolute guarantee that he will get them to the honourable member as soon as possible. Hopefully, tomorrow we will have a courier bring them out to the honourable member in case he should lose any sleep.

Mr BECKER: By way of explanation, the practice in the past has been that, if a Minister answers a question and the member finds the answer unsatisfactory, the member can rebut the answer. That is what I did. I have served on Estimates Committees since the first time the system was introduced to the Parliament, because I called for them. I consider that a member has a right to rebut an answer given by a Minister. The original question that I asked related to workers compensation, sick leave and call back fees, and the answer revolved around call back fees. I made my response on the basis of what I thought the answer was from the Minister and on my interpretation of call back fees prior to asking a question in relation to drugs and drugs figures. That has been the practice.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest that we should return to the subject before the Committee.

Mr BECKER: That is all right. I am just having my say, too.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Albert Park.

Mr HAMILTON: Page 224 of the Program Estimates refers to the employment of Aboriginal staff by the Department of Correctional Services. Will the Minister provide further details of how successful the department has been in recruiting staff, what programs are undertaken in the pursuit of staff development and how these Aboriginal staff members have been utilised by the Department of Correctional Services?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Department of Correctional Services commenced actively recruiting staff with Aboriginal background in 1988, after the appointment of a personnel consultant with responsibility for equity issues. At that time there were four Aboriginal staff in the department. The number of Aboriginal staff in the department has increased dramatically since then, and particularly after the appointment of a personnel consultant early in 1990.

During 1990-91 the department recruited 10 Aboriginal staff members as correctional officers. Four of these officers were posted to Yatala Labour Prison, two at the Adelaide Remand Centre and at Port Augusta Gaol, with the remaining officers being posted to Mobilong Prison and Cadell Training Centre. The total number of identified Aboriginal staff currently employed by the department is 27, comprising 19 correctional service officers, five administrative service officers, including the community-based officer for the prison visitors scheme, two community service officers, including a casual community service supervisor, and one probation and parole officer. These 27 officers represent 2.2 per cent of total departmental staffing as at 30 June.

All members would concede that 2.2 per cent is not sufficient, and we will continue to do our best to improve that. However, it is a long way from the four we had when we started this exercise. Aboriginal staff members specifically have contributed to the department through the cultural awareness program, where nine staff have been utilised to present cross-culture awareness training sessions for interested departmental staff. These programs are run over a three-day period and have been held on four occasions. Aboriginal staff undergo presentation techniques, training for the cross-culture awareness training sessions.

It is envisaged that all Aboriginal staff members will have the opportunity to participate as presenters should they wish to do so, and they will be encouraged to do so by the department. South Australia is little different from the rest of Australia in gaoling its Aboriginal problem to a far higher percentage than they are represented in the general community. There is a whole range of reasons for that, but it is certainly incumbent on the Government, and on the department, to do all it can not only to attempt to reduce the percentage of our prisoners who have an Aboriginal background but also to ensure that those people who take care of our prisoners have an Aboriginal background or at least an understanding of the Aboriginal culture. We owe it to our black population and to ourselves to gain a greater understanding of the original owners of this country.

Mr HAMILTON: Page 223 of the Program Estimates refers to the new community correctional office at Marla. Will the Minister provide background information relating to the Marla development, including the resource implications and the program objectives? About 18 months ago I was in the area and I was impressed by its vastness and the need to resource the surrounding area, especially places like Mintabie. Will the Minister elaborate in that regard?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In 1987 the circuit magistrate drew attention to the need to provide improved criminal justice services to the Pitjantjatjara lands and the North-West. In particular, the need was emphasised for a community service order program. The Justice and Consumer

Affairs Committee of Cabinet referred the matter to the department for investigation and preparation of a report. A report recommending the establishment of a community correctional centre at Marla was presented to the Justice and Consumer Affairs Committee of Cabinet in mid-1989.

Cabinet ultimately supported the recommendations and provided funding in 1990. Funding covered the provision of an office, two houses, three staff, a regional officer, a probation and parole officer, a clerical officer, casual supervisors, establishment and recurrent costs. Capital costs were \$499 000 and recurrent costs are estimated at \$224 000.

The regional officer moved to Marla in February 1991. The office and second house were completed and the office officially opened on 25 July 1991. The clerical officer has been appointed and the position for the probation and parole officer has been called. Already the regional officer has about 48 offenders under supervision and is providing support to the circuit magistrate. He is also working closely with the local communities in establishing work projects to accommodate community service and fine options.

The objectives for establishing a departmental presence at Marla are to provide courts in the Far North with appropriate services; to establish community service fine options and other community-based alternatives to imprisonment; to enable courts to reach a more rapid disposition of cases; to reduce the rate of imprisonment of the Pitjantjatjara people; to provide tangible material benefits to the communities through community work projects, including retaining money in the communities that might otherwise be paid in fines; and to assist in the administration of a criminal justice system sensitive to traditional values.

Mr HAMILTON: Can the Minister elaborate on the types of community service orders that are imposed on offenders in the Marla area?

Mr Durant: The work programs are being developed in consultation with all the communities in the Pitjantjatjara lands. So far, only five or six offenders have recently been placed on community service orders, I believe at Amata and Fregon. We are identifying people in each of the communities to act as community service supervisors and the programs of work that will be undertaken in the communities will be done in consultation and on the advice of the local communities.

The Minister has mentioned that the officer who has been appointed there already has a significant workload and is endeavouring to provide services to the court, so we have not been able to get the community service program up and running to the degree we would like; hence it is important for us to get the second officer established to provide back-up to the existing regional officer. I am unable to give the honourable member any further detail of the types of programs that will be operated in the communities but there are a wide range of activities that the communities will identify over and above work that is already being done under the CDEP program that will be available to offenders to undertake as community service work in those communities.

Mr HAMILTON: I am most interested in the types of programs that are carried out in that area, and, by way of a further supplementary question, I am also interested to know the type of offences, the reasons for those offences and whether it is members of the Aboriginal community or the white community who are committing the offences. Having some knowledge of the area, I suspect that they are Aborigines, although I do not wish to be unkind. Will the Minister provide further information along those lines?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will get those figures that are available. The offenders are overwhelmingly if not totally

from the Aboriginal communities in the Pitjantjatjara lands. They are the only people who live there, by and large. The offences are pretty much the normal run-of-the-mill offences. I do not think anything too exotic occurs on the lands. The offences are mainly larceny, abuse of alcohol and other nuisance offences.

When I was at Marla for the opening of the centre, I had some very informal discussions with Mr Yani Lester, who is the Chairperson of the community council for the Pitjantjatjara people. He was particularly enthusiastic in having young offenders working on the lands, in some cases doing traditional things. We can certainly assist them in that; that would be quite acceptable to us. Working on cattle stations is another option that was mentioned by Mr Lester and a few others.

We will try to accommodate all those wishes of the community, because to fly some of these young people down to Port Augusta Gaol, for example, which we sometimes do, for a few days imprisonment for disorderly behaviour is pointless. In fact, I am not sure that the trip does not add a bit of excitement to an otherwise dull life. It seems to me that to give young people a plane trip and a look at the big city of Port Augusta might be rewarding them for playing up within their communities. That is certainly not the way to go about it and commonsense tells us that. The Marla Community Correctional Centre will enable us to do something that is much more appropriate, both for the offender and for the community that has had the offence committed against it.

Mr HAMILTON: I suspect that alcohol may have been one of the major problems up there and, knowing the Minister as I think I do, I think his department would be working with other departments in addressing the problems of alcohol abuse in that area.

I refer to page 224 of the Program Estimates, where it refers to program evaluation. Given that the CEO of the Department of Correctional Services is chair of the Government's program evaluation steering committee, will the Minister detail the initiatives undertaken by the Department of Correctional Services to evaluate its own programs?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Department of Correctional Services has always evaluated its activities. Unlike most of the human services agencies of Government, it has had difficulty devising measures that can be used to ensure successful evaluation. Since the Premier's directive about program evaluation was released in May this year, the department's chief management analyst has been devising a suitable conceptual framework and operating guidelines for evaluation within the department. As an initial step, the department created the service evaluation forum, comprising all directors of the department. The purpose of the forum was mainly to provide a departmental focus for evaluation, to raise the awareness of the divisional directors, to finalise the most appropriate approach and to send a message to the line management that the Department of Correctional Services executive was approaching evaluation very seriously.

The department has placed its evaluation focus around the principles recommended by the Office of Cabinet and Government Management and adapted these to its own unique circumstances. A sound policy framework has evolved that will be implemented by all departmental line managers but promoted and coordinated by the Corporate Services Branch. Further, given the major organisational redesign recently achieved by the department under the structural efficiency principles, evaluation has been given a higher profile within the department.

The major areas of planning and evaluation have been linked in the Corporate Services Branch, thus ensuring a consistent approach to these two vital areas of the organisation. The department has implemented evaluation of certain areas of its activities during the 1990-91 financial year. This has ensured that the department is well on the way to achieving the Premier's stated goal for each agency to evaluate 50 per cent of its budget over a five year period.

The evaluations completed in 1990-91 include executive restructure, certain aspects of Mobilong Prison, Yatala Labour Prison (which is an ongoing evaluation), home detention, supply function, community corrections programs support, prison numbers, Parole Board Secretariat, recruitment and the dog squad. In addition, an ongoing review is being conducted at the Yatala Labour Prison. It is important for the department and indeed for any areas of Government to have some ongoing evaluation program. It is quite simple to institute new programs, and in many cases those programs go on for donkeys years without proper evaluation. As far as I am concerned, that is bad government.

I am particularly pleased with the way in which the Department of Correctional Services has taken up the challenge of evaluation of its programs. It certainly complements the work that the Government Agency Review Group is doing in prompting and assisting departments, where required, to evaluate all programs not simply as a once-off thing but as an ongoing part of the good management of those departments.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the Minister take under consideration and possibly review the policy with respect to how the department deals with prisoners who have been arrested, tried and convicted under what amounts to a false name and the way in which it then proceeds to deal administratively with those prisoners upon release? I am aware of a case where a prisoner was released having been held under a false name. He was associated with fraudulent offences in which he used numerous false names. Therefore, it was quite reasonable that he should be arrested and dealt with under one of those false names rather than his real name. However, at the end of the process when the department released him, he was assisted to obtain official documentation, including a driver's licence, under this false name. In fact, he had some difficulty in restoring his original name in an attempt to rehabilitate himself.

While obviously it may require legislative change to empower someone, such as the Executive Director or a magistrate, to set the record straight, I think it would be better for the department and society as a whole as well as the prisoner if, upon his release, the department made some effort to sort out the administrative problem associated with a prisoner who has used multiple names in the commission of offences to ascertain the correct legal name and to ensure that, when the prisoner is released, any documentation or assistance that he is given to settle back into the community is done under his correct legal name, even if that means that some processes of the law must be changed to recognise the change in name. Will the Minister take that matter under consideration?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The circumstances outlined by you, Mr Chairman, are very familiar to me. Tomorrow, I will provide to you the brief that I received when I raised the same question. I think you will find that whilst there are some problems they are mainly of the particular individual's deliberate making rather than any deficiencies in the law.

The CHAIRMAN: I was not intimating that there were deficiencies in the law; I just felt that we should not allow the individual, deliberately or otherwise, to leave the system under a false name.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will certainly look at that question and send you this brief, which makes very interesting reading. All is not as it seems.

Mrs KOTZ: Last year in the Estimates Committee, the Opposition asked the Minister if it was a fact that the union was threatening to hold up the using of F division. At that time, the Minister said that he had not heard those rumours. F division was officially opened in December 1990 but was not used until May 1991, five months later. Were staff employed on the payroll of F division prior to its use in 1991; if so, how many and at what cost?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: As I have said, I was not aware of any rumours. There were some difficulties with the union in respect of the opening of F division. Staff were employed, but the honourable member will be pleased to know that they were not standing around an empty F division, but were used in other parts of Yatala and, in effect, were

keeping down, to some extent, the requirement for call backs and overtime. F division is now fully operational, but there is no doubt in my mind that some of the claims of the PSA were justified.

Mrs KOTZ: How many prisoners are in custody in F division, how many spaces are available and when will the division be full?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: F division has been full since 30 August: there are as many prisoners as there are beds. The maximum number of beds is 95 and there may be 93 prisoners, but the division is fully operational.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 10 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Thursday 26 September at 11 a.m.