

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Friday 18 September 1992

## ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A

**Acting Chairperson:**  
Mrs C.F. Hutchison

**Members:**  
Mr M.J. Atkinson  
Mr M.K. Brindal  
The Hon. J.L. Cashmore  
Mr M.R. De Laine  
Mr V.S. Heron  
Mr G.A. Ingerson

*The Committee met at 11 a.m.*

**The ACTING CHAIRPERSON:** A relatively informal procedure will be adopted and there is no need for members to stand to ask questions. A flexible approach will be adopted in giving the call for asking questions, based on about three questions per member, alternating sides. There will be the provision for supplementary questions, but I would advise Committee members that those supplementary questions must refer to the answer given to the original question. Members will be allowed to ask a brief supplementary question to conclude a line of questioning. Subject to the convenience of the Committee, a member who is outside the Committee and who desires to ask a question will be permitted to ask that question once a line of questioning on an item has been completed by the Committee. I would appreciate an indication of that beforehand. If the Minister undertakes to supply information at a later date, it must be in a form suitable for insertion in *Hansard*, and two copies must be supplied no later than Friday 9 October to the Clerk of the House of Assembly. I propose to allow the lead speaker for the Opposition and the Minister to make opening statements, if they so desire, of about 10 minutes, but no longer than 15 minutes.

I remind members of the suspension of Standing Orders that allows for Estimates Committees to ask questions on matters relating to Estimates of Receipts and the administration of statutory authorities. Questions must be based on lines of expenditure and revenue as revealed in the Estimates of Payments and Receipts, and reference may be made to other documents, for example, the Program Estimates and the Auditor-General's Report, etc., and members must identify a page number in the relevant financial papers from which their question is derived. Questions are to be directed to the Minister and not to the advisers, but the Minister may refer questions to the advisers for a response.

Education, \$916 107 000

**Witness:**

The Hon. G.J. Crafter, Minister of Education.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr G. Edwards, Acting Director-General of Education, Education Department.  
Ms H. Kolbe, Assistant Director-General, Resources.  
Ms M. Sleath, Director, Personnel  
Ms M. Wallace, Acting Associate Director—General (Curriculum).  
Mr B. Treloar, Assistant Director of Finance.  
Mr G. Willmott, Director, SSABSA.

**The ACTING CHAIRPERSON:** Minister, would you like to make an opening statement?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Thank you, Madam Acting Chairperson. As is usual in this Committee, I have circulated some statistical information that is now circulated to schools each year along with the annual reports of the Education Department. This provides information with respect to the costs associated with the running of each school in South Australia. It also provides other statistical information that is of interest, with respect to enrolment data. It is interesting to see that, for the first time in over a decade, there is an increase in enrolments in our schools. The demographic trend of the 1980s in particular, when there was a very substantial downturn in school enrolments, has now passed. Some 50 000 fewer students are in our schools now than some 15 years ago, which is a huge reduction in student numbers. Members will be well aware of the reasons associated with the age profile demographic trends in this State requiring us at the same time to build many new schools in the new suburbs, particularly in the outlying metropolitan areas of Adelaide, whilst having very few students in many schools in well-established older areas. At the same time, we have great demands on our education system to upgrade the existing stock of buildings.

Undoubtedly, we had the worst education system and the worst stock of buildings when we came out of the Playford era, and the past 25 years have seen enormous additional resources put into education in this State to take it from the worst education system in this country to the best. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that much more work has to be done, and many of the additional resources put into education in these past 25 years have been put into human resources, perhaps at some cost to the physical buildings that comprise our education infrastructure. Information and statistical data has been provided to the Committee on retention rates. We have seen a dramatic increase in retention rates in South Australian schools in this past decade, from just over 30 per cent to over 80 per cent. The national comparisons show that South Australia is ahead in this area, and thankfully so. It is a great tribute to our schools that, within a very short time, they have been able to accommodate the different cohort of students and, with the development of the South Australian Certificate of Education, we have been able to embrace a curriculum and accreditation process for this now much broader

group of students who are remaining in schools to complete their senior secondary education.

The statistical information also breaks down into the various types of schools that we have in our education system: junior primary, primary, high schools, area schools, rural schools, Aboriginal schools, special schools and other special education units. As has occurred in previous years, there are some notes with respect to those people who simply try to draw comparisons between the cost per student or whatever. That needs to be read in order to gain a more accurate picture of how resources are allocated to our schools.

By way of general comment, I would say that the main feature of this budget has been substantial additional funding provided for works programs in our schools throughout the State. The capital works program, the minor works program and the maintenance program have for the first time exceeded \$100 million. That has come about through our ability to use more efficiently the existing stock of resources that we have and, whilst we have been building new schools, we have also been able to rationalise our stock of properties to dispose of surplus property. I believe that the Government in its wisdom has made a good decision by allowing the Education Department to retain all of the proceeds from the sale of surplus education property. It has provided a substantial incentive for many schools to amalgamate or reconfigure so that parcels of property can be disposed of and those proceeds put back into rejuvenating education, particularly in secondary schools in South Australia.

A sum of \$14 million is provided for minor works, in addition to what is now the normal provision for minor works. Those funds will be targeted to those schools most in need of upgrading or maintenance in one form or another. It is anticipated that about 200 schools throughout the State will benefit from that substantial additional funding. Briefly, I point out that the South Australian education system continues to be used as a model in many respects by other States, and I am constantly approached by other State education systems who come here to take away either our staff or the ideas and concepts that we have developed in this State, and I refer to the Education Review Unit, our multi school campuses, our relationship between the Government and non-government sector, our planning for non-government schools, the School of the Future, our design of in-house primary schools, the Changing Directions Scheme for the rejuvenation of the teaching service and so on. They are all areas where, in the past few months, other States have come here to benefit from what has been tried in this State and found to be effective.

I would also say that the statistics that are provided from the Grants Commission and the Loans Council show that South Australian schools are resourced well above the national average. Indeed, it is said that some 1 400 teachers could be shed by the Education Department in this State to return it to the national average for the resourcing of schools and staffing levels. During the period of enrolment decline in the past decade or so there has been a very substantial retention of freed-up teachers in our education system. In addition to that, South Australian teachers and principals are the highest paid in this country. South Australia was the first State

under the curriculum guarantee package to provide leadership opportunities for teachers to remain in classrooms rather than to leave practical teaching to serve the education community of this State. Those positions were established over two years ago and in recent times we have successfully negotiated a second round of advanced school teaching positions. They will come into effect next year.

For a very long time, South Australia has been able to provide very high quality curriculum materials and that is evidenced by the demand for our curriculum materials not only throughout Australia but overseas. An active marketing program is in place in the distribution of curriculum materials and professional development programs. Whilst from time to time there are critics of our system—probably rightly so and we should never shy away from such criticism—all that needs to be put into context and, over a long time, we have been building up a very sound and effective education system. As I say, though, we can always improve.

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

**Mr BRINDAL:** I am told that in this place one never apologises, so for that reason I would like to start with an apology. It is an apology to many of the departmental officers who are present, some of whom I know to be good and dedicated professional people. Having said that, I am aware that in this place we have a clear duty, and it is a duty to the people of South Australia. That duty is to question and probe the Government on the operation of its departments. Quite frankly, we have heard from this Minister for the seventh year in a row the usual, predictable and pedestrian statement, a statement that leads my friend and colleague the member for Victoria to say, 'I wonder which education system he is talking about, because it is not the same education system that exists in my electorate.'

Education is in crisis in South Australia and that is not just the opinion of the Opposition. It is a fact that is put almost daily before Parliament by members of the Opposition. It is put almost daily before us by the ordinary people of South Australia. It is a crisis that is not being expressed by the disgruntled few: it comes from students, parents, grandparents and teachers at the chalk face. If after seven years the Minister cannot recognise that, it is time that he did another good and adequate job for the Government, but certainly not in education.

It is a crisis that has been pushed to one side by the media only because of the even bigger financial fiascos that almost daily cascade upon this Government, but that does not make it any easier for the students in our schools. A bit later the Minister will probably play his usual trick and say, 'I do not understand why the honourable member, who was supposedly a good teacher, insists on getting stuck into the Education Department.' I want to assure him that I am not getting stuck into the Education Department. I have one concern and one concern only, and that concern is shared by every member of this Committee and every member of the Opposition, and that is the better education of the children of South Australia. That can be achieved only through cooperative effort, the efficient use of resources and the development and maintenance of a professional

and contented teaching service, not one of which this Minister has achieved.

Approximately seven years ago, I heard the Minister talk about turning something from worst to best. In fact, I contend that in seven years he has overseen the destruction of this department and its turning from the best to the worst. The Minister just told the Committee that money has been put into the human resources at the cost of maintenance of buildings and fabric. We can all see that, with holes in gutters everywhere, but would that it were true, because there has been the tragedy of human resources in the Education Department. We have many serious questions to ask and I will not long detain the Committee, but I want to make a few essential points as to what I am saying.

These are some of key areas in which we believe education has failed and is failing. There has been the continual breaking down of key education election promises, such as no cuts in teacher numbers—a promise made in 1985—and the promise about curriculum guarantee that was made in 1989. None of these promises has been kept.

Findings by university researchers have shown that one in four teachers believe discipline problems in schools are serious or very serious and that weekly 2 500 teachers are the target of verbal abuse by students. Madam Acting Chair, you will remember that I asked a question in this House about discipline in certain schools in the Elizabeth area and it was and pooh-poohed, ridiculed and lampooned by the Minister sitting at the table. What happened? Just 12 months later a university researcher came out with exactly the same facts. The Minister was notably silent in both the media and this Chamber about the facts presented by the university researcher and never bothered to apologise to the Opposition, which originally raised the question.

The Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee discovered a \$230 million backlog in the maintenance of schools because of Government corner cutting. Parents in the area that I just mentioned—Elizabeth—are virtually queuing to move their children from Government schools. In the Elizabeth area one non-government school has a waiting list of 4 000, despite annual fees of \$1 400 and the worst recession in 60 years. At least 24 000 school children in South Australia are now suffering from literacy lag. There is a minimum figure of 20 per cent and up to 40 per cent in some schools. These are not my words; they come from Mr Rod Sawford, who was a colleague of mine and a respected primary school principal in the Port Adelaide area and who is currently the Labor member for the area.

In one area of Adelaide alone, 1 500 students have severe learning difficulties and many students enter into year 3 without mastering the basics of reading. The former Director-General of Education, Mr John Steinle conceded in November 1990 that over 300 000 South Australians had literacy problems. Again, Madam Acting Chair, that is a matter of fact. Even with this evidence the Government refuses to allow basic skills testing for all students and resists increased priority for early diagnosis and intervention.

The Association of Speech and Hearing estimates that between 5 000 and 17 000 students need speech pathology. Yet, between 50 per cent and 75 per cent of

those students receive no help whatsoever, and the Minister now says it is a health problem. As long as I have been in the teaching service it has been a problem of the teaching profession, but it gets too big for the Minister so now it becomes a health problem. While the Minister debates with the Minister of Health, who picks it up? What happens to the children? That is the question that we will be asking all day: what is happening to the children of South Australia under this Minister?

The Minister has had two great planks in the past seven years. First, there has been the merit principle for promotion, and I will deal with that first. The merit principle for promotion says in the past everything was wrong with our system; we now promote on merit. I have evidence, and I am sure every member in this Chamber has evidence, that the merit principle that the Minister trumpets has degenerated into a system of patronage, pay backs and nepotism. Meritocracy has given way to mediocrity and there is a group of hapless harridans in the department who, by and large, control much of the promotion processes of the department and say who gets what job. 'Jobs for the boys' has been given a new meaning in the South Australian Education Department—and please excuse the gender reference, Madam Acting Chair.

We are now seeing the manipulation of school closures for political purposes. If the Minister likes we can detail chapter and verse on those accusations. In short, I believe, and the Opposition believes, that education in South Australia is a disgrace. We have initiated and are currently partaking in a select committee looking at primary and secondary education in South Australia. I am sure that all members of that select committee will be very keen to redress the very many wrongs that exist in the system. But those wrongs exist. This Minister has presided over this department for seven years. It is time he went, because he has failed education, he has failed our children and he has failed South Australia. For the sake of those children, if for no-one else, I hope the Minister will have the courage to resign.

My first question relates to voluntary separation packages, and I refer to the Program Estimates, page 141, 'Support Services'. I should start by saying that in some circles of the Education Department, voluntary separation packages are not being called VSPs but GBBBs, which means gratuitous bonuses for the big boys. During last year, 83 employees of the Education Department took voluntary separation packages at a total cost of \$4.6 million. Some of these packages were for senior officers and were as high as \$200 000 to \$250 000 when termination entitlements were also included. Reputable Education Department sources have informed me that a number of senior officers who took VSPs had publicly indicated to others prior to the VSP offer being made that they would retire within the next six to 12 months. Some of these officers were aged in their late 50s and, with generous superannuation and leave entitlements, did not need the incentive of the VSP. However, all these senior officers took the VSPs.

I know this information to be to be correct, because one of those senior officers, whom I will not name publicly but whom I am quite prepared to name to the Minister in private if he cares to ask me, told me prior to the VSP offer that he had had enough and would retire.

This officer's VSP would have been well in excess of \$150 000, and the total termination package was well over \$250 000. People are very angry that those whom they call fat cats in the department, with generous superannuation and leave entitlements, were given golden handshakes. Did any member of the senior executive who accepted a VSP excuse themselves from discussions on VSPs because of a potential conflict of interest; who recommended to the Commissioner for Public Employment the potential candidates for VSPs; and will the Minister provide a detailed breakdown of all VSPs, such as names, ages, positions held and the amount of VSP in each case?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** First, I will respond to the honourable member's diatribe that we have just heard. I think it is important that I put on record the fact that in the education community across this country a good deal of work has been done on looking at what it is that makes for an effective school. When the honourable member says that our schools do not have the respect of the community, I would challenge that. A recent major study on community and consumer attitudes to our schools which will be released in the near future and which was conducted by the Australian Council for Education Research (and the largest sample in that study was from South Australia) does not indicate that that is so. I suggest the honourable member might like to spend some time in New South Wales or other States, look at the education system there, make some comparisons and then come into a Parliament such as this and make a more reasoned judgment about what is happening in our schools.

Overwhelmingly, parents are satisfied with their child's teacher, and they show great commitment to their schools. They do have concerns—many concerns—about educational opportunity and so on, and that has always been the case. When these results are finally collated and released, I think they will contribute to a more balanced debate about educational outcomes.

The honourable member refers to literacy, selectively quotes statistics that have been advanced in a Federal parliamentary committee and seems to equate illiteracy with literacy difficulties. That is a very unfortunate slur on all the good work that is being done in the field of literacy, not only in schools but in TAFE and in community based programs. As he acknowledges, a large number of people in this country do have literacy difficulties, and many of them have been educated outside this country and have literacy difficulties arising out of factors external to educational opportunity. Nevertheless, there is an ongoing task in that area—and an important one. The honourable member has told the Committee that he believes that basic skills testing is the answer to the world's literacy problems, and I think he would find that that is disputed, even by his most conservative colleagues in this country and in other jurisdictions.

He goes on to deride the merit principle, and I must say that it will take many years for the merit principle to be established as the basis of appointments within the Education Department—indeed, many years ahead. He does little credit to the very difficult task that has been taken on in a large employer organisation such as the Education Department in its trying to implement that

principle. Obviously, it is a threat to many people who have never applied for a position in their lives, have simply cruised through their careers, and have gone from promotion to promotion without ever facing a panel, ever having to make a job application and being placed in charge of our schools delivering important services. I believe that the merit principle is the only alternative, and that is true across all employer organisations. It has been resisted strongly in the Education Committee; we are trying to implement it. It is quite hard to reason the criticism that has been advanced by the Opposition of the implementation of that principle in our schools system.

With respect to school closures—if they are for political purposes—I can assure the Committee that many of my colleagues are not happy about the school closures that have occurred in their electorates. They occur as a result of difficult processes of growth and decline of schools, allocation of resources and the provision of the best opportunities for students. They are never easy, they never have been and they never will be, but they are a fact of life, particularly where there has been the enormous decline in the number of enrolments that we have experienced in South Australia.

With respect to voluntary separation packages, the rules that apply have been established by the Commissioner for Public Employment. VSPs are occurring in all Government agencies. They have come about in the Education Department as a result of the Government Agencies Review Group recommendations. There has been a substantial reduction in the number of non-school based positions in the past 12 months in the Education Department. That has been the subject of questions in the Parliament and the rules under which they have been applied, I believe, have been appropriate. I will be pleased to obtain the specific information that the honourable member sought about the persons who were involved in that decision-making process. I think there is always criticism of VSPs by those who do not benefit from them and believe they should have had access to them.

There is always gossip about who got how much and who would and would not have retired if they had not applied. I am not sure how that can ever be eliminated from the scene, as much as we would all desire that not occur. If the honourable member has some specific information, if he believes that there has been fraud of any kind—I think he was alleging that people—

*The Hon. Jennifer Cashmore interjecting:*

**The ACTING CHAIRPERSON:** Order! The member for Hayward was heard in silence.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Certain declarations need to be made with respect to *bona fides* of people entering into these arrangements. If the honourable member has information to show that that has not occurred, I will be pleased to have the matter investigated. However, I will obtain the information that the honourable member seeks.

**Mr BRINDAL:** In his opening statement, the Minister said that he was aware that the Education Department's priority in the past few years had been in the area of human resources rather than physical resources. I take that to be an acknowledgment of the severe maintenance problems in our Education Department schools.

There is reference on page 139 of the Program Estimates to central office upgrading. The Minister will be aware that in recent years many schools have had to miss out on maintenance, minor works and upgrading due to the tight budgetary position. So, these schools were dismayed to learn that the Minister has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on renovation of the central office for bureaucrats.

Reputable Education Department sources have confirmed that more than \$500 000 has just been spent on renovating the fifth floor of the department's central office. These sources were outraged when further renovations were begun this year on the ninth floor, where the Minister, the Director-General and other senior bureaucrats are located. I am told that a very nice parquet floor has been installed together with quality, new furniture, including tables and chairs, and that an office redesign has taken place.

**The Hon. Jennifer Cashmore:** My primary schools will be pleased to hear that.

**Mr BRINDAL:** So will mine. My sources have estimated the cost of this further extravagance—and I use that word deliberately—to be perhaps as high as \$200 000. Will the Minister say how much money was spent on renovating the fifth and ninth floors of the central office, respectively, and will he explain the reasons for those renovations?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** With the reduction of some 300 positions in the Education Department as a result of the GARG recommendations and the bringing into the central office of functions involving personnel, payroll and school building programs, the Education Department has been given the opportunity to quit rental properties in a number of locations, allowing it to house those functions in Government-owned property. There have been resultant reductions in rental payments that go outside the public sector, and there have also been savings in administration, reduced supervision requirements, and so on, enabling, I believe, a more efficient service to be provided.

There are costs associated with that, and I will be pleased to provide details to the honourable member. It is estimated that the annual rental savings at Murray Bridge are \$175 000; at Noarlunga, \$118 000; and at Elizabeth, \$172 000: a total of \$465 000. So, very substantial savings will be made. In addition, costs of delivering services will be lowered because of the reduction by almost one-third of non-school based State-funded employees of the Education Department.

With respect to the costs of bringing in staff and housing them and those new functions in the Education Building, I will be pleased to obtain details of that; that work is continuing at the moment. With respect to the office of the Director-General, I can assure the honourable member that the Minister's office is the same as it has been. If he is making an allegation of me, then he should check his facts. Work has been done with respect to the Director-General's secretariat, that is, work that was advised to be done a very long time ago—in fact, in the time of Dr Boston's Director-Generalship. He set the work in train, and it has now been undertaken.

In relation to floor coverings, advice has been taken on what is the most efficient and economical floor surface. In areas that were busy it was seen that carpet had not

proved to be good value, and that advice was, as I understand it, taken from experts. So, I can assure the honourable member that it is not in any way a matter of that money being misspent. The demands that are placed on the bureaucracy in the Education Department are very substantial indeed, particularly with the vast staff reduction that has occurred in the past year.

When we are delivering a service as important as education and we have a budget in excess of \$1 billion, we are expected to have an efficient organisational structure and to be perceived by the community as being efficient. I would have thought that that principle was applied across all Government and non-government organisations in the community.

The Director-General's secretariat was very badly organised and rundown and was quite shabby. It was quite timely that this minor refurbishment occur in that department. It had been unchanged for over 20 years. So, I think the honourable member's allegations are unfounded, if he seeks to ridicule or deride the senior management of the Education Department in this way.

**Mr BRINDAL:** Let us be quite clear. The Brighton High School is bussing every student from Brighton High School down to Mawson High School to do tech studies, and for more than 10 years the Minister has been aware that there was a need for new tech studies and home economics facilities at Brighton School. Let us not hide behind the cloak of a previous Director-General or the fact that it has been on the book for years but talk about the money that is needed to run education in this State and confine it to that.

The Minister talks about the savings made by contracting office space to justify renovations to central office. But it is well known by every member of this Parliament that it was this Minister who decentralised head office and caused the huge blow-out in rents all over South Australia before deciding now that it is a total disaster and bringing them all back. He wasted the money sending them out there, and he is now justifying extra expenditure to bring them back. It is rank hypocrisy.

That leads me to my next question, which concerns the very savings that the Minister is now claiming to make. I refer members to page 139 of the Program Estimates. Last year the Minister announced the abolition of two of the metropolitan-based area offices of the Education Department. The Minister indicated that this was part of a package to reduce the amount of money spent on administration in central and area offices. He has repeated the allegation today. One of those area offices was located at Elizabeth House in the Elizabeth shopping centre. However, I understand that the department was locked into a 10 year lease on 2 400 square metres of space at Elizabeth House and that this does not expire until December 1995.

The initial annual rental payment in 1985 was \$291 000, so it is estimated that the rental payment now will be about \$400 000 a year. When this was realised, there were many red faces in the Education Department and there was a desperate search for staff to put into this vacant office space which is clearly, by the Minister's own admission, no longer needed. Therefore, the decision was taken to move all the advisers and support staff from the Professional Services Centre at Para Hills into Elizabeth House. The Professional Services Centre is now

at least substantially vacant, yet only three years ago this same Minister and this Government spent \$100 000 upgrading the Para Hills High School so that the advisers and support staff could move out of expensive office accommodation and back to schools. He shifted them back to schools, spent \$100 000, has now got this spare office and has again shifted them out of schools and back into spare office accommodation, all of which is costing money and is a fiasco. The Government is now desperately trying to find other tenants to take over the vacant space. However, so far the only success has been five staff from the Child Adolescent Mental Health Service who have leased part of the space at \$7 000 per annum.

My question is: what is the annual rental payment currently for Elizabeth House, how many staff are located there, and how much money was spent on the Para Hills High School in developing the Professional Services Centre?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Let us be clear that the decentralised structure of the Education Department was the decision of the Tonkin Government. The only change that the incoming Government made was to provide an additional office at Whyalla and to decentralise in that way.

The most expensive refurbishment of a school ever in the history of education in this State was Brighton High School. More than \$8 million was spent on refurbishing that school, yet the honourable member has the gall to come here and grizzle about the lack of expenditure on Brighton High School. Discussions are going on between the Brighton High School community and the Mawson High School community about the relationship between those two schools. Obviously there are great advantages in forming a new relationship between those two schools which will certainly address the issues facing both school communities and access to the curriculum areas to which the honourable member has referred.

Some of the office space in the Elizabeth buildings will be retained by the Education Department as the basis for the Teacher and Student Support centre. The staff who have been transferred there are part of the network of centres that has been established across the State. There are staff remaining in the school, but a great deal of the movement of staff has been brought about by an overall reduction in non-school staff numbers in the Education Department. I have already referred to the specific rental information and how much is to be quit. I will obtain for the honourable member the cost of how much is remaining.

With respect to the 10-year lease, the Education Department has negotiated a new tenant to take on a sub-tenancy of that area. I am not sure what gossip the honourable member has heard about that, but I shall be pleased to clarify that for him. If he believes that there has been some vacant space there that we have had to fill up, I can say that is simply not true. Staff have been directed there as a result of the establishment of the TASS centre, which is a new and different function and is in accordance with similar staffing in other TASS centres across the State.

**Mr BRINDAL:** As a supplementary question, I understand that there is a 10-year lease on Elizabeth House. I understand that the Minister will provide the

information I clearly asked for in the question. Perhaps the Minister will explain the central issue. Two or three years ago he announced a back-to-schools policy, taking people out of isolated buildings in centralised or even decentralised regions and putting them back near students in schools. Since the Minister did that with much fanfare and took a lot of kudos for it, what justification can there possibly be for taking people out of buildings and premises which he owns, which he has renovated and on which no rent is payable, and putting them into buildings for which a commercial rent is payable, given that those buildings are removed from children and schools, and the fact that it is against the very philosophy that he claimed to be implementing? I might be stupid, but would the Minister explain the answer?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The honourable member has failed to understand that there has been a substantial reduction in staff. He has been basing his questions on the assumption that there is a stable number of staff, or the same numbers of staff, simply being transferred from a school location to a non-school location. The reality is that there has been a reduction of staff in the non-school location. There has been a reduction of staff in the school-located but non-school staff. The school facilities that have been used by non-school staff are still being used by some non-school staff, but used less. The reason why we have to retain some space in the non-school setting is the need for the specialist services of the Education Department in some locations to work with a number of other agencies that are providing human services. The interrelationship between staff, the way in which we are working with other service providers, is seen as the most efficient and effective way to deliver that service and also to give service to those schools and those accessing those particular services. As I said, it is occurring with very substantial savings to the cost of rental accommodation.

**Mr BRINDAL:** As a further supplementary question, I understand fully the contraction of staff. Have any staff been moved from Para Hills to Elizabeth? If any staff are left, why leave them in paid rental accommodation when there are more than sufficient premises to accommodate those staff for which no rental has to be paid? Why pay out money that you do not have to pay out, even if the number of staff is reducing? Have any staff been shifted from Para Hills to Elizabeth and, if so, why?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The honourable member is taking a snapshot of someone who has looked at this at a particular point in time. We are still in fact relocating staff, as I said earlier, into the city location in terms of some of the functions that are being centralised in the Education Department. So, when that process is completed, we will have fewer people in the Elizabeth office. We will have fewer people in the school-based location because there are fewer staff performing those functions. We will have some staff located centrally as well. I will provide the honourable member with the details of those movements, but they should be seen as the current position and not how the final configuration of how the allocation of staff will work.

If the honourable member is trying to say that the movement of personnel out into school-based locations is being reversed, that is not so. I think I have explained why that is not so, but one needs only to travel around

the metropolitan area to see the very large number of units located on school properties and working in conjunction with schools. I believe that has been a very effective strategy, part of the back-to-schools strategy, that has provided for a better location for the delivery of services. After all, all those people are serving schools and students. It has provided for an effective use of surplus school property, where we still have viable schools, but they do have surplus property that otherwise was inefficiently used. It has the resultant saving of not being in high cost rental space.

I have received some advice from the officers at the table that indicates it is our belief that no staff have been transferred from the Para Hills school to the Elizabeth office. I will seek further confirmation of that. That is just another of the spurious allegations being raised in this Committee of the Parliament, and I will have some more to say about some of the others during the course of this Estimates Committee. It is a great tragedy that the Committee is being used in this way.

**Mr HERON:** With reference to page 144 of the Program Estimates, what measures are being taken to ensure secondary school students are prepared for the world of work? Can the Minister provide examples of successful work education programs and how these programs are of benefit to students and teachers?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** A large number of our secondary school students are participants in the work force. That is a fact of life. It can be seen as a positive factor in the education of young children. It would be a mistake if we did not try to embrace the work that young people are doing in some way in the formal studies of students in our schools. We have long had opportunities for work experience in our schools, and that plays a valuable part. A recent study conducted by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Training indicates that, nationally, one in three full-time secondary students is now holding a part-time job. That provides us with some opportunities to bring about greater relevance to the world of work, and the experiences of young people in our schools.

I have been very pleased, particularly during the period of my Chairmanship of the Australian Education Council, to work with the Business Council of Australia, and particularly its Chairperson, Mr Brian Loton, who has a particular interest in establishing a strong relationship between Australian schools and Australia's employers. It is through his leadership that that organisation of employers in this country, and other employer bodies, have formed policies which bring their organisations into a much closer relationship with this nation's schools. As members would know, in our schools we have had a year of 'Schools in industry', and a number of very key programs have developed as a result. Also, we asked schools throughout the State to form their own relationships with local industry and employers. That has grown and taken off in many unexpected ways, and it has been pleasantly surprising to see the commitment to our schools of so many industries in this State.

The Padthaway Primary School—in the electorate of the member for Victoria, who is alleged to have been most critical of schools in his own electorate and their capacity to deliver services—has a key teacher to develop work-education industry links in that small rural

community. So, it is not a matter of metropolitan-based schools only; schools throughout the State are participating in school-industry links. Mitsubishi and six other schools—Marion, Blackwood, Christies Beach, Hamilton, Morphett Vale and Brighton-Mawson High Schools—are also involved in that.

I have spoken on a number of occasions to executives of Mitsubishi about their interest in the language skills and other relationships of students, and a number of education functions have been conducted within the Mitsubishi plant. With South-East high schools and the South Australian Timber Industry Training Council, there is another example of activity in this area—again in the electorate of the member for Victoria, who has been critical, as I say, of the performance of schools in his electorate.

That is a fine example of relationships and of making educational opportunities relevant to the world of work. Warooka and Para Hills Primary Schools and the Department of Agriculture and Yorke Peninsula farming communities have a relationship, as do BHP and Whyalla schools, East Adelaide Primary School and Heyne's Nursery, which is near that school, and so on. One could go through many examples such as this across the State.

Specific initiatives relating to work education include: the School Education and World of Work project, which seeks to incorporate industrial relations and occupational health and safety issues in the curriculum; the provision of youth labour market issues, a series of pamphlets that has been provided to teachers, with current careers and labour market information, a joint Education Department and TAFE initiative; and the computer Job and Course (JAC) explorer system, which distributes current course and occupational information to over 300 schools and communities in South Australia. The Education Department provides a support staff and budget for that information service to young people making very important decisions about their career paths.

The Unlock Your Future campaign is a venture between the Education Department, the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia, the Department of TAFE and a number of key industries. We have the Vacation Counselling Service, which provides a very important service to assist students in course and subject selection over the January vacation each year. There is the visits program, which coordinates visits between school and industry. The visits register is currently staffed by an Education Department teacher, and the program assists country students, in particular, in organising industry visits. There is substantial support within the curriculum division of the Education Department, and work is proceeding to support industry and vocational education, career and work education and the development of a work education framework to assist teachers when incorporating work-related issues in the curriculum, matters I referred to in my introductory remarks. There has been significant inter-agency work to improve careers information and to assist interest in management and coordination of activities relating to careers and work, such as Manufacturing Week, Skills Expo, the Tourism Hospitality Forum and the general promotion of school and industry links.

**Mr HERON:** What is happening this year in primary and secondary schools regarding attainment levels? What

is proposed for 1993 and how will that relate to moves to develop a national approach to reporting on students and achievements? What are the benefits to South Australia's attainment levels of a standardised testing of students?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** This is an important development in schools not only in South Australia but across this country. We are moving to a situation in which the community is requesting of us more and more information about the educational outcomes of students, and information much greater than that which can be provided by a standardised testing situation. The issue of standardised testing has been brought into disrepute by its manipulation for other purposes, particularly in the restructuring of grant maintained schools, which we have been seeing in England and now will be seeing developed in Victoria, presumably, if there is a change of Government there.

By contrast, a good deal of important work is currently going on across this country in the development of attainment levels. The 1992-94 three-year plan for the Education Department recognised that significant development had occurred and that the focus had shifted to implementation from the previous discussions and training programs that have taken place on assessment issues. Teachers in R-7 schools are developing this program this year, and in 1993 this program is to be developed in our secondary schools. Further development and trialling will occur in the collection and treatment of data, particularly in relation to data that will inform the implementation of our social justice action plan.

As I said, the teachers of 8-12 students will commence a formal introduction of the program in 1993. National profiles are being developed as a collaborative effort by the States and Territories to meet the same intentions as described for the attainment levels. In fact, the South Australian attainment levels have been based on the work being done in this area nationally. Once again, it is an area in which the broader community has a great deal of interest, with some national dimension being achieved in this area, without taking away the basic rights of the States.

The draft national material is already available following the same general framework as the attainment levels. Although there are some differences in terminology and presentation, that is currently being discussed by the working parties looking at these issues. The national profiles will be created in mid 1993 and available for use across this country in 1994. South Australia, as with all States and Territories, has made an in-principle decision to work cooperatively to develop national materials.

Teachers will continue to use the attainment level materials through 1993 and, if those materials meet expectations, will begin to use them from the beginning of 1994. The assessing, reporting and data processing training and development undertaken within the framework of the attainment levels this year and next will be applicable when using the national materials, if they are found to be appropriate.

**Mr HERON:** Will the Minister provide an overview of primary school student enrolments over the past decade and indicate the predicted enrolment changes for next year? How many extra teachers is it estimated will be required in primary education as a result of the

predicted enrolment increases for 1993, and what is the cost?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** As I indicated in my introductory remarks, there has been a growth in primary school enrolments. There has been a growth in overall enrolments in education, but secondary enrolments are still declining, although the number of primary school enrolments ensures an overall increase. It might be of interest if I were to table the first term enrolments at schools over the past decade, which indicates the number of students that have been enrolled this year in primary and secondary schools, to give a broader picture.

In the primary sector, in which the honourable member has sought the information, the numbers have increased. Last year 114 929 students enrolled, and it is estimated that this year there will be 117 416. That is what we provided in the budget this year for a further increase to 118 570 primary school students. This requires us to provide additional staff and that has been provided for in the budget. The estimated increase of about 1 100 students is, indeed, only an estimate and it is revised from time to time. Whether it is that number depends on a whole range of factors. It is estimated that an additional 50 teachers will be required to absorb those increased student numbers. The accurate number for enrolments for the start of the 1993 school year will not be known until the end of the February 1993 census has been processed.

**The ACTING CHAIRPERSON:** Is that table included in the statistical summary that the Minister distributed? If it is included, there is no need to table it, as it is available.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** It is, and it is covered in that way.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I am concerned that several times this morning the Minister made statements claiming a reduction of 300 non-teaching positions in the department. He referred to revised predictions of staff. Those statements appear to be in direct conflict with financial statements in the Auditor-General's Report. My question is on that subject. On 27 August last year the Minister announced a 25 per cent cut in the Education Department bureaucracy and said:

The move, subject to approval by the Government Agencies Review Group, will result in a reduction for 1992 of the total number of staff employed outside schools from approximately 1 200 to 900 with total annual savings of \$14.7 million. None of these positions will come from schools.

The financial statement budget papers for 1991 and 1992 show that the number of GME Act employees only declined by 81.6 full-time equivalents; that was from 840.8 to 759.2. The Auditor-General's Reports for 1991 and 1992 show that the number of public servants only declined by 67 full-time equivalents, from 844 to 777.

Given these independent measures of the extent of the cut back, does the Minister still claim to have cut staff employed from outside schools from 1 200 to 900, and will the Minister provide a detailed breakdown of the positions and classifications, as well as a brief description of the job involved for each of the positions abolished?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** There is an explanation for this. The honourable member need only talk to people in the department who are well aware of the extent of the reductions that have been made and the changes that has required of us in education administration. The salaries of



those officers have been provided to the Parliament, in response to questions and have been deducted from the Education Department budget, and the department has reduced its staffing numbers to date by 276 of those 300 positions.

The remaining staff are being held against other positions so that, in fact, all of the 300 positions have been abolished. That information has been made available to the House. As to the classifications of those positions, I will check that detail to ensure that it has all been put on the record, and what has not been put on the record most certainly will be.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** As a supplementary question, because this seems to be a very fundamental and important matter in a budget Estimates Committee, if what the Minister says is correct, and I am sure that it is, why is there such a disparity between reality and reporting to Parliament? The source of the figures I have provided is the Financial Statement No 1. 1992-93—the current paper tabled by the Premier a fortnight ago—at page 150. It would have been printed only days before its tabling in Parliament and the information that the Minister has just given the Parliament would surely have been available. Why is there such a disparity? It can be clearly seen by the Minister that Parliament is being misled. We are entitled to believe the figures in the Financial Statement.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I can assure the honourable member that I asked the same question of my officers and I will ask Ms Kolbe to explain the definitions that I think are causing the concern.

**Ms Kolbe:** In the definitions used in the Auditor-General's Report, for instance, AFT refers to average full time equivalents throughout the year. Therefore, it is a flow concept, whereas the positions reduced are actually the count of positions at a particular point in time, and the point in time that the Minister mentioned is 30 June. We began implementing GARG on 1 January 1992 and the reductions have been made fairly rapidly. But until 31 December 1991 we had the full complement of the previous organisation. In terms of positions, we have really only commenced reductions from 1 January 1992 onwards and, therefore, when one looks at 30 June and the number of positions in the organisation, we have the reduction that the Minister mentioned. However, if one looks at the positions that were held as averages throughout the year, then the number is much greater because we only started the reductions in half of the financial year.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** Ms Kolbe's explanation is satisfactory so far as it refers to the Auditor-General's Report, but the Financial Statement would have gone to State Print presumably not many days or certainly weeks before it was tabled in Parliament. How is that disparity accounted for? It would have gone to the printer long after 30 June this year.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I will try and clear it up now. To which document is the honourable member referring?

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I refer to page 150 of the Financial Statement, 1992-93, table 86 'Actual employment as at 30 June 1992'. It then refers to 'Education, GME Act, 759.2'.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I will have officers look at this and I will try to provide an explanation.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** By way of fuller explanation, can the Minister tell us right now, categorically, how many GME employees—this very day—are employed by the department?

**Mr BRINDAL:** It will be the first day you have ever been able to, if you can.

**The ACTING CHAIRPERSON:** Order! The member for Hayward will get his opportunity.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I do not have today's employment figures in my pocket but I can obtain them for the honourable member. I have figures applying at the end of the financial year.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** That was nearly three months ago.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I have quoted those for the honourable member. I will obtain the snapshot figures for her.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** My next question relates to Languages Other Than English (LOTE), and I refer to the Program Estimates, page 137. Before asking the question I wish to quote from authorities who are extremely critical of LOTE. Professor Tony Stephens, Director of the Centre for Language Teaching and Research, has recently published a critique of the LOTE program called 'Continuing with LOTE studies' and in it he states:

Ironically, the Education Department of South Australia prides itself on a program of primary LOTE study, which is meant to achieve saturation in 1995, although this outcome is extremely unlikely. No proficiency testing is required for the recruitment of primary LOTE teachers . . . Teachers who may have had an insignificant amount of training in a language are put in front of classes which quickly perceive their instructors have no confidence in their own language skills. The amount of time allotted to such courses in the weekly timetable is often such that the LOTE becomes what is known as a 'muck-about' subject and the children acquire the prejudice at a very early stage that LOTEs are simply not to be taken seriously. South Australia's vaunted initiative in primary school LOTE studies may ultimately achieve no more than a massive turn-off of younger students from serious language learning in later years.

Every member of this Committee would recall from his or her own experience that that is a very serious problem and one to be avoided. How many extra LOTE teachers each year will have to be employed to allow the Government to meet its promise that every primary school student in 1995 will be studying a language other than English? Does the Minister believe that there should be an independent review of the Government's LOTE program in light of the strong criticism from the Director of the Centre for Language Teaching and Research?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** One needs to be careful in generalising upon the specific comments that were made by one academic in this area. I have had discussions with Dr Stephens and with many other people working in this field, and they disagree with the conclusions that Dr Stephens has reached. I must say that a debate has been going on, particularly in tertiary institutions, about the marshalling of resources, the limiting of our language teaching profile, and there is some concern about providing resources to particular language areas and eliminating other language areas from the profile of subjects that is made available to students in our schools. That is an unfortunate and unhelpful debate in our community.

I acknowledge that in the senior secondary years there are some disincentives for students to continue language

studies in years 11 and 12 because it is a belief on the part of students and their families that the study of a language will not help their chances of getting into their chosen faculty in the tertiary sphere. Some tertiary institutions in this country are giving bonuses to students to study languages at the senior secondary years and to encourage students to maintain their language studies at university. Less than 10 per cent of students in our universities study a second language and that is an unsatisfactory position for this country to be in. Disincentives of this type need to be removed.

Recently I had a talk with Professor Stephens. He agreed with me that we should continue to work towards a new policy amongst our universities to provide incentives for students to study languages at the senior secondary years. If that were the case, a different argument would be occurring about resource allocation in our schools, because the argument that Professor Stephens advances is substantially about resource allocation. Do we continue to maintain our commitment to the teaching of community languages or do we abandon that? Do we maintain our commitment to the teaching of languages of economic importance or do we delete that area of our commitment? Do we maintain our very substantial commitment to the two traditional languages that have been taught over the years in our schools, namely French and German? We have agreements with a number of Governments that provide support and resources to the teaching of languages other than English in our schools and in this State we have worked assiduously to ensure that we strike a balance and meet the obligations that we have entered into with respect to the Governments that have formed those agreements with us in good faith.

It has meant that we have not had the teachers within our teaching service, particularly at a time when there has been a decline in student numbers, and we have not been able to recruit teachers with specific skills in the subject language areas. As a result, we have had to enter into some short-term training courses for teachers, and Professor Stephens has been a leader in assisting the Education Department to access those courses and provide flexible opportunities for existing teachers to upgrade their skills in these areas. Actions have been identified that will be put into place to meet the 1995 target. They include early offers of employment, intensive training and development, and redeployment of employees with language skills and qualifications.

We have a strategy in place. It may not be exactly to the liking of the various interest groups in this area but it is an area where there is constant discussion and debate, and indeed lively debate. I welcome that and I welcome the commitment that is shown by our tertiary institutions and by so many of the communities representing the various language groups in our society in the education process. It is not quite as simple as the honourable member advances. It is one part of the overall fabric that has been developed with respect to the provision of language teaching in primary and secondary schools and its impact on our universities.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I assure the Minister that my colleagues and I do not for a moment suggest that this is a simple proposition, and that is the very reason that I want to pursue it. I assure the Minister

that the Liberal Party recognises the very serious implications, not only cultural and political but also economic, for the future of Australia in the teaching of languages, and it is committed to it. The question is how we do it, and that leads me to the Language Other Than English Mapping and Planning Project (LOTEMAPP). There is deep concern that some of the languages that are being taught in primary schools are not being linked up with the continuing teaching of that same language in the high school that is fed from those primary schools. How can we justify teaching Indonesian in primary school if only French is offered in the high school which the children attend?

Considerable criticism has been levelled at LOTEMAPP from many people involved in language teaching, and the Centre for Language Teaching and Research recently held a special conference to discuss LOTEMAPP. The Minister said that some people did not necessarily agree with Dr Tony Stephens, but there are plenty who do agree with him, and I will refer to some of their comments.

Mr John Deane from the Modern Languages Teaching Association of South Australia stated that that association had many difficulties with LOTEMAPP. These included that there appears to have been no reference made to languages in the secondary sector—that is a serious criticism—and no consideration given to the interface between primary and secondary schools with respect to language education. I would have thought that was a fundamental need of LOTE. Furthermore, he stated that one would have expected some consultation with those who will have to implement LOTEMAPP if there is to be a policy document. I understand that has not occurred. Mr Deane also stated that second language learning virtually does not gain anything from LOTEMAPP.

Anne Martin of the University of South Australia wondered whether the ALLC was the appropriate body. She felt that the issue was that the Minister should be made more clearly aware that LOTEMAPP is exceedingly contentious and is seen by people with expertise in the field to be inadequate. Therefore the Minister might be well advised to seek a third opinion from external experts. Professor Tony Stephens of the Centre for Language Teaching and Research said:

The version of LOTEMAPP currently in circulation is a treasure trove of mysteries to the reader whose age of credulity ended with a sudden loss of faith in Santa Claus. To the more experienced eye, it resembles a whimsy from the pen of George Orwell.

What status does the current Language Other Than English Mapping and Planning Project draft have? Will the Minister seek an independent review of the current project and, if not, why not?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I think that the somewhat florid language that is used by some of the academics in this area is not entirely helpful given that we are still in fact developing LOTEMAPP, particularly in secondary schools. Of course, a lot more work has been done in the primary school sector, but the articulation of that with the secondary school sector is most complex. Some people would say it is an impossible task given the geographic locations of schools across the State and the complexity and breadth of curriculum that is required of our secondary schools. However, it is a challenge that I think we are required to undertake, for all of the reasons

that are advanced in the arguments. That requires a lot of cooperation and planning; is not simply a matter of what happens in school A and school B in the same geographic location, because that is simply not always possible to map or to plan. So, there is a network of opportunities for students in the field of language studies. I think that we are particularly well served by those opportunities in this State.

The South Australian Secondary School of Languages (SASSL) is a very successful establishment. I think some 800 students are studying a second language under the auspices of SASSL. Indeed, I understand that the great majority of those students have that language subject as their best subject in terms of tertiary entrance requirements. That is often the reinforcing of a family language. Of course, not only is that important for their career path but it is important for the wellbeing of our community. There are also the languages now being provided through the Open Access College. That is becoming another important factor, not only for those students in geographically isolated areas but also for those students in the metropolitan area as well. Indeed, the majority of students now enrolled in the Open Access College live in metropolitan Adelaide; it is the largest school in the State. In addition, there is the network of ethnic schools that provide formal language studies, which is also an important element of access for language students. In drawing up LOTEMAPP in terms of articulation between primary and secondary years, we must take into account not only what is provided in mainstream schools but also under the specialist umbrella of programs that are provided. I have some statistical figures here, I think, which I can provide.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** Can I ask the Minister to answer the question, which is: will the Minister seek an independent review of LOTEMAPP and, if not, why not? Also, will he answer the previous question, which was: will he seek an independent review of the actual LOTEMAPP program? Aside from the interests of children of this State, I would have thought it was in the Minister's own political interests simply to say, 'Yes, I will.' Clearly something is seriously wrong and people are angry.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The honourable member is virtually asking for the impossible. LOTEMAPP is not in place.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** It has not been well done.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I do not know how the honourable member can actually make these allegations when LOTEMAPP is a concept that is being developed.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** And not well developed.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The honourable member says that people are not thinking about it in the right way.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I raise a point of order, Madam Acting Chair. I do not believe it is within the province of the Minister to question the *bona fides* of any member of this Committee to ask questions.

**The ACTING CHAIRPERSON:** There is no point of order. I would ask the Minister to continue.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The honourable member has just asked her fourteenth question on this particular matter. The point is that this is a concept that is being

developed and, as the honourable member has indicated in her questions, there is debate about this, and that is welcomed. There is a great variety of viewpoints because, essentially, it is a matter of allocation of resources and of giving greater resources to one area of language study than another area of language study, and that will always be controversial and will raise a whole lot of issues that are difficult for our schools, individual families, ethnic communities and education system to address. However, it is an issue that is being addressed.

Unlike in many other jurisdictions in this country, this matter is being addressed in this State. Yes, there is an external review of the LOTEMAPP program. There is an advisory committee to the Minister of Education, which consists of people representing the interest groups in this area. I refer to the Multicultural Education Coordinating Committee and, as Minister of Education, I take advice from that committee on this matter. I can assure the honourable member that that committee is reviewing the progress constantly. I receive representations and depositions from that committee as it monitors this issue. It is a group external to the Education Department and a very valuable advisory group; it is a broadly-based group of people. I very much value the comments it has to make to me on issues as important as the LOTEMAPP exercise that we are currently developing.

**Mr ATKINSON:** I refer the Minister to page 159 of the Program Estimates—Support Services. A 1991-92 specific target was that schools should be encouraged to adopt the School Watch program as a crime prevention strategy. How many schools are in School Watch? Does the Minister have any evidence that School Watch has reduced vandalism or arson in schools?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I was recently at a briefing given by a senior officer of the Police Department on the relationships between the Education Department and the Police Force, not only in the development of the School Watch program but indeed in a whole network of community policing exercises. It is very encouraging to see the development of the policing services that are occurring in our community in conjunction with schools and students and, indeed, the development of positive attitudes on the part of young people in this State towards our law enforcement agencies. There are now opportunities for much closer and more personal relationships between officers of the Police Force and our students. The School Watch program has been a very successful program. It has been welcomed in our schools. Some 87 schools have so far entered into the School Watch program and by the end of this year it is estimated that more than 100 schools will benefit from this support from their local communities. The project team working on this—a team of officers from the Education Department and from the Police Force—are fully booked until the end of term one of next year, which is an indication of the support for the development of the program.

*Mr Brindal interjecting:*

**The ACTING CHAIRPERSON:** Order! The member for Hayward will have his turn in a minute.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Because this is a very new program, few statistics are available, apart from anecdotal evidence, on the impact that this is having on the reduction of anti-social behaviour, graffiti, arson,

vandalism and so on, around our schools. I can say that, overall, there has been a reduction in the costs associated with the incidence of graffiti and vandalism. In the 1990-91 financial year, \$260 000 was expended in this area and in the financial year just passed \$170 000 was expended.

Principals of School Watch schools followed up a comment on a drop in criminal activity against schools of between 50 per cent and 75 per cent, and that is believed to be a general trend in all School Watch schools that have been contacted, but we must wait longer to draw conclusions on the effectiveness of the School Watch program. Computer figures from Education Security Services regarding the statistics of crime are not available at the present time, but that is being worked on, and I think all the statistics will prove helpful in the establishment of the School Watch program.

**Mr ATKINSON:** I refer to page 147 of the Program Estimates and the program entitled 'Aboriginal education'. How does educating Aboriginal students differ from educating other students and how does the department promote understanding of Aboriginal culture?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I think that the member for Hayward raised this issue or a variation of it during the Estimates last year or the year before that. Providing appropriate educational opportunities for Aboriginal children is always a very difficult area. There is no doubt that they form the most disadvantaged group in our community in a number of areas, and education is no exception to that. Yet, we know how important education can be to all young people in overcoming factors which are external to those within their own control and which vastly affect their opportunities in later life and access to career paths. It is interesting to see the growth in numbers of Aboriginal students in the tertiary sector, particularly in the University of South Australia, where I understand there are now some 400 Aboriginal students enrolled. Many Aboriginal students come into study as mature age students.

The three year plan of the Education Department places a high priority on this area of education. The staffing allocation provides for this in the various tiers of staffing that exist within the Education Department. The strategies that are developed vary from location to location and are many and varied. I was at Point Pierce only last week, opening the new school there, and it reminded me of an African saying that I heard recently about education: it takes a whole village to educate one child. At Point Pierce I saw the importance of the school not being separate from the community but being a central part of a given community. I think that one of the difficulties in the past has been that the school has been seen as something different from and alien to the natural structure of Aboriginal communities in the remote areas of South Australia.

A lot of work is being done at the moment by officers of the Education Department's Aboriginal Education Unit as well as by other staff to bring about much more culturally sensitive relationships among the school, the teaching service and the community. The nature of the curriculum and the work that is occurring on the Aboriginal lands at the moment are very important; communities are themselves wanting to accept a much greater responsibility for the management and delivery of

education services and for participation in education services. Nonetheless, they want to see their children given a very sound basic education that will enable them to become the providers—the teachers, nurses and so on—of services to those communities in the future. The work that is occurring in the urbanised areas of the State is of similar importance, and that varies from the establishment of schools such as Kaurna Plains School to the specific programs in our many existing schools. I will ask Mr Edwards to comment briefly on some of the more specific programs, for the benefit of the Committee.

**Mr Edwards:** These are probably best summarised in the current three-year plan for Aboriginal education. They are somewhat general in nature, so I will not be describing specific programs of a geographic nature. The major priorities of the three-year plan as it commences this year are: support for key elements in the integration of the Aboriginal community perspectives in school and system decision-making (and that is a point that comes strongly from the Aboriginal deaths in custody inquiry); increasing the level of operational responsibilities by Aboriginal communities in Anangu schools as part of a staged implementation plan; implementation of a coordinated Aboriginal employment strategy covering recruitment, retention, selection, training and development of Aboriginal staff; ensuring educational access for children in homelands in remote areas using face-to-face and open access methods; training and development of school staff in meeting the learning needs of Aboriginal students, including teaching strategies for English language acquisition; exploring supplementary training and development delivery using distant education strategies and, in particular, computer assisted learning; direct student support through counselling, tutoring, appropriate referrals and parental liaison; development of appropriate framework and curriculum in Aboriginal and Anangu schools; cultural studies curriculum development for specific Aboriginal language groups; Aboriginal studies curriculum development, training and development; and improved planning, monitoring and reporting processes. That is a series of general issues that is setting the priorities for our directions in Aboriginal education in both the remote and the metropolitan areas.

**Mr ATKINSON:** I refer the Minister to 'Multicultural education' on page 146 of the Program Estimates. What will be done this financial year to improve standards for students of non-English-speaking origins?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I appreciate the difficulties that this group of students is having in our schools, particularly with respect to the new arrivals program. South Australia, in fact, receives a disproportionate share of young people who come into our schools and require quite substantial assistance to enable them to take their place in mainstream schools. The objective of the English as a second language program is to improve educational opportunities, outcomes and participation not only in formal education but in the community at large. We do that, first, by developing English language confidence and, secondly, by facilitating participation of those students in mainstream schools.

The ESL program has two elements. First, the general support element which provides services directed at improving the English language confidence of that group of students within the settings of our normal schools, and

it assists mainstream class teachers to respond to the English language needs of students from non-English-speaking backgrounds. There are 240 primary and secondary schools in South Australia receiving special salary allocations totalling 140.8 full-time equivalent salaries, and 28 729 students are eligible for support under that program.

The ESL and mainstream teacher development course provides training and development for ESL and mainstream teachers to better enable them to respond to the English language needs of students from non-English-speaking backgrounds. The newly developed ESL curriculum and assessment materials facilitate the accurate identification of student needs and appropriate curriculum support to meet those specific needs. The new arrivals element provides extensive English language programs for newly arrived students who have minimal or no English schooling.

With respect to resource allocation, the general support allocation from Commonwealth sources is \$3.007 million, while the State provision is \$1.637 million. The Commonwealth provision for new arrivals is \$2.718 million, and the State provision is \$828 000. The State Government subsidises both the general support and the new arrivals programs to ensure support for newly arrived students and students from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Apart from the 140.8 full-time equivalent salaries to schools both elements of the ESL program are supported through an administration network in the Education Department and teacher support programs in the form of curriculum officers.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I refer to page 141 of the Program Estimates. Concern within the Education Department has been expressed to the Opposition about preferential treatment given to two former long-serving ministerial officers on the personal staff of the Minister. At a time when 300 positions have been cut from the department, these two officers were moved into two new positions in the Education Department. One officer has gone to a new senior position as assistant to the Director-General and the other officer has gone to a new position in the Education Department Information Services Unit. Were these positions advertised? Was a panel appointed to select the successful applicants, and what salary package has been given? As the Minister's staff complement has remained the same, what justification is there to spend over \$100 000 extra on publicity and the Director-General's office when, for example, thousands of children are still missing out on special education?

**Mr ATKINSON:** On a point of order, Madam Acting Chair, for the purposes of counting, was that one question or four?

**The ACTING CHAIRPERSON:** That is one question.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** First, I will clarify some of the inaccuracies that the honourable member peddles as if they were fact in this Parliament. It is a pity he does not seek out the true figures before he makes the allegations and assertions that he makes which attack credibility of individuals who cannot defend themselves in this Parliament, and I abhor the tactics of the Opposition in targeting individuals and using the forums of the House and its privileges to do. The reality is that I have less

staff in my office, and the honourable member should have taken the trouble—

**Mr BRINDAL:** On a point of order, Madam Acting Chair, the Minister has clearly misrepresented my remarks and I take offence. I ask him to withdraw. I have not named anyone in this place. We could give names, but we have not. I claim to have been misrepresented and I ask the Minister to withdraw.

**The ACTING CHAIRPERSON:** The honourable member will have a chance to respond when he asks his next question.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** First, the honourable member identified in the House a small number of people employed in my office. The reality is that there are now fewer staff in my office than there were previously. The honourable member has stated clearly that I have not reduced the staff of my office; I have. Secondly, I can assure the honourable member that the officer to whom he refers has been transferred to a position that was previously occupied by a person who has left the Public Service to occupy a position in a non-government school. I will obtain details of that appointment.

**Mr BRINDAL:** Madam Acting Chair, you told me I would have a chance to respond, and I will. I did not name individual officers. The Opposition has been very careful to target only what we see as problems within the department. We are not targeting individuals. I resent the Minister suggesting otherwise. Certainly if I am wrong in suggesting that the Minister has reduced his staff, and I am sure the Opposition will acknowledge that we are wrong, but we can only go by the material presented to us by the Minister and that shows that he budgeted for 16.7 staff last year, he achieved 16.4 and he has 16.4 this year. If that is a reduction, it is an insignificant reduction—in fact it is not a reduction but a continuation of what he had last year. I resent any statement in this House to the contrary. If his figures are wrong, let him say he cannot produce the right figures and let him tell us what the right figures are, but do not give us one set of figures and then accuse us of misusing them.

We have been contacted by a school council member who told us this week that the Education Department has offered the principal of their school a voluntary separation package but it must be taken by the end of next week. When the haste in respect of the offer was queried, they were told that the Education Department has 20 to 30 surplus principals in the system and it was desperate to find positions for them. How many surplus principals are in the system and is the department using the offer of VSPs to make vacancies for them? Will the Minister also indicate in each case what tasks those surplus principals were undertaking in term 3 of 1992?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I will, first, clarify the position about the staff assigned to the ministerial office. There are two categories of staff: the honourable member referred to ministerial staff not Public Service staff, and there is a clear distinction between the two.

*The Hon. Jennifer Cashmore interjecting:*

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** But there are not 16.5 ministerial staff. If the honourable member wanted to be fair about this, he would delineate those particular categories of staff.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I have provided that information every year: it was asked for in a recent question and it is now on the record.

*Members interjecting:*

**The ACTING CHAIRPERSON:** Order!

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** As I said, I will obtain the specific information that the honourable member wants, but he makes assertions based on information that is simply not correct.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I would like the Minister to answer the question and not to answer the answer that I got.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I think the honourable member should allow for some rebuttal of matters that are factually incorrect. With respect to principal VSP packages, there is a surplus number of principals because of amalgamations and closures of schools and the inability of some principals, who are surplus as a result of the application of the merit principle, to obtain appointment. It is estimated that at the end of this year there could be approximately 50 principals regarded as surplus in that sense, but many of those could gain positions on the basis of merit or by being placed in other positions for which they are suitable.

However, this would still leave an estimated 25 positions, and that number could be reduced by the application of voluntary separation packages, which are seen as the most equitable and fairest solution to this problem and certainly the most efficient in terms of management of the Education Department budget. A number of expressions of interest have been received from principals of our schools, and it is likely that 25 offers will be made in this current round.

**Mr BRINDAL:** The Minister has just talked about voluntary separation packages being equitable, and he also said, as I understood, that 50 principals will be surplus to requirements because of the merit principle. Does that mean that those principals were once considered meritorious enough to run a school but are no longer so considered, and that, therefore, they are on the scrapheap because they were once good enough and no longer are? What does it mean in terms of the promotion of new people? In other words, how many people are being discarded by the system and at what cost, and is this occurring because the system is contracting or because the department is promoting a new breed which it considers more meritorious? With respect to the equity of the merit principle, did Mr Mark Shiller, a former senior officer of the department, take a voluntary separation package, and has he since undertaken work for the Education Department?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The honourable member has completely misrepresented the statement I made a moment ago. As I carefully explained, surplus positions have been created by the amalgamation or closure of schools and also by persons not succeeding in winning positions on the basis of merit—and I think that must be acknowledged. The honourable member simply said that these positions have been created as a result of people passing through a merit-based selection process for the position of principal. The reality is that that is not the case: it is a combination of all those matters. As I said, this is an estimate, because the process is on-going.

The Opposition must work out whether or not it wants the merit principle: that was unclear from earlier

questions to this Committee. If the merit principle is considered important—and I believe it is fundamental to choosing the right people for the right jobs in the department—there is an associated cost in order to improve the quality of educational outcomes and leadership in our schools. Principals occupy the key positions in our education system, and I do not think their importance can ever be over-estimated.

Having said that he did not intend to name in this House people who cannot defend themselves, the honourable member simply goes ahead and does that. I do not have that information; therefore, the record will have to remain uncorrected for some time with a serious allegation being made against an officer of the department, and I think that is most unfortunate.

**Mr BRINDAL:** No allegation was made. The question was: did a person who was named take a package, and has he since worked for the department? No allegation was made in respect of that person. If that question gives the Minister some political difficulty, that is his problem and not the problem of the officer in question. I refer to page 137 of the Program Estimates. Currently, about 300 to 400 Australian children live in and around Kuala Lumpur. Education Department sources inform me that the former Director-General of Education, Dr Ken Boston, was interested in establishing a South Australian Education Department school in Kuala Lumpur. I am also informed that Dr Boston has had a number of discussions about the proposal. Will the Minister provide details of this proposal and say why the Education Department is contemplating the establishment of a school in Kuala Lumpur when it has enough trouble running its own schools in South Australia?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Once again, the honourable member does a grave disservice to our teachers and schools. The reality is that the education system in this State through the vehicle of the Senior Secondary Assessment Board is providing very valuable services to a number of schools in Malaysia. Indeed, a deal of potential exists to expand services that are provided to schools in Malaysia and other places. We have a very amicable relationship with education authorities not only in Malaysia but in many other South-East Asian countries. Indeed, a number of people holding political and senior positions in education and other areas of political life were educated in South Australia and retain friendships and relationships and a commitment to friendly relations between our countries. So, in a sense, it is a natural environment in which we can assist each other and share common resources.

There have been some discussions over a period of time, the most recent being between senior officers of the department and me, about ways in which we may be able to serve the needs of expatriate students, not only in Malaysia but in other places, and expand the current services that we provide. However, the situation has reached no more than the discussion stage. Recently, I met with the Malaysian Minister of Education when he visited Adelaide, and I also spent some time discussing common issues with the Malaysian Minister of Recreation and Sport when he visited Adelaide, and I must say that there are very cordial relations between our Governments, and there is a very keen interest in

developing much stronger ties between our countries and, in particular, our education systems.

It is quite churlish to say that we should withhold any of these relationships or that we should not develop these sorts of programs because of some attack that is made on our standards in South Australian schools. The reality is that we have for a very long period provided all the senior secondary examination services for the Northern Territory—a conservative administration. We have a very amicable relationship and a very valuable one for both parties. That has not been the subject of complaint, to my knowledge: in fact, it is seen as a considerable advantage to students in that remote part of this country, particularly those who want to continue to enter tertiary institutions across Australia.

In relation to the establishment of the International Baccalaureate program, apart from the Narrabundah school in Canberra which serves the diplomatic corps, in essence South Australia was the first State to embrace the provision of the International Baccalaureate examination in a State school. It is important that we have at least an element of our State education system that provides for those students who want to embrace a certification process which will gain them entry to most universities throughout the world and provide for the small diplomatic corps that resides in this State and also the children of those who are mobile executives in major corporations, and so on.

I am delighted that that program, albeit in a very small way, has begun at the Glenunga international school. That school also receives full-fee paying students, being one of the four State schools involved, and once again we, along with Western Australia, have led the way in taking full-fee paying students into our State schools. That has been a very valuable addition to the learning environment—the ethos of our system. But it is also a money earner for us. Once again, I think it would be churlish and, indeed, counterproductive to say that we should abandon that scheme on the basis that our standards are inadequate as perceived by the honourable member's question.

This is a very important issue for a State such as South Australia, an isolated State that is trying to market its education product. It is doing what the Arthur D. Little report recommended we ought to do across the public sector; it is doing it in a relationship with the private sector; and it is doing it in a way that brings into the Education Department a sense of corporate reality in terms of the ability to market products and to earn income that otherwise has simply not been seen as a possibility. It must be done carefully, properly and in a measured way. Of course, it must be done in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government, because we are not a sovereign Government in the sense of foreign relations. So, it is a complex area. I would like to ask Dr Garry Willmott, who is the Director of the Senior Secondary Assessment Board, to comment briefly about the matters to which I referred earlier, because he has been engaged in discussions with the Malaysian Government and with schools in Malaysia for a period about these matters.

**Dr Willmott:** SSABSA has been involved in delivering the South Australian matriculation program in Malaysia since 1984. Currently, we have six colleges in Malaysia, four of those in Kuala Lumpur, offering the

South Australian year 12 program. Over the next couple of years, that program is likely to expand significantly. Several additional centres are interested in offering the South Australian program. Currently, we are also in negotiations with those centres to offer year 11 of the South Australian Certificate of Education in particular centres. The total resource that that program has brought into the State in the past financial year is approximately \$250 000.

Regarding the servicing of South Australian expatriate students in Kuala Lumpur, that matter was raised with me by the High Commissioner in Malaysia when I was last there. He was concerned that an Australian program be available to those students, and the reputation of the South Australian matriculation program and the SACE is extremely high in Malaysia. We are also one of the States that offers a comprehensive public examination program which is highly attractive to expatriate students. It was within that context that the High Commissioner suggested some further discussions of some cooperative arrangement between the South Australian system and possibly a school in Malaysia that could service South Australian expatriate students.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I understand the sense of much of what the Minister has said, but does the Minister agree that it is better to have our own backyard in order and tidy before we go off doing other things. Quite specifically, I believe there are in excess of 400 students at Morialta High School, which is currently being amalgamated with Norwood High School because it is not considered to be viable in its own right, yet the Minister is telling this Committee that it is viable to go off to another country in another part of the world and establish a South Australian Education Department school. There are isolated children all around South Australia for whom the Minister will not provide schools, because he says it is not viable, yet the Minister will go to another country and talk about establishing a school when he is closing down schools here.

Quite simply, is it not better to have our own Education Department in order than to go rushing off into Malaysia and setting up 'you beaut' schemes which might suit the High Commissioner but which do very little for South Australia? Secondly, will the Minister, since he raised the subject, detail the number of successful people to complete the baccalaureate at Glenunga High School in the past three years?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I ask the honourable member to refrain from manipulating what I say. No-one, neither I nor Dr Willmott, has said there is any intention to establish a South Australian school in Malaysia. The honourable member heard that said; he sat there and listened, and then he just attributed it to us.

It is quite irresponsible and mischievous in the extreme to say that, and it could be quite harmful to the discussions that are going on between our respective Governments. That does a grave disservice to the standing of this Parliament. The reality is that there is no additional expenditure, no loss of revenue, to our schools because of these arrangements: in fact, it is revenue earning, as I explained to the Committee.

That is what all the commentaries are saying to us as a Government, that is, to look at the products that we have, to work out how we can market those products to earn

revenue, to develop longer-term relationships between our trading partners, particularly in South-East Asia, and to enhance the wealth-generating opportunities that we want for future generations in this country. So, the statement that the honourable member has made is very irresponsible and mischievous, because it misinterprets—in fact it says quite the opposite—what both Dr Willmott and I have contributed to this Committee.

The relationships we have are important relationships and need to be put into the proper context in which we are providing education services off-shore from this State. The relationships we have developed are really quite unique in this country and should be praised, not denigrated by the Opposition. The concept of fixing up one's own backyard and allocating our resources to it rather than reaching out to other nations and developing relationships with them is very much out-dated. It is often applied by ultraconservatives in terms of foreign aid, trade relations and so on. We see the results of that occurring now in Europe and in the United States with respect to our own ability to penetrate rural commodity markets. If we were to apply that to education, we would be doing a great disservice to future generations of young people in this country.

With respect to education outcomes at Glenunga High School, I will obtain that information. As I said, a few students so far have embarked on that program. Some students have withdrawn from it, because they found it not to their liking or perhaps too onerous; other students have persevered. Students are also doing the Senior Secondary Assessment Board examinations in conjunction with the International Baccalaureate examinations to provide a double certification process, but I will obtain those figures for the honourable member.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I should like to clarify something.

**The ACTING CHAIRPERSON:** This must be clarification only, because the honourable member has asked four questions, and the last one was a broad-ranging supplementary.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I do not know whether I misunderstood the Minister or he misunderstood me, because my question was specific. I asked whether the Education Department was interested in establishing a South Australian Education Department school in Kuala Lumpur. I heard the answers by both the Minister and his adviser, and I did not hear any denial that the department was going to physically set up a school. If the Minister is now saying he is not, that is fine and I accept it. My question was: were you going to set up the school? In neither of the answers did I hear said, 'No, that process would not include the physical setting up of a school in Kuala Lumpur.' If I have misinterpreted, I acknowledge that, but perhaps you did not quite hear the question, which specifically related to the setting up of the school in Malaysia.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I thought it was quite clear in my answer that that has not been a part of the discussions to which I referred. I was saying that the form of the relationship has not yet been developed. I think it is quite wrong for the honourable member to imply that from the discussions that I was explaining to the Committee. It is quite mischievous to say that, because that has not formed the basis of discussions in which I have been

engaged with the Malaysian Ministers to whom I referred or the work that SSABSA has been doing. We want our relationship to grow and to serve not only expatriate students but Malaysian students in the best way it is agreed that we can serve them. To precipitate some specific program, as the honourable member has done, and then try to attribute that to me is what I was complaining about.

**Mr De LAINE:** On behalf of my colleague the member for Albert Park, I should like to follow up part of the answer given by the Minister to the member for Hayward. What progress has been made in relation to the introduction of the International Baccalaureate scheme into Seaton High School? As the Minister will be aware, the member for Albert Park has been a keen advocate of this scheme for the Seaton High School.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I thank the member for Price for his question. The member for Albert Park has been very active, on behalf of the Seaton High School community, in advocating the need to develop a program for a group of students at that school who wish to access an international qualification. In the establishment of the International Baccalaureate program, the original thrust in South Australia was to accommodate the children of families that were coming to South Australia to work on the submarine program at Port Adelaide. From the Kockums firm, 80 families are coming to Australia. I met executives of that company and representatives of the Swedish Government, and they indicated that it was the intention of the company to provide educational opportunities in the eastern States of Australia for those children so that they would be spending only vacation time with their families whilst they were in Australia developing the corporation.

The then Premier and I developed a plan, in conjunction with those families, for them to visit schools in South Australia and hopefully choose to have their children educated in Adelaide and live with their families. We wanted to see whole families come here rather than have them separated in the process. I was pleasantly surprised when I met the team that came to visit our schools. They refused to allow us to introduce them to any schools. They wanted to go into a variety of primary and secondary schools, Government and non-Government schools, without announcement and inspect what they wanted in those schools. They did that and then came to see me; they said that they were very pleased with the range of educational opportunities provided in our schools and that they would recommend to their staff that their children should not be placed in boarding schools in the eastern States but should come to Adelaide.

It is interesting that, having established the IB program at Glenunga, it has been attractive to a different group of people. I understand that a majority of young people from those families have gone to Seaton High School and are very pleased with the educational opportunities that are provided there. It is for those reasons that the member for Albert Park has been advocating that that additional program be placed at Seaton. It is early days yet. I think that we need to examine and monitor carefully the effectiveness of the International Baccalaureate program and its application in our schools. I do not think that it will ever be a major program: it will only ever meet the needs of a specialist group of young people and their



families. Nevertheless, an argument may be made for a second IB program to be placed in a State school. Programs are provided at Mercedes College and at Pembroke College. There are discussions right across this country and in New Zealand for the development of the IB program, once again in a specialist context, in schools throughout this country. There is a good deal of interest in the program at present.

I know that the honourable member has looked at the schools across his electorate with the school communities and has developed a strategy, in conjunction with those school communities, arising out of the review of schools in the western areas of Adelaide where traditionally we have had a lower retention rate to year 12 and a lack of articulation between primary and secondary education to the degree that we would have liked. There have been declining enrolments in a number of the schools, and the plant has been run down as well. There have been smaller numbers and fewer resources to maintain that quite old plant. Therefore, there has been a reconfiguration of schools and substantial capital expenditure in a number of primary schools and, of course, at Seaton High School.

Emerging from this is a very important pattern of provision of education from reception through to year 12. It should not be seen as being out of the question that the International Baccalaureate program should be considered in relation to specific targeting of programs and development of curriculum within the overall education provision in that part of Adelaide.

**Mr De LAINE:** I refer to the Program Estimates, page 144. How do the Finn, Mayer and Carmichael reports impact on education, training and employment for young people in South Australia?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** This is a fundamentally important question. I think that the impact of those reports will be felt in this country for the next decade and well beyond. They are reports of a far reaching nature on the relationship between education, training and the world of work, the pathways that young people will follow to be sufficiently educated and trained to enter the work force, and the ability of the work force to continue to train those young people during their years of employment. It has as its central focus the notion of education for life. It gives the basis to a future work force that has the capacity to change skills bases and the application of talents a number of times during the working life of citizens of this country. It is estimated that in the next century workers will need to change their career paths about five times during their working life—maybe not dramatically but enough to require retraining, upskilling and access to appropriate opportunities for that to occur.

The fundamental basis of the Finn report is that all young people in this country would be engaged in the mainstream of our society; that is, they would be engaged up until the age of 19 in employment, training or education, or combinations of them. There is simply not an option, and there are certainly not incentives in society for young people to do nothing—that is, to be sidelined from the mainstream of society. But it then provides within the work of the Mayer committee (which is still yet to conclude its work, although it is almost at that stage) for the establishment of key competencies that we

want all young people to attain during their years of schooling, and to see those key competencies developed in training opportunities, university and in the world of work. It is suggested that they be continued until the mid-20s, and for them to be built on in the life-long learning opportunities.

This is quite a radical concept, which we will need to digest very slowly, but then in conjunction with the Carmichael report, the work of the national board that provides for a range of key elements in the ability of young people to enter the work force, the youth wage concept (which is embraced in that), new notions of training and the development of the new national training authority (which is under way at the present time), the very substantial funding that has been provided in the Federal Government's One Nation statement for training (the largest single component of funding that has been provided for the development of training opportunities in this country) all come together in a very important way.

The fundamental nature of the impact of these reports is not yet fully realised in the community, and there is a duty upon us all to ensure that the information that passes out into the community is understood as fully as possible, because it will have impacts on TAFE and on industry-based training. Also, it will have an impact on key industrial issues, wage structures and so on. It will most certainly have an impact on schools, particularly the senior secondary years of schools, and on our universities. For all those reasons, this is a most important issue. There is a meeting of Ministers of Education and Training to be held next week at which Mr Eric Mayer will present the details of his report, and at which there will be discussions about both the Finn and Carmichael reports.

**Mr De LAINE:** With reference to page 154 of the Program Estimates, what Government initiatives are proposed for this year to assist schools with minor maintenance of classrooms and other facilities; what resources are being spent on new schools, maintenance and school refurbishment this year; and has this been increased?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** In my introductory remarks, I commented on the need for us to provide additional resources in the area of maintenance of school buildings. I explained the history of the development of education in this State, particularly in the post-war years. That problem is shared across this country, not just in the area of education but also in the maintenance of health service buildings and other physical resources that serve our community. So, in the formulation of this budget, the Government has provided an additional \$14 million for maintenance programs, over and above the normal maintenance allocation provided to schools. That will be allocated to approximately 200 of the schools that are seen as being most in need of urgent attention of one form or another. I believe that will improve very much the working environment for our teachers and students, as well as the public perception of our schools.

No doubt some of that funding will not be seen publicly, but some of it obviously will be, and that is combined with an amount of approximately \$11 million that was provided three years ago to over 500 schools throughout the State by way of the back-to-schools program. That was the total of the funds raised by the

sale of surplus properties, and it was returned to schools for other minor works, maintenance, and so on. When those two sums are added together, it amounts to a very substantial additional expenditure that has been provided for the maintenance and repair of schools across this State.

Given that our new school program has been proceeding, and we have now a network of new schools which are regarded as the best concepts in schooling provision across this country—they are now being picked up by other States—as school numbers increase, we are in a position to provide additional accommodation and, as school numbers decrease, we can diminish the asset holdings of schools in a way that was simply not possible in the past, and blend them into communities, be they new and emerging communities with many young people, or be they ageing communities where the need for those facilities change and can be provided in other ways.

So, there is an overall works budget of just over \$100 million this year. This is the first time that that figure has been realised in this State. It is a very substantial increase in the minor works area for maintenance—an increase of approximately 80 per cent in the funds made available in this budget.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I refer the Minister to page 141 of the Program Estimates. Under 'Interagency support services—provision of executive, professional, technical, administrative and clerical support staff', I note an increase of 309 staff in the proposed figure of 788.9 from the actual figure of 479.9 for 1991-92. The increase in salaries was considerable, from a proposed sum of \$36.3 million to \$46.7 million actual. For the current year, there is a proposed decrease in staff numbers but an increase in salaries to \$64.8 million. Will the Minister explain the reason for the increase of 309 staff in this area of the department?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The explanation for this is related to how we account for workers compensation payments, the staff involved in workers compensation claims within the department, and how that is recorded in the Estimates Committee documents. In 1991-92, responsibility for the payment of workers compensation claims over 21 days and up to two years was transferred from the Department of Labour to the Education Department. This has meant that the actual average full-time equivalent level shown as 788.9 includes this adjustment of 315 average full-time equivalents, giving a comparable result of 473.9, which is lower than the proposed 1991-92 actual outcome.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** This is a supplementary question, because that was an apparently extraordinary explanation. Is the Minister saying that the Department of Labour previously paid the salaries of these people who are now attributed to the Education Department and, if so, what jobs were they doing that were paid for by the Department of Labour? Were they employed by the Education Department? This is a lot of people to switch from one department apparently unrelated to education into the Education Department because of a workers compensation scheme.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** They are people who are not at work; they are on workers compensation payments, and it is a matter of how they are accounted for and paid. In the past, they have been dealt with in one way and

they are now being dealt with in the committees under education.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** Is the Minister telling us that we have 309 people on workers compensation in that area of the Education Department—which, by my calculations, amounts to almost half the people in that department?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The honourable member will find that the Education Department issues close to 30 000 group certificates in a year, so that is the number of people who have been employed in one aspect or another of education services. Of that number, these are the people who are currently on workers compensation or who have been during that period.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** This must be pursued by way of a further supplementary question. The Minister just said that approximately 30 000 people in the Education Department at any given time—

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** No, throughout the year.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:**—throughout the year on workers compensation—

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** No, employed by the Education Department or by those units associated with it.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** But (and it is an important 'but') the identification of these staff in the Program Estimates at page 141 is that they are executive, professional, technical, administrative and clerical support. That is a discrete number from within the 30 000, and it would be a relatively small proportion of that 30 000. They are identified as being currently 788.9 in number, an increase of 309 apparently accounted for by workers compensation within that area. We are not talking about teachers: we are talking about executive, professional, technical, administrative and clerical support staff. It is half the number.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** That is the category in which they are placed, because they are teachers, ancillary staff and other people in the system, but they are not currently in a school and not paid for in that way; they are paid for under our workers compensation system. That is the categorisation in which they are provided for. Every other Government department similarly this year, in our budgeting arrangements, has, I understand, been provided for in this way.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I wish to pursue that line of questioning still further. I and, I think, any fair minded person would regard this as a misleading statement to Parliament. Why are those people not placed in a category such as 'Teachers on workers compensation' and identified in the budget papers as such? I am sure the Minister would understand that, if he were sitting here as a member of the Opposition without the knowledge that he has from his departmental officers, there is no way that he could possibly identify teachers on workers compensation or be led to think that there are 788 people on the executive, professional, technical, administrative and clerical support staff when, in fact, a number—and we still do not know how many of these people—are not in that category but are teachers on workers compensation.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Obviously, the great majority are, since that is where the majority of employees are in the education system. Previously, though, they were in

the Department of Labour line. If the honourable member is saying that we are trying to hide them in some way, that is simply not the case. There has been a Treasury directive that they be provided in the department's budgets under this heading. I will be quite pleased to obtain a breakdown for the honourable member of the categories of teachers, ancillary staff and non-school staff amongst those employees. It is certainly not meant to be attributed to in that way.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I will move on to another line of questioning, but I believe that this will be pursued by Questions on Notice. I will be grateful if the Minister will provide that breakdown. Although the Minister denies that he is trying to hide these people, the effect of the presentation in the budget papers is that they are hidden, and I maintain that that is wrong. Parliament should know how many teachers and other categories of staff are on workers compensation.

Where they were in the past is of historical note. They certainly were not in such numbers in the past as they are now, and it would not have been possible by perusal of the budget papers, without questioning, to identify those teachers.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I fail to see the basis of the honourable member's allegations. Questions have been asked over a period of time about workers compensation with respect to education and other providers. A parliamentary select committee is dealing with workers compensation, and that has access to all these figures; they are publicly available each year. There is discussion in the community at large about workers compensation laws, the cost of workers compensation, and so on. No-one has ever sought to suppress that information: it is freely available in the community, as it is, of course, to the Parliament.

In fact, this year it has been taken out of the core agency, the Department of Labour, and put into the documents relating to each particular agency. So, in fact, the reverse of what the honourable member is stating is actually happening.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** The fact remains that, notwithstanding all those other committees, an examination of the budget papers as such, as the line of questioning has revealed, does not indicate the actual state of staff on workers compensation or their location within the department.

I turn now to Program Estimates, page 138. Why did the department employ 13.7 fewer staff than was proposed in special education last year, when the needs in this area are enormous? Will the Minister provide—and he may need to take this second part on notice—a complete breakdown of money allocated to the Special Education Consultative Committee for 1990-91 and 1991-92, in particular providing details of the amount of grant allocated to each organisation, moneys spent on overseas trips and details of any such trips, and moneys spent on salaries, administration and travel?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** With respect to special education salaries, I will ask Ms Kolbe to explain the figures to which the honourable member refers, and I will obtain the other information for her.

**Ms Kolbe:** The changes we are seeing in the papers really reflect the greater integration of children. There is an allocation on the basis of enrolments, which is now

formula based, and that was part of the social justice plan introduced in the previous year. It is a function of enrolment as well as integration of children, who then do not show up any longer in this program, but the staff is allocated in accordance with the number of children who need to be taught in those centres and schools.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** Surely, wherever the children are they need the special attention that is warranted by special education; therefore, one would expect and hope that the staffing for special education follows the child, since it is the child who is in need, and that the staff should be reallocated to the areas in which the children were being educated, namely, normal schools. Why has that not happened?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** That is precisely what has happened. The trouble is that the honourable member has read from one line of the budget in respect of special schools and, as Ms Kolbe explained, the additional provision is provided now within the formula provided to schools. There is an additional component for special education.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** Can the Minister identify the 13.7 or greater number, if such number exists in another line?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** They are in the general salaries line in the tier 1 and tier 2 salaries that are provided to schools and, as Ms Kolbe said, there is now a formula whereby additional salaries are provided for the education of children with special needs.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I want to pursue that. Can the Minister guarantee that the formula has ensured that the number of staff has remained constant or has increased? Formulae are useful means of disguising decreases and I would like the Minister's assurance that the number of staff working in the area of special education has either remained constant or has increased and that there has not been a decrease of any kind.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I understand that the salaries have been increased in this area. Across our system there are 334 full-time equivalent salaries for special education in tier 1 and in tier 2 in 1991 there were 370.4 full-time equivalent salaries provided. In 1992, 398.6 full-time equivalents were provided, which is a 28.2 full-time equivalent growth in that area.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I refer to page 136 of the Program Estimates. This question will probably have to be taken on notice. For each of the average full-time equivalent figures shown, that is, 1991-92 proposed, 1991-92 actual and 1992-93 proposed, will the Minister provide a breakdown of staff in the same categories as shown on page 150 of the budget paper financial statement, that is, the categories of GME Act, weekly paid, other and other major Acts?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Yes, we can provide that information.

**Mr HERON:** I refer to page 151 of the Program Estimates. Can the Minister provide an overview of the value to teachers and students of the line stating, 'Fifty "Windows on Practice" documents published'?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I can. This is another example of some of the excellent work that has been done in South Australia, particularly within the curriculum function of the Education Department, which has brought

great credit to our system. It has been of much interest in other places, not only in Australia but also overseas. I would like to pay tribute to the work that Garth Boomer has been doing in this area. It has been outstanding work and his leadership has proven once again to be valuable in this area. I will ask Mr Edwards to comment on some of the detail associated with this line.

**Mr Edwards:** We regard Windows on Practice as a low cost method of publishing and publicising exemplary teaching practices. The publications, which include videos, are prepared by teachers and members of the school community for teachers and members of other school communities. It has been established as a cost neutral exercise and, to date, 44 titles have been produced on topics such as biology, health education, resource based learning, predictive behaviours, language other than English, technology, environmental education, social justice, literacy, maths and assessment. It is an ongoing project.

**Mr HERON:** Can the Minister explain what action has been taken to ensure that school cleaning is efficient? What savings have been made as a result?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The honourable member can probably answer this question himself better than most of us in education because, over the past 20 years, the honourable member has given much time and effort in ensuring that this sector of our industry in South Australia is efficient, is managed appropriately and that the conditions of employment and industrial relations are the best that we can achieve. Much credit is due to the honourable member for his influence in this industry. We now have an industry that has eliminated to a large extent the fly-by-night operators who took down many employees and who provided a less than satisfactory service to our community.

Our schools were no exception in that area but, through the careful negotiation of major industrial contracts, we now have an effective, efficient and well-organised industry and service to our schools. The cost of cleaning our schools is substantial and so we need to be vigilant to ensure that we are getting good value for money, while at the same time ensuring that people are not exploited in the provision of this service. Unfortunately, in some cases that applied in the past. The industry has been fraught with difficulties: it is not simply the Education Department that has been grappling with this problem, because it has been done across the public sector at large and I must put on record my appreciation for the fair and frank way that this matter has been dealt with by unions, employers and by our school communities that are the focal point of cleaning contracts.

It was a great disappointment to hear of people who unfortunately failed to understand the way in which our cleaning of schools has been provided in recent years. It is 20 years since school windows have been cleaned, yet the other day I saw a photo of people within our schools complaining that school windows were not being cleaned. That is simply a function of each school community and it has been for a long period. We do accept responsibility to ensure that every school throughout South Australia is thoroughly cleaned. There are wet areas, workshop areas and home economics areas in schools that require specialist cleaning to maintain appropriate health and safety standards. The department under its obligation has

also negotiated with industrial cleaners a reduced rate of cleaning that has brought substantial long-term savings to the department. That has been mirrored by other agencies. I will ask Ms Kolbe to comment briefly on the budget figures and explain them to the Committee.

**Ms Kolbe:** As the Minister mentioned, during the past year we have negotiated the conversion of what was called petty contract cleaners to industrial cleaners and the contracts have all been negotiated and written up. As at 1 July 1992 the department will pay industrial rates to those cleaners. The saving to the department in one year is expected to be of the order of \$3 million.

**Mr HERON:** Will the changes in the Federal budget with regard to fringe benefits tax impact on schools, particularly the provision of car parking for school staff?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Some statements were made that caused considerable concern amongst school staff in school communities. That was most unfortunate and a simple inquiry could have avoided the stress that was caused at the time. It relates to schools in a certain geographic area, but teachers transfer from school to school and this provides for incentives or disincentives for teachers. The statements which were attributed to the Federal Liberal member of Parliament, Mr Alexander Downer, and which were published in the *Advertiser* that schools were facing massive tax bills as a result of the extension of the FBT caused considerable concern in school communities. It was only in a small publication that the correct explanation was provided.

A very clear statement has been issued by the Federal Government that schools are to be exempt from changes to the fringe benefits tax, which will tax the provision of free or discounted car parking to employees. It was most unfortunate that such a bold statement, which spread very quickly around the schools, was made.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I find the Minister's answer intriguing. I understand from press reports last night that the Government in Canberra is talking about the imposition of fringe benefits tax in respect of vehicles, not car parking. I also note from the Minister's answer that he spoke carefully about car parking in schools. As the Minister knows, a number of car parks are provided in area offices, in the central car park, and in many places that are not schools. What is the extent of fringe benefits tax that will be payable by the Education Department in respect of its car parking, not in schools but elsewhere? What are the likely implications of any change in the fringe benefits tax to the Education Department car pool and the provision of cars to senior officers?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I cannot make a definitive statement on what was said in Federal Parliament last night, but I can say that the statement which I referred to and which was published by the Treasurer's office stated that the budget papers provided that educational institutions and hospitals would be exempt. This relates to the impact of the car parking issue as announced in the Federal budget. That was published in a statement clarifying the comments made by Mr Alexander Downer that schools were facing massive tax bills as a result of the extension of the FBT. The response from the office of the Federal Treasurer was quite embracing in that it said that educational institutions and hospitals would be exempt.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I draw the Minister's attention to the fact that in press reports last night I understood some of his Federal colleagues to be talking about fringe benefits tax applying to the provision of cars, not car parks, and I again ask whether the Minister will seek to provide the information, because the Education Department may not come under the definition of an educational institution. No teaching takes place there, therefore its car parks might be subject to fringe benefits tax. Will the Minister clarify the matter and attempt to provide the Committee with an answer?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The philosophy behind the Treasurer's statement, to which I referred a moment ago, is as follows:

There was no and is no intention to tax educational institutions and hospitals in any way. The people who are targeted by the changes are those who take car parking facilities as a salary alternative or as part of their salary package.

That explains the philosophy behind this tax. The Education Department already pays some fringe benefits tax, as do all Government agencies, I imagine. We will need to seek clarification about the announcements that were made last evening to see whether they extend the requirement for fringe benefits tax to be paid on certain aspects, as this philosophy statement says, such as with respect to those persons who have a motor vehicle as part of their salary package.

**Mr BRINDAL:** Last year the Minister stated clearly to the Estimates Committee that cars form part of the salary package of senior officers in the department, so some people working in the department drive private-plated cars. Therefore, I understand what the Minister has told the Committee today and previously is that those cars and the car parks will be subject to fringe benefits tax. I ask again whether the Minister will endeavour to provide the Committee with that information.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I just explained to the honourable member that we already pay fringe benefits tax in certain circumstances. Whether the interpretation that the honourable member placed on it is the correct one will need to be determined when the details of what was said in Parliament last night are made known. We simply do not know that.

**Mr BRINDAL:** Did the Minister recently make a ministerial appointment to the position of Principal of Adelaide High School for a period of five years and, if so, why? Have there been any other precedents for five-year ministerial appointments to any principal positions in South Australia?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I will ask Ms Sleath, who is the Director of Personnel in the Education Department, to explain this particular appointment.

**Ms Sleath:** Under the Act there is the opportunity for the Director-General of Education to make a placement of a principal. On this occasion, in consultation with the chairperson, the District Superintendent of Education, the current principal of Adelaide High School—who was chosen on merit and then continued in the school for this year—has further been placed in that school for another five-year tenure.

**Mr BRINDAL:** Clearly my question related to how many appointments—either ministerial or by the Director-General—have previously been made in this way? How many are intended to be made this way in the future? We

have heard all about the merit principle this morning and we are now hearing about a different principle entirely.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** First, this was an appointment made on the basis of merit. The question is how long should that appointment continue, in what circumstances, and who should be involved in making that decision. As has been explained to the Committee, the chairperson of the school council and the district superintendent—the key people working with that school—were in agreement that this was the most appropriate method of appointment to this very important school.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I accept everything the Minister is saying, but there are many other principals who have been appointed on merit on tenure. At the end of that tenure they have been required by the process of merit, which you have outlined to this Committee, to resubmit an application for the same school. There are many principals in schools who have had to seek reappointment to their school although they were originally chosen on merit. I go back to my original question: how many people have been reappointed by either the Minister or the Director-General? Is this a new practice in the department and how often is it going to be used? If it is, we can stop all preselection processes and the Minister can reappoint meritorious people to their schools.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I think a management structure needs to maintain some degree of flexibility within the overall principles that have been established. As I explained to this Committee earlier, there is an interim period of some years while the merit principle is being established. It will take a good number of years before all of the principal appointments are made on the basis of merit. There have to be interim arrangements whilst that policy is being implemented. As we have said earlier, VSPs have been offered in some cases. Other principals appointed to schools are among a group of principals from which schools and officers of the Education Department panel make appointments. So, in this interim period there is a variety of ways in which these appointments are being made. In fact, I have quite a number of representations and deputations from school communities asking for appointments to be made in one form or another, which suit the needs of that school at a particular time.

In this case there was the continuation of the employment of an excellent school principal—he was very highly regarded within that school community and by his peers and the community at large. That was seen as the most appropriate method of filling that position in that school. That does not occur in other schools. However, we are trying to accommodate the principals who are surplus as well. Many of those principals are outstanding and their substantive position has been lost as a result of their initiative in improving educational opportunities, for example, in amalgamating schools and in some cases closing schools and so on. So, it is not possible to have an absolute staffing formula, if you like, at this point in time. However, it is envisaged that many appointments will be made in this way. It depends on the particular circumstances.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I simply want to know how many positions have been filled in this manner in the past three years—I want a number. Will the Minister provide to this

Committee any documentation that may be in his possession relating to this point?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I will need to take on notice the question in relation to the number of positions that have been filled in this way in the past three years. However, I understand it is not a large number.

**Mr BRINDAL:** Will the Minister provide such documents as he may have in his possession in respect of this appointment?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I do not have any documentation in my possession, but I will try to obtain the information that the honourable member is seeking.

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

**Mr BRINDAL:** I refer to pages 139 and 140 of the Program Estimates. Will the Minister confirm that about 19 schools participated in a pilot program for the department's devolution policy and that three of those schools got themselves into financial difficulties and had to be assisted financially by the department? Will the Minister release a copy of the report prepared on the pilot program for devolution?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The honourable member would need to provide me with details of the basis for the statement he has made; I would need to know the names of the schools. I am not familiar with the information but if the honourable member will provide it to me I will be pleased to follow it up and determine whether there is some basis for it.

**Mr BRINDAL:** Is there then no report on the pilot program of devolution?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I have not seen one, if there is.

**Mr BRINDAL:** As I understand it, when ministerial officers have been talking about the devolution policy, they have claimed that schools already control \$150 million in their budgets. Is there a breakdown of the funds already provided for schools, at least?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I understand that \$171 million is already provided to schools. I can provide the honourable member with a breakdown of how that is comprised.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I will get further details about the question and provide them to the Minister.

**Mr HERON:** I refer to page 153 of the Program Estimates. How many teachers and other school staff are expected to take part in the exchange program this year, and what is the benefit of that program to the schools and students?

#### **Membership:**

The Hon. J.P. Trainer substituted for Mr Atkinson.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The teacher exchange program that has been developed over a good number of years in South Australia is a very vital component of the professional development opportunities for our teachers. We live in an isolated part of the world, and I think it is important that teachers have the opportunity during their working life and professional careers to teach in other countries and settings. The teacher exchange program provides for that. It is done at very minimal expense to the education system, but the program has great benefits

for us all in education. It is universally appreciated by teachers often, but not necessarily, in the early years of their career. Of course, we benefit from those teachers who come here to teach in our schools, as well. The program began in the United Kingdom in 1961, in Canada in 1977 and in the United States in 1981, and specific language scholarships and other exchanges have been developed and approved since the mid-1980s.

As I mentioned in reply to an earlier question, we now have a variety of such programs, some of which are subject to Government to Government agreement. Recently, I was present at the signing of an agreement between the Governments of the United States of America and Australia for teacher exchanges and other educational relations between our two countries, and I also attended the opening of a new education office in the Australian Embassy in Washington which has been funded substantially from business sources in the United States and which will prove a very important link in teacher and student exchange programs, academic research and other relationships between those involved in education in our respective countries.

The numbers vary from time to time and, of course, there are some personal financial imposts on the individuals who take up exchanges, so the numbers vary from year to year. There has been greater interest of late in the awards that provide an additional grant to assist with travel and course registration fees, and in most instances the additional funding is provided by non-departmental sources such as the Japan Foundation, the French and German Governments, their respective foundations, the Australia Indonesia Institute, and so on.

I must say that there have been some difficulties with the management of some language programs, because of changes in circumstances in overseas destinations and so on, and I have been involved in renegotiating the Italian teacher exchange program. South Australia has led the way in this regard amongst the Australian States, and only Victoria and South Australia have teacher exchange programs with Italy. There were some practical difficulties in the exchange program that have now been ironed out, and that is a very valuable program, which is now well entrenched.

**Mr HERON:** What measures are being taken to relate school and TAFE courses so that students can gain credits for work done at other institutions?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The process of cross-accreditation is very important. Earlier in discussions in this Committee I referred to the work of the various national reports—the Finn, Carmichael and Mayer reports—and underpinning that is a new relationship among schools, training providers, particularly TAFE, and the universities. We are particularly well placed in South Australia to accommodate these new and emerging pathways. And a particularly valuable role has been played by Dr Willmott in the work coming out of the national agenda in ensuring not only that we in South Australia are well prepared to take advantage of these new arrangements, but also that there is a national dimension to this. I will ask Dr Willmott to comment briefly to the Committee on the implications of this for South Australia and nationally.

**Dr Willmott:** Already in South Australia a number of arrangements have now been negotiated with SSABSA

for credit transfer arrangements between SSABSA year 12 subjects and TAFE subjects and courses. There is also what we refer to as a two-way credit transfer arrangement, where TAFE programs can gain credit in the South Australian Certificate of Education, the national communication modules and the IVEC program (Introductory Vocational Education program) in TAFE can now gain credit within the South Australian Certificate of Education. In addition to that, some 52 stage 2 year 12 subjects have been negotiated for credit into over 70 different TAFE courses.

The importance of these arrangements is heightened by the developments arising from the Carmichael report where significant connections will need to be developed over the next few years between post-compulsory schooling, TAFE and work placement programs to allow students to remain in school but nevertheless to keep their options open for introductory vocational training certificate programs.

**Mr HERON:** Will the Minister outline to the Committee the development of the job and course explorer system? What developments will take place during 1993 to provide students with information about job and future study opportunities?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** There is always concern that young people, during their secondary years, gain access to appropriate and up-to-date information about career paths in which they are particularly interested and to which they are suited. There have in the past been great inequities about who can access this information. Some schools have placed a great deal of emphasis on having career counsellors and other staff who have links with industry, with universities and so on and who are able to provide accurate and up-to-date information for these students, whilst other students have found that information very difficult to access and in fact have sometimes received outdated information. We can learn a great deal from the information that is available to students in countries like Great Britain, where information about universities right across that country and other tertiary providers is available on-line in computers that are readily accessible right across that country.

In Australia, because of the development and growth of the States over the years, we have tended to see the provision of education as being within the boundaries of each State, and it is quite a task for a student to continue studies outside of the State. That is now being broken down and rightly so, to avoid duplication of effort, and we have a student body that is able to see where courses are right across this country and access those as is appropriate. I suppose it will always be that the main body of students will study closer to their home, but not necessarily so for all students.

The job and course explorer program has been developed and is continually updated and has become an important asset in schools. Every secondary school has student counsellors; indeed, most schools have more than one counsellor and access to this information. I shall ask Mr Edwards to comment briefly on the JAC system and its relationship to other systems that are available to ensure that students in all schools gain access to the variety of information that they require so that they make the correct choices in their senior secondary years;

choices that will advantage them in developing the talents that they believe can be developed by access to training and further educational opportunities.

**Mr Edwards:** The system was adopted from software that was developed in Victoria and all States have now picked up that particular system. We now have a nationally consistent system of job and course information, and the Commonwealth is interested in participating in that as well. Discussions are presently taking place that will lead towards a national database of careers information—it will be consistent across the nation—as well as updated demand figures and employment and unemployment figures as well. The question was related to further developments and that will be one that we expect to take place during the next 12 months.

There is also another system called *JILL*, which is Jobs Illustrated. That is a separate computer package which enables young people, having expressed interest in a particular set of careers, to then have illustrated by information, spoken word and coloured illustrations what particular range of jobs is available in the area in which they are interested. A third package being developed is one that is attempting to bring together all the cross-credentialling arrangements from schools into TAFE and from TAFE into higher education. So, there are three particular packages being developed alongside one another. The hope is that in the long term they will all be brought together. Given the fact that there is now consistency in all States using JAC itself then that is a good base for that to occur.

**Mr BRINDAL:** Under the provisions in the Standing Orders, I seek permission from the Committee for the member for Fisher to proceed with a question.

**The ACTING CHAIRPERSON:** With the agreement of the Committee, I invite the member for Fisher to proceed.

**Mr SUCH:** I refer to school fire safety (Educational Facilities, Program Estimates, page 154). I have a copy of a letter sent from the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service's Fire Safety Division to Mr A.M. Finnis of the Department of Housing and Construction on 20 September 1990, concerning Aberfoyle Park South Primary School. It states, in part:

The South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service would like to draw your attention to the current situation at the above primary school following a recent hydraulic assessment of the newly installed hydrant system.

Attached is the results of the tests conducted by the service, and when considering the minimum requirement of 1 400 litres of water at 275 kPa pressure is to be achieved under the regulations, the results, both in unassisted and when boosted, are very poor. There is insufficient water delivered by the system to satisfactorily extinguish a fire. This would then result in far greater fire damage to the property than would be expected, if the installed system performed to the requirements.

The letter is signed by N.R. Toseland, Acting Superintendent, Fire Safety Division. I am advised by reputable sources within the MFS that this matter has not been satisfactorily resolved two years after the matter was first raised. Also, these sources advise that:

... the school recently built at Woodcroft Primary has even worse water availability and pressure.

As the cost of paid fire losses to Education Department schools for 1991-92 amounted to \$3.6 million—a 200 per cent increase in just one year—can the Minister explain

why it has taken the department so long to resolve the problem of low and inadequate water pressure at Aberfoyle Park South Primary School? Secondly, has the department been advised of even worse problems with water pressure at Woodcroft Primary and, if so, what steps is it taking to resolve that problem? Finally, how many other schools, and which schools, face the same predicament in relation to water pressure and the availability of water in the event of a fire?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I welcome the member to the Committee, but I think he has come to the wrong Minister. I do not provide water to schools or to any other institutions or have any influence over the pressure of that water. Obviously, we are interested in it. We will in fact pay for the services provided. But the question of this is obviously beyond the school grounds; it is the ability to get water, quantities and pressure that is appropriate for fire safety, and that is a matter that is simply beyond my ability. We are a client in this situation, along with many other clients in that community. If it is affecting the school it is obviously affecting many other institutions, houses and so on. I will have a report or assessment of this situation prepared by either the Minister of Water Resources or SACON, as they are directly involved in this matter.

**Mr SUCH:** Does the Minister regard this matter as urgent? I certainly do; in fact, I am most concerned that this matter has gone on for at least two years and that it seems to apply to other schools. I am sure that the Minister would accept that a school is in a different situation from a house and would require much more water and better pressure to fight a major fire. I understand that recently the local fire brigade tried to obtain water in that area but was unable to get sufficient.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I am surprised that that letter, which appears to have been written two years ago, has just surfaced now. I do not know whether the honourable member has asked any questions previously of me or any other Minister about this matter. Obviously, there are regulations and requirements with respect to fire safety and access to water for other purposes as well; they will need to be attended to, and I am pleased to do that.

**Mr SUCH:** By way of explanation, this matter was drawn to my attention recently by a public officer who provided me with these documents because of his concern about the situation that exists at that school. In the past few days, I have written to the Minister of Education and the Minister of Housing and Construction. Whilst I am not trying to secure publicity for its own sake over this matter, I have no alternative but to raise it as a matter of urgency, given that it was drawn to my attention recently.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I would like briefly to explore the Minister's original answer to the question. I realise that it is not the Minister's responsibility or duty to be in control of the availability of water and its pressure at his schools, but is not either the Minister of Education or the Minister of Housing and Construction specifically responsible under the law for the protection and safety of the children and teachers in those schools? If the E&WS Department cannot provide water at adequate pressure and in adequate quantities, should not the Minister, as the person responsible for those schools, make some other provision?

By way of explanation, it is quite clear that in respect of many large businesses around Adelaide, including the State Bank (because water in sufficient quantities and at sufficient pressure could not be obtained), the design of the buildings required the provision of rather large reservoirs of water high up in those buildings in the case of fire. Despite the Minister's answer, I would have thought that it is incumbent on the Minister to ensure the safety of teachers and children in schools and that, if another Government department cannot provide water at the quantity and pressure required, it is incumbent on the Minister to do so.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** As I understand it, Education Department schools historically have received firefighting provisions on the basis of specialist advice provided by SACON officers. This advice, in turn, relates directly to the appropriate current legislation. Only one specific Education Department policy statement relates directly to the provision of firefighting provisions, and that applies specifically to country schools where an inadequate water supply exists.

So, I can only assume that some consideration has been given to the issue of water supply to schools where there is very great difficulty in getting water. I can imagine that situation occurring in a number of remote locations in the State. So, obviously special provisions are made for the evacuation of children and so on in those circumstances.

I will have the relevant information gathered together now that someone from within the bureaucracy with some sort of axe to grind has come to the honourable member about this matter. It is strange that the information has not come from within the individual school's community or some other source. I can only presume that it is being dealt with in some way or another to the satisfaction of the groups that are directly interested and affected by this matter, but obviously it requires a response and I will ensure that that is attended to expeditiously.

**Mr BRINDAL:** Surely, it is the absolute right of parents to feel that their children are safe in schools. I do not accept that we are doing anything other than questioning what must rightfully be questioned. Is the Minister saying that a different standard is applicable to Government buildings, and, in particular, to his schools, from that which is applied to supermarkets, shops and places of public entertainment? Certain standards are required by this Parliament and this Government for the protection of the public in places where they congregate. Do I understand the Minister to say that different rules apply to schools and buildings under his responsibility? I hope that I do not understand him to say that in some way it just does not matter.

The member for Fisher is not raising this matter for any political purpose other than to question something that must be questioned. If those kids are at risk, we have the right to question the Minister, and I have enough faith in him to know that he will do something about it. It is a very legitimate and serious question, and perhaps it also begs the question as to why a school is allowed to be open if the fire provisions are less than adequate in the first place. I do not expect the Minister to check every aspect of every drawing, but as Minister he has a perfect



right to believe that his officers are giving good advice and that kids are safe in our schools.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The honourable member is again fabricating my answer and putting his own gloss on it in order to make some equally outrageous statements about fire safety in schools no doubt to alarm people and get another headline in order to advance his own political cause and, once again, denigrate the Parliament and the work of this Committee—and I deplore that. The honourable member has completely misunderstood my comments, but I will not restate them as he will only misquote me again. However, I can say that the Building Code of Australia, which is being introduced across this country, suggests that there be increased firefighting provisions within school classified buildings. The letter that the honourable member read to the House would be from an interest group in the community that is advancing what it sees as its right to advocate, through whoever will advocate on its behalf, its view of the world. I was interested in the fact that the school community or other people from within the education system were not complaining about this matter and that it has taken two years for the honourable member to raise the matter anyway. My understanding is that our schools meet current safety requirements, but the honourable member says that they do not. The matter can be clarified but, if it is couched in terms of water supply and associated matters, it will need to be dealt with by another Ministry, and I will be pleased to refer it to the Minister responsible for a response.

**Mr BRINDAL:** Page 138 of the Program Estimates refers to the cottage boarding house scheme. The Minister will recall that previously I asked him questions about this matter in the House. In November 1990, when the Minister announced the cottage boarding house scheme, he said that houses would be provided at Port Lincoln, Whyalla, Cleve and Port Augusta. I am advised that at this stage the Port Lincoln High School council is not interested in the scheme because of the way in which it has been handled, and that the two South Australian Housing Trust houses in Port Lincoln have been vandalised and lie vacant.

I am advised there has been a similar problem with homes in Whyalla and Port Augusta. We have also had contact with people concerned about the boarding options available in Burra. Does the Minister believe that house managers should be paid a salary? Does the Minister believe that major changes need to be made to the scheme to make it viable? Further, in answering this question, in terms of Aboriginal education, could the Minister explain to the House why the Wiltshire program currently has only one boarding facility in Adelaide? The Minister well knows that the Pitjantjatjara Lands Council, for cultural reasons, will not allow groups of Aboriginal adolescent boys to come to Adelaide at the same time as Aboriginal adolescent girls. The Minister also well knows that the Pitjantjatjara Lands Council and responsible people from the tribal lands have for years been asking for a parallel boarding facility to mirror the boarding facility provided by the Wiltshire program in Adelaide. Yet the Minister has failed to provide another facility for the Aboriginal people of the Pitjantjatjara tribal lands and has instead opted for the development of cottage homes which are apparently under-utilised.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I have had a number of meetings with the representatives of remote Aboriginal communities who are very concerned about the Wiltshire program. There is some merit in the program, but I think it is one of a number of options that need to be provided for young Aboriginal students so that they can progress through their secondary years. It is generally agreed that we should continue to develop secondary school opportunities on the Pitjantjatjara lands; secondly, that we should provide opportunities for students to study in their senior secondary years closer to the lands, that is, in Alice Springs and in some of the major country centres where a broad curriculum is offered, such as in Port Augusta, Whyalla, Port Lincoln, and so on. This is particularly useful where those children can live within a family setting, which is appropriate and comfortable for them, rather than to fabricate some boarding structure that may be quite difficult and unnatural for that group of students who would find it difficult enough, anyway, to cope with the dramatic change in lifestyle and surroundings in a large urban-based secondary school.

The boarding cottage concept, which was established by the Commonwealth Government in conjunction with a number of States, is not specifically designed to meet the needs of Aboriginal students, although in some cases it may well assist—and in this case it has assisted the Wiltshire program. But the difficulties that have arisen in one area of South Australia in the development of this program have been about the management of the scheme and the relationship to the school communities from a management point of view. It has been decided that we should explore the management of these cottage homes being placed in a non-government organisation. I have been involved in negotiations in recent months which are now coming close to fruition for that responsibility to be vested in a non-Government organisation that will provide this service in the country areas of South Australia for those students who simply cannot afford boarding accommodation in city or country centres and who want to live closer to their families or perhaps travel home to their families on weekends—or certainly more regularly than they could if they were based in the city. A number of financial supports are available for students living away from home to undertake studies which would assist that group of students to continue their secondary years. I am hopeful that this matter can be concluded and that the program can now get underway quite speedily.

It is interesting that this is not a problem in the South-East of the State, which has taken a different attitude towards the development of this new service in our schools. I realise that it is a quite dramatic step, because we have never been involved in boarding facilities of any form in the Education Department in South Australia. I think it has been a deficiency in our department and it has left a group of students in a disadvantaged position. We must acknowledge that students cannot obtain the breadth of curriculum that they want in many of the remote areas of the State. It is assisted by distance education, but at times that is not appropriate for some students and their families. Also we need to look at our specialist schools; for example, in relation to Urrbrae Agricultural College one third of its students board and come to that school to access the specialist programs there. We have a number of other

schools where many students are boarding. For example, students board at our special music interest schools. So, the Education Department has assigned an officer to assist in the development of policies and strategies to assist those students who leave home in order to continue their secondary studies, and this is an emerging area of importance for the Education Department.

**Mr BRINDAL:** In view of what you said about Aboriginal education and its importance, I believe that a tri-State report has been presented to you in respect of the Pitjantjatjara peoples of the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia. Are you prepared to make that report available to members of this Committee?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I will consider the status of the report. It is not a report that is in my province alone: it is a report that was prepared for the four Ministers involved in the proposal to establish an educational provision in the remote Aboriginal communities which cross the geographic boundaries of each of the States involved and the Northern Territory. The Commonwealth Minister is also involved in it, because, of course, the Commonwealth has an interest in this area. Members would know the great difficulties that bedevil the provision of human services, particularly health services, across those borders where people almost have to give up their crutches as they cross the border and pick up a new pair on the other side, and so on. In a sense, that is occurring in education, too, which is further disadvantaging a most disadvantaged group in this country. There is also great merit in considering whether we can establish a teaching service that is common across those geographic boundaries, and a curriculum which is appropriate, acceptable and relevant to the lives of those young people and, in so doing, enhance the opportunities all those communities want for their children. So, if the other Ministers agree to release the report, I will be pleased to release it to the honourable member.

**Mr BRINDAL:** The Minister would be aware that this Committee has the power to send for papers. I do not want to move that we instruct the Minister to send for that paper, and I take it that the Minister has given his word that he will do his best to provide the paper to the Committee. I will accept there could be difficulties, but your word will be enough; if you say that you will do your best for us, then I am prepared not to move that we send for the paper. Is that what you said?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I would refer the honourable member to the concept of *ultra vires*, and he might like to consider the application of that in the circumstances. I will do what I can.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I refer to page 137 of the Program Estimates and to 'permanent against temporary appointments', known as PATS. How many permanent against temporary appointments were made at the start of 1992, and how many still apply? How many secondary trained teachers are still teaching in primary schools at present? Will the Minister provide a breakdown of where the PATS are located? Minister, you will know that you recently answered a question on notice from me about part of the question prior to this; it is just the fill-ins that we want at this point in time.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I will have to take that question on notice for the honourable member and provide the information later.

**Mr De LAINE:** What is the proportion of young people staying at school to year 12 in 1992 compared with 1982; how does South Australia's retention rate compare with the national average; and what is the predicted South Australian retention rate and national average for 1993?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I think there has been a dramatic change in the nature of those participating in secondary education not only in South Australia but in all States. It is an interesting phenomenon for which many people take credit, and particularly my Federal colleagues often claim the credit for this occurring. I think perhaps they can take some credit because there have been some changes in the provision of social security for young people which have acted not to attract them away from school for economic benefit. In some economically disadvantaged families there was a very strong incentive to leave school at an early age in order to gain the social security benefit to support the basic needs in families. Now there are very strong incentives to stay on at school, and Austudy, of course, provides for those beyond the age of 16 to receive benefits where they meet that criterion. Indeed, many students in our schools now do.

South Australia has been traditionally disadvantaged because students have generally been a year younger than their eastern State counterparts. They could once obtain Commonwealth financial assistance to stay in years 11 and 12, and often they were 14, 15 and 16-year-old students. Now those below 16 are not eligible, so South Australia particularly was drastically affected by that change in arrangements. I think that our age profile has now changed with the growth of the reception year through the education system.

The increase in apparent retention rates from 1990 to 1991 was from 64.4 per cent to 76.8 per cent. It is anticipated that this year it will be in the low to mid-80 per cent category, which takes South Australia way above the rates that apply in other States. I think that the ACT needs to be disregarded to some extent in this area because of the special circumstances, but in the last full school year for which we have figures New South Wales had an apparent retention rate in Government schools of 56.3 per cent, Victoria 71.1 per cent, Queensland 75.4 per cent, South Australia 76.8 per cent, Western Australia 67.1 per cent, Tasmania 52.1 per cent and the Northern Territory 60.9 per cent. There are still quite substantial discrepancies across Australia. Obviously the work of the national reports to which I referred earlier—Finn, Mayer and Carmichael—are very important in providing for that cohort of students who are not completing 12 years of formal education.

Members have probably heard me say on a number of occasions that we still lag behind our major trading partners—Japan, North America and many European countries—in respect of retention rates. We have undervalued 12 formal years of education in this country for a very long time. It is amazing to think that only a decade ago (1982) almost three out of 10 students remained on to year 12 and there was a lower participation rate at that time in training and tertiary sector opportunities. Nevertheless, we need to take advantage of the

opportunities that the national agenda is providing to increase the number of training and work-related training opportunities to give young people more flexibility in moving between education and training and work and getting accredited for the skills that they are picking up in that process and the cross-accreditation issues to which Dr Willmott referred earlier.

**Mr De LAINE:** How does the Education Department assist students in remote and isolated locations and what services does the department provide through distance education?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** This is a very important area as well. Again we are finding people who at one time did not conceive that they would have the educational opportunities available to them that are available now. Correspondence, writing assignments, getting them marked, and so on, was a cumbersome approach. The introduction of the telephone as a teaching tool has enhanced that, but we now have a wide range of new technologies available to us, and they are growing every day, to provide services to students in remote communities. Also, students who are isolated, even within the metropolitan area, for one reason or another—whether through disability or the itinerant nature of their family's employment and so on—need to access education in this mode.

I will ask Mr Edwards to provide some of the dimensions to the provision of open access education that are being developed. It has all happened very quickly in South Australia. We have had the linking of the School of the Air with the Open Access College, the developments that will take place in Port Augusta with respect to the School of the Air and, indeed, the increased curriculum that this will provide to the backup provided by the Open Access College. The wide range of curriculum opportunities now available has deluged the college. Last year it was finding it very difficult to keep up with the demand that was being placed on it. Most of those issues have now been resolved. I visited the Open Access College a few weeks ago and was very impressed by the developments that have occurred at the Marden campus. It is now becoming a very important element in the delivery of education services.

**Mr Edwards:** There is a range of initiatives that is worth mentioning. The Minister has briefly touched on the School of the Air in Port Augusta. That will be relocated to Augusta Park Primary School shortly and the facilities there will be significantly upgraded. Next year we expect that from the Port Augusta School of the Air we will be able to teach 20 SACE subjects to students in the 086 STD area code. There will be significant relocation of the delivery of services from the Open Access College in Adelaide to the facility at Port Augusta.

A range of other initiatives include years 6 and 7 students being issued with computers. Year 7 students have their computers linked via a modem through high frequency radio, and next year they will have access to NEXUS through this medium.

The School of the Air Resource Centre will be linked to the Marden Campus Resource Centre via dynix, thus providing access to a wider range of reference materials to all open access college students. Materials are being developed for years 8 to 10 students in Anangu and

Aboriginal schools so that the Open Access College services can be delivered into those schools.

We have an itinerant teacher service, in which there are five positions, as well as a homestead video scheme. That has been retained, having been around for a number of years. It is more closely linked to curriculum and has been extended to include years 8 to 10 students. Previously it was an R to 7 facility only. South Australia is the only State to maintain the homestead video service. All students enrolled at the Open Access College receive support from their teachers with regular telephone or DUCT lessons as well as a teacher visiting program.

The programs are now delivered out of the School of the Air by high frequency radio, which is a far more listenable frequency than the one that they had 10 years ago. The college is exploring future options for technology usage by both college and school-based students. This includes such things as video conferencing, making use of TAFE delivery facilities, interactive computing using the new electronic classroom and Authorware software and possibly the use of satellites. The service to our open access college students has improved with far better quality materials, including integrated video packages, subject specific camps that bring students in a similar subject together, in-schools experience for remote and isolated students and a more efficient Dispatch Centre. All this is backed by training and development funds made available to the schools so that we are now providing training development support to supervisors, coordinators and local delivery centres.

**Mr De LAINE:** How will the Education Department social justice action plan affect students; and how many tier 2 salaries are provided to support social justice measures for schools?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The social justice strategy that has been developed by the Education Department is very important. One of the big issues that often remains unaddressed because it is almost too difficult to tackle is the question of equity in education. It is a fundamental obligation on a State education system to address some of the inequities of opportunity that exist in our community. We have just been talking about the needs of those students who live in remote and isolated areas. Prior to that we spoke about Aboriginal students, and prior to that those students with physical or intellectual disabilities, and so on. This is a very complex and difficult area, and for many it is simply too hard and too complex. What is a need in one school at one time may not necessarily be a need in that school at another time.

There is a tendency for resources to become institutionalised, and they are then very difficult to change. In areas such as special education, the Education Department does an excellent job in trying to pin the resources to the individual students, so those students can have a degree of flexibility rather than be captive to the geographic location where the resources are. That has been one of the great advantages of the deinstitutionalisation process. There are financial advantages also to release resources to be used in various other ways to meet the needs of that particular group of students. I will ask Margaret Wallace, the Acting Associate Director-General of Curriculum in the Education Department, who has been working in her substantive position on the development of the social

justice strategy, to very briefly outline the nature of the strategy and its resourcing.

**Ms Wallace:** The social justice action plan was released and distributed to schools in May 1992. The plan is based on an overall increase in performance in the system. We have set two targets: one is a 15 per cent increase in attendance of school card holders and Aboriginal students; and the other is a 20 per cent increase in the retention of school card holders and Aboriginal students. We have established a training and development program for principals which has been in operation during this year. Schools and divisions will report on the way in which they have achieved the targets of the plan.

A large number of resources are allocated to the social justice strategy overall. You have heard some of them today, such as the special education salaries at 398 in the system. We also allocate salaries for school card, for teaching English as a second language, and to support students of non-English speaking background. As well, salaries go into gender imbalance with respect to open access—that is, schools with small cohorts of secondary students are allocated additional salaries to assist with the curriculum range. There is additional coordinated support in adult re-entry schools, and Aboriginal education resource teachers are allocated as well. On top of that, counsellors in primary schools and several of the Commonwealth programs are obviously targeting the same sorts of things as the social justice action plan—that is, the disadvantaged schools program and the country areas program. There are 20 additional salaries to mother tongue development. The focus school program has a particular emphasis on achieving literacy, particularly at R-10, and there are salaries allocated to that program and to schools. Overall, approximately 1 000 additional salaries are allocated through that tier 2 mechanism.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I will pursue the questions I was asking before lunch about workers compensation, relating to page 141 of the Program Estimates. Page 44 of the Auditor-General's Report confirms the information that the Minister gave to the Committee and adds figures to that information. The report states:

Workers Compensation. From 1 July 1991 the Education Department assumed responsibility for the payment of the first two years cost of workers compensation claims (with the exception of journey accidents and legal fees). The amount paid was \$7 673 000 which was brought to account under Interagency Support Service Items not allocated to programs.

That is as the Minister confirmed. It continues:

In previous years the premium paid to the Department of Labour (\$8 412 000 in 1990-91) was allocated across all programs.

Does this amount of \$7.67 million have to be added to the Auditor-General's estimate of \$14.3 million as the total cost of workers compensation claims to the Education Department, or is it a part of that cost?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** It is part of the cost.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** As these teachers are now allocated under the interagency support services, will the Minister indicate which specific Education Department program lines these teachers were previously provided under? I am sure the Minister would appreciate the significance of the question, because it is important that Parliament knows from which areas of the

teaching profession most workers compensation claims come, and whether they are spread evenly, clustered in certain geographic areas or in certain school programs?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** As I indicated earlier, I am not sure of the particular schools, but there is quite detailed information about the breakdown of workers compensation claims with respect to the Education Department that is available and has been available to the Parliament. I will explain the change in the way that these show up in the estimates booklets, and I will try to clarify that situation. The notes I have on this matter are as follows: the management of the first 24 months of the compensation claims has been delegated to the Education Department. In the past financial year that amount was \$7.737 million. This excludes claims greater than two years old, lump sum payments and injuries incurred while travelling to and from work.

The Government Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Office retains the financial delegation to meet claims beyond 24 months—journey accidents, lump sum and common law settlements. The total expenditure for the 1991-92 financial year was \$14.305 million compared with \$12.227 million in the previous year, 1990-91. As a percentage of salaries, wages and related payments, this represents an increase of .21 per cent in real terms from the 1991-92 financial year. I think people understand that the way in which the workers compensation law is applying in terms of continuing to pay salaries is causing the increased expenditure, to a large extent.

That will reach a plateau but, in its early years, there is an escalating cost associated with the application of the scheme, and concern is being expressed broadly in the community at the moment as to the cost of this scheme. The calculation of the amount of money to be transferred from the Department of Labour to the Education Department has been difficult, due to the fact that some of the sums are based on estimates, and the honourable member has acknowledged that in her explanation. I hope that that clarifies to some extent the issue that the honourable member is raising.

If there is concern that the level of the incidence of workers compensation claims in the Education Department is higher than in other sectors of Government service, I can quote the figures in relation to other agencies. The Education Department's percentage of total salaries and wages compared with payments for workers compensation is 1.8 per cent, the same figure as that for the South Australian Police Department. The Department of Road Transport is 4.2 per cent; the Department for Family and Community Services is 4.6 per cent; and the Engineering and Water Supply Department is 4.7 per cent. That gives some basis for comparison. I have a table that shows the Government Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Fund summary of claims, causes and payments in relation to the years 1988 to 1992. This is the information that the member for Coles was seeking, and I seek to incorporate that table in *Hansard*.

**The ACTING CHAIRPERSON:** It can be tabled; it will be distributed to individual members of the Committee.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** Last year during the Estimates Committee, the Minister indicated that the department was proceeding with proposals for a

teacher performance appraisal system. Will the Minister indicate what progress has been made with this project?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** There are a number of elements to the procedures which are being put into place or which are already established in the Education Department for performance appraisal and for ongoing monitoring of personnel who have been determined as not meeting the required standard in the Education Department. There is a Principals Performance Management plan, under which each principal is required annually to prepare and negotiate a performance plan with his or her district superintendent. The plan addresses skills and abilities required to achieve directions outlined in the School Development plan which, as members would know, is reviewed by the Education Review Unit.

The district superintendent will further negotiate with the principal new issues for inclusion on the Performance Management plan after a school review by the Education Review Unit. I have noted in a number of cases where there has been comment by the Education Review Unit that those comments about the performance of particular principals have been followed up and dealt with within the Education Department. It has been a particularly valuable adjunct to the work of the Education Review Unit.

There are a number of other strategies, one being the Managing Poor Performance plan which was announced last year and which is just coming on stream in the Education Department, whereby all members of the teaching service are subject to consideration of this matter. It will always be only a minority of our personnel who will be regarded as falling into the category of requiring the assistance of the Managing Poor Performance plan. It might lead to the dismissal of a member of the Education Department or it might lead to a strategy whereby that person's performance can be monitored and improved, the person then being able to regain a normal teaching status or other status within the education system.

There is also the Changing Directions program, which provides for a financial incentive and counselling for a person to change his or her career path, that is, to leave the teaching service and be given assistance to retrain into another career path. That has proved to be a very successful avenue for those teachers who have found that they are simply no longer suited to the teaching service. Interestingly enough, it has now been taken up in a number of other States. From recent discussions with the Federal Education Minister, I noted that he was interested in the development of that scheme. It is only in its infancy, but there is now a series of approaches to performance appraisal. I will ask Ms Sleath to elaborate for the Committee.

**Ms Sleath:** In relation to the Managing Poor Performance scheme, at this stage we have in-serviced all our principals and many of our deputy principals, and this year we have in-serviced our newly appointed district superintendents of education. Briefly, the scheme involves informal support in the school setting if a teacher is showing signs of not performing in certain areas. If the person's teaching does not improve via that informal support, we move to a formal supervision program, which has with it a school based performance review and planning through collegiate support.

The union is involved in this program, the duration of which is approximately two months of formal supervision. If, for some reason, the teacher still has difficulties in performance, we move to a stage called the administrative action stage, and an officer external to the school assesses the performance of the teacher whose performance remains poor despite this informal support and then formal supervision.

Given the outcome of the report, this can move to dismissal under section 26 of the Education Act. At the moment, in our schools we have procedures, training, reference manuals and base documents that help to determine standards, namely, Teachers Work and Leaders Work relating to the work of principals and other leaders in our schools. They are in schools at the moment for consultation.

The South Australian Institute of Teachers is participating in the program and of course in its future review. So far a number of schools are involved in stage one of the process with some people being moved to stage two, and this is the first year for a considerable time that we have had such a detailed process with detailed training that helps us to improve the standard of teaching in our schools.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** As a supplementary question in response to Ms Sleath's reply, how many teachers have been required to participate in the Managing Poor Performance plan in stages 1 and 2, and how many teachers have been dismissed for failing to reach the required departmental standards, despite participation in the plan?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The answer regarding the first stage is that we are unsure. This is the first year of its implementation, and the first stage is a stage in which we are not involved centrally. It is occurring at the school and district superintendent level. We can check around and try to gather that information. Informally, we understand that there are a number of teachers and some principals who have been engaged in the first stage. That might result in no further action being taken. Of course, it might involve the other stages proceeding and so at this stage of the year there are probably only a few cases that have been referred to stage 2. As the program develops, we will have a better picture of it. I will obtain the more precise information that the honourable member seeks. As to how many people have been dismissed, the scheme is so new that we have not got to that stage.

In the past and during the period I have been Minister of Education few teachers have been dismissed, because it is almost impossible in my experience to dismiss teachers as there is not the necessary information that has been gathered over a period of time in order to provide for the requirements in law with respect to dismissal. That has been the great difficulty that the department has had. Teachers often resign of their own volition or unfortunately take leave, extended leave and so on, and I think that they are unsatisfactory solutions to what are often unfortunate and sad situations that can have quite a dramatic impact on whole school communities. It is appropriate now that we have in place a scheme which has been developed in conjunction with Crown Law officers and which will meet the requirements of the industrial tribunals in the future.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** Last year the Minister said that 182 teachers would quit teaching with a \$42 000 retraining grant under the Changing Directions scheme. The Auditor-General has reported that only 117 teachers took up this offer. In the first instance, how did the Minister identify that number of 182 teachers who would quit under the Changing Directions scheme if, as the Minister says, the department has not had the mechanisms to identify inadequate teachers, and what is the reason for the difference between the 182 estimate and the 117 who took up the offer? Did the department carry out its threat to require some teachers to take retraining packages as indicated by the former Director-General, Dr Boston, in late 1991?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The second phase of the Changing Directions scheme is now under way. Criteria was established for eligibility for the scheme, and that was circulated to teachers and they then applied. There were far more teachers applying than there were positions, and a process was established to determine whether those teachers met the criteria. This was done not by the department but by external consultants to avoid precisely the criticism that has been levelled at the department today by the member for Hayward—of favouritism or manipulation in some way so that some person missed out on what is perceived as a cash payment while someone else should have got it.

For precisely that reason, this matter was put in the hands of a firm of consultants who, interestingly enough, have been hired by the New South Wales Government to do a similar program for it. I understand the consultants are in discussions with other Governments to perform similar duties for them. This program will be completed in the next few months. As I said earlier, there is some possibility that this program could be continued in this or some other form, depending on the review of its effectiveness and also its national application.

In essence, it is a self-funding program. That is the element of it that is attractive to education administrations that have a large number of teachers who have been teaching for long periods and who have lost their motivation for teaching or for rejuvenating their career path within the confines of the teaching service. For more specific details on where we are at the moment, I ask Ms Sleath to advise the Committee.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** When Ms Sleath advises the Committee, can she let us know what is the relationship between the Managing Poor Performance plan and the Changing Directions scheme? It is not clear to me whether there is a relationship and, if there is, what it is.

**Ms Sleath:** As the Minister stated, we are in our final stage of offer of the Changing Directions scheme, the retraining grant, and possibly by the end of this school year all the grants that were available will have been taken up under the advice we get from the consultant we are using. The figures quoted last year—

*The Hon. Jennifer Cashmore interjecting:*

**Ms Sleath:** Yes—I believe they will be taken by the end of this year or the end of next Christmas vacation holidays.

**Mr ATKINSON:** I refer the Minister to page 150 of the Program Estimates and the program title 'Socioeconomic disadvantage', which I presume is

Education Department language for 'poor'. How many pupils will obtain the School Card in 1992-93? Has the number obtaining the card increased over the past 10 years, and has the value of the grant increased over that time?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The expression 'socioeconomic disadvantage' has been learnt by the department from social workers; that term seems to have gained some currency. The application of the School Card is an important development in the provision of financial support to students and their families who are poor by accepted standards. There has been a discrepancy in the payment of this money between Government and non-government students who came from families with similar degrees of disadvantage. That has now been rectified.

More importantly, we moved from a free book scheme, with all the negative connotations of welfare handouts, to what was known as GAS students (Government Assisted Students), which was also a derogatory expression and alienated that group of students from other students within the school community when books were allocated and payments made for other elements of school activity, to a card which had a money value to it and could be used by students in the same queue as other students in order to purchase books and services, including school uniforms and the payment of school fees, from the school community. The payment of these amounts has grown from \$33 per student in 1983 to the current provision of \$112 for a primary school student and \$168 for a secondary student. That is what this budget is providing for the 1993 school year. That is an enormous jump, many times beyond that of the inflation factor. It means that a large number of students are now able to pay for all their school costs, that is, the fee provision and the cost of books, excursions and school clothes partly in addition to this contribution.

In 1992, 65 200 students in State schools and 11 800 students in non-government schools received the School Card, making a total of 77 000 students. It is estimated that, next year, that figure will rise by some 4 000 students to 68 600 in Government schools and 12 400 in non-government schools. That is a figure above 30 per cent of the student population in schools across this State. The estimated cost of the School Card payment is \$9.882 million this year, increasing to \$10.584 million in this budget. It is a very substantial payment of funds to students from disadvantaged families.

It means that no bad debts are associated with non-payment of school fees for at least 30 per cent of the school-going population. That represents an enormous contribution to expenses associated with families. It brings into perspective the bad debt problem that is experienced by some school communities with a group of people who are not categorised as socioeconomically disadvantaged but who may be disadvantaged for one reason or another or are temporarily disadvantaged, or who simply do not want to pay a school fee. It is not due solely to socioeconomic disadvantage.

The other element of the School Card is that it has been designed to fit in with the criteria provided by the Federal Government for payments to families in need. The family allowance supplement is an important component of that. When one adds together the various

cash payments that are provided to this group of families in the community, one can see that a network of State and Commonwealth services is provided for these families to ensure that children in these circumstances are as little disadvantaged as possible.

**Mr ATKINSON:** I refer the Minister to page 144 of the Program Estimates and the program entitled, 'Provision of general secondary education in schools'. What plans are there for the Technology School of the Future? How many students and teachers use the school?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I am very proud of what has occurred at the School of the Future, which is situated at the Levels campus of the University of South Australia and on the site of Technology Park. The concept of placing the School of the Future within the confines of Technology Park and linked with the university campus at the Levels has paid dividends. It is primarily a teacher development opportunity but it is used by many thousands of students, as well. It is a growing program that has been operating now for a short time. It is novel and has drawn attention from all other States. Indeed, the staff of the Technology School of the Future have been engaged in consultancies for other States in developing similar programs elsewhere.

It was established in May 1989 as part of the Government's education policy to provide learning experiences to develop technological capability in senior secondary students and teachers. These experiences are set in an innovative, entrepreneurial context. The programs focus on both across curriculum approach to technology and courses in technology studies as a discrete study. Its aims are to develop, enhance and provide technology education programs for senior secondary students; to provide teachers with training and development in new areas of technology and their applications in school curriculum; to provide curriculum development and research in technology education; to support individual students to develop enterprise, innovation and invention skills; to develop programs that focus on girls and technology and supporting programs that increase the participation of girls in technology; to liaise and provide a tangible link with industry; and to work in an entrepreneurial and innovative way to offer these programs.

In 1990, additional funds were provided to expand the existing operation. This has enabled extensive expansion of program options. In March 1989, as part of the Government's 'Beyond 2000' education policy, it was proposed to develop a Science School of the Future at Science Park, Adelaide and work on that is proceeding. In the period from January to July of this year, 2 361 students and 1 648 teachers participated in formal programs at the centre. Participants have come from 114 schools in the State. The figures will increase next year as the additional staff who have been provided come on stream for the development of new programs.

**Mr ATKINSON:** What is the department doing to help adults go back to school?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** My earlier comments about this country's undervaluing formal education is showing up clearly in the number of people who left school for short periods and for much longer periods and who want to return to formal education. A network of schools has now been established throughout the State to provide

specific programs for this group of people. Formerly it was undertaken partly by the Education Department and partly by the Department of Employment and Technical and Further Education. Responsibility for educational provision until the final year of secondary education is now provided solely by the Education Department. The nine senior colleges and campuses that have been set up specifically to cater for these re-entry students are: Thebarton Senior College, Hamilton Secondary School, Christies Beach High School, Whyalla College, Marden Senior College, Le Fevre High School, Charles Campbell Secondary School, The Parks, and Inbarendi College at the Elizabeth West campus.

In February of this year 3 296 full-time equivalent adult students were enrolled in secondary schools, and 82 per cent of those were enrolled in the campuses to which I have just referred. The mandate is to provide for adult students who are genuinely returning to complete their school studies and for those who require bridging programs to enable this objective to be achieved. The department has expended a considerable sum of money in providing new and specialist facilities for this group of students so that there was appropriate furniture, common rooms, and so on for students who wished to access these programs.

In addition, I should mention that there are eight engineering pathway schools, of which six are designated adult re-entry centres. These have arisen out of the programs that were formerly provided at the Goodwood High School and former Goodwood Technical High School. It was seen that those programs were particularly valuable but needed to be extended to other locations throughout the State. That is what is now occurring. Dr Willmott might be able to comment in a moment on the work that has been undertaken within the Senior Secondary Assessment Board to provide accreditation for those students who have entered this group of schools. That has been a particularly valuable exercise, because one of great weaknesses of the Goodwood High School type of program in the past was the lack of accreditation and its articulation with trade training and TAFE courses.

The engineering pathway schools are: Charles Campbell secondary college, the Thebarton senior college, Christies Beach High School, Whyalla college, Edward John Eyre campus, Le Fevre High School and Hamilton secondary school. Dr Willmott might wish to comment further.

**Dr Willmott:** In relation to adult students within the South Australian Certificate of Education, there is a special provision which gives adult students, so defined, credit for the first part of the SACE; that is, year 11. Also, a special entry program into higher education is currently being negotiated with the universities for a three-year pathway for entry to higher education.

The engineering pathway program has been developed jointly by the Education Department of South Australia, the Engineering Employers Association and SSABSA. It is engaged in a number of schools in the metropolitan area. The schools involved are: Charles Campbell, Christies Beach, Hamilton secondary, Inbarendi College, Le Fevre and the Thebarton senior college, and two country secondary schools—Edward John Eyre and Millicent. The program involves a combination of specially designed programs based upon accredited SACE

courses which have a career orientation towards the engineering field, coupled with the opportunity for students to gain various credit transfer arrangements by doing TAFE courses, or by doing SSABSA courses which can attract TAFE credit.

The intention of the program is to allow students a significant orientation towards the range of engineering trades, technician skills and other careers, while maintaining their enrolment in secondary school and completing the South Australian Certificate of Education. This is one of a number of what are now referred to as 'career pathway programs' through the South Australian Certificate of Education, and others are currently being developed in the area of tourism and business.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I refer to page 81 of the Estimates of Payments and Receipts, page 43 of the Estimates of Receipts, 1991-92, and page 46 of the Auditor-General's Report. This concerns estimates in respect of the sale of land and buildings. I point out that over the past two years the department has grossly overestimated the amount of money to be earned from the sale of land and buildings. For example, in 1990-91, the estimated revenue from the sale of lands and buildings was \$10.4 million, but the actual revenue was \$4.3 million, an overestimate of \$6.1 million.

For 1991-92 the estimated revenue was \$21.2 million but the actual revenue was \$5.7 million (Auditor-General's Report, page 46), giving an overestimate for last financial year of \$15.5 million. We notice on page 81 of the Estimates of Payments and Receipts that the department has estimated that \$47.2 million will be received this year from the sale of land and buildings; that is a rise from the \$5.7 million actual revenue received last year to a projected revenue for this financial year of \$47.2 million. That is a nine-fold increase.

Given the record of the last two years, does the Minister believe the assets this year have been substantially over-valued when compared to real market values, and will the Minister provide on notice a complete breakdown of sales for 1991-92 and proposed sales for 1992-93? Will the Minister specifically include in his answer whether any part of Mawson High School is included in the estimates for this year for sale and, if any part, which part?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The reality is that those properties, to that value, that have been declared surplus by the Education Department are in the hands of the Lands Department, which handles property transactions for Government agencies. Indeed many of the properties have actually been sold and the matter of settlement of those payments often follow some time after the actual sale of the property. So, it is not a matter of massive over valuing of properties, although in the current climate some properties have fetched somewhat less than what would have occurred some time ago when there were different property values. In the main the Education Department properties are seen as quite desirable for purchase and for other development uses. The department believes that it is able to meet the targets that it has established for itself and all of those properties that meet those amounts that are referred to have been identified and are either being settled, payment received, or are in the process of being sold. There is no inclusion in any of the programs for sale of property associated with

Mawson High School. Obviously, any decision about whether there was any surplus property in the future would depend upon the outcome of the current consultations and discussions that are going on.

**Mr BRINDAL:** Will the Minister provide a breakdown of sales for 1991-92 and projected sales for 1992-93, given that we accept there may be some overlap because of the collection of moneys, etc.?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I can identify the properties, but I am advised not to give you the estimated market value because many of these will be sold by auction or by treaty and we do not want to disadvantage our opportunity to maximise revenue.

**Mr BRINDAL:** Will you give us the actual price of the properties?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I will give the members of the Committee whatever information I can.

**Mr BRINDAL:** Does the Minister believe that school sports teams for middle primary and upper primary schools should be able to offer not only encouragement certificates for all but also trophies and prizes for best and fairest, most wickets, most goals, etc., to encourage excellence in performance? If so, will he ensure that such advice is sent to all schools because many schools have apparently been told they are not allowed to award such trophies and prizes?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** We are somewhat surprised by the honourable member's statement. Having checked with my officers, they know of no direction. If the honourable member has a copy of some communication that would help us to confirm that information; it might help me in replying because I know of no such direction.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I certainly will, but the Minister will recall there has been ongoing confusion about this matter because it has been debated back and forward in this Chamber for two or three years and I think some of the reason why some schools are reluctant to award trophies is that, in view of the debate, they are unsure of the current position, and so if the Minister were to answer the question and say he was in favour of trophies and the encouragement of excellence in performance, that stands on the public record as a clear indication to schools that they can award trophies and would therefore remove the confusion the Minister is speaking of.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I think the confusion has been created by the honourable member, and we do not have a system of decree in matters such as this. A junior sports policy has been established across school systems in conjunction with major sporting associations in this State and has been the subject of exhaustive consultation over a long period of time. The sorts of arguments to which the honourable member refers do not help; I think it would be particularly helpful if those who claim that such a direction has been given or circular distributed identify it so that we can come to grips with and clarify the position.

**Mr BRINDAL:** The Minister still has not answered my question: does he or does he not believe in the presentation of certificates, trophies and prizes to encourage excellence in performance in sport in middle primary years?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** What I believe is irrelevant. This policy has been established by way of consultation. As I said, we do not have a magisterial situation where



decrees are made; so, my views are irrelevant. My duty is to establish policies and see that they are disseminated amongst our schools and the broader community—it is simply not a matter for decree.

**Mr BRINDAL:** The Minister might understand his answer but I do not.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The honourable member might care to prove that there is, in fact, a document in circulation that he claims is creating this confusion. I would like to know that the factual basis for what he is claiming has been given as an instruction to schools.

**Mr BRINDAL:** At no stage did I say that there was necessarily a document in circulation. It could well be the absence of any clear direction from the Minister or the Minister's office that is causing the problem.

I refer to secondary education on page 137 of the Program Estimates. A small number of our secondary schools still retain some traditional examples of rewards for excellence in academic study and leadership in such things as school prefects and dux of the school.

**The Hon. Jennifer Cashmore:** Norwood High being an appropriate example.

**Mr BRINDAL:** My friend and colleague the member for Coles quotes Norwood High and I could also quote Brighton High School, which is in my electorate. Many other schools have long stopped the practice of hanging honour boards in the foyer and generally finished acknowledging the dux of the school in the 1960s and 1970s. Does the Minister support those schools that still recognise excellence through such awards as dux of the school and the system of prefects?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Throughout our schools there is a well-established system of rewarding excellence in achievement, whether it be sporting prowess, academic achievement or in extra curricula activities and so on, and I am always pleased to see this occurring. Yesterday, I presented certificates and prizes to students at a school, and the presentation was done in a very appropriate and sensitive manner so that all students who participated were recognised, but those who achieved outstanding results were also recognised.

The establishment of the merit ceremony at Government House, an initiative of this Government of some years ago, is an example of the recognition of outstanding achievement by students in senior secondary years. Many schools have developed such structures in one form or another for recognition of excellence, outstanding achievement and so on. It is done in many and varied ways, particularly in primary schools, and the establishment of a large network of special focus schools is another example of the department's attempt to establish excellence in teaching practice in the development of curriculum for special interest students.

Our special music, agricultural studies and gymnastics focus schools, and so on, have all contributed in a way to the recognition of outstanding achievement of excellence, providing a setting for students to develop the special talents with which they obviously have been endowed. That is all very much part of our education scene. The inclusion most recently of a series of programs involving focus schools for children of high intellectual potential, the so-called gifted and talented, is another example of this in our schools. I referred earlier to the international

baccalaureate program, and so on. So, many examples of this are spread through our school system.

**Mr BRINDAL:** In view of the Minister's answer, both about focus schools and about excellence in practice and traditions of excellence, will the Minister ensure that in any proposed amalgamation between Brighton and Mawson High Schools the wishes of the school communities are paramount and such traditions of excellence as exist in Brighton High School, including their focus as a special interest music centre, are retained if that is the wish of the school community down there?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I can give the honourable member an assurance that the school community's and indeed the broader community's views will be taken into account absolutely in this matter. I can think of nothing worse in terms of an end result than disbanding this special music focus of Brighton High School. It is a great achievement in education in this State, affecting the whole ethos of that school, and has a very positive influence in the broader community. As I said, in recent years more than \$8 million has been spent on upgrading facilities in that school. I do not think that there is any risk of that special focus not continuing, whatever the outcome of the discussions of the neighbouring Mawson High School.

**Mr HERON:** I refer to page 153 of the Program Estimates book: what initiatives are being taken to promote outstanding teachers, while enabling them to remain in the classroom?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** We have spent some time in the Committee talking about teachers who are under-achieving or who are unsure about their future career paths. At the same time, we should not overlook the need to provide incentives for our very best teachers to continue on the career paths within the classrooms of our schools and working directly with teachers, rather than their incentives for promotion and greater rewards being outside schools, which unfortunately so often has been in the case in the past.

The curriculum guarantee provided for Australia's first network of leadership provisions within schools with the appropriate awards. They were referred to in that curriculum guarantee as 'advanced schools teachers' but in the process of negotiations they were designated as other categories. We have since been negotiating on what are now known as advanced school teaching positions. As I indicated earlier, those negotiations are nearing conclusion. We will see that additional category of teacher in our schools and the additional rewards that will flow.

It is an initiative which is being followed across this country, although South Australia is in advance of other States. But the area of advanced school teaching categorisation is one that will require a careful and close scrutiny by Ministers and educational advisers across this country in the next few years. There is much to be gained by putting this category of teacher into international profile. It is a category that is very important in our education system, although it is fraught with some management difficulties and of course it is also fraught with cost implications, which can be very substantial and which can in fact detract, if they are not controlled, from the benefits that they will provide if funds have to be drawn from other areas of the education budget.

The selection criteria for the second phase of advanced school teachers in South Australia will be very rigorous and will ensure that these positions are available only to exemplary teachers. Expert evaluators will visit schools during 1993 to assess teachers at work in their classrooms before they are selected on the basis of merit against the criteria. There will be six evaluators, who will be outstanding educators, and it is planned, pending the outcome of negotiations, to appoint the evaluators in the latter part of this year. The introduction of advanced school teaching positions paves the way for our best teachers to be promoted, yet stay in the classroom to enhance the quality of teaching and learning over the whole school.

**Mr HERON:** Can the Minister provide an overview of South Australia's role in national cooperation to develop educational teaching and learning opportunities for all Australian students? I am referring to page 151 of the Program Estimates.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The development of the national curriculum frameworks is proceeding as a result of a decision taken by Education Ministers in Hobart in April 1989. It was quite an historic meeting where the national goals for Australian schools were settled and established. It was also the time when the decision was taken to establish the Curriculum Corporation in Melbourne and to take over the functions previously vested in the Commonwealth Government for curriculum development following the disestablishment of the Schools Commission. That new corporation is to be a partnership between the Commonwealth and the States. It was also to have in its policy structure an opportunity for participation by parents, unions and the non-government school sector. That corporation has been growing steadily. A group of us wished that the Australian Council for Education Research and the secretariat of the Australian Education Council could be incorporated in that structure, but that was not finally agreed, so the Curriculum Corporation was established as a free standing body with close relationships to the bodies to which I have just referred.

Eight areas of the curriculum have been agreed as a basis for the preparation of national statements and national profiles—the attainment levels that we talked about earlier. The areas for national statements being preferred are English, mathematics, science, technology, languages other than English, health, the arts and society and the environment. Different State and Territory systems are taking responsibility for the development of materials.

South Australia is taking national leadership in the preparation of statements and profiles in English and brief development for health and studies of society and the environment.

Three gender equity consultants for the Gender Equity and Curriculum Reform Project from South Australia have been appointed in English, LOTE and mathematics. A project officer has been appointed under the Gender Equity and Curriculum Reform Project: innovative projects to investigate girls' learning and English to support the national English statement and profile. This project is coordinated by South Australia over three States. A Curriculum Corporation officer has been appointed from South Australia to develop support

material for the national English profile. South Australia has been involved in the trialling of national English and mathematics profiles in schools and in the collection of exemplars.

The benefits to South Australia are the benefits of economy of scale through reduction in duplication of effort, the ability to use material developed elsewhere, increased quality, increased national communication, increased portability of curriculum and certification across State boundaries.

South Australia is also collaborating on a national basis in some Commonwealth funded projects. The Literacy and Learning Early Years of Schooling project, for which South Australia is the grantee, is a collaborative project including the Education Department, the South Australian Catholic sector, the New South Wales Catholic sector, the ACT and Tasmania. South Australia is also grantee for an early years of schooling literacy base data project which involves all States and Territories.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I refer to page 87 of the Estimates of Payments and Receipts. Sources within the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia (SSABSA) have provided the Opposition with some extraordinary information about the level of overtime payments for some SSABSA staff. I seek the Minister's response to those claims, because they are serious and, if true, they need to be substantiated; if they are not, they need to be rejected. One claim involves one staff member who is employed only on a part-time basis—that is, .6 of a full-time equivalent. I have been informed that this one staff member incurred up to 2 000 hours of overtime last year. If this is correct, it is the equivalent of 40 overtime hours each week for every week of the year. Will the Minister advise the Committee whether a part-time employee has incurred substantial hours of overtime, whether the hours amount to 2 000 and, if not, how many hours of overtime have been worked? If this is the case, why did not SSABSA either make this officer a full-time employee or employ some other officer full time on a short-term contract?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I presume that the honourable member can provide me the information with respect to the officer to whom she is referring?

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I cannot give the source of the information, but I believe there would not be more than one officer working for SSABSA on that part-time basis who had worked such a substantial number of hours of overtime. I am sure I have given the Minister sufficient information to enable him to identify the employee and the overtime levels.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I am not sure whether the honourable member has. I think the honourable member has a duty to give some identification of the person to whom she is referring, otherwise we could be doing an enormous amount of work and doing that at cross purposes. The introduction of the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) has placed an enormous workload on officers of the Senior Secondary Assessment Board, and the board is operating under strict guidelines with respect to the employment of staff, as are all Government agencies, so it is necessary for overtime to be carried out by officers. If the honourable member will provide at least some identification of the officer to whom she has referred, I can justify spending time going

through staff records and so on. There are many part-time staff employed by the board.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** As a supplementary question, will the Minister tell the Committee how many part-time staff are employed by the board, how many are employed at the specific level of .6, and how many of those might have worked hundreds of hours, if not over 1 000 hours, of overtime? I would be surprised if there were more than one. But if there is more than one, the question becomes even more relevant because it indicates that this is a widespread practice.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I will try to elicit that information for the honourable member.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** Still referring to page 87 of the Estimates of Payments and Receipts, under the new SACE, all teachers had to submit assessment plans for each subject to SSABSA for approval early this year. I have been informed that one teacher submitted an assessment plan which had been prepared and recommended by SSABSA, only to find that SSABSA did not fully approve it but only gave it provisional approval.

In another case, two teachers in one subject at a non-Government school submitted identical assessment plans: one was approved while the other was approved only provisionally, subject to major changes having to be made. How can this farcical situation occur and what action has the board taken to prevent its recurrence—if indeed the board is aware of it.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Or, indeed, if that was the actual situation. Once again, I would need documentation so that the proper analysis can be made. If there is a problem there it can be identified and something done about it. If there is not a problem, there cannot be widespread confusion during the introductory stages of SACE. When raising issues of this type in the Parliament, one must be careful that there is not a negative impact. I have already warned the House about the consequences of a question that was asked in the middle of an examination period about security of examination papers. Allegations were made in this place about the alleged sale of an examination paper in the week prior to the examination being conducted. Extensive police inquiries were conducted and throughout the school community there was a great deal of concern, and the matter received widespread publicity. The honourable member did not even respond in the Parliament at the end of the investigation.

This occurred also in relation to allegations from the Opposition some years ago about cheating in public examinations. The allegations in that case were also very thoroughly investigated and found to be wanting. So, when issues are raised on the instance of one example, we ought to do people the courtesy of trying to check them out factually and to see whether the case is a one-off mistake. If it is a widespread problem, obviously, the honourable member is quite within her rights to raise it and bring it to the notice of the community. But if it is a one-off case and there is a particular fault, that can be rectified. Not all schools and teachers then need to believe that there is a fundamental fault in the way in which the board is administering the introduction of this new program. I will ask Dr Willmott, who may be able to give us some specific detail, to clarify this for the

honourable member, but I am particularly cautious about this issue, because our public examination system is so important to the career and life opportunities of our young people as well as being important to their teachers that we need to be mindful of how these sorts of issues and criticisms of its administration are raised. We are not immune to criticism, but it needs to be handled carefully.

**Dr Willmott:** During the early part of this year, the board considered something of the order of 5 400 assessment plans. The overwhelming majority of those—and I can supply the Committee with the specific statistics—were approved. A very small number of programs was provisionally approved, and an extremely small number was not approved and had to be resubmitted. The question raised was: how is it possible that an assessment plan which very closely paralleled an advised plan from the board was not approved and, similarly, in relation to two identical plans from teachers, how was one approved and one not? There is a relatively simple answer to that apparent inconsistency. Assessment plans must be developed with specific reference to the nature of the class and the group of students for which they are designed. They must take into account the background of those students, the size of the class and the particular nature of the teaching program that the teacher has determined, based on the extended subject framework at year 11. On the basis of that range of information, the SSABSA moderators would consider the assessment plan and determine whether it was appropriate.

Therefore, it is possible for two virtually identical plans to be submitted, one of which could be most appropriate for a particular group of students and another less appropriate, and there could be matters upon which the teacher was asked to reconsider. Similarly, assessment plans for which SSABSA provided guidelines were of a general nature and needed to be developed and finetuned in terms of the specific nature of the student or the class group. These kinds of fine judgments were made by moderators in the process of approval of assessment plans and communicated quickly back to teachers. In fact, we found that the process of assessment plan approval at the beginning of this year worked extremely effectively and those provisional plans which were identified were quickly rectified.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I thank Dr Willmott for that explanation. I simply point out to the Minister in response to his earlier remarks that it is because the Opposition realises and fully appreciates the value and importance of SACE that these questions are being asked. They are of critical importance to South Australian students and teachers and this is the forum in which these people are entitled to have their concerns aired. The Opposition makes no apology whatsoever for raising questions about SACE, because we regard it as our obligation to do so.

Also, it is clearly not appropriate for me or any member in this forum to identify a particular school or assessment plan but simply draw the problem to the Minister's attention so that he can be aware of it. As the Minister would know from another forum in which we are both currently working, the judgments made by teachers about the nature of classes and groups of students in terms of value judgments as to how one

assesses one group over another is a matter about which many members of this Parliament are acutely concerned. We want to see that such value judgments are not made in such a way that some students get a very raw deal and are perpetually classified as disadvantaged. I am sure the Minister understands the point I am making. I refer to page 87 of the Estimates of Payments.

The Minister might be aware that there was considerable criticism from schools about problems associated with SSABSA's new computer software package called SASO. A memo from the Deputy Director of the board, Mr John Halsey, in June this year states:

As expected, SASO came in for some criticism . . . Schools feel somewhat in the dark about the latest situation and strongly requested a clear communication on exactly what is happening with SASO and when they can confidently expect that it will be available in its entirety. All schools reported spending a great deal of ancillary staff time trying to make SASO work. They believe they ought to be compensated for this. I find it hard not to agree with this proposition. Ancillary hours are very cheap compared to TRT days—we could allocate 10 hours to every school for a total of about \$25 000 to \$30 000.

Has the board agreed with Mr Halsey's recommendation and made this allocation? If not, why not?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I will ask Dr Willmott to comment. I recently answered a Question on Notice about a number of matters contained in the question, but that might not have been communicated to the honourable member. I ask Dr Willmott to go over that background.

**Dr Willmott:** I would have to have a detailed look at the memo referred to. The board has not made a decision to allocate funding to support ancillary staff in schools operating the SASO program. There may be a rationale to do that. It is also a question of the funding resources that would be available from the board to do that.

We have provided extensive support to schools in the implementation of the SASO program, and that has been in terms of an advisory service to schools and through the exchange of disks and the issuing of a further version of the SASO program, which is known as version 1.2, which was issued at the beginning of the second semester. I should point out that the development of such a complex program as the SASO system is one that is expected to be completed by the end of this year, but it takes a year to develop and implement in schools. In a sense, it can be tested only on its complete distribution because it must be implemented within each school and particular concerns that arise in schools in terms of school capacity to operate it must be addressed, and they are being addressed.

Some of the technical issues and other problems that have arisen in relation to the SASO program have been addressed in the second release. Other concerns that have been identified are being addressed in a proposed version 1.3, which is scheduled for release later this year. That implementation program has been accompanied by extensive support for schools, but that has not included the provision of funding for ancillary staff.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** The Minister said that he had answered a Question on Notice. I am not familiar with that answer but I did note in Dr Willmott's response that there was no specific reply to my question, although there was a forecast that ancillary hours will not be available. I want to make sure that the answer that comes subsequently in writing indicates whether the board agreed with Mr Halsey's recommendation and

made the allocation that he sought. That is now historic; it is not a future decision.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** That is an internal board matter and I am not able to interfere in it. It is the suggestion of one officer of the Senior Secondary Assessment Board, who has communicated his views. I gather that happens in many organisations and that management welcomes suggestions as to how services can be delivered. The board needs to determine cost implications such as whether that is the best use of those resources. My response related to the earlier matters that the honourable member raised, not so much the issue of the suggestions made by Mr Halsey in that minute.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I want the Minister to understand that I am not suggesting that he is personally responsible for this, but I am saying that Parliament is entitled to know whether the allocation was made.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** It ought to be put into proper context. The Government has provided \$16 million for the implementation of SACE. That is a massive expenditure and almost all of it has been spent in supporting teachers in schools, in the development of curriculum, in the assessment methodology and so on. As Dr Willmott said in response to the earlier question to the member for Coles, the assessment of those teaching plans is a massive job in itself, and so the suggestion of increased support in one form or another is quite a common occurrence because substantial resources can be allocated in the implementation of the new South Australian Certificate of Education. The request for \$15 000 or \$30 000, or whatever it is, in the context of \$16 million ought to be put into that perspective.

#### Membership:

Mr M.J. Atkinson substituted for the Hon. J.P. Trainer.

**Mr De LAINE:** I refer the Minister to pages 143 and 144 of the Program Estimates under the 1991-92 Specific Targets—Implementation of the education of girls: three-year action plan—and also the 1992-93 Specific Targets—the monitoring of this plan. What are the priorities for the 1993 action plan?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I will ask Ms Wallace to advise the Committee on this matter.

**Ms Wallace:** The equal opportunity policy for the education of girls was released in 1983, and the three-year action plan 1992-94 was released in 1991. The three objectives of the action plan are: to broaden the post-school options for girls; to increase the participation of girls in mathematics, science and technology; and to develop a supportive learning environment for girls. There has been a number of achievements since the release of that plan. A range of documents has been published to support the implementation of the action plan. Other publications have been produced which relate to SACE and girls. The materials that were produced as a result of the review into national policy in relation to the education of girls have also been reproduced in South Australia.

Mechanisms are being established to monitor the implementation of the action plan and the attendance, participation, retention and attainment of girls by group; that is, girls living in poverty, girls from non-English

speaking backgrounds, girls who are Aboriginal and girls with disabilities. Training and development activities have also been undertaken throughout the State. These include seminars on a number of issues, for example, girls learning English, increasing the participation of girls in mathematics, science and technology and countering sexual harassment in schools. The priorities for 1993 in the three-year plan with respect to the education of girls are: monitoring and reporting on the achievements of girls; documenting classroom practice so that other teachers can learn how to implement the three-year plan; working with other officers so that the education of girls issues become part of all curriculum development; and ensuring that the links between the national policy and the State policy are clear.

**Mr De LAINE:** I refer now to the very successful Education Review Unit. How many schools have been reviewed by the Education Review Unit and what initiatives or major reviews will be carried out by the unit in 1993?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I want to put on the record my appreciation of the work that the Education Review Unit is doing in our education system, because the establishment of this unit and the work that it does is not generally understood in the broader community. It certainly is now well understood in school communities and its work is welcomed overwhelmingly in those communities. It is a very constructive and positive development in the external review of what goes on in our schools—not only in our schools but also in other dimensions of education in this State.

It has reviewed areas such as the provision of homework to students and it is looking at other components of education provision within the education bureaucracy and so on. However, at the end of term two of this year 420 schools had been reviewed. So, we are well on the way to two-thirds of all schools in the State being reviewed, and by the end of next year that will be complete. The extra school reviews to which I referred a moment ago include: the curriculum authority and responsibility in schools; the Year of School and Industry and school/industry links; primary science and technology focus schools, known in the education system as the Skytech program; the school development planning process itself; and the area of homework, which I mentioned earlier. Major reviews that are planned for next year include: the introduction of attainment levels in schools; school councils; student behaviour management; open access learning; anti-racism policy implementation; disadvantaged schools; the Peachey Road School staffing strategy—a new approach to the provision of and appointment of staff to schools in that locality; and the Noarlunga basin schools cluster program—another interesting development in education.

With respect to the *modus operandi* of the Education Review Unit, members might be interested to know that reports are now provided to the Parliamentary Library as a result of a motion carried in this place earlier this year. The focus of reviews has been: the development plan for the school (each school in this State now has a school development plan); the processes for its development; and the degree of success the school has had in achieving its objectives in terms of student outcomes. Public reports, usually of 20 to 40 pages in length, have been prepared

for all schools so far reviewed. The results of the first two years of reviews have been as follows: the assurance that the majority of schools are planning the key elements of their development with reference to their parent, teacher and student communities; the high degree of success in achieving the objectives outlined in the school plans; and the increasing emphasis on learning outcomes for students in these objectives.

In excess of 4 000 recommendations have now been made to schools as a result of school reviews. The bulk of these recommendations to schools have dealt with the following issues: first, school development planning and objectives, including curriculum; secondly, decision making within a school; thirdly, school organisation, leadership and management; and, finally, regulations and requirements. With respect to resources provided in the budget for the work of the Education Review Unit, at the commencement of Term 3 1991, the Education Review Unit had a head count of one director, 12 review superintendents and five support and clerical staff. At the end of 1991, as a result of the implementation of GARG, this was reduced to nine review superintendents. Additional school based staff are seconded for brief periods to individual school review teams. The non-salary expenditure for the unit's operations (school and other reviews) for the 1991-92 financial year was \$440 340. Total expenditure for the unit for the financial year 1991-92 was \$1.761 million.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I refer to the Estimates of Payments and Receipts, page 87. The Minister will be aware that last year many people called for a one-year delay in the introduction of the SACE, because they thought its introduction was being unnecessarily rushed. The Minister will also acknowledge that the Liberal Party in this House shared that view and questioned the Minister on it reasonably extensively. In April this year the Registrar of SSABSA, Mr Mostyn Coleman, reported to the SSABSA board as follows:

That this (that is, annual assessment goal) was completed satisfactorily in 1991 in the context of the factors I mentioned at the start of this report is quite remarkable. I also believe it would be improper to expect in particular the assessment and computing personnel to be able to repeat this in 1992. Perhaps in hindsight the level of development planned for and executed in 1991 was too great.

Does the Minister agree with Mr Coleman's view that the level of development planned for and executed in 1991 was too great?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** Here we have another example of an officer of the board communicating internally his particular views of the state of the world and, if the honourable member is extrapolating from that that there should have been a different time plan for the implementation of SACE, I think it ought to be put into that perspective. Whatever year SACE was introduced, there would have been at least some people saying it was too early, and I think the community were asking of us to bring about reforms in senior secondary years. This matter was fully debated in the Parliament. Legislation was introduced to implement SACE; that debate took place in this place and the other place, and the legislation was duly passed. I do not want to engage in any debate about whether or not it should have been established. We are in the middle of establishing it, and that is the task at hand. It is an important task, and I am gratified by the

enormous commitment that the SSABSA board members have made, coming from all sections of the community as they do. The staff of SSABSA have worked assiduously to implement it and the Government, on its part, has provided substantial resources for this to occur.

There is an enormous amount of work going on in our school communities, and in fact most schools have taken this opportunity not only to prepare themselves for the introduction of SACE but indeed to rethink years 11 and 12 in their schools in terms of their staffing component, the curriculum provision and so on. It has been a positive initiative in secondary schools in this State. People are obviously concerned that the process should occur smoothly and responsibly. I am satisfied that we are doing all we possibly can for that to occur. Dr Willmott might be able to comment further.

**Dr Willmott:** I would like to make an additional comment about the context of the report by the SSABSA registrar to the board. Indeed, it was the case that in the completion of the result cycle earlier this year, the board was placed under some pressure to complete that task on schedule, and that created some strains, particularly in the computing area. There is a contextual factor there that is important, however. It was not just a matter of the additional responsibilities of the board in preparing for SACE which created pressure for our information systems area: we also took a decision, which was part of the resource rationalisation plan which SSABSA implemented, to withdraw from the use of the Government computing centre and set up an in-house network system for all our information servicing. That was planned, and in fact it saved the board about \$200 000, but it did mean there was a substantial amount of reprogramming of our assessment services and our information systems activities, and that was the major reason for the comment that Mr Coleman made to the board. The backdrop to that, of course, was the additional responsibilities associated with SACE preparation, but fundamentally it was a question of a resource saving program which required additional programming and other management services that SSABSA needed to develop.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I refer to the Estimates of Payments and Receipts (page 87). In June this year SSABSA's principal board liaison group reported:

Concern is still being expressed about satisfactory achievement not being challenging enough for some students.

Because of concern about SSABSA's assessment system at stage 1 of the SACE which involves only a satisfactory grading, most schools are having to maintain a separate school base set of grades to report to students and parents. Is it not an unnecessary waste of resources for schools to have to keep two sets of assessment records for students and what action does SSABSA intend to take to resolve this situation; and, as SACE students must undertake public examinations at stage 2 of SACE, year 12, has SSABSA considered introducing some public examination at stage 1 of SACE, that is, year 11?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I will ask Dr Willmott to comment, but it should not be overlooked that schools already do provide and have for many years provided their own internal assessment program for year 11. Obviously, that continues in the form that it traditionally takes, although modified no doubt by the impact of

SACE. If the honourable member is advancing on behalf of those who have advocated to him some change in this system that a uniform examination system should be required of schools at year 11, I think that brings quite a new dimension to the relationship between schools across the State and SSABSA. Indeed, I think considerable concern would be expressed in many school communities about that requirement, but no doubt Dr Willmott can add further to that.

**Dr Willmott:** The difference between the three levels of assessment at stage one (satisfactory achievement, recorded achievement and what was referred to as 'requirements not met') and the 20 point scale and graded achievement at year 12 is the product of long-term consultation that occurred during the Gilding inquiry. The view that emerged from that inquiry was that it was appropriate that SSABSA not implement a grading system and a numerical scoring system at year 11, as it was felt that that would place too much assessment pressure on students at year 11 level and decrease to a considerable extent the flexibility available to schools.

One must remember that at year 11 the curriculum structure is such that schools can design their own programs based upon the extended subject framework and, as we have noted from an earlier question, they can design their own assessment plan based on the broad requirements of the extended subject framework. In fact, some schools have included in their assessment plans examinations and various kinds of structured tests while others have chosen not to do so, and that freedom is available to schools. Indeed, some schools have chosen to report results to parents of year 11 students using higher levels of achievement than 'satisfactory', and SSABSA does not discourage that practice. That option is available to schools.

As far as public certification is concerned, the view that emerged from the Gilding inquiry that had wide support was that the certified grading system at year 11 would be simpler than a detailed numerical scale.

**Mr BRINDAL:** In view of both the Minister's and Dr Willmott's answer, when the South Australian Certificate of Education was first mooted, as we understand it, it was intended that one certificate should cover all students. It has become obvious that some students will never be able to complete SACE successfully. Does the Minister believe that all year 11 and 12 students should attempt to undertake SACE if some of them cannot satisfactorily complete the course?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** This is the whole point of the implementation of the Finn and Carmichael recommendations and the development of the key competency concept, and dovetailing that in with the SSABSA requirements for the South Australian Certificate of Education so that some accreditation, some value, can be given to the work that students do on a variety of pathways that they follow through education and training and in the work force.

The cohort of students that begin secondary education and then progress into university is about 10 per cent of that student population. The previous matriculation process was designed to serve that small group of students who proceeded on to leaving and leaving honours years, in the days when they were the

certification processes, and then entered universities, teachers college, and so on.

That provided for a system which was conducted predominantly by the University of Adelaide when it was established. So, things have changed somewhat since then, and they are seen as a responsibility to provide for the majority of students who do not progress to universities but who, rightly so, seek to have some sort of accreditation for the work that they do that is accepted by employers, training providers, their families, and so on. That is the challenge that has befallen us and that is how SACE has been developed.

The challenge ahead of us now is to see how this can develop in terms of the increased opportunities that we want to provide for that group of students that the honourable member says are not suitably qualified or are not meeting required standards. Whose standards are they? What standards are appropriate? What is the appropriate accreditation for that group of students? How do we ascertain what skills they have, what talents they have been able to develop, and so on? It is accepted that that is a complex matter, but it is very much the issue with which we are grappling at this stage in the national sphere. Dr Willmott might like to comment on that a little further.

**Dr Willmott:** The intention of SACE is that it be within the reach of all, which was the key phrase that was in the final inquiry of the Gilding review. SSABSA, in developing programs and accrediting courses for SACE, has been particularly mindful of that goal. We believe a number of strategies are now in place to make SACE within the reach of all students who are committed to study at years 11 and 12. Those arrangements include special courses and programs for disabled students, such as our communication for the hearing impaired course; special programs for students with non-English speaking backgrounds; discussions with the special education centres to look at ways in which special education students can undertake SACE; vocational pathways connected with TAFE programs to provide career orientations and options for students who, as the Minister has indicated, undertake SACE without the intention of going on to university; special programs that relate to work-related studies and education to give an employment focus to SACE studies; the cross-credit arrangement with the vocational education certificate; and other connections with vocational training.

All these arrangements have been put in place for the SACE, and of course they complement the traditional academic programs that students may undertake to lead them to complete a higher education entrance score. SSABSA, as I have indicated, has especially attempted to pursue the goal of the SACE being available to all students.

**Mr BRINDAL:** This question is fairly delicate, because the Minister wears the hat also as Chairman of the Select Committee on Primary and Secondary Education, and I hope the Minister will treat this question as fairly delicate. I have been contacted by someone who formed part of one of our visits to the country. To follow up the evidence given about the recruitment of teachers, I pointed out that it was a matter before the select committee. They pointed out that it may well be next year before the select committee reports. Therefore, they

asked whether you, as Minister, could, of your own volition, act on any of the evidence or investigate matters which were brought to your attention in order to correct any anomalies that may exist for the recruitment of teachers next year. Is it within the Minister's province to do that? Will the Minister attempt to do so if he has such matters brought to his attention privately?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I am pleased that the honourable member has raised the point, because it has been clearly understood that, when matters are brought to the attention of the select committee that require the attention of the Education Department or some other authority, we should have a process in place that refers those matters on for attention. I shall be pleased to take on board any suggestion. The Education Department is going through the recruitment process for next year now, so if the honourable member has some correspondence or some form of communication that he could pass on, I should be pleased to do that while there is still the opportunity to do something next year.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I believe it is appropriate for the Opposition, on behalf of the Committee, to record in *Hansard* its thanks to the departmental officers who have attended today. We are also conscious that this could be the last time that the Minister appears in this capacity before this Committee. He has had to put up with us for a number of years. However, we would like to thank him for his forbearance. I can assure the members of the Education Department that the Hon. Mr Lucas is looking forward to working with them on a much closer basis after the next election.

**The ACTING CHAIRPERSON:** I, too, would like to record my appreciation to the Minister and his officers who have been present today. It has been a long session for them, but the Committee appreciates the way in which the questions have been answered.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I should like to thank the officers who have worked very hard not just today but for many weeks to provide this information and who will be working afterwards to provide the information that has been sought by Committee members. They are very committed public servants and I very much appreciate the work they do year round for the education of children in our schools.

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

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Minister of Education, Miscellaneous, \$74 967 000—  
Examination declared completed.

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Children's Services Office, \$54 374 000

**Acting Chairperson:**  
Mrs C.F. Hutchison

**Members:**  
Mr M.J. Atkinson  
Mr M.K. Brindal  
The Hon. J.L. Cashmore

Mr M.R. De Laine  
Mr V.S. Heron  
Mr G.A. Ingerson

**Witness:**

The Hon. G.J. Crafter, Minister of Children's Services.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr Brenton Wright, Director, Children's Services Office.  
Ms Julie Baker, Manager, Policy and Planning.  
Mr George Lewkowicz, Director (Resources).

**The ACTING CHAIRPERSON:** I declare the proposed payments open for examination.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I refer to page 169 of the Program Estimates and staff communications within the CSO. The MacGregor Marketing Children's Services Disadvantaged Groups Research study, conducted in 1990 and 1991, found that the CSO faced a 'massive challenge' in addressing internal communications, besides taking its message and functions to the people of South Australia. The study found, among other things, that:

Staff members—some of whom held positions involving important decision making—were often confused over regulations and responsibilities.

Staff perceive a breakdown in communication between head office and the various regions . . . we were told, head office personnel are reluctant to contact regional representatives and vice versa . . . As one staff member put it, 'If you come from central office, you're an alien.'

Removal of some services from the DCW umbrella has effectively hidden those services . . . People say to us, 'We never even knew you existed.'

Staff are reluctant to offer advice to prospective clients . . . One CSO representative expressed this concern in these words, 'From what I've learnt today, we need the information first—before we start giving information to the community.'

Does the Minister agree with the MacGregor marketing study that it exposed problems in the CSO, both in the understanding of what services it should be delivering to the public of South Australia and also in the lack of understanding that various employees have towards one another? Will the Minister outline the measures that have been put in place since 1991 to upgrade communication between CSO staff so there is not a 'them and me' attitude, and the steps taken to improve the public image of the CSO which was, if this study is correct, clearly considered inadequate by the study in 1990 and 1991?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The honourable member's question is somewhat dated, although it is important to put on the record the work that the Children's Services Office has done in the areas to which he refers. All enterprises must be very conscious of the issues that the honourable member is raising; that is why the Children's Services Office seeks advice from various means, one of which is through studies such as the one referred to.

However, the material on which that was based is even older, and it is not a matter of any great concern in the Children's Services Office or in the broader community at the present time. Of much greater concern were the problems of communication and movement between the agencies providing children's services prior to the establishment of the Children's Services Office in 1985. At that time we had a combination of Government and non-Government providers, and the Government providers were divided between various agencies—health,

the then Department of Community Welfare and the Education Department.

I am not sure whether the honourable member can recall, but at that time there was a committee chaired by the now Supreme Court judge Justice Olsson that tried to adjudicate between the interest groups in this area. There was great division, communication breakdown and lack of planning in the provision of children's services. There were great equity gaps in the system, and the work that this Parliament and, subsequently, the Children's Services Office did in this area has been quite remarkable.

We are dealing with many small units and very small groupings of staff often working in isolated communities. In a small community there is often only a Children's Services Office provider, not an education provider or health provider, and so on. They are often in very complex and isolated situations. So, important communication issues arise. I will ask the Director to comment on this issue, which is obviously important.

**Mr Wright:** We took note, of course, of what the consultants said and put in place measures to remedy the deficiencies they had identified. Before I go through those remedies, I might say that the incident to which the honourable member referred arose during one meeting where one or two brand new staff happened to be in attendance. I did not think then and do not think now that it was a typical reaction from Children's Services Office staff.

Nonetheless, we took the advice seriously and, since that time, have put in place staff training programs on marketing and customer relations. We have produced an in-house booklet to assist with communication issues such as promotions and public relations. We have developed a video that staff can use to give information to clients about the range of children's services. An induction manual has been developed for all new employees.

Regional and central office staff work together now to streamline processes so that customer needs can be met in the most efficient manner, and we have put in place a system of staff exchanges between regional and central offices, so that staff can gain first-hand experience of many of the operations of the organisation. These are the sorts of measures we have put in place, and I believe that the problem identified by the consultants is one of historical interest only and not a current problem.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I accept all that but, just for the record, would it be possible to provide to the Committee a list of the major initiatives undertaken to improve the communication? I am not asking for everything you did with everyone, but just some of the major things done in the area.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The Director has just outlined some of those in general terms, and we will take on notice the honourable member's question and provide more detailed information for him. On the broader issue, the Children's Services Office has received a good deal of cooperation from elements of the media in this State in order to promote children's services, and some excellent videos and other promotion programs have been prepared that bring the services that the Children's Services Office provides to a range of people in the community who might otherwise not know of those services.



That is always very important, and the medium of television has been particularly important in getting that message across. The staff of the Children's Services Office are often seen on television at the appropriate time, and are able to penetrate sections of the community we simply would not otherwise be able to reach.

The advisory committee provided for under the Children's Services Act has also taken on quite a substantial brief in looking at the needs of the community that may not be adequately met, given the current range of services provided under the CSO umbrella. It has recently conducted (and is about to provide the results of) a phone-in and will discuss it at a seminar with respect to sick children in our community and the need for care for those children when their parents are at work. That is an area of concern, I know, to many families in the community. Once again, there are a variety of ways in which communications are being carried out within the CSO and within the broader community.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I have to confess that this question is a little parochial. The question concerns Child Care Services—Program Estimates, page 167, Financial Information Paper No. 3, Capital Works Program 1992-93. The new Warradale Child Care Centre is almost adjacent to my house, so I have been following its development with some interest, which is the reason for my question.

Several child care centre operators have voiced concerns to me about what they believe are costly and fundamental errors in the design and construction of new CSO child care centre buildings; for example, in one case money is being earmarked to equip the new centre, but the money so earmarked has had to be spent on barricades to segregate very small children from wandering into open plan centres.

I am told that this design flaw is one apparent in both the new Warradale and Golden Grove centres. The Opposition has been told that the Warradale centre, which I believe is estimated to cost nearly \$600 000, is a design disaster: apart from the lack of forethought in segregating very small children from older ones, part of the centre's play space has been sited in a corridor and access to the kitchen, which is centrally located, is also awkward, necessitating the need to walk through play areas.

It has been claimed that the root of the problem with these flaws is that there is little consultation between CSO officers, who actually have to work in the centre, and the designers who design the centres. Presumably, it may even involve an entirely different department. Will the Minister detail what additional funds have been allocated to Golden Grove (Johns Road) pre-school and the Warradale Day Care Centre because of design shortcomings? If funds have been allocated, is it expected that extra funds will be necessary, and does the Minister agree that there are presently problems appearing in the design of child care centres and, if so, will he examine measures to ensure that those officers who use the centres are in some way involved so as to improve the design of such facilities in the future?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I accept the parochial interest of the honourable member. I understand that he is about to marry and I thought he was using very good judgment in having a house alongside a Children's Services Office

program. I thought he might break some good news to us—

*The Hon. Jennifer Cashmore interjecting:*

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** It is a little early for all of that. I will ask the Director to provide information for the benefit of the Committee.

**Mr Wright:** I cannot answer specific questions about extra funds concerning the two centres the honourable member refers to, but I will undertake to get that specific information. As to the more general question about the design for new facilities, I am rather surprised to hear that he has been informed that there is a consultation problem in the design of new centres because we have in place quite an extensive consultative process in relation to the design of new facilities. We have a process which produces what we call a standard design, and that process is based upon consultation with the users, those who work in and those who have children in recently built facilities. That is a continual process of updating that standard design. In addition, for each individual project we have a consultative process involving local people looking at particular aspects of design projects. I am surprised to hear that comment being made.

I am surprised to hear the specific reference to the segregation of age groups of children because, as the honourable member would appreciate, we have had a fair bit of experience in designing these things and that is a fundamental issue, one on which I cannot believe we would have fallen down. I will have to pursue the detailed nature of the question subsequently but, in general, I believe that adequate consultative processes are in place. We work very closely with the architects from the Department of Housing and Construction. They are involved in these consultative meetings which consider both the overall design development and the particular design development processes. The centres are complex and some of the sites that we have to build on are not necessarily ideal, so problems arise. I do not suggest for one moment that it is easy going, but I think that the finished products are usually, if not always, satisfactory and getting better.

**Mr BRINDAL:** The statement that there was inadequate consultation was predicated on the fact that we were given information that there was a problem. In asking the question I made the assumption that, if the CSO and practitioners had been adequately involved, the problems would have been lessened and may not have arisen. I am not saying that someone suggested a lack of consultation: I extrapolated that from their saying that there was a problem. I was also surprised to receive the information, so I think the question is worth following up and I would be pleased if the department would do so. One thing that I can say is good about the Minister of Education is that the design of schools is normally very good and very well thought out. I have not heard other of the CSO, either. However, in view of having asked the question and being told that there was a problem, I believe it is incumbent on us to check up on it.

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** More than 50 centres have been established under the Commonwealth/State program and I have not heard major criticism of this type. Nevertheless, if you build that many, I guess there must be some criticism. The process of consultation to which Mr Wright has referred is a very thorough one.

The management of these centres is vested in a community-based committee and very practical scrutiny is put into these plans. They take many and varied forms, depending upon the parcel of land that is provided or the needs of the centre. It is incumbent upon us to investigate that concern.

**Mr BRINDAL:** My next question relates to support services for young children with special needs and is based on information on page 166 of the Program Estimates. Many professionals working in the children's services area have drawn my attention and that of the shadow Minister to the lack of adequate support services. While they applaud the development of the CSO over the years, they argue that the development of the integrated learning of children has not been accompanied by an increase in support services. They say that there is a pressing need for more speech therapists, psychologists and other special staff to help parents and early childhood staff assist children overcome physical and anti-social behaviour problems.

I have heard the Minister speak in this Chamber about early intervention programs and the great benefits that can accrue from them economically as well as socially and educationally to the children. Earlier this year, for example, the Opposition detailed the waiting time for speech pathology services in the children's services area. In the northern suburbs, young children faced a 10 month wait for therapy when it was decided to close off the CSO waiting list. I understand that decision is to be reviewed next month. When the decision to close off the lists was taken earlier this year, the Lyell McEwin Hospital also had a waiting list for speech pathology of around 10 months and limited its referral to children under three years of age. The situation is little better elsewhere, for in the western suburbs young children can wait four months for therapy and more than 60 children are already waiting for treatment.

Does the Minister agree that long waiting lists for therapy have a detrimental effect on the development of young children and, if so, what steps is the Government taking to address the quickly rising number of children on CSO waiting lists for speech pathology services, given that intervention at this time could well save considerable cost to the Education Department later on in a child's schooling?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The honourable member is quite correct: it is fundamentally important that there be early identification of the special needs of some children who are entering CSO programs and that there be a response to that which can save a great deal of difficulty, hardship and frustration, on the part of the children and their families and also service providers in later years. This is an area that requires very close cooperation and consultation between human service providers. In the past there has been a tendency to compartmentalise the provision of specialist services in agencies—whether that is within CAFHS, Mental Health Services, the hospitals and the community-based health services, general practice and so on. Now we see the need for a much greater degree of overlapping and coordination, the concept of hand-held files and so on.

A lot of the work that has gone on in recent times has been very valuable in this area. It has minimised the stress, the pressure and the cost associated for families

with children who have special needs and, of course, costs in the provision of services as well. Nevertheless, there is still work to be done. Indeed, the more resources that are provided, the greater the needs that are identified and then, of course, the greater the call for Government to respond to it. As I said, I think the Government is simply one respondent to this call. In our community, under the national health structure that we have in place—flowing from the Commonwealth legislation—there is a network of services that need to be accessed by these particular children and their families. I will ask Mr Wright if he will comment on the specifics of this matter.

**Mr Wright:** I would like to add a little more detail to what the Minister said and to acknowledge the fact that the honourable member's question is a very important one, concerning an issue that we take very seriously. It would be fair to say the community is going through a period of transition at the present time, where there is an increasing emphasis on services for children with special needs being provided with those services in community-based settings rather than, as was the case, in institutional settings. That is a process of change that is occurring right now and has been for a year or so and will continue for the next decade, I suspect. One of the effects of that movement from an institutional service to a community-based service is that considerably more demand is placed upon community agencies such as the Children's Services Office.

It is very gratifying to be able to report to the Committee that we are working in close cooperation with other agencies, particularly institutionally-based agencies, in trying to develop appropriate community services for these children. In the past few years, for example, we have developed programs in conjunction with the Spastic Centres of South Australia, the Regency Park Centre for the Young Disabled, the Intellectually Disabled Services Council, the Downs Syndrome Association and community health centres. There are now special programs operating in CSO facilities in cooperation with those agencies at Myrtle Bank, Warradale, Marino, Valley View, Salisbury Park, Mount Barker, O'Halloran Hill, the Riverland, Salisbury, Gawler, Elizabeth, Clare, the Barossa, Woodville West and Reynella South. These programs involve the provision of extra services for children with special needs. As I said, they are operated in conjunction with the specialist agencies that have had traditional responsibility for particular groups of children. We are very pleased with the progress that we have been able to make.

The honourable member's question referred particularly to speech pathology services. It is on the public record that we have had difficulty in maintaining our services at a pace which will meet demand. We have taken some initiatives to redress those problems. In particular, we have appointed for a short period an additional half-time speech pathologist in the northern suburbs, which is where the problem seems to be at its most acute, and that person is now in place and is assisting with the backlog of assessments that had built up over the period. It is probably worthwhile pointing out to the Committee that, since the establishment of the Children's Services Office, there has been a considerable increase in the demand placed upon speech pathologists in particular but equally

on all our specialist services personnel. We are now providing services to all the CSO preschools, the family day care network, toy libraries, subsidised child care centres and private child care centres. We are covering an age range of 0-6, and that is a considerably wider target group than was the case prior to the establishment of the CSO. We recognise that the challenge there is big, we have taken steps to build a solid foundation at the community level for the management of these children in the future, and in the meantime we have responded to particular crises as they have occurred.

**Mr BRINDAL:** As a supplementary question, I acknowledge both the Minister's and the Director's answer, but let us isolate for a minute programs that are capable of solution by intervention, rather than programs that may by their nature be longitudinally based; that is, people with a motor coordination disorder may well have treatment all their lives, but if it is a speech pathology problem early intervention may well solve the problem. If we could do that, has the Minister undertaken any cost-benefit analysis of a heavy concentration of support services in the CSO area and in the early schooling area, even to the detriment of later problems in areas such as TAFE and secondary schools and, if a cost-benefit analysis has been undertaken, would it be worth the Government deliberately concentrating on such an area for long-term gain rather than just holding the current pattern, which we seem to be losing because we just do not have the resources?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** There is no doubt about the thesis that the greater the resources that are applied in the early years and the more effective the intervention then the greater will be the benefits that will flow to individuals and the community and, obviously, there must be savings associated with that. However, it does not simply relate to the economic element, of course, but also it is quality of life that is enhanced by that early intervention. The CSO has marshalled substantial additional resources. That is probably not enough, and whether it will ever be enough is also problematical, but the work Mr Wright has done in marshalling resources and better directing them, particularly as Chairperson of the Human Service Chief Executive Officers' Committee, has been particularly valuable in this area.

So, I think the explanation that has been given to the Committee shows that the CSO is going in the right direction; and we will have to see whether that can go faster or whether more resources can be marshalled and how difficult that is to achieve. But that is the direction in which we are moving, without acting irresponsibly to other sectors of the community. We know of no specific study that would show that, but I think that is the generally accepted view.

**Mr ATKINSON:** I refer to page 165 of the Program Estimates, and the program entitled 'Preschool education'. What is the Government doing to ensure that high quality preschool education services are available to South Australian families?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I am constantly reminded that we in South Australia enjoy a substantially higher degree of service provision in the preschool area than is available in any other Australian State, and access to it is much greater here in South Australia than it is in any other State. Ninety-four per cent of four-year olds in this

State attend four sessions of preschool each week. I am told that in Western Australia it is less than 20 per cent of four-year-olds who would have access to preschool. There is a reason for that, of course, because children start school earlier, but nevertheless there is a child of that age who has less access to services when one considers the importance of those preschool formative years, and the importance of the range of children's services gives to that group of young people in our community.

The issues for us relate to the small group of students who are not able to access preschool services—and I think they can be reasonably clearly identified in our community—and also whether children's services as a whole cannot be more integrated around the needs of the preschool sector. I think that debate will ensue for some time. We have combinations of child care, preschool and before and after school hours care that blend into the provision of services for other members of the family and so on. They all need to be taken into account in determining not only the high quality but the access to the services that our families need in a rapidly changing community. A greater number of mothers are engaged in the workforce, greater numbers of part-time positions are available, there is more mobility of people in order to access employment and there is greater involvement of parents in further education and so on.

The current budget that is before the Committee demonstrates clearly the Government's very strong commitment to preschool education services over many years—in fact, it is much greater than any other Australian State. This Government believes that preschool education is a vital part of a child's development and that these services must be accessible to all eligible children. Indeed preschools can play a particularly beneficial role in assisting the development of children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and they are therefore a very important component in children's services overall social justice strategy. Funding for preschool services in the budget before us is \$38.63 million. I point out that 322 Children's Services Office preschools and 100 Child Parent Centres located in our schools are currently serving over 18 000 children.

An increase in the level of operating grants for individual preschool centres is being maintained in this budget. The social justice supplement of \$115 000 to the preschool operating grants has been maintained in this year's budget. An inflationary allowance will be built into grants to all centres—totalling additional funding of \$11 000. The centre operating grant supplement provides additional funds to support the ongoing operation of centres in most need. Eighty-eight priority one centres are receiving an additional 10c per daily child attendance and 157 priority two centres an additional 6c per daily child attendance. This significantly assists these centres in the provision of equipment, materials and general facilities.

The Government is continuing to respond to the needs of families in the rapidly growing outer suburban areas of Adelaide. During 1991-92 the Children's Services Office constructed two new preschools at Woodcroft and Noarlunga Downs, as well as two preschools in country areas at Renmark and at Rendelsham. During 1992-93 three new preschools will be completed at Golden Grove, Andrews Farm (Munno Para council area) and Salisbury

Heights. Construction will also commence on the new preschool at Seaford. Through close involvement in the planning for new growth areas, the Children's Services Office seeks to ensure that preschool services are available at the earliest possible time for young families moving into new development areas. I think it has been a particularly important aspect in the development of new suburbs in metropolitan Adelaide that we are now able to provide for children's services programs at the time that they are most needed.

**Mr ATKINSON:** I refer the Minister to Child Care Services at page 167 of the Program Estimates. How extensive is the occasional care program?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** The occasional care program is very extensive. It all happened very quickly in South Australia, and I think a great deal of credit is due to Commonwealth-State relations in this area and the great advantage that exists in South Australia because we actually have a Children's Services Office, the one agency that can put programs such as this on the ground very quickly. The occasional care program targets families who have a parent or parents not in the work force. It has been called a 'now and then' care service because it caters for the needs of parents who need care on a non-regular basis. Parents make use of the service to attend courses, keep appointments, shop and generally have respite from the duties of parenting young children.

In particular, the occasional care service improves the quality of life of families who are physically remote from extended family members. When fully implemented, the program will provide occasional care services at 57 locations across the State: 40 of those services are already operational, 10 of the remaining 17 are expected to begin operations this calendar year and the final seven will be established in 1993, depending upon the availability of a number of new sites. The services operate for two to nine sessions per week depending on local needs. The program is funded from two sources. Under the national child care strategy, 24 services will be established with joint Commonwealth-State funds to cater for children over and under two years of age. Under the State social justice program, 33 services for children only over two years of age will be established.

The occasional care program is a major initiative under our social justice strategy and is targeted accordingly. It specifically targets areas in which social disadvantage is indicated by high numbers of low income, isolated, Aboriginal and non-English speaking families. Each of the occasional care services is staffed by a qualified child care worker and, in the case of the Commonwealth-State funded services catering for under two-year-old children, a second child care worker is provided. When the program is fully operational, it is expected to provide 2 924 sessions of occasional child care per week at 57 locations; 364 of these sessions being for children under two years of age. The occasional care services are located in Children's Services Office preschools, Education Department child-parent centres and, in keeping with the community orientation of the CSO, neighbourhood and community houses, 12 of which have been established in rural areas, and 18 rural services are planned overall.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I refer to page 167 of the Program Estimates where under the broad objectives and goals it is stated:

To identify areas of unmet needs and negotiate with the Commonwealth for funding to provide appropriate services. To administer and support before and after school care and vacation care programs for school aged children of working parents.

The Opposition has been contacted by people working in the children's services area who are concerned about delays in reaching agreement with the Commonwealth about the implementation of the national child care strategy and the fact that those delays are having a particularly negative impact on the out-of-hours care sector.

The Minister would know that, in response to public need, school councils are setting up and running unfunded services and that staff are accepting under award rates simply because of their dedication and a wish to keep these services operational. Unfortunately, a chicken and egg situation is developing, and I am told that services in poorer areas have had particular problems through being unfunded: they cannot offer fee relief because they are so poor, so use of their services is low despite the need for care. They have been told by the Children's Services Office that they are unlikely to qualify for funding in the future because their numbers are too low. In view of the broad objectives outlined in the Program Estimates, I ask the Minister: what steps is the Government taking to resolve the delays in reaching agreement with the Commonwealth in implementing the national child care strategy?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** We must put this into context. No other State has yet reached agreement with the Commonwealth in this area. The triennium that we are talking about will take us through to 1996, so the Commonwealth obviously will not bring on stream the total funding package in the first phase of this next three-year program. There must be some understanding in the community of the strategy enveloping that triennium and that fact that priorities for the allocation of the new programs have to be established.

It is interesting to note the clamour that has gone on, particularly around some school communities, to establish these programs and then to seek funding down the track in order for those programs to continue. I think it is wise for school communities which are seeking to establish these programs, whether to bolster their enrolments in some way or other or to provide a service that is genuinely needed, to enter into consultations with the Children's Services Office prior to embarking on the establishment of a program so that there can be some realistic understanding of whether funding will be available and the likely timeframe. There is nothing more distressing than to have children placed in a program in which relationships are formed between the caregivers, the children, and so on, and then to see the program falter and collapse because great pressure is put on parents who cannot afford to access those services. There has been a dramatic growth in these programs under the existing triennium arrangements with the Commonwealth and we are keen to see that continue, but it has to be done in a practical and realistic way in the community. I will ask the Director to comment further on this matter, as that might assist the honourable member.

**Mr Wright:** The Minister has already mentioned the growth rate of services in this area. The number of subsidised before and after school programs has grown from 16 in 1983 to 100 today. Those 100 represent 52

new services established since July 1989. In the last three years there has, in effect, been a doubling of the services in this State. That is an acknowledgment of the demand that the community is expressing for this kind of service, and I can appreciate the feelings of those communities that are waiting for a funded program.

We are keen to move ahead with the implementation of the national strategy as soon as the negotiations have been concluded. The national strategy will give us the opportunity again almost to redouble the level of service provision in this area, and that will go a long way towards meeting the demands from those communities to which the honourable member referred. It is a matter of carefully negotiating the arrangements with the Commonwealth, in cooperation with other States. It has been a lengthy process, which is hopefully drawing to a conclusion. We hope that we shall be able to start implementing the new programs in the not too distant future.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** I refer to the Program Estimates, page 166. Attention has been drawn to the inadequate and, in some cases, non-existent services for families with children with disabilities, particularly in the out of school hours care area. Will the Minister detail the initiatives that the Government plans to take in this area during 1992-93, the chief areas that have been targeted and the main areas of unmet demand?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** With the dramatic increase in these programs, as Mr Wright has indicated, has come the identification of some groups that find it difficult to access the existing programs. In the negotiations with the Commonwealth for the next triennium funding and development of this aspect of the agreement, we would want to have included some specific programs relating to that group of young people in the community. I will ask Mr Wright to elaborate on that matter.

**Mr Wright:** Once again the honourable member has raised an issue that has concerned us. We are conscious of the fact that there are families with children suffering from disabilities who have difficulty in accessing these programs. We have attempted to address the situation at least in part by developing a special program for vacation care which is called the intervac program. That program provides specific subsidies to vacation care programs which allow them to take on the extra staff needed to care for children with special needs, and we have been able to increase the allocation to that program this year.

However, it is acknowledged that there is a difficulty, particularly for older children. Whilst our vacation and outside school hours care programs are generally targeted at primary school age children up to, say, the age of 12, there are many children who are older than that who have special needs and who require some form of outside of school hours care. That is an issue we are addressing in cooperation with other organisations, particularly IDSC and the Health Commission. We have raised the matter with the Commonwealth as well. It is an area that we will continue to pursue in the future.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** With reference to page 165 of the Program Estimates, the Opposition has been contacted by people working in the children's services area who are concerned about the office's commitment to the planning process. They identify the fact that it is essential that services go where they are

most needed, that the CSO be accountable for the decisions it makes and that local government have a real say. That is very relevant in identifying need. I am advised that local government areas identified as high needs areas by the State Planning Committee have been passed over, whilst centres have been built elsewhere. A case in point is the City of Campbelltown; it was passed over and a centre was built in St Morris. I can understand, if parents are using the centres to enable them to go to work, that a centre closer to the city that picks up from a wider range is possibly better than one based on a perimeter area. Since that decision about St Morris in 1989, sites have been chosen in Golden Grove, Warradale and Adelaide for CSO facilities.

As the local member, I ask the Minister whether the Campbelltown/Thorndon Park area is still considered to be a high needs area? I suspect that, if there are vacancies in existing centres, it is for the reason I identified earlier, that is, that parents cannot afford the fees. Has there been a review of the high needs report that was prepared in the late 1980s and, if so, what public consultation took place during the review?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** I will make some introductory remarks and then ask Mr Wright to comment further. I have been critical of the process as well, because I believe there is not sufficient State input in this process. I have raised this matter with the Federal Minister. The State Children's Services Office is represented on the planning committee, as are a number of other organisations but, when one determines these issues by local government area, one must recognise that there are small council areas and large council areas, and there are great variations in provision. With regard to the honourable member's comment about the St Morris Community Child Care Centre, it is very close to the Campbelltown council boundary, and we could probably provide a location in the Campbelltown council area that is less appropriate than the one at St Morris, depending upon the catchment group we are trying to meet, and the honourable member referred to the routes that people take to and from work, and so on. It is somewhat of an imprecise art. I am not sure we could ever devise one that would be totally acceptable—perhaps not. We can perhaps improve on the existing mechanism. One way to do that is to have greater State input. I will ask Mr Wright to comment on the specifics.

**Mr De LAINE:** I move:

That the sitting of the Committee be extended beyond 6 p.m.

Motion carried.

**Mr Wright:** The planning process to which the honourable member refers was put in place for the last joint program. As far as I know, the high need areas identified during that process have not been changed since they were first announced.

To expand a little on what the Minister has said, we were not happy with the process we went through during that last program, and part of the negotiations with the Commonwealth for the new program has revolved around devising a new planning strategy. We have agreement with the Commonwealth for a process which I believe will be far superior this time around and which will allow for more equal contributions by local government and State Government with the Commonwealth in supervising the planning process. However, more importantly, it will

provide for a much greater degree of community consultation in the process of identifying high need areas.

We will be planning to sponsor jointly with the Commonwealth and the State a series of public meetings across the State where people can come to look at demographic statistics that derive from census data; discuss local variations; discuss where they perceive the situation will change in the next few years; and, generally, make a strong contribution to the planning process. In the past, there has not been any public access of any significance to that planning process, so this next round will prove to be far more satisfactory.

It will also be more satisfactory because people will feel that once the decisions have been made they have had an opportunity to input to them and, generally, they will be prepared to accept the outcomes. So, we are looking forward to a much more cooperative process and a process that should lead to better decisions in the next round.

**Mr BRINDAL:** The Opposition has been contacted by the Association of Child Care Centres, which has claimed that some CSO officers are taking what they describe as a belligerent attitude to some private child care centres, including entering centres unannounced, harassing centre directors and demanding to know where each staff member is employed and on which day and at which time. Is the Minister aware of those allegations that CSO offices have harassed private child care centre directors over levels of staffing and, if not, will he make inquiries and provide a report for the Committee?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** We would certainly want the honourable member to provide us with the specific information so that those allegations, which I very much doubt are true, can be checked. Not only do officers of the Children's Services Office have a right to enter premises and to ask questions of that type, but also they have a duty to do so. In fact, members of this place would be critical of them if they did not fulfil their duties.

This is an instance in which very young children are being cared for for long periods of time by caregivers, and there is a great duty resting in the Children's Services Office to ensure that those programs are provided at the appropriate standards. In addition to that, private child care providers now receive Government funding for the delivery of those services, so there is the additional requirement for there to be appropriate accountability for the expenditure of that money. If the honourable member provides that information, the specific details will certainly be investigated.

**Mr BRINDAL:** The Opposition has been contacted by the Director of a child care centre regarding Aboriginal or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled with kindergartens. The letter states in part:

Currently, centres who have Aboriginal children enrolled are disadvantaged. Staffing calculations are made on attendances, yet we know that attendance of Aboriginal children may be irregular for many reasons. These children who attend consistently cannot be replaced on the roll with other non-Aboriginal children just because they may attend more regularly. When the Aboriginal children return from an Aboriginal extended family funeral or other traumatic events they receive more attention, not less. The current system should be changed so that Aboriginal children get the support they need, and centres enrolling these children need special help rather than more deficits.

I might add that the director of the above kindergarten has had at any one time up to 16 Aboriginal children enrolled in the kindergarten. In view of the foregoing, what steps is the Children's Services Office taking to provide additional support to kindergartens which have fluctuating enrolments of Aboriginal children and which often need additional support when returning after culturally enforced breaks from the kindergarten? Also, how accurate is this year's proposed expenditure of \$605 000 on Services for Aboriginal Children (Program Estimates, page 161) given that last year's estimate of expenditure was underspent by \$86 000 or about 15 per cent?

**The Hon. G.J. Crafter:** My first reaction to the assertions made in that letter is that they have undertones of racism associated with them, which is quite unhelpful. Evidence to me from time to time is that Aboriginal students are quite regular attenders, particularly in the pre-school area, and some of the complaints are that they use services excessively and put burdens on staff. This is the situation where one cannot win. We would need to have a look at the actual realities, if someone wants to manipulate the staffing formula to reduce their own workload, to provide some additional services of a specific type or whatever else it is that is motivating the person to make the assertions that they make in that correspondence. There is no doubt that South Australia is the most effective jurisdiction in this country in targeting children's services to Aboriginal children.

It has been long left as a neglected area, that is, the great difficulties that Aboriginal families have in more remote communities, and sometimes in urban settings, in entering the door of a kindergarten in our community. There has been an invisible barrier there for many families, and the CSO has done a great deal to break down that invisible barrier and to make those children and their families welcome in kindergartens, to provide ethno-specific services that relate to those children and to give them the leg-up that we would want for them as they enter more formal education opportunities. I am not sure whether Mr Wright wants to comment further.

**Mr Wright:** The question provides an opportunity to raise more general issues in relation to services for Aboriginal children and families. I am sure the honourable member appreciates that this is an area of our work that we take very seriously. In fact, we have been very successful in obtaining the participation rates to which the Minister has just referred and, over a period of several years, we have been able to double the number of Aboriginal children under the age of five years using our services.

We have been able to do that through a range of measures, and the most effective seem to be the employment of Aboriginal staff, which has been a major focus for us, teachers and other staff; the employment of four full-time equivalent community workers to assist with the very situations that the honourable member's question hinted at; by targeting family day care as an area where Aboriginal participation could be increased; by the construction of a new facility at Port Adelaide (Kalaya Children's Centre), which will provide a major focus for early childhood services for Aboriginal children in the next decade; and by a number of other measures which I believe have brought us into a position where we

are providing leadership to the rest of the country in this area.

**The ACTING CHAIRPERSON:** There being no further questions, I declare the examination completed. In doing so, I thank the Minister and his officers for their attendance before the Committee. I also take this opportunity to thank Committee members for their spirit of cooperation, which enabled questions to be dealt with on time.

**Mr BRINDAL:** On behalf of all members of the Committee I thank the Minister and his officers, especially, for their attendance. I appreciate that it is difficult for them to appear at the end of the day, having

waited on everyone else, and that it intrudes on their time. In addition, I believe that the Committee and the Minister owe you, Madam Acting Chair, a vote of thanks for the very impartial and almost friendly way in which you have chaired proceedings today, which have been difficult at times.

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#### ADJOURNMENT

At 6.6 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Tuesday 22 September at 11 a.m.