

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 21 September 1993

## ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A

**Chairman:**

The Hon. D.J. Hopgood

**Members:**

Mr M.R. De Laine  
 Mr V.S. Heron  
 Mr C.D.T. McKee  
 Mr J.K.G. Oswald  
 Mr I.H. Venning  
 The Hon. D.C. Wotton

*The Committee met at 11 a.m.*


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 Environment and Land Management, \$38 772 000
**Witness:**

The Hon. M.K. Mayes, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr R.I. Thomas, Executive Director, Office of the Environment Protection Authority.

Mr D.R. Mutton, Chief Executive Officer, Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Mr M.F. Whinnen, Director, Corporate Services, Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Mr B. Leaver, Director, Resource Conservation and Management Division.

Mr M. Newland, Deputy Director, Resource Conservation and Management.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I declare the proposed expenditure open for examination. Does the Minister wish to make an opening statement?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** Yes, Mr Chairman. The Department of Environment and Land Management was established in October 1992 by an amalgamation of the former Department of Lands with the environment components of the former Department of Environment and Planning. Further changes comprised the transfer of the Aboriginal Heritage Branch and Aboriginal ranger training function to the Office of State Aboriginal Affairs and the establishment of an Office of Planning and Urban Development, which of course is under the leadership of my colleague. Recently, other responsibilities have been added to the Department of Environment and Land Management to create the new Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Establishment of the Department of Environment and Land Management was accompanied by a major internal reconstruction of the department aimed at obtaining maximum advantage from the combined resources of the new entity, to provide a better customer focus and improve the management effectiveness of the organisation as a whole. As a direct result of this reorganisation the programs of the department have changed significantly. The program 'resource conservation and management' now includes the former program 'flora, fauna and park management' (that is, the National Parks and Wildlife Service), plus 'coastal management', 'native vegetation management', 'pastoral management' and 'valuation services.' Similarly, 'community education and

policy development' incorporates 'conservation policy and program development', 'State heritage conservation' and the community awareness activities from other programs. 'Botanic Gardens' is now aligned with 'landscaping and garden maintenance' and the State Herbarium, while former Lands Department programs are contained within 'land services', which includes land titles and surveying, and 'resource information' embraces the control of land data plus mapping and aerial survey.

The Committee will notice that both the line and the Program Estimates and the Financial Statement in the Auditor-General's Report have been prepared to include a full year comparison on the basis that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources had existed since 1 July 1992 and with both ex-Lands Department and environment functions included. The alternative was to provide separate statements or results for each agency for each period, that is, July to October for lands and environment and then October to June for environment and land management. This would have meant a minimum of three separate statements being presented for the 1992-93 operations.

It was agreed that Parliament would be better served with the combined option whereby a comparison could be made, notwithstanding the fact that to prepare the last year's figures, that is, both proposed and actual, some pro-rating and apportionment has been necessary. Not only were actual and budgeted results spread between programs and, indeed, departments, but the 1992-93 program titles have also been changed in 1993-94, as I have just explained, to reflect better the new organisation. Consequently, in both the line estimates and program budget papers that the Committee has before it, any comparison between the '1993-94 proposed' and '1992-93' is impacted on by this decision.

Funding of environment and natural resources has benefited from the cost reductions and efficiency savings generated in the consolidation of the two previously separate agency functions. Neither agency drew any additional funding in 1992-93. The cost of the VSP packages used by Lands to rationalise programs was met from within the resources of the department. In total, 46 persons from the combined department accepted a voluntary separation package in 1992-93 and this facility has continued to be used in 1993-94 to restructure the organisation.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources, like all agencies, has been asked to share in budget reductions. However, funding of the highest priorities has been maintained at the highest possible level, having regard to the importance of the functions, their contribution to the core responsibilities of the department and their impact on customers.

Levels of service to the client public have not been jeopardised and, indeed, the consolidation has provided a window of opportunity to merge the respective regional offices previously operated by the two agencies, with an increased range of services and savings in senior regional staff. The rationalising of support services resources has also contributed to the saving emerging from the consolidation. Further significant savings are expected to result from relocation of the disparate functions in the city and near suburbs into consolidated office accommodation.

The funding of the new agency in 1993-94 reflects the forward financial planning of both previous departments. Members will recall that, at the Estimates Committee last year, the Department of Lands stated that its financial performance objective was to become financially self-sufficient, requiring a \$3.3 million or 7.5 per cent per annum turn about. This has been achieved. While overall funding for the environment functions has been reduced by approximately 5 per cent, this is predominantly in specific areas—for

example, a reduction in funding needed for native vegetation support funds.

The savings and flexibility available due to the merger of the two previous agencies has enabled the financial level of support given to the national parks function in 1992-93 to be continued in 1993-94 in real terms. In addition, the general reserves trust program continues to provide invaluable support to the national parks functions and the principle of user-pays continues to provide annually revenue in excess of \$3 million directly back into the park system enabling more client contact staff to be engaged and facilities to be improved.

Employment in the national parks system has increased over the past five years from 242 to 268 staff, an increase of 11 per cent. The National Parks Review Group is expected to report very shortly and to recommend on a broad range of issues that relate to reserve management. This budget provides additional funds for Government high priority issues, including metropolitan beach sand replenishment. A total of \$2.5 million has been allocated to protect the coast and restore sand to depleted areas of metropolitan beaches.

Regarding the Finnis Springs pastoral lease, funding of \$306 000 has been provided for the acquisition of the property by the Aboriginal Lands Trust for the Aboriginal community. In relation to the Botanic Gardens-Hackney depot redevelopment, an immediate injection of funds to commence work on the reinstatement of this area has been allocated with a continued funding commitment in subsequent years. The operation of the Natural Resources Council and the natural resources forums will continue and their operating costs will be shared by the participating agencies.

This financial year, 1993-94, is the final establishment year of the Environment Protection Authority and its related support units. In support of this function the Government has provided in excess of \$4 million, to which will be added fees of approximately \$2 million which, prior to the establishment of the authority, had been generated by the licensing activities of the Waste Management Commission.

These are some of the issues to be dealt with in 1993-94 by the new Department of Environment and Natural Resources. In addition to the above, the department will continue to provide the extensive range of services previously available from the former agencies. As well, it will actively pursue priorities related to ecologically sustainable development and an integrated strategic approach to the conservation and management of this State's natural resources of land, water, air, flora and fauna. This includes addressing issues highlighted in the State of the Environment report released recently: continuing the biological survey of South Australia, addressing a range of matters regarding animal welfare, finalising the review of coast protection legislation, improving the quality and coordination of spatial information, further developments in the computerised land titles system, the establishment of a cleaner industries demonstration scheme and many others.

The creation of the Department of Environment and Land Management in October last, and subsequently the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, has provided an early start for the new agency in its reorganisation and strategic planning. The results achieved to date, both in economic terms and in improved customer service opportunities, are extremely encouraging indicators for similar moves in other agencies.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** Before I ask the first question, I note on page two of the Minister's statement that,

as a direct result of the reorganisation, the programs of the department have changed significantly. Being given the responsibility of trying to determine which funding is where under the new arrangements, I can assure the Committee that it has changed significantly. I would be most interested to know just what the changes have cost the Government. If we look at the changes that have occurred in the department, we see that six months ago it was the Department of Environment and Planning, then it became the Department of Environment and Land Management and now it has become the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. I would be most interested to know what costs have been involved in those changes. I imagine that the department would be suffering quite an identity crisis also.

My first question relates to matters concerning recycling. Prior to the last election, we saw a number of commitments made which, to quote then Premier Bannon, would have turned South Australia into the waste recycling centre of Australia and provided Adelaide with a major paper recycling plant. In 1990, we saw the release of the recycling strategy for South Australia but very little came out of that strategy. Little if any action has been taken to address the anomalies in the Beverage Container Act as a result of the High Court findings in the Bond case, and there is still considerable uncertainty as to whether the legislation will be extended, and that in turn is causing considerable confusion with industry, local councils and so on.

Local councils, with the support of their communities, have gradually developed some excellent recycling and kerb side collection schemes, but this Government has done next to nothing to coordinate these programs. Because of the lack of Government commitment, we could finish up with a piecemeal approach to what is a very important issue, that is, strong community support, and I would suggest that that is what we have been trying to avoid over a long period of time—finishing up with a piecemeal approach.

The Government has done even less in providing initiatives to encourage markets for products made out of recycled materials and, on top of that, the Minister has attempted to blame local government for the lack of action when I would suggest that it is his incompetence and that of the Government which has brought about the lack of results to a large extent. I understand that for two months the Minister has sat on a report containing 17 recommendations from local government. I would be interested to know of the results of that report. Why did the Minister delay responding to a report from local government containing 17 recommendations in relation to future initiatives to be taken regarding kerb side recycling collection programs?

When the Minister finally responded to that report, what was his response? I understand that the matter of the levy was addressed in that report. What levy would the Minister see as being acceptable for Government to partially fund a kerbside recycling program? Further, what funds have actually been spent in developing kerbside recycling schemes in South Australia?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I think there are probably about 15 questions in the one, along with quite a direct comment from the member for Heysen, indicating a considerable misunderstanding of what is happening and what can happen with kerbside recycling and recycling as a whole.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The Chair did assume the member for Heysen was making his opening statement as well as asking his first question.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I took it as a question, and it is a pretty extraordinary statement from the member for Heysen; it reflects a complete lack of understanding of the situation in terms of recycling and what we confront in this State and nationally. There is a national approach to this matter, and it clearly involves direct local government input. Indeed, local government has to be involved in kerbside recycling and collection. Without local government's direct involvement there will be no successful recycling program in the complete sense. Because of the frustration I have had in getting the LGA to come to a position on this matter, I think that we ought to consider some other options which might involve bringing private contractors into the environment to do the work that would normally and should properly be that of local government.

I am not the only one who has been very critical of local government. I was recently at the launch of the northern recycling program where the principal officer involved—and I would be happy to share the comments with the Committee—made a damning comment on the LGA's failure to pick up and run with the ball on this matter and address it in a comprehensive way. The remarks of that person who, I think more than anyone else in South Australia, has been instrumental in putting in one of the cheapest, most efficient and probably the most successful recycling programs—that is, collection and product completion (putting the products through a recycling program), reinforced my concerns and my frustration. The member for Heysen was also present at that launch.

We are faced with a situation where unfortunately the LGA on this occasion sadly has not exhibited leadership. It has forced individual councils to make their own decisions and run with them as local councils. In my opinion that is inefficient: it is certainly not the preferred option or model. The City of Adelaide has certain advantages over other cities in Australia to do these things, and the model being promoted by this Government picks up the national standards and uses them in a city-wide program which can then spread right throughout South Australia. It is unfortunate and rather sad that the LGA has not involved itself. There have been ongoing negotiations between my officers, the Director of our EPA and other officers of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, but they have constantly been frustrated by the LGA's lack of leadership in this area. Local councils are unfortunately having to run with this matter themselves, and, in my opinion, that does not lead to efficiencies.

If we look at the models around the country and see what has happened in other States we can see that local government has actually taken the initiative. In Brisbane, Perth and Sydney, local government has taken this initiative, and there are a number of reasons for that. I have had the advantage of speaking with the Chief Engineer, Steve Adams, from the Greater Geelong Council, whose collection and recycling program has distinct advantages and cost savings for local government. He explained to me that from their experiences the recycling program they have implemented does not involve a subsidy from the EPA to the council in terms of collections: it involves a come-back of EPA subsidies as a levy of between \$2 and \$3 per tonne.

That comes back in the form of capital support for recyclers and collectors and other sections of the recycling industry. The council actually makes a saving: as he explained to me, in one area the council has actually reduced its running costs on about 700 000 homes and units from about

\$240 000 per annum to between \$130 000 and \$140 000. That includes a 6¢ subsidy per collection per household for collecting recyclable material such as plastic and glass. The council takes everything; it collects the whole lot. So, he said that the council makes a direct saving from being involved in this process.

We have been discussing with local government the provision of a subsidy in the establishment of the recycling program. Local government wants a subsidy for collecting those items. That is not consistent with what occurs in Victoria. The advantages will come back to local government; there will definitely be a saving, because the council will collect less so-called non-recyclable garbage, and that will take a load off its programs and, indeed, trucks. The Geelong council now uses fewer trucks to collect the non-recyclable garbage that still goes to land fill. If we look at the models around Australia we will see that we are dragging the chain. State Government is not dragging the chain; it is local government or, if I can be more direct, the LGA, as has clearly been outlined by the officer responsible for establishing the recycling program for the four northern councils: Munno Para, Salisbury, Elizabeth and Gawler.

Clearly, the member for Heysen does not understand the mechanics, the technicalities or the economics of the recycling industry. We want for this State a clear and State-wide policy to cover the full cycle of all products so that local government can operate on a scale and with a degree of efficiency that will provide the best benefit to the consumer. In my opinion, that will entail the setting up of a program that includes a variety of collection depots and other programs that are contributed to by the whole of local government with the involvement of every local government authority in the city and those in the country which we believe are in an appropriate position to be involved.

It is important that we see the full picture. The State Government is not in a position to step in and do this. Local government promotes itself as the sector of government that is closest to the people. It is involved at the local level in primary issues, such as rates, rubbish and roads. If that is the responsibility and charter of local government, in my opinion it has the onus to become involved. Some councils have taken that initiative, and I congratulate them. Unfortunately, however, there is a lack of consistency between councils. Marion council's program differs from that of the northern councils, and the programs proposed by Tea Tree Gully and other councils differ again. So, this situation will contain inefficiencies unless we have a city-wide scheme, and that is what we are encouraging.

I am not sure to which report the honourable member refers or whether I have touched on all the issues that he raised in his opening question. There is no report; I am not dilly dallying with a report. There have been negotiations on an ongoing basis between my officers and the LGA. The fumbling of the ball and the incompetence is not in my court. That is reinforced by, as I have said, an independent comment from a person who is deeply involved in these issues and who established the northern region recycling program. It is in the LGA's court. I am not accusing local government; I am saying that the LGA must pick this up and run with it.

Members of the LGA can run around and say that it is my fumbling, but we are up to 8 years behind other States in Australia—not because of the State Government's failing to promote it but because local government, which has the primary responsibility for rubbish collection, has not picked up the ball and run with it as strongly as it could.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I do apologise to the Committee if what was intended to be a helpful statement from me was slightly misleading. I was trying to convey to the Minister and to the Committee that my understanding was the member for Heysen was both giving his opening statement and asking a question. I point out that that was entirely in order.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** The Minister has not really answered any of the questions I have asked. He referred to the report that I brought to his attention and said that there is no report, and he said that he is having ongoing discussions with the Local Government Association. I have been told—and I have it on very good authority—that the Minister received a report containing 17 recommendations from local government with regard to future initiatives and that the Minister sat on it for two months before responding. The Minister is saying that there is no report. I believe there is a report, and I want to know how the Minister responded to it.

I understand that the matter of a levy was referred to. Does the Minister believe that it was acceptable to the Government that a levy be included? What levy would be acceptable to the Government to fund partially a kerbside recycling program? What funds have been spent in developing kerbside recycling schemes in South Australia? I would suggest that, while the Minister is prepared to blame local government, the State Government needs to play an important coordinating role if this State is to tackle recycling. I refer in particular to kerbside recycling programs, which have been promised since the 1989 election.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I repeat that there was no report. I think the honourable member is referring to some proposal that was put forward by the LGA. It is not a report. The member can carry on as much as he likes. It was put to us, and we responded on two occasions. That is part of what the LGA put forward; it was part of the negotiations. That is it in a nutshell. In Victoria, the levy, which is one of the matters for discussion, does not go directly into funding councils to be involved in collection, but it is part of the process of putting capital investment into the recycling program, and that has a lot of merit. One of the things that local government is pressing here through the LGA is a refund from the taxpayer, via the levy, for rubbish collection.

I will use the example of Geelong. It is one of the most successful schemes in Australia, and it has been running for eight years. It has a 91 per cent community participation rate, and it covers an area involving about 300 000 people. Local government there receives a benefit from being involved in recycling. It gets a return, because there is a reduced cost in waste collection. The subsidy is 6¢ per household. It is the recyclers who collect the material, so they win. They see this as a very positive program that their local community supports strongly. Together with local government, we have been negotiating for some time about an overall program. The LGA has put forward a number of options, and we have endeavoured to have the national standard, which was proposed as a benchmark, put in place in this city. The sum of \$306 000 has been put aside for the recycling program, and at present it involves three staff.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** What has been the success rate of the Government's purchasing policy in respect of recycled goods, which was announced by the Minister's predecessor? Will the Minister provide details of the value of recycled goods purchased by State Supply, and in particular what plastic products has it purchased? What funds have been spent in assisting industry with the manufacture of recycled products? In other words, what incentives are being

provided to encourage industry to produce recycled products? There is a significant amount of interest in respect of the introduction of plastic milk containers in this State. The other night the Minister voiced his concerns on air about the opposition to the introduction of the plastic container by the Mothers Opposed to Pollution group.

Has the Minister any further detail on that matter as it relates to that organisation? When is it anticipated that a decision will be made, recognising that, if plastic milk containers are brought into South Australia, they will have to be exempt from the beverage container legislation, which would require them to carry a deposit? I am particularly interested to know the success rate of the Government's purchasing policy in respect of recycled goods and the initiatives that have been shown and incentives provided by the Government to make that program work.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** That question is probably more properly directed to the Minister of State Services. I will be more than happy to provide further information on those aspects, if I can. I can make the broad statement that policies are in place to encourage the recycling of material and the use of recycled material within Government agencies. All those policies are available, and I would be happy to supply them to the honourable member.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** The policy is not working—that is the problem.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** That is your opinion: I have a different view. I would be happy to take the question on notice and provide the relative information later. The question of the application of the policy within each agency relates to my colleague, and I will direct it to my colleague. In relation to Mothers Opposed to Pollution and its opposition to plastic milk bottles, yes I was on radio, and I am very concerned about this organisation. At this stage I have no further information from inquiries that I have made; further information will be available in due course.

Mothers Opposed to Pollution ran a rather expensive advertisement which saturated one of the radio stations over the weekend. I have a reasonable link with the conservation movement, and I have never known a conservation organisation to have the resources to fly first-class around Australia, entertain office personnel and offer various luxury lunches and other enticements to Ministers' wives. It has access to enormous resources to promote a very lavish function focused on one aspect of the industry, that is, plastics. It seems to be very quiet and almost offensive. I recall reading a letter in the local paper attacking me for considering placing a 5¢ deposit on liquid paper containers.

It raises my suspicions, I have to say. I have a very grave concern for the public, because Mothers Opposed to Pollution is not an incorporated body. I first heard of this group when I appeared on radio and debated the principal, an Alana Maloney, who apparently is a Queenslander. She has no links with the conservation movement in Queensland and no track record. She dropped out of the sky overnight as the representative for this organisation. The group is inviting public membership at \$15 a touch, and I am told that there are 10 000 members. That would probably represent the collective membership of all conservation groups within Australia, including the Australian Conservation Foundation and all State councils. It is an amazing organisation, and I have been on the correspondence list for most conservation organisations—certainly my wife has—for the past 10 or 15 years. We have never heard of it, never seen it before. Suddenly, here it is promoting a policy to deal with plastics, which I am

more than adequately dealing with, I believe, in the process of discussions and negotiations with the dairy industry and the plastics industry. However, this group conveniently overlooks the problems that we have with liquid paper containers, which are a major problem in terms of our litter stream. It is something that I will address in a comprehensive way in dealing with this issue of containers.

I make no apology for my comments. The liquid paper industry has to carefully reflect on its relationship with this organisation, because one of my officers, whilst endeavouring to contact the Executive Officer of the Liquid Paper Manufacturers Association, discovered that its answering service number is the same as that of Mothers Opposed to Pollution. He phoned through on the same number to contact the Executive Officer of the Liquid Paper Manufacturers Association. One might say that that is a very large coincidence, but I would say that it makes me very suspicious about this organisation, particularly since its focus is to hammer one aspect of the industry, that is, plastic containers.

I urge members of the public to be very cautious, because if you become involved in any of these activities there is no protection for you as an individual. It worries me greatly that it is promoting itself, and I think rather spuriously, as an organisation that has the interests of the community as a whole in mind. Alana Maloney, who apparently is the principal officer of this organisation, accused me of having a low regard for women, or having no concern for the attitudes of women within the community.

I assure Ms Maloney that I do have a great concern about that, and that is why I have taken the position I have with the plastics industry and the dairy industry. In fact, I have put on file in this place an amendment to the EPA Bill that will give me as Minister the authority to ban the use of plastic containers for white milk. If that is not a statement or a declaration of my position on this, then I have never seen one. Officers of my department have been deeply involved in negotiations with the dairy and plastics industries, looking at the whole recycling issue with regard to plastics, and particularly HDPE, for white milk.

I have put my score card up there, and I have laid the cards on the table. I am certainly very suspicious, and I repeat my warning to the public: be very cautious before becoming involved with organisations which do not have a track record or do not have a history that one can relate to. Those with a proven track record in this area have some association with the Conservation Council, ACF, Wilderness, and so on. They have credibility and can stand by that. However, an organisation that suddenly drops in from Queensland, has no history and is focused on one issue and writes some very strange letters to the press focusing on the evils of plastic while ignoring the impact of liquid paper containers on the environment makes me a little worried, and I restate my original caution.

I do not retreat from my earlier statements. I would say to anyone who is connected with the Liquid Paper Manufacturers Association who is also linked with Mothers Opposed to Pollution and is trying to promote a particular sectarian view that they should be ashamed of themselves. Of course, there are many ways that money can be fed through to spurious or, I guess, front-running organisations. It does not have to be through direct cheques; they can go through PR companies and any other means to fund an organisation like that while maintaining arm's length involvement. I would ask the honest manufacturers—and I am sure that is the case with the overwhelming majority in the liquid paper manufacturing

industry—to take steps to eliminate these people from their organisation, to have them removed, so that we can deal with this as an honest and proper debate within the community. We do not want to be misled and have the agenda changed by organisations who want a particular outcome that suits their purpose and not the overall well-being of the community.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** I have a supplementary question. On a number of occasions the Minister has mentioned the Geelong recycling system. While listening to the Minister on the radio the other evening I gained the impression that he was tending to push that particular system. I point out to the Minister that HDPE plastic can and is being recycled in South Australia at the moment. In fact, Rib Loc of Cavan freights HDPE material from Melbourne into Adelaide to make piping and other products. I also understand that Plastics Granulating Service at Kilburn can turn HDPE into pellets, etc. I just wonder why the Minister is placing so much emphasis on this Victorian company and the Victorian system, rather than recognising what can and should be happening in South Australia.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I am not focusing on Victorian companies. I am encouraging South Australian companies, and I want to see South Australian companies do it. I think all of the equipment used by the Geelong collectors for recycling is South Australian made. In fact, the Victorian company, Hayes and Son, which does the majority of collection of all materials, bar newsprint (which is collected by another local collector), uses and promotes South Australian machinery around Australia. Mr Joe Sweeney has given advice on a number of recycling schemes, and he has used a South Australian company and its equipment, part of which he has modified over the years to be very efficient and very cost-effective in packaging materials ready for processing by recycling companies.

I use Geelong only as a model in respect of kerbside collection and processing. There are enormous problems in Geelong with respect to recycling HDP—not the clear HDP or the plastic labelled HDP, but paper labelled coloured HDPE, which contains household detergent, shampoo, and so on. They had a problem with their recyclers in Victoria taking coloured and other labelled containers, other than the plastic labelled product, and that is a warning for us. I am aware that Rib Loc in South Australia is doing a fine job and that it takes quite a deal of interstate HDPE. I want to ensure that there is support for it to continue to have success where it uses that for various things like pipe lining and so on.

That would involve a continuation of its programs and strong support by a mechanism within the plastics industry in this State. I am not just talking about the high density polyethylene (HDPE) white milk product container but also the other HDPE containers which are used extensively throughout the South Australian community to present these products.

I support very strongly the continuation of our local companies, and there are several, for example, Rib Loc and there is another at Woodville that does granulating and produces a variety of products from that. I want to encourage them; I want to put in place a scheme. I have no intention of asking the Victorians to come over here to run the South Australian scheme.

However, what I have done is to look at what I see as a very successful scheme which has been going for a number of years and which has invented the wheel and encountered the problems. I am sure any member would be most welcome

at the Geelong recycling facility and I am sure those involved would share any information, because they are very hospitable. In fact, the local Liberal MP was there when I went, along with the recyclers, representatives of local government and the collectors. It was a very useful experience for me and it gave me a number of pointers. Most of those people have been involved around Australia in advising local government authorities and other private companies on the sorts of pitfalls and potholes they encountered on the way.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** I refer to national parks, because the management of our parks and reserves under the National Parks and Wildlife Act is a disaster. Obviously from the Estimates it will continue in that fashion in 1993-94. I hasten to add that this is the fault of not the dedicated staff but rather the lack of resources provided by Government over the past decade. We now have over 20 million hectares under parks and reserves. While there have been changes to the names given to those who work in these parks, the cold hard facts are that the staffing levels are an absolute disgrace.

As far as endangered species are concerned, in the past 10 years we have moved from having 43 species of marsupial either threatened or extinct to 66 either threatened or extinct, and at the present rate of progression all our marsupials will be threatened or extinct within 12 years. I would suggest that this means that we are looking at one species threatened every four or five months—twice the rate of loss of the previous 10 years—which means, in turn, that our present methods are losing our species at a rate never before imagined. We lost 43 species in the first 194 years of colonisation and 22 species in the past 10 years.

If we look at the major problems relating to pest plants and feral animals, again we see that the situation is totally unacceptable. We only have to look at the close metropolitan parks, which are weed infested. We can look at the problems with feral animals and compare the difference, for example, between the Gammon Ranges parks and the property next door to Arkaroola, which is a privately run park, to see the difference in problems being experienced with goats. There are very few, if any, goats on the Arkaroola property but a large number in the parks under the control of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

If we look also at rabbit control, we can see that the difference between what has been achieved on Arkaba Station, which is a private station in the Flinders Ranges, and the problems being experienced in the national parks is quite considerable. On top of this, of course, is the preparation of management plans, which are in no way keeping with up with the demand and many of which are not being adhered to.

The Minister has referred to employment in the national parks system increasing over the past five years from 242 to 268 staff. I would suggest that, if one compares the increase in the amount of land that has been purchased for national parks, one can see that it is still a very unsatisfactory level when one considers that we have fewer than 90 rangers looking after 20 million hectares: 128 personnel look after the parklands in just the City of Adelaide.

What funding is to be directed into dealing particularly with pest plant and feral animal problems in our parks and reserves, and how does that compare with the situation five years ago? What funding will be provided for the management of our national parks and reserves under the National Parks and Wildlife Act and how does that compare with the situation in the past five years? As I said earlier, we need to be aware of the significant increase in the amount of land under the control of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** Certainly, since 1984 and under your stewardship, Mr Chairman, we have seen a massive increase in the number of hectares that are part of our parks and reserves system. One has to remind oneself in the current economic climate that in the 1980s there was growth, growth, growth and everyone was part of it—at all levels of the community. Certainly, the private sector was probably—if one wants to put it that way—more profligate than anyone else in that period.

I think it was a very long-sighted move of some wisdom for the Government to initiate those steps back in the early 1980s to acquire parcels of South Australia of reasonable size for the benefit of the community as a whole. I guess one has to say that certainly in the current economic situation—and that is no different from the situation facing Victoria, New South Wales, Western Australia and Northern Territory—there is financial pressure on every national parks service.

In my opinion, it is much better to have that land under our management, under our control, than having some years later to try to chase it when it has been placed under further commercial pressure and distress. If one can in fact hold it and keep it for the community as a whole now, there would probably be an opportunity to retain the pristine nature of those areas of land. If it were to continue to be used for commercial purposes, we would quite obviously lose the value of it as a park in the real sense—as against perhaps a recreation park. We are retaining the park as an asset with its native flora and fauna. It is important for us to have that now rather than waiting or delaying until perhaps 1998 or 2020 and trying to regain and maintain the parks system. So, in my opinion, it is better to have it now than not to have it at all.

Yes, we are under certain financial pressures to provide increased services and there is no question that, with the increased leisure and activity time that the community has, more and more people want to use our parks throughout this State, and not only South Australians. One only has to go to the arid areas of South Australia this month or next month to see the numbers of interstate neighbours who come to use our parks system and who put it under a reasonable amount of pressure. Certainly, there have been increasing numbers. About 25 years ago in the Coongie Lakes and Mound Springs area one would rarely have seen a four-wheel drive of any sort from anywhere, let alone from Victoria, New South Wales or Queensland. So there is increasing leisure time and an increasing degree of affluence, which allows people from Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and other parts of the Eastern seaboard and, of course, South Australians, to go and enjoy that marvellous asset that we have retained through the wisdom of decisions that you, Mr Chairman, have made with another hat on. I congratulate you for it. I think it is something we will always cherish and has enshrined for our future something that perhaps the Europeans have lost and never will regain.

In the broad sense, in general response to the honourable member's question, we have seen the State take a responsible decision to protect and preserve for future generations those areas of land which are now, I believe, in a situation where they can provide for those future generations some example of what the original Australia was like certainly prior to European settlement of this country. The area has grown significantly: I can see that. It has gone from about 3.8 million hectares in 1984 to 20 million hectares in 1992-93, as the honourable member has said. Staff numbers have increased. We have now gone from approximately 240 full-time staff to 268 in 1992-93. Of the total staff base of about

365, totally park related, 87 per cent are field based. Almost 90 per cent are out in the field, in the parks, offering all that information to the community and protecting what we have there.

The reason for the parks review, which has been under the guidance of the CEO, Mr Dennis Mutton, is to actually give us a better picture. I have heard over the years, in my previous occupation when I was responsible for looking after the wellbeing and welfare of the staff of those parks areas (this goes back to the 1970s), of accusations from both sides of the House that there were not enough staff in the national parks. It is almost insatiable, I guess. The demands can be totally elastic in the sense of what one can provide in the way of services to the community. You could look at any level of staff being well occupied in preserving some of the most minute aspects of our parks and reserves system. Reality suggests that we need a full and complete picture of that. That is why the parks review was initiated—to get a better picture and complete understanding of where we are. We can direct our energies and resources to providing a better service to the community.

There were 135 submissions from the community to the parks review, and wherever I have gone in talking to those involved—and believe me there is a huge community interest in our parks, as a consequence of more disposable income and greater leisure time; people are very interested to see this—I have found that the majority of them support my general contention. It is better to have it under our management now so we can debate the issue than to lose it forever and never recover it.

With regard to the endangered species and the threats that are occurring, I will refer to Mr Bruce Leaver in a moment, but in relation to the overall position, the major periods of extinction of mammals since European settlement was in the late 1880s to the 1920s, as I am sure you are aware, Mr Chairman. It is important to note that. That is when there was major agricultural expansion throughout this State. My forebears took part in that and I have seen the consequence of where they lived, out of Burra, towards Terowie and up the Broken Hill line. Unfortunately, they had a vision about South Australia which equated to their English or German background, and we did not have the same environment which would sustain the sort of agriculture that they expected.

No species of vertebrate animal is known to have become extinct in South Australia in the past 30 years, although some local populations have disappeared, for example, the Flinders Island Tammar wallaby in the early 1970s. There have also been changes in status between endangered and vulnerable, and *vice versa*, as more information has become available on distribution and abundance. For example, a population of black flanked rock wallaby was recently located in the Lake Eyre Basin, and this population has been unknown to science for the entire period of European occupation of this continent. We have to put it into very careful perspective. I would ask Mr Bruce Leaver to add more detail to this reply.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I would point out that the Minister's answer has been quite comprehensive. I ask that specific details be kept to within reasonable bounds.

**Mr Leaver:** Some of the problems we are facing are obvious reflections of where we live. It is a very arid State. There has been a great deal of impact from European settlement on the native wildlife of this State following settlement. This has manifested itself mainly through the extensive populations of feral animals and weeds, both in our settled areas and in our more remote areas. By far the most

serious pest in relation to this is the rabbit, not only competing with native animals but also denuding native vegetation and preventing revegetation of these areas. As a consequence, they also support large populations of foxes and cats, which also impact adversely on our wildlife.

Until we come to grips with that very serious pest, reintroduction and revegetation programs would be largely a waste of time and money. With respect to the very large areas that rabbits infest—in particular I refer to the large areas of park and pastoral areas in the north-east—any on-ground physical control programs are a waste of time and money. The only possible prospect of control of this serious pest is biological control. South Australia was instrumental in putting the notion of biological control of rabbits on the Australasian conservation agenda, and we are becoming increasingly optimistic that current national research programs will bear fruit in the near future. For the first time, the prospect of controlling this serious pest will be before us. Then we can seriously start to address the issues of reintroduction of threatened species and stopping the continued degradation of the habitats.

I refer in particular to viral haemorrhagic disease, which is almost ready for release after extensive quarantine work in Victoria, and I understand there are successful programs in relation to the fertility control of mammal pests, in particular foxes and cats, which a bit further down the track will also see programs to biologically control these serious pests. Whilst our record as a State in terms of extinction of native animals is lamentable, the factor that has caused those problems and will continue to cause those problems is being addressed, and for the first time science is starting to provide a way out.

Native animals are not the only matter we are concerned about. Vegetation is a major issue. Again South Australia leads the nation in terms of legislation to control the clearance of native vegetation after the severe impact of agricultural land use over the past 150 years. Those programs again will take time to stabilise, particularly as those matters to which I referred regarding the impact of pests, not only in parks but also in agricultural areas, can be brought under some sort of control through the current biological control programs.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** Mr Chairman, I do not want to delay the Committee any longer because this is ridiculous: three questions in an hour. My specific questions have still not been answered, so I would like the answers to be provided on notice if that is possible. The questions that I asked were: What funding will be provided for the management of our national parks for 1993-94? How does that compare with the last five years? What specific funding is to be directed into dealing with pest plants and feral animals, and how does that compare with the last five years? I would appreciate receiving that information on notice, Mr Chairman.

**Mr De LAINE:** On page 88 of the Estimates of Payments the line 'native vegetation compensation fund' indicates a significant reduction in the payments to this fund: in fact, a reduction this year of something like \$6 million. What is the reason for the variation?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** In my opening comments I referred to native vegetation retention and management in terms of a reduction in allocations as a consequence of our achievements. The administration of the Native Vegetation Management Act and the Native Vegetation Act, which was introduced in 1991, has been allocated \$8.38 million for 1993-94. The total cost of this initiative to 30 June this year has been \$63.675 million. With that, we have achieved the

retention of 520 540 hectares of remnant native vegetation, and there are now 692 heritage agreements within the agricultural lands of South Australia.

Costs are reducing as the number of outstanding applications to clear is reduced, so that is a positive flow-on. The height of the activity was at that time when you were the responsible Minister, Mr Chairman, and had the custody of the legislation, particularly the Native Vegetation Management Act 1985. The projected 1993-94 total of \$8.83 million will be allocated along the following lines: just over \$500 000 to the native vegetation fund for research into native vegetation and management of heritage agreements; and \$500 000 for fencing and existing heritage agreements. Just over \$7.5 million will be paid to landholders who have been refused permission to clear vegetation under the Native Vegetation Management Act 1985. The commitment under that Act is declining because no clearance applications could be lodged after 13 February 1991, and a landholder, once refused clearance, had two years from the date of refusal to lodge a claim for financial assistance, as the Committee would be well aware. About 80 cases where a landlord may obtain assistance are still valid. So, I hope that explains the reason for the variation from the previous year in respect of the native vegetation retention fund.

**Mr De LAINE:** Page 212 of the Program Estimates indicates that a management plan for oyster growing areas has been completed. What was the main thrust of that management plan and what are the details of it?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** Significant emphasis has been placed on this issue, which is necessary because there is enormous potential for South Australians to be involved in the industry and enjoy the benefits of it. As a former Minister of Fisheries, I had the opportunity, and to some extent the pleasure, of being involved in a number of initiatives being undertaken by South Australian business people. Areas for aquaculture development are released following the preparation of management plans, in which I identify areas suitable for development. It is important to look at the Government's approach to this matter from the point of view of inter-agency relationships. The plans provide a means of canvassing public views on the alienation of waterways, which is a contentious issue. When I was Minister of Fisheries I recall an area near Port Lincoln concerning which a great deal of anxiety was expressed by the local community, which had come to use the Boston Bay region. If the member for Flinders were here, he could give chapter and verse on his experience of that complex and difficult issue. People had genuine views and very reasonable concerns about alienation of, as well as access to, their waterways. Balanced against that was the need for us to support a growing industry: a cash industry which brings quick returns to South Australian investors from markets that pay a premium for a clean, high quality product, which we can provide.

I am sure all members have had the opportunity to look at the sorts of situations that face aquaculture farmers in Europe, Asia and the United States where the comparison is quite staggering in terms of finding non-contaminated waters where aquaculture can in fact be promoted. In Europe it is just about impossible, and it is becoming increasingly difficult in North America, as well as the Asia-Pacific area. We are in a sense a haven, a safe spot where we can happily support aquacultural industries, and we should be doing so wholeheartedly. I know that my colleague the Minister of Primary Industries and I have very similar views on this matter, and I guess 3½ years as Minister of Fisheries gave me

exposure to the people involved. I also have local constituents who are builders and manufacturers who are actually diversifying into aquaculture at all levels, whether it involves oyster, marron or anything else, and it is becoming a significant industry in its own right. We must have in place mechanisms to deal with that; I think we have gone about it in the right way and our EPO will be constantly working with OPUD to ensure that.

If we look at the development of those management plans it is important that we see a coordination between our agencies—OPUD particularly with Environment and Natural Resources and Primary Industries—so that we have those three organisations working closely to ensure that communities understand what is going on; that there is a clear direction, a policy, involvement and a certainty for those people who are going to invest. Local councils are also invited to participate in the planning process so that on-shore issues can also be dealt with at the same time. Draft management plans have been available for a variety of areas: for example, Kangaroo Island, Streaky Bay and Franklin Harbor. We have seen that ongoing process develop.

The Port Lincoln aquaculture management plan was completed in February this year. We are addressing this matter so that we can capture and be a part of it and work with industry to develop it for the benefit of the whole community. We are looking at the major aquaculture regions of this State. My colleague the Minister of Primary Industries is heavily involved in this matter. Whilst he was overseas he promoted it with our international friends who were very interested in not only the outcome of the project but also the opportunity for investment. Our situation is unique. One only has to visit the Mediterranean or the North Sea to see 'contaminated water' signs on the waterways. The prohibition on aquaculture that that causes is staggering.

So, a mechanism is in place. I believe that this matter is being handled very efficiently. The feedback I have received from people I know who are involved in aquaculture in this State is the same. Advice from all agencies has been first class. There is an ongoing commitment by the officers of the Fisheries Division of the Department of Primary Industries and my officers in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to ensure the growth of the industry, protection of the environment and the provision of opportunities for members of the local community to have a say and to understand what is happening around them.

**Mr De LAINE:** I refer to the proposal to establish a waste recycling facility on the corner of the Old Port Road and Tapleys Hill Road at Royal Park. This proposal has raised the anger of nearby residents, quite a number of whom occupy houses near the site of this proposed facility, in both my electorate and the electorate of the member for Albert Park. A series of environmental problems have been highlighted across a range of issues—in particular, concerns about the disposal of waste water containing soluble compounds that will be flushed into the open drain on the Old Port Road and from there into West Lakes and the Port River. What power does the Minister have either to prevent the establishment of this proposed facility in this location or to enforce tougher environmental conditions on its operations should it go ahead?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** Since I answered a question by the member for Albert Park in this place regarding this proposed facility, there have been continuing discussions with its proponents. One thing that concerns me in terms of the overall picture of recycling in the western suburbs—and this



would affect the electorate of the member for Price as well—is the likely use to which this facility would be put. The member for Albert Park focused on the potential hazards to members of his community from the likely contamination from any overflow that might occur into the Old Port Road drain which would then flow into West Lakes. Of course, that would not be acceptable to my department. However, my overall concern is whether local government authorities will use the site or participate with this proponent in the recycling program. There are some question marks next to that already. One must ask: will this proposal go ahead or is there a doubt?

The South Australian Planning Commission is currently considering this proposal and has sought comments from the relevant agencies, and that includes agencies under my responsibility. We will provide those comments. A couple of weeks ago I made the comment, and I will restate it now: if this proposal does not meet environmental tests it will be opposed. I make that quite clear: if the proposal cannot be adapted or altered, that may spell its death knell. I will encourage the establishment of recycling programs, sites and collection locations throughout Adelaide, but they must be environmentally sound and acceptable; they cannot be allowed to contaminate our environment. If there is any risk to the environment from this proposal, I will oppose it, and I expect that my officers will oppose it, and we will convey that opinion to the Planning Commission, which I hope will oppose it as well for the sake and safety of residents in the area and the community as a whole. It will be opposed if there is the potential for consequential contamination of any other location. If he wishes, the member for Price can convey to the member for Albert Park my concerns about this matter and the fact that it is being addressed. The matter of noise, which also appears to be a major problem, will be addressed in our report to the Planning Commission.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** Two proposed developments have caused considerable interest and concern because of the impact they would have on national parks: first, the development at Wilpena; and, secondly, the Tandanya development on Kangaroo Island. Recently, in a ministerial statement, the Minister said:

... the lease, amongst other matters—  
referring to Wilpena—

prescribes the resort of a size described in the second schedule of the lease must unless otherwise agreed between the parties in writing be built by 30 June 1994. Failure to comply with this requirement would be a nominated breach of an essential term of the lease and would therefore render the lease liable for cancellation.

What progress has been made in recent discussions with the Ophix Finance Corporation regarding the development at Wilpena and what difficulties, if any, are they experiencing with completing the project by 30 June; and has there been or is there likely to be an agreed variation to the Ophix development lease agreement at Wilpena to extend the development period beyond 30 June 1994?

Regarding the Tandanya development, will the Minister provide an up-to-date report on the current situation and, in particular, say whether the impasse between the Native Vegetation Branch and other agencies regarding the future of the project has been addressed?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** The honourable member correctly quoted from my ministerial statement regarding the Wilpena development. All I can say at this stage is that there are continuing and active negotiations with the Ophix proponents; and I understand that those negotiations are very positive. I cannot say any more about that at this stage. I have

put on record the situation regarding the requirements of the project on which the honourable member has correctly reported. Options are available. If the requirement that the development be completed by 30 June 1994 is not met, the Government can terminate or extend the lease to allow the continuation of the development.

At this stage no consideration has been given to Wilpena, and the reports I have received from the discussions are quite positive. With regard to Tandanya, the discussions that are going on between Systems One and a variety of Government agencies are again quite positive. The honourable member mentioned the issue of the resolution of differences of opinion about a variety of aspects involving the question of native vegetation. I recall that about six months ago his Leader attended a meeting on Kangaroo Island, with the Kingscote district council and a variety of other interested parties, where a resolution was proposed that the Native Vegetation Act be amended to allow this development to proceed.

I am vehemently opposed to opening the Native Vegetation Act in the way proposed by this meeting, and I might say that the Leader of the Opposition agreed with the proposal. In my humble view, I would see that as a violation of the Native Vegetation Act and something that would, for ever and a day, be a detriment and a cross to be borne. It is quite staggering to suggest that the Native Vegetation Act be tampered with in such a way. That sort of contribution, which was made from the minutes of that meeting (which were circulated quite widely to the community), has spirited a number of questions from the conservation movement in the public domain.

That proposal as a solution to the Tandanya development is totally unacceptable to me and to an overwhelming majority of my colleagues, given the great success the Native Vegetation Act has had in preserving what little vegetation remains in this State for our benefit and that of future generations. I find that solution quite staggering. It would worry me greatly if the Leader were to become Premier and we were faced with developments of this sort, which would necessitate such a variation to the Native Vegetation Act.

Positive discussions are going on between officers of all the agencies involved with the Tandanya development, and I hope that those discussions reach a satisfactory resolution in the near future. At this stage, I am not able to divulge the progress of those discussions, because they are confidential. Of course, they involve Systems One and its associates, and I respect that it has shareholders and others to whom it must report, and it would be inappropriate and improper for me to divulge the progress of those discussions. However, I am encouraged by what I hear from the officers involved.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** Could the Minister provide information regarding the Government's financial commitment to funding the Lake Eyre Basin Joint Government Task Force previously announced by the Minister? What funding has the Government sought from the Commonwealth Government or that the Commonwealth Government will make available for the preparation of a joint study and any other purposes associated with the listing? Who has the Minister or the Government invited to represent the State Government on the joint study?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** The funds for the Lake Eyre basin study have been set aside. I am still in the process of finalising discussions with the Commonwealth Government as to what it will contribute to the overall study. We believe that the study will take two or possibly three years to obtain

a complete picture of what is happening in the Lake Eyre region, that is, to get a complete picture of the environmental values and the economic contribution that that region makes to the South Australian and Australian economies. I will not put a final figure on it, because I intend to have further discussions within Government about the absolute figure that we will be able to devote from the State Government this year, but it will amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars.

I hope a figure of some sort from the Commonwealth Government will allow us to commit ourselves to the study which we as a State Government have committed ourselves to. That is different to that which the Federal Government committed itself to, which was a fast-track process to have the Lake Eyre region listed for interim world heritage. I am not able to put an exact figure on it, but it is certainly more than \$200 000. Any further contribution will depend on the negotiations with my Commonwealth colleague.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** Who has been invited to represent the State on the joint study, or has that not yet been determined?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** We have not finalised the task force. Of course, it will involve scientific officers from both within and outside Government. It will involve those people who have access to that scientific and economic information, which we will put together with the information that currently exists. I am sure a great deal of information is available from a variety of sources, such as the mining and pastoral industries and the conservation movement. That information can be collated to give us a complete picture of the Lake Eyre region. We have in mind the sorts of people whom we will recommend for the task force. They will be focused technical and scientific people who have the skills, knowledge and background to be able to bring together this information.

We propose to establish an advisory group to oversee the whole operation and give those interest groups, whether they be Aboriginal, pastoral, mining, tourism, community, church or conservation, whatever their background, the opportunity to overview what is happening and to provide information that will benefit the whole process. I have outlined the sorts of people we have in mind, but we have not finalised it. We are not far away from doing that. I want to get in place the financial structure before we make any announcements on who will be involved.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** On a couple of occasions, the Minister has indicated his personal interest in the saving of individual trees, and I note with some interest that his colleague the former Minister appeared as large as life in the *Sunday Mail* last week having saved a further tree. Will the Government introduce legislation to protect individual trees and, if so, when will it be introduced and what form will it take?

Further, talking about the saving of individual trees, will the Minister investigate the removal of a heritage tree, which I am told was between 80 and 100 years old, from the grounds of Adelaide Oval about four weeks ago? My inquiries indicate that the tree had some white ants in it, but there has been some speculation about that, and I have some concern because I am informed that it just happened to be right in the centre of an area that will be required for the staging of the Madonna concert.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I will endeavour to keep my answer brief. This is something that I have a great deal of fondness for, and I am sure the member for Heysen does as well, given the submissions he has made to me over the period that I have been Minister. Certainly, I will investigate

the matter urgently. In relation to the information provided by the member for Heysen, the argument that is often put up by people is that a particular eucalypt contains white ants. In fact, the advice that I have received over the years is that they live together quite handsomely and happily. Probably most senior gum trees, if I can describe them as that—those over 100 years of age—contain white ants. However, they enjoy a harmonious relationship with these trees. I believe our tree experts would quite easily discount any suggestion that a tree had to go because it contained white ants. Most elderly gums would probably have white ants in the pith, in the centre of the tree, yet the tree remains healthy.

If the city council has used that argument, it is fairly spurious, thin and transparent. If it has removed an 80-plus year old tree for the sake of the Madonna concert, I would be quite scathing in my comments, as I am sure the member for Heysen would be, of whoever made that decision. Quite frankly, those sorts of decisions just stagger me. I just cannot believe why people do that. You can use a tree in a very effective way at that sort of concert. I am sure people have used them in the past and will continue to use them as a viewing platform. Not that I would encourage that—and it is beside the point—but I will urgently investigate that matter and follow it through.

Just to give the honourable member a very brief overview, most of the State's significant trees have been included on the State heritage register. Of course, it can always be improved, and I will investigate any suggestion that trees have been missed and should be on the register. I would encourage all members to be vigilant in looking around their own electorate to find trees that they or their constituents feel are significant and should be on the State heritage list, and we will respond to that instantly.

Under the new State Development Act we have given local government the power to list local significant trees as local heritage items. I would encourage that. I have gone one step further than that, in the sense that I have asked the Minister of Planning and Urban Development to look at undertaking a significant tree survey in a broader context to look at what we call the canopy aspect, not understating or overlooking the under-cropped effect that happens.

I can recall as a child looking over the vista of the City of Adelaide from Windy Point, and there were not too many trees, certainly in the southern and south-western regions of the city. That has changed significantly. We now have a green canopy over the city, and when you take people to various vantage points—whether it is Windy Point or Mount Lofty or anywhere along the foothills—you can see this magnificent, leafy city which is very significant in respect of the quality of the lifestyle we enjoy in this wonderful city.

I think we as a community have to preserve that. That does not mean that you do not chop down your lemon tree, as the member for Hayward suggests in his most recent piece of outrageous publicity. I am quite happy for people to move their trees around and ensure that they have landscaping that suits their social and domestic needs. The honourable member's comment was silly. Unfortunately, that sort of public comment undermines the seriousness and the value of the debate. What I propose is—and I would propose it to the Minister and to my own local government authority—that they look at the broader aspect of trees within our environment. It does not mean that, if your house is cracking, you cannot do anything about it. I can speak from experience in Unley because, unfortunately, I planted a gum in the wrong location. I extended my house and the impact of the addition

caused some cracking. It was only a young gum but I had to move it. I totally endorse people being able to do that in the freedom of their own home.

Unley Park has a magnificent environment for our native birds and provides a wonderful canopy. It is an exquisite area and one that must be enjoyed by all. In Heywood Park you get a real impression of what is available. Unfortunately, the area in which I live is not as generous with its trees as perhaps other areas, such as Malvern and Unley Park. People visiting from the country remark about the number of native birds that one hears in the mornings—and not just in spring. A variety of native birds can be found in the Unley area, including lorikeets, magpies, wattle birds and so on.

I want to ensure that we retain that foliage, that canopy, which attracts native birds and provides such a beautiful amenity. The magnificent trees in the Malvern and Unley Park areas contribute greatly to the value of those suburbs. I believe they add tremendous value to the properties located in that region. Of course, that is dollars in the bank in relation to those properties retaining their value, and of course increasing in value over time. That is because of the wonderful amenities that are available.

I believe that the Minister of Planning and Urban Development should work with local government and us to ensure that we have a comprehensive policy that looks not only at significant trees but trees collectively. One tree may not be significant, but a collection of trees within an area provides an important environment for the continuation of that sort of amenity, and it encourages and attracts native birds. That is what I am talking about. I am not saying that people will not be able to cut down their lemon tree or their liquid amber if it is in the wrong spot. I am saying that we should encourage people, where they do that, to replant in a better location. It is a moving thing rather than a fixed issue, and it is something that has merit.

**Mr McKEE:** I refer to page 216 of the Program Estimates, which indicates that the Environment Protection Authority intends to implement a cleaner industries demonstration scheme to provide assistance to industry for specific demonstration projects. How will this scheme be funded and what is it intended to achieve?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I thank the member for Gilles for his question, because it really is a very significant issue in the 1990s. I am sure all members in the Chamber are fully aware of the sorts of issues raised by constituents, and particularly now young constituents who may not be of voting age but who have an ongoing and growing interest in the environment. They are asking questions about cleaner production and best practice and all those things that to us have arisen only in the past few years. This sort of jargon is second language to them; it is nothing that they have not encountered. My own son is in a school that has an environmental education program. I guess that these sorts of questions are put not in the same eloquent way that some journalists pose them but they are placed on the agenda very clearly in terms of what we are doing about these things; why as a community are we not stepping in to address these overall issues?

From our point of view, the EPA is initiating a number of steps with a number of agencies. The program has to involve other agencies, as I am sure the honourable member appreciates. The Economic Development Authority and, of course, the Commonwealth Environment Protection Authority are involved. What we propose to do—and we are getting funds from those agencies—is to look at the cleaner production demonstration scheme, which forms the major part of the

program. Of course, the EPA will be assisted by CEPA, as we know it, and we have to bear in mind that there is a Commonwealth office and there will be a national Office of Environment Protection. The Commonwealth body that will be involved in this will have a direct interest in seeing this happen.

We have held four cleaner production workshops, and they were quite successful. There is a need—and I am sure that Mr Thomas would agree with this—for us to get clarification of these agencies. It is pretty easy for South Australian or New South Wales business people to understand that we have an EPA, but it is when the Commonwealth agency and the national agency step in that there is confusion.

The State and the Commonwealth are looking at case studies in local industry. So we are focusing on an area that is very relevant—that is, local industries—and not going away and looking at a national approach or focusing on the ‘big Australians’, as tends to be the Federal Government’s approach. Certainly, it has been criticised in the past for doing that.

We are looking at some further programs such as the cleaner production workshops. We were a little concerned about some of the ways in which the CEPA organisation came into this. We want to see it on a more local basis. We believe that it is important for us to be involved as a local EPA, having that first-hand contact, knowing our industry and having built up a relationship over the 2½ years that we have been involved in negotiations through the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. We think it is very important that local people understand what local industry has to confront. If we have someone from Canberra, with all due respect to our Canberra residents, they come in and have a different picture of what South Australia is and they do not have an appreciation of the local needs as such. They probably tend to put off side—and I hope that that is not the case—or to alienate our local industry to some extent.

The guidelines for the demonstration schemes have been developed by our EPO in conjunction with our Economic Development Authority and the Commonwealth. Of course, another important player in this is the South Australian Centre for Manufacturing and, not to be ignored, our E&WS Department as well. There will be a steering committee for the scheme.

The final guidelines need to reflect the desire for this scheme to complement the national scheme which is being established by the Commonwealth Environment Protection Authority and which promotes cleaner production. CEPA requirements are broader in scope and should be able to give a better application of the scheme. Discussions with the Commonwealth Government necessitated some significant modification to our guidelines. However, the essential objectives have been basically achieved and we are ambitious see the operational strategies of the demonstration scheme put into place.

A mixture of demonstration strategies is envisaged with appropriate financial support. The sorts of things we will be looking at will be: interest-free loans over 10 years for installation of equipment that is proven to be new to South Australian industry to demonstrate to similar industries the value of cleaner production processes; and partial funding of individual company assessments through engagement of independent consultants where appropriate to identify potential changes. In that situation, we would go in and do an assessment with the company and work with it. As I am sure the honourable member would appreciate, that requires a

great deal of trust in the relationship. Again, I stress that there is a need for a very close consultative collaboration between us and industry to achieve that. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry has been terrific in this; the cooperation and support of the General Manager has been first rate.

Industry is working it out: cleaner is smarter. You save money, you have cleaner production and you enjoy the benefits of that as they flow out. I am sure that all members would appreciate that what we can sell in this country, whether it be related to agricultural or manufacturing products, is cleaner production. We are much better off than Europe and North America but we do not really appreciate it. When we go away and talk to people, as members of this House do, we must constantly remind those people of what we have here. Europeans appreciate the situation; they have a very clear picture of Australia.

I was recently with the Director of the Department of Environment in Germany and in relation to native vegetation production he said, 'Please, for the sake of the world, for the community, keep and save what you have and institute the best environmental practices, because you are unique. We are not in that situation; we don't have those things you have.' They have major pollution problems with everything. I am sure that the honourable member will appreciate that Europeans use about three times the level of fertilisers and chemicals—pesticides—in farming areas than we use. In fact, it is probably more than three times; it is quite staggering.

This is all related, of course, to this ethos of being self-sustaining in periods of war. It goes back to the starvation people faced in the Second World War. Every country, including France and Germany, wants to be self-sustaining. That is lunacy in terms of what they are doing. They should be relying on countries such as Australia to provide that cheap agricultural product that we can do so well, so effectively and so efficiently and cleaner by a mile. Of course, the world would benefit if they did that. The bureaucrats understand it, but there is a very strong lobby, particularly the French farmers, as we are discovering in the current negotiations.

We have the opportunity to move down that path. As public officers and leaders in the community, we have a responsibility constantly to hit the button to tell our industry that the cleaner it is, the smarter it is, because we will reap the benefits of this in the long term. There is no doubt about it, in my opinion, and we must continue to promote it.

**Mr VENNING:** But our industry is going broke.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I hope not. I hope that the GATT agreement continues, irrespective of what the Irish Prime Minister thinks. I hope he is in a very small minority, along with his French counterpart, whom I once had the joy of meeting, and I will not go through that process again.

In summary, in terms of the cleaner production program that we are promoting, the scheme will also fund competent proposals aimed at commercialising waste minimisation technology, which has already been demonstrated successfully on a pilot scale. The potential for broad application throughout the industry sector will be an important consideration. As I said, that is a very significant part of the discussions that occurred between the Environment Protection Authority and other agencies. Negotiations are under way with the MFP to establish a cleaner production centre for the food processing industry in the United Nations environment program. That is progressing very successfully at the present time.

We are making significant steps in addressing this issue. As I said, that is the window of opportunity for us and we have to continue with that, particularly in food processing. We have a huge opportunity at which I think we can succeed.

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

**Mr McKEE:** My second question is in relation to beach water quality. I refer to page 216 of the Program Estimates. Will the proposed Environment Protection Authority have a role in assessing water quality at key public bathing spots? I understand that the Marine Environment Protection Committee, soon to be subsumed into the EPA, has done some work in that area.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** The honourable member is correct. The Marine Environment Protection Authority will be absorbed within the EPA. However, the work that it is doing in this area will continue until the new body comes to life. Consultations have been initiated with officers of the Local Government Association and other bodies on monitoring conditions of the marine and estuarine waters in South Australia. It is important that we look at what is being done to ensure the safety for our community of our coastal areas, particularly for our main bathing spots. There are so many in South Australia, as I am sure the honourable member is fully aware, that there has to be a fairly comprehensive approach.

The specific proposal is for standard bacterial tests at, I guess, the most popular bathing sites, on a regular program throughout each summer, with spot tests at selected high density shack sites. That will assure the community of appropriate safety so they can continue to enjoy our magnificent beaches in the summer and autumn months which bring so much relaxation to our community. It is important for us to be able to give that assurance. There are some other aspects which must be considered in dealing with this issue, and they include the disposal of plastic wastes, packaging, netting, oils and other things from our commercial fishery. The fishers are conscious of the need to care for the environment, because any impact that disturbs the sensitive ecological balance within the marine and aquatic environments can have a devastating impact on their industry and their individual incomes.

The Fishing Industry Council and the Minister of Primary Industries are represented on the Marine Environment Protection Committee, and rightly so, and they are involved in looking at these issues. We are committed, through the commission—which will be through the EPA—to develop an analysis of the problems across the State and to look at the code of practice to manage the problem. This will be implemented under the auspices of the EPA when it is established. It is a very important issue and something we have always taken for granted. It is something we cannot take for granted. We have to maintain ongoing protection for it so that we can continue to say that we have the safest beaches in the world.

**Mr McKEE:** If people are not already aware of the importance of this type of environment protection, one only had to look a couple of weeks ago at the ABC program *Two seconds to midnight*. If people had not been aware of the problem, they would certainly have become aware of the importance of environment protection if they had seen that program. With respect to page 214 of the Program Estimates, I ask whether the Ibis awards were run this year and, if so, what conservation projects were awarded prizes?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I know that this matter of the Ibis awards has been raised in the House previously, but I can provide some additional information. One has to focus on what has been achieved particularly in the rural community, and I had the privilege in my early career as a Minister to enjoy that portfolio responsibility and saw the Land Care programs being established. Some were well established but others were being established in our rural community, and I focus on the rural community. There were some outstanding examples involving people in communities such as the Clare-Blyth area. One outstanding program is being run there, and—

**Mr VENNING:** Magpie Creek.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** That is right, and the individuals involved are doing an outstanding job and are leading the way for the rest of the community. Not only are they satisfied with what they are doing to achieve what they have achieved but they are also going around the rest of the State supporting other communities who want to undertake the same essential and necessary programs. I commend those people. They were doing this before it became the popular thing in the rural community.

The retention of native vegetation has been a real highlight. It is part of our Government's program, and a considerable number of heritage agreements have been entered into between private landowners and the South Australian Government. I mentioned earlier that there were 692 agreements. The Ibis awards were sponsored by the Commonwealth Development Bank, being instigated by the department and managed through the Resource Conservation and Management Group. They have become well recognised both within South Australia and interstate as a prestigious award. They have been taken up very well by the rural community. It is just another way of reinforcing some of those outstanding works that have been undertaken by members of our rural community not only to preserve and ensure the productivity of their local environment but also to reinforce its value and ensure it is there for others to enjoy, not just washed away or swept away by the harsh northerlies that we quite often get.

The Ibis awards are given to primary producers in South Australia who have done the most for plant and native animal conservation on their properties as part of successful and sustainable commercial farming. I recall from my travels around the State that numerous people are heavily into this. I can think of personal friends on the Yorke Peninsula who, over the past 10 or so years, have been very vigorously and actively involved in plant and soil conservation programs which I think are very significant.

There are six regional winners who compete for the State award. These awards, now in their fifth year, carry prizes and trophies to the value of \$12 000. It is the only event of its kind in Australia, and it is essential that it continue. The judging is conducted by the Department of Primary Industries and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and it is supported by the Commonwealth Development Bank.

The Ibis is a symbol of the farmer working with the environment, and that is a very significant achievement for our rural community. The 1993 awards related to environmental reforms in the outback; the long-term rehabilitation or rabbit and brumby degraded land on Dulkaninna station on the Birdsville Track; in the South-East, the fencing of swamp areas at Mingbool to enable native flora and fauna to flourish from grazing pressure; on Eyre Peninsular (Boston Island), the establishment of a sustainable farm and thriving natural

habitat on a property with no useable groundwater and very limited access; at Karoonda, the creation of corridors of native vegetation to provide homes for native birds and animals, windbreaks for crops and livestock; in the Mid North and Yorke Peninsula region, a sustainable system of farming at Burra without chemicals and without burning stubble; and, finally, in the Kangaroo Island area, farming and conservation in a sustainable fashion and diversification into other products, for example, yabbies and marron.

The State award was granted to the Beck family of Mingbool in the South-East and consists of an ibis trophy and an overseas study tour to the value of \$4 000. I particularly wish to thank the Department of Primary Industries and the Commonwealth Development Bank for their support. Our environment paper, *Eco-Biz*, contains a photograph of those members of the Beck family who have been involved: parents, son and daughter-in-law. The area at Mingbool and the surrounding swamps, including Magpie Swamp, is magnificent country. Members of the Beck family are to be congratulated, and the venture is well worth the money that the Commonwealth Development Bank has put into it.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I understand there is some formal agreement that the change to emergency services will be about 3.30 p.m., which would also be the appropriate time to break for 15 minutes in the afternoon. That leaves limited time for questioning on this line and people might like to take that into account regarding the way they ask questions and the way in which questions are answered. Secondly, we have in fact been examining Environment and Land Management, \$38.772 million. I would propose to allow questions from the second line, Minister of Environment and Land Management—\$2.127 million. I see no point in artificially divorcing those two lines, unless there is any objection from any member of the Committee.

**Mr VENNING:** Land salinisation and agricultural land has become a particular concern, and it is only in recent years that the full extent of the problem has been realised. We are told that the preliminary land evaluation indicates that the area affected has been substantially underestimated and is increasing, and that the significant problems in the South-East have made us aware of some of these problems. What particular action is being taken through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in cooperation with the Minister of Public Infrastructure in dealing with a number of these areas?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** This is a very significant issue, which involves a problem of which I became more aware when I was Minister of Agriculture. It was put on the long-term agenda as being something that as a community we had to address quite urgently. Obviously, because of the nature of the problem and the costs involved, it required a long-term solution, and community support was needed to achieve that.

The Upper South-East is a particular area in focus at the moment, but in this regard it is not to be separated from the rest of the State or Australia, because one only has to go to Western Australia, particularly the Esperance region where I have family, friends and relatives, to realise that it is a major issue also for the Western Australian Government. Indeed, it is a major issue for Australia as a whole, because we cannot isolate it and just say it is one State Government's problem: it is a national problem and we have to address it as a community, otherwise the estimates are that we will lose within the next 20 years up to 50 per cent of our productive land in this country, which would be a tragedy of enormous proportions. In some areas it is almost up to 25 per cent now

in terms of loss of productivity from those areas, so the honourable member is absolutely correct: it is a critical issue, and one from which no Government, of whatever ilk, can walk away, and nor can the community.

We have a huge task in front of us to ensure we address the problem. Dry land salinity and the associated land degradation is something on which this department is very clearly focused, along with the Department of Primary Industries and the other agencies involved, and of course the honourable member mentions the Department of Public Infrastructure as well. The Natural Resources Council, which of course reports through me to the Cabinet Subcommittee on Public Infrastructure and Natural Resources, has highlighted this matter as its priority and focused on the needs of the Upper South-East, where there are serious effects of salinity, as identified by all those involved, whether by the farming community, bureaucrats or the private sector, who provide advice to our farming community.

I am sure the honourable member recalls in relation to the Upper South-East two Government investigations, one of which was completed in 1990 and the other in 1991, which suggested drainage and other management measures necessary to reverse the situation. These studies recognised the need to address the economic factors and the social needs (which are often overlooked in the rural community), as well as the core of the whole matter—the environmental issues. One then asks: where do we go, and what sort of action do we need to take? The Natural Resources Council strongly supported the preparation of a management plan to address the dry land salinity and flooding problems and a detailed environmental impact statement to evaluate the impacts of that plan.

A draft EIS was released yesterday for public comment and public submissions will be received up to 15 November. I have the document here, so I invite everyone to make their comments: I am sure plenty will be waiting to do so.

**Mr VENNING:** Do you have a spare copy?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** You can have this one. I also hand to you the newsletter entitled 'War on Salinity'. I will get some more copies of that for members of the Committee. We cannot anticipate your questions but we will do what we can to ensure that you get that information. I am sure members will go through that with a fine tooth comb. It is essential for what I see as one of the State's most productive agricultural areas. What flows from this will determine how we go in other areas of South Australia which have the same problem but perhaps not to such an extent. The matter is quite critical on Yorke Peninsula and Kangaroo Island, as I am sure the member for Flinders appreciates, with his new electorate encompassing part of the area involved. If we do not have a program in place throughout this State by the turn of the century, we will be in diabolical trouble, and I think we must work collectively as a community to achieve that.

I will provide members with an overall summary on which they can make their own judgment. The draft EIS evaluates the potential impact of the various options to address the problems in the Upper South-East. The area comprises 680 000 hectares of which 250 000 hectares are currently affected by salinity and a further 175 000 hectares are at risk. That is the magnitude of the problem. It is a community based program, which was developed by a steering committee comprised of members of the community and experts from relevant agencies, including those which I have already mentioned, the E&WS and the Department of Mines and

Energy. The steering committee reported to the Natural Resources Council under the guidance of Professor John Lovering. I stress that there has been extensive community consultation.

The management plan addresses the twin problems of dryness and salinity as well as surface flooding, which is a factor of which everyone in the South-East is aware. I will leave it open to members to address those issues, but we must look at the cost involved. The estimated cost of the preferred option, including all on-farm costs, is about \$75 million over a period of 10 years, and the cost of the drainage program is estimated to be \$36 million. The economic analysis indicates a positive outcome through productivity boosts but it requires that the on-farm measures of pasture renovation, saltland agronomy and, obviously, revegetation be carried out as part of the package.

**Mr VENNING:** Regarding contaminated land, will the Minister ascertain: how many former industrial sites have been assessed during the past 12 months and the 12 months prior to that; how many sites is it anticipated exist in South Australia; and how is the contaminated land problem being addressed in our State?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I will take that question on notice, but I am not sure that I will be able to answer the second part of the question as to how many sites it is anticipated are contaminated: I mean, how long is a piece of string? I will do my best to obtain that information.

**Mr VENNING:** As a country member, a large number of constituents and community bodies contact me about waste paper. For instance, the Clare Rotary Club has a very good program for the collection of waste paper and its sale in Adelaide. It was receiving \$50 a tonne; now the price has been reduced to \$30 and it could be reduced further to \$25. So, there is no incentive for that club to continue with that program, which would help solve a problem in not only the Clare area but throughout country areas. What can the Minister tell me that will help my constituents to keep this program ongoing?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** We want to keep such programs ongoing, and this is one of the things that we are endeavouring to put in place with local government. Local government wants the industry to pay a particular price for the disposal of landfill to offset costs to the recycler; that is, to ensure that the person who collects the paper and provides it to the recycling industry gets a price that makes the effort economical. Local government proposes a fee that I do not believe industry in this State can bear. That is one of the sticking points, and I make no bones about it. If we were to set a fee of \$4 a tonne on industry, I do not think that too many industries in this State would be operating. I have a problem with getting the LGA to understand the bottom line.

We must have a recycling program but not one that is a burden on industry in this State, one with which it cannot live. When the levy is put into place, we will have to assist recyclers to get their product into the system. The honourable member's paper collector must be given an economic return so that the paper can be brought into the system. However, this is not the only problem. The price of plastic has dropped to about \$150 a tonne. That is not economical on the advice I have been given for collectors to collect; they would not be able to survive. We have to come up with a package with the LGA to ensure that collectors get a suitable return so that they can survive in the industry. Otherwise, why would they do it? They certainly would not do it for the love of it.

That is the sort of issue we need to tackle, and we want to

do that. All accusations aside about who is dragging the chain, I hope that we are close to reaching a reasonable agreement with the LGA, something with which the industry can live.

*Mr Venning interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** That is a very good point. I have some information on leaking storage tanks, but I will provide that in a more comprehensive answer.

**Mr HERON:** I refer to page 88 of the Estimates of Payments and Receipts: the provision of \$250 000 of specific purpose Commonwealth funds to the endangered species program. How much funding will the State contribute to that program and which projects will be funded?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** The answer given by Mr Leaver regarding endangered species and the situation in which this State finds itself was excellent. It would provide an excellent background for anyone and would be suitable for school projects. I refer to the overview of funding on page 88 of the Estimates of Payments and Receipts and the commitment to provide \$250 000 of specific purpose Commonwealth funds to the endangered species program. The State Government's contribution has been about \$200 000 per annum with grants from the Commonwealth. We believe that that program should continue. Populations of endangered plants and animals have been established in our natural parks and wildlife reserves and on other Crown lands: to date, two brush-tailed bettongs and one population of stick-nest rats have been established on Wedge, St Peter and Reevesby Islands. Assistance has been provided with the establishment of populations on private land, but some have had limited success.

Several endangered plants have been propagated by the Botanic Gardens and individual plantings are being undertaken in isolated areas—for example, the Monarto mint bush at the Monarto Open Range Zoo. As I said, the Government has an ongoing commitment to support that, with the provision of funds totalling about \$250 000 for this calendar year to undertake a diverse range of projects ranging from emu wrens to skipper butterflies. As Mr Leaver has said, we must be aware and conscious of the constant discovery of new species. We would all note the significant achievement last year in connection with the biological survey of South Australia with the rediscovery of the Adelaide blue tongue. This is important work, and it will continue to be supported by the department.

**Mr HERON:** I refer to page 91 of the Estimates of Payments. The Monarto operations of the Zoological Society will receive extra funding this year, from \$162 000 to \$410 000. What is the development of the open-range facilities at Monarto?

*The Hon. D.C. Wotton interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** The member for Heysen is quite correct: it is an excellent project and very exciting. I congratulate those who have been involved. I do not have before me a list of those who have been involved, but I am happy to support them and give them credit.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** It was a previous Liberal Minister who established it.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** The member for Heysen can claim that credit, and I support his comment. If it was his initiative, well done! I have been briefed on a couple of occasions but, unfortunately, I have not had a chance to get out there and have a look at it. I am sure that those members who have been out there thoroughly endorse its exciting programs. It is due to be officially opened in the next month

or so. Fences, roads and paths are being completed to allow public access after 31 October. Without prior booking, it will be a pretty busy area. Twenty long-term unemployed people are working on this project to gain skills so that they become more employable. Various groups—including Aboriginal community members—have assisted in fence building, seed collection and sowing, and tree planting to green Monarto, and there is strong local support, along with volunteer and corporate involvement.

The Director of the Adelaide Zoological Gardens, along with his board, has been a tremendous source of energy in driving this along. From what I hear, their plans for Monarto and the Adelaide Zoo—the zoo we have all grown up with—are really quite exciting. I will not touch on those matters yet, because that is a matter for the zoo board to raise with me. It is a very exciting program that will not only attract and entertain both children and adults into the next century but also bring many visitors to this wonderful State.

Various things will happen there. Negotiations are under way for five baby elephants to go to Monarto. We are part of the zoo plan, which is a network that looks at endangered species around the world and focuses on certain animals. We are part of that, so there have been exchanges between our zoo and zoos overseas and interstate. The plan is to focus on various aspects of these animals and place them in a more natural environment. We do not want to coop them up and allow them to be gawked at by inquisitive humans—we want them to be seen in a more natural environment for their good and that of their species. It is an exciting program, and I look forward to seeing it open for the enjoyment of all South Australians.

**Mr HERON:** I refer to page 212 of the Program Estimates and note the intention of the department to prepare a code of management for emu farming. I understand that this code of management must be in place before permits can be guaranteed under the amended legislation. What progress has been made in respect of this important milestone for our emu farming industry?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** Within the next few weeks, I will be taking to Cabinet the draft management plan for emu farming. I hope that the code of management goes smoothly for this industry, which is biting at the bit to go—it is really ready to fly. I am advised that the draft code has been drawn up. There has been a good deal of consensus between the industry, the Government and the conservation movement in putting it in place. On Sunday night, I had a couple of points that needed tidying up. I understand they have been fixed, and I expect to march it through pretty shortly. Ongoing consultation has occurred with the Farmers Federation to ensure that its support is there. In addition, this consultative group has received advice from the Commonwealth, and that is very important.

With regard to meat hygiene requirements, national animal welfare standards have had to be taken on board. I am confident that the draft report will be received very well by the public. I hope we can proceed with great haste. I am not able to reveal the specific details of the draft code, but I can indicate it will strongly reinforce my commitment to the Parliament that Government, through this code of management, will not seek to be the regulator of the economic development of the industry. It will be up to the industry to ensure that this code of practice is followed. Our concern is to ensure that what is a protected species is properly cared for. However, I want to see this industry flourish, and I encourage it to do so. I hope we see a lot of benefits flow to

those people in the industry and in the State as whole, because as the meat becomes more popular it will become a marvellous source of food and also a further income source for South Australians.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** I was particularly concerned to learn recently that the department responsible for State records—and I am not quite sure which department that is—destroyed most of the records relating to public buildings in South Australia, including many on the State heritage register. Every record relating to a heritage place should be retained. This is a very serious matter. How did this occur, who undertook the culling of the records, and what will be done to ensure that more significant records are not destroyed?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** That is not my area, but I am concerned about the issue that the member raises in terms of our heritage information being destroyed, if culling has occurred. I heard something about this in the press the other day but, as I said, it is another Minister's responsibility. I will refer the question to the Minister, and I will check whether anything that belonged to the Heritage Branch has been destroyed. The advice I have is that it would be unlikely that any of our records were involved.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** Many of the public buildings on the State heritage list were in the records that were destroyed.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I will have to take that on notice. I understand quite clearly what the honourable member is saying. I cannot give a direct and accurate answer in relation to that at this stage, because I have to check what records in relation to what public buildings on the heritage list were involved. There is a view amongst the officers that there may well have been some public building records on the State heritage list kept by SACON or State Services, whoever has that responsibility.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** How much additional funding will be provided from Treasury for the State heritage fund for the next 12 months?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I will have to check that. It is probably the same program as last year. The figures I have would confirm that, but I will double check it and respond in a few moments.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** The Minister would be aware that over a period a fair bit of concern has been expressed about the lack of open space that is now available through the Hills face area. It has been brought to my notice that recently the Government offered a piece of land known as the Blackwood forest or Blackwood experimental orchard to the Mitcham council for the price of \$1.6 million. As I say, there is concern about the shrinkage of open space, and that area is recognised as an important area to be retained for the community. Can the Minister provide any detail as to why the Government found it necessary to dispose of that land? Have any conditions been laid down regarding the sale of that land to the Mitcham council? I understand that the land has been offered to the council; I cannot be sure that the council has picked up that offer.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** The honourable member is correct. The area known as Blackwood forest property is dedicated Crown land and forms part of the old Department of Agriculture experimental orchard. There has been ongoing deliberation as to the future of the property for several years, as I understand it. No firm decision has been made, because the department acknowledges, as the honourable member said, that there is community concern and interest in this

parcel of land and the potential loss of open space.

Over 12 months ago there were discussions with the Mitcham council, which offered to purchase the land for \$1.2 million. It is understood—and I have no better information than the member for Heysen—that there was to be a joint venture with a private developer. That offer from the Mitcham council was rejected for two reasons: first, it did not reach the Valuer-General's valuation; and, secondly, the department (and no doubt my predecessor was involved in this) was not quite clear where things were going in terms of future development and what the requirements would be for that area. As a consequence, the department is sitting on the land while it considers where it might go in terms of the development that Mitcham council is embarking upon.

Of course, the department recognises the need for community involvement in any outcome proposed for that parcel of land. I think that recognises that, when one talks about amenities, consideration needs to be given to the local community. At this point nothing is happening, on the latest advice I have. The department is sitting on the land and evaluating what might happen with regard to the pattern of urban growth within the adjoining areas, and some planning might flow from that as a consequence.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** I have a supplementary question. The present Minister and indeed previous Ministers—and I am not sure, Mr Chairman, whether or not you come into this category—foreshadowed a policy to purchase more land as part of the second ring of parklands, and I would have thought that this land was considered to be part of that policy.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** It could well be. I thank the honourable member for drawing it to my attention.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** I now refer to a subject that is very close to all of our hearts—cats. Does the Government intend to proceed with legislation to provide for compulsory registration and desexing of cats and, if so, when; and is there any other information that would be of interest to the community in respect of this important issue?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** In terms of the overview of cats in our community, there is no question—and I am sure members would agree—that the cat, a superb domestic pet, when it is let loose in the wild becomes an extraordinary predator, which is efficient and destructive. I have seen on the South Coast, not more than 50 kilometres from the city centre, a feral cat as big as a bull terrier. That was how it appeared to me—it was extraordinary. It was enormous. In fact, one of our problem areas is the South Coast, because there is so much food for them and they can prosper, and of course it is so close to the city where people can just drop them off. It is staggering what damage they can do, and any ornithologist or conservationist will tell you that the impact is just devastating.

I see this as a local government matter and, in fact, one local government authority has already moved in that direction. I hope to have extensive discussions with local government in order to arrive at a manageable situation which at least places responsibility with the owner of the cat. It would encourage desexing, initiate an education program with respect to proper care and treatment, and ensure that cats are not left to go wild. It would also encourage people to have cats desexed or placed with an appropriate welfare body such as the RSPCA or Animal Welfare so that they are not left in the wild where they can become a very efficient predator.

We are not far away from commencing those discussions



with local government bodies. I hope we can come up with a responsible and carefully managed program to care for our environment. I do not believe that the Government should introduce compulsory desexing and compulsory identification, such as a microchip in the ear. I would think that, from the community's point of view, an education program is the way to go. We are about to initiate those discussions, and I hope we come up with some suitable solutions.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** I have a supplementary question. How does that line up with the recommendations that have just come from the cat committee, or whatever it was called?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** It lines up with the general thrust; it does not take on board the administration of the report or the review. I am grateful for the commitment and support of those people involved, but they had a particular view about how things might be achieved. I do not agree with the recommended implementation of those measures. I do not think they are acceptable; I do not think they could be practically achieved, and the only way to go is a process of consultation and negotiations.

That involves not only local government but also the community as a whole, because it is estimated that there are something like 400 000 cats in our community. An enormous number of people in our community are involved and have a very strong affection for the cat and I think they would resent—probably strongly and to a large extent they would be correct—heavy-handed nanny politics entering the situation. We have to address the issue, but I think the appropriate process is by consultation and education.

In relation to the State Heritage Fund, my officers have been able to get the information together for the member for Heysen. I will be very brief. The total program last year was \$394 000; the amount proposed for this year is \$466 000.

**Mr De LAINE:** I refer to page 214 of the Program Estimates, land services program, and note the commitment of the department to a quality assured survey service. What does this mean in practical terms for the department?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** This is an important part of our programs and one that from my own point of view has a fairly large impact on what happens in our community. A quality assured survey service impacts on all of us. The quality system of the Survey Services Branch within the Land Services Group has achieved third party accreditation by compliance with the Australian standard, which is Standard 3902, following assessment by Standards Australia. While more than 1 100 companies have now been certified by Standards Australia, this is the first survey organisation, and one of the first public sector organisations, to be included in its register of quality endorsed companies. This entitles the Survey Services Branch to use its endorsement as a marketing tool in seeking new contracts and also to use the well-recognised quality endorsed company standards. It is a red logo with five ticks on the branch stationery. I have seen some of the stationery and the logo is quite clear.

The certification covers all cadastral and engineering survey functions, including data search, drafting or certified surveys. It also includes support areas such as business operations and the survey depot. Development of the quality system to this level was aimed at getting the job right the first time. By ensuring client requirements, the actions needed to meet them are clearly defined and documented. Subsequent action by staff is, of course, more effective and more efficient.

An early benefit of the quality system has arisen in the

examination of plans of land subdivision prepared by the Survey Services Branch. The LTO now fast tracks these surveys because it knows that the necessary requirements have been met before the plan is lodged. This saves time and effort in examination and also minimises the time needed for the acceptance process, and that is of benefit to our commercial industry.

I know from the comments of a couple of my constituents who are involved in this on a daily basis that they are very pleased with the outcomes. So, I think we can be quite satisfied with the development of this quality system. It has also been able to identify some duplication and slow processing in the previous system. That has brought us further savings. This benefit will be magnified as more functions within the department are brought under the quality assurance umbrella.

**Mr De LAINE:** I refer to page 212 of the Program Estimates—sand replenishment. I ask this question on behalf of my colleague the member for Albert Park. When will the replenishment program commence for the foreshore at Semaphore Park and Tennyson and can the Minister give details of this program?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I thank the member for Price for this question on behalf of his colleague the member for Albert Park who, having a foreshore electorate, has a strong interest in this area. I indicated in my opening comments that we had set aside \$2.3 million for coast protection sand replenishment on Adelaide beaches during 1993-94. We have called tenders and the timetable—so that the member for Price can convey the information to his colleague—is that the contractors will be ready to act early in the new year.

We are estimating that the funding should enable about 200 000 cubic metres of sand to be dredged and pumped on shore from an off-shore sand source near Port Stanvac. Members may recall that I made some comment about that as opposed to the traditional ways of doing it. There is less noise, less disturbance, it is much more remedial and I think it will be a more efficient method of sand replenishment. It is estimated that this ongoing replenishment will be essential to maintain the beaches in their present condition.

One other aspect that people forget is that when there is a natural drift north of our sands we do not have the replacement that protects our foreshore from winter or even summer storms when they occur. It is part of our ongoing strategy and it will be part of a two-year dredging cycle which will be adopted and which we believe is the most efficient way to do this. The member for Price and his colleagues along the foreshore—the member for Morphett and the member for Hanson—all have an ongoing interest in this. I think that the member for Semaphore, who enjoys the end result in most cases, would be fully supportive of this program. I look forward to seeing it put in place, because it is an essential factor in the overall maintenance of our asset. That is also couched on the discussions we have had with local government as well.

**Mr De LAINE:** I refer to page 212 of the Program Estimates and the development of joint management plans with traditional landowners as a specific target for 1993-94. Can the Minister outline the thrust and details of this joint management plan? Will there be any implications emanating from the historic Mabo judgement in relation to this plan?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** It is very important that we look constructively at this issue, particularly in those areas where there are direct links with the traditional owners. My colleagues, and probably you, Mr Chairman, when you were

a Minister, were very anxious to establish joint management arrangements with our indigenous communities. The discussions we have had affect areas such as Witjira. We have been in discussion with the southern Arunda Aboriginal community. They have their own corporation and respect of the Witjira National Park. We were going to embark on a number of joint management arrangements. They were in the negotiation stage when I came into this ministry a year ago now and were being promoted by my predecessor as opportunities for us to bring together the reconciliation for our Aboriginal communities to have an active say in the running of those parks, and I speak of the Witjira park but there were others in the channels then.

When our new CEO, Mr Mutton, joined us, we looked at the overall situation of parks and reserves, and I decided that we needed to do a complete review of our national parks and reserves system. We put those in abeyance on the basis of looking at what opportunities we might have to further refine or improve what had been proposed, although some had had actual draft management plans put out for public comment. I have not yet firmed up in my own mind, nor taken it to Cabinet, but there are a couple of major areas in South Australia which have very close links with the traditional owners, such as the great Unnamed Conservation Park, which is near the Tjarutja Maralinga Lands.

There are marvellous opportunities for those people to have an involvement in the development of that park. They know that country better than anyone. It is their land, and they have a real understanding of it. They know within a matter of hours, if not minutes, if anyone comes within a bull's roar of it. They can provide the appropriate sort of advice and guidance, I would think, to ensure the protection of that area for future generations. They are some of the options that we have had to look at as part of the review. I look forward to the opportunity to see what comes out of that review in relation to the prospect of joint management arrangements for some of those parks and reserves.

**Mr VENNING:** To try to save time, I will ask my next two questions together, and they deal with lead contamination and noise pollution. Will the Minister provide details to the Committee regarding the success or otherwise of the Port Pirie lead implementation program which commenced in 1984 and, in particular, will he provide details relating to the concern being expressed in certain parts of Port Pirie that the concentration of lead exceeds the NHMRC three-monthly goal of 1.5 milligrams per cubic metre? In relation to noise and West Beach (and I declare an interest, because I spend time there when I am at Parliament), have the changes to the curfew at Adelaide Airport to allow international flights to arrive late at night or early in the morning become an issue, and has the doubling of flight improvements in the past three years at Parafield the potential to become a significant issue? Further, is occupational deafness a major problem in South Australia and, if so, what action has been taken in that regard?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I will be equally brief. Port Pirie is the primary responsibility of my colleague the Minister of Health. I guess we have an interest in the overall global issue of blood lead levels and that is again primarily the responsibility of my colleague, but we have an interest in atmospheric lead and lead in the environment which, with our new EPA structure, we will be very carefully monitoring as part of that overall national approach. I will refer the question with regard to the specifics of Port Pirie to my colleague for a comprehensive answer. I am sure that that will be forthcoming

because, compared with other Australian cities such as Broken Hill and Mount Isa, Port Pirie is 10 or 15 years ahead of the problems they confront, unfortunately for Broken Hill and Mount Isa.

With regard to the noise level at Adelaide Airport, I am not sure as to the situation there. I have not received any direct complaints about pre-curfew hour operations. I hear them if they go over in the mornings if there is a northerly. They use the whisper jets, and it is only the 727s that rattle my windows and fillings. I have not heard any pre-6 a.m. flights over our place. I presume that that does not necessarily mean there is nothing happening down there. It may well mean that within the immediate environs there is a problem. I will take that on notice and get back to the honourable member with a detailed response.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** I will ask a question about native vegetation and tie it into pastoral management. I want an assurance from the Minister that the Government is able to meet its obligations with regard to compensation payments or financial assistance and fencing under the native vegetation scheme. There is some confusion about this, although I note in the papers that the estimate for the Native Vegetation Fund for last year was \$14 318 000, and this year it is \$8 380 000. Why has there been a decrease? One would hope that the Government's obligations will be met. Further, what is the shortfall between expenditure and income for the pastoral land management program, and what efforts are being made to obtain alternative funding and to review the program to contain costs while also delivering a product of more use to pastoralists?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** In relation to meeting our commitments, I can assure the honourable member that we can. The honourable member has referred me to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources receipts and current payments on page 88, at \$14.318 million for 1992-93 and \$8.380 million for 1993-94. The benefits that flow from the cut-off point of the heritage agreements are a major part of our capacity to reduce the funds put into that account. There is a reduction in the number of outstanding applications to clear. The \$14.3 million in 1992-93 was warranted for about 93 000 hectares with respect to 143 agreements.

The projected 1993-94 total will be allocated basically as \$500 000 for funds for research into native vegetation management, \$500 000 into fencing of existing heritage areas, and about \$7.8 million in payments to land-holders refused permission to clear vegetation. As I said earlier, the Chairman was then Minister, and the commitments of the Native Vegetation Management Act 1985 are declining because no clearance applications could be lodged after 13 February 1991. A land-holder, once refused clearance, had two years from the date of refusal to lodge a claim for financial assistance.

Approximately 80 cases are outstanding but my advice is that we can meet all our commitments to the native vegetation retention program. In relation to pastoral lands, to which the honourable member referred, I hope that I have given a reasonable and comprehensive answer to the native vegetation allocations under page 88. There is a shortfall of around \$400 000 on revenue from leases, and the honourable member is correct in drawing it to the attention of the Committee. The department made a commitment to fund the balance to ensure the program is maintained, so that there will be an ongoing commitment for the assessment, inspection and of course other programs which the board initiates under the pastoral land care arrangements. So, there is a commitment

from us to maintain pastoral land care activities.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** What will be the Government's financial assistance to the Conservation Council for 1993-94, and will it include any increase to cover CPI increases over the past three years? I am sure that the Committee would recognise the superb work that KESAB does, and there is some concern at KESAB that the EPA role will be extended into traditional KESAB areas of awareness and education, which may ultimately create a reason for the EPA to reduce funding to KESAB and other environmental organisations. Recognising KESAB's significant role at a community level in providing environmental education in South Australia, I would like an assurance from the Minister that that will not be the case.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** The funding arrangements are the same as last year for the Conservation Council and for KESAB, and there is no CPI adjustment built into that. I am looking at something else in relation to the Conservation Council but at this stage I am not able to deal with that, and I am not talking necessarily about any recurrent additional funds. The allocation for 1993-94 to the Conservation Council of South Australia is \$60 000 and \$46 800 for targeted programs; that is for a field worker and a back-up for the field worker. The allocation to KESAB is \$150 000, which is the same as for last year.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** Is the Minister able to allay the fears that have been expressed that the EPA might be taking over some of the roles that have been carried out by KESAB in the past?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I do not think there will be any real change in operations with the existence of the EPA. It will be the same sort of arrangement as existed with the old department.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** I make it clear that I do not need the answers to the following questions now, but I would appreciate their being taken on notice and the answers provided by the time set down for answers to be provided to these Committees. For what boards, committees and councils does the Minister have responsibility as Minister or within his department or agency? In respect of each such board, committee or council who are the members? When do the members' terms of office expire? What is the remuneration of the members, who appoints them and on whose recommendation or nomination are the appointments made? What is the role and function of any such committee?

How many officers are now on contracts of service rather than permanent employment, and at what levels are they serving; that is, EL1 or EL2, and so on? Who, if any, of these officers are subject to performance reviews? How is performance measured, who measures it, who reviews performance and what are the consequences of failure to perform? Are any performance bonuses paid and, if so, what are they and how are they measured?

What, if any, savings have been identified from the restructuring of the department and where have the savings been made? Do the savings involve a reduction in staffing numbers? If they do, how many staff will leave, from what areas will they leave and at what stage of the restructuring will they leave? What, if any, improvements in efficiency have been made, how are they measured and what is the reward for improvements or penalty for failing to improve? What problems have been identified as a result of the restructuring?

For each department and agency for which the Minister

is responsible, how many positions are to be abolished through targeted separation packages, what is each position and how many persons have so far applied to take the benefit of a TSP? How many targeted separation packages have so far been accepted? What are the salaries and conditions of service of each ministerial officer of the Minister, and what are the job specifications of each officer?

**Mr McKEE:** I refer to page 89 of the Estimates of Payments. Will the funding for the EPA be adequate to meet its needs and how does it compare with other States?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** The Government has given a commitment to the EPA to establish an appropriate funding level. By the end of this financial year, 1993-94, there will be 70 staff employed by the EPA. The anticipated numbers will be an increase to 76 or 80 with a full growth of the office. The commitment of funding is around \$7 million when one takes into account the amalgamation of the various agencies that came under the banner of the EPO. As you know there were six Acts and six sections to absorb, and about \$2 million relates to the Waste Management Commission, about \$1 million is for accommodation and other activities of the EPO, and about \$4 million involves new funding. By 1994-95 we expect to have a staff of 80. The comparison with interstate is interesting, because in Western Australia quite significant and radical surgery has been undertaken on the EPA.

Its capacity to be a proper environmental protection authority has been watered down by the positions of the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer being replaced with one position with a part-time function. The Victorian EPA is being wound back; its budget will be cut by 30 per cent over three budget years with a cut of 7.5 per cent this year and 9 per cent next year. So, the Western Australian and Victorian Governments are heading in exactly the opposite direction to the one we are taking. I think that is unfortunate because it will undermine the general national approach that has been agreed to by heads of Government in terms of addressing environmental issues.

The New South Wales EPA is probably one of the most successful. It is a well established organisation and, to some extent, it is the benchmark for all EPAs in Australia. We have used some aspects of its approach in establishing our EPA and it is now using some of the achievements that we have made in creating our organisation to better refine its own organisation. Those two EPAs will stand out during the next year or so as the ones that are focusing on environmental issues that confront the community versus, from what I can see, almost a shut down of the Western Australian office and a severe curtailment of the functions of the Victorian office.

**Mr McKEE:** It seems to me that the most recently elected conservative Governments are not showing much of a commitment. I refer to page 212 of the Program Estimates: the proposal to completely ban the use of lead shot for the 1994 hunting season. I understand that there have been problems this year with implementing the ban and that negotiations have taken place with organisations representing game shooters in order to overcome those difficulties. Will the Minister assure the Committee that the 1994 ban will proceed?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** The member for Gilles is correct: there is a proposal for a State-wide ban on lead shot for duck hunting. This ban was initiated and negotiated by my predecessor, who had a strong commitment to the elimination of lead shot from the environment. When I came into this position in October last year I received submissions from a number of organisations—SA Field and Game, Hellenic

Shooters and Sporting Shooters—which were concerned about the potential of using steel shot in private wetlands or areas where the hunting of ducks, in particular, is allowed with lead shot. The fear was that the increased breech pressure would put shooters at risk, and supporting professional evidence confirms that view.

Consequently, I negotiated with the five major organisations interested in this area—the three that I have already mentioned plus the Native Conservation Society and the South Australian Ornithological Society—to establish a committee to look at what was likely to happen. I allowed for lead shot to be continued to be used in those wetlands but not in game reserves. That, of course, was applied in the sense of a ban. We have allowed for a 12-month moratorium until the beginning of 1994 to permit experimentation and the development of alternatives and to conduct an education program to enable SA Field and Game, Hellenic Shooters and Sporting Shooters to educate their members and to develop options for the use of something other than lead shot. Each of those organisations has made a commitment to respect that. I hope that we are close to seeing the prohibition of lead shot in the environment and, given the enthusiastic support of those organisations, I expect that that will be achieved by the beginning of 1994.

**Mr McKEE:** I refer to page 215 of the Program Estimates: 'Significant initiatives for 1992-93—identify the major input provided to the draft EIS on dryland salinisation in the Upper South-East'. What is the status of this project?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I have provided specific background regarding this area of concern in relation to a question asked by the member for Custance, although the honourable member's question was a general one. From the point of view of consultation, we have a clear obligation to ensure that the wetlands—those areas of South Australia with which we are not over endowed—are protected and that guarantees are given so that future generations can enjoy the benefits that have been enjoyed by earlier generations, although perhaps not so much by this generation because of the stress that has been placed on those areas.

If we can put in place this program for the wetlands and the problem of dry salinity in such areas as Bool Lagoon, the Coorong and other South-Eastern areas, I see us as being at the forefront of bringing about change and the recovery of those lands for future use in both a commercial and a recreational sense. As I said earlier to the member for Custance, it is important that we put something in place, that it stay and that it be supported by the community, because if it is not supported by the community we will have a major problem. We need the community behind us to back this plan, and so far that has been the case, as was indicated when I handed out copies of the EIS to members. I am happy to distribute further copies of the EIS to members so that they know exactly what is being proposed, the short-term and long-term costs involved and the way in which we envisage this plan will be managed in the future after the problem has been addressed.

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

Minister of Environment and Land Management—Other Payments, \$2 127 000—Examination declared completed.

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Police, \$271 435 000

**Membership:**

Mr Matthew substituted for the Hon. D.C. Wotton.

**Witness:**

The Hon. M.K. Mayes, Minister of Emergency Services.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr D.A. Hunt, Commissioner of Police.

Mr M.D. Wall, Manager, Business Services.

Mr D.J. Hughes, Director, Corporate Services.

Mr A.J. Strickland, Chief Executive Officer, Department of Emergency Services.

Mr F.E. Bowering, Manager, Financial Services.

Mr S.W. Peters, Acting Manager, Information Technology.

Mr R.J. Matte, Chief Business Analyst.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I direct members' attention to the Estimates of Payments (pages 92 to 96) and the Program Estimates (pages 219 to 235). The Minister may make an opening statement.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** As part of the Government's structural reform process, the Premier has announced the formation of the Department of Emergency Services. The Government believes that the establishment of the new department will provide, in the future, very significant opportunities for greater efficiency in the delivery of emergency services, in terms of both the utilisation of resources and the opportunities for greater coordination between the various operational services.

I want to take this opportunity once again clearly to state that the new department will not mean the amalgamation of the emergency services operating in this State. Those services will continue to operate independently and will report directly to the Minister of Emergency Services. The role of the new department and its Chief Executive, Mr Andrew Strickland, will be to ensure coordination between those agencies, and to achieve efficiencies of operation in some areas, whether they be corporate services, communications, computing or other defined and agreed areas.

I should point out that an important outcome of more efficient coordination will be a better support structure for the volunteer component of the emergency services. I take this opportunity again to state the strong support of this Government for the volunteer base, and our commitment to provide them with maximum support to carry out their duties. In carrying out this process, the new department will be structured as a small office, focusing on building the best structure to achieve the outcomes that I have identified. Mr Strickland, as his first task, will carry out a detailed process of consultation with the heads of agencies in the emergency services portfolio, with the various unions covering those agencies and with the metropolitan regional and country staff of those agencies.

Following this round of consultation, the Chief Executive Officer will proceed to structure his organisation according

to the requirements for coordination and integration identified in discussions with the emergency services agencies. Turning to specific agencies, as in previous years this Government has continued to afford a high priority to law and order, which is emphasised by the significant budget allocation to the Police Department in 1993-94 of \$289.1 million.

South Australia continues to enjoy the best police-to-population ratio of any mainland State in Australia. This budget, like previous years, will enable the number of police officers to be maintained and cadet recruitment undertaken to ensure that this occurs. It will be noted from the Program Estimates that the actual departmental staff numbers last financial year were higher than the proposed levels. This is because of a lower than anticipated attrition from police strength. This additional cost in 1992-93 was supported by Government. In 1993-94, it is anticipated that police numbers will equate more closely with the approved strength and hence the employment figures for 1993-94 are down on the 1992-93 actual outcome.

I reiterate: it continues to be the policy of this Government that police numbers be maintained at the approved level. Furthermore, over the past three budgets, including this budget, some 80 additional police positions have been funded. In addition, the agency's overall staffing will be increased this financial year as a result of the transfer of the SACON security function to police as part of the public sector reform initiatives. This will result in a more coordinated approach to the delivery of services and sharing of resources. It is planned that the budget for this function be transferred to the police agency later in the financial year.

The 1993-94 allocation will enable spending to be maintained in line with the high levels of recent years. This is despite the very difficult economic conditions prevailing in South Australia and elsewhere. In considering the 1993-94 allocation, we must not lose sight of the fact that this allocation follows on from recent budgets where the department received record levels of funding. This enabled significant progress to be made with the technological developments (computing and communications), building upgrades and provided for the recruitment of more police officers.

Whilst the proposed program expenditure for 1993-94 represents a \$2.2 million budget reduction in straight cash terms (actual expenditure 1992-93, \$291.3 million; proposed allocation 1993-94, \$289.1 million), when this amount is adjusted for non-recurring 'one-off' type items between years, the dollar allocation is basically *status quo* with last year. Nevertheless, the Police Department is facing other anticipated commitments which have to be met from the proposed budget allocation. These include potential wage claims and absorption of inflation of goods and services.

The police agency is no different from any large organisation that has to manage with a finite budget. Therefore, in order to manage within the police budget allocation for 1993-94, the Commissioner has developed a budget containment strategy involving a combination of cost reduction measures and reallocation of resources. The underlying philosophy in arriving at this strategy has been to ensure that 'front line' service delivery is not impacted. Under this strategy, police patrols will not be affected. In fact, I reiterate: there will be no reduction in operational police. I can reassure the public that calls for police assistance will not be affected by this strategy. This is important, because the Opposition recently quite incorrectly sought to raise community concerns

by comparing the highest patrol response time of 18 minutes at Christies Beach with the lowest patrol response time of eight minutes in Adelaide.

These are the two upper and lower extremes and can be quite misleading if looked at in isolation from the total picture. The Opposition failed to indicate that, of the 322 353 incidents attended by police patrols in 1992-93, the average response time throughout the metropolitan area was 11 minutes, with a subsequent average time spent on-the-job of 29 minutes.

A contributing factor to the response time in the Christies Beach area is the elongated shape of the area, which often naturally results in patrols having to travel further to attend taskings. It is normal department practice to continually review resources to alleviate areas with any imbalance. In the case of Christies Beach division, 15 additional police personnel have been transferred to the area in recent years (since 1989-90).

It must also not be overlooked that the patrol staff at Christies Beach may be supplemented by a further 10 patrol officers attached to the regional response group 'flying squad' available on an on-call basis across the metropolitan area. It is also important to note that patrol boundaries do not apply when urgent taskings arise. Both general and specialist patrols may be deployed for emergency taskings. The community can therefore be reassured that their emergency calls for assistance are afforded the highest priority.

As part of the 1993-94 budget strategy, there will be a slight reduction in civilian staff of up to 39. This includes civilian positions in support areas (18), for example, workshops, cafeterias, information technology and training and education. Other civilian reductions will be implemented by changing the mix of police and civilian staff at some police stations (21 will be affected by that). This will involve reallocation of police personnel from areas of lower priority.

The strategy provides an increase in sworn police at police stations and increases flexibility at the local level, for example, prisoner handling and cell guard duties. Furthermore, it satisfies, in part, a requirement for more police, and prevents any impact on police service delivery to the public that might otherwise have been the case if operational police numbers were reduced. It should be clear that the use of police officers in this manner will enable a far broader range of responsibilities to be undertaken than those previously carried out by civilian clerical staff.

There will be some reductions in civilian staff numbers, which will be achieved in consultation with staff and their staff associations and within current Government policies, including voluntary separation where appropriate. There will be no retrenchments. It is important that the community be aware that this Government, despite real economic constraints, has continued to give a high priority to the police budget, which is reflected in the significant allocation of \$289.1 million.

Some of the other key features of this 1993-94 budget allocation are as follows. An allocation of \$11 million is provided for vehicles to enable ongoing replacement of the motor vehicle fleet. This will involve almost 600 vehicles being replaced in 1993-94—which is more than half the fleet—with an equipment allocation of \$6.2 million, with a high priority being given to the acquisition of occupational health and safety items for operational policing purposes (for example, soft body armour and hand guns), and to other essential support equipment. This will also enable acquisition of computing and communication equipment, including

completion of phase three of the crime systems, and enhancement to Fleurieu Peninsula and Kangaroo Island communication system will be undertaken.

There will be an extensive building program of \$13.2 million enabling a number of significant projects to be completed or commenced during 1993-94. These include Elizabeth police courts complex, academy weapons training facility, Salisbury subdivision base, Port Augusta police complex, Coober Pedy police complex, Cockburn police station, improvements to Adelaide police station accommodation, and securing a site for relocation of the Darlington police facility.

Other noteworthy features of the budget include the following. Additional resources for implementation of the juvenile justice and Gaming Act initiatives. Resources to implement the new firearms legislation aimed at improving the control of possession, use and sale of firearms in South Australia. This will also enable further attention to be given to the follow-up of non-registration of firearms and non-renewal of licences (as mentioned in the Auditor-General's Report). There will be continued support for crime prevention programs, such as Neighbourhood Watch, Schools Watch, Safety Beat, Blue Light and Stop Auto Theft.

I am pleased that I have been able to inform the Committee of this continued high level of resourcing, which this Government has provided in the police budget. The Commissioner has indicated that, with the funds provided this year, he will be able to meet all priority operational needs. This is a responsible budget for these times, and is clearly aimed at maintaining service delivery to the community.

Turning to the fire services, the State Labor Government will continue to provide adequate resources and funding to MFS and CFS brigades in 1993-94, and I must state again that Government policy is to maintain the identity and independence of MFS and CFS and to recognise the importance of volunteers in the provision of the fire services of South Australia. While amalgamation is not on the agenda, either between MFS and CFS, we will continue to foster cooperation, which already takes place to some extent in the use of facilities, communications and training. Examples of specific areas of responsibility which are being looked at are the establishment of the MFS as the provider and maintenance authority for alarm monitoring systems and the appointment of the CFS as the provider and supervisor of a country radio network for the CFS and the MFS. As I have indicated, the Chief Executive of the department will be fully involved in ensuring that such cooperation takes place.

The importance of having well-trained firefighters has not been lost on the chiefs of both organisations, with the CFS instituting measures to ensure retention of valuable members in country towns and both organisations sharing training expertise at Brookway Park and Brukunga. There have been a number of other specific achievements in both fire services, and this financial year will provide further significant initiatives. I shall be happy to detail those initiatives when the Committee examines the relevant budget lines.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Does the Opposition have an opening statement?

**Mr MATTHEW:** Yes, Mr Chairman. The opening sentence on emergency services in the 1993-94 Financial Statement states that 'maintenance of a strong commitment to security and protection is reflected in the budget of the emergency services portfolio for 1993-94.' Nothing could be further from the truth. The police budget for 1993-94 has been cut by \$3 034 765. Further, other payments against the

emergency services portfolio have been cut by \$835 614—in all, a cut of \$4 270 377 for the emergency services budget. I contend that that is hardly a strong commitment to security and protection. Scrutiny of the police budget reveals cuts in recurrent expenditure for general metropolitan police services, road safety programs and police community liaison, education and information services.

There has been a reduction of 49 police, the equivalent of six patrol teams, from the general metropolitan police services at a time when violent crime is spiralling and the community is demanding a greater police presence. At a time when this Government preaches road safety, it has axed six staff from this area and slashed the budget by \$519 000. Police stations have been hard hit with the axing of 39 clerical staff. These include five from the Adelaide police station, two from Christies Beach division, one from Darlington, one from Port Adelaide, three from Elizabeth, two from Holden Hill, one from Gawler, half a position from Mannum, one from Murray Bridge, one from Clare, one from Mount Gambier, one from Kadina, half a position from Woomera and one from Whyalla.

The axing of those positions will be partially compensated—and I stress 'partially compensated'—by transferring members of the police band and the mounted cadre. Despite this, the end result will be the officers redirected from operational police duties to clerical duties behind desks. I contend that uniforms behind desks are not an increased police presence in our suburban police stations. Many of the staff lost from stations are experienced in the use of technical equipment and new police computer systems. This experience will not be easily replaced.

The Government's lack of commitment to policing is further demonstrated when analysing the capital works program for 1993-94. Most of the so-called 'new works' listed for the 1993-94 financial year, and repeated by the Minister in his statement (also listed in the capital works program for 1992-93), have not commenced and their costs have blown out. Examples include the indoor weapons training facility, delayed by four months and up by \$310 000 or 19 per cent; Coober Pedy police station, delayed by three months, up by \$80 000 or 3 per cent; Port Augusta police complex, delayed by 11 months, up by \$700 000 or 15 per cent; Salisbury subdivision base, delayed by four months, up by \$500 000 or 25 per cent; and the Cockburn police station, delayed by eight months, up by \$45 000 or 17 per cent.

As if these factors are not bad enough, the Liberal Party is concerned over the bureau, or Department of Emergency Services' proposal. While the Government has announced the formation of a Department of Emergency Services, there is no allocation for staffing and accommodation for the new management. While the Government claims that savings will be made, it is yet to provide details and evidence of the savings. Indeed, evidence given to the Opposition from concerned sources suggest the opposite could be the case.

It has been put to the Liberal Party that the department is to have 15 management support staff with accommodation in the Finlayson's building. I understand that the new CEO, Mr Andrew Strickland, has an office on the tenth floor of the building at this time. Of the 15 staff, we are advised that five are to be EL2 positions, and a further staff member, Mr Lewcock, will be paid at the EL3 position. Further, a budget of \$2 million is being sought to maintain the office. I understand that all departments under the super department have indicated they are not in a position to contribute money or staff towards its central management and, as a conse-

quence, Mr Strickland is to seek funding from Treasury.

The announcement of the formation of a super department has all the signs of a rushed decision, cobbled together on the eve of an election in a bid to make an ailing Government appear as though it is doing something.

We are mindful that Queensland is the only State in Australia that has a Bureau of Emergency Services, and its future is presently being examined following a number of difficulties. While a bureau was attempted in Tasmania, it proved unsuccessful and I understand has now been abolished.

The questions therefore remain: why have a single Department of Emergency Services; what benefits will it offer; where is the evidence; will it provide a greater operational police presence; and will it provide a faster and more efficient delivery of other emergency services, including fire, ambulance and rescue, and, if it will, I challenge the Minister to table this evidence today?

The announcement of the super department adds confusion to an already bewildered Public Service, where individuals are spending considerable time and energy worrying about their own job. As a consequence, they are being distracted from their normal duties. The announcement of the Department of Emergency Services also coincides with the receipt by the Police Commissioner of the John Collins report. This report, which has been drafted over the past 12 months, recommends significant changes to the structure of the Police Force. The question therefore remains: will it now be necessary to undertake further studies to determine what effect a Department of Emergency Services will have on this proposed structure? In short, we have a fine Police Force and emergency services in this State that want to get on with the job of preventing and detecting crime and protecting South Australians. However, this State Government is proving to be a significant impediment to the achievement of that aim.

My first question relates to the reduced appropriation I detailed in part earlier. I refer to pages 92 and 93 of the Estimates of Payments and Receipts. I note from that document that appropriation for 1993-94 is down by \$3 034 765 against the 1992-93 expenditure. Further, I note that the 1992-93 recurrent expenditure exceeded that previously proposed by almost \$3.3 million, but the capital expenditure was down by \$2 million, resulting in an overall deficit against budget of \$1.2 million. What capital works projects were scrapped in 1992-93 to meet that financial year shortfall? What cuts to police operations had to be made in order to recover the reduced appropriation for this financial year? What allocation has been made to cover salary increases and what appropriation has been allocated to cover the staffing needs of the Bureau of Emergency Services?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** The brief answer to the first part of the question is that nothing significant was scrapped from the program. It was affected by the processes in the building industry and what was encountered in the capital works program. So nothing was deleted; it was just the outcome that can occur within budget estimates when dealing with capital works.

In looking at the overview of emergency services as a whole, regarding the concept of gaining efficiencies—particularly between some emergency services and those that have a very active operational side in the sense of a recurrent active operational role such as the police and the fire services—there are obvious areas where some level of

commonality can be enjoyed.

What has been seen is an opportunity for us to enjoy some economies of scale, which can in fact be realised by having an executive comprising each head of agency looking at opportunities to realise common usage of both assets and, of course, staff resources. Training is one area in which I think we will see some benefits in the long term, from the point of view of joint usage not only by emergency services but also by other agencies—perhaps outside private organisations could be potential beneficiaries as well.

We have communications, information technology and a range of maintenance and other service facilities that are common to all services but not specialised in some ways in all of them either. We might be able to reap rewards by having the maintenance of heavy vehicles, for example, located with the Metropolitan Fire Service. It has just established a heavy vehicle maintenance workshop and we may be able to reap benefits from its undertaking heavy maintenance work for a range of the services.

We may well find that the fleet is cared for by the Police Department for low vehicles or specific and dedicated vehicles required by the Police Department and other services. The focus would more likely be from the Police Department, but quite clearly there would be benefits as a result of the establishment of a common vehicle maintenance and service facility.

The same applies to communications: there could be benefits flowing from common use of facilities and also purchasing procedures, which would be closely correlated. But there are circumstances where, because of the unique nature of each service, that would not be practical. However, in general, those sorts of benefits can flow from the overall examination of those resources used by the emergency services area. That is the long-term benefit that will come from the establishment of an Emergency Services Bureau, as in Queensland, and that has been referred to. Certainly, from the discussions I have had with the heads of agencies here, there was seen to be some advantage in having that sort of structure in South Australia.

Each State in a sense has its own unique characteristics and perhaps this State, because of its nature and size, has some benefits that other states do not have in attempting to enjoy economies of scale from various rationalisations, reorganisations, refurbishment and rethinking of the use of resources.

That is the overview of the situation. I expect that a small office will be available for the Chief Executive Officer of the department. It is very similar to the situation with the Department of Defence, where the Secretary of the department and the heads of services are involved. Of course, in the defence situation, that would involve the head of each of the three branches of the armed services. In a sense, there is a parallel to be seen from what has been offered.

In his opening comments in relation to this question, the honourable member referred to the Collins report and the uncertainty that this has perhaps created. It is an excellent report that has given the Commissioner an opportunity to overview the whole operation of the Police Department. It is a functional document that can be used as a cornerstone or benchmark for future reference in terms of improving the delivery of services to the community from the Police Department.

The Emergency Services Bureau is a good example of what can be achieved by going through—with the support of the senior management from the Commissioner down—a

large organisation and looking at ways in which those services can be improved. I particularly want to see some closer cooperation between fire and ambulance services. Because of the unique nature of events that have transpired over the past two or three years, we have seen not a very close relationship because of ambitions that have been expressed by various groups within the fire service, whether it be CFS or MFS. We can achieve a better service to our community by bringing together some of the those common uses but still maintaining the autonomy and the uniqueness of both organisations.

**Mr MATTHEW:** I was warned before I came in here that this was to be a long afternoon because the Minister chooses to reduce the questioning lines through long answers, and then does not answer the question. It appears that the information I received was correct, because I did not get the answers I was seeking. I ask a supplementary question and will perhaps give the Minister some assistance with the information I put before him. First, he gave credence to the Collins report as a useful document to which to refer. I do not deny that. I will start by referring to page 6 of that report, which states:

At the time of preparation of this report, the details of possible departmental amalgamations had not been announced. Without knowing such details, it is difficult to be precise regarding the impact of any such amalgamation on our organisation structure proposals.

So, from the Collins report, we know they were not aware of the proposal regarding the Emergency Services Department and have acknowledged that their recommendations could change. Therefore, I ask the Minister again, will he confirm or deny that the CEO of the bureau or the Department of Emergency Services is seeking to have 15 staff, a budget of \$2 million, and certainly at least six of those staff at very senior levels, EL2 and EL3; and can he justify that and quantify that? I am not looking for the answers that he gave before, which included words such as, 'might be able to', 'may well find', 'could be benefits', 'benefits can flow', and 'I think these are the benefits'. I am after specifics. Can the Minister provide the specifics to this Committee of where the Department of Emergency Services has been costed, what the staffing needs are and where the money will be coming from?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** The money will be coming from the overall budget. I cannot confirm that the CEO is seeking 15 staff. There have not been discussions with me at this stage about numbers of staff. All I can say at this time is that it will be a small office. I see the benefits flowing from the establishment of a small office, not an office that is top heavy or inundated with senior public servants. The answer to the honourable member's question is 'No.'

**Mr MATTHEW:** My second question flows on from the first. I point out to the Minister, as he is fully aware, that the Police Commissioner is a statutory office holder with wide ranging powers. As head of the Police Department, the Commissioner has control of the police budget and has had responsibility for his civilian staff. The appointment of a Chief Executive Officer of an Emergency Services Department raises the question as to whether the Police Commissioner will retain all his powers and responsibilities or whether some of them will transfer to the new CEO. Will the ability of the Police Force to operate efficiently be affected by the Commissioner's becoming responsible to a civilian CEO for some aspects of the operations of the Police Force? Did the Minister discuss his decision to form a Department of Emergency Services with the Commissioner, did the

Commissioner support the Minister's decision and, if not, why did the Minister proceed?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** Obviously the honourable member does not understand how Government works. Let me enlighten him. The Premier makes these decisions; the Premier is responsible for the operation of the Public Service. Those decisions are made in consultation with Ministers. The Premier makes the ultimate decision and has the final responsibility.

*Mr Matthew interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** We can have a row. I am quite happy to entertain you any time. Just let me answer the question and I will stick to the topic. The position is quite clearly that I had extensive discussions with the Commissioner and other heads of agencies. In fact, the initial proposal about an emergency services bureau came from discussions I had which flowed from discussions I had with the Commissioner of Police. The Commissioner and I talked about the concept, and the initial concept, the working document, with the agreement of the other heads, was picked up by the Commissioner. The Commissioner offered to do the work on putting it together as a package. That is how this thing grew. It was then put into the process of public sector reform, and it went through that process involving the Premier. As a consequence, the proposal that was finally presented was recommended to the Premier and to Cabinet.

As to the question about statutory powers, there will be no dilution, depletion or reduction in the Commissioner's statutory powers. They will remain, and should remain. That has been made clear at any time it has been raised in the public arena. There is no interference or any attempt to interfere with the role that the Commissioner has. That is well respected and well understood, and will remain so. The Commissioner has obviously certain responsibilities in terms of administration of the justice system, and he will retain those and continue those as is appropriate. So, the clear answer to the honourable member's question is that there is no alteration to that situation. I could not comprehend how that would come about, given the statutory nature of the powers that are vested in the Commissioner of Police.

**Mr MATTHEW:** I am tempted to ask a supplementary question but will not, because I think the Minister just wishes to avoid the issue. Certainly he did not seem to endorse the bureau but preferred to handball it to the Premier. I refer to appropriation and staffing, page 222 of the Program Estimates. I note that proposed staffing for 1992-93 for general metropolitan police services was to be 1 312.6 but was reduced to 1 263.8, in other words a reduction of 49 police or quite a number of patrol teams. From where were these police removed, why, and what have been the consequences of these cuts to this section of the Police Force?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** Apparently this is a technical process that has been followed. In fact, there is no reduction in staff, I am advised. It is actually the way in which the method of recording under the human resources management system is operated. There is apparently a faster recording mechanism. The old manual systems of personnel practices 20 years ago were very slow. The new system now provides a much faster record of where people are, so there is a better and more accurate picture of the structure and staff numbers. That is what I am advised by the officers.

**Mr MATTHEW:** As a supplementary question, the simple fact is that the document shows a reduction in actual staff for 1992-93 against those proposed. Either there was a reduction in staff or there was not. If there was not, the



document should reflect that. If there was and it is reflected correctly, where did those staff go?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** The advice from my officer is that it reflects the system. If the honourable member is not satisfied with that, we can arrange for a detailed response so we can explain exactly how that operates. That is the answer according to the person responsible for the budget line. I cannot give any more information than that at this time.

**Mr De LAINE:** I understand the Salisbury area is likely to increase in population in the next few years and that the incidence of crime in the area is also increasing. In view of this it is necessary that there be a policing presence in the area. What action, if any, has been taken to address these problems?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** As the member for Price has said, there has been concern for some time about the Salisbury situation, and this matter has been taken up by numerous members. Projections of future population in the Salisbury area from various State and local government agencies have shown that considerable population increases are likely in the next few years. The incidence of crime in that area is increasing and it is considered vital to provide a policing presence in that area to conform to the principles that we have established of community policing.

The department has been in contact with the Department of Technical and Further Education and a mutually beneficial land swap is to be arranged. A site is now available and therefore detailed documentation will commence in 1992-93 to construct a new patrol base in Salisbury. The site is within the Mary Street-Ann Street-Wiltshire Street area, and it is anticipated that construction will commence in November 1993 with completion by December 1994. The expenditure proposed for 1991-92 was \$193 000, is estimated at \$2 million this year, and in 1994-95 leading up to completion it is estimated at \$306 000, which is \$2.5 million for the completion of the patrol base.

**Mr De LAINE:** I understand that the current facilities for weapons training within the department are inadequate to provide effective firearms training to police officers. I think all members of this Committee would agree that it is imperative that police officers have proper firearms facilities in order to be trained and to protect themselves in the community in the event of armed confrontation. What action has been taken to address this situation?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** This matter has been raised, particularly with the introduction of the new regulations, by a number of people in the community, and they have expressed some concerns about their position as experienced users of firearms versus police officers. Some of those comments are very sensible, while others can be described as being fairly unreasonable. One has to be aware of the facilities available to police officers for training in the use of firearms, and I refer to all aspects of weapons used by the Police Department.

The present facilities for weapons training are at the Echungu Police Reserve. The facilities are in the open and are very basic, with the result that inclement weather prevents effective training. There is a high volume of training involved, with all officers requiring constant refresher training. Recent attention to the need to improve firearms training has arisen as a result of specific occupational safety issues and the findings of the recent Coroner's inquiry.

The construction of modern indoor facilities at the Police Academy was considered to be the most appropriate way to ensure proper training and to ensure also that the depart-

ment's obligations in the area of occupational safety are covered. I am sure that all members would support that. Obviously the Coroner's finding stimulated considerable debate within the general community and I am sure that, as a consequence, attention was focused on the need for police training versus the training that security officers or sporting shooters go through.

The overall cost of the project is \$1.9 million, and when completed the facility will provide a 10-lane range with a computerised target system, firing simulation area and classroom training. Its construction will commence this year with completion in the next two months. Hopefully that will give the assurance that the public is looking for in regard to police officers being properly trained in the use of firearms.

**Mr De LAINE:** After reading an article in a Western Australian paper about a Neighbourhood Watch program being operated in Bunbury, my colleague the member for Albert Park asked a question in this place on 17 December 1983 of the then Minister of Emergency Services, the Hon. Gavin Keneally. He asked: would the Minister investigate the possibility of introducing a Neighbourhood Watch concept of community policing here in South Australia? Shortly after that, Neighbourhood Watch was launched here in South Australia. On 17 November this year we will see the tenth anniversary of that initial question. What has been the progress of the concept of Neighbourhood Watch in South Australia over the past decade?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** It has been a very successful program in the sense of the overall community safety, which has been a very strong theme for the South Australian Police Department and this Government. As at 30 June this year 337 Neighbourhood Watch areas have been established, each with an average of 700 homes per Neighbourhood Watch area. There are 161 areas on the waiting list and the program has resulted in the reduction of several areas of crime being committed throughout our community. At the same time 42 Rural Watch areas have been established. The important aspect in terms of community safety is the involvement of the community in this program. It is bringing together the community and re-establishing the old values that existed when we had more time, there was no television and everyone did not have two automobiles—or one at least; when people actually knew who their neighbours were and spent time with them. It is actually getting people to communicate again, and that is a very important aspect of this community policing-community safety program.

In addition to that it is bringing the local police officers into contact on a regular basis with the local community, so again it is re-establishing that important relationship that I know existed when I was a kid. We knew who the local sergeant was; his kids went to our school, and we did the same things as they did; we knew they lived in the community and went to the same church, and so on. Technology has changed, and the demands on police resources and police officers have changed dramatically, and this is where Neighbourhood Watch has brought back that link between members of the community and the police officer, re-establishing the confidence between both, so that there is a greater understanding and communication. I am sure all members have been to their local Neighbourhood Watch meetings on occasions. The usual thing is that, if the meeting is well supported, it creates a relationship which has humour, vitality and strength for the community as a whole, and there is a closeness which I think those people who have become involved in Neighbourhood Watch appreciate and which was

not present in the community before the Neighbourhood Watch era.

I go back to the days when I am told the local police officer would hop on his bike, whether it was a motorised version or a pedal variety, and ride around to advise the family if they have a new son or daughter. That sort of policing is well and truly gone, but I have been told about it by my parents, and it was quite valuable in drawing the community together. The police officer was an integral part along with the teacher and the family doctor and all those other important service providers within the community. The achievements of Neighbourhood Watch, Rural Watch, School Watch and other programs which have been established as part of our community safety strategy are a significant part of that and, with over 13 000 volunteers involved, it is a very significant community resource and one that we must ensure continues indefinitely, to preserve not only the safety of our community but the fibre that exists to ensure links between all levels.

Some areas have difficulty in maintaining enthusiasm, and that is unfortunate. The Police Department needs to be reassured that there will be community support when it establishes a Neighbourhood Watch area. The community must want to have Neighbourhood Watch. It is no good five or six people, the ones who are involved in Rotary and every other service organisation, church and community group, doing the same things again. Neighbourhood Watch needs a support network, and the community needs to get behind the police and support it. It is fine for the Police Department to provide Neighbourhood Watch, but its success relies very much on the support of the local community. The tenth anniversary will be the time to look back and reflect on the success of Neighbourhood Watch over the past few reporting periods in reducing various levels of crime. I will ask the Commissioner to provide some details on the success of the Neighbourhood Watch program.

**Mr Hunt:** Part of the central drive for the Neighbourhood Watch scheme, which is part of our overall crime prevention strategy, is aimed at property crime. The major area of concern which induces fear in people for their safety and wellbeing is housebreaking. I am pleased to be able to say that in 1991-92 there was an 11.6 per cent reduction and in the current year to June 1993 there has been a further reduction of 2.3 per cent in those types of crime.

Another matter that is of grave concern to the community is motor vehicle theft: in 1991-92 there was a 15.9 per cent reduction and in the current year to June 1993 there has been a further 12.2 per cent reduction. On that basis, with the effort and input into Neighbourhood Watch and other crime prevention programs, we regard these as very satisfactory results.

**Mr VENNING:** Page 223 of the Program Estimates refers to road safety: why has it been necessary to axe six staff in this area (four in 1992-93 and a further two in 1993-94); why has the road safety budget been cut by \$519 000 as against the 1992-93 appropriation, and what effect will this have on road safety, particularly when we realise that road accidents have increased, as the Minister would know?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** About \$450 000 applies to special funds for one-off non-recurring equipment purchases in 1992-93, which related to the department's acquisition of a black spot program. That is a one-off exercise that was recognised in the 1992-93 budget, and that accounts for those figures. The honourable member is referring to a \$452 000 variation between \$14.126 million and \$13.674 million

mentioned on page 223 of the Program Estimates under 'Road safety'.

**Mr Venning:** If that is so, why were those figures not included in capital expenditures?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** They were funded through the recurrent line. It is income from the Commonwealth.

**Mr VENNING:** Neighbourhood Watch, Rural Watch, Business Watch and School Watch programs are referred to on page 229 of the Program Estimates. The waiting list for the Neighbourhood Watch program appears to be five years. If the Government is serious about crime prevention, I would expect an increase in crime prevention staff to cater for community needs; however, crime prevention and community liaison staff appear to have reduced in number. What does the Minister propose to do to reduce the waiting list for Neighbourhood Watch programs?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** As I said earlier, one aspect of the Neighbourhood Watch program is the need for the police to have community support. I am not sure whether the member for Custance has discovered this in his electorate, but in my electorate through maintaining close contact with the local inspector of police in charge of the region I have seen clear indication from his officers that there needs to be community support. In one Neighbourhood Watch group in my electorate, which covers the area in which my electorate office is situated, there has been a drop-off of support. That has put inordinate pressure on police officers to maintain and support that group. They must rally around in order to maintain enthusiasm within the organisation, and that puts enormous pressure on those people who are committed to maintaining Neighbourhood Watch. That is one of the uncertainties involved in the equation. The community must be seen to support it. In other areas, there is strong enthusiasm, and the police can let the group run on its own energy.

One of the things that cause delays is the demand that is placed on the police because they do not get overall community support in the area. That factor must be built in. I will ask the Commissioner to answer this question as he has first-hand knowledge of the situation regarding delays in the establishment of Neighbourhood Watch programs.

**Mr Hunt:** It is of grave concern to the department that there is a waiting list. However, it is reassuring that there is such a clamour for the staffing and opening of Neighbourhood Watch, Rural Watch, Business Watch and many other watch areas. We have learned from our experiences in other places where watch areas have been put in place and then not supported by the community at large and/or the integration of the police officer component. We must tread slowly and surely. As a result, we have a proud record in South Australia of not yet having lost a Neighbourhood Watch area. Some have been amalgamated into larger areas, but we have not yet lost an area, an experience that I think no other jurisdiction can boast.

So, it is for those kinds of reasons that we go very slowly and do it in a very organised way, making sure that we are the maintenance factor in all those areas and ensure their long-term success.

**Mr VENNING:** I have some difficulty working out the answer to that, because there is almost a contradiction between what the Minister said and what the Commissioner said. From what the Minister said, I believe the waiting list was there only because there was no community cooperation or community desire for it. However, the Commissioner seemed to give a more detailed and professional answer. If a community wants any of these volunteer watches—whether

it be neighbourhood, rural, business or school—can it have them?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** That is a matter for the Police Department to determine. It has a program it follows, and it decides what resources it has available to establish a service. It assesses the demands for Neighbourhood Watch placed before it, and it assesses whether it can supply that service. I am not sure what the member is driving at, but obviously the resources are not available. I do not know of any police service in the world—and I have had discussions with a number of them—that can instantly put in place a matrix of neighbourhood watches across a country. They are still introducing the concept in the United Kingdom in various locations, and it has been going there for a number of years. They are doing the same in parts of Europe, as well. It will happen as time and resources permit.

I am sure the Commissioner can reinforce what I have said in that sense, but it is a matter for the Police Department to work effectively through what resources it has and look at its program. The Commissioner has said, as I have said, that it needs community support. The local police want to see a clear indication from the community that they want Neighbourhood Watch so the community can carry their responsibilities and their share of supporting it, and not just fall back on the police officers who then have to carry it over the line. That is exceptionally unfair and defeats the main reason for having Neighbourhood Watch, which is to bring together the community for their own safety and to protect their well being.

**Mr VENNING:** Three quarters of that answer was what I was looking for in the first instance. It is not so much the community's being prepared for it but having the resources to do it. I am concerned that five years is too long when people want these programs very badly. It would appear from the Minister's answer that the resources are not there.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** That is not correct—I am not saying that at all. I am saying that these processes are introduced. Neighbourhood Watch has been introduced over a period, and it is still being introduced. It is an ongoing process. We have 377 sectors in place now, and the number will continue to grow. Not all communities have indicated interest in it. Interest has grown as the concept has spread throughout the State. As we have said, there are still 161 sectors to be addressed.

*Mr Venning interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** That's the case everywhere. It is exactly the same in Victoria, New South Wales and around the country. The resources are there to introduce it over a period, and that will continue.

**Mr VENNING:** I refer to firearms regulations on page 222 of the Program Estimates. I note 1992-93 expenditure in this area increased by 38 per cent over budget to \$1 310 million and that three extra staff were employed. Further, I note this higher level of recurrent expenditure is to be maintained in 1993-94. Are all these increases attributable to the new Firearms Act and regulations?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** The breakdown of that is \$364 000, and the increase is mainly due to lower staff attrition, a more timely salary cost attribution of staff movements and, following the introduction of the new human resources management system (and no-one on that side of the House seems convinced), an increased cost of accommodation for Flinders Central.

**Mr VENNING:** I note that, despite the extra expenditure of \$1 310 000 and three extra staff being employed, 14 308

firearm licences are still outstanding. Of these, the report states that 1 347 owners were deceased, with the whereabouts of their firearms to be determined. It states that 3 673 licence holders could not be located, and 3 044 licences were cancelled. At this rate it will take more than 7 years to clear the backlog, assuming that extra work generated for the police by the new Firearms Act and regulations does not cause further delays. What action does the Minister plan to rectify the problem?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I am not sure where the honourable member pulled those figures from, but I am sure that, with regard to the time estimated to deal with the backlog, quite obviously we must look in light of what existed previously because we are, in a sense, chasing the horse. We are not introducing something that is brand new to the community: it is an existing practice, and people have had access to firearms in a much more relaxed way. We are putting in place a responsible system for the administration of firearms.

One thing that we keep forgetting when we get into this debate is the police officers who have to go out in these situations—and we had one last night in Brisbane—and confront people who are disturbed because of a variety of events or through illness, who are erratic and who are perhaps not in control of their faculties. The police have to apprehend these people and create a manageable situation while endeavouring to protect hostages and ensuring that lives are not lost. They put their life on the line when they do that, and I strongly endorse the Police Department in its proposition, which the Government has supported wherever it has been initiated (and I know that the Commissioner and I are at one on this), with respect to the inordinate need to have protection and safety in our community. As part of that policy, we recognise the need for legitimate and responsible people to have access to firearms at the appropriate time. For example, many of the honourable member's constituents need to deal with feral animals.

**Mr VENNING:** Most of them.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I am particularly thinking of the farming sector. I am not sure about townfolk. I am more focused on the farmer or grazier who needs to deal with feral animals—whether it be a fox or whatever—that are killing their stock, and one has to be conscious of that. I freely acknowledge that I have taken a lot of advice from the Police Department. I came to this area late in the day, and a lot more people are more expert in this area than I am. One is sitting next to me, namely, the Commissioner as the Registrar. I have to accede—and I willingly do so—to the information that is provided to me in relation to the management of firearms in this State. What we have put in place—although obviously it has caused discomfort to some people—is manageable. Numerous country members have said, 'What about Bill Smith, who needs a particular type of ammunition that can be supplied through his general local store on order from a firearms dealer?'

I know that situation can be dealt with, so there is a reasonable, practical way of that farmer having access to that ammunition because he has a very legitimate reason to have it. The legislation is constructed to support that individual. As I say, to a large extent the problem has been created, but we have a chance of curtailing it. We want as much as possible to establish a system which will keep to a minimum the opportunities for people who are irresponsible, careless or who deliberately go out to commit a crime with a firearm.

That is what we have aimed at. It is not perfect, and anyone who claimed it was perfect would be kidding themselves and kidding the public at large. However, in my opinion it is a good attempt, on the advice and the collective negotiations that have occurred in this area, and as a result of the select committees that have been involved over the past five years. I came in late in the piece, but from what I have seen and from what has been given to me by way of advice, from not only the Police Department but other sources, we have come up with a reasonably satisfactory arrangement that can provide a reasonable level of safety for the community.

The other thing I must say to the member for Custance relates to this issue of people who have a domestic violence order against them or some other misdemeanour involving the use of firearms going on to the national information system. I strongly support that in respect of situations where the police have to stabilise an incident, retrieve hostages or whatever, because it enables them to assess the situation and the potential offender. I think that it gives us overall coverage. In relation to the honourable member's specific question, I guess it would be appropriate if I referred it to the Commissioner, who is the Registrar of Firearms.

**Mr Hunt:** Right from the very outset of the introduction of the firearms registration and licensing system, which was computerised back in 1980, there has been a concern about the level of non-renewals. In fact, at the end of June 1993 the total number of licences on file was 114 209, and the total of non-renewed licences was 14 308. As a result, and given the Auditor-General's comments over the years, a number of strategies have been put in place to ensure that we are proactive and that we resort to first reminder notices and second reminder notices and other inquiries, but it is fairly apparent that for one reason or another there is not full support by the licence holders.

At first glance it might appear that it is due to economic distress or other reasons, but there are a number of reasons why people do not renew. First and foremost, 1 347 of those persons were deceased; 3 673 persons could not be located, and that is not an unusual circumstance in this day and age when people are much more mobile now from one State to another; 3 044 persons have cancelled their licences; and 6 244 persons have not renewed their licence because they have done something illegal with their firearm and/or it has been confiscated or for a number of other reasons. Strategies have been put in place over the years but, unfortunately, a number of people still do not comply.

In recent years the Auditor-General's Report has commented on the slow progress by the department in reducing the number of registered firearm owners who have expired licences. The audit suggested additional resources (and that is where the three people came from) be allocated to address this matter. It is for those kinds of reasons, and in compliance with the Auditor-General's advice, that we have put added resources into the firearms inquiry section in order to minimise the number of expired or unexpired licences.

**Mr McKEE:** I refer to page 94 of the Estimates of Payments and Receipts under 'Victims of crime', and in particular the sexual assault unit. It is particularly disturbing to hear of cases of sexual assault almost every day through the media. What action, if any, is being taken to address the needs of victims of sexual assault?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** This has had enormous focus in our community. These statistics constantly come up, and we recognise the community awareness in respect of this area. We see it at all levels. As a consequence, people are being

encouraged to come forward, and the media have been playing this one right to the end of the line—nine to the power of 10, if you can envisage the extent to which they have exploited the whole drama of it—some very tastefully and some rather appallingly, from what I have seen. However, they have a role to play, in my view, because a massive education campaign is required. The media have a very strong role to play in conveying the message about what is happening within our society because we need to change.

I guess the focus comes back on men, predominantly, but it is a community issue and not just focused on men. There has to be a community review of where we are going with regard to expectations and the roles that we play in society. I know that is happening progressively with a whole range of aspects and attitudes. What the police have to do is pick up the bits, and that is no easy task. It is certainly something that has to be dealt with very carefully. The sexual assault unit is located in the Adelaide police station building and is staffed by 12 police officers and a supervisor who provide 24-hour service to victims in the metropolitan and near country areas.

The reports that I have had from people who have had contact with this unit suggest that it is outstanding and probably the best of its kind in Australia. There is enormous community confidence in this unit and the work that it has been doing. I have not heard one word of criticism about it—all I have heard is praise. I am not sure what other members have heard, but from day-to-day in my electorate I have certain matters brought to my attention—sadly—and usually they are complaints about some other part of the process; they are certainly not about the support that is offered through this unit of the Police Department.

The unit, in its process of picking up the pieces, is essentially responsible for the preparation of statements by victims who have suffered sexual assault and arranging the provision of medical examinations and other support services, thereby facilitating the investigation process, which they follow through. The members of the sexual assault unit are involved as support persons to victims at pre-trial conferences with prosecution authorities. This system is designed to lessen the trauma to victims as they progress through the court system. During 1992-93 the sexual assault unit assisted 834 victims, compared with 515 the previous year.

That reinforces the view as to what is happening in our community as people come out and many things are no longer taboo. It is actually spoken of in an open sense. The stress on those individuals must be enormous and, of course, the pressure on the police who deal with this on a daily basis must be enormous. The emotional impact on those officers must be quite extraordinary in the circumstances, and I can imagine the pressure they are under to keep up with the work load when the number of victims goes up from 500 to 800. It is a pretty hefty increase to deal with.

Recent changes to the Summary Procedures Act permits the videotaping of victims' allegations from persons who are illiterate or mentally retarded and, of course, the video facilities have been utilised by the sexual assault unit. The cost for 1992-93 was \$575 000.

Finally, from all reports, I commend these officers and what they are doing. It is an outstanding unit of the South Australian Police Department. Sadly it is a unit that has to be there, but in being there it has achieved a great deal and it continues to provide an excellent and outstanding service to our community.

**Mr McKEE:** I refer to page 96 of the Estimates of Payments and Receipts and capital payments in relation to

Elizabeth. For some time concerns have been expressed regarding the inadequate accommodation facilities for the police at Elizabeth. I now understand that a new Elizabeth police and courts complex has been built and that the police component is now operational. Can the Minister provide details of this facility and the costs involved?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** This impressive building, which is on Main North Road, is a quite outstanding building structurally. It is worth looking at as a visitor rather than in any other role. I prefer to stay that way myself. Of course, the Police Department has been very sensitive to and conscious of the various accommodation needs. Our officers at Elizabeth had to confront difficulties and overcome them.

A unique relationship has to be established between the courts and the police and that has to be realised in constructing any facility. The two entities have to link very closely, yet one is the body responsible for the administration of the law and the other, in a sense, is responsible for the judicial function of the law. They have to be seen to be separate in the eyes of the community. That poses particular issues that the Commissioner and his staff had to confront in negotiations with the Courts Department in getting this new facility in place. However, in doing so, some improvements were undertaken in various areas of the development of the new facility, for example, in the installation of additional surveillance cameras and improved lighting within the facility. The department considered the long-term needs at Elizabeth for new accommodation and cells in conjunction with the courts building.

Funding was approved in 1991 and budgeted to proceed with detailed documentation, proceeding on the basis of the construction of two separate buildings, one for the police and one for the courts, on the site immediately north of the former complex. The redevelopment included the provision of a new police station patrol base, cell facilities, staff amenities and stores on the ground floor. The first floor incorporates the divisional headquarters, CIB offices and prosecution services. External facilities include parking for police staff as well as for operational vehicles.

The redevelopment of the court has included the provision of seven secure courtrooms, children's court, magistrates chambers, administration, public areas, interview rooms and an enclosed car park for magistrates. I am advised by the Commissioner that the building has come in ahead of time and below budget. So it is a good news story from that point of view and certainly from the point of view of the overall budget. Completion was estimated at \$16.482 million, of which the police component is \$7.34 million. It will provide up-to-date facilities for our officers in the delivery of those services in the Elizabeth area.

**Mr McKEE:** I refer again to page 96 of the Estimates of Payments and Receipts in regard to road safety for school students. It is my understanding that the department conducts a youth driver education program as part of its road safety awareness campaign. Can the Minister outline in more detail the objectives and benefits of the program, including an indication of the number of youths who benefit annually as a result of the program?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I am delighted to be able to respond to this question, because the issue of driver safety is constantly raised. I am sure all members have this matter brought to their attention. It confuses me as to how we continue as a community to accept this slaughter on the roads. It is not that I have seen it on a regular basis but, again, only last Thursday week I was on my usual Thursday night jog

with my jogging group and heard a screech and a crunch, and sadly another of our community members became the victim of a road accident.

We just seem to go on ignoring it. If it were a war and we were losing 160 people a year, we would have people shouting in the streets. How is it that we accept this? Is it seen as a right to drive or should it be regarded as a privilege? I think that children today see it as a privilege. The community is spreading a message, and our agencies, particularly the police, have taken up the challenge—and it is a huge challenge—to educate our young people about the dangers of driving, speed, carelessness and lack of attention and, of course, use of drugs and alcohol when behind the wheel.

I notice a greater degree of concern about and attention to care on the roads from younger people whom I have seen in the community. However, we still have to reach many more people. As part of that, our Traffic Safety Section conducts youth driver education programs. From time to time members have probably seen police cars with markings referring to the youth driver education program. Those very useful support programs are sponsored by SGIC. Of course, SGIC has been involved in road safety programs with the South Australian Police Department and the Department of Road Transport over a number of years.

These driver safety sessions consist of two sessions of two hours duration, and they highlight attitudes, road crash causations, defensive driving techniques, and alcohol and driving. Every high school, college and area school is included in the program, which enjoys the approval of all school principals. Of course, the Government strongly supports this. Six members are employed full-time in YDE and the State Government Insurance Commission sponsors the program by paying the cost of the salaries of four members, six vehicles and a range of lecturing aids.

Of course, the objective of the youth driver education program is to reduce the number of young people involved in road accidents. Sadly, we have to continue to focus on this as we go on. The main strategies are to create awareness of the cause of road crashes, the consequence of drinking and driving and the laws pertaining to driving and their enforcement, knowing that we have benefits that flow from this and the widespread promotion of safe driving attitudes and improved communications between specialist traffic officers and young road users. Last financial year, 16 500 students involved in years 11 and 12 were included in the youth driver education program. In addition, student volunteers at schools are trained in safe and efficient management of marked cross walks and school pedestrian crossings. During the 1992-93 financial year, 9 173 students involving 187 groups were trained. It is an outstanding program.

People keep asking why we are not doing more of this. We are doing it and we are involving a large proportion of our students. If people were aware of this, they would be less critical of what is being attempted. In addition, last year 275 groups, involving 9 000 students, received instruction from the Traffic Safety Section, provided through the Children's Road Safety Education and Cycle Safety to School community groups and safety school program. An extensive program is available and it goes beyond that, where we see a major thrust in trying to bring driver education home to our young people.

**Mr MATTHEW:** At this juncture I point out that this Committee has been considering these budget lines for the past 1½ hours and during that time each side has put forward six questions apiece. The time of Parliament is expensive, as

is the time of the Minister's senior officers. I hope that in the remaining time the Minister will try to use that expensive time constructively and answer the questions in a concise and direct manner.

*Members interjecting:*

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr MATTHEW:** I refer to page 235 of the Program Estimates, in particular to the statement under '1993-94 Specific Targets and Objectives', that is, 'to further enhance the Justice Information System by integration with other operational police systems'. I assume by this statement that reference is being made to the operations systems integration project known by the department as OSI. I also note from page 21 of the Capital Works Program that it is planned to spend almost \$2 million on the operation systems integration project in 1993-94 of an estimated \$4 049 000. I also note from the previous year's capital works that this expenditure was originally expected to be only \$2 290 000. I am also aware that Aspect Computing was paid a consultancy of \$56 000 in 1991-92 to devise the project. Why has the cost blown out by so much; who calculated the original cost; what other consultancy work has since been undertaken or is presently being undertaken and, again, at what cost?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I understand that the honourable member asked the Attorney-General a similar question in relation to this area. I would appreciate being given some latitude in responding, as I need to go through in reasonable detail the explanation of the question. It was the first part of the question that the honourable member asked the Attorney-General in the Estimates Committee. The following information will provide a satisfactory explanation to the question asked with regard to the budget position.

The original OSI project was shown in the 1992-93 Capital Works Program at a cost of \$2.29 million, as referred to by the honourable member. However, to separate from this, a funding requirement for an infrastructure upgrade and development of a charging system were identified. The \$4.049 million now referred to as the estimated cost of OSI is merely the aggregate of the funding requirements for OSI. The charging system development and infrastructure upgrade as per the police OSI business case incorporates additional development required if the OSI business case was adopted, offset by a lesser infrastructure upgrade. If we follow the advice of the consultants, we will see as an outcome a situation where we are retained within the budget estimates. It is now evident that these figures should be shown separately until the final approach is adopted to avoid confusion.

However, no actual allocation has been made beyond the \$1.996 million shown in the budget papers. Further allocation will depend on the outcome of the current review of the business case. So that covers the point made. As I indicated earlier, if the consultants are still working and if they follow the path which has been established, when we are able to do that, we will make these figures separate to avoid any confusion in the following budget.

**Mr MATTHEW:** By way of supplementary question, I appreciate the Minister's answer. I am concerned about the current review that is undertaking additional development that may be necessary. As part of that initial development, will it be necessary for the existing JIS programs for police to be rewritten in Adabas Natural and, if so, why was this software chosen and why was the decision to move away from Culinet software and IDMS made in the first place?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I think I touched on that by referring to what the consultants were currently consider-

ing—they are currently considering what the honourable member has raised as a question. It is anticipated that the result of the review will determine that the OSI development should not include any conversions of systems but rather be based on the building of a series of interfaces which provide the integration at the user level. This approach will still provide police with the system integration required, yet will allow the JIS processing scenario review to continue as planned. This revised approach is still subject to cost and time frame considerations together with an analysis of the cost benefits of the police migrating all systems to another environment. In the meantime, the department continues to lease the Hitachi main frame computer.

**Mr MATTHEW:** With the indulgence of the Committee, a further supplementary question is necessary, because this is a complex matter. The Minister made reference to a question I asked the Attorney-General last week in the Estimates Committee. That was a question about the future of IDMS data base and Culinet software. During that Committee, the Systems Manager for the Courts Department made quite clear that IDMS was no longer being developed as a main frame tool by the owning software company and therefore indicated that the Courts Department was moving away to a different data base, that of Oracle. He also indicated that it would be necessary to build bridging software.

The Minister has just told the Committee that it would be necessary to build bridging software between JIS and the Police Department, so we now have one computer system that was originally to be one whole system with the courts splitting off on a different data base, building bridges, and with police splitting off with different software, again building bridges. There are many expensive blow-outs possible here. Has the Minister or his representative discussed with the Courts Department its changes, have all the cost ramifications of this potentially very costly move been calculated out and, if so, what is the cost?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I understand that the consultants are in contact with the Courts Department and its considerations are being taken into account by the consultants in the process of this review. I stress that I have to await the results, as does the honourable member. I cannot give any further information at this time. I can hear what he says about the potential for interface and the need to build in interface mechanisms between police and courts, but I have to wait, as will the Police Department and the Courts Department, to see what the consultant reports on this matter.

**Mr MATTHEW:** My second question refers to a statement on page 235 of the Program Estimates, under '1993-94 Targets and Objectives', that is, 'to continue to implement the initiatives contained in the current information technology strategic plan and to develop a new integrated information technology strategic plan which takes account of computing and communications requirements'. When I analysed the OSI project, I naturally became concerned, having also looked at the courts and the direction that computing in the legal area and the Police Department was taking. I am therefore surprised that this particular statement makes reference to the development of a new integrated strategic plan which takes into account computing and communications requirements.

What has been in the information technology strategic plan, if it did not take into account the very basics of computing and communications requirements—items which should have been the structure of any such plan—and does

this lack of account mean that moneys spent on implementing the current plan have been wasted?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** It is probably useful for Mr Hughes to respond to the question from the member for Bright, but I understand there were in fact two separate plans: one dealing with computing and one with communications, which with the new technology are now being brought together as an overall strategic plan for the communication requirements as set out in the statement on page 235. In order to give the member a firsthand and detailed response I will ask Mr Hughes to do so.

**Mr Hughes:** I think the Minister has virtually answered the question anyway. It is true that we had a separate strategic plan for our radio communications, and that commenced in the early 1980s and has been recently completed. We also had a separate computing plan, which is almost nearing completion, and as with most plans, before you reach the end of the life of the system you need to be looking ahead. With the merging technologies it is now necessary and advisable to incorporate both computing and communications aspects in the one plan, and we are looking at that proposal.

**Mr MATTHEW:** I realise that a lot of the work done on these plans precedes the Minister coming into his present portfolio, but I remind the Minister, as I am sure he probably is aware, that for a number of years the Auditor-General has criticised the Police Department for its lack of integrated technology plan. Why has it taken until this time for action to be taken to integrate this plan, and will the Minister give his personal guarantee that he will ensure that at last it is done and done properly?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I am aware of the member's comments about this. The former report of the Auditor-General at page 128, under the heading Police Department—Information Technology, states:

Significant progress was achieved during the year in implementing the IT strategic plan. Several systems have been developed or redeveloped during the financial year and the major system commented on previously, the Human Resources Management System—previously referred to by me on several occasions—

commenced operation on 6 August 1992.

So, I think that there is a reasonable response from the Auditor-General in regard to the Police Department's approach to information technology. I will defer to Mr Hughes to comment on that matter because he has been in contact with the Auditor-General's office and has a firsthand knowledge of what has transpired in conversations between the Auditor-General's office and the Police Department.

**Mr Hughes:** It is true that in past years the Auditor-General did comment on the rate of progress with our IT strategic plan, and the comment referred to by the Minister which was made by the Auditor-General in 1992 was relevant to that progress. During the lead-up to the current Auditor-General's Report I had discussions with the Auditor-General's staff, and they are happy with the rate of progress being made with the strategic plan, to the best of my knowledge. They are aware that, apart from the operational system's integration, the plan is substantially completed and within budget.

It may be also worth noting that, as a part of the Cabinet approval to approve the department's IT strategic plan, the Commissioner entered into an arrangement whereby he provides a six-monthly report to the Government Management Board on progress with the plan. I have several letters from the Government Management Board. When it received

the first report the board wrote a letter to the Commissioner dated 13 April 1992 which states:

I note the significant progress that your department has made in initiating the plan, and in particular the progress that you have made in firmly establishing the key management aspects which will be necessary to guide and direct the plan. . .

In responding to the December report the Government Management Board wrote a further letter to the Commissioner dated 20 January 1993. The letter states:

I believe that the department should be commended for the quality of the document [the six-monthly report] in terms of its presentation, depth and clarity—in particular, the way in which it has presented project plan and status information for each of the projects. . . I understand that the progress made is such that all of the projects are expected to be on schedule. . . . with exception of the OSI project.

In May of this year the Government Management Board again wrote to the Commissioner. The letter states:

From the document, I understand that the progress being made is such that all projects are expected to be on schedule and within the budget agreed with Cabinet in May 1991, with the possible exception of the Operational Systems Integration project. This project is of very great significance in achieving the benefits of the Information Technology Strategic plan. As I have indicated to you, I would be pleased to help in resolving the issues arising from this project in conjunction with your partners in the Justice Information System project.

So, we have since submitted another six-monthly annual report as at the end of June and I do not have the response from the Government Management Board with me, but I think that clearly indicates that progress with our plan is being monitored on an ongoing basis by both the Auditor-General and the Government Management Board.

**Mr MATTHEW:** I am pleased to hear they are monitoring it, because close monitoring it does need. I refer to page 222 of the Program Estimates against the line 'Administration of TIN expiations'. This question also relates to question on notice NO. 355, which I asked of the Minister and to which he replied, concerning details of expiation notices related to speed camera offences by police vehicles. The figures provided to me by the Minister show an increase in expiation notices issued to police officers by 304 per cent, from 149 such notices in 1990-91 to 603 such notices in 1991-92. The Minister's answer also showed that, in 1991-92, 106 police personnel were required to pay their own fines, which is an increase of 125 per cent, and 497 such notices were withdrawn. Does the Minister have comparative figures available for 1992-93, and what are the criteria used to determine whether or not police personnel should pay for the infringement notice that they may receive when driving a vehicle?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** Because of the nature of the detail that is warranted in the response, could we take those questions on notice in relation to the statistics? I am advised that we do not have those figures with us, but we will get them certainly. In relation to the criteria, again I think we would need to prepare a detailed response to give the honourable member the full picture of the circumstances where these notices are waived when a police officer is involved. The Commissioner could give you a general comment about that, and I am sure he would be happy to do so, but it may be better if we take it on notice and give you a proper and appropriate response, thereby leaving time for other questions.

**Mr MATTHEW:** I am advised by senior police officers that speed cameras could be affecting police response times. In fact, they claim that, because there are so many speed cameras on the road and so many police officers have had to

pay fines, they are less likely to hurry out to a call, and they adhere to the speed limit. They claim that, as a consequence, for any item that is not classified as category 1, call-out times have lengthened.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** That is a significant question that warrants a response now. I will ask the Commissioner to respond as the senior officer responsible for that area.

**Mr Hunt:** In general terms, the culpability or responsibility of a police officer is no less than that of a citizen when it comes to breaking the law. Some rules, which the Minister has said we will supply in detail, are laid down, but in general circumstances, if there is no valid reason why a police officer on duty is breaking the law, he or she must pay. This affects not only police vehicles but other Government and emergency vehicles and anyone else who might be going about the course of their duties.

Certain provisions under the Road Traffic Act exempt emergency vehicles from specified sections of the Act, but each case is reviewed. I assure the honourable member that there is no favouritism in any of those considerations. The point about whether or not an officer will have an affected response time ought not to present itself as a major problem, because in each case the general rule of safe driving applies whether or not the officer is going to an urgent case. Each case is judged on its merits, and I do not for one moment think that the existence of speed cameras has an intrusive effect on response times to any category of call for assistance from members of the public.

**Mr HERON:** I refer to page 21 of the capital works program for 1993-94: commencement of the PATROL project in the South Australian Police Department. What does PATROL mean and how will it aid the fight against crime?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I stress that this is a pilot program. PATROL, which stands for the Patrol Assistance Tasking Reports Operational Logs project, is aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of systems which support operational police and management and providing a platform for coordinated technical solutions allowing direct data entry and access to police information systems.

The technology available to our officers includes laptop technology that is available for use in their ordinary day-to-day responsibilities and duties. Objectives of the PATROL program include: the provision of a fault tolerant digital communications platform for both data and digital voice networks on a State-wide basis with critical linkages into national networks; direct incident entry at police stations; direct field data entry at crime scenes; and direct field data access. All members would be aware, as I am certain are you, Mr Chairman, of the need for security of police communications. There is ongoing debate about the media not being terribly helpful on occasions when they appear at events. We hope that this trial period will bring forward a method of communication that will give not only data information to the police officer but security in the transmission of information to and from a police officer.

The system will result in significant improvements to patrol despatching efficiencies with direct benefits to the provision of police services to the community, as well as providing timely access to managerial information. We have provided \$384 000 in this year's capital works program to enable IBM system 88 (COMCEN) hardware and software upgrades to data network expansion for direct entry of incidents at metropolitan police stations (17) and minor software upgrades, which will significantly improve the ability of COMCEN to determine incoming emergency call

numbers and improve the response time to pertinent information and danger levels of suspects; an interim trial to be conducted on an automatic vehicle location system to determine feasibility, practicality and savings advantages; and a trial to be conducted on personal computer terminals. The project will be subject to business case and consideration within the work being done for the new IT strategic plan before proceeding. So, it will fit into the overall plans which are now being considered and which I mentioned earlier.

**Mr HERON:** The community, in the interests of road safety, has been concerned at the danger of high speed pursuits made necessary by a small group of offenders. What action, if any, has been taken to reduce the number of high speed pursuits of offenders?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** The South Australian Police Force is at the forefront of the solution to this problem, which has been of huge concern to our community and which has caused enormous loss of both personal life and property. It has been an outstanding success from the point of view of the police, and I congratulate all those who have been involved. Recently I had the privilege of being overseas and seeing that we are in front of the rest of the world in this area—there is no doubt about it. People blink, but quite often we are in front in these areas. Because Australians underestimate or understate their own skills, they do not believe they can be in front.

This program, entitled Operation Bother, was established in March of this year to minimise the incidence of recidivism in illegal use and allied offences and to establish a central coordination and intelligence facility to identify targets for the operation. I think it has been a tremendous success and it is continuing. It is growing as a consequence of the energies of police officers who have taken up this matter at all levels within the force. It has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of high speed pursuits and the number of stolen vehicles. It is linked with various programs such as vehicle safety programs which are being promoted within the Police Department, the RAA and the Department of Road Transport. We see this as a timely program, a path setter in policing in this State.

Operational officers have been working with the community and with the parents of some of these young people. Recently, the Star Force and Hindley Street officers, together with Aboriginal FACS aid workers and the ambulance service, went north past Arkaroola to run a seven-day program with some of these children who are now in detention. The reports of that program are outstanding. Journalists who went there and saw what happened had their eyes opened. I commend the article in the *Bulletin* magazine summarising the events. To all those people in the Police Department who have been involved, the public owes a sincere vote of thanks for the work that has been done. I am not sure from where it emanated or from which senior officer level it came, but from my observations it has been outstanding.

When we were in Germany we had the opportunity to meet with the head of traffic police in Bonn, and he was quite stunned when we gave him a brief outline of what Operation Bother was about and how it was being achieved. Certainly, we are doing things in this State which are cutting new horizons in this area. It has been an outstanding success, and it is continuing. It now has tentacles that are running out and doing other things in terms of meeting community expectations and supporting parents who are involved with some of the young people who are committing these awful crimes and putting at risk the safety of our community. I thank the



honourable member for his question, and I congratulate the officers involved. It is outstanding, and the initiative taken in establishing this has been a trendsetter. It will be seen by other police forces around the world as one of those unique South Australian experiments that has worked.

**Mr HERON:** I understand the department recently carried out a marketing survey to determine the level of respect for South Australian police. What are the details of that survey?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I am delighted to respond on this matter, and I will ask the Commissioner to comment to reinforce the outcome of the survey. When speaking to this on radio yesterday morning, I made an error, because I said it was in the 80s; in fact, it is in the low 90s, which is even better. In July 1993, the Police Department commissioned McGregor Marketing to survey a wide cross-section of adult residents throughout the Adelaide metropolitan area to determine the level of respect for the South Australian Police Force. The question posed was:

Considering everything about the way the South Australian police do their job, do you have:

1. a great deal of respect for them;
2. a little respect for them;
3. neutral/don't know;
4. not much respect for them; and
5. very little respect for them.

The survey found that nine out of every 10 respondents, or 91.5 per cent, indicated they regard the police with respect. Significantly, seven out of 10 of these people, or 69.8 per cent, stated they had a great deal of respect for the police. Only 6.5 per cent claimed to have little or no respect, while a further 2 per cent did not know—that is a worry. The survey followed another survey which showed that 80 per cent of the adult population was satisfied with the way South Australian police do their job. That is an outstanding result and reinforces the community confidence which some sectors of the media are not keen to promote—and I will not name anyone in particular. For some of them, whatever the truth of the story, it spoils the story as it goes to air. That is very reassuring, and I am sure the Commissioner was delighted when he received that result.

**Mr Hunt:** There is much speculation about the efficiency and effectiveness of police services around the world and, when you are dealing with a nearly total service delivery style organisation, it is extremely hard to quantify. One thing that is a valuable measure is public opinion in relation to the acceptance and respect for the police service. About 20 years ago, when the first of these surveys was done, South Australia was ranked top of Australia with 62 per cent, and everybody thought that was rather remarkable. Since then, South Australia has been around the top ranking, and for one short period we were about ranked second. However, this survey reveals, as the Minister said, that 80 per cent of people are satisfied with the job we do, and 91.5 per cent have a high respect for the South Australian Police Force.

These are figures which we ought jealously guard, and it sets a job for us to maintain that standard in the future. However, we regard the success of this as the high level of interaction between the police and the community through our community policing programs, and the trust which has been built up. This was not in anyway biased. Indeed, it was a totally independent survey done by a reputable marketing group, and part of the methodology was to talk to people who were married, single, single parents, young, old, employed, unemployed, in family circumstances and living alone. So, a very wide range of people in the community were surveyed,

and I can only say how proud I am of the service that my officers give to the community at large. I am pleased with the response, although I am worried about the other 8.5 per cent.

**Mr VENNING:** Page 215 of the Auditor-General's Report states that \$1 733 000 was spent on the provision of clothing. Page 456 states that the Police Department paid \$700 000 to State Clothing for warehousing and distribution of police clothing. Does this \$700 000 payment form part of the expenditure of \$1 733 000 and, if so, why is the cost of warehousing and distribution such a large amount, that is, 40 per cent of the total cost?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I may have to take that one on notice in order to give the member an appropriate and proper answer. I have been given some information which suggests that that \$700 000 includes the clothing, but I will make sure that I provide a complete answer. I would rather not mislead the member or the Committee by doing anything less than that.

**Mr VENNING:** My last question comes from the document Meeting the Challenge—Progress in relation to SACON security. On page 24 the Premier states that SACON security will be incorporated into the Police Department. Why do the budget papers not show a transfer of funds against 1992-93 to the Police Department for the security service?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** That decision was taken after the budget documents were released, and it will be part of the process of negotiation. The date of transfer has actually occurred. The SACON security unit transferred to the department on 3 September 1993 as a result of the announcement in Meeting the Challenge. The unit is now attached to the operations command of the Police Department, with the General Manager, Mr Rose, reporting to the Assistant Commissioner (Operations), Mr Lockhead. It is proposed that in January 1994, as a result of the Police Department's restructuring (Collins report), the unit will be part of the new operations support command, with Mr Rose continuing to report to Mr Lockhead, the Assistant Commissioner in charge of that area.

It is envisaged that the basic role and structure of the security services unit will be unaltered and there will be some minor administrative changes, for example, considered uniform and ID badges in line with the new name. The budgetary arrangements have been well and truly negotiated in terms of the actual line within the department's budget, but we will not see any final record of that until the estimates next year.

**Mr VENNING:** It has been put to me that former SACON officers are to have a new uniform design and vehicle badges. Is this correct and what will it cost, along with what the Minister has already mentioned?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** The member is correct. I will have to take the cost on notice. The Commissioner might be able to answer that and be very specific as to the member's question.

**Mr Hunt:** I am not in a position to give the cost here and now. However, I can explain that this initiative, together with others falling out of the reorganisation report under the police review, is now in stage 2, which is the implementation stage, and all of these matters will be investigated and reported on before the end of the year. At that time we will know the total cost.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** We will take the remainder of that question on notice.

**Mr VENNING:** I refer to page 233 of the Program Estimates, prosecution cases. I note from the 'Performance indicators' table that the number of cases considered by prosecution increased by a significant amount yet again in 1992-93. This time the increase was 11.5 per cent from 125 570 to 140 000 cases. I also note that a further 10 per cent—a 154 000 increase—is expected in 1993-94. Should this occur, the cases considered will have increased by almost 75 per cent in just four years. Does this 1993-94 projection reflect an expectation that crime will continue to increase?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** One can make any sort of estimate or expectation, but in relation to the overall figures a variety of events is occurring within the community, and I have mentioned one. Overall statistics, which we recently released, showed reductions in certain levels of reported crime and increases in others—property offences reduced; stolen vehicles reduced; and rape, off the top of my head, increased. So there is a variation in those figures. In order to provide specific answers, I will take it on notice. However, there was an 11.5 per cent increase in the backlog of speed camera and red light camera notices. I will provide the honourable member with a reasonably detailed answer which specifically addresses that question.

*[Sitting suspended from 6.2 to 7.30 p.m.]*

**Mr MATTHEW:** I ask that the Minister take on notice a number of questions that have been asked in other Committees by other members in relation to public sector reform and the structure of committees under the new Emergency Services Department. If the Minister accepts those questions as being put on notice, we can expedite the matters before the Committee.

**The CHAIRMAN:** If the Minister is happy to receive a document from the honourable member and respond to the honourable member, the Committee can have no problems with that. Is that the understanding?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** Yes.

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

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Minister of Emergency Services—Other payments,  
\$17 221 000

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr W.W. Haby, Chief Officer, Metropolitan Fire Service.  
Mr R.J. Hoey, Deputy Chief Officer.  
Mr B.K. Treagus, Director, Finance and Administration.  
Mr R. Tidswell, Manager, Finance.  
Mr R.L. Hagan, Assistant Chief Officer, Support Services.

**Mr MATTHEW:** I refer to page 18 of the Capital Works Program for 1993-94, and in particular to the allocation of \$1 385 000 for the purchase of a fire boat. I am advised by an experienced fire officer that the vessel has attended only two fires each year for the past 10 years. I am further advised that the Department of Marine and Harbors tugs, which are on stand-by, have full firefighting capabilities and that there is an agreement in place between the Metropolitan Fire Service and the department to allow MFS officers to board and direct firefighting procedures from these vessels in case of a fire on the Port River. I am further advised that the Port Stanvac Oil Refinery and Birkenhead fuel storage facility

have their own firefighting capability. Further, departmental staff and firefighters advise me that the purchase of a new boat is in their opinion a disgraceful waste of taxpayers' funds. With these statements in mind, why is the Government pushing ahead with the purchase of this boat when other States, notably Victoria, seem to be able to manage without doing so?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I am sure most members are aware that the replacement of the fire boat has been under consideration for some time. Of course, the old fire boat—*Carlew*—was constructed in 1994 and is currently out of survey and not available for use. The position with regard to provision of fire boat services has been of considerable concern to the MFS for some time for a number of reasons. The Chief Officer will give what I regard as a technical overview of the need for that service.

However, to summarise, we need a vessel that has a capacity to provide support for land-based vehicles in the peninsula area, particularly around the storage areas of the chemical plants in that region. The fire boat proposed as the replacement for the *Carlew* and for the temporary vessel, which has been leased from the Department of Marine and Harbors, will provide that flexibility and the capacity that is needed in emergency situations. Currently, that tug support is not available 24 hours a day, nor is it available as a committed service in the sense of what is required by the fire department for any emergency.

I am sure that every member appreciates the fact that what we face in the fire service is not a situation where you are on duty in the sense of doing the task that you are paid for 24 hours a day: it is an emergency response situation, and the same applies to the equipment. We need that equipment there to support those services that may be demanded in the awful situation where we have a massive oil spill and fire in the peninsula region. That situation has been identified as requiring the boat that has now been decided upon by the Government and it will provide the sort of back-up pump and facility service that is needed for the emergencies that we hope will never happen but could happen, in the peninsular area in particular.

In addition, the boat will support other services or other agencies, for example, in the oil spill area and so on. Of course, first call would have to be the dedicated commitment to the fire service, but it can and will be adaptable to provide that back-up service. I will ask the Chief Officer to give a more technical overview of why we are going down the present path with regard to the replacement of the *Carlew*.

**Mr Haby:** As the Minister has explained, the fire boat is the replacement for the old boat. The reason for wanting a dedicated fire boat, except for all those reasons outlined by the Minister, is that the new boat will be able to access the shallow waters which the tug boats presently used as a back-up facility to the existing make-shift boat cannot do. These boats have a very deep draught and cannot access the shallow waters. In many areas of the river at Port Adelaide very expensive craft are tied up and it is very important that we get to these areas as they are not accessible by land-based appliances.

The main reason for the boat is to supply water to the land-based operations and the areas adjacent to the Port River are not accessible in many cases. In about 80 per cent of cases where there are heavy industries and fuel depots, we cannot get our pumps adjacent to sufficient depth of water to be able to draught water from the Port River.

The new boat also gives us the opportunity to go out past the breakwater at Port Adelaide and into the open sea. So, if there is a boat on fire in the gulf area and if no tugs are available—and that can happen—because, as the Minister explained, the tugs are not staffed on a 24-hour basis, during the early hours of the morning the fire boat would be available to respond to those areas.

**Mr MATTHEW:** By way of supplementary question, I made a reference earlier to the situation in New South Wales. I have in front of me part of the standard operational procedures for fire boats used in that State. It states in part:

Close liaison has existed for many years between the New South Wales fire brigades and the Maritime Services Board who provide firefighting support vessels for use in combating ship and harbor front fires and other port emergencies.

Further, it states:

The new tugs are equipped with water and foam based fire-fighting equipment. . . The Maritime Services Board has designated these tugs as emergency response vessels and, as such, they are available on a 24-hour basis providing this facility in Sydney Harbor and Botany Bay.

It goes on further to say:

The commercial tug companies provide the only water-borne firefighting support for the ports of Newcastle and Port Kembla.

With those things in mind, and also the fact that this Government already owns 882 working boats and pleasure craft that I have been able to identify through Ministers to date, when considering the purchase of the new fire boat, did the Minister's officers look at the situation in New South Wales for its much larger water frontage than we have in South Australia, through Sydney Harbor? Did the Minister's officers also look at existing boats owned by Government, as the firefighters union which is a strong advocate of the fire boat has expressed surprise to me that a boat such as the *Des Corcoran* was not refitted at a much lower cost for this purpose?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** Yes, and in order to meet the requirements that have been set down to protect and provide adequate safety to the community, the only conclusion after extensive consideration of this matter by virtually every agency—and I have to stress with great attention being placed on it from Treasury—was that every alternative, including the *Des Corcoran*, and any other vessel that was available, did not meet the flexibility or the needs of what was required by the fire service in order to provide the sort of community safety that we would want and expect to be provided in the situations that could confront our fire services.

One has to take into account the proximity of those industrial activities to residential dwellings in the peninsula in particular in balancing the argument of cost benefit analysis. It was taken into account. I can assure the honourable member that every avenue, every option was extensively canvassed to see whether we could find some alternative that would give the same level of protection and safety to the community. I do not know whether the Chief Officer wants to respond. I am sure the department has looked at every possible outcome which would avoid the expenditure of this money but also provide that same security.

**Mr Haby:** This particular boat is a purpose built boat. To be effective, it is required to throw water and foam a distance of 90 metres. To do this, it needs a very large pumping capacity, so that a very stable boat is required. These other vessels that were looked at were much smaller craft and were not suitable.

**Mr MATTHEW:** It seems that boats to Government departments are becoming like lap top computers and mobile phones and computers have become in general—another toy. I refer to fire equipment servicing, and in particular to page 241 of the Program Estimates and page 384 of the Auditor-General's Report. Bearing in mind statements in those documents, I note that the fire equipment servicing division had a total income of \$2 429 000, yet achieved a profit of \$51 000 for the year ending 30 June 1993. This was an income increase of \$48 000 on the previous financial year, but interestingly a profit drop of \$14 000 or some 27 per cent on the 1991-92 financial year.

I also note from these documents that the staff level is to increase by 4.2 or 13.6 per cent. Further, the GARG review undertaken by Government claims that \$100 000 a year is achievable under full commercialisation. Why did this profit drop in fire equipment servicing occur; why are the staff increases necessary; and are the GARG recommendations being put into place?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I am advised that the reason for the drop in profit is related to an abnormal item of \$50 000 which was brought in in this year relating to fire extinguishers. Apparently, in Government departments this cost has been realised in this year, and that is the reason for the figure that is out of the trend, I guess, from previous years, in particular the previous year. If the honourable member wants more detail, I can certainly take the matter on notice and provide it so as not to slow down the proceedings tonight, and I will do that.

**Mr MATTHEW:** As a supplementary question, perhaps the Minister would be good enough to take on notice a request for a copy of a business plan that may or may not exist for that area. My third question refers to 'Trends and Issues' in the Program Estimates (page 250). I refer to the statement, 'Cooperation and closer working with the CFS is being established in operational and support areas'. As the Minister would be aware, in May 1992 SACON released a feasibility study for the MFS/CFS collocation at that time, claiming savings in the vicinity of \$1.8 million. What were the findings of the consultant engaged to determine whether or not the savings were feasible (his predecessor indicated that such a consultant would be engaged), what further recommendations were made by that consultant and will the collocation proceed?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I will answer the question as I see it; if it is not adequate, and if the honourable member wants to give me more detail, I will respond further. I am not sure whether the honourable member is referring to more than the collocation issue, which is in relation to the CFS and MFS considering the sharing of facilities, or maybe closer cooperation in the physical sense. In terms of the possible collocation of the CFS to the MFS facility, there has been extensive discussion and planning going on between the two. There have been some technical matters which have entered the discussion through the advice received from SACON to the MFS and the CFS. The Chief Officer of the Metropolitan Fire Service and the Chief Executive of the CFS have been working together to come up with a feasible plan which would see efficiencies gained and achieve greater cooperation at the same time.

Through the establishment of our new Emergency Services Department, one of the responsibilities of the CEO is to look at what we can realise in the way of cooperation and collocation in a physical sense; what efficiencies can be gained by common use of resources; and how we can best

develop those in terms of all the assets which are under the jurisdiction and control of each fire service.

The position with regard to the physical collocation is with SACON at the moment: it has been working on various options to meet the requirements of both the MFS and the CFS in a physical sense. The proposal was that a floor be devoted to the CFS in the MFS building; it would be a specialised and dedicated floor with separate access for CFS personnel and related people. Also, it would be under the complete control of the CFS but in the same building physically as the MFS. That proposal has been with SACON for some time to enable it to look at the physical constraints and the necessities of both organisations. So, I have addressed that part of the question.

Both chief officers have been working very cooperatively to achieve the best result for the taxpayer, and the new executive, of which they will both be members, will be sitting down to look at the best result for the South Australian taxpayer by achieving the best use of our resources. That answers the question that was directed to me, but if more detail is required I am more than happy to accommodate that.

**Mr MATTHEW:** In questioning during last year's Estimates your predecessor indicated that a consultancy report would be undertaken at a cost of \$52 000, with the cost of that consultancy being shared equally between the MFS and the CFS. What are the details of those findings?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I am advised that that consultancy did not proceed. When I first came into office as Minister of Emergency Services I had a meeting with both the chief officers, who went off to look at what options they could work out together, and since that time they have had the carriage of this as chief officers rather than involve a consultancy. So, both chief officers and SACON have been working on this as an option.

**Mr De LAINE:** I applaud the decision by the Government to acquire a new fire boat for Port Adelaide. The member for Bright shows his ignorance of Port Adelaide and its needs by opposing that acquisition. I totally reject what he says: that boat is needed down there. Where is this new fire boat being built?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** It might be useful for the Chief Officer to give a history of the fire boat saga if I can describe it as that, because it would be important for the member for Price and his own electorate to have the full history of the situation. As I said in answer to the member for Bright, it has quite an extensive history, and it is only fair and reasonable for your constituents and the public at large that the whole story is unveiled. I think in the end result the solution is an excellent one for the safety of your community particularly and of course for all South Australians who live and work in that region. I ask the Chief Officer if he would like to go to the background of the fire boat leading up to where it will be built.

**Mr Haby:** The actual registration of interest was put out for a fire boat some time ago—just off the top of my head it was something like two and a half years ago. This registration of interest looked at boat and ship construction all around Australia, and the selected persons from that registration of interest were Image Boat Builders of Western Australia. Boat builders in South Australia were looked at in very close detail, and at the present moment the Crown Law Department and the State Supply are negotiating a contract with Image Boat Builders of Jandakot, Western Australia, with regard to this fire boat.

**Mr De LAINE:** On page 244 of the Program Estimates, under the program 'Fire suppression and control, metropolitan', one of the issues/trends is the introduction of an enhanced mutual aid system within agreed areas with the CFS. Following on from the disastrous bushfires in 1982-83 there has developed a greater cooperation between the States through the fire services. What does the enhanced mutual aid system consist of and how did it operate?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** The member is correct that 1982-83 was something of a watershed in terms of assessments of our fire services, particularly our CFS, and we will be addressing that in due course. The achievements of the Chief Executive Officer of the CFS are quite outstanding in terms of establishing uniform facilities, cooperation and communications throughout South Australia in terms of fire services. I know I am digressing slightly, but it really has placed South Australia in a much better situation to confront those horrific bushfires that we from time to time experience in this State. We will continue to see them no doubt.

In relation to enhanced mutual aid, it is a cooperative scheme operated by the two fire services in areas adjoining their mutual boundaries, and it is very interesting to look at this because I guess with the emotional debate that has occurred within the community it is often forgotten that there is very close cooperation in a number of areas throughout South Australia.

The thing that people would remember originally when we had this outbreak of fires with the pyromaniac who ran around the city is that the back-up for the MFS, when it was under enormous pressure and handled that situation extraordinarily well, came from the CFS. How did we arrive at this? In essence, enhanced mutual aid ensures that, irrespective of boundary or the colour of the fire appliance, any emergency incident will be attended by fire crews which are closest in terms of response time.

In the metropolitan area, when working out the nearest fire crew, a four minute penalty equating to four kilometres is applied to the CFS volunteer station. This is a recognition of the time required for volunteers to respond to their stations, whereas the MFS personnel are immediately available.

Legislative responsibility is always maintained by the dispatch of at least one appliance from the service within his area as the incident occurs, and the senior attending officer of that service takes the role of incident controller. In those country towns serviced by the MFS, the brigades have become members of the adjacent CFS group. That I think is something I should underline, because not often is that realised or noted by people. However, I want to make sure that people realise this. This allows input by the local MFS officer into group plans and decisions, and it also enhances future cooperation between the services. It is important to recognise that, when we see those emergency situations where enormous pressure is placed on either service, we do have back-up, and that is something that is important for the safety and wellbeing of the community as a whole.

**Mr De LAINE:** The member for Bright dared to intrude into my electorate with a question, so I will now intrude into his electorate. Recent incidents at Brighton in South Australia and Coode Island in Victoria have highlighted the arduous nature of firefighting. What measures have been taken to improve the physical fitness of firefighters in order to minimise the chance of injury at extended incidents?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** The physical and mental demands on a firefighter are extraordinary; one could say that it must be a fit person's occupation. One only has to talk to

a fireman who has had to retrieve a body from a fire to know that the mental strain is extraordinary. I would not for one moment want to experience some of the things that firefighters in this State have experienced in retrieving a burnt child, alive or dead, from a fire. Having to retrieve a severely burnt child would be even more horrendous given that the firefighter knows what fire can do and what that child will have to go through. That sort of thing must be dealt with.

We talk about a fit body and a fit mind. That is important in terms of wellbeing and the whole approach that is required to firefighting. A high level of aerobic fitness is required to cope during incidents that require long periods of peak performance. Mental agility is required in circumstances beyond the ordinary. For instance, if a firefighter is on a 90ft ladder fighting a fire with bits of building falling off around him, it would take someone with particularly good commitment and dedication to the task to remain at their post. That is what is expected of firefighters, and that is what we get. It is not often that they have to face that sort of thing, but that is what they are there for: they are paid for being able to utilise the highest possible skills in those situations. They must be able to face that stress and they must have the physical endurance to be able to last. There is little time for rest; the effort is continuous. In an environment that is totally filled with smoke they must be able to use natural cunning, skill and training in order to survive.

Stressful conditions that involve the use of self-contained breathing apparatus and protective clothing quickly reduce the effectiveness of firefighters who are not aerobically fit. Time is allocated on shifts to improve physical fitness. Equipment and exercise schedules are provided. At new fire stations, such as the one that was opened last week at Prospect, a gymnasium is provided at the rear of the accommodation area. That is essential for the ongoing wellbeing of the firefighter, and ultimately it benefits us, our family and friends and everyone else in the community. So, physical fitness is a significant part of a firefighter's daily occupation.

A physical education officer is employed to assess and monitor the fitness levels of firefighters, and service administrative procedures, which provide guidance to firefighters on health and welfare issues, are continually updated to reflect present fitness technology. So, I think members can be assured that there is a clear understanding that we require firefighters who are fit both physically and mentally in order to accommodate the extraordinary stress that is placed upon them. I remember as a child seeing the fire truck going past. It looked romantic and exciting, but having witnessed Ash Wednesday I think I would pass on that. Our officers must be prepared for the worst, and they are.

#### **Additional Departmental Advisers:**

Mr A.D. Macarthur, Chief Executive Officer, Country Fire Service.

Mr T.P. Crichton, Director, Corporate Services.

Mr P.W. Stump, Manager (Finance).

**Mr MATTHEW:** I refer to page 97 of the Estimates of Payments and Receipts, which details the appropriation to the CFS for the current financial year. I note a reduction in Government recurrent allocation of \$79 000. I therefore conclude that there has been a total CFS budget reduction of \$158 000 when one takes into consideration other contributions to that budget. Given this reduction in the CFS budget for 1993-94, will arrangements for the water bombing contracts for this fire season be affected and, in particular,

what danger conditions will be necessary to have planes on stand-by on airstrips with CFS air support crews?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I am given to understand that the required planes will be on stand-by. If called upon they will be available to assist in any situation. The circumstances that we would have to confront in a bushfire period are adequately covered in the provisions set down by the CFS.

**Mr MATTHEW:** Will this arrangement be different from that which has applied in previous financial years? I am given to understand that the aircraft normally used for this purpose are presently operating in South-East Asia and will not be retained in South Australia without a firm commitment from the Government. I understand that that commitment has not been given; therefore, I seek the Minister's advice on whether a contract can be secured. If not, why will the contract be put in place, and can an assurance be given that Country Fire Service districts and the people who reside in them will receive the protection to which they have become accustomed?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** The situation is different from previous years: we are buying the aircraft to be on stand-by to cover our needs. So, there is a stand-by arrangement with the aircraft contractor to provide those services upon demand. There has been a change, but I am advised by the CEO of the CFS that that arrangement will cover our demand. We will buy as we need to, so to speak.

**Mr MATTHEW:** Can the Minister provide the cost of buying that time compared with the cost in previous financial years? If the cost is greater, how will it be funded, bearing in mind that we have a budget shortfall against the previous financial year?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** There is a price, with a swings and roundabout effect. I am given to believe that the differential is \$70 000 as against \$144 000. However, when we buy time for that aircraft we will not get the discount that we enjoyed with the previous arrangement. So it will cost us more for the time during which the aircraft are in operation.

**Mr MATTHEW:** I have in my possession a memorandum entitled 'CFS-MFS Mutual Aid—Fringe Area Adelaide', dated 17 November 1992 and signed by the Chief Executive Officers of the Country Fire Service and the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service.

I note that the CEO has agreed that the former Chief Fire Officer and consultant to the Government, Mr Allan Bruce, will provide the necessary training modules for CFS brigades. Has this occurred in line with the agreement between the CEOs and the Government and, if so, when will the modules be made available to the CFS, which I understand has committed itself to the enhanced mutual aid plan?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** The answer is 'Yes' it has been put in place, and it has been trialled with two brigades. It has reached what the Chief Fire Officer believes is a satisfactory level.

**Mr Macarthur:** The enhanced mutual aid training has been done at MFS stations by CFS brigades. Currently, two brigades have been through the training process, and they are happy with it. We will make a few small alterations to the timing when volunteers are available. Other brigades that want to be involved in the enhanced mutual aid plan will then take on board those training programs. On the other side of the ledger, the CFS has trained quite a number of MFS people in bushfire fighting techniques to the same level as we train CFS brigades.

**Mr MATTHEW:** Have joint exercises involving breathing apparatus, dangerous substances, vehicle accident

rescue, and so on, occurred between both fire services as agreed and, if so, can the Minister provide the dates and details of the brigades and the MFS stations involved in these exercises?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I will take that on notice, and we will get back to the member with the information in accordance with the standing arrangements of the Committee.

**Mr MATTHEW:** With regard to the broader issue of amalgamation with the SES, a report in the *Advertiser* of 9 August 1993 quoted the Minister as follows:

I would imagine the Country Fire Service would likely be the predominant emergency service in the country. It would takeover the SES facilities, assets and volunteers.

With that statement in mind, and given the later announcement of the formation of a Department of Emergency Services, what discussion did the Minister have with each of the CEOs of the CFS and the SES? What was their response, and what agreements has he entered into with the two CEOs?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** That report in the *Advertiser* was not accurate. Unfortunately, I cannot recall who the journalist was, but certainly the article misquoted me quite dramatically. The proposal I have in mind is a discussion between the Commissioner of Police and the SES personnel and volunteers in each regional area with an SES service. I would not include the metropolitan area, because the SES offers a clear and distinct service in metropolitan Adelaide. Contrary to what one of the directors of the southern region has suggested, I have visited the southern region unit on a couple of occasions, and I am fully aware of what it provides by way of service to the community, and I endorse strongly the continuation of the SES in those functions.

However, in country areas there is an overlap not only of membership but also in respect of aspects and functions. I guess the best example is what was drawn to my attention during the national CFS exercise at Clare last weekend. Many of the CFS units had to leave and respond to the storm situation, demonstrating the overlap—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I have very reliable reports, I can assure you. In the country there is an overlap between the CFS and the SES. That is what I am proposing. We have to look at the best—and I am sure the member for Bright would be the first to get on this band wagon—possible service at the least cost to the community wherever we can. We must respect the views and aspirations of the volunteers who are involved in both services.

I propose that the executive of the Emergency Services Department would explore at a State level what options were available in consultation with the local communities to discover their views with regard to the possible marriage, if you like, of the SES and the CFS in some of these regions. In fact, it has already happened in some areas. In a number of areas we have one service operating. In a number of other areas, there is very close cooperation. Of course, both the CFS and the SES are volunteer organisations: they have the same ethos. We are not marrying two organisations that are not similar. They have a very similar origin and their ethics are very similar, so one can see how they could come together.

The CFS has about 19 000 members in South Australia, while the SES has about 2 000, and 50 per cent of the SES members are based in Adelaide. So, we have about one thousand SES members throughout the State, and we estimate that 70 per cent of them are in the CFS. I am sure the member for Culance will agree when I say that there is enormous

overlap. It is a very close relationship, as was seen at Mallala and last weekend at Clare, when we saw how things overlap. The matter has been distorted slightly by the media in trying to make an issue. That is fine—you can make a story out of anything. The media has made a story out of something which really began as a very simple proposition whereby we should look at the most efficient way of delivering these community services.

This is not something that I thought up overnight—a number of regional CFS representatives and local government raised the matter with me. They said, 'It is time that we looked at what we can provide as local government and what is provided through the SES and the CFS.' That is what initiated my discussions. I raised the matter with the Commissioner of Police, who is, of course, the Chief Executive responsible for the SES services, and it flowed from there. All I am proposing is that we have our executive, which is made up of those people, look at the best delivery of service at the least cost to our community. If the volunteers involved in the SES do not want to be part of it, that is fine. It is a voluntary organisation, and that is something for them to decide. I am not suggesting for a moment that I would want to interfere with that. However, I do want them to look at the issue. If we can see cost benefits and advantages from such an amalgamation or some closer cooperation, we should attempt to do it for the safety of the community.

**Mr MATTHEW:** I appreciate the Minister's explanation. I am pleased to hear that his statement was not as a result of a fleeting thought. Has either he or one of his officers drawn up terms of reference in respect of the proposed amalgamation and, if so, can he table those terms of reference for the Committee?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** There are no terms of reference to table with regard to any amalgamation. What I propose is what I said, namely, the executive of the Emergency Services Department will look at this issue. As a group of people, they have ample skills and capacities to address this issue in a thorough way. I have had discussions with each of them, and I know they are eager to find what advantages can be gained for the whole community.

**Mr McKEE:** I refer to Estimates of Payments (page 98) under the heading 'Country Fire Service.' What is the policy of the CFS board and councils regarding the ongoing replacement of fire appliances to ensure that volunteers are provided with acceptable standards of equipment?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** On the MFS budget line, I indicated what I believed were the outstanding achievements of the Chief Executive Officer and his staff in undertaking a major overhaul of our CFS equipment scattered throughout the State. I am sure many of us recall the fierce debate that erupted in the community, and the Chief Executive Officer had to cop a lot of that because he went out and said that if we are going to have an effective fire service then these are the sorts of standards we need to set. He set them with the support of his board and his staff, and I think we are better off for that.

With the disparate arrangements existing at the time of Ash Wednesday—the different communications that existed between neighbouring CFS units—it is amazing how we actually survived without losing more people and more property, and I am sure the Chief Executive Officer would reinforce that. So, he was given a very clear task and he has been outstanding in achieving that. We do have a policy which we are required to follow and the ongoing replacement

of fire appliances relates to two aspects, and that is, of course, safety uppermost and growth in 20 years.

Since 1987, 253 appliances have been purchased for replacement of appliances older than 20 years. That is a very significant capital outlay that has occurred within our Country Fire Service. During 1993-94, 41 appliances will need to be procured. There are one-off contracts currently under negotiation with bodybuilders, for example, Moore Engineering, the Country Fire Authority and the Australian Fire Company; and cab chassis for 3 000 litre and 2 000 litre appliances have been ordered through CMI Hino.

Since 1987 the CFS has purchased appliances to specific standards. As I said, there have been 253 appliances purchased. The break-up is 12 appliances at 3 000 litres, 26 appliances at 2 000 litres and three appliances at 1 000 litres for 1993-94. Based on the capacity, proven performance and price, the State Supply Board has endorsed a one-off contract with Moore, CFA and AFC for 23, 15 and three respectively of those appliances. So, it is reassuring for our community to see that the commitment of the CFS has been substantially improved and the overhaul of our capital has been achieved in the period under the guidance of our Chief Executive Officer.

I am pleased to say there has been a very significant movement, and there was a lot of fairly sensitive negotiation undertaken on the part of Mr Macarthur with local government throughout South Australia.

**Mr HERON:** This House appointed a select committee to inquire into the application of bushfire protection and bushfire suppression measures on public land in general and National Parks and Wildlife areas. What action has been taken to investigate the select committee's report and recommendations?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** The relevant points to make in response relate basically to how the CFS board will accommodate all of those aspects raised by the select committee report. The CFS board at its July meeting resolved to coordinate a joint agency position paper on the select committee report. The South Australian Bushfire Prevention Advisory Committee, which reports to me, is preparing a response to the bushfire protection recommendations, and the CFS board understands that the Local Government Association and the Conservation Council are also preparing papers on the report.

So I expect we will see, probably by the end of October, a comprehensive response to the select committee report, which will then of course be taken into account in adopting the measures which were posed in the select committee's report.

**Mr HERON:** What will happen to the Port Pirie fire station?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I will take that on notice, Mr Chairman.

**Mr VENNING:** My first question relates to small country brigades, and one in particular, the brigade in Narridy. These are small brigades and the units they have are almost 20 years old. At Narridy it is obvious that they cannot justify a new four-wheel drive unit, particularly a Hino unit, but they do not want to lose the unit that they have. Can they be allowed to retain the unit, which is over 20 years old; and, if not, is there a solution to the problem?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I will refer that question to the board for its consideration. I am sure they will look at it sensitively to see what sort of options we can find with perhaps second-hand equipment that would be adequate. I am

not sure at this stage whether I should intervene in the board's deliberations and make a decision for it; I think wisdom would suggest that I actually allow the board to consider that matter. I give an undertaking to the honourable member that we will refer that matter to the board.

**Mr VENNING:** Could the fleet management therefore also come under that question and would the Minister consider fleet management from the board level, to enable these smaller brigades to get hold of used or second-hand older units, keeping the newer units in the higher profile areas? I gather that would have to be taken on notice, too.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I am happy to field that question. I am advised by the CEO that the board is considering such a proposal at this very time. There are a number of things that the new department will be looking at in terms of getting an overview of what can be achieved, what better use can be made of resources and what better support can go out to those very communities to which the member for Custance refers. There needs to be some recognition, particularly in these times in the rural community, that there is not the same access to funds that there was perhaps five or so years ago. So, I can assure the honourable member that the board will be giving that matter consideration.

**Mr VENNING:** In its September 1993 newsletter, the Volunteer Fire Brigades Association made the following claim in relation to the Bureau of Emergency Services:

Ultimately we are going to be left with one bureaucracy controlling the money and country people may suffer because the bulk of funding will go to the city.

And, further:

The Government's moves to rationalise ambulance services and replace volunteers with paid officers has significantly increased costs and reduced the level of service.

Can the Minister guarantee that funding to country fire fighting will not be reduced and that volunteers will not be replaced by a paid unionised work force in any area?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** The answers to both of the honourable member's questions is 'Yes.' There is no way that we as a Government will even contemplate replacing those volunteers. There is no way we could do that anyway, even if anyone had a desire to do so. I am not sure how many times I have made the public statement since I have had this portfolio, but I will state it again: the volunteers are an essential part of the Country Fire Service and will continue to be so, and we will be encouraging more than the current 19 000 to be involved. I am aware that, because of the nature of rationalisation in the agricultural industry, there is pressure on some areas actually to provide services. However, I think we are really going to have to be out there encouraging the development of volunteers to supply and service the safety of our community.

Let me ask the honourable member to convey to the volunteers in his electorate that there is no intention whatsoever to replace them. In fact, it is quite the opposite: we will be encouraging volunteers to become involved. We are establishing the cadet program and that will be a further encouragement to our volunteer network. Whatever the fears about St John, they are completely misplaced in this case and I hope that we can get on with the issue and stop fighting the 'bushfires', getting into a creative situation where we can look at further enhancing the services provided by the CFS.

**Mr VENNING:** I have no hassle with the resilience of the volunteers and their continuing contribution. However, will there be guaranteed funding? That is the most important aspect.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** Given environmental and economic circumstances, I would see the continuation of funding. I can give an assurance only from my point of view. Whatever budgets bring forward they will bring forward. I think I should separate this. The creation of the Department of Emergency Services will not lead to any intention to reduce or deplete the budget line to the CFS. In fact, the opposite is true: we hope we can enjoy some benefits that will bring a better service and facility to the CFS. As an option, there is none of this 'all in a big cake tin'. One of the fears is that the police would become the major agency and would consume the budget because of the demands. That is just not on; it will not happen. Each line will be separately identified and will continue to be so.

The process of emergency services is to realise efficiencies and economies of scale for gains to the community on the dollars that are put in. That is what it is about: it is not about reduction in funds at all but about a better service. If we can get a better service for the dollars we put in, that is of benefit to the community.

**Mr VENNING:** My last and most important question relates to the general health and welfare of the CFS. I am very concerned about the results of the rural crisis, the demise of the rural community and also a perceived lack of support by the bureaucrats for the CFS in some areas. Is the Minister aware of the problem we see today, where some of our country brigades cannot man their units? Are there any alternative plans to cover this problem?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** Yes, I am aware of that; I have been conscious of it. The honourable member knows that I have relatives scattered throughout the State and they keep me informed of what is happening in most areas and about most issues. Even if I do not want to hear about it, they tell me. I am conscious of the fact that there is increasing pressure on the CFS because of stress on the rural community as a result of the current economic environment. As an Emergency Services Department we are obviously going to have to address that as one of our major issues in order to maintain our volunteer strength.

I earlier made an oblique reference to our cadet program. We are backing that up with stress management counselling and all those services that now come into play in a modern fire fighting service. So we are conscious of and share the honourable member's concerns. We will continue our vigilance to address them so that we can see a continuation of the safety that is provided to our rural community, which does not have the benefit of an MFS facility within the immediate area.

**Mr VENNING:** Supplementary to that, is the Minister aware of a mooted organisation called South Australian Volunteer Emergency Service (SAVES)? It is apparently an organisation promoting the amalgamation of all country volunteer organisations, that is, the CFS, the SES, St John and so on.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I have seen a newsletter or something to that effect. I am not sure what it related to, but I am not *au fait* with any registered or incorporated organisation under that banner. I would be happy to explore it if the honourable member has any information he would like to share with us. I can recall having seen something some months back under that sort of heading. It was a newsletter of some sort, I think. It might have gone to some members of Parliament, but it did not have any significant impact on me. If the honourable member has any information, I would be very interested to see it. If it is an organisation that will have

some impact in our area, we need to know about it so that we can encourage it, offer it support or get it to support us in encouraging volunteers to come in.

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

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Auditor-General's, \$8 090 000

**Membership:**

Dr Armitage substituted for Mr Matthew.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr K.I. MacPherson, Auditor-General.

Mr K.J. Bockmann, Deputy Auditor-General.

Mr P.A. Deegan, Manager, Administrative Services.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** It is understandable that there would be significant interest by members of this Committee concerning matters that may be contained in the Annual Report of the Auditor-General that was tabled in this Parliament on 9 September. However, as members would be aware, the focus of interest at this time is that of the estimates of the Auditor-General's own department. Matters relating to other departments and statutory authorities should be raised with the responsible Minister at the time of the estimates hearing for those departments and/or statutory authorities, as the case may be. The Auditor-General, of course, would be pleased to assist the Committee with respect to any matters relating to the operations of his own department.

**Dr ARMITAGE:** I note on page 159 of the Auditor-General's Report this year which deals with the Government Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Fund that there are a number of claims received by cause of accident, with detail provided for the past five years. In the same report last year (page 105), similar figures for the claims for the previous five years were followed by calculations of total payments for the five years mentioned for each one of the causes of accidents and, further, the average cost per claim as calculated by audit in dollar terms. Given that the figures are not provided this year, I wonder why they were not. Can we at some stage be provided with those figures?

**Mr MacPherson:** I am not quite sure to which department the honourable member is referring.

**Dr ARMITAGE:** The Department of Labour.

**Mr MacPherson:** That is an issue that arises in the context of the audit report. The appropriate forum for me to deal with those issues is the Economic and Finance Committee. Could I suggest to the honourable member that those issues that relate to specific departments or statutory authorities be related through his colleagues on that committee, as that is the appropriate forum for those matters to be dealt with.

**Dr ARMITAGE:** If that is the case, this may be a fairly short segment, because many of the questions that I have are related to various things from the Auditor-General's Report. I accept what the Auditor-General has said, and what was implied in the Minister's opening statement, that, if there are specific questions about departments, it is appropriate to ask the actual Minister, but I would have thought this was an appropriate forum to ask about variations in the Auditor-General's Report from one year to the next.

**Mr MacPherson:** It is a matter that relates to the activities of a specific department, and certainly it has been a matter



subject to comment in my report. This occasion of the Estimates Committee is focused solely on the requirements of my own department, my operational needs and the estimates associated with that. The matters related to specific departments and statutory authorities have been taken up in the context of other Committees, so could I invite the honourable member to relate those questions to his colleagues on those Committees.

**Dr ARMITAGE:** I certainly shall.

**Mr MacPherson:** We could open up the entire report if I took that course and we could be here for days.

**Dr ARMITAGE:** That is another matter and perhaps we ought to be here for days in this forum. I accept what the Auditor-General is saying although, as I say, I am not asking a specific question about a department: I am asking something about the Auditor-General's Report. What was the total cost of the Auditor-General's investigations into the State Bank? Did all his investigations, in his view, reach, from a professional point of view, a satisfactory conclusion, or were there gaps which, in his professional point of view, were unfillable because of time constraints and legal complications?

**Mr MacPherson:** The total cost to date has been \$14 million. As to whether or not I was able to complete the investigation satisfactorily, the investigation of the bank was one which could have occupied me for a lifetime, so there had to be a cut off point; there had to be a decision made as to which matters were relevant and should be pursued. Certainly the litigation was a major complicating factor and in a number of instances materially delayed the progress of that investigation. I interpreted my terms of appointment as requiring me to determine primarily what was the cause of the losses in the bank, and that was the primary focus. The matter of the identification of misdemeanours, offences and what have you by personnel within the State Bank and Beneficial Finance were issues subsidiary to the main matter of determining what caused the losses. I guess one has to finish at a particular point in time and, having regard to all those factors, I am satisfied that I covered the main issues in my terms of appointment.

**Dr ARMITAGE:** As a supplementary question, given that the Auditor-General said that the legal complications did cause some dilemmas and problems, what then would have been the estimated time and cost penalties associated with those legal complications.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I assume, by the way, that the Minister is giving *carte blanche* here. The questions are technically to the Minister.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I think it is appropriate for the Auditor-General to answer this question, and there is quite clearly a need to have a clear separation of the independence of the Auditor-General in these matters from Executive Government.

**Mr MacPherson:** As to the legal proceedings, the first proceeding was one taken by the bank in January 1992. That started a process which led to very significant delays and complications. In my view, the bank in that matter acted somewhat precipitously. I say that having reflected on the matter.

It was in contact with my department immediately prior to the commencement of the action, and it was asked whether it would delay the matter until the following week when I would have returned, but it moved immediately. That was on the basis of the advice it took at the time so I must accept it, but it allowed other parties to coat-tail that action. It took

several weeks, which deflected us from the investigation, and the matter was never ultimately pursued.

The second action was more substantive. It was instituted by the former directors in August 1992, and it was pursued to judgment in the Full Court. The Full Court stated that the procedures adopted in the investigation to that date were appropriate, and in fact no other process was open to me. The court determined how the procedure would be undertaken from that point until the conclusion of the investigation. In that context I was obliged to follow the procedure as laid down by the Full Court. That was quite a time consuming procedure because the spectrum of issues covered by us in the investigation, as the Committee would be aware, was very broad. That delayed the investigation very considerably.

A third action was taken against me in December 1992 when the Government introduced legislation to try to limit the potential for interested parties to bring an action. That action was never completed. A further action that was recently brought against me did not really affect the report in any way. That matter was associated with the custody of documents. I took the view, and I explained it to all the parties, that documents and other material that I received in the course of the investigation were certainly not privileged and they were to be available to whomsoever by way of compulsory process. That compulsory process could have been by way of subpoena or other process of the court, but at the time I made that comment to the parties I was not contemplating legislation.

So, the period of the investigation was punctuated by threats of litigation on a regular basis which meant that I had to be extremely careful, otherwise I could have been taken down to the court every few weeks. In fact, there was one period when I received about 60 letters over a matter of a few weeks. The letters were phrased in quite strong terms, and I did not wish to place myself in a position where I was being trotted off to court and delayed, so it took some navigating through that process. So, yes the litigation did delay the report materially.

**Dr ARMITAGE:** Do you have any estimate of the cost as a result of those delays? You mentioned a further action relating to the custody of papers. Was that prior to the report being delivered?

**Mr MacPherson:** I said that that did not have any impact on the report. It was subsequent to the finalisation of the report. As to the question of cost, I have not quantified it, but it would run into hundreds of thousands of dollars.

**Dr ARMITAGE:** Did the Auditor-General's involvement with the bank and the investigation in any way impede the normal auditing function with respect to State Government instrumentalities, departments and authorities?

**Mr MacPherson:** It had the impact of deflecting us from undertaking a number of value-for-money or efficiency and economy-type audits. It did not deflect us from our financial and compliance auditing responsibilities.

**Dr ARMITAGE:** Last year's report carried some criticism of departmental practices, and this year's report does not identify any. For instance, last year the Auditor-General was quite specific about the need for whole-of-Government reporting. It has been addressed to a certain degree in the special report, but are there any further improvements in whole-of-Government reporting that the Auditor-General believes might be necessary?

**Mr MacPherson:** The impact of the State Bank losses was quite serious, and we believed that there was a need to report fully on the public finances of South Australia. The

first volume of that report, which in past years has particularised certain departments as being remiss in whatever respect, was not done this year in that same way. Volume 1 is a focus on the public finances. Volume 2 picks up what, in past years, has been the subject of brief comment in the introductory area called Audit Issues. So, this year if you were seeking to ascertain our view in relation to administrative aberrations and so on with respect to specific departments, you would find it under the specific department in volume 2.

**Dr ARMITAGE:** In last year's report the Auditor-General identified eight major deficiencies in control exercised over Government computer systems. For the life of me, I cannot find any record of that in this report. Have all those problems been fixed, or do some of them remain?

**Mr MacPherson:** I would not suggest that all those problems have been fixed. From the point of view of the audit this year they were not a material issue. In the area of Government computing, the audit of computer systems is a major issue from an audit point of view. We have undertaken a particular focus in that area in the past 12 months, and that will continue. A series of subsidiary issues arise in relation to computer auditing such as security and the types of software that we use to assess the information that is processed through computers, because I see that as the area of the future. We will have to place particular emphasis on computer auditing in the future if we are to be able to give an audit assurance. An audit assurance is a high level of assurance that there is no material misstatement. We will have to give that emphasis in coming years.

**Dr ARMITAGE:** In last year's report an increased incidence of fraud detection in the public sector was commented upon. There is no such comment this year. I take it that would be difficult because it would be a whole of Government observation. Did the Auditor-General investigate the concern of last year in the preparation of this year's report?

**Mr MacPherson:** We would have been aware of that but, again, the issue of fraud was not seen as being as material for commentary as was the whole of Government financial position. My colleague sits on a committee which looks at this matter for the whole of Government. That is not to say that it is not an issue; it is just not a material issue when one has regard to other matters.

**Dr ARMITAGE:** Given that it was material enough an issue last year for it to be reported upon in the report and given that that is not the case this year and that you said that certain features of the bank investigation caused dilemmas and difficulties for your department, are those the sorts of difficulties that you experienced, that because matters which you regarded as worthy of report last year were not important enough this year you did not bother to investigate? In other words, did you prioritise because of resources and time spent in the bank?

**Mr MacPherson:** Fraud is always on the agenda for an auditor. Issues such as the misappropriation of goods and money and the manipulation of accounts for whatever purposes to portray a particular view are always on the audit agenda. The mere fact that it has not been the subject of comment does not mean to say it is not important. Had there been an issue with respect to fraud it would certainly have been the subject of comment. I am not aware personally—and I can ask my colleague to supplement what I say—of any issue which is fraud related and which required commentary in the audit report because it was material. I will invite my colleague to make any observations that he sees fit.

**Mr Bockmann:** If I could pick up where the Auditor-General left off, I draw attention to the fact that there was a section in volume 1 which covered the issue of fraud in the public sector. It picked up and reflected some of the observations that were made in the previous year. In the honourable member's original question he asked about the extent of fraud in 1991-92. We indicated that there had been an increase in the number of cases reported to the Auditor-General.

There is an obligation for public sector agencies under the Treasurer's instructions to report cases of fraud to the Auditor-General. Fewer cases were reported in 1992-93, but it was still emphasised in the report that management should be alerted to the fact that it is its responsibility to ensure that systems and procedures are put in place to prevent and detect fraud. We kept pushing this issue.

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

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State Aboriginal Affairs, \$4 000 000

**Witness:**

The Hon. M.K. Mayes, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr D. Rathman, Chief Executive Officer.

Mr I. Carter, Director, Operations.

Mr G. Knill, Executive Manager.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I declare the proposed payment open for examination. I refer members to pages 101 to 103 in the Estimates of Payments and pages 261 to 267 in the Program Estimates. Does the Minister wish to make an opening statement?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** Yes, Mr Chairman. This is an historic occasion for our State Department of Aboriginal Affairs because we have a stand-alone department, and it is significant being International Year of the Indigenous Person. The Government's commitment to placing Aboriginal affairs high on our priorities and of raising the public's profile of our indigenous citizens can be demonstrated through the many activities throughout the State to recognise 1993 as the year for the world's indigenous peoples. One can never forget the emotion and symbolism of the dawn ceremony and the raising of the Aboriginal flag at Hindmarsh to launch the year on 10 December last year. I note that the shadow spokesman was there that morning when the flag was raised.

This year, we have established in Adelaide the first Aboriginal languages institute. This year, for the first time, the Chairperson of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, Ms Lois O'Donoghue, and the elected members of the regional councils held formal meetings in this House, in this very Chamber, with the support of the Speaker and members. This year, Her Excellency the Governor and members of Cabinet held an historic Cabinet meeting and Executive Council meeting on Pitjantjatjara lands.

It is the first time that a Minister of Aboriginal Affairs has appeared before the Estimates Committees as the Minister of a department with the discrete and independent responsibilities for coordinating and monitoring the Government's activities with respect to our original citizens. In the changes to Government administration announced by the Premier last October, the Government established the Department of State

Aboriginal Affairs. It represented and demonstrated beyond mere rhetoric the Government's commitment to the indigenous Aboriginal citizens of this State.

I am proud tonight to be able to say that we have now consolidated several of the major policy units of Government to form the department and have thereby established a mechanism for more effective coordination of our service and programs to the Aboriginal community. We are now in a position to monitor more effectively the outcomes of Government activities by ensuring that services are directed to the most pressing needs and are culturally appropriate. The Ministry is committed to a five-point plan, based on community well-being.

The program for 1993-94 will be committed to the following:

1. Community Participation. This will increase the level of participation of Aboriginal people in providing advice to Government. It is my belief and intention to work through the existing community structures, such as the ATSIC elected arm, to provide members who will effectively represent a community viewpoint to Government. In committing myself to better lines of communication with the Aboriginal community, I have called for a review of the Aboriginal Heritage Committee with the intention of developing a regional focus for advice from the Aboriginal people about protection and preservation of their sites.

With regard to the South Australian Education and Training Advisory Committee, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission representatives play an important part in the work of the committee. I have endorsed the continuation of the role of Executive Officer/Chair of the committee for a further two years. The committee has planned and implemented the establishment of the first South Australian Aboriginal Languages Institute and participated in the planning of an International Conference on Indigenous Education, and it has played an important role in bringing the public and private sector education providers together to consider the education needs of Aboriginal children and adults.

With the agreement of the Minister of Housing and Urban Development, it was agreed to transfer the Aboriginal housing advisory functions to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. The Government is examining ways to improve the availability of all forms of housing for Aboriginal people; this includes the ability of Aboriginal people to enter into home ownership. Aboriginal housing will be coordinated under an interim arrangement known as the Aboriginal Housing Advisory Committee. The committee will be representative of Aboriginal Housing Management Committees and ATSIC regional councils. The committee's main term of reference is to develop an independent Aboriginal housing body.

2. Land Needs. To strengthen the day-to-day operations of the three land holding authorities to enable the authorities to develop a vision for the future about Aboriginal land needs. In practical terms the Government has provided additional resources for the authorities to more closely consult with the communities they represent and to promote the benefit to external agencies for a coordinated response to servicing communities within the jurisdiction of the land holding bodies.

Members will appreciate the constraints encountered by Government in providing new resources, but we feel it is important to begin a process which supports the land holding authorities to care for the Aboriginal lands, and to this end we have provided for a land care program to be continued in

some cases or initiated in others. In the case of the Aboriginal Lands Trust, my department has seconded a senior officer to assist the trust to further develop its plan to provide an effective service to its lease holders.

3. Women. The role of women within the Aboriginal community has long been recognised as important to the social well-being of Aboriginal people. The women's adviser to the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs coordinated a conference of Aboriginal women in May this year. During this conference Margaret Hampton stated:

If Governments are to deliver appropriate and adequate services and programs to meet the needs of Aboriginal women then they must increase their efforts through consultation with Aboriginal women.

To this end, I have accepted and endorsed the recommendations of the women that an Aboriginal Women's State Advisory Committee be formed, and I am currently awaiting the outcome of the deliberations of the working party, which was elected to draft the terms of reference for the advisory committee. It has been made clear to me that the advisory committee will be the catalyst for refocussing the development of the Aboriginal community through women's eyes.

4. Networking. The Department of State Aboriginal Affairs has been given additional resources to improve the networking between the Aboriginal community and Government agencies. Regional areas have been established to service north western (Maralinga/AP lands across to Oodnadatta), central western (Eyre Peninsula), north-east (Flinders Ranges/Innamincka), northern (Spencer Gulf), central (Adelaide) and southern (Crystal Brook to Mount Gambier).

The department has reorganised the use of its staff to provide six regional community liaison officers to improve communications between Aboriginal people in respect of cultural and site preservation, and to respond to information inquiries. In addition to the six community liaison officers, a liaison officer works with the education committee to support the work of local committee members. Currently the department, with the support of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, is in the process of appointing a project officer to monitor the programs of State agencies in response to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. The department is responsible for maintaining links with the Commonwealth, primarily the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, and within the State Government it has begun a process of meeting with Aboriginal senior officers in addition to the normal links established with departments.

5. Economic Independence. Real progress in the 1990s and beyond will be achieved when the Aboriginal community is able to provide economic independence for its people. This will be done by promoting the culture of the people to the wider community and overseas. The richness of Aboriginal art and performance is already focusing the minds of Aboriginal Affairs Ministers through the Australian Aboriginal Affairs Council officers working party on tourism. My colleague the Minister of Tourism has committed his officers to the development of Aboriginal tourism in South Australia. An Aboriginal tourism workshop, 'Dreams and Realities', is to be held in the Barn Conference Centre, Mannum, on 6 and 7 October 1993. Aims and objectives of the workshop are to provide information and support for those already involved in the tourism industry and those wishing to establish tourism enterprises. Business enterprise will become more important in the years to come in an effort to generate wealth and employment.

The business advisory panel chaired by Mr Ian Duncan of Western Mining Corporation will continue to be an important support and encouragement for Aboriginal enterprise initiatives. The group of business and expert members of the panel are in full support of increasing the resources available for enterprise development.

I will seek to hold discussions with my Cabinet colleagues and my Federal counterpart to devise a means by which we can give realisation to the aspirations and plans that the panel has examined during its 12 months of operations. Employment must remain high on the agenda because it offers a source of economic independence for the individual. The Aboriginal Employment and Development Branch of DEET-SA is currently negotiating an agreement with the Commonwealth DEET for a new three-year employment development strategy. In the budget, additional funding was provided to the branch to enable it to continue its work identifying jobs and placement of Aboriginal people.

I am particularly concerned to say tonight that we the elected parliamentarians of this State need to join a bipartisan approach to take the lead in encouraging the community to capture a new vision about our Aboriginal citizens, to understand their aspirations and to work to achieve a real reconciliation among all sectors of society.

**Dr ARMITAGE:** I did in fact have an opening statement but I think I will curtail that, given the time. As the Minister has said, this International Year of Indigenous People has been very exciting and great advances have been made. I was present at the flag raising, amongst many other ceremonies. I took my son there for a variety of reasons and he still mentions the emotion of that day every time we go past the flag pole; he is 12 years old. It had a major effect on him and I would hope that those sorts of emotional experiences can be shared by more people and hopefully change some attitudes.

I am delighted that we are here questioning a Minister on a departmental status. It is something that I have mentioned to Mr Rathman and Mr Knill on previous occasions before it happened and I am delighted about it. However, given the time I will not say any more about that.

I refer to page 267 of the Program Estimates. I note that the Minister's statement refers frequently to consultation and so on, which is a particularly important element in Aboriginal culture. I have discussed this matter with people from the State Department of Aboriginal Affairs previously, but I would like to ask the Minister a question in relation to this issue.

Anxiety within Aboriginal communities is continually reported to me in terms of the supposed program responsibility that has been accepted by the State Department of Aboriginal Affairs. Given this consultation, many Aboriginal people inform me that they are concerned about the decision being taken without any particular consultation. What consultation regarding the changed role took place with Aboriginal people and staff of the affected agencies? In particular, who was consulted in the following Aboriginal communities (and I am happy for the Minister to take this question on notice): the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands, Ceduna, Coober Pedy, Copley, Irrwanyere, Marlee, Mount Gambier, Nepabunna, Oodnadatta, Point Pearce, Port Lincoln, Port Augusta, the Riverland, Whyalla and Yalata, from the Aboriginal point of view? And, from the Cabinet point of view, was the change in philosophy discussed and approved by Cabinet in a general sense before the decision was made and, if so, what was the rationale for that decision?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I understand that the honourable member's question is directed to the creation of the department and the consultation that took place before that decision. In a sense, I came in with the creation of the department, if the honourable member's memory can go back to 1 October last year. I became very conscious of the enthusiasm that a number of Aboriginal community leaders had for the concept after the announcement that there would be a Cabinet reshuffle. Various people were speculating who might be Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and some approached me in anticipation that I might be. Those people expressed a desire that we should have a department that stood alone and had a responsibility and custodial functions within Government agencies.

I am not aware of what consultation took place in the broader community prior to the Premier's announcement of the department. There was considerable discussion prior to its actual creation, but that was post the Premier's announcement, because we went through a process of creating the department. There had to be administrative separation to ensure that the department was created with its own accountability and its own structures and that the CEO had all those powers vested with CEOs.

During that process, I had reasonable consultation with a variety of community leaders, not from the AP lands but people whom I was meeting as the newly appointed Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. I bounced off them their views about it, and I did not get any negative comments: I got inquiries about how it would operate and what impact it would have. I had significant discussions with a broad cross-section of community representatives who met with me about mainstreaming, what would that mean, and whether they would actually have the opportunity to identify within the big budgets those funds which would and should be dedicated to the Aboriginal community.

The general concern was that the Aboriginal community were not getting the return from those departments which they believed Ministers were saying they should get, not only in terms of absolute amounts but also in terms of delivery of service. That is when I formed the view that we were going in the right direction in creating a department, and I will take on notice the honourable member's question relating to those discussions with my predecessor, the Hon. Mike Rann. The commitment I gleaned from those discussions was that we needed some accountability built into those large departments, the budgets of which were delivering services such as education and health, so that we could have some identification and performance measurement with regard to those budgets and what was being delivered. That was the message I got from the community in those consultations.

There was not any real concern, although I know that there is, and the honourable member is quite right. I have had questions raised with me about the wisdom of going down the path of creating a department, and people are saying, 'We are going back to the 1969 model; is this the best way to go?' It is a bit like the State-Commonwealth argument—whether or not we should have States. There is a very strong wisdom in our having an identifiable operational unit that can have accountability and a voice not only in Cabinet but also with other CEOs in the bureaucracy. Having a fully fledged CEO who is an Aboriginal himself gives a certain impact in the delivery of those advocacy arguments before the other bureaucracies and the other CEOs.

I accept what the honourable member is saying. There are people who are questioning the wisdom of the creation of the

department, but the overriding question that was raised with me was, 'What will this mean in terms of our identifying as an Aboriginal community what we should be getting out of these departments, given your colleagues' commitments, whether it be the Minister of Education or the Minister of Health, in terms of what they believe is being delivered?' There was a question mark from a number of those Aboriginal community leaders about the actual delivery of those services. We have now stepped forward, and I might digress if the honourable member wants me to go on, because it is an important issue for him to know what we are doing. We have followed that through and we are now establishing with those departments performance agreements so we can actually measure an outcome from the moneys that are going into the programs to which they are committed.

Therefore, as part of our social justice policy they are identified and the department has some way of relating to them and measuring an outcome which we believe is important in assessing what our Aboriginal community is getting from the dollars being spent. So, that is the outcome from those discussions which commenced before October last year. We are still in that process because, as the honourable member knows from my opening remarks, we are dealing with housing and we have further work to do there to get a proper performance outcome so that the community knows those dollars are going effectively into the right places.

**Dr ARMITAGE:** Not many people have raised with me any objection to the creation of a department. Their anxiety is more related to the functions of that department once it has been created. Is the program responsibility of the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs likely to be expanded?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** Yes. I also accept what the member for Adelaide is saying: I think the majority of people have raised with me the issue of the functions of the department.

**Dr ARMITAGE:** I am also very supportive of the creation of the department.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** Yes, I am not reading anything into your comments. I am accepting it as a genuine question as to where we are going. The more bipartisan we are on this issue the greater the success, because there are some major issues that the community must address. There will be an expanded role for the department, in my view, and I know that is also the Premier's view, because our discussions following his announcement in October last year indicated that. That will occur in terms of not only that performance check process but also what we are doing through our Director of Operations in expanding, taking over the Aboriginal Heritage Branch and reviewing systems that we know need to be improved. Mr Carter has that direct responsibility. We must look at the whole aspect of operations, because we have picked up the old SACON functions involving services to our Aboriginal lands, and again that is Mr Carter's responsibility. So, not only are the physical application and administration expanded but also in my view the overall performance measurement and assessment of what is being delivered to Aboriginal kids throughout South Australia in terms of education and what is being delivered to Aboriginal adults in terms of tertiary provisions or services. We need to constantly review that because of the special needs that exist.

We have some magnificent stories we can tell. I somewhat light-heartedly refer to the achievements of one of our great South Australians in winning the Brownlow medal after two seasons in Victoria playing for Essendon, but we have some

magnificent successes in this State and we now have something like over 500 Aboriginal university students. We are seeing that success flow through in a whole range of activities: in the arts, the law, within the whole community and within the church. Wherever one goes one can see these results on a day-to-day basis. Too often we look at the negative side of things. Certainly, it is a worry that we have street kids and that we have found 7-year-old Aboriginal kids in Hindley Street. That is shattering, but we cannot let that defeat our achievements as a community, and we should not run around with a sense of guilt looking over our shoulders at what we did wrong: we should be considering what we should be doing right. We have a lot to achieve, and we can work together to accomplish that, and certainly the department can play an important part in this regard.

**Dr ARMITAGE:** The matter of employment is of vital importance for a variety of reasons not the least of which is that it gives seven-year-old street kids, to whom the Minister referred, a role model. I refer in particular to page 267 of the Program Estimates and Information. I am told that the State Government Aboriginal employment strategy was reviewed in 1991. The report was presented to the Commissioner for Public Employment later that year but was never publicly released. Why was that review never released—I understand that that was before the Minister took over this portfolio, but the answer would be of interest; what are the current levels of employment in Government agencies in relation to permanent positions, their range of classifications and occupations; and what is the Government's current Aboriginal employment strategy?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I was not aware that the 1991 Aboriginal employment strategy had not been released. I will look into that matter to see why that is so and place the matter before Cabinet for consideration. It might be somewhat out of date now, but it could be useful as a benchmark for the community. I have no idea why it was not released; I assumed that it had been. Regarding the figures requested by the honourable member, I will ask Mr Rathman to respond.

**Mr Rathman:** At the moment, the employment strategy is subject to negotiations which are continuing with the Commonwealth to secure a three year commitment for the continuation of the activities of the Aboriginal Employment Development Branch. An amount of \$104 000 has been allocated to the branch for this financial year from Aboriginal Affairs appropriation funds to enable DEET(SA) to continue with the placement program that has begun and to ensure further development of employment opportunities through that branch. It is our understanding that it is only a matter of the technical details being worked out between DEET(SA) and the Commonwealth DEET before we secure an agreement between those two parties.

**Mr De LAINE:** I note on page 102 of the Estimates of Payments a significant decrease in Commonwealth funding for the Aboriginal visitors scheme, which I understand has been highly successful. Has funding for this program been cut or is it being provided through another source?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** The member for Price has had a longstanding interest in this area and has been very supportive of programs that have been conducted in his electorate. He has built up an excellent relationship with community leaders in his electorate and I think it is important that that continue as it is a significant aspect of community life in the Port Adelaide region. Recently there was a valuation of the visitors scheme called 'The Calming Effect—The Aboriginal Visitors Scheme in Action'. The reviewer

observed that the scheme is a significant social statement by the Aboriginal community to call a halt to the devastation of premature deaths that have occurred in police custody. It is stated:

The need for the Aboriginal visitors scheme to be strengthened and maintained is clearly indicated.

In light of the Commonwealth's decision not to fund the scheme on an ongoing basis, we have approved the reallocation of \$220 000 for the 1993-94 operation of the scheme. That reallocation has been strongly recommended by the Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee. So, the scheme will be continued. I think it is essential, and I was somewhat surprised—indeed, I was staggered (I am not sure of the background to the Commonwealth's decision)—when I heard that it was not to be continued. I would have thought that for the paltry amount of money involved the Commonwealth would have continued that program.

Time and again we find that the Feds handball it back; they initiate something and then pass the responsibility to us. I think this is a whole of Government responsibility, a national responsibility and not just the responsibility of South Australia. South Australia's track record is probably the best of most of the States. There are still serious problems in Western Australia and Queensland and, I think, in parts of New South Wales as well.

We are probably setting the pace in some of these areas, although we still have some work to do. It staggers me that they should have pulled the plug on it like that. It leaves one somewhat flabbergasted and cold as to why it should come out. As State members we should be advocating to our Federal colleagues the case for reinstatement of funds so that we can see it better, because in my view any additional money above this is money well spent.

**Mr De LAINE:** I refer to Estimates of Payments (page 102) and note the increased Commonwealth funding of \$200 000 to the Aboriginal Education and Training Advisory Committee. Will the Minister outline the scope of work and programs proposed to be undertaken by the committee?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** There have been some outstanding achievements, and the people who have been involved under the guidance of the Chair have really shown a great deal of wisdom and farsightedness in the way they have adopted the program. I will provide the honourable member with details in respect of the scope of the work and programs which SAYTC proposes in 1994, although the funding the member mentions is set out on page 102 of the Estimates of Payments. I will provide the honourable member with a breakdown. Approximately \$48 000 has been set aside for the committee to meet with its own members and other policy and monitoring committees. The meetings will facilitate community consultation and advise and monitor and encourage achievement toward Aboriginal education policy goals. About \$40 000 has been allocated to employ a chairperson to direct and coordinate the consultation and advise from the committees and to the Minister and agencies.

With regard to my earlier comments, given the performance of the Chairman, that is money well spent. We are probably getting a good return on our investment. The sum of \$57 000 is allocated to employ staff to undertake projects and research required by the committee. Further, \$40 000 will be used to employ a field officer to formalise and coordinate the regional advisory networks; \$45 000 to employ an officer to research and evaluate the standards of early child education in the northern area; \$6 000 to establish local communities,

so that there can be ongoing consultation with the central committee; and \$20 000 for consultancies and issues such as the World's Indigenous People's Conference, which will be held in Wollongong in November. The Chairman of our State committee has a significant role to play in that conference. So, we will see some pretty good outcomes for that.

**Mr De LAINE:** I refer to page 267 of the Program Estimates under '1992-93 specific targets—encouraged Aboriginal participation in local government'. How successful has that encouragement been?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** There are ongoing discussions with the Minister of Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations. We had an opportunity to visit, as the member will note, the Aboriginal lands. One of the interesting aspects of that visit was that the AP Lands Council is very keen to have some sort of local government status in its area. It is quite an exciting prospect, and certainly I know my colleague is very supportive of that concept, as I am. We can see certain autonomies and benefits flowing not only in terms of initiatives and opportunities for our indigenous people on the AP lands but also the opportunities for them to explore other funding options and gaining access to other expertise, which perhaps is not available to them in the current environment. It is quite an exciting concept. I know that the Minister of Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations is currently exploring it. It has been proposed that a pilot study be conducted on the AP lands to investigate the requirements for an Aboriginal community council of land authority to obtain local government status.

In 1992 the Australian Local Government Association formed a national Aboriginal reference group to consider strategies for further involvement of the Aboriginal people and communities in local government, and the LGA in South Australia established a State-based reference group which complements the national group. The LGA sought assistance from ATSIIC for a consultant to develop a strategic plan for the Local Government Association's Aboriginal affairs reference group to address access. Morton Consulting has been chosen and has already started the consultancies. The three councils—the Corporation of the City of Port Adelaide (which the member will no doubt be familiar with), Murray Bridge and Central Yorke Peninsula—are involved in the following way: they are organising a conference between the Aboriginal communities and staff and elected members of the three councils to promote cross-cultural awareness and understanding, and each council is to involve the Aboriginal community in local activities in the area.

It is quite an exciting prospect and one that I hope has legs. I hope we see it grow into something that becomes part of local government infrastructure in this State. I am sure that the Local Government Association has not missed the opportunity to look at what can present itself there. I thank the member for raising that question. It is something that people do not normally consider, but I am sure, given the discussions that he has with his local council authority, he will give it all the encouragement in the world.

**Mr VENNING:** My first question relates to the Program Estimates at page 267. One of the significant achievements for 1992-93 is detailed as follows:

Monitored agency responses to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

Page 1 000 of the response by Government to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody indicates that Aboriginal liaison officers at that stage were in five hospitals

in South Australia and that the South Australian Health Commission had identified funding requirements to increase the number of these officers. What funding requirements were necessary; were they provided; and how many Aboriginal liaison officers are in South Australian public hospitals?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** Under my portfolio responsibilities I made reference to the establishment of community liaison officers. They are separate, I believe, from the question that the member has raised, and that is in relation to the liaison officers under the Health Commission banner of my colleague the Minister of Health. I would have to take that question on notice, if I am correctly interpreting the member's question, and give him a detailed response. I can respond in relation to the role and function of the liaison officers which we propose to establish and, of course, some are already established. However, I will not do so if the member is focused on those areas in the Health Commission.

**Mr VENNING:** I want to ask a series of questions, which no doubt the Minister will take on notice. I refer to page 267 of the Program Estimates and the program description for State Aboriginal Affairs.

1. For what boards, committees and councils does the Minister have responsibility as Minister or within the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs?

2. In respect of each such board, committee or council: who are the members; when do the members' terms of office expire; what is the remuneration of the members; who appoints the members and on whose recommendation or nomination is the appointment made; and what is its role and function?

My next question relates to page 267 of the Program Estimates and the program description for State Aboriginal Affairs, contract officers.

1. How many officers are now on contracts of service rather than permanent employment, and at what levels are they serving (that is, EL1 or EL2, etc.)?

2. Who, if any, of these officers are subject to performance reviews, how is performance measured, who measures it, who reviews performance and what are the consequences of failure to perform?

3. Are any performance bonuses paid and, if so, what are they and how are they measured?

My final question relates to page 267 of the Program Estimates and the program description for the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs.

1. How many positions have been proposed for abolition through targeted separation packages?

2. What is each position?

3. How many persons have so far applied to take the benefit of a TSP?

4. How many targeted separation packages have so far been accepted?

5. What has been the payout under each TSP?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I will take the questions on notice.

**Mr VENNING:** I refer to page 267 of the Program Estimates. Will the Minister provide the Committee with a list of all agency responses to relevant recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I would like to clarify the question so that we get it absolutely right when we respond and do not have any further confusion. When the honourable

member refers to 'contract officers', does he mean in terms of 'contract for employment' or 'contract of employment', and are we meant to understand that that includes temporary officers? We would not have people who are employed in the sense of 'contract for employment', that is, a contract which would be for, say, three years and they would perform specified duties, the delivery of those duties being at the discretion of the officer. We do not have people like that but we do have temporary officers who are employed on a week-to-week basis. Does the honourable member want information in relation to temporary officers?

**Mr VENNING:** That is the correct interpretation.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** We will provide information in relation to temporary officers, bearing in mind that we do not classify them as one would in the normal sense as contract officers.

**Mr VENNING:** Yes.

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** I will take the honourable member's question on notice.

**Mr McKEE:** I refer to page 102 of the Estimates of Payments and Receipts. Can the Minister outline what options the State Department of Aboriginal Affairs is proposing to deal with the tragic problem of the apparently growing number of Aboriginal street kids who are frequenting areas such as Hindley Street and the occurrence of family breakdown that is a prime cause of this problem?

**The Hon. M.K. Mayes:** As we all know, this is a tragedy. We are working comprehensively with all the agencies to endeavour to address this. I am not sure whether I can give this adequate attention in the time available to me. This is a serious issue that needs to be addressed in a comprehensive way. I would like to take the question on notice and respond in an appropriate and proper way that does not appear to be either transparent, frivolous or trivial in relation to a very serious issue and one that is attracting considerable attention from agencies, both private and public, and the churches—both Archbishops have made comment and are very interested in seeing this proceed. As a community we are going to have to address this in a comprehensive way. I will take the honourable member's question on notice and table in the House a complete answer, not a part answer, which I think will not provide an appropriate and thorough response.

**Mr McKEE:** The question is very important and so is the response. I am happy for the Minister to take it on notice.

**Dr ARMITAGE:** Bearing in mind the time, I seek the indulgence of the Committee to make an incredibly brief closing comment. I merely want to point out that one of the dilemmas of the Estimates Committees functions in Parliament is fitting in all the Committees. I find it particularly distressing as shadow spokesman for the Opposition on Aboriginal affairs that we have had to curtail this issue. I believe the importance of this issue is almost inversely proportional to the time we have given it. I understand that negotiations take place and I am not blaming anyone. I merely point out that it is a pity that we have not had more time in which to explore issues that are of enormous importance, and I am sure that the Minister would agree.

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

## ADJOURNMENT

At 10 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Wednesday 22 September at 11 a.m.