

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**Thursday 22 September 1994****ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A****Chairman:**

The Hon. H. Allison

Members:

Mr R.L. Brokenshire
 Mr M.R. De Laine
 Ms R.K. Geraghty
 Ms J. Greig
 The Hon. M.D. Rann
 Mrs L. Rosenberg

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

 Environment and Natural Resources, \$41 394 000
Witness:

The Hon. D.C. Wotton, Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr D. Mutton, Chief Executive Officer.
 Mr R. Thomas, Executive Director, Office of the Environment Protection Authority.
 Mr C. Schonfeldt, Acting Director, Water Resources Group.
 Mr L. Best, Acting Manager, Resource Management, Natural Resources Group.
 Mr I. Fitzgerald, Director, Corporate Services.

The CHAIRMAN: I advise that any information to be supplied later must be submitted to the clerk of the House of Assembly no later than 7 October. I declare the proposed expenditure open for examination. Does the Minister wish to make an opening statement?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Thank you, Mr Chairman. This Government was elected to ensure that the sustainable management of our natural resources was achieved. The organisation and our programs and strategies are aligned to achieve sound long-term management of the environment with the early and specific actions derived from my department's corporate strategic plan which reflects this Government's priorities.

The Government wants the public to see the department as a productive, responsive and committed organisation which strives to provide relevant quality services and products that maximise the value and benefit of South Australia's natural resources and heritage to the community.

The major programs to be undertaken by the Government in 1994-95 involve a broad range, including coastal management, where we will be investigating funding alternatives in conjunction with local councils; providing councils with support and advice for developing local coastal management strategies and action plans; and developing a new Coastal

Management Act to meet the needs of the next 10 years and beyond.

In pastoral management we aim to complete all pastoral lease assessments by 1997; introduce user friendly economic impact models for pastoralists to look at alternative strategies for managing their land by December 1995; and review and amend the relevant Act.

In the area of national parks and reserves management, we will be responding to the national parks review by preparing and implementing a realistic action plan; undertaking a comprehensive park audit (this process has already commenced); increasing management plan outputs for parks and reserves so all current reserves have plans by the year 2005; and identifying protection requirements for reserves, particularly high fire hazard parks adjacent to built assets.

The public living in the outback will be receiving relevant and practical community facilities and services, according to a five year rolling plan developed by the Outback Area Trust. A major part of our activity will be devoted to biological conservation by completing the biological survey of the State by the year 2000; expending \$1 million over two years for the protection of areas of high conservation value in the Lake Eyre Basin including Coongie Lakes and the arc of the Mound Springs; involving community groups and landowners in wildlife management, protection and enhancement projects on privately managed land; and finalising the native vegetation management financial assistance program by 1997 and achieving sustainable management of heritage areas by the year 2000. A major commitment has also been made to develop a State conservation strategy, and this is being progressed through a joint parliamentary committee.

Recreation and tourism issues are significant matters for regional employment and development, and we are aiming at establishing the State's natural resources as key tourist and recreational destinations. As well as that, we are looking to identify those parks suitable for significant sensitive private sector investment of infrastructure for visitor facilities and improving revenue from tourist facilities for reinvestment of the proceeds in the national park tourism basic infrastructure.

The valuation services provided by the agency are used by virtually all councils and the Government as the base valuation figure for various rates and taxes. This high quality service is aiming to be self-funding by July 1995. Animal welfare is a key priority for the Government. We recognise the work being done by the RSPCA and associated organisations, and we will be amending legislation and establishing an education program to reflect the keen interest of the electorate in cats as well as dogs.

The water resources function was transferred from EWS in January 1994 and plays a vital role in the quality and quantity of water available in this State. A key part of the Government's strategy was to improve urban catchment and stormwater management initially in the Patawalonga and Torrens catchment areas, and it is under way. I have also announced the development of a State water plan for South Australia which will include an extensive consultation phase prior to the plan's completion early next year. I will be pleased to expand on this matter during questions.

In addition to being the custodian of the key information bases for title, valuation, cadastre and topography, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is the designated lead agency in Government for information systems and is sponsoring a whole of Government approach in this vital area. The creation of strategic alliances with CSIRO and private sector organisations has added consider-

able value in the area of technology and product development and dissemination. The provision of fast, efficient and economic land registration and titling facilities is vital to the economy of South Australia. We will be working closely with our customers to improve further services and reduce costs. Quality management will be a key part of that process.

We aim to complete the State heritage survey by the year 2000 whilst improving the conservation and care of the State's heritage resource. An objective is to develop educative phases of our heritage. Our Botanic Gardens are major recreational locations with local, interstate and international visitors, including the Conservatory at Hackney. We will be continuing the redevelopment of the Hackney precinct to integrate this area into the existing garden.

The herbarium is the repository for plants in this State, and we are aiming to create a herbarium database by the turn of the century. We are initiating research that will commercialise certain native species, particularly Sturt's desert pea. We are aiming for the proclamation of the Environment Protection Act this calendar year which, with an authority, will encourage, through an integrated approach, sound environmental practices in the private and public sectors.

Programs that monitor water and air pollution sources will be implemented. We will be encouraging cleaner production practices and seeking enhancement of the reuse and recycling of packaging and other materials. This is being assisted through the establishment, in cooperation with local government, of the Recycling and Waste Management Board. Management of solid and hazardous waste and contaminated sites is high on our list, as is the reduction of environmental noise and the phasing out of ozone depleting substances.

The Commission of Audit drew attention to the need for accrual accounting in Government agencies, and it is planned to implement the process from 1 July 1996. The financial management benchmarking study drew our attention to the costs of this activity in the department, and action is being taken to reduce our costs and improve efficiency in this area.

In summary, Mr Chairman, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is delivering the Government's program for this sphere of operations, and my officers and I are prepared to answer the Committee's questions.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments open for examination.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: This year's recurrent budget shows a reduction of \$6.4 million against last year's actual expenditure. After allowing for decreased expenditure on the native vegetation scheme of \$5 million and the increased provision of \$2 million for stormwater management and the Lake Eyre project, this means a reduction of \$3.4 million for other programs. It will be of concern to all people who care for the environment that the Government has seen fit to reduce expenditure in this critical area when Governments world wide are recognising the need for greater investment in the protection of the environment and the management of our natural resources. There is a danger that the impetus created by the previous Government for the protection of the environment will be lost.

South Australia has led Australia in many areas. These include the protection of native vegetation—I think we might easily be a world leader with our protection scheme—the removal of sludge and effluent from our gulf and riverine waters; the control of development in our water catchment and vigneron areas; and investment in securing large areas of the State for parks and reserves.

The Opposition will seek to hear from the Minister how this budget will address the whole spectrum of ongoing environmental issues ranging across sustainable development, air quality, land and water management, the protection of endangered species, the management of parks and reserves, heritage conservation and environmental law. The Opposition will remind the Minister of comments and criticisms made by him of programs undertaken by his department in the past, and it will be interested to learn of the initiatives he is taking to address these issues and criticisms. It will also be interested in the delivery of promises made by the Government and the Minister before the election and action that has been taken since. The Minister told last year's Estimates Committee when he was shadow Minister for the Environment:

... the management of our parks and reserves under the National Parks and Wildlife Act is a disaster. ... staffing levels are an absolute disgrace.

What is the current number of people employed in National Parks, and how many extra staff does the Minister propose to appoint to rectify what he said was a disgrace?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: While we are getting the exact information the honourable member has sought, I have in the past been concerned about the management of our national parks and reserves. A number of relevant issues have been referred to since coming to office. I am very much aware of the concern in the community to ensure that our parks are properly managed and that there is an appropriate park audit. An audit of the State reserve is currently being carried out at a cost of some \$87 000 and will establish an information base for future management. A number of other matters are being considered. With regard to the management of parks, the staffing proposed for 1993-94 was 148.5; for 1994-95 we are looking at 163.4, which indicates an increase in that number. I am not totally satisfied that that is sufficient. I am referring to GME Act staff in parks. There are weekly paid officers as well.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Last year there was a total across those two categories of 268: where do we stand compared with last year in both categories of employment—GME Act and others?

Mr Mutton: The figures included in the program papers on page 448 are the figures for average staffing levels for the year and 163.4 is the estimated average for 1994-95, compared with an actual 198 last year, which included a number of people associated with biological services, which are now included in another one of the programs identified within that listing. In fact, there is a projected increase of two staff members in parks for this coming financial year over last year at this stage, but it will also depend on the level of revenue generated out of the general reserves trust—the trust established a number of years ago as a basis for maintaining and improving the level of services in parks. That revenue in large proportion is generally turned back into employment numbers through the general reserves trust.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: In view of the Minister's strident criticism of previous management programs, and remembering that he said that the management of our parks and reserves under the National Parks and Wildlife Act was both a disaster and a disgrace, how does he intend to address the issues of endangered species, pest plants and feral animals such as rabbits and goats, and what extra resources will be made available for the management of parks and reserves?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: We are looking at a number of areas, and I have already referred to the park audit, which is costing \$87 000. A review of the provisions of the National

Parks and Wildlife Act and a five-year tourism plan, which will cost \$20 000, are being undertaken. Fire management is a major problem at present, and about \$290 000 has been set aside for that purpose. In pest management, \$150 000 will be spent on additional pest animal and plant control projects. An integrated approach to the fox, rabbit, cat and goat problem in the Flinders Ranges is being addressed. There is also a boxthorn control program in the Sir Joseph Banks Group and offshore islands. Work is also being done on bridal creeper on Kangaroo Island, and research is being undertaken on biological control of bone seed and rabbits. They are some of the major issues being addressed.

The distribution of endangered and vulnerable species is being determined as part of the Biological Survey of South Australia, and viable populations of several species have been established within the State. I refer particularly to magpie geese at Bool Lagoon in the South East, brush-tailed bettongs at Wedge Island in Spencer Gulf, St Peter's Island and Venus Bay, and sticknest rats at Reevesby Island. The State has also assisted Earth Sanctuaries, which the honourable member would realise is a private sanctuary, with the establishment of brush-tailed bettongs, sticknest rats and numbats at Yookamurra in the Murray-Mallee. We have also established a program to reintroduce the bilby to South Australia. This is being funded in part by public donation via the *Advertiser's* threatened species feature. So, a number of initiatives is being introduced in this area, and I can assure the honourable member that endangered species and dealing with pest plants, in particular, are of concern to me.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: The Liberal policy on national parks and sanctuaries, which was released at the time of the last election, states:

One-fifth of the State, or 20 million hectares, is dedicated to reserves under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. The parks are failing to achieve the statutory goal of preserving and protecting the State's flora and fauna.

Page 448 of the Program Estimates shows that expenditure on the management of parks will fall this year by \$813 000. Given these reduced resources, how does the Minister again propose to address his own criticism of the management of the parks? What action has the Minister taken to address the criticism made by him as shadow Minister that 'the preparation of management plans for parks and reserves is not keeping up with demand' and that many plans are not being adhered to?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I am sure that the honourable member and other members would be aware of the report that was released recently relating to the review of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. That review was instigated by the previous Government. Funding of some \$800 000 has been allocated specifically to address a significant number of the recommendations that have come out of the parks review. The need for an audit of our State's reserves has been recognised for a very long time. It is of concern to me that, with the information that we have before us as far as the department is concerned, there is no detail relating to an information base for future management of our national parks and reserves. That is why we are spending some \$87 000 on that park audit.

I have already referred to initiatives in pest management. There is also a metropolitan park review which will cost some \$10 000 and which will determine the most appropriate management options for metropolitan parks in particular. A number of other initiatives are being considered. I make the point again, in direct response to the honourable member's

question, that additional funding of some \$800 000 has been allocated to specifically address a number of the issues and recommendations that have come out of the park review.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Certain caves at the Sellicks Hill quarry, two days prior to the election on 9 December 1993, were imploded. The implosion resulted in a three month investigation by the Government and ultimately an action being taken in the Supreme Court of South Australia. Could the Minister advise the outcome of the Supreme Court proceedings? What is being done to avoid a similar situation arising in the future?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: After the implosion on 9 December last year the Government conducted a three month inquiry into the incident to assess what had happened and what future action was appropriate. During the course of that inquiry the Government obtained reports from two independent assessors concerning the calibre, stability and safety of the caves for either tourists or mine operators, the options and reports of other interested groups, including cavers, as well as additional information provided on economic, tourist and environmental issues.

On 11 March this year the Government decided that it would not stop the Sellicks Hill quarry from continuing to operate, and a joint statement was released by me and the Hon. Dale Baker, the Minister for Mines and Energy, on that day. Subsequently, the State heritage authority issued a stop order and provisionally heritage listed the caves under the Heritage Act. I exercised my power of veto over the decision of the State heritage authority on 18 March 1994 and put out a media release that day explaining what I had done and why I had taken that action.

My decision to veto the State heritage authority's decision was challenged by the Australian Speleological Federation in the Supreme Court of South Australia. The federation asserted that I had not acted in accordance with the Heritage Act in exercising my veto and that I had failed to adequately consult with the federation before making my decision. On 30 June this year the Supreme Court dismissed the action taken by the federation and upheld my decision.

In dismissing the action, Justice Bollen rejected the suggestion I had not consulted properly prior to making my decision and found that I had consulted in a genuine way. Justice Bollen found that, in making my decision, 'matters affecting the public interest were undoubtedly taken into account', and he was unable to find that I had been in error in any way. The federation then appealed against that decision to the Full Court of the Supreme Court. The federation withdrew its appeal yesterday and, as a result, the legal challenge to my decision has now come to an end with my actions having been upheld by the Supreme Court.

I have been eager to ensure that a more appropriate process is put in place should this situation occur again. As a result, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Department of Mines and Energy have been working closely together to develop a code of practice, taking the form of an incident management procedure, to ensure that an appropriate process is in place for the future. That process has now been agreed between the two agencies, which is a first for South Australia, and will be put into effect should similar situations arise in the future. I think that that will be to everybody's advantage.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I refer the Minister to page 453 of the Program Estimates. I note an objective is to ensure establishment of metropolitan wide kerb side recycling. The introduction of plastic milk bottles has been seen by some as

a problem. What is now happening with plastic milk bottles since their introduction last year; and what will be the effect of the introduction of a metropolitan wide kerb side scheme on the return rates?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: First, and I know I cannot show pictures to the members of the Committee, unfortunately, but I have a map of the metropolitan area in front of me that shows very clearly that the vast majority of the metropolitan area is now serviced by kerb side collection or kerb side recycling schemes. The introduction of the plastic milk bottles in South Australia has caused a lot of discussion. Milk is now exempt from the Beverage Container Act as of June 1994. All containers, including plastic bottles and liquid paper board packaging containing milk, are exempt. Milk is considered, of course, to be consumed primarily in the home and, therefore, does not present a litter problem.

There is no evidence to suggest that the 2 litre plastic milk containers have appeared in the litter stream. Action has been taken to ensure that there are systems in place to collect and repossess the containers. These include kerb side collection and some milk industry funding of freight. The Government has also made a commitment to a comprehensive kerb side recycling system to be established in metropolitan Adelaide, and this is recognised as being the most economic method of achieving the recycling of containers which, for the most part, are used in the home, as I said earlier.

The milk industry is providing further assistance in the form of funding and the supply of equipment and publicity to facilitate collection and repossessing of plastic containers. Rib Loc, as we would all know, is a success story in regard to the storm water pipe that it is now manufacturing from recycled plastic high density polyethylene (HDPE) found in plastic milk bottles, and it is certainly to be encouraged. As kerb side recycling gains momentum, it is expected that more of this material can and should be diverted from land fill to produce value added plastic products, and I am pleased to see that that is already happening. I understand that such items as mobile garbage bins, stormwater pipe, recycling crates, plastic pallets, and so on, are being made out of recycled milk bottles and I am pleased that that is happening.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Obviously great things are happening in the metropolitan area. The Minister referred to a map. Will he provide copies to Committee members?

The CHAIRMAN: Can the map be easily photocopied?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: It will be circulated among members of the Committee for information.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I note that \$1 million is earmarked for the development of management plans for water resources. Will the Minister tell us about progress of the development of a management plan for the very important Willunga Basin.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I understand the honourable member's interest in this area. Planning for the Willunga Basin has two major goals: first, to secure and enhance the development of rural pursuits such as vineyards and almonds in the area; and, secondly, to provide urban development which is sensitive to the local environment. The rural area of the basin was proclaimed in 1991 under the Water Resources Act 1990. Since that time we have worked hand in hand with the Southern Vales Water Resource Committee to develop the Willunga water resource management plan, which aims to do two things: first, to determine whether the present level of development is sustainable; and, secondly, by means of artificial recharge, the transfer of licence and an alternative

water supply developed by a process whereby expansion of primary industry can occur.

The management plan, as the honourable member would probably know, is also focused on the total resources available to the area, which includes treatment and reuse of both surge and urban stormwater produced in the local area. In October 1993 the Government entered into a memorandum of understanding and an agreement to work towards the preparation and implementation of a strategic management plan for the Willunga Basin, which will, amongst other things, endeavour to identify the key issues associated with urban development and the retention of rural areas. This has led to two further studies being commissioned; namely, the Willunga Basin Urban Form/Landscape Study and the Willunga Basin Integrated Water Resources Study.

These studies were conducted in parallel and gave a unique opportunity to integrate natural systems and environmental sustainability into the early stages of the urban planning and development process. I understand that it is the intention of the Premier to release both studies for public consultation at a launch later this year.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: On the question of computer systems used by the department, we have heard from other Ministers during Estimates Committees that involvement by the department in the outsourcing contract will be dependent upon demonstrated cost savings. Is this the basis on which the Minister's department will be outsourcing these requirements? How many staff are employed by the Minister's department to maintain, operate and develop information technology systems; and what is the annual cost of these services?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: As the honourable member would know, the department is a heavy user of IT and has evolved a range of equipment and support services that are now subject to outsourcing under the Government's proposals. The department has a number of mission critical applications, which are dependent on the department's IT support services. In particular, I would refer to its responsibility for the legal/fiscal and the geographic nodes of the State's Land Information System (LIS). However, in the main, support for the activities representing the environmental node of the LIS is provided by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The department is affected in each of the target areas for stage 1 of outsourcing and, if the honourable member requires, I am quite happy to provide all that detail for him. But the department has already outsourced a number of its hardware and software support services to the private sector and other Government agencies.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Is the Minister satisfied then that the integrity of the lands Torrens title system can be guaranteed if the processing of these records are outsourced to EDS?

Mr Mutton: Regarding the outsourcing of spatial information type systems, which are the land title system, the DCDB, the topographic systems, the valuation systems—which are the ones that are fundamentally the responsibility of my agency—certainly there has been no decision in that regard from an outsourcing perspective, and there is continual discussions in those sorts of areas. But the imperative would be, in relation to any outsourcing that went on, that the integrity of the system could be maintained, and that would be a position we would take in any discussions and negotiations.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Will the program to convert South Australian survey records to a computer-based graphics system be included in plans to outsource information

technology to EDS; and will the department have to purchase new equipment to access the EDS outsource?

Mr Mutton: Again, my knowledge of the situation is that the survey systems are in the package of spatial information areas of information technology and they are still not being looked at for outsourcing at this point. Some of the hardware may be the property of EDS, but the custodianship of the databases at this stage is with the department and, therefore, the integrity. We do not see a need for any additional cost associated with technology from our agency's point of view that would not have been required in other circumstances to improve the quality and service that we would provide.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: EDS does not make the equipment; it does not make the boxes. It is actually for the application of systems. On another issue, there has been some media speculation about decisions and recommendations to relocate radioactive waste to the Woomera area. What input has the department had regarding the environmental factors on site at Woomera in terms of a repository and the transportation of radioactive waste from interstate across our borders and along our roads?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Again, this matter has been of concern to me. I was very anxious, soon after taking up the portfolio, to know the involvement that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources had had in the past in this area. The Commonwealth Department of Primary Industries and Energy has been coordinating a study to identify a site for a permanent low level radioactive waste repository. A report on phase 2 of the study was released for public comment on 18 July this year. The phase 2 report deals with the selection of regions where suitable sites for a repository could be found. As I understand it, of the eight identified sites three are wholly inside South Australia with a fourth partially within the State. Comments received on the phase 2 discussion paper will be used to identify a preferred region for further study. In South Australia the control of activities related to radioactive substances, including radioactive waste, comes under the Radiation Protection and Control Act 1982 and associated regulations.

As the honourable member said, on 28 August the Commonwealth announced that it would transfer low level radioactive waste from Lucas Heights to Woomera for temporary storage. An article appeared in the *Advertiser* on 23 August 1994 relating to that issue. Discussions between the Commonwealth and officers from the Premier's Department and South Australian Health Commission took place in early June 1994 regarding the safety aspects of the transport of low level radioactive waste from Lucas Heights to Woomera. At that stage my department was not involved, and I have already indicated my concern about that.

For some time there has been a lack of input into this area on the part of the department, and I have looked to rectify that matter. I have made quite clear that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is to be involved in any decision making in future. As I indicated in my earlier response, this has been happening not just since December last year; discussions have been going on for some time. It is of concern to me that my department has not had a part to play in those discussions previously.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to establish that prime responsibility for this specific issue lies with the Department of Health; there is no line in this Minister's portfolio. The Minister seems prepared to respond, but it is not his prime responsibility.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: South Australia was the site for atomic testing at Maralinga. After many years of negotiations, in which I was involved for some years with the British and Australian Governments and the Maralinga Tjarutja people, we finally achieved some degree of settlement with the British Government with respect to clearing up that area. Of course, negotiations are still going on with regard to compensation. Whilst it is true that Australia has to find a national repository for low level radioactive waste—that must be waste from Australia; we do not want to be the dumping ground for radioactive waste from other countries—many people could say that South Australia has played its part in terms of its national commitment over the Maralinga experience.

One thing that concerns me is that this must not lead to any attempt to establish a permanent repository and there must be absolutely no acceptance of the use of the Woomera repository or any other part of South Australia for radioactive waste from overseas. The Minister said that he would like the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to be involved in the process. Is that now happening in terms of those environmental safeguards?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I have asked the Chief Executive Officer to ensure that where opportunities are available in regard to organisations which are discussing such matters the department should be very much involved. It is my intention to ensure that that is the case.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: There is another concern. I guess I have a somewhat jaundiced view—and I am not reflecting on the Minister because this statement was not made by him—but it was mentioned that this would be a temporary repository for low level radioactive waste. In light of that, we wonder where the long-term or permanent repository will be. I understand that there have been discussions about Roxby Downs being a possibility for a permanent repository. Is the Minister aware of any discussions since the last election in relation to disused mine shafts at Roxby Downs being used for a permanent repository, and what is the Minister's position on that?

The CHAIRMAN: Was the Minister involved in such issues?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: No, Mr Chairman, I have not been involved; but I think it would be appropriate for me to ask the Chief Executive Officer whether he wishes to make any comment in regard to the negotiations that may have taken place prior to our coming to office or during that time.

Mr Mutton: Last year, at one of the meetings of the Ministerial Council on the Environment, a draft document was tabled relating to options for the storage of low level radioactive material in Australia. I understand that there was some discussion between the Ministers, without advisory staff being present. As a result, you may be aware that some months ago there was a publicly released document on that issue. That publication is out for comment back to the Commonwealth Government. The department, through the Office of the Environment Protection Authority, will be preparing material in relation to the State's response, presumably together with other agencies, as a result of that document having been put out for public comment. However, there are no decisions as far as we are aware at this stage, and they would be premature until the consideration of that document has taken place.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: The State Government announced that it was very unhappy with the decision—and I totally concur with that—about Woomera being a temporary

repository. Can the Minister give us an assurance today that he as Minister for the Environment would oppose any permanent repository, either at Woomera or Roxby Downs, for radioactive waste and certainly give an assurance of a blanket opposition to the use of any area of South Australia for radioactive waste from overseas?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I do not believe that I can give such a blanket assurance. I have already explained to the honourable member that the opportunity has not been provided previously for my department to be involved in those discussions. That has also been the case during the term of the previous Government—that adequate opportunities have not been provided for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to be involved in this process. That is why I am particularly keen that that situation change and that opportunities be taken up by the department to have a much greater involvement in the decisions that need to be made.

Mrs ROSENBERG: Previously, the Leader of the Opposition asked a question about parks management and, as part of the answer to that, the Minister referred to the parks review and briefly referred to the fire protection part of that parks review area. Bearing in mind that my electorate covers the Onkaparinga estuary and the Aldinga conservation park, would the Minister be prepared to expand further on the fire protection part of the parks review?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: As I indicated earlier, the honourable member is right in saying that fire protection is a major issue. We need only to look at what has happened in New South Wales in the past and what is currently happening to recognise the responsibility that we have in providing sufficient fire management resources. As I said earlier, an additional \$290 000 is being spent to upgrade and develop fire access tracks in reserves. These tracks provide the opportunity to prescribe burn areas, as well as enable access to manage fires both from within and into reserves. This positive initiative will contribute to a positive working relationship between landowners, country fire service volunteers and district ranger staff. Since becoming Minister, I have been particularly keen to ensure that there is a close working relationship between the staff within national parks and CFS volunteers.

Other commitments include a legislative review of the National Parks and Wildlife Act. I mentioned earlier that, as a result of that review, specific attention has been given to the need for improved fire management. It is a very sensitive area, because the matter of whether parks should be cool burned is a matter that has been debated for as long as I can remember. A lot of information can be provided which indicates that a cold burn is effective with regard to fire management. There are those who would indicate very strongly that damage can be carried out to a species as a result of those burns occurring. But it is certainly recognised by the department and by me as Minister that we have responsibility to ensure that appropriate fire management is addressed within our parks, and it is my intention to ensure that that happens.

Mrs ROSENBERG: I am quite interested to know more about how we will involve the Aboriginal population in nature conservation. I refer to page 452 of the Program Estimates. What steps have been or are being taken to ensure that Aboriginal people participate in the management of the State reserve system?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Both the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and I as Minister are committed to providing opportunities for Aboriginal employment and

participation in nature conservation programs in South Australia. At present 11 Aboriginal staff are employed within the natural resources group in park administration and operation. I am pleased to indicate that funding of some \$32 000 has been provided to operate a joint board of management with Aboriginal people with regard to the Witjira national park and to be able to provide infrastructure for accommodation. An additional \$50 000 has been set aside for Aboriginal employment, training and development.

Aboriginal communities are being consulted in the preparation of management plans for reserves. The adopted plans will outline the significance of reserves to Aboriginal culture and opportunities for participation in park management. That is very important. The strategy is currently being reviewed to take advantage of any opportunities to involve Aboriginal people through the community employment and development program, and that program for Aboriginals and natural and cultural resource management is a very special one.

Finally, I indicate to the Committee that cross-cultural training and development programs will be conducted to support the commitment to providing employment opportunities for Aborigines. These are some of the areas currently being addressed. However, I will be looking at every available opportunity to ensure positive outcomes for Aboriginal people and nature conservation in South Australia. Aboriginal people are currently serving in the National Parks and Wildlife Service and have made significant commitments in that work. I have had the opportunity in the time that I have been Minister this time and previously to observe some of that commitment and some of the work that has been carried out. I am delighted that the extra funding has been made available in connection with our parks to assist with job opportunities for Aboriginals.

Mrs ROSENBERG: The issue of ecologically sustainable development is something that is constantly referred to. It is identified as a key issue on page 456 of the Program Estimates, and it highlights the need for both State and national levels of conservation and development interests to work cooperatively together. What action has been taken to advance this sustainable development in South Australia?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: In April this year, the Government endorsed the national strategy for ecologically sustainable development. I take every opportunity to advocate an environmentally sustainable approach to all that we do. As far as I am concerned, to promote the need for ESD is one of our most important responsibilities—not just to promote it but particularly to implement it. Members would be aware that I initiated the establishment of a joint parliamentary committee on the conservation and development of living resources in South Australia. I emphasise both the conservation and development of living resources, because there are many opportunities that we have to develop industries and generate employment based on our living resources. Emu farming is one industry that we have already introduced and aquaculture is another, an example that is very important in this area. Through the development of living resources, the need for their conservation increases because industry needs access to wild populations for breeding stock.

I have also initiated the development of the State water plan, which aims at advising the Government how the State's scarce water resources can be used sustainably and with maximum benefit economically, socially and environmentally. We have often developed water resources in the past without regard for the environmental conse-

quences. Placing large dams on water courses without providing for downstream flow for aquatic life is but one example to which I can refer. That plan is coming along well. The South Australian Water Resources Council has been given responsibility for the development of that plan, and it will provide an excellent framework within which we can ensure that we use our water wisely.

I conclude by saying that there are many other examples to which I could refer, but I want particularly to refer to the fact that cleaner production methods by industry, the development of recycling systems and products which utilise recycled material, the development of measures to retain run-off on land so that it can provide aquifer recharge and create lakes such as Greenfields at Salisbury, which I had the opportunity to see in detail the other day, are all examples of sustainability in action, and I am keen to ensure that we see many more of those examples in the future.

Mr De LAINE: I refer to the toxic waste facility. On 14 March, the Minister announced that plans to construct Australia's first high temperature incinerator to dispose of toxic waste were being investigated by the Environment Protection Authority. The Minister is reported as saying that it is quite obvious that such a facility will be required in South Australia before long. Has the Environment Protection Authority completed investigations into this proposal; and, if so, will the Minister table a copy of the report? If the investigation is not yet complete, will the Minister indicate its progress and say when the report will be available?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I think it would be appropriate for the Executive Director of the Environment Protection Authority to respond to that question.

Mr Thomas: We, through one of the Australian and New Zealand Environment Conservation Council (ANZECC) working groups, called the Scheduled Waste Working Group, are looking at a number of projects for the treatment and disposal of hazardous waste in Australia. This is a national initiative, which I believe has admirable objectives. There is currently a moratorium on the export of hazardous materials to fit in with convention commitments but also to encourage the development of endemic or native technologies in Australia which ultimately have export potential.

We are not currently pursuing incineration options, but one option that we are looking at with the University of South Australia is the development of technology for the treatment of arsenic waste. We have just commenced that, and we will put that forward as our contribution to the Scheduled Waste Working Group. Other technologies are being pursued elsewhere, such as the plasma arc technology which is being developed by the CSIRO for the disposal of various hazardous materials and the BCD technology in Queensland for the treatment of PCB contaminated materials.

Mr De LAINE: How many sites are being investigated for incinerators, and where are they?

Mr Thomas: We are not currently investigating any incinerator sites. The sorts of activities that I described relate more to specialised technologies that do not involve, at this point, incineration, but incineration may still be needed for certain technologies. It is not favoured at this point, but it may still be required. The sorts of technologies that we are looking at include solidification, stabilisation, high temperature plasma arc separation and various specialised chemical processes.

Mr De LAINE: What is the estimated cost of constructing such a facility, and what are the operating costs associated with it?

Mr Thomas: I do not have those sorts of figures at hand, but most of the work that has been conducted to date is on a pilot scale by a number of different industries throughout Australia including CRA, Cleanaway and a consortium of the University of Sydney and the Australian Submarine Corporation subsidiary. The sorts of costs for pilot scale technologies range from about \$500 000 to \$2 million before we get into a commercial scale. That is the stage we are at.

Mr De LAINE: How much toxic waste is currently being stored in South Australia, and how is it managed?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I will ask the Executive Director of the EPA to answer that question, but it may be necessary to provide further details on notice.

Mr Thomas: I am pleased to say that the Waste Management Commission, which the EPA incorporates, has in the past been very active in hazardous waste management in South Australia. Because of that, we do not have large repositories of hazardous materials. For example, PCBs were exported before the moratorium and appropriately disposed of in facilities in Europe—so we have very few PCBs in South Australia. The main repositories of hazardous materials are in New South Wales and Victoria, particularly in New South Wales where there is a very famous repository or storage of HCBs at Botany Bay, which are owned by ICI, and that is by far the largest volume which is yet to be disposed of. The idea is that we will develop appropriate technologies in Australia to do that.

There are some small repositories in South Australia. The EPA has a facility at Dry Creek for receiving hazardous material, and we try to be as pro-active as we can in receiving, for example, farm chemicals that have reached their use-by date. Regarding the arsenic disposal technology, which we want to develop in South Australia and which I described earlier, we have about 10 tonnes of arsenic waste at that site, and our view is that the pilot investigation for that technology will use that arsenic material.

Mr De LAINE: Does the investigation include any consideration of importing to South Australia waste from interstate or overseas for destruction?

Mr Thomas: At this stage it is not intended, and the moratorium and various conventions to which Australia is a signatory pretty much prevent that. The intention is to dispose of our own waste and clean up our own backyard, which is a responsible outlook. We need to develop these technologies, but I cannot pretend that we have all the answers yet, by any means.

Ms GREIG: I take this opportunity to commend the Minister and his staff on achieving a productive, responsive budget that I am sure we can all appreciate was put together most realistically in a time of great financial constraint. I also acknowledge the detail of the broader parameters of this portfolio addressed in the Minister's answers to questions so far. I am pleased to see the Minister's strong desire to work with the community on environmental issues, as highlighted throughout the Environment and Natural Resources Program Estimates.

I was also hoping to congratulate the new Leader of the Opposition, but he was with us for only 45 minutes. I am sure somebody will pass on my congratulations to him. On page 456 of the Program Estimates, the department's role in renewable energy programs is mentioned. The Government's environment policy includes a commitment to ensure that, within 10 years, 20 per cent of the State's energy will be derived from renewable energy sources. What action is being taken to achieve this?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Members of the Committee would recognise that this is a fairly difficult goal to achieve, but I assure members, particularly the member for Reynell, that we are working towards this goal. The policy reflects the Government's desire to see renewables playing a greater role in the future, and it recognises renewables as a potential growth industry for South Australia. It is intended to explore all opportunities to reduce reliance on non-renewable forms of energy. The motor vehicle is the only area to which it is not intended to apply at this stage. The policy includes suggestions on how this may be achieved, including pilot programs, integration with existing suppliers and encouraging the use of roof insulation, for example, by providing financial incentives. This enables energy conservation and energy efficiency to be among the measures considered.

A renewable energy working group has been established to prepare a renewable energy action plan, with the objective of recommending to the Government a set of measures which would assist in achieving this target. The working group has members from key Government agencies, including the Economic Development Authority, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. It also includes representatives of the Electricity Trust and the Gas Company, who I am pleased to say have agreed to participate. In addition, the Australian and New Zealand Solar Energy Society, which has a keen interest in renewable energy and whose members are involved in the renewable energy industry, is also participating. The Office of Energy is chairing and servicing the group.

The group's terms of reference require it to identify the current contribution of renewable energy sources in this State, and examine opportunities for the wider utilisation of renewable energy and measures to achieve this. Of particular importance is the fact that the group will also examine opportunities for manufacturing renewable energy technologies. I expect the working group on renewable energy to report to me in the first half of next year. All of us recognise that it has a very challenging task before it. I look forward to receiving its report. I see tremendous potential for South Australia to be involved in this area. While having said at the outset that it is a difficult and challenging goal, it is one to which I will give everything in attempting to achieve it because it is something that I support very strongly indeed.

Ms GREIG: I noted in the Minister's opening statement reference to the Lake Eyre Basin. On page 452 of the Program Estimates, under 'Resource Variations', I note the sum of \$500 000 for the Lake Eyre project. How does the Government intend to honour its commitment to spend \$1 million over two years in the Lake Eyre Basin and what benefits are expected to accrue from this expenditure?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The projects to which the honourable member has referred are very important as far as the Government is concerned. The projects will be funded over a two year period: half will be spent in 1994-95 and the other half in 1995-96. We are talking of working towards \$1 million. An amount of \$605 000 will be spent on the provision of visitor management and protection of sensitive areas along the Cooper Creek. An Aboriginal heritage survey will be conducted. An amount of \$75 000 is to be spent on fencing the Strzelecki regional reserve, whilst a further \$100 000 will be spent on the biological survey and research in South Australia's Stony Desert. The Mound Springs development in the Witjira National Park and on the Oodnadatta track for the Blanche Cup and Bubbler Mound Springs will receive in the vicinity of \$220 000.

The Kidman Pastoral Company has surrendered leased pastoral land to allow the area surrounding the Blanche Cup and Bubbler Mound Springs to be fenced and proclaimed as a reserve, and this proclamation has been approved by Cabinet. I am delighted that we have been able to move as quickly as we have in this area. It is and always has been a major commitment of the Government to be able to protect the more sensitive areas of the Lake Eyre Basin. The areas to which I have referred are some of the more sensitive, and I am sure that those members of the Committee who have visited those areas recognise the sensitivity of particularly the Coongie Lakes and sections of the Mound Springs.

The allocation of these funds indicates the Government's commitment to the conservation significance of the Lake Eyre Basin and will certainly enhance tourism within the area. By the establishment of the new reserve, of which I am delighted to be able to inform the Committee, we will make clear to all people with an interest in the preservation and protection of that area the Government's intention to proceed as a matter of urgency in a number of those areas.

Membership:

Mr Atkinson substituted for the Hon. M.D. Rann.

Ms GREIG: On page 453 of the Program Estimates reference is made to an objective to review current noise provisions. Why is a review of the current noise control provisions necessary?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Two main reviews are occurring—one relates to the specific machines currently described in the machine noise control regulations, and the other deals with allowable noise emissions from industrial and commercial premises, under the industrial noise control regulations. The review of the machine noise control regulations deals with noise sources such as lawn mowers, domestic air-conditioners, garbage collection units, bird scarers and so on. Where maximum permissible levels are exceeded during the operation of these noise sources, the machines are limited to hours of operation, and daytime use only is allowed. The review is considering alternative methods of enforcement, including interstate approaches and how appropriate these alternatives are for South Australia. The ease of administration of these regulations is being considered throughout the review to reduce the total involvement and assessment time for inspectors. In addition, further consideration is being given to aligning our regulations with those used in other States to assist in the process of achieving uniform noise legislation throughout the nation.

In regard to the industrial noise control regulations, that review was enacted in July 1978 and is regarded as of vital importance to South Australia for a number of reasons. The existing regulations are regularly considered by industry, by local councils and by other groups that have a particular interest as being overly subjective, which results in uncertainty for industry, for new developments or for existing operations. A review of the regulations is necessary to overcome these uncertainties, particularly for industry, and to provide an improved basis for dispute resolution between existing industries and local residents. That is something of which I am made aware on an ongoing basis.

New developments also require consideration of the environment in which it is intended they be located. The existing regulations do not appropriately provide planning measures that inform industry of its environmental obliga-

tions to its neighbours, and that is certainly something that needs to be considered.

Extensive appraisal of interstate legislation is continuing and it includes an assessment of how effectively the legislation operates in particular States and how effective it might be if it were implemented in South Australia. Again, where possible, the review will aim to align our regulations with an acceptable national approach, and that has been sought for some time.

Mrs GERAGHTY: During the Torrens by-election, the Premier made a number of firm commitments on action to clean up the River Torrens. The commitments included \$20 000 for an education program, the installation of trash racks, \$10 000 for the appointment of a facilitator to work with local government, and the provision of \$260 000 a year for three years to the Adelaide University for research. Can the Minister provide details of how each of these promises has been met and indicate which budget line will fund these commitments?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The funding for the facilitator has already been provided. As I am sure the honourable member would know, the person has been working effectively with councils along the Torrens for some time. As far as research is concerned, that is a matter that we are working towards. We have been seeking some financial assistance through the Commonwealth. Regrettably at this stage we have not been successful. However, that is something on which we will continue to make representations.

I am sure that the honourable member would also know that the councils are working very closely in relation to the establishment of an authority for the Torrens. I think that all of us would agree that the only way we will achieve improvements in any of our waterways is to look at a total catchment management program, and that is certainly what we are doing in relation to the Patawalonga and the Torrens. I have been very pleased with the response that we have gained from the councils along the Torrens so far in wanting to work together.

The honourable member would be aware that the previous arrangement with the River Torrens Standing Committee, while it was a committee comprising some very enthusiastic people, ensured that it had no teeth at all and a lot of frustration was felt by its members. So, definite moves have been made.

The consultant to whom I referred earlier is Mr Kym Read of B.C. Tonkin and Associates. In April this year, to facilitate the formation of an authority, he began working with the councils, and I understand that a draft constitution for the authority will be discussed by the steering committee at the meeting on 27 September 1994.

A submission for funding from the Landcare program is awaiting approval by the Commonwealth Minister, and that is anticipated any day now. Satisfactory completion of the State-Commonwealth partnership agreement is also anticipated. That Landcare program seeks funding for a number of initiatives that we can consider. Once the authority is established, we will also be looking for it to work towards a management plan, which would, in turn, indicate quite clearly where there is a need for such items as trash racks.

It is no good just working on a one-off basis with individual councils that may have ideas of where such facilities are required. As I said earlier, it really does need a total catchment management program to be implemented. That can best be done through a management plan, and the same procedure will be adopted with work being carried out on the

Patawalonga. It might be appropriate for me to ask Mr Mutton to refer specifically to lines in the Program Estimates.

Mr Mutton: Stormwater expenditure—that is, internal expenditure within the agency—will come out of the sub-program management plans for water resources (page 448 of the Program Estimates).

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Mr Chairman, can you request that, in assisting the Minister in correct procedures, members refer to the budget lines when they put their questions to the Minister?

The CHAIRMAN: It is a standard request when the Chairman's preamble is read out at the beginning of sessions. I have noticed, after what I think is my seventh Estimates Committee, that the exception has been the rule. I ask members to refer specifically to a line to identify the avenue of questioning. The Ministers have been very flexible; they have recognised instantly whether or not the matters were relevant to their portfolio. However, it does help other members of the Committee if the line is identified and it is purely an internal thing as much as anything.

Mr ATKINSON: While I agree with you in this case, the honourable member is seeking to find the fulfilment of a promise, which to her does not appear in the budget lines. I am unsure how one prefaces such a question.

The CHAIRMAN: The member of the Committee whom you replaced sought to employ the same tactic. In fact, the line that he was pursuing, over seven questions, was relevant to the Minister for Health's portfolio. The Minister was kind enough to respond, but he obviously did not have to because it was outside his portfolio responsibility. I refer to the disposal of toxic nuclear waste.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: That was the health portfolio. The legislation lies within your shadow portfolio rather than the Leader's. The Chair and the Minister have been flexible and cooperative, and I am simply asking for cooperation from members, as was requested by the member for Mawson. It is not an obstructive tactic, rather, an attempt to assist.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: On page 452, under the heading '1994-95 Specific Targets/Objectives', we make particular reference to the preparation of a draft State waters strategic plan, the establishment of a metropolitan catchment/stormwater management strategy and the establishment of the Patawalonga and Torrens catchment management boards. As I said earlier, I cannot work fast enough to ensure that those authorities are established. It is a source of some frustration to me that, for example, in relation to the Patawalonga, nine months has now elapsed. One of the first things I did as Minister was to meet with the councils to point out clearly the very high priority that this Government placed on the establishment of such authorities. It is of considerable frustration to me that that has not been achieved, but we are still working towards it.

Mrs GERAGHTY: Supplementary to that, the Minister talked about trash racks. Who do you envisage will clean and maintain the racks?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: That will need to be considered in the preparation of the management plan, to which I referred earlier. I do not think that that detail has been determined. To be frank, I am more anxious to see the trash racks implemented and a lot of the work commenced rather than worrying about who will clean them out. I realise it is an important issue that needs to be addressed, but it is something that will be addressed when the management plan is being prepared.

Mrs GERAGHTY: I refer to page 453 of the Program Estimates. Many residents in my electorate are concerned about the proposals being developed by CSR and Cleanaway to establish a tip for waste at Halls Road, Highbury. The concerns include the area being invaded by heavy garbage trucks and the noise that will be made by them; health issues, including the spread of vermin; quality of life, which includes offensive odours; and the question of the contamination of the water table. Does the Minister support the plan for the establishment of this tip? What role is his department taking in assessing this proposal? Does it support the plan?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I do not think it is appropriate to say whether or not I support it because, as I understand, at this stage no application has been lodged with regard to this matter. I got myself into trouble last time when I was talking about this issue because I referred to it as being part of the member for Torrens' electorate and I find that it is part of Mrs Kotz' electorate. We will clarify that as well.

As I said earlier, from what I understand an application still has not been lodged. A consortium formed by CSR, Readymix and Cleanaway announced its intention to develop a quarry at Highbury as a solid waste land fill depot. A proposal of this nature will require the lodgment of a development application under the provisions of the Development Act 1993. Consideration by the Development Assessment Commission also will be required and, if approved, submission of a licensing application under the provisions of the Waste Management Act will be sought. At this stage there is evidence of strong opposition to the proposal from nearby residents. As the honourable member would be well and truly aware, and I am well and truly aware, an action group has commenced lobbying State and local government members. I might say that it is pretty active in its representation at this stage.

The CSR, Readymix and Cleanaway proposal is, although not yet fully developed, likely to be of considerable economic significance. Initial expectations are that ultimately the three stages could provide a total disposal volume of more than 50 million cubic metres with an active life in excess of 100 years. Such a development in that location would be of major environmental significance because of its being located in close proximity to the Torrens Valley. Some issues, including traffic generation (as the honourable member has indicated), will be of social significance to nearby residential areas. As a consequence, the opportunity exists for the proponent to be required to provide a detailed environmental impact statement under the provisions of the Development Act. This power is vested in the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations and it is likely that a decision will be made shortly after lodgment of a formal development application. The consortium is aware of the possible need for an EIS and has engaged specialist consultants to assist in developing the proposal.

At this stage we are uncertain of exactly what will happen. Until an EIS is prepared, and if the proposal proceeds, I do not think it is appropriate for me to say whether or not I support this development. I would want to look at the evidence that would be made available before I made such a decision. It is interesting that this is one case where the proponents have felt that it would be better to seek consultation with the community prior to going further down the track of putting in an application, etc. As the honourable member indicated, they have found that there has been a significant response to that and they may be reconsidering whether it is appropriate to take that line of action at this stage. There is

a formal process to be followed, and as I understand it that will be the case.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: On page 453 of the Program Estimates the metropolitan solid waste management strategy is highlighted. Could you advise on the progress of this strategy?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: A consulting firm was engaged by the South Australian Waste Management Commission in May last year to prepare a draft waste management strategy for metropolitan Adelaide. This project was to be completed in September 1993. However, early this year it became evident that the consultant was having some difficulty with the project and an independent review was undertaken. Following this review, the consultant withdrew from the project to permit the office of the Environment Protection Authority to complete the work. The consultant has not been paid any additional moneys since December 1993 and no further payments will be made to the consultant for this project.

It is intended that the draft strategy cover the period 1995 to 2010 with provision for reviews in the years 2000 and 2005, and revision again in the year 2010. EPO staff have now commenced that task, and it is envisaged that the draft strategy will be sufficiently advanced to permit consultations with local government and the waste industry in February next year. Whilst the delay is regrettable, the metropolitan Adelaide strategy will no doubt benefit from significant waste management strategy developments, both interstate and overseas, which have occurred in the intervening period. I would be pleased to provide the honourable member with details of the key features of the strategy, if he is interested. I recognise the importance of the strategy's being developed but, as I say, regrettably that has not happened. I hope that as a result of other activities interstate and overseas we may in the long term gain from that delay.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Page 452 of the Program Estimates refers to the development of tourism opportunities associated with the State's natural heritage. I understand that one of the recent initiatives is the provision of visitor facilities at the Innamincka Regional Reserve. Will the Minister provide advice on the reconstruction of the Australian Inland Mission building at Innamincka?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: My CEO has just suggested that I could talk about this for half an hour, but I will not. It was a great day, and one that I will remember. Of course, we are talking about the opening of the reconstructed Australian Inland Mission (AIM) building at Innamincka. It was completed at a cost of some \$500 000, \$210 000 of which came from donations from well-known personality, Dick Smith, and the Australian Geographic, which is an organisation that Mr Smith established. The National Parks Foundation also contributed, as did the Australian Nature Conservation Agency and Santos. Donations were still being received on the day itself; a couple of buckets were taken around to see whether anybody would like to contribute. I am not sure exactly how much was raised on the day—I do know that it was a significant amount—but I am told that the remainder (approximately \$250 000) will be funded from the department's capital works program.

The reconstruction of this historic building, which is being used as a National Parks and Wildlife Service office and a visitor information centre, provides a focal point for tourism in the region. This was pointed out very clearly on the day of the opening. Judith Barr was the MC for the day, and at the commencement of the formal proceedings she asked people

to indicate where they came from. It is interesting to note that on that particular occasion there were some 3 000 people in Innamincka—I think the usual population is about 27—representing every State and Territory of Australia, as well as people from America and the United Kingdom. I think that indicates what a very important tourist attraction that particular part of South Australia is.

I would certainly encourage any members of the Committee who are heading that way, if they have time, to visit the reconstructed AIM building, as it is really worth having a look at, and I think it is yet another excellent example of what can be achieved by Government agencies and community organisations getting together to achieve a significant goal. The reopening of the AIM building has certainly been a significant goal as far as tourism in South Australia is concerned.

Mr BROKENSHERE: Will the Minister advise what facility is planned to manage increasing numbers of visitors to Seal Bay on Kangaroo Island?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Again, I am sure that the majority of members of the Committee have visited Kangaroo Island, and if they have I am sure they would have visited Seal Bay, a magnificent part of the State. A new visitors' centre is currently under construction at Seal Bay, I am pleased to say, the total cost of which is about \$450 000. The centre will contain visitor interpretative displays, as well as staff offices and amenities. It will be solar powered, and has been designed to be very energy efficient. It has also been designed to minimise impact on the area's special landscape values.

Members may be interested to know that some \$200 000 has been raised through the park entrance fees, and a further \$250 000 has come from Federal funds. There is no doubt at all that the facility will enhance Seal Bay as one of the State's significant tourist attractions, and we are looking forward to being able to open that facility later this year.

Mrs GERAGHTY: Referring to page 453, I raise the issue of chemicals and clean-up of chemical sites. Chemicals were sprayed by the Electricity Trust of South Australia in a South Australian Housing Trust subdivision in an attempt to control white ants and damage to underground cables. The chemicals used were Aldrin, Dieldrin, and Heptachlor, which are from the organochlorin group and which have been banned in the United States agricultural system since the early 1970s. Two are listed as possible human carcinogenics, and the other has caused death in children who have ingested as little as 25mg of the substance.

Electricity Trust workers have complained of symptoms that can be identified with exposure to the chemicals after working in the open trenches and pits and, if these workers have been affected by the inhalation of contaminated dust, I am concerned about the level of contamination to which surrounding households have been subjected by windblown dust. Would the Minister ask the EPA to ensure that Government and statutory authorities will cease using these chemicals; will he undertake to put in place the appropriate testing program for all members of the community who have been subjected to this possible contamination; and will he give an undertaking that soil removed from the area is disposed of under the guidance of the Environmental Protection Office?

The CHAIRMAN: I am not sure whether the question is strictly related to this ministry. Again, it is a health matter related to a specific department that is using these chemicals. The Minister has proved very willing to respond as far as he is able, but I am not sure that he is actually responsible for

this line of questioning. I cannot find it on page 453. If the honourable member could refer to a specific line on a page.

Mrs GERAGHTY: I am referring to 'Develop and maintain effective response procedures' in the context of providing advice to emergency services. It goes on to talk about spills of material which could adversely affect the community.

The CHAIRMAN: This is not so much a spill of material as a deliberate use of a chemical for departmental purposes.

Mrs GERAGHTY: That is correct, but by deliberate use wind will carry contaminated dust.

The CHAIRMAN: I appreciate the honourable member's line of questioning, but it is a little like firing a gun at a flock of geese. You are hoping you will bring the Minister's question back to you, but I will leave it with the Minister.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Mr Chairman, you are quite right in saying that it is more the responsibility of the Minister for Health or perhaps an occupational health and safety issue. It is obviously of concern to the member, and she has referred to my taking this matter up with the EPA. I will ask the Executive Director of the EPA whether he would like to respond to that question.

Mr Thomas: As the Minister pointed out, this complex issue transgresses a number of areas. There are occupational health and safety issues which come under the Department of Labour and the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and dangerous substance issues which come under the Dangerous Substances Act and also the Department of Labour. Of course, the Health Commission would be involved to some extent in advising on health exposure issues. The EPA is involved in the disposal of contaminated material.

It would probably be triggered under the Waste Management Act, and there would be a need to seek a licence to dispose of that material if it were significantly contaminated. We would look at the level of contamination and that would determine where it would go. I am not aware of that particular site, but if you make that information available to the EPA we can certainly determine whether it is before us.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair was not trying to be obstructive. I suppose the thrust of this question is whether someone in authority will assume responsibility for pursuing the member's question.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Following Mr Thomas's indication of the EPA's interest in following that matter through, if the member will provide us with more details we will certainly do that.

Mrs GERAGHTY: On 30 March the Minister announced that a Shack Site Freeholding Committee had been established to advise the Government on the best method for freeholding shacks. He said:

The freeholding will be done on a user pays system in accordance with our policy.

Has that committee reported to the Minister; what were the recommendations; will the Minister provide a copy; how do owners of shack sites apply to purchase the freehold of their properties; on what basis will the properties be valued for sale; and what is meant by 'user pays'?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The freeholding committee has been established, and it is chaired by the former Minister for Lands and Water Resources and member for Chaffey, Peter Arnold. Other representatives have been drawn from coastal and river shack areas and local government and Government agencies involved in shack administration, planning and health.

The committee is required to submit a final report to me with recommendations for Cabinet no later than 30 November this year. I understand that the committee will be able to do that and will be providing me with recommendations and a series of criteria by which the Government will work towards the freeholding of these shacks. This matter is taking up quite a bit of time, but I am sure that the committee will be able to deliver.

The Committee might be interested in the Shack Site Freeholding Committee's terms of reference, which require it to do the following:

- observe specific health standards as they relate to effluent disposal as a prerequisite for freeholding;
- assess whether the shacks conform to building standards as defined by local councils, are of sound construction and built of acceptable building materials;
- ensure that any shack having potential for freehold is environmentally compatible with the natural landscape and surrounding vegetation;
- ensure that legal access is available to each shack site;
- ensure that appropriate access to the waterfront is available or made available to the general public;
- consult with local councils under which care, control and management of the shack areas rest;
- review any Government regulations, policies or directives that may prevent or deter shack owners from freeholding their sites, and provide recommendations for changes.

The terms of reference are quite broad and are being followed. I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to respond to the meaning of 'user pays'.

Mr Mutton: In relation to 'user pays', the Government's position is that the freeholding of shack sites will be the responsibility of individuals from the point of view of payment. Therefore, looking at the components which are likely to be part of the user pays area, it will be the purchase price for the property, and by 'the property' I mean the land, which is currently Crown land. It will involve survey costs and costs associated with the procurement of title of that land and also the cost of upgrading the facilities to meet whatever criteria are laid down as a result of the Shack Site Freeholding Committee going about its deliberations. I use as an example the disposal of effluent. That will have to be in line with requirements laid down by the South Australian Health Commission. In those circumstances, it may be a common effluent system or a sealed effluent system which would have to be provided by the land-holder individually, if it is an individual system, or as part of a combined system for a particular area of shacks.

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

Membership:

Ms Stevens substituted for Mr Atkinson.

Mrs GERAGHTY: How many shack owners have already applied for their properties to be converted to freehold, and how many freehold titles have been granted? What is the status of these applications?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: No applications have been made at this stage because it is not possible for that to happen. Until I approve the report and the criteria that it contains as to how we should proceed with the freeholding, I am not in a position to have any applications considered.

Mrs ROSENBERG: In answer to one of the questions of the member for Torrens, the Minister touched briefly on the Patawalonga. I refer to page 452 of the Program Estimates. Obviously, with the onset of another summer, the residents of Glenelg and the tourists will want to know what is

happening down there and will want to use the Patawalonga for recreation. What progress has been made in improving the water quality of the Patawalonga?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: As I said earlier, the State Government is actively promoting a cooperative approach with local government and is working closely with the councils that make up the catchment area in developing a stormwater management strategy for the Patawalonga catchment. The two principles of this strategy are: first, pollution control must be instigated on a catchment wide basis, as I said earlier; and, secondly, that the management of run-off is recognised as having multiple advantages. The Government stands by its pre-election commitment to allocate \$4 million during the term of this Parliament for clean-up measures to improve water quality in the Patawalonga. The sum of \$1.5 million has been included in the State budget for 1994-95.

The 11 councils in the Patawalonga catchment have established a steering committee to form a catchment authority and are preparing a program of works on which the allocation will be used. The Patawalonga Water Quality Committee, through the Engineering and Water Supply Department, has prepared a report on possible initial works which recently I announced in the House. I have released that report to the steering committee to consider the preparation of a catchment plan, which I also reported on to the House earlier this year. Another \$500 000 is allocated in the State budget to the Department of Housing and Urban Development to commence design work on cleaning up the basin itself, including sediment removal, a flushing system and a wetland at the end of the Sturt River channel. Relocation funding was sought and now has been approved under the Commonwealth's Building Better Cities program for these measures to be carried out.

Trial trash racks have been successfully operated at several locations in the Patawalonga catchment this year. They are of innovative design and were prepared by the Engineering and Water Supply Department. In conclusion, I should also say that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is coordinating a program of water quality monitoring by schools in particular and community groups under the Water Watch program. Under this scheme, KESAB has also conducted a tagged litter survey and is coordinating groups in the Patawalonga catchment. While I have some frustrations, as I expressed earlier, about the time being taken to establish the authority, the community support and the interest that is being shown in this project is very encouraging indeed.

Mrs ROSENBERG: On page 452 of the Program Estimates there is an objective to facilitate the implementation of a national action plan for the management of blue-green algae. I understand that, as part of the Premier's submission to the Prime Minister for the national blue-green algae action plan, he offered to appoint a National Algal Manager in South Australia. What is this initiative all about, and what will it achieve for South Australia?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: As the honourable member has indicated, the Premier released the national blue-green algae action plan, and it was handed to the Prime Minister in May this year. I am pleased to say that the Prime Minister has supported the plan. As lead Minister for the Murray-Darling Commission Ministerial Council, I have also taken the opportunity to make the council aware of the plan as well. The plan is largely procedural in nature. It is designed to ensure that all the recommendations made in December 1993

by the Senate standing committee and its report on water resources/toxic algae will be effectively pursued. In addition, the submission drew attention to two important matters that were not given sufficient priority in the Senate standing committee report. These were research on toxicology and the treatment technologies to be able to deal in an improved manner with algal blooms when they occur, and also the importance of flow management as a control mechanism.

Taking these issues into consideration, the plan proposed action through three main mechanisms: first, that the National Algal Manager established by the Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand be given a broader role to provide a national focus on and overview of the progress of many blue-green algal issues; secondly, support for the sustainable rivers program, which is a joint Murray-Darling Basin Commission and land and water resources research and development initiative, as a critical first step in addressing flow management issues; and, thirdly, an accelerated works program for nutrient reduction to be developed as a high priority task by the National Algal Manager in conjunction with State and Federal agencies.

The action plan focuses to a large extent on the proposed National Algal Manager following through many of the Senate standing committee recommendations. It is intended to establish and oversee the position in South Australia. Funding for the position will be through ARMCANZ, which means that all parties, including South Australia, will contribute according to the agreed formula but that South Australia will provide office space and infrastructure and administrative and technical support—something that I strongly support. The position will be established in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and will be advertised shortly in the national press.

This is an important initiative for South Australia because we will be able to exercise significant influence on national programs for tackling blue-green algae, particularly in addressing the problems in the Murray-Darling Basin. Every member of the Committee would recognise the significant problems that would occur if the issue of blue-green algae was not addressed. I certainly will support the initiatives that come out of this action plan.

Mrs ROSENBERG: The 1994-95 targets on page 453 of the Program Estimates include a phase out of sewage effluent discharge into our gulf through negotiating environment improvement programs. Will the Minister provide a status report on the progress of the Government's policy relating to sewage effluent disposal into coastal waters and rivers within South Australia?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The EPA is currently negotiating environment improvement programs with the Engineering and Water Supply Department to eliminate environmental harm caused by discharge into the marine environment by 25 March 2001, as stipulated in the Marine Environment Protection Act. The major effluent discharge from the Bolivar, Glenelg, Port Adelaide and Christies Beach sewage treatment works is being given high priority. The EPA's strategic plan indicates that environment improvement programs negotiated by the EPA with other Government bodies—as I said, one of those being the EWS Department—as well as industry will be finalised by June next year with draft plans being available for discussion by mid-November this year. The environment improvements plans will address other issues such as the generation of odour from sewage treatment works such as Bolivar and other initiatives that will be considered. Again, it is a good news story, and I am

delighted that we are working towards the meeting of these targets.

Ms STEVENS: Page 448 of the Program Estimates shows a cut to the allocation for recurrent expenditure by the Botanic Gardens of \$350 000. Will this mean a fall in the standard of maintenance and cuts to other programs at the gardens?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: It is not a cut: in fact, it is really an improvement in efficiencies. I am looking forward to having the opportunity of spending most of Saturday looking at some of the suggested plans and initiatives that are being put forward by the Botanic Gardens. One of those is a much superior watering method in the Mount Lofty Botanic Gardens to the one that currently exists. It is recognised that that will reduce the need for funding. Other initiatives have been put forward but the Chief Executive Officer, Mr Mutton, may be able to provide more detail.

Mr Mutton: It is a matter of improvements in efficiency and effectiveness in the operation and management of the Botanic Gardens, not a reduction in services. That does not mean that over time we will not be looking to improve services further as we go through ongoing reviews of how best to do that, but the reduction in budget allocations for this financial year is about improvements in efficiency, not a reduction in service.

Ms STEVENS: Will the Minister outline some of these improvements and efficiencies?

Mr Mutton: We are progressively moving away from hand watering in the gardens to irrigation systems that are electronically activated so that we can physically water at an appropriate time of the day for water efficiency purposes and not have people tied up with watering during the normal time of the day and on weekends. To a large degree, that is one of the major improvements in efficiency and the one that stands out amongst all of them in relation to the management of the gardens.

Ms STEVENS: What are the projections for revenue from the Botanic Gardens for this year, and how do they compare with last year?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I will take that question on notice and provide details for the honourable member.

Ms STEVENS: Is the board of the Botanic Gardens exploring any opportunities to increase revenue from the gardens? If so, will the Minister outline what these might be, and does he support a wider public use of the gardens for functions?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to answer that question but, for all sorts of reasons, I recognise the sensitivity of the desire to make more use of the Botanic Gardens for functions. One of my favourite places to eat is the restaurant in the Botanic Gardens. I suggest to my colleagues around the table that, if you have not eaten there lately, do yourself a favour and go. It is a magnificent venue and I would like to have that facility open much more often than it is, namely, during the evenings.

Currently, if you want to have a function at the Botanic Gardens Restaurant you can do that, but there are significant security problems. You can ensure that people come in through the gate and can be directed, but you cannot always make sure they go out through the gate and do not loiter in the Botanic Gardens. That is only one example. I know that Botanic Park is used extensively for functions and a number of other activities have been considered. The Chief Executive Officer can comment further.

Mr Mutton: Certainly in relation to the potential for revenue generation in the Botanic Gardens system, reviews are going on to see what opportunities exist. I refer to the number of people who use the Botanic Gardens as a photographic setting for weddings or other group photography. Other opportunities can be looked at. The other initiative that has been put in place in the past month is that parking in Botanic Park, between the Adelaide Zoo and the Botanic Gardens, has been metered. Fundamentally it is as a traffic control measure, but is also to generate revenue from those who park in Botanic Park whilst not visiting the zoo or the Botanic Gardens. That project to charge for parking from Monday to Saturday inclusive at a very reasonable rate will generate funds to be invested back into the Botanic Gardens system.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The member for Elizabeth may be interested to know that the statistics indicate that more than 1.6 million visitors each year use Botanic Park or pass through it en route to the gardens or zoo. Only recently the Government approved the proposals recommended by the board and approved a SAFA loan of \$1.25 million to fund improvements in Botanic Park, which amount to rationalisation of existing use. The loss of public safety and landscape deterioration of Botanic Park has been noted over 10 years and the board has engaged consultants to recommend improvements after consultation with all interested groups. It is a very popular and important venue for people to gather and we have to ensure that it is properly maintained.

Ms GREIG: I refer to water management, which is mentioned as a key component of the resource management and conservation program (page 452 of the Program Estimates). In light of the drought conditions currently being experienced in Queensland and the potential for those conditions also to occur in South Australia, what is the Minister doing to ensure that South Australia's limited water resources are being carefully looked after?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I have asked the South Australian Water Resources Council to present recommendations to me by April of next year regarding the future direction of water management in South Australia. I have instructed the council to consult the community when developing its recommendations. I will use the council's recommendations to help me develop a State water plan because it is important that the plan identify a number of things: what water is available throughout the State; how should it be managed and protected; who is responsible for management allocation and protection; and in what ways can we use water now and in the future? This is a very important issue. All of us recognise that water is our most important resource. It is vitally important that we recognise and understand more about the quality and quantity of the water available to us in South Australia. I will ask the Acting Director of the Water Resources Division to add further to that.

Mr Schonfeldt: It is a great reflection on the way we have been able to manage water resources in this State that we have not had to endure water restrictions for decades, and it is unlikely that we will. That in large part is due to the great deal of effort and work we have put into management and looking after our water resources so that we do not fall into shortages. A great deal of effort is spent, with the resources available to us, working with local communities to ensure the proper management of those resources. A significant effort is put into making sure the resources available to us out of the Murray-Darling Basin, which we rely on extensively during

these dry periods, are protected so that we can continue to rely on them.

An interesting observation on the drought in Queensland is that one might expect that it would affect us: no rain falling in the upper parts of the Murray-Darling Basin, one would think, would have some impact on us. The interesting thing is that we have a large number of resources available to us in storages in the Murray system in Hume and Dartmouth. Right now the Murray-Darling Basin Commission is looking at ways to ensure that the water available is delivered through the Murray system to continue the supply of water on which we rely. During the last drought of this nature back in 1982-83, we continued to get the water to which we were entitled under the Murray-Darling Basin agreement, and it was of good quality because it was from the upper sources of the Murray system, which is world-class water. It was going through the system without having much potential for pollution along the way, compared with water that we might get out of Queensland. The effort we have been putting in has paid many dividends.

The budget papers (page 448) refer to management plans for water resources and assessment of water resources. Much of that effort is designed to ensure that the healthy situation in which we find ourselves continues well into the future.

Ms GREIG: My district is high in industrial activity, and of considerable concern to our local people is the promotion of cleaner and environmentally conscious industries, as highlighted on page 453 of the Program Estimates. I understand that the environmental industry sector is one of the fastest growing in the world. Is the EPA able to provide assistance for the development of these industries in South Australia?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: It is yet again another good news story. The honourable member is right in suggesting that this is becoming a major industry. In fact, a recent industry commissioned report estimated the value in waste management as something like \$280 billion per annum. South Australia needs to position itself to capture a share of that market and is in the process of so doing. The peak industry group responsible for the promotion of this industry sector in Australia is the Environment Management Industry Association of Australia.

Although it has been active in the eastern States for some little time, it has had a very low profile in South Australia. In March this year, the Executive Director of the EPA, who is with me today, in association with the principal executive, took the opportunity to launch a South Australian EMIAA network and also to act as State convenor. Although it is not a core business of the office of the EPA within the department, it has been recognised that the EPA can assist in developing this sector within South Australia, and I will certainly do everything I can to encourage that.

There has been a need for new project initiatives to kick start, if I can use that terminology, greater interest in this sector. To this end, the EPA has developed a range of programs, including the recycling development fund, which is being used to assist with initiatives by industry and community organisations to broaden the opportunities for development of markets for recycled material. We also have the Cleaner Industries Demonstration Scheme, which provides funding in the form of loans and grants to South Australian industry to demonstrate, through working examples, how industry can improve production, minimise environmental impact and save money through cleaner production techniques.

There is also the NATO pilot study on contaminated sites, which has provided some funding to assist in the development of emerging technologies for site remediation. With the assistance of both the Commonwealth EDA and the EMIAA, support has been secured for South Australia to host the next NATO pilot study meeting in Adelaide. This meeting is regarded as the peak international conference on remediation technologies for contaminated sites.

I am delighted to be able to indicate that, very largely as a result of Executive Director Mr Thomas's having been able to go overseas and make significant approaches to those responsible, we have been able to ensure that that international conference will be held in Adelaide in 1996. It is certainly something to which I am looking forward. It is a very exciting area and one that I want to promote as strongly as I possibly can. I think there is tremendous potential for South Australia to be involved in support of many of these initiatives.

Ms GREIG: The linkage between conservation and tourism is clearly identified on page 452 of the Program Estimates. Can the Minister advise what measures are being taken to ensure that tourism opportunities are realised from the proposal to nominate the Naracoorte Caves for world heritage listing?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I thank the honourable member for this question, too, because it gives me the chance to spell out fairly clearly where South Australia stands as far as world heritage listing is concerned. Regrettably, the push that has come from the Commonwealth to have the Lake Eyre Basin placed on the world heritage list has meant that we have had to object very strongly to that particular listing. There are many reasons for that, and I will not take up the time of the Committee in again relaying to members some of the reasons why we have opposed world heritage listing of this area.

Certainly, the South Australian Government is not against world heritage listing. However, it has been against the process that has been adopted in relation to the Lake Eyre Basin. If the Naracoorte Caves receive listing at the World Heritage Council in December this year it is expected that there will be many significant pluses for South Australia. One of them is an increased visitation rate in the South-East of the State.

Officers of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the South Australian Tourism Commission are working closely together to examine infrastructure requirements, to prepare a development and marketing plan and to consider possible funding sources. A \$16 000 consultancy has been jointly funded by the two agencies, and preliminary capital works budgets have identified the need for upgrading of the caves' infrastructure; that is something to which we are giving consideration at this stage.

However, the Government is very supportive of the caves being added to the world heritage list. It would be the first site in the world to be listed because of its fossil record, along with Riversleigh in Queensland—it is a joint listing. We are very hopeful that the decision of the World Heritage Council, when it meets in December, will be a positive recommendation to ensure that the Naracoorte Caves are included on the world heritage list.

The CHAIRMAN: The fossil is *Thylacoleo*.

Mr De LAINE: What share of this year's savings target of \$170 million recurrent expenditure, as set out in the June financial statement, was allocated to the department?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to answer that question.

Mr Mutton: The Department of Environment and Natural Resources was asked to take savings of \$2.5 million into consideration in its budget process this year. That saving was spread over various parts of the organisation through improvements in efficiency and effectiveness.

Mr De LAINE: Can the Minister summarise the extent of cuts made this year? Were they achieved by downsizing staff numbers or by creating other efficiencies through changed work practices and, if so, what are the details of these changes?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to answer that question as well.

Mr Mutton: The savings we have been asked to achieve in this financial year have primarily been achieved through improvements in efficiency and effectiveness within the organisation without having an impact on the core businesses of the organisation and services to the community. We have made a specific point of ensuring that customer service remains, particularly to rural communities in the State.

However, as part of our operations, we have done some reorganisation of our structures, particularly at what we might class as middle management levels. So, we have tried to flatten out our structures and remove some layers in the organisation in order to improve communications and efficiency—and, I repeat, without impacting on service delivery on the ground. That was one of the areas that we particularly targeted to ensure that we maintain services on the ground and improve services in the park and reserves system and in regions.

We have completed a review and started to make some significant changes in the area of ground survey staff, who basically do ground cadastral surveys and the like. We have phased down the operation, with those operations being picked up quite successfully within the resources available in the private sector.

We are continuing to review our operations so as to ensure that we are delivering services efficiently and that the services we are delivering are the ones required by the community. In summary, they are mainly efficiency and effectiveness changes, but one area that we have scaled down for the private sector to take on board is our normal physical ground survey work.

Mr De LAINE: What are the target cuts for the next three years as part of the ongoing program to reduce overall recurrent expenditure by \$300 million over the next four years?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: In 1994-95 it is \$2.5 million; in 1995-96, \$1.9 million; and in 1996-97, \$500 000. We have been given only three years at this stage.

Mr BROKENSHERE: A key issue raised on page 456 of the Program Estimates is the need for both an integrated and sustainable approach to natural resource management. Sustainable management of the State's natural resources is fundamental to the economic and social well-being of South Australians. What steps are being taken to ensure that these resources are being managed in an effective and sustainable manner?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I am very pleased to receive this question because it is an issue that is of fundamental importance for South Australia. As I indicated previously in a response to an almost identical question, this State is in a unique position in terms of the challenges that face us in the management of our resources. On the one hand we are the driest State in the continent, and on the other hand we have the terminal portions of two of Australia's longest river

systems, the Murray Darling and the ephemeral systems of the Lake Eyre Basin.

The growing awareness of the need to manage our natural resources in a manner which reflects their mutual independence is reflected in the establishment of the Mount Lofty Ranges catchment centre at Mount Barker. I am particularly pleased that that centre has been established. The centre brings together officers from the Departments of Primary Industries, Engineering and Water Supply and Environment and Natural Resources with local government officers and members of the local community. It will go a long way towards facilitating community input into local land management issues while at the same time making expertise within Government agencies more readily available to local government and the community.

During the winter recess I visited New Zealand with the express intention of study its newly introduced model for resource management. The primary objective of its legislation was to secure a sustainable base for New Zealand's natural resources. It is something in which I have always had a particular interest and want to become more involved. While the essential differences between our two countries, particularly the form of government and the size of area involved, preclude the New Zealand model from being adopted unchanged in South Australia, there are aspects of it that have the potential to work well in the South Australian context. On my return, and as outlined in my report to the Parliament, I asked the Natural Resources Council to begin work on preparing a framework for a more integrated approach to the management of our State's resources. I anticipate that an initial report from the council will be forthcoming before the end of the year. As I said earlier, it is a matter of fundamental significance and importance to South Australia.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Although it is generally accepted that legislation is necessary to achieve a measure of environmental protection, such legislation must be complemented by a vigorous community education program designed to raise the community's awareness of environmental issues. Such awareness is necessary if undesirable actions of individuals are to be changed. Page 456 of the Program Estimates refers to an annual awareness program: what action is your department taking to raise the community's awareness of environmental issues?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I do not think that enough action can ever be taken to make people aware, because Government can only do so much in protecting our environment. The community has to accept that it has a responsibility as well. We will continue to make people aware of that responsibility and encourage more and more people to get involved. I believe that there is increasing acceptance within the community that, although there is a clear role for sound legislation aimed at protecting the environment, there is an even greater need for individuals to act responsibly so that the world in which we live is not degraded but is passed on to future generations to use and enjoy. That is what the role of my department is all about.

Often irresponsible action on the part of individuals results from a lack of understanding of the impact on the environment in which we live rather than from a deliberate act of vandalism. In 1994-95 almost \$600 000 was committed through departmental programs to raise community awareness of environmental issues and to promote responsible actions by all members of the public. The money will be directed to major projects such as the recently completed and very successful 'Bazza's Environment and Recreation Trail'

at the Adelaide Royal Show. Members might be interested to know that during the period of the show some 42 000 people were involved on that trail.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend publicly the officers in my department who worked with the community, and the people and organisations who gave them support in putting that trail together. If ever there was an opportunity for people to be made more aware of what is happening in our environment, that is an excellent way of achieving it. That is only just one of them: we can use many other opportunities to make people more aware, such as the 'Don't Muck up the Murray Campaign', World Environment Day, etc. In addition, promotional materials such as brochures, booklets, etc., are being produced to provide visitors to our national parks and other places of tourist interest with information about many of the features being visited and about how those features can be protected from damage.

I am always impressed when I go to places such as Tasmania and on my recent trip to New Zealand (to which I referred earlier) at the amount of publicity they give to their national parks and other resources that can be used by the public through tourism, ecotourism, etc. Other information and material relating to the conservation of our water resources, the maintenance of clean air, the control of noise, recycling and the management of waste is also being produced advising the public of how their actions can contribute to a healthier and more attractive environment. So, there are many things that can be done, and we are already doing a lot. As I said earlier, this year \$600 000 will go towards that goal. The department and I have a very high priority to make as many people as possible aware of their responsibilities.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I concur with the Minister on those points. I was one of the 42 000 people, and I had a great day. I thought of the Minister and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources as I tried to get my three children through the 15 points around the showgrounds. I think it took us about six hours, so I certainly thought of the Minister during the day. The National Environment Protection Council legislation is highlighted on page 453 of the Program Estimates. What benefits will accrue to South Australia as a result of the proposed National Environment Protection Council legislation?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The objectives in establishing the National Environment Protection Council are to ensure, first, that people enjoy the benefits of equivalent protection from air, water and soil pollution and from noise wherever they live within Australia; and, secondly, that decisions by business are not distorted and markets are not fragmented by the application of different standards across jurisdictions. There is also much to be gained by industry and business. It is believed that a cooperative national approach to the environment will provide a much better definition of the roles of respective Governments and a reduction in the number of disputes between the Commonwealth and the States on environmental issues. I am sure that we all recognise the importance in achieving that.

This will provide greater certainty for Government and business decision-making, and it will provide better environmental protection. The development of national environmental standards and consistency in implementing timeframes will also assist industry which is based across one or more States and/or which is competing with various industries interstate. The Environment Management Industry Association of Australia (the organisation that I referred to recently), and

peak industry groups, certainly support the establishment of the NEPC.

I believe the National Environment Protection Council will work because it will be decision driven, thereby protecting the interests of the smaller States. When I say 'decision driven', it will have a two-thirds voting system. It will have a legislative base and means of implementation. I know that some concern has been expressed by at least one of my colleagues in another State regarding the establishment of the NEPC but, as far as South Australia is concerned, we support the establishment of the council, and we look forward to working with it.

Mrs GERAGHTY: I refer to page 453 and cite 'Develop legislation covering site clean-up,' etc. The issues I raise relate to asbestos and the asbestos pits that are installed in various locations across the State, and of which the Electricity Trust of South Australia is unable to give the exact location. I also raise the asbestos fuse meter panels, which workers installing meters or refixing burnt out fuses have to drill into, thereby causing contamination. Will the Minister ask the EPA to ensure that all Government and statutory authorities appropriately label all equipment containing asbestos, including such things as fuse meter boxes; and, in the case of asbestos pits, or similar sites, that all such sites be identified and a register established and made available to anyone who requests such information?

Mr Thomas: That question covers a couple of areas. In terms of labelling installations that contain asbestos and then the appropriate dismantling processes, that is really dealt with under occupational health and some other areas. The disposal of asbestos and the reworking of the pits in which it is buried is certainly covered by the EPA. With regard to that area, there are a number of comments that I can make. We do not have a register of contaminated sites in South Australia, but we are looking at that issue. I cannot claim that we would have a record of all sites and, even if we did have a register, it is still quite possible we would miss a number of sites.

In terms of the potential environmental hazard, if it is properly covered and not being reworked, it is probably safer to leave it where it is. However, if the site is being worked because there has been a change of use and new development on it, a potential hazard emerges, and that is when it is nice to know whether there is a site there. There have been some occasions when that has arisen, and we have immediately moved in and recommended clean-up orders. Under the new Act we have a much clearer mandate for clean up.

At this stage we do not pretend to have full control over the contaminated sites issue. There is room for improvement, and it is intended to deal with that as an amendment to the Environment Protection Act after the Act is proclaimed, and that will probably be about six months down the track. The main issue is liability with regard to clean-up, and that issue has been dealt with by ANZECC. There is a paper on contaminated sites liability, which I can make available. I point out that the Government has endorsed that liability paper. Again, that fits into the issue of consistency between the States, and major industries are very keen to see that.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The management of contaminated sites and contaminated land is, as Mr Thomas has indicated, a very complex issue—technically, legally and also in terms of social justice. There are a lot of concerns regarding this issue, including public disquiet over potential adverse health and environmental impacts that the member has referred to; and problems with the redevelopment of contaminated sites and the difficulties faced by developers arising

from uncertainties due to the lack of legislation. But, as Mr Thomas has indicated, I hope that many of those issues will be addressed more clearly as we move further with legislation relating to the Environment Protection Authority.

Mrs GERAGHTY: If a register were to be established containing as many sites as possible, would that be made available to people who requested it? I am thinking particularly of workers who might have to go onto a site.

Mr Thomas: Whether we develop a register as part of this process has not been decided. There are advantages and disadvantages with a register. The problem of a register is that it gets out of date very quickly and then liability arises if you advise with regard to that register. So, we have not fully determined that. My view is that there are a number of ways we can look at this. The section 90 process for change of ownership is very efficient in this State, and we could use that and attach information to the section 90 statements. However, there are a number of options we will look at.

Mrs GERAGHTY: I refer to page 453: last year the Marine Environment Protection Committee started consultation with the Local Government Association on monitoring the condition of marine and estuarine waters in South Australia. It was also proposed that a code of practice should be established for the disposal of waste from the fishing fleet. Will the Minister advise the Committee of the progress that is being made on this important matter, and is his department taking a lead on the issue?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The Executive Director of the EPA is a member of that committee, so I will ask him to respond.

Mr Thomas: I am not aware of the outcome of those discussions with local government, but the EPA is aware of the need to develop better and coordinated water quality monitoring practices in South Australia. As part of our strategic plan, we have introduced a State water quality monitoring plan. We do not intend to do it all, but we will coordinate agencies which are collecting that sort of data and ensure that we have consistency of data of equal quality and on a common data base, and we will develop that data base so that the community has access to it. We will also contribute funds towards it.

On the code of practice, a number of things are happening. Probably the most important is an Australia-New Zealand Environment Conservation Council initiative, which is on the agenda now. Incidentally, the next ANZECC meeting will be held in South Australia in November and it will be chaired by the Minister. One issue of interest is ballast water management and exotic species which have been introduced into South Australia. I suspect your question relates to this important issue. An action plan has been developed nationally, and South Australia is part of it. A number of agencies are involved, and again we will coordinate that. We are aware that a number of exotic species are already causing problems in the Port River, for example. There is a desperate need Australia-wide to look at the management and introduction of exotic species, because they represent a major problem. The Sea Star in Tasmania is presently causing havoc. There is an action plan and we are part of it. I will not go through the details, but I can provide them.

Mrs ROSENBERG: My question relates to page 448 concerning the water resource management program: \$6.54 million and 88 FTEs are allocated for expenditure on water resource management. Water is obviously a key resource for development, prosperity and the maintenance of a high standard of living. Therefore, it is imperative that we

properly manage the State's precious water resources if we are to sustain our lifestyle and achieve economic development. How will the Government ensure that sufficient water of suitable quality will be available to sustain future development within the State?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The focus for water resources management within the Government is in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and I am pleased that it is. On coming to office a decision was taken that water resources should be transferred to the department. It is a very important resource, as has been said on three or four occasions today. It is important that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has that focused responsibility. The total water resources group budget for 1994-95 is \$7.5 million. However, taking into account receipts of \$.76 million and national Landcare funds of \$.21 million, the net State funded budget is \$6.54 million. The present staff complement is 96 people, which includes 8 national Landcare funded positions. However, this will increase to 108 people as vacancies in key positions are progressively filled during the year.

The budget papers indicate the break-up of activities for which these resources will be used. Since these papers were prepared, a reassessment of priorities has occurred, resulting in some changes which reflect the importance of management plans to secure water resources. The number of people, including national Landcare-funded positions, working on the three areas is as follows: 22 people work on the assessment of water resources and management of the water resources inventory, which is concerned with data collection processing, assessment, storage and retrieval; and 35 people work in the area of managing water allocations and the protection of water resources. That area is concerned with the administration of water allocations and water quality protection provisions under the Water Resources Act, catchment management of the Mount Lofty Ranges watershed, including administration of the waterworks regulations and catchment management associated with the Murray River.

In addition, 34 people work on the development of a policy and water resources management plan, which is concerned with support for the South Australian Water Resources Council and water resources committees, community education, Landcare initiatives and water resources investigations, such as the State water plan to which I referred earlier. Also, we are looking at stormwater management and water for the environment generally.

Three of the major initiatives being undertaken within the group during 1994-95 are the Mount Lofty Ranges catchment program, where there are 12 full-time equivalents, the State water plan, where there are 3.5 full-time equivalents, and stormwater management with 2 full-time equivalents. The Water Resources Group also provides the key coordinating function of bringing together people from other agencies, local government, community groups and land holders to achieve effective integrated resource management. As I have said a number of times today, the need for effective integrated resource management is of high priority.

Mrs ROSENBERG: As a supplementary, you mentioned the Mount Lofty Ranges catchment program. How successful has that been?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: It has been very successful. Over a period of time a number of questions have been asked and much controversy has been raised about future development and the action that can be taken to protect that catchment. We need to recognise that the Mount Lofty Ranges catchment is

one of the more urbanised catchment areas in Australia, and that in itself is a significant issue. The beauty about this catchment program and the establishment of the office in Mount Barker means that it has brought all the agencies together for the first time. As most of my electorate is within that catchment, I have always seen that as a major problem. We have had different agencies going in different directions and the opportunity has not been provided for close consultation and involvement with the local community, including business people, landowners, and so on. That has improved dramatically, even in the short time that the office has been open. I am in close contact with those who have responsibility for working through the catchment program and who are working in that office. I will certainly ensure that the program runs effectively and that the initiatives that have already been put forward to improve conditions within the catchment will be followed through.

Ms GREIG: I refer to page 452. Has the 60 per cent of pastoral lease assessments been completed? What security of tenure is being provided for protection of lessees?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: A number of points need to be made with regard to the effectiveness of pastoral lease assessment. The lease assessment program continues to be seen as a valuable starting point for future sustainable management of our range lands. The Government has decided that the pastoral management program should remain with the environment and natural resources portfolio. There was some uncertainty about that in the earlier days of the Government. The Pastoral Management Branch which, amongst other things, provides executive support for the Pastoral Board will, therefore, remain within DENR, where it will actively integrate its activities with other agencies and groups responsible for arid land administration. I believe that this decision reflects very well the fact that pastoral lands are a multiple use resource and their administration is best placed with the agency that the Government requires to integrate natural resource management. Again, that is the subject to which I have referred previously.

Amendments are proposed to South Australia's Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act that will include provisions to issue continuous pastoral tenures in prescribed cases, and strengthen the coordination of field activities in the State's range lands between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Department of Primary Industries, and I see that as being essential. We will also continue the membership of the two pastoralists on the Pastoral Board. I might also say that the amendments will pick up already agreed changes to the way the actual amount of rent payable under a pastoral lease is established and conveyed to lessees and other minor procedural changes noted as necessary from the operation of the 1989 Bill.

So a lot of things are happening as far as pastoral lease management and assessment is concerned. Whenever possible I have been very keen to consult with pastoralists. As I said earlier, it is not just a single agency involvement: we are looking at tourism, mining and pastoralism. This department in particular, as well as its responsibility in pastoral management programs and assessment, also has the overall responsibility of protecting the environment of that very sensitive area. I can assure the honourable member that, if she wants any more information, I can give her heaps.

Ms STEVENS: I refer to page 452 of the Program Estimates. On 12 April 1994, the Minister released the review into the management of the National Parks and Wildlife Act and announced that he had called for an immediate park audit

to give him a snapshot of the condition of natural and built assets of all reserves in South Australia. Why has the Minister considered it necessary to commission yet another report, given his strident criticism of the management of parks last year and the Liberal Government's policy undertaking that this work would be undertaken by the new South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Commission?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: First, it is not another report. The audit will be seeking and providing information on individual reserves. As I said earlier, before the member for Elizabeth took her place on the Committee, I see that as being vitally important. We have a huge amount of land under National Parks and Wildlife responsibility in this State. It is vitally important that an audit be carried out to provide much needed information regarding adequate management, lack of management, suggestions as to how management can be improved, and all sorts of other issues relating to those individual parks.

The honourable member also referred to our policy announcement prior to the election that we would move to establish a national parks commission. I have not proceeded in that area because, again as I said earlier, the previous Government established a review into the national parks in this State. As a result of that review, a substantive report has been brought down. I have already indicated to the Committee the number of recommendations that are provided in that report that we are moving to implement as a matter of priority. A couple of suggestions were made as to future management tools or organisations that might be given responsibility for the management of national parks.

I have also recognised that the establishment of a commission may not be the appropriate way to go. We have other alternatives. It does not really matter whether it is the establishment of a national parks council, whether it be in another form, whether it be a commission or whatever. The objective that I had and still have very strongly in the establishment of such a body is to provide the opportunity for wider input into the management of our parks and reserves. It is my intention that that will be achieved. The budget has included funding for completing the inaugural audit of the National Parks and Wildlife Act reserve system. That has commenced. The audit will be a report on both the values and management of protected areas administered by the Government and will develop a database of information; as I said earlier, that will assist managers and provide a means of assessing management performance.

An officer has already been seconded to the planning and project section to undertake the necessary field work and to gather data on reserve attributes and management regimes over the next year in particular. Linkages with computer based information systems are also being established to assist the audit. As I said a couple of times during this Committee, I see the audit as being a very important tool in improving management of our national parks. Over 20 million hectares of parks under reserves in this State is a lot of land and a huge responsibility on the part of Government. The audit will help provide the information which will in turn enable us to manage more appropriately that land in the future.

Ms STEVENS: In answer to a question, the Premier has advised that the Wilpena redevelopment will not be subject to the preparation of an environmental impact statement. The Premier made a commitment that proper scrutiny would be given to the management and maintenance issues by the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources through the provisions of the lease. Has the Minister received any

proposals for the redevelopment and, if so, how do these plans address the complex environmental issues created by the presence of the chalet at the mouth of Wilpena Pound?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: This is a very complex issue, with court proceedings having been instigated in New South Wales regarding the proposed Ophix development. To some extent, that has delayed any progress on the plans advanced in our policy just prior to the election. The decision to ensure that we watch closely the progress in regard to any upgrade of the current facility or any other agencies within Wilpena is one that I support. Because no work has been carried out at this stage, we have not set in place any particular procedure to follow. In fact, because of the court proceedings, it has been difficult until recently even to be able to talk to the lessees at Wilpena. That can now occur, and one of the first things we will do is look at the most appropriate methods that the Government and I, as Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources, can use to ensure that any development in that area is appropriate.

Ms STEVENS: Has the Minister's department developed any criteria at all for this redevelopment; what are the details; and, if not, why not?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to answer that question.

Mr Mutton: As the Minister said, the circumstances are such that it has been only in the very recent past that we have been in a position to start discussions with the proponent for the redevelopment of the existing facilities at Wilpena. Those discussions are very much in their early stages, and we have not yet reached the point of finalising criteria for that development, but that will be done. The development at Wilpena is obviously part of the existing management plan for the Flinders Ranges National Park. The management plan process within parks is one of the mechanisms that are used to look at on-park developments, and the opportunity for public consultation is part of that exercise. To answer the honourable member's specific question: due to timing, those discussions on the development have not yet taken place.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: What will the codes of practice regarding stormwater management involve, and how will they be implemented?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The EPA's program of developing codes of practice is progressing well. Four codes are being developed in consultation with industry and the community to improve existing practices at the pollution source. Those four codes will address: the community; the building and construction industry; industrial sites and premises; and municipal activities and practices. A code is also proposed for stormwater recharge to aquifers, a matter in which I know the honourable member is particularly interested. It is an area of great potential but one which involves long-term resource protection, so caution must be exercised.

The first general code of practice for the community is currently out for consultation, and a public release is targeted in the next couple of months. The others will be available for release over the next 12 months. To answer the question specifically: the codes of practice program will concentrate initially on improving existing activities and practices at the source rather than jumping into high cost structural options. The program will also have a long-term awareness and education component to ensure sustained community improvements. The codes will be adopted as environment improvement policies in the new Environment Protection Act

1993 and will be able to be used by local government officers. So they will serve a very real purpose.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Reference is made on page 456 of the Program Estimates to educating the community on environmental and natural resource issues. How important does the Minister see initiatives such as 'The Birth of the Forest' which was recently released at McLaren Flat and in which the Minister has a particular interest, particularly with respect to the education of children on environment degradation and the initiatives contained in that project regarding general land degradation on the Fleurieu Peninsula and in Southern Hills areas?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I was delighted that the member for Mawson invited me to join him recently to visit an important project in his electorate—'The Birth of the Forest'. I can honestly say that this is one of the best examples that I have seen of the community pulling together in an environment program. 'The Birth of the Forest' involves an area of land where there has been some but which certainly has the potential for significant land degradation. It is a very steep area, and a determination has been made by community organisations, including the McLaren Vale Primary School, Trees for Life and other organisations well known to the member for Mawson, to get together to obtain trees and plant a significant area to ensure that that land degradation is halted.

I was particularly pleased yet again—previously with the member for Mawson I had had the opportunity—to observe much of the work that has been carried out by one of his constituents in using old newspapers to address the matter of land degradation. That constituent should be commended for the work he is doing. Again, it is a very good news story. He has already been able to prove that by using old newspapers land degradation in the Willunga area has been able to be addressed very well indeed. In only the past couple of days I made arrangements for the member for Mawson to bring that constituent in to discuss with me his proposal, which I want to support, and I commend both the member for Mawson and Mr Dean Frankham, his constituent, for the work they are doing to address land degradation and, in particular, to make more people in the community aware of their responsibilities and the ways in which they can become involved in conservation in South Australia.

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

Membership:

Mrs Rosenberg substituted for Mr Wade.

Mr Quirke substituted for Ms Stevens.

Department for Family and Community Services,
\$145 776 000

Witness:

The Hon. D.C. Wotton, Minister for Family and Community Services.

Advisers:

Mr R. Deyell, Chief Executive Officer.

Mr L. Carpenter, Deputy Chief Executive Officer.

Ms J. Lowe, Director, Family and Community Development Division.

Ms J. Whitehorn, Project Officer, Agency Services.

Mr J. Southgate, Manager, Financial and Physical Resources.

Mr R. Fletcher, Director, Agency Services.

Ms R. Ramsay, Executive Director, Operations.

Mr G. Boxhall, Director, Young Offender Services.

Mr S. Ramsay, Manager, The Office for Families.

Ms Z. Nowak-Cremer, Manager, Anti-Poverty Unit.

Mr M. Szwarcbord, Manager, HACC.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to pages 161 to 163 in the Estimates of Receipts and Payments, Financial Paper No.2, pages 461 to 472 in the Program Estimates, and Financial Information Paper No.1.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Two important points need to be made as a preface to today's proceedings. First, it is important to be clear about the context. The Government has embarked upon wide-ranging public sector reform to facilitate maintenance and improvement of key services, while at the same time addressing the State's financial problems. The public sector has a vital role in boosting the performance of the State's economy and encouraging the creation of jobs. A more productive public sector will provide the Government with the capacity to deal directly with key economic, social and environmental policy issues that face the South Australian community.

As a public sector agency, the Department for Family and Community Services is not, nor should it be, quarantined from that reform agenda. It is entirely appropriate that the department has made savings in the previous financial year through separation packages and operational efficiencies. The fact that those savings have been returned to the department to offset the \$2.5 million reduction in the appropriation is testimony to the significance that this Government attaches to meeting its commitments to families and children. The facts should speak for themselves.

This year the department has available some \$230.5 million, which is more than was available last year and significantly more than the department spent. The second important point I make is that this Government has, within the context of debt reduction, made clear social policy commitments in relation to families and children, which are fully reflected in the Estimates and open to public scrutiny. The commitment to place special emphasis on the detection of child abuse and providing support for the child is underpinned by a \$39 million allocation to service delivery. There are no plans to close district centres, and I repeat the commitment I made previously that there will be no cuts in existing levels of service as a result of this budget.

The commitment to maintaining quality support services while developing further preventative strategies is fully reflected in increases in funding for family preservation services, a new 'caring for families' pilot project in the western suburbs and the domestic violence help line. The commitment to maintaining existing funding to the non-government sector has been met, including injections to meet salary increases resulting from the South Australian

Community Services Award. A central initiative in our election platform—the establishment of the Office for Families—has been met. The commitment to family impact statements is being addressed within a family impact strategy which takes account of the devolved and performance oriented nature of today's public sector.

The State has matched or will match current offers made by the Commonwealth for the HACC program. The indexation provisions for SAAP have also been matched and extra funds will flow on to services. There are, of course, significant challenges that lie ahead for myself as Minister, the department and the industry to respond to the continuous improved agenda, which will deliver more responsive and efficient services. The task is made all the more urgent by the fact that we acknowledge that there is a pattern of incidence of child abuse in our community.

I believe that this budget affords us the opportunity to work together to respond to these challenges sensibly, with due regard for core responsibilities of Government to protect children and support families. The department has already undertaken a major re-evaluation of its directions, and key proposals are to be introduced this year that will provide the framework for a more efficient and more mature outcome-oriented system for supporting the community services industry.

The Government remains committed to providing greater opportunities for non-government organisations to deliver a wide range of services through addressing the requirements of contestability. However, at the same time we will ensure that this is achieved in a coherent and rational way, based on maximising the potential of all sectors for the benefit of our customers and the community and the families and children of South Australia.

Mr QUIRKE: The Minister would be aware that a huge cut in the health budget has flowed through to the funding of many community services. The justification given by the Health Commission for many of these cuts is that they are not health services. The Minister would appreciate that the distinction between health services and community welfare services is often blurred. There can be no doubt that these services provide vital welfare assistance to many disadvantaged people in our community.

An example of such a service is the Para Districts Counselling Service, which was told last week that \$50 000 would be slashed from its budget this year and that all funding would cease next year because it was not strictly health related. The service began in 1964; it sees 3 000 clients a year; and its three permanent and four casual staff, backed up by 19 volunteers, provides counselling in a range of areas, including domestic violence, loneliness, grief and child and sexual abuse, and specialised financial advice. If this service receives no funding, it will place a huge extra burden on FACS-funded services in that district. Will the FACS budget pick up any of these services that have been cast adrift from the health budget?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: As the honourable member would appreciate, many organisations are funded through the FACS budget. I think it is probably best if we take the specifics of the question on notice, if that is acceptable to the honourable member. We currently fund the Para Districts Counselling Service to the tune of \$58 000, and it is intended that that funding will continue. That funding is provided in family support and in other areas. I am unsure whether the honourable member is indicating that there was an expectation on the part of the Para Districts Counselling Service that

it would receive more than that. I think the honourable member said that the service was told that its budget would be slashed by \$50 000.

Mr QUIRKE: There was a \$50 000 slash in this year's budget. Next year the Health Commission will provide no money whatsoever.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: While I understand the concern expressed by the honourable member, the responsibility for the health budget is not mine but my colleague's. I will speak with the relevant Minister and then provide the honourable member with further information.

Mr QUIRKE: As the Health Commission draws funding from this area in general, there will be an impact on the community. We want to know whether FACS will pick up the slack, so to speak, in a number of these areas, and whether, in the next 12 months, FACS will build that into its forward estimates.

Membership:

Mr De Laine substituted for Ms Stevens.

Mr QUIRKE: The Liberal Party's family and community services policy released in December 1993 promised to identify statutory responsibilities to be retained within the Government sector and to provide opportunities for non-government organisations to deliver a wide range of services. How far has the Government moved towards implementing this policy of welfare outsourcing?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The Government has not moved very far at all, to be quite frank. The reason is that, understandably, I was keen to be able to make an appointment to the position of permanent head of the department before that procedure was adopted. On several occasions, the Government has indicated a commitment to providing more opportunities for the non-government sector to deliver services. The Government has been asked on a number of occasions what it is doing to implement this policy. The department currently outsources about 35 per cent of its budget. Over \$30 million of that outsourcing funds the delivery of services in the community and non-government sectors.

The Government has already moved to increase opportunities for the delivery of services in the non-government sector by establishing the Caring for Families Project through the Port Adelaide Mission. Over the next two years, some \$178 000 has been allocated to that project. An additional \$356 000 has been directed to family preservation services delivered in partnership with the non-government sector. These funds bring the program budget to \$1.03 million and will enable expansion into the State's Iron Triangle.

Initiatives such as the domestic violence help line may also be focused on providers in the non-government sector, subject to the current consideration of the options. The Government's election policy made it clear that a number of methods may be used to implement this policy, including a direct approach to organisations to provide a specific service or an invitation for expressions of interest in the provision of certain services. The department's approach to contestability has been the subject of discussions between me and the Chief Executive Officer. In conclusion, Mr Deyell comes to us from New Zealand and has extensive experience in respect of this subject. If the honourable member wishes, it may be of interest if Mr Deyell expands on that.

Mr Deyell: After taking up my appointment I became aware that the Minister was keen to move on this matter. My advice to him so far has been that it is sensible to develop a

framework that enables us to consider the matter. My advice has been that we embark on a process that establishes the principles and parameters around which the Government wishes to maintain responsibility across the range of community service programs. I believe that that will establish for the Government a link from each program in respect of the overall goals and objectives while, at the same time, setting the scene for the Minister's accountability requirements for any agency which seeks to contest the delivery of those services. I anticipate that that process will enable the Minister to identify the core services that should be retained in the public sector and the services and program areas that the Minister would wish to have contestable.

Mr QUIRKE: What proportion of the 1994-95 FACS budget will go to non-government organisations, and how does this compare with the 1993-94 budget?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: We have that information but it might be best if we come back to it, rather than take up the time of the Committee at this stage.

Mr QUIRKE: Given the Government's intention to introduce private prisons, will the Minister contemplate the privatisation of juvenile justice institutions in South Australia?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: At this stage the Government has no plans to move that way. I do not contemplate that that decision will be made by the Government.

Ms GREIG: I again congratulate the Minister and his staff for the work they have put into this section of the budget. I particularly acknowledge the commitment given to maintaining quality support services and the commitment to the family through the Office of the Family. I refer to page 162 of the Estimates of Receipts and Payments and the Minister's opening statement. Has the State matched all the growth moneys offered by the Commonwealth in the Home and Community Care and Supported Accommodation Assistance programs?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The department's budget for 1994-95 includes \$539 000 in additional State funds for the HACC program, thereby matching Commonwealth funding of \$865 000. That will provide a total of \$1.4 million. In addition, the Commonwealth has indicated likely growth funds of a further \$1.635 million. State funding of \$1.018 million will be sought from other Government and non-government sources to total \$2.635 million.

In terms of the SAAP program, the Government has budgeted \$270 000 to match the Commonwealth's offer of \$226 000 in respect of indexation. The additional funds will flow into services. Also, increases for superannuation will be provided. There is no Commonwealth offer of new growth funds for 1994-95. However, there is an offer by the Commonwealth of national unmatched growth funds from previous years. The department is currently examining this offer, made some two weeks ago, with respect to the opportunity for meeting matching arrangements.

The Commonwealth has also advised of so-called additional funds of \$3.9 million nationally which were appropriated separately from existing Commonwealth SAAP funding and are not subject to the usual matching arrangements. I understand that these additional funds are intended to support the development of improvements in SAAP, as outlined in the National Strategic Directions document. Priorities for the allocation of these funds and associated administrative arrangements are currently being examined by Commonwealth and State officials. The need to look at matching Commonwealth funding is recognised as a signifi-

cant issue by this Government. I am pleased with the result of negotiations that have taken place and with the direction that has been taken in regard to providing funding through HACC and SAAP.

Ms GREIG: I refer to page 468 of the Program Estimates in respect of anti-poverty services and the Minister's general commitment to an early intervention and prevention focus. Will the Minister outline some examples of the prevention programs which have been established in this area and in particular those which impact on poverty within traditional Aboriginal communities?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: There are a number of points I would like to make in regard to this question, because it is very important. The fact is that 52 preventive projects were funded towards the end of 1992-93, and the majority of them were implemented in 1993-94. A further 30 projects were developed and implemented later. These projects are run in partnership with a wide range of community agencies, and I will give a couple of examples. There were funds for debt relief families participating in the Family Empowerment Project at Elizabeth. This project involves Anglican Community Services, the Morialta Trust, Levi Strauss, the University of South Australia and the Elizabeth Family Resource Centre. The aim of the project is to break down welfare dependency among a group of welfare dependent clients and to develop their coping skills to the level where they can provide support to other welfare clients.

Another example is the whitegoods loan scheme which assists clients to save for the purchase of their own whitegoods. This scheme is run in partnership with community agencies. These arrangements are usually combined with financial counselling and other support mechanisms. There is a wide range of living skills education programs dealing with nutrition, low-cost meal preparation, budgeting and consumer credit issues as well. Also, essential household items are provided to enable clients to establish a home within manageable debt levels. The main target groups are victims of domestic violence and young homeless people moving to independent living.

There are a number of other areas where there is significant involvement on the part of the department. A number of community development initiatives were implemented in isolated Aboriginal communities. I think that is of particular interest to the honourable member. I would be happy to provide more information about some of those projects for the honourable member if I could take that on notice.

Mr QUIRKE: I refer to the question of juvenile justice. Where are we going with the second secure facility? What planning is now in train for that second secure facility? Was your acceptance in the House the other week of the kind offer of the member for Lee and his high school site taken seriously? Do you have any other sites in mind, other than the high school concerned? Do you have any design plans? Is there any other relevant information?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I will stray from the advice that was provided to me by my colleague and put down some of the facts, because it is important that that should happen, and I appreciate the opportunity provided to me. The previous Government, as the honourable member would probably know, approved the replacement of the ageing and inefficient youth detention facilities at Enfield, otherwise known as SAYRAC, and Magill SAYTC with two new facilities, each accommodating up to 36 young offenders. As the Enfield facility has been replaced by the Cavan Training Centre, it is now timely to review the Magill Training Centre, as it is very

inefficient to operate, consists mainly of ageing and inappropriately designed buildings and occupies valuable real estate.

Coincidentally, a property at Royal Park on the former site of the West Lakes High School has become available. The department has been invited to consider the property for any of its future building programs, and that is as far as we have gone with that particular site. It has been offered to us for our consideration to determine whether it is appropriate for any future building programs. However, a consultancy has been engaged to determine the department's future needs for youth detention facilities: the feasibility of redeveloping the existing Magill facility on a reduced site; whether it would be a more cost effective option to build a new facility on a different site; and how the currently unoccupied former West Lakes High School site at Royal Park could be utilised for youth detention and other purposes should that prove to be the best option.

The selection process for the consultants consisted of advertising for tenders in the *Advertiser*, short listing according to defined criteria and requesting written and verbal presentations from the final eight firms, some of which were based outside South Australia. Pizzey Noble Redden Pty Ltd was successful in its tender and began work on the project on 29 August this year, with an expected completion date of late January next year. Having said all that, and not wishing to give my colleague on my left too much of a swollen head, I point out that, during a recent visit to New Zealand, I was interested to see what had been achieved in that country, in particular on the North Island, in reducing the number of juveniles in detention. Members around the table would also be aware of what has been achieved in the United Kingdom, for example, and many other countries, where the number of young people in detention has been reduced significantly.

That has been achieved in a number of ways. One of the ways in New Zealand is as a result of the legislation that was introduced in 1989, and members would be aware that, to some extent, the legislation that we have in South Australia is, in fact, mirrored on that legislation. I realise that there will always be the need for detention centres for juveniles, but I would hope that we might be able to look at other programs also that would provide alternatives to locking away some of these youngsters up to the age of 18 years. So, while I have supported and approved the consultancy that has been engaged, I would hope that in the process—and I know that this is something which the department is already looking at—we would be able to consider other alternatives, other programs, in this whole area of juvenile justice.

Of course, it is very early days as far as the new legislation is concerned. The honourable member might be interested to know that I had a very fruitful discussion with the judge of the Youth Court recently regarding investigation of this whole issue. It is an area that is of particular interest to me and it is one that I will continue to investigate in regard to all forms of alternatives.

Mr QUIRKE: What is the recurrent cost of incarceration in the Cavan Secure Centre and the Magill facility every day?

Ms GREIG: Is there a reference to a budget line?

Mr QUIRKE: The budget line is Family and Community Services; the Opposition has a right to ask these sorts of questions and I do not need advice on whether it relates to a budget line or the whole vote. We are looking at recurrent costs.

The CHAIRMAN: The honourable member will realise that the Chairman in the preamble each morning asks, for the facility of the Minister and the members, that as far as

possible a specific line be identified. As I said earlier, that has been followed more in the breach than in the observance, but if members are trying to identify a line to follow another member's line of reasoning, it is obviously a question of great interest to the whole of the Committee, bearing in mind the very high cost of incarceration in the institutions the honourable member has mentioned. Is the Minister happy with the question?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I would like to take that question on notice. I am certainly happy to provide the information to the honourable member.

Mr QUIRKE: We would like to have that information.

The CHAIRMAN: It should be provided to the clerk of the House by 7 October.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: A question was asked concerning the percentage of FACS budget to the non-government sector. I indicate that in 1993-94, 22.54 per cent of the budget went to the non-government sector and this year it is proposed that 35.6 per cent will go to the non-government sector.

Mr QUIRKE: What processes are used to allocate funds to non-government service providers, and how are these agencies held accountable for public funds that they have received?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to respond to that question but, before I do, I point out that on coming to office I was concerned that there was not appropriate accountability. That does not mean to say that we have agencies in the non-government sector that are ripping off the Government or the community. I do not mean that in any way at all, but it is necessary to be quite sure that those organisations are accountable in terms of the taxpayers' funding that is provided to them. I have asked the department to consider various methods of funding and that investigation is currently being carried out.

Mr Deyell: Funding under the FACS budget is distributed primarily through three main advisory committees. That is the primary mechanism used. HACC and SAAP have advisory committees and, as members will be aware, that is the subject of a joint Commonwealth-State agreement, so that the decision making process is a joint Commonwealth-State process on the recommendation of those advisory committees. The third funding process within the department is for funding that is identified in the family and community development grants area and the Minister received advice from a family and community development advisory committee.

Mr QUIRKE: The Program Estimates, page 471, indicates that the department continues to have more than one-third of its total budget allocated to external, mostly non-government service providers. Will the Minister provide a list of the grants to these bodies for 1994-95 and for each of the past two years? I put that question on notice.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Yes.

Mr QUIRKE: The department seems to take quite a while to release grants to non-government service providers. Will the Minister comment on that and give us an idea of the time taken between a decision being made and the funds being provided?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I am aware from representations I have received from some of those organisations that they would prefer to have their funding earlier than is the case now. I think it would be appropriate for Mr Carpenter to answer that question.

Mr Carpenter: We need to consider this question in relation to the three distinct programs. In relation to HACC

and SAAP, funding is the subject of Commonwealth-State agreements, both of which are up for renewal soon. Those agreements, as presently constructed, require that both State and Federal Ministers approve funding of programs and agencies. Generally speaking, those processes are relatively smooth where agencies are continuing to receive funding; in other words, the funding is flowing over. Where new initiatives are to be funded, again the process is as quick as possible. In general, the time between agencies applying for and receiving money would be about two to three months. In relation to State-only funded programs, there are a number of components, and a similar process occurs. Depending on the program, people are asked to submit on an annual or triennial basis. Those submissions are considered, recommendations are made to the Minister, and the agencies are advised whether or not they are successful. Again, that process ought not take more than a couple of months.

Mr WADE: On page 469 of the Program Estimates there is the statement:

Domestic violence continues to impact on the social and economic well-being of South Australia.

This Government promised that there would be a concerted effort with regard to domestic violence, particularly in terms of placing greater emphasis on prevention. What has the Government done to address its responsibilities in this most important area?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The member for Elder is right in saying that the Government has made specific commitments with respect to domestic violence. That has come about as a result of deep concerns within the community about the rising incidence of violence in the home and the social and economic costs to the community. The Attorney-General has already introduced specific legislation to address domestic violence, as was foreshadowed in our election policy. In addition, a domestic violence portfolio has been established within the Crime Prevention Unit. The Health Commission continues to provide local area prevention therapy and education programs through health centres. Also, the Minister for the Status of Women has established the South Australian Women's Advisory Council with a very important brief to advise on all priority issues, one of which is women and violence.

In my department domestic violence is addressed on a number of fronts, including services directly through district centres, funding to women's shelters and outreach services and a coordinated prevention strategy managed by the combined Health/FACS resources unit.

The funding to women's shelters in 1994-95 will total \$4 million for staffing and operational costs. The commitment to establishing a 24-hour help line for victims and perpetrators of domestic violence is in train. The department is negotiating the possible transfer of the help line to the Adelaide Central Mission.

On 26 April national 'Stop domestic violence'—Crows football posters were launched to introduce the domestic violence help line. Some 5 000 of these posters have been printed and distributed throughout the State. It is not as though I spend much time in hotels, but I have been delighted to see that they are on walls in bars and in other areas.

The CHAIRMAN: I have one in my office.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I am pleased that the Chairman has taken account of the message that has been given. Also, a zero tolerance domestic violence community education campaign, comprising a series of posters, information kits

and a small community grants program, will be launched early next year. I shall be pleased to provide more information for the honourable member when that is about to happen. There is much information that I could provide, and I should be only too happy to do so if the honourable member wishes to have more information.

There are now 24 domestic violence action groups throughout the State. These are made up of community members and workers in domestic violence. They do a fantastic job. Their primary role is to develop local campaigns aimed at increasing community awareness. Of course, the domestic violence resource units facilitate coordination and provide practical support and advice to the groups.

It is also interesting to note that \$215 000 of the emergency financial assistance budget was paid to domestic violence victims. That is a 39 per cent increase over last year. The areas of greatest demand correlate within areas where department-supported domestic violence action groups are located, indicating a trend towards earlier intervention in this problem. That is the crux of what it is all about: the sooner we can develop earlier intervention programs and people recognise the difficulties and problems that come out of domestic violence, the better. I had the opportunity recently to address the annual general meeting of Men Against Sexual Assault. We have provided funding for that organisation as well. I commend that organisation for the work it is doing in encouraging men to take greater responsibility and to work with other men. As I said earlier, it is all part of this earlier intervention in problems associated with domestic violence.

Mr De LAINE: I refer to page 468 of the Program Estimates. FACS has suffered cuts, as have most, if not all, other departments. The Port Adelaide and Parks FACS offices, which are classified as D offices, have quite small staffs. These offices deliver much needed services in those areas, and that they should continue to do so is important in terms of access. Will these two offices be given adequate staffing and resources to stay open?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: There are no plans to change the arrangements in regard to those two offices. If the honourable member desires, I can provide more information. I will ask Mr Carpenter to provide that information.

Mr Carpenter: As the Minister has outlined, there are no plans to reduce the level of service in the department. The operation of D offices will continue at the same level. They will be funded to the same level of staffing as they were the previous year. Some minor changes have been made to some of those offices' operating hours, which are more or less for the convenience of the customer than for any other reason. Regarding those offices that are not staffed five days a week, 9 to 5, the demand on our services does not require that. There have been adjustments to try to get the opening hours that are most suitable to that population.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I will provide some more information to the Committee on a question asked by the member for Playford about the cost of running Magill and Cavan training centres for public occupancy. The figures for 1993-94—and these are based on average occupancy rates calculated from the figures in the Auditor-General's Report—are approximately \$72 000 Magill; and \$73 000 Cavan, per occupancy. I should point out that Cavan was open for part of the year only, and that figure includes some set-up costs as well. That is a lot of money, and that is why we need to be absolutely certain, or as certain as we possibly can be, that the young people who are detained in those centres at that cost, apart from anything else, receive appropriate programs and

attention, etc. They are figures per institution, *per annum*, per inmate.

Mr De LAINE: I refer to page 469 of the Program Estimates. Last year there were changes to the Family and Community Services Act to provide for family conferences. Given that this is the International Year of the Family, what funds have been provided for the provision of these family conferences?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The honourable member should address that question to the Attorney-General, whose line that matter involves. It does not come under my portfolio as Minister for Family and Community Services. I am sure we could get that information for the honourable member, but I do not have that answer with me now.

Mrs GERAGHTY: I refer to page 467 of the Program Estimates. The very successful program for young motor vehicle offenders, Street Legal, faces a most uncertain future and is continuing only by very frugal budgeting. Can the Minister give an assurance that funding for staff who are attached to that program will not be cut?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: At the outset I will say that, prior to my becoming Minister, I had quite a lot of association with Street Legal. I have always recognised it as an excellent program. It is one of two or three programs for young offenders, and it is one that I support very strongly. Only last evening I had the opportunity to meet with some people who are visiting South Australia from New South Wales and Victoria to attend a conference on the ageing in South Australia. Both were inquiring of the Street Legal program, because there is significant interest in establishing a similar program in both New South Wales and Victoria.

The department has funded Street Legal for the past three years. During this period other similar programs have been developed in the northern and southern suburbs. In the north the program is known as Classic Holden and in the south the program is called Youth in Motor Sport. These programs have all mushroomed with a range of State, Commonwealth and private funding and have achieved outstanding results with some of the State's most difficult young offenders.

As I said earlier, these programs have my support and that of the department. In conjunction with my colleagues, the Attorney-General and the Minister for Youth Affairs, I am endeavouring to consolidate the benefits of the funding to ensure that the future financial viability of these programs is not only preserved but also expanded to give all those young offenders who could benefit from the program the chance to participate. That is vitally important. I am not sure whether the honourable member has asked specifically for funding or whether she has asked whether we will continue to maintain that program. I can give the honourable member an assurance that the department will continue to fund that program.

Mrs GERAGHTY: You are anticipating that a consensus decision may be made fairly soon, but Street Legal is having difficulties.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I am aware that Street Legal has been having financial difficulties for some time. Just recently I met with the Minister for Health and the Attorney-General to examine this issue and a number of other issues. I recognise the urgency in reaching a conclusion with regard to that program.

Mr BROKESHIRE: I refer to page 469 of the Program Estimates. What redistribution of non-government sector funding might occur as a result of the family services development policy?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: It is important to be pretty clear about the Government's position on the family development services policy in order that misunderstandings do not occur. The policy was the outcome of a steering committee established in 1992 to examine services for families covered through the family and community development program. In fact, I launched the policy in May this year. Since then, the department has quite rightly pursued a process of consultation with local community members on the possible implications of the funding criteria. This has been approached in a local area planning context, with district centres coordinating discussions between community organisations on developing a plan for family services based on the funding framework.

It has become clear that application of the funding policy as it stands will inevitably mean a redistribution of funding, given that the total funds available remain unchanged at \$2.6 million. Such an exercise will have to involve a loss of resources in some areas and increased resources in others. That will have to be balanced out. As the policy currently stands, country areas will benefit rather than metropolitan locations. Within the metropolitan area communities such as Gawler, Enfield, Marion and Happy Valley would have an increased regional budget. But it is also important to point out that there is no suggestion that any organisation in any location would be defunded or lose resources because of this policy.

The exercise which I have endorsed and which I understand is happening is the use of the policy as a framework to develop local area plans which can assist the Family and Community Development Committee in its deliberations when preparing its advice. I will receive that advice from the committee, and only then will I approve the package and be in a position to make a clear statement about the future funding of a particular service.

It was and is my hope that the local area planning exercise will be positive. It is important that that should be so, because we must encourage local organisations to come together to discuss in a cooperative way the possibility of accommodating possible changes in resources. They will be able to look at operating efficiencies and other structural arrangements as possible options where resources might be less than were previously available. Alternatively, they may look at ways in which increased resources should or could be allocated to achieve improved outcomes for children and families most in need.

Finally, I should also point out in answer to some critics of the policy—and this is why I am pleased the question has been asked—that it is not a population driven model but one which takes account of both the demographics and social profile of the community. I think it is important that that message gets across to the community.

Mr BROKESHIRE: Page 467 of the Program Estimates refers to services to homeless young people. Will the Minister outline what the Government is doing to meet its very clear undertaking to provide a more comprehensive approach to youth homelessness?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The Government has endorsed the supported accommodation assistance program's (SAAP) strategic directions report, which proposes a range of strategies for the program's restructuring so that it and the measurement of its performance focuses more squarely on outcomes for clients. As we said earlier, that is and must be a very important goal. Key issues in the report include: the lack of skilled assessment of clients; the need for increased

levels of skills and professionalism in SAAP staff; case management; and long-term exit points.

The restructuring of the metropolitan youth sector SAAP services has resulted in the creation of a systematic approach to working with young people, which includes a pivotal assessment and referral service, and that also has the responsibility for encouraging and assisting with an intra- and inter-agency case management approach. SAAP funds were provided to the Youth Centre Training Council to develop and implement an assessment and referral training package for youth SAAP services.

The possibility of creative long-term exit points from SAAP for young people has been carefully monitored through a special pilot program. The Department for Family and Community Services is reviewing the skill and qualification level of staff in agencies, their training needs and their training policy. A joint departmental and SAAP working party is currently reviewing the procedures for departmental referrals to SAAP and for access by SAAP services to departmental support, and written protocols will be an outcome. Having said all that, there is and must be a high priority on the part of Government for young people who are at risk because of the lack of an appropriate home. This matter is of particular significance as far as I am concerned, and I intend to take a keen interest in the work to which I have just referred.

Mr QUIRKE: There appears to be no indication in the Estimates of Payments for FACS of the \$1.5 million which the Government has agreed to raise from the IGC and the Casino for dealing with problems associated with gambling addiction (page 471 of the Program Estimates). Will the \$1.5 million be paid through the Department for Family and Community Services; if not, why not?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Mr Deyell will answer that question in detail. It is intended that Treasury will set up a special deposit account to deal with this issue.

Mr Deyell: It is intended that the funds will be paid in quarterly instalments, and the Minister and the Treasurer currently are negotiating the arrangements to ensure that that happens.

Mr QUIRKE: Who will receive funding from this source and for what specific purposes; what are the conditions attached to these payments under this scheme; and when will payments commence?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: As I think the honourable member would know, we are at a very early stage in this process, but I will ask Ms Lowe to answer the question in detail.

Ms Lowe: As the Minister has said, the arrangements about how to administer the fund are currently being negotiated. The Cabinet decision to set up the gamblers' rehabilitation fund also approved the setting up of a committee to organise research into the extent of need relating to gambling addiction and families who are affected, and then to recommend to the Minister the directions and priorities and the kinds of services that should be funded. The details of that are currently being negotiated. The day-to-day administration of that committee will be conducted by FACS.

Once decisions have been made on the advice of the gamblers' rehabilitation committee and the kinds of services that are considered to be appropriate have been established, needs have been identified, attention has been paid to the kinds of outcomes that such funds should purchase and appropriate benchmarks established, service agreements will be set up by FACS on the advice of the Minister who will, I

understand, take advice from the gamblers' rehabilitation committee.

Mr QUIRKE: The new young offenders legislation came into effect on 1 January 1994 following the deliberations of the juvenile justice select committee. The expectation was that this legislation would enable more minor cases to be dealt with by police or family conferences and that only the more serious offences would come before juvenile courts.

The Program Estimates indicate that the amended sentencing provisions have resulted in an increase in both short-term (less than two months) and medium to long-term (seven months and over) detention orders. Is the Minister satisfied with the operation of all aspects of the new juvenile justice system? Are there any aspects of the scheme which he believes need to be revised?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: It is very early days to determine whether the legislation should be revised. The honourable member may be aware that, when in Opposition, a successful amendment that I put before the House established an advisory committee to be used for that purpose. It is very important legislation and it is essential that, if a review is needed, that need is recognised. The FACS responsibility to provide programs for young offenders is primarily targeted at recidivist young offenders on community service orders, Youth Court obligation or serving a detention order in a youth training centre.

The program initiatives now have a strong victim awareness component designed to make the young person aware of the consequences of their behaviour for the victim and the victim's family. The number of youths serving in detention centres increased slightly during the first three months of the new legislation, but dropped substantially in the second three months. For example, between October and December 1993, 43 youths were sentenced to detention; from January to March 1994, 47 youths were sentenced to detention; and from April to June this year, 28 youths were sentenced to detention. Detention orders, since the new Act came into force, have shown that two clear trends have emerged with the length of custodial orders: first an increased use of very short orders (under two months) and, secondly, an increased use of moderately lengthy orders (six months or more).

As I mentioned earlier, I was very pleased to be able to have a very fruitful discussion with the judge of the Youth Court, and a number of these matters were discussed during that meeting. I told the judge that I am particularly keen to have ongoing discussions with regard to the success of this legislation. As far as I am concerned, it was supported in a bipartisan way in the House. It resulted from a very effective select committee, and I believe the legislation is good legislation. The Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee was set up to monitor the implementation and ongoing work of the legislation, and it is important that that should happen. I place great importance on the legislation and the effective working of it.

Mr QUIRKE: Does the Government intend to review the operation of the new juvenile justice system at some point to see whether its objectives are being realised or whether any finetuning of the procedures is required?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: As I mentioned, the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee was set up for that very purpose: to monitor the implementation and ongoing work of the legislation. It is the responsibility of the Attorney-General, Family and Community Services has a representative on that committee, so it will be constantly monitored.

Mr QUIRKE: What are the implications for the department if the whole of Government approach to information technology announced by the Premier proceeds? Will the Minister explain to the Committee, in terms of page 423 of the Program Estimates, whether the implementation of the new desk top approach will carry a significant expense? What is the expense involved in this if we go for whole of Government out-sourcing in respect of computer technology?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: First, Family and Community Services has always been an outsourcer of its major information technology processing activities. Previously this outsourcing was to other Government agencies—Southern Systems and the Justice Information System, for example. The impact of the EDS decision has numerous ramifications, and I refer, first, to staffing. The only staff member to be affected by outsourcing is currently on temporary transfer with Southern Systems. It is expected that she will be offered a position in EDS should the Office of Information Technology not require her for other duties within the Government. A rearrangement of staff responsibilities will need to take place to undertake the necessary monitoring of contracts and service level agreements. This should be accommodated within the existing numbers. It may mean that field officers will have to become a little more self-reliant.

Wide area networking will be postponed with EDS being responsible for this area. Postponement is due to the delay in integrating State-Net (the Southern Systems network) and J-Net (the Justice Information System's network), but the extent of the delay at this stage is unknown. As far as security is concerned, the department is currently developing its security policy and accompanying requirements. They are completed for the welfare client application on the Justice Information System. They need to be developed for the remaining applications and incorporated in the service level agreements with EDS.

Finally, confidentiality issues form a major part of the security requirements and will be part of any service level agreement with EDS. I do not need to emphasise the importance of that point in this department. The department is developing a policy covering confidentiality and privacy, and the parts of this that effect the service legal agreement will be included in it.

Mr QUIRKE: What impact will the Government's decision to outsource computer services to EDS have on the department specifically? Will any IT projects currently in train or under consideration by the department be delayed because of the EDS decision?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I would have thought that I provided that information in my previous answer, but I will ask Mr Deyell to comment further.

Mr Deyell: It is too early for us to gauge the detailed effect of any current projects simply because the service level agreement must be negotiated.

Mr QUIRKE: Has the review of the Adoption Act established by the Minister's department in March this year been completed and, if so, what changes are recommended by the report and when will the Government act on them?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The review has been completed, and I understand that the committee is to report to me this month with its recommendations for amendment of the legislation. However, I would not be surprised if it does not flow over to next month as well.

As the honourable member would know, the committee was appointed in February of this year to examine a number of aspects of the Adoption Act and to make recommendations

to me about required changes to the Act. The review has been quite extensive; an issues paper was produced and almost 1 000 copies distributed. That paper discussed the issues under review and invited written and verbal submissions from the community, and a number of consultations has been established.

The submission response rate has been surprisingly low. I am informed that it is about 17 per cent, which is a surprise to me given the number of representations that I have received on the matter of adoption. I think that we all recognise that it is an extremely sensitive and complex issue.

As anticipated, the majority of submissions have addressed the issues of information rights and veto provisions. I have made the point on a number of occasions that it is not my intention to re-create the wheel as far as this legislation is concerned. It is very complex legislation. I am very much aware of the debate that took place when last the legislation was addressed. However, it is important that the review should report to me and that I be made aware of any changes necessary in regard to adoptions in South Australia.

Mr QUIRKE: Has the Government ensured that there will be representatives of disabled people on advisory boards and, in particular, the Family and Community Development Advisory Committee? How has he addressed the Government's policy of achieving 50 per cent representation by women on advisory committees?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: There is a very wide membership of the advisory committee. There are not necessarily people on it who are representative of any particular community. I would be happy to take that question on notice and provide details for the honourable member at a later stage.

The CHAIRMAN: They should be provided by 7 October in duplicate to the clerk of the House.

Ms GREIG: I refer to page 467 of the Program Estimates and the question of high-risk behaviour by young people. This is one area of particular concern. What initiatives is the department taking to combat the alarming increase in the number of young people committing suicide?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I am sure that youth suicide is a matter of concern to all of us and it is a matter that I have looked at carefully. The high incidence of youth suicide in the rural community at the present time is of particular concern to me. The department's Services for Young People program has a specific focus on providing services to young people whose self-destructive behaviour places them at high risk of early death. The concern is not only for those young people who make repeated suicide attempts but also for those young people who engage in behaviours such as serious self-mutilation and repeated high-risk activities where death may occur.

The honourable member has asked what initiatives the department is considering to combat the rate of youth suicide. The current strategies include the provision of counselling and support services to adolescents and their families by youth workers and social workers in district centres. There is also the development of strong links with mental health, the police, hospitals and drug and alcohol services in order to facilitate early identification and treatment. Another important strategy is advocacy for policy and services for disturbed adolescents with serious emotional and behavioural problems and the promotion of inter-agency responses to staff development and training.

I am delighted to be able to inform the Committee that the recently established Office for Families, in collaboration with the Australian Institute of Family Studies and its New

Zealand equivalent, has applied for funding to conduct comparative research into adolescent suicide in rural areas particularly. I am very pleased that that initiative is proceeding. It is only an application at this stage, but it is something that I would support very strongly indeed.

I mentioned earlier my pleasure at the way in which the Office for Families is working at this stage. It is an important initiative of Government. I am particularly pleased, having always had a very strong respect for the Australian Institute of Family Studies, that we are now working towards a collaboration and a close working relationship among that organisation, its New Zealand equivalent and our own Office for Families in South Australia. I think there is tremendous potential for a very close working relationship to develop at that level.

Additional Departmental Adviser:

Mr Lange Powell, Commissioner for the Ageing.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the Minister wish to make a statement in relation to his portfolio responsibility in terms of the ageing?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The ageing portfolio does not carry program responsibilities of its own that appear in the budget papers. However, the portfolio is a vital one, and that is why I wanted to make this statement. It deals with the interests of a large and fast growing section of the South Australian population. People aged over 65 years—around 196 000 of them—now make up more than 13 per cent of our population, a proportion that is expected to grow by a further 12 per cent over the next decade or so.

However, a critical issue for policy development lies in the particularly rapid growth in numbers of the 'older old', if I can use that term. The population aged 75 plus, for example, will increase by over 40 per cent in the same period, while the number of those aged 85 plus will grow by over 72 per cent. Such demographic trends have major implications for health services, in particular, and the Government has taken careful account of them in framing new policy initiatives, such as the casemix funding of public hospitals.

However, the vast majority of older South Australians continue to live in their own home and the Government recognises the importance of ensuring that care and support services in the community are developed progressively to keep pace with demographic growth. Housing, community care, public transport and consumer protection policies and programs all need to have regard to the needs of their older market.

The Government's 'Growing Older' policy statement reflected these wide-ranging concerns. As Minister for the Ageing, I place a high priority on monitoring the performance of the Government's own agencies in addressing these issues and on keeping abreast of developments in other spheres of Government and in the non-government and private sectors. I am assisted in this task by the Commissioner for the Ageing, Mr Lange Powell. South Australia has an enviable record in providing quality care for its older citizens and of innovation in service delivery. As members will be aware, responsibility for nursing home and hostel accommodation and for about 62 per cent of expenditure on the HACC program rests with the Commonwealth. It was of concern to me during the year that our State, despite being relatively well provided with nursing home beds, had experienced shortages in this area which had placed considerable strain on public hospitals, community services and especially older

people living at home and their carers. I will be maintaining particular vigilance in this area during 1994-95.

On a more positive note, the Government is pleased to continue supporting a number of programs, some of which were developed under the previous Government. Examples include the Seniors Card, regulatory reform in retirement villages, Elder Protection, information services for older people, legislation covering consent to medical treatment and palliative care, and several others. High quality services for older South Australians remains a very high key priority for Government. I hope the tradition of broad bipartisan support for continuing development will be upheld.

Mr QUIRKE: How many of the Minister's staff are involved in policy development and research related to the ageing? What are the goals and objectives under this portfolio for the coming year in a specific sense? How many submissions on the ageing has the Minister taken to Cabinet?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I will take the latter part of the question on notice, because there have been a number of them. I think it would be appropriate, given that the Commissioner is responsible for the Commissioner for the Ageing's office, for the Commissioner to answer the first part of that question.

Mr Powell: The Office of the Commissioner for the Ageing currently consists of the Commissioner and three senior policy staff. Policy development responsibilities are shared between the four of us. We are supported by two staff in the Seniors Card Unit, but their responsibility is administration of the Seniors Card scheme rather than policy development. We have two clerical staff. In relation to office priorities and particular policy goals for the year, I can provide an extended list. I could go through the list of all our objectives.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I suggest we put that on notice.

Mr QUIRKE: I would be happy with that. The Seniors Card was introduced and then expanded by the previous Government to include discounts by private businesses. This has been a resounding success. However, there have been allegations that some businesses which are not part of the official scheme have attempted to cash in by placing signs welcoming Seniors Cards even though they offer no discount to card recipients. Can any action be taken against businesses which falsely purport to be part of the Seniors Card scheme? Is the Seniors Card name and symbol protected by copyright?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: While the Commissioner is thinking about that latter part of the question, I point out that we can only endorse the official logo. If companies put up cardboard replicas or anything else, I think it would be very difficult for us to police that. If the honourable member is suggesting that we follow up an allegation, I am happy to make inquiries about it. Certainly, it has not been brought to my attention.

I am delighted with the success of the Seniors Card in South Australia. It is something that I have supported since its introduction. In fact, at a very early stage before it was introduced into South Australia I made inquiries about the introduction of the card in other States. The need for reciprocal rights is a matter that is constantly being brought to my attention. I know that there are methods of overcoming that problem, but it is a matter we need to continue to address.

The recognition of the Seniors Card by both the participant and the companies and businesses which have become part of the scheme is incredible. Currently there are 157 000 Senior Card holders on the database and approximately 650 applications are being received weekly, and that is excellent.

The new directory which the Premier released earlier this year has seen the expansion of that listing by over 60 additional businesses in joining the scheme. It is a strong vote of confidence in the attractiveness of the Seniors Card to business. It is one that works both for the client and for the business, and it is one that I very strongly support.

Mr QUIRKE: What progress has been made in regard to achieving reciprocal rights for Seniors Card holders in other States?

Mr Powell: There are two dimensions to the interstate recognition of Seniors Cards. Perhaps I could briefly pick up the earlier question about copyright, because it relates to this matter. The Seniors Card logo, as members would know, is a blue and gold letter 'S'. That logo was originally designed in Victoria and is copyrighted to the Victorian Government. It has since been adopted, with the permission of the Victorian Government, in New South Wales and South Australia, and I understand that Tasmania and Queensland are reviewing their logos as well. This provides what I could loosely call a *de facto* national recognition of the Seniors Card symbol.

Returning to the two dimensions of national recognition of the card, private sector businesses in most States are being invited to show, in their directory of benefits to card holders, whether they are prepared to recognise Seniors Cards from interstate visitors. Members may know that our current directory has a small 'Australia' symbol against all the businesses that are prepared to recognise interstate card holders. From our experience, the majority, I think about 80 per cent, of businesses in our State are prepared to accept interstate card holders. After all, it is just business for them.

The second dimension concerns the recognition of interstate card holders for public sector benefits. This becomes more difficult, particularly in relation to public transport concessions. The reason for this is that some States, particularly Queensland, which have a very large tourist intake feel that they would be forgoing major revenue if they accepted all Australian Seniors Card holders for discounted public transport fares. For this reason it has not yet been possible to get agreement across State Governments to recognise the cards from all States. However, it is a matter which my office and the seniors' card schemes in other States are pursuing.

Mr QUIRKE: The Opposition recently released a Cabinet submission from the Minister for Transport proposing huge fare increases for TransAdelaide services, particularly for passengers in outer suburbs. The proposals also included the abolition of discounted interpeak tickets, which are commonly used by pensioners. Does the Minister believe that the cheaper interpeak public transport fares make an important contribution to the quality of life for many aged people?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I will take that question on notice, if the member will accept that.

Ms GREIG: I refer to page 162 of the Estimates of Payments and Receipts, and the line 'Funds for seniors'. Would the Minister outline the outcomes of the grants for the seniors' program review?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The program's aim recognised worth of older people through the provision of small one-off grants for voluntary agencies, community organisations and self-help groups, to encourage a more active and independent life for elderly in local communities. The program funded through the Family and Community Development Division of FACS is looking at current financial commitments to programs. The current financial commitment is \$169 000 per

annum, and \$42 000 has been designated to cater for Seniors' Week activities. The honourable member has asked about the outcome of the review: the grants for seniors continue as a small grants line within current budget, with minor amendments to guidelines, and SACOTA continued to receive, as I said, \$40 000 annually.

The Office of the Commissioner for the Ageing is to recommend to the Minister for FACS (myself) policy to address gaps in aged care programs aimed at encouraging and assisting older people to maintain an active involvement in the community. The reasons for the review are also important, I think, because there were trends in applications received outside of guidelines for the extension of the premises, the construction of access ramps, the installation of security and/or external lighting, provision of wheelchairs, etc. Also, grants for seniors' funding agencies, whether that be the Greek Orthodox Community, the Greek welfare, Radio for the Third Age, etc., were found to be outside the guidelines because of changes in policy intended to ensure that funds were directed to services for the most disadvantaged in the community. I think members would realise that funding for those particular groups is a very sensitive issue. There has been a lot of representation made by members of those organisations; and it was totally appropriate that the review be carried out, and I am awaiting a report from the Commissioner which will provide me with advice on that issue.

Ms GREIG: There is widespread concern in the community and, in particular among the elderly members, about the escalating crime rate and community safety. Would the Minister provide details of what the Government is doing in this area and, in particular, the elder abuse program?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I was very pleased to be able to launch a few days ago the elder protection program, which I support very strongly. There is a fear of crime: it is a major concern for older members of the community. There are also people in the community who are elderly and who are subject to various forms of abuse. I am informed that between 3 and 5 per cent of people in South Australia over the age of 65 are subject to some form of abuse. That does not mean to say that that is on a daily or an ongoing basis; it might be every now and again that such abuse takes place. I acknowledge that it was an initiative of the previous Government to look into this matter—and one that I strongly supported—but it has been recognised for a long time that there was a need for some protection for those people.

I think we all recognise that it is difficult under many circumstances for older people to seek help because that abuse might be as a result of working within the family; or family, caregivers, neighbours, or somebody who is close to them, might be abusing them. It think it is essential that an opportunity be there with trained staff to be able to assist those people and, as a result of this program, trained staff will be available in four centres throughout the metropolitan area to provide advice and assistance for those older people who are abused. I think it is a very good program, and it is one that I support very strongly.

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

Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources, Minister for Family and Community Services and Minister for the Ageing—Other Payments, \$3 388 000—Examination declared completed.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is also one other formality: a draft copy of the report from Estimates Committee A (1994, second session) has been circulated. A resolution was passed by the Committee on the first day during the time when the Premier was a witness. It is a formality that this Committee has to report to the House that that resolution was passed.

Ms GREIG: I move:

That the draft report be the report of the Committee.

Motion carried.

At 5.38 p.m. the Committee concluded.