

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY****Thursday 22 June 1995****ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A****Chairman:**

The Hon. H Allison

**Members:**

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

*The Committee met at 11 a.m.*


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Environment and Natural Resources, \$46 630 000  
 Family and Community Services, \$144 479 000  
 Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources,  
 Minister for Family and Community Services and Minister  
 for the Ageing—Other Payments, \$3 368 000

**Witness:**

The Hon. D.C. Wotton, Minister for the Environment and  
 Natural Resources, Minister for Family and Community  
 Services and Minister for the Ageing.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr D. Mutton, Chief Executive Officer, Department of  
 Environment and Natural Resources.  
 Mr A. Holmes, Director, Natural Resources Group.  
 Mr R. Thomas, Executive Director, Office of the Environ-  
 ment Protection Authority.  
 Mr P. Hoey, Director, Water Resources Group.  
 Mr I. Fitzgerald, Director, Corporate Services.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I declare the vote open for examina-  
 tion. Does the Minister wish to make an opening statement?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Yes, Mr Chairman. The 1995-96  
 budget for the Department of Environment and Natural  
 Resources provides for recurrent expenditure of  
 \$104.7 million with a capital works budget of \$16.6 million.  
 The Government's budget approach for 1995-96 is to reduce  
 operating costs by \$4.6 million through strategic productivity  
 improvements and the elimination or reduction of non-core  
 activities. At the same time, the Government has recognised  
 the need for a greater focus on capital investment to maintain  
 the current asset base and to provide for strategic asset  
 development and it will increase the capital works allocation  
 by \$5.45 million to \$16.6 million.

The budget has been structured to target the key objectives  
 of coastal management and protection, waterway clean-ups  
 and the Environment Protection Authority, whilst allowing  
 the next major environmental initiatives to include waste  
 minimisation and litter issues and the promotion of key  
 national parks in South Australia.

The budget will be used to further provide key works in  
 areas of natural resources, heritage, water resources, animal

welfare, mapping and technology, national parks,  
 conservation, land management and marine protection. The  
 Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium will continue to receive  
 the Government's support with an allocation of \$4.9 million.  
 Budget expenditure would help drive initiatives and consoli-  
 date programs under the Government's 'A Cleaner South  
 Australia' statement which are aimed at promoting a cleaner  
 and healthier State, whilst ensuring conservation management  
 and use of our natural resources are kept at a sustainable  
 level.

A commitment has also been made to programs that  
 promote cleaner production in industry and in areas of waste  
 minimisation and waste management. The highlights of the  
 1995-96 budget are significant. Nine of our national parks  
 will be targeted to bring them up to a very high standard  
 demonstrating our commitment to conservation and the  
 enjoyment of our natural heritage. These park initiatives form  
 a package that enhance nature conservation and natural  
 experiences as they include elements of wilderness, outback,  
 coastal, mountain and nature parks close to the city and other  
 locations that demonstrate and market South Australia's  
 unique attributes.

This \$2.9 million upgrade will include \$1 million to  
 implement recommendations from the 1993 National Parks  
 Review, road improvements in Innes National Park and  
 Flinders Chase, infrastructure upgrades and fire protection  
 measures. An additional \$300 000 of State funds will be  
 committed to continuing the biological survey of the State.  
 The Royal Zoological Society of South Australia will receive  
 \$2.26 million for the Adelaide and Monarto Zoos. The  
 RSPCA will receive \$461 000 for activities under the  
 Prevention of Cruelty Act and Kesab will receive \$160 000.  
 The National Trust of South Australia will receive \$69 000.

In addition, the Government will be allocating \$2 million  
 for infrastructure for a major redevelopment of the Mount  
 Lofty Summit, which has been an eyesore since the 1983  
 bushfires. The Government will step up measures to protect  
 the State's fragile coastline by committing at least \$5.1  
 million next year. The sum of \$2.5 million will be spent on  
 the biennial metropolitan sand replenishment program and at  
 least \$1.8 million has been earmarked for coastal protection  
 in the Semaphore and Tennyson areas. The sum of \$800 000  
 will also be spent throughout the State on dune fencing,  
 rehabilitation and small protection works.

The focus on the marine and coastal environment is part  
 of a five point marine protection package initiated by the  
 Government. The package includes:

- . Establishment of catchment management boards to improve  
 quality of stormwater discharge to the sea.
- . Introduction of codes of practice for stormwater manage-  
 ment.
- . Environment improvement programs for sewage treatment  
 plants.
- . Phasing in of effluent reuse schemes.
- . Reduction of spills and contamination from poor shipping  
 practices.

I intend early in the financial year to initiate a review of our  
 approach to the metropolitan coast and develop a strategy for  
 long-term sustainable management. The Patawalonga and  
 Torrens Catchment Water Management Boards were  
 established in May 1995. Their immediate focus is to develop  
 comprehensive catchment water management plans. Funding  
 will be provided through a catchment environment levy being  
 raised by councils on local government ratepayers.

The \$2 million revenue to be raised from each catchment will be spent on wetlands, trash racks, silt traps, water quality monitoring and community education. The Government will also make a significant direct contribution to urban catchment management. The formation of other catchment boards, including one relating to the Murray River, is planned. The Mount Lofty Ranges catchment management program will continue with a Commonwealth, State and local government commitment of \$2.6 million in 1995-96.

Waste management is a key part of our program. A discussion paper on an integrated waste management strategy for metropolitan Adelaide has been developed and released for industry and community response. We are aiming for a high standard of environment protection through waste reduction, recycling/re-use and best practice waste disposal. Adelaide's kerbside recycling scheme will continue to be developed, and the levy on disposal to landfill will be set aside for the kerbside recycling scheme and other initiatives such as the recycling and resource recovery fund, which was launched this month.

South Australia is a world pacesetter in the development and use of spatial information. We are developing a full spatial information system based on a whole-of-Government approach. As lead agency, the department is making a significant contribution through its custodial role of much of the core spatial infrastructure and the transfer of that data to an open systems environment.

That competitive advantage sets South Australia apart as a location to develop a spatial information industry, and registrations of interest have been sought for major local and international companies to partner the Government in becoming world leaders in the development and use of spatial information systems.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** I certainly welcome the cooperation of the Chair and of the Minister. I welcome also the Minister's approach to these subjects. Rather than give a general preamble about the environment, I shall say a few words about French nuclear testing in the Pacific, on which I am sure the Minister will share many of my views.

We in the Labor Party believe that the French Government's action shows extraordinary contempt for the people of our region and for the people of Australia. We have to remember that, only last month, the French Government signed the review of the non-proliferation treaty, which calls for restraint on further testing. That restraint lasted only a couple of weeks. We have seen Mr Chirac order the resumption of testing, against the feelings of virtually every world leader and of all countries in the Pacific rim, indeed as far away as Japan.

The South Australian Labor Party has been receiving many messages from ordinary citizens in South Australia asking what they can do—ordinary South Australians who are concerned about the environment and about nuclear proliferation. We intend to run advertisements in the French media, spelling out, in the words of ordinary people, those concerns and why we are angry about what the French are doing in our backyard.

We can only presume that if Parisians who read *Le Monde* heard that Mr Chirac wanted to explode nuclear weapons in the south of France, there would be an extraordinary reaction, even though Mr Chirac says that the explosions are quite safe and do no environmental damage, which I find extraordinary.

It is important that all of us as community leaders, whether at Federal or State level—just as the Premier has made statements about issues in Macedonia, as have I and the

former Premier Lynn Arnold—in a bipartisan way, give the French Government the very firm message that we oppose French nuclear testing in our region. I have an appointment with the French Ambassador, Dominique Girard, who is coming to South Australia in July to present credentials to the South Australian Government, to the parliamentary officers and, of course, to the Opposition. We will certainly give Dominique Girard the message from the Labor Party's point of view why we believe the actions of the French are reprehensible and why we believe it is a shame that France not only does not honour its treaty obligations but also did not take account of the huge world-wide condemnation when France showed almost exactly a decade ago that it was prepared to use murder, killing and Government-backed terrorist action in New Zealand to continue its nuclear testing program.

It was forced to stop because of that worldwide reaction. We must make sure that we send a very clear message again, because it is quite clear that the French Government is only influenced by a hit in its pocket, or public humiliation on the world stage. We certainly support the strongest action of the United Nations on this issue. We will be running ads this weekend in the *Advertiser* and elsewhere, which state, 'Make Jacques Chirac testy', and calling upon ordinary citizens to contribute to an advertisement in France so that the French people can see why we are angry. I am very pleased to see a toughening up of the attitude in Canberra against French nuclear testing in this morning's *Australian*. The article states:

The Minister for Trade, Senator McMullan, has indicated that Federal Cabinet will today ban \$1 billion worth of bids by French companies for Australian defence contracts.

According to the article in the *Australian*:

Cabinet will also give serious consideration to recalling Australia's ambassador in Paris as part of moves to toughen its response to France's decision to resume nuclear tests in the Pacific. Senator McMullan replied, when asked what chance France had in its \$500 million bid to replace the Royal Australian Air Force's trainer fighters:

... very little. A ban on French bids to sell defence equipment to Australia is considered one of the few retaliatory measures available to the Australian Government [and the Australian people] which would genuinely hurt France. French companies are bidding or are planning to bid for up to 40 Australian defence contracts with a total value of more than \$1 billion. . . The Government has frozen defence ties with France at existing levels and has restricted access to Australia by French military aircraft and ships in response to France's decision to resume tests. The Opposition has called for the Government to go further and scrap all defence ties with France. . . Senator Evans' delegation has recommended that the South Pacific Forum take further action against Paris, including suspending France's dialogue status with the forum. . .

Would the South Australian Government, given that it has been prepared to speak out on international issues such as the Macedonia situation, support in a bipartisan way the strongest protest by this Parliament? I will be introducing a private member's motion on this subject when Parliament resumes. Does the Government support the very strongest of protests to the French Government? Will the Brown Government join with me in making a very strong protest to the French ambassador, Dominique Girard, when she visits South Australia in July? Does the Minister agree that the detonation of nuclear devices does have serious adverse effects on the environment, and does the Government in South Australia oppose the resumption of nuclear testing by the French at Mururoa atoll?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I say at the outset that I share much of the concern that has been expressed by the Leader

of the Opposition. As Minister for the Environment in South Australia, I have received a considerable amount of representation from people in this State who have expressed disgust at the action that has been resumed by the French Government. I know that the matter is to be discussed, and I presume will be discussed at length at the next joint Party meeting, and that action will be determined at that time.

I am interested to know that the Opposition is running advertisements. I have been very pleased with the comments and suggestions that have been made by individuals as to how they can protest in this matter. People have been very strong in coming forward with specific initiatives that they feel they can take, and I think that is appropriate: it is something that the average person feels very strongly about. I believe that all diplomatic measures must be and should be supported. I have been pleased with the stance adopted by both the Federal Government and the Federal Opposition on this matter. At that level it has been a bipartisan approach. Both have expressed very strongly their concerns and disgust at what has happened. I am very much of the opinion that a national approach is the strongest form of protest that can be taken.

I was concerned, soon after the news broke that the French would resume testing, that the Commonwealth seemed to be a bit slow off the mark. I think that was regrettable. It is a pity that the Federal Government was not in a position to come out immediately and express that concern; but, nevertheless, that has happened. It has been a bipartisan approach at the Federal level, which is something I support. I support the concerns expressed by the Leader of the Opposition, and I am sure that the vast majority of South Australians feel very strongly about this issue.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** I congratulate the Minister on his response. Has the Brown Government formally made any protest to the French Embassy or to the French Government about the resumption of nuclear testing in the Pacific?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I will take that question on notice. It is obviously an across Government decision that needs to be made in that area. As I indicated earlier, I know that the subject will be discussed in the Party room. As far as the Government is concerned, I know that consideration is being given to that matter but I cannot speak on behalf of the Premier, who would be the appropriate person to make that announcement. I have had concern about the environmental outcomes and any damage that could be caused to the environment as a result of this testing, and I am sure that that is a concern shared by many people.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The Chair has deliberately allowed debate to continue on this topic. As the Leader would appreciate, it is a matter for which the Federal Minister has control. It is a Federal issue but in view of the fact that the Chair shares the concern of peoples across the entire Pacific—particularly those closer to the French testing zone than we are—I have allowed the debate to continue. I remind members that there is no specific provision within the Minister's lines for lengthy continuation of the debate.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Mr Chairman, whilst I am asking questions under page 423, line 19—'Environmental policy and advice', I appreciate your comments and assistance. On 15 June I wrote on behalf of the Opposition to two water companies both with French connections interested in bidding for the \$1.5 billion outsourcing of South Australia's water management. I wrote to them asking what their attitudes were, because of the substantial French component in each company, to the resumption of French nuclear testing. I did so because they are both large corporations in France that

have made a point of coming to South Australia, offering sponsorship and telling us that they regard themselves as wanting to be Australian good citizens and good corporate neighbours. In addition, the State Government has said that it wants the successful bidder, in conjunction with the EWS, to be a focus for expanding into the broader Asia-Pacific region in terms of selling South Australian water expertise.

So, I believe it is incumbent on both those companies, in terms of their French corporations, to make clear their attitude to the resumption of French nuclear testing in the Pacific. I have, in fact, received brief replies to my letters from both companies—Compagnie Generale des Eaux, which is based in Paris, I understand, but also has a Sydney subsidiary; and Australian Water Services, one of its partners in the joint venture being Lyonnaise des Eaux, which also is a major French corporation. The letter signed by Mr Pierre Alla, the Managing Director of Australian Water Services, states:

Australian Water Services, like most Australians, is very concerned with the news that the French Government has announced it will resume nuclear testing in the Pacific. Our minority partner in the joint venture, Lyonnaise des Eaux, does not have a position on the French Government's decision to resume testing, as this is Government policy and not related to the company's business.

I was a bit concerned that it seemed to be having a bob each way, that this major corporation back in France is not prepared to take a stand on the issue but that its subsidiary here in Australia shares the concern. That seems to be a device perhaps lacking in French charm.

The letter from the other company, Compagnie Generale des Eaux, states:

On behalf of CGE Australia I have released a statement expressing our deep regret concerning the decision by the French Government to resume testing. As you will appreciate, our parent company in France is a public listed company which has no connection with the French Government, and cannot influence the policies which the Government adopts. . . We would be extremely disappointed if the decision by the French Government resulted in actions which would jeopardise the progress that we and our Australian partners have made.

Whilst that is a stronger statement, we do not really know the attitude of the French corporation based in Paris. Given that the Federal Government is today considering banning \$1 billion worth of bids by French companies for Australian defence contracts, does the State Government believe that negotiations with French water companies should cease while the French Government goes ahead with plans to explode nuclear devices in the southern hemisphere or until there can be a clear message from those two companies in terms of where their French partners stand on this issue?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Again, this is one of those discretionary questions in a couple of ways. There is an unusual dichotomy between the Minister before us, who is in charge of the resource—the water—and the Minister for Infrastructure (Hon. J.W. Olsen), who has responsibility for negotiation, correspondence, communication and subsequently contracting with the two French companies—Lyonnaise des Eaux and Compagnie Generale des Eaux. I have no objection to the Minister before us making a comment, but I simply point out again that he has no ministerial responsibility for the matter. I suppose the Leader is seeking less than factual information from the Minister because he said, 'I ask your opinion'. So, I leave the matter with the Minister: if he wishes to make comment he may do so, but I would rule that the question is more pertinently addressed to Minister Olsen when he appears before this Committee next Tuesday.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** While I understand that the Leader is keen to have this detail placed on the record, how

the Government deals with those two companies really is the responsibility of my colleague the Minister for Infrastructure. I do not believe it is appropriate that I get into a debate on that subject at this time.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** I will be introducing a private member's motion in this House condemning French nuclear testing in the Pacific and recommending the very strongest action. Considering the very strong public opinion on this issue, I think it would be a great move if we could approach this issue in a bipartisan way. It would be good if every member of both Houses of Parliament supported the motion so that we could present it to the French Ambassador when he arrives here in July. By way of information, we will be launching our 'Say Non to Nuclear Testing' campaign on Bastille Day, 14 July, and again I will be inviting the Minister to attend.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The Leader will appreciate the fact that the Chair has no axe to grind in respect of this matter, but the Chair is bound by the parameters of the Estimates Committees. The Chair recognises the Leader's concern and that of other members in the Chamber.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I refer to page 426 of the Program Estimates, with respect to improvement of park management. I was amazed to read a rather bizarre story this morning where the PSA President claimed that tourism and national parks would be affected by some targeted separation packages started by the former Labor Government some three years ago. Drawing a very long bow, it claimed that roads and the management of parks would be under threat. The story contains quite a lot of information. What information can the Minister provide, particularly in respect of staffing levels, strategic directions and specific initiatives to improve park management?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** The management of national parks and the potential that national parks provide in South Australia is a subject about which I feel very strongly. As members would realise, in this State we have over 20 million hectares under national parks and reserves—that is, approximately 20 per cent of the State. I suppose we could say it is approximately 20 hectares for every man, woman and child in South Australia. On a recent trip that the Chief Executive Officer and I made to the United States, it was a matter of particular interest as to just how we should manage appropriately that area of land with the small tax base that we have to work from in this State. It is a challenge but one that I feel very strongly about.

In line with the Government's desire to reduce the overall size of the Public Service, there will be some reductions in the staffing of national parks. Ranger numbers will be reduced by two. The work of five tradespeople will be contracted out, and a number of other activities will be rationalised. The impact on ranger staff has been minimised. The Government has responded to what was an excellent review brought down earlier into the management of national parks by setting some key strategic directions, including enhanced community participation, and I am sure all members would realise the significance of the volunteer movement in South Australia in regard to national parks.

The consultative committees, the friends of parks and the set-up that we have in South Australia is something that is envied by all other States. When I meet with other Ministers, through ANZECC, I am pleased to see their interest in the amount of support we receive from volunteers in this State.

One of the other strategic directions that we are taking is innovative resourcing opportunities, that is, providing the

chance for prisoners and young offenders to work with some of the schemes in national parks. Recently I had the pleasure of presenting certificates to youngsters at Cavan who had helped to carry out work on one of these schemes. I can only say that it was a great experience when a number of those youngsters came up to me afterwards and said they had never experienced anything like that before nor received anything like a certificate. It was a challenge but it worked very well, and I am keen to see that continue. There are other employment programs and also university participation.

We are also pursuing best practice in park management and improving the quality of facilities generally. I am particularly keen that the corporate sector be invited to participate in that program. Already it is happening with Gerard Industries—Clipsal—having determined that it would want to participate in a major project at Cleland, and I am very keen to have a greater input from the corporate sector in South Australia in helping us to provide improved facilities. Then there is the involvement of the traditional owners, and I would be very happy if any honourable member sought further information about that at a later stage.

A sum of \$2.9 million for additional capital works funding has been allocated to park management initiatives. The \$2.9 million is distributed through improved roads through our parks at Innes, Denggali and Cape du Couedic. I am very keen to see fire prevention improved. I have already indicated support for the Mount Lofty summit tourism infrastructures. A number of initiatives have come out of the parks review, and I believe that we are in a very good position to promote and improve management in our national parks throughout the State, but I am particularly pleased that we have been able to set aside nine parks that we want to promote significantly across South Australia. I hope that people throughout the State continue to enjoy their opportunities to participate.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I refer the Minister to page 426, where reference is made to a specific initiative for coastal protection. I seek specific details of that initiative.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** As I said in my opening statement, the Government's commitment to South Australian coasts has been demonstrated very clearly by significant funding in this area. At least \$5.1 million has been committed for 1995-96. A key element of that funding is \$2.5 million for the biennial sand replenishment program. I realise that there is always a lot of debate about the success or otherwise of that program, but the advice that I continue to receive is that it is the appropriate way to go, and I support it. Also, at least \$1.8 million has been provided for protection works at Semaphore Park and Tennyson. Preliminary work has been undertaken in conjunction with the Woodville Hindmarsh city council, and precise details of the program will not be clear until the impact of winter storms has been assessed. I have been rather interested in some of the comment that has been made on this matter; it has been suggested that, because the funding is set down in the budget, we should be commencing work on these seawalls immediately. I would have thought that the majority of people realised that it is very difficult to do that in the middle of winter and that it will be necessary to wait until the end of the winter season before work can be commenced.

Also, \$800 000 has been set aside for State-wide protection works. Specific project allocations will be determined in consultation with the Coast Protection Board. Finally, the Government will also undertake a major review of the management of Adelaide's metropolitan beaches. This review will look at a range of management issues. It is very timely,

given that the Foundation Culver report is now almost 25 years old. I think we need to take a fresh look at how best we can protect the coast in South Australia, and I will be providing more detail about that at a later stage.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** On page 427 of the papers reference is made to a broad objective for the protection and monitoring of water and air quality. How does the quality of air in South Australia compare with other States, and what steps are being taken to improve the state of knowledge and improve our air quality in Adelaide and throughout the State?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I very much appreciate that question. I am delighted to have been able to launch a new program this morning; it is a new initiative in regard to air monitoring which will put air monitoring in South Australia right up at the front nationally. It is an excellent initiative, which has come about as a result of private enterprise through MCI, the involvement of the Commonwealth Government, the Environment Protection Authority and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Some air quality monitoring has been carried out by the department in its various guises over the past three decades. This indicates that some of the air pollutants such as lead and carbon monoxide are gradually decreasing at the sites tested, whereas others are not. However, there has not been a network of sufficient capability to be able to provide us with an overall picture of the State's air quality, so making any sensible comparison with other States just not possible.

The Office of the EPA has recently been evaluating current capabilities and considering the existing needs which must be fulfilled. These needs include monitoring of air for the protection of the environment, assisting in the formulation of suitable control policies and fulfilling responsibilities under the recently proclaimed Environment Protection Act. To assist in the development of a State-wide monitoring network, the EPA has enlisted the services of the CSIRO and the Victorian EPA to enable an educated first guess for the location and extent of a monitoring network. This has resulted in the network to which I have just referred and which I was very pleased to launch this morning. That will allow the investigation of air quality and will provide the Environment Protection Authority with a considerable amount of excellent data, which will be monitored.

The network will take in four areas across the metropolitan area and will have a mobile facility, which will be moved around the metropolitan area. At a later stage we will also be looking at country regions. That will be accompanied by the development of further technology to monitor airborne pollutants as an integral part of the Government's 'A Cleaner South Australia' policy. I am thrilled to bits with the advances that have been made in this area. The quality of air in this State has always been an important issue, and I am delighted not only with the fact that we are now at the front throughout Australia but also that we have been able to work with South Australian industry, which will be able to market that initiative overseas. I was delighted to hear the Managing Director of that company say today that, already, it is making arrangements for that initiative to be exported. Yet again, it is an opportunity for MCI and the South Australian Government to be involved in exporting environmental expertise.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** Also from page 427, I was made aware that over the past 12 months there has been an increase in the number of complaints to the EPA about air pollution. How is the EPA dealing with this?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** The number of air pollution complaints reported to the EPA has risen substantially over the past year from about 300 to 500. The reasons for the increase are not completely clear, although increased public awareness of the EPA is no doubt a major contributing factor. The EPA currently has a full complement of four officers able to investigate complaints from specific sources. However, the EPA will also attempt to identify the causes of these more general complaints with a view to ensuring that remedial action is taken. I would like to commend the EPA for the work it is doing in this and many other areas. As members would be aware, the legislation was gazetted only at the beginning of May. It is good legislation: it was introduced by the previous Government with the support of the then Opposition (and now Government).

I am sure that Opposition members will raise the matter at a later stage, but the allegations that are being made by some people, that the legislation lacks teeth, are totally inaccurate. It is strong legislation and that legislation has been recognised interstate as well. We are now in a very good position to work not only with problems relating to air quality but in a large number of other areas as well.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** There has been a great deal of publicity about the difference of opinion among the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Mines and Energy and the Minister for Primary Industries over the establishment of an exclusion zone in the Great Australian Bight Marine Park. I have already indicated that I will be introducing legislation to establish an exclusion zone. On 9 February, the Minister for the Environment said that the park would have to include exclusion zones to protect the breeding grounds of the southern right whales, and on 22 May the Premier announced that the Government would declare for 12 months a small area known as Head of the Bight as a temporary exclusion zone. This covers 17 500 hectares instead of the 552 square miles as recommended by SARDI and, as I understand it, apparently supported by the Minister in Cabinet.

I want to congratulate the Minister personally for that strong support in Cabinet, albeit that it was not effective in terms of getting the numbers in that forum. Why did the Government reject the recommendations of the report prepared by SARDI for the permanent exclusion zone over the mating and calving area of the southern white whales in the GABMP (Great Australian Bight Marine Park), and did the Minister support this decision?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** First, as with any decision made by Government, it should be an across Government decision; it should involve all agencies. I have not stepped away from indicating clearly publicly that I strongly support any action that can be taken to protect the breeding grounds of the southern right whale, and I will always hold that position. I also see that this is a great opportunity for a win-win situation—probably a win-win-win situation—for South Australia in that we are protecting the whales; it is a great opportunity for ecotourism in South Australia; and it is a great opportunity to work with Aboriginal people. That is why I have been very supportive of any measures to introduce exclusion zones in this area.

I rest very easily with the decision that has been made by the Government. An exclusion zone has been determined: that is a request that has been made of Government over a long period of time, and I could say that it has been made over a lot longer than the last 18 months in which this Government has been in office. People were talking about action being needed in the Great Australian Bight to protect

those whales a decade ago, and no action was taken by the previous Government. I have been told that there was much debate and discussion about that matter across Government in the previous Government, and no decision was made, no action was taken at all at that time.

It was the Brown Government that declared that there needed to be an exclusion zone for this purpose. I very much support the need for all agencies to work with the community, particularly the Aboriginal community, over the next 12 months in determining an appropriate management plan so that this area can be protected in the future. A consultancy is to be let to prepare that management plan for the marine park. That plan will provide an economic analysis of the potential impact and benefits. I suggest that we need to be aware that there will be impacts and benefits of park proclamation and zoning options on mining, fishing, tourism and other industries in relation to the management of both the marine environment and the adjoining coastal land.

It is expected that planning work will be completed to the extent that preliminary recommendations on park boundaries and zoning can be made to State Government by 30 September of this year and a draft plan ready for presentation to Government by 30 November this year. That spells out very clearly that the Government is keen to finalise this issue and to have that management plan in place. As members would be aware, the Nullarbor National Park lies to the west of the Yalata Aboriginal lands and extends to the Western Australia border. The park contains the world's largest semi-arid landscape, spectacular caves and Aboriginal cultural sites. To fulfil the tourism potential for the Nullarbor region, further funding to expedite management planning and infrastructure development is required.

That is one of the issues that will be addressed, but it is important that we work with the community in preparation of that development plan. At last we have an exclusion zone in place, and I am looking forward to working with my colleagues who all have a responsibility in this area to ensure that the development plan approved by Government on behalf of the people of South Australia is an appropriate plan that will protect the breeding areas for the whales, will provide an excellent opportunity for ecotourism and will involve the Aboriginal people. I believe it is absolutely essential that that also should happen.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** The point is that, whilst a good PR spin is being put on this—and I can understand the Minister's sensitivity about what happened in Cabinet—the fact is that this temporary exclusion zone—it is not a permanent exclusion zone—covers only 17 500 hectares of the Bight instead of the 552 square miles as recommended by SARDI and the Minister. There is one hell of a difference between the two. Also, there is the suggestion, which one can only describe as bizarre, that in future there may be a part-time but tiny exclusion zone; a part-time zone that is sort of an exclusion zone for part of the year but not in other parts of the year. It is a bit like having a national park for part of the year but not for rest of the year. Does the Minister agree that mining and fishing interests should be allowed into the exclusion zone at certain times of the year and, if so, why? Given what the Minister just said about supporting any measure, will he support my legislation to be introduced to establish the exclusion zone based on the boundaries recommended by SARDI and recommended by him in Cabinet?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** First, I have already explained that we have an exclusion zone in place now and it is a

damned sight better than any other exclusion zone that we have had before, because there has not been one.

*The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:*

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** The Leader sat around the Cabinet table for a long time in the previous Government and had plenty of opportunity, I would have thought, particularly as Minister for Tourism, not only to promote the need but to take action to bring it in. The Leader of the Opposition has attempted over a period to make much play out of the problems that he saw developing between my colleague the Minister responsible for fisheries and myself. The discussion between my colleague and me has been an open one. We sit next to each other in the Cabinet and we have discussed this matter openly with our agencies. It is all very well for the Leader to be expressing these concerns about Ministers not getting on with each other. At least we talk to each other: with the previous Government there were times when Ministers would not even sit in the same room together. Let us not have the Leader trying to create the impression that there are great divisions between Ministers in this Government, because I can say that there are no such divisions.

I have had the opportunity which few Ministers have had, that is, having two chances in a ministry and a Government. I had the opportunity between 1979-82 and again now, and in each case I can honestly say that Cabinet members have worked closely together. It is the determination and commitment of the Premier that has ensured that decisions are made across Government and we do not have one agency fighting another agency, and I believe in that strongly. Let us look at the Leader's proposed legislation: he has talked about it and indicated that he is going to look at different boundaries and that sort of thing. Let us look at the legislation, because there will be plenty of opportunity to indicate whether we do or do not support it in this House at that time, if the legislation is to be introduced.

We have made that commitment in regard to the protection of the whale. The Premier has made that commitment very strongly; it is a long-term commitment, far beyond the 12 months that the Leader of the Opposition is talking about; but it is necessary for us to have a management plan that involves participation from the community, from the tourism sector, from Aborigines and from the agencies to which the Leader has already referred, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Department of Fisheries. It is important that all those people come together in the formation of that management plan. Based on the discussion that has already taken place, I believe that management plan will serve very well what we are trying to achieve, and what this Government has been able to achieve, that is, the protection of the whale, particularly the breeding grounds. I feel strongly about that issue.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** The Minister did not answer the question, which is: does the Minister agree that mining and fishing interests should be allowed into the exclusion zone at certain times of the year and, if so, why? Would the Minister be prepared to support a part-time exclusion zone?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I agree with the current status of the exclusion zone, which quite clearly prohibits mining or fishing within that zone.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** In perpetuity, beyond the 12 months?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I have already indicated that that was my position. I indicated it previously, and the Leader of

the Opposition referred to it five minutes ago when he referred to a statement I made earlier.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Do you stand by that?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I stand by that.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** It is a tiny portion rather than a major portion: there will be no part-time status?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I have made the point publicly, and I stand by that.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The Minister has given an unequivocal response.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Yes, Mr Chairman. Why did the Government reject the management plan for the Great Australian Bight Marine Park prepared by SARDI after two years of community consultation, including consultation with fishing and mining interests? Who will prepare the new plan and will this be under instructions from the Environment Minister, the Minister for Mines and Energy or the Minister for Primary Industries (including fisheries)?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** That plan by SARDI has not been rejected. Some sections of the plan have already been picked up and other sections are being considered in the light of the need to develop this management plan. I have already indicated that all of this is currently under the responsibility of the Minister responsible for fisheries, as the Leader knows. The exclusion zone was brought down under the Fisheries Act.

*The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:*

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I am quite happy with the way it is at the present time. I have already said about three times that I recognise the need for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to be working closely with fisheries and all of the other people—Tourism, Aborigines and everyone else. It has to be, and it will be a joint involvement. If it is not, I will have something to say about it but at this stage it is the responsibility of my colleague the Minister responsible for fisheries, and I am pleased with the plans in place to work towards the development of what I believe will be a very effective management plan dealing with this important issue.

**Mrs ROSENBERG:** My question, which relates to the Onkaparinga estuary, could probably be asked by either of the members alongside me, because the Minister will note that I am flanked by my two colleagues from the south. It is appropriate that this is Estimates Committee A, because we are truly the A team, and this question could be asked by any one of us. I refer to page 426 of the Program Estimates and the objective to establish management boards for the Murray, Onkaparinga and Gawler/Little Para Rivers. My interest is in the Onkaparinga. The Minister is aware of considerable community discussion about how that might be set up, and I am particularly interested in the Minister's attitude to involving the Friends of Christies Creek. Will he comment on the Onkaparinga estuary being seen as a catchment board that would take in the entire catchment?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** As the matter has been raised, it is good to see the three members for the south battling in there. It is great to have that representation. I know how well the three members are serving their constituents in the southern areas.

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** We will see about that. I commend the member for Kaurna on her commitment in this matter. In fact, I have been absolutely delighted with strong support received from members of the Government concerned for the catchment management program and the

introduction of legislation. The Catchment Water Management Act 1995, as members will be aware, empowers regional communities to manage local water resources using funds generated from within the relevant catchments.

As the member for Kaurna has indicated, Catchment Water Management Boards have been established for the Torrens and Patawalonga catchments. Obviously, that was our priority: that is where we needed to start, because there is great community concern about the fact that those two waterways have been neglected for such a long time. In fact, concern is much more widespread than that, because waterways across the State have been neglected for decades, and there is a need for action to be taken.

The establishment of the two boards was initiated as a necessary response to what was seen to be a very pressing problem. However, it has always been the broader intention that the legislation should provide the impetus for catchment communities to generate the proposals for establishing catchment boards. That is the approach that I would prefer to be taken in the Onkaparinga as well as in other catchments. Ideally, councils in the area would get together with local environmental groups in the catchment community to develop a specific proposal for the Onkaparinga catchment, and I know that that is happening.

I appreciate very much the support of the member for Kaurna, who has discussed this matter with me on several occasions. She has mentioned the Friends of Christie Creek, a group that is keen to establish a catchment management board for the Onkaparinga catchment. I understand that the Noarlunga council is also very interested, but it would prefer at this stage to establish a section 200 authority under the Local Government Act. That is something that we need to work through, and I look forward to discussing the matter with the Noarlunga council and the community.

It will be up to the various interest groups in the catchment now to consolidate their positions on the matter and to develop an agreed and appropriate proposal that best suits their local situation. I would, however, strongly encourage them to consider the entire catchment in their deliberations, as that will ensure that the fundamental basis of integrated catchment management is not lost and that an effective funding basis is established, and it is essential that that should happen. I would certainly welcome a consensus recommendation from them to establish a catchment management board under the Catchment Water Management Act, should that be the outcome of their deliberations, and I certainly hope that it is.

**Mrs ROSENBERG:** As the Minister referred to Patawalonga and Torrens catchments as the prime mover behind the Catchment Water Management Act, does he wish to record the successes we are currently achieving in that regard?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Of course, I would be delighted to do that. However, before I do that, I commend Peter Hoey and the Water Resources Group within the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources on their commitment in supporting the legislation and getting it introduced in this State. It was a very strong commitment by the Government. The Premier and the Chairman of the Local Government Association announced the initiative some time ago. We did not have much time to get the legislation up and running, but that has been achieved. The legislation ensures that storm-water in the metropolitan area is managed to reduce pollution of the watercourses.

The second major aim of the legislation is to ensure that the resource is utilised rather than wasted, as is currently the case. I have always been very keen to ensure that stormwater can be treated positively rather than as a management problem, as in the past. The statutory authorities or the boards have been formed to manage the funds raised by the levy. The levy is a separate charge on landholders, as members will be aware. Levies will be used for the purpose that has been set down in the legislation. The legislation clearly determines some of the work that will be carried out, as well as community education programs supporting some very good community projects that are currently in place, installing trash racks, etc., constructing wetlands, fencing off creeks, and revegetation programs. It is a very good levy.

**Mrs ROSENBERG:** Another issue in which I have had long-term interest is the biodiversity of our State. Referring to page 426, I note a specific objective to speed up the biological survey, which I totally support. Will the Minister explain the reason for that, the initiatives that have been taken and, in particular, give details of the funding?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Of course the biological survey is very important for the State. The Government has made it very clear that it is keen to increase opportunities for mining throughout South Australia. I am very keen to ensure that, in doing that, we have a much better understanding of our biological diversity in this State. Knowledge and understanding of the State's biodiversity is a critical factor in managing natural resources and achieving ecologically sustainable development. That is what this Government is about. The biological survey is a precursor to decisions on land use and resource allocation, and it is vital that we have that information.

The Government has recognised the need significantly to resource that aspect of work. In 1995-96, an additional \$300 000 of capital works funding has been allocated to the biological survey, together with \$100 000 from Commonwealth programs. That will give considerable impetus to the survey. To be quite frank, I would like it to be twice as much as that, if not more, but with the current restraints that we have the extra \$300 000 from the State and the \$100 000 from the Commonwealth will help significantly. Information is stored on the environmental database and is readily available for effective use coming out of that work.

The honourable member asked for some specifics about the work. Two recent surveys demonstrate the importance of the program and show an ability to respond quickly to demand. One relates to the Messent Conservation Park and another relates to Yumbarra Conservation Park. I have been very pleased with the standard of information that has been provided in both programs. I look forward, with the added financial support, to much more work being carried out to enable us better to understand the biodiversity in South Australia.

**Mr CLARKE:** I refer the Minister to the Patawalonga clean-up, and a number of concerns expressed by residents. The Minister might also address his mind to how he will handle his colleague the member for Colton, who said he will stand in front of bulldozers rather than allow one of the preferred options for addressing this problem. Did the EPA conduct a medical biological study of the sludge to be removed from the Patawalonga to determine the scope and level of contamination? Who undertook this work? What were the results? Were they conclusive, and were recommendations made on how this material should be handled?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I will ask Rob Thomas, the Director of the Environment Protection Authority, to respond in detail to that. It has been a determination of Government that, as Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources, I should be responsible for the catchment areas particularly, and that the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations should have responsibility for the areas below Tapleys Hill Road, going to the ocean. I am not saying that to walk away from my responsibilities as Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources. I have received a fair bit of representation on this matter. Those answers need to be provided in detail, and I will ask Mr Thomas to do that.

**Mr Thomas:** The EPA was required to licence the disposal of sludge from the bottom of the Patawalonga. I understand that the Urban Land Trust found it very difficult to find a suitable site in which to dispose of that sludge. Suitable land in that area is very limited for a number of reasons—there are numerous constraints. Our role was to licence the disposal and attach appropriate conditions to that licence. We also agreed to provide some monitoring in this instance. We would not normally do that, but we have agreed to do so in this case. In terms of pathogens and the bacteriological risk from those sediments, one would not normally expect a high pathogen load in settlements of that kind but, nevertheless, we did some testing of those sediments.

I do not have the results of those tests at hand, but I understand they demonstrated that general contention. The main concern related to heavy metals and similar contaminants. We were surprised that the heavy metal results were not as high as anticipated because we know that a fair load of heavy metals has moved into the Patawalonga but, once those heavy metals are dispersed throughout the whole Patawalonga, the overall concentration in any particular sample does not show as very high. Nevertheless, we have imposed conditions on the Urban Land Trust to ensure that the risk of leaching of contaminated material into the Patawalonga is minimised. The Urban Land Trust has agreed to install clay-lined systems.

The other concern related to odour generation and its impact on local residents. We have agreed to monitor that, and we have also imposed conditions that will minimise odour generation. We believe no public health risk is caused by this activity. The main risk would be to the Patawalonga water body, and we believe the conditions we have imposed on the operator will minimise that risk.

**Mr CLARKE:** I have a supplementary question. It would seem that the EPA has some real concerns, from what Mr Thomas said, about the dumping of this sludge; that in fact there will be odours, and the best the EPA is able to do is monitor the level of the odour and the degree of its offensiveness to residents. There will be odour, so it is difficult to see—and you may not be in a position to answer this question, because it is a policy issue—why HUD is responsible for areas below Tapleys Hill Road when this is clearly an environmental issue, which should come under the authority of the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** As I indicated earlier, it was a decision made by Government that, as Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources taking in water resources, I should have a greater role to play as far as the catchment is concerned. It is vitally important, without any work being done below Tapleys Hill Road, that we get it right in the total catchment. That is what we are on about. As far



as the questions asked by the Deputy Leader, those matters have been addressed and are being addressed by my colleague the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations and, as Mr Thomas, Director of the EPA, has indicated, of course we have a responsibility in the monitoring process, and that will continue.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** What has been the role of the Minister's department in providing clearances and approvals for the construction of the sludge dumps at West Beach; is the requirement for clay lining for the dump areas a variation to the original plans following the discovery that local soil was too pervious; and was the EPA consulted on this issue?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I answered those questions when the Leader was out of the Chamber. I have indicated that the involvement of the EPA in this area—

**The CHAIRMAN:** I point out to the Minister that I was consulted before I redirected the questioning to the Leader.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I am quite happy for Mr Thomas to respond to some of the specific points that have been raised.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** What has been the role of the Minister's department in providing clearances for approval of the sludge dumps, and is the requirement for clay lining for the dump areas a variation to the original plan?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I will ask Mr Thomas to respond.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I point out to the Minister that that is a new question.

**Mr Thomas:** Yes, we were consulted on that issue with respect to clay and we expressed our concerns. Our response indicated our desired design specifications. We also indicated that we would prefer the right sort of clay to be used for those clay-lined ponds. I cannot advise the Committee of the outcome but my understanding is that the department has responded to our submission.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Is the local soil too pervious.

**Mr Thomas:** A number of sites have been discussed. I do not believe that the soil on the proposed site is too pervious. It is our preference that material of that kind be properly held because it is sludge mixed with water; we need to ensure that it settles out and does not move into the soils beneath and further contaminate the Patawalonga water column. It is just proper practice. It is then a matter of what sort of material is used to design the line system.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Is the Government, Kinhill or the contractors liable for any penalties if these areas leak toxic or other contaminated materials into the underground watertable or into the Patawalonga creek? Can the Minister assure local residents that there will be no leaching of toxic materials into the local watertable using this particular method?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I say again that that is the responsibility of the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** But you are the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** The Deputy Leader made that point while the Leader was out of the room, and I am explaining that.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The Minister responsible will be appearing before the Committee tomorrow.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Mr Chairman, I have indicated already that, as Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources, 95 per cent of the things that happen seem to be my responsibility in one way or another. The Director of the

EPA has already responded to that and has outlined our responsibility in monitoring that situation. I understand the concern. I have received representation from the member for Colton. I understand that he feels very strongly about this, and so she should on behalf of his constituents, because we need to ensure that we are monitoring this effectively and appropriately.

**Mr Thomas:** Part of the requirement on the proponent in this instance will also be to conduct ground water monitoring. That is a precautionary measure that we would apply as a condition of the licence in any of these circumstances.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Will that involve certain liabilities in terms of the contractors, the Government or Kinhill?

**Mr Thomas:** We would not specify the liabilities because we are not drafting the contract. The contract is between the Urban Land Trust, Kinhill and other agents that they are using. Liabilities may arise with regard to our legislation, but we cannot anticipate what they would be.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** There is a great deal of concern by local residents and others, and that is why they are seeking assurances or advice from the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources—because it involves the environment—about the possibility of toxic material leaching back into the Patawalonga creek adjacent to the dump, where it will drain straight back into the Patawalonga. That is one of the concerns. Local residents are also concerned about being protected from airborne pollution and offensive odours. There are a number of environmental issues about which it is inevitable that they would seek the advice of the EPA or the assurances of the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources.

I was Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, but Aboriginal health was the responsibility of the Minister for Health. That did not stop people from asking me questions about Aboriginal health, because it is an overview portfolio. It is the same with the environment. The Minister cannot just step out of the ball game. This has been sold to the people of this State as a major environmental initiative. It is the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources who has been standing in front of the television cameras. That is why the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources is being asked these questions.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I am very pleased to answer these questions and to recognise my responsibility as Minister—

**The CHAIRMAN:** I point out to the Leader of the Opposition that the Chair will have some say as to who answers what on what day. If the Minister is happy that he or any of his advisers have an overview, I have no objection to the Minister's providing that.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Mr Chairman, I have no intention—and I think it is about the fourth time I have said it in respect of this issue—of walking away from the responsibilities I have as Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources. As I indicated to the Deputy Leader earlier, the agency and I realise that a large percentage of what seems to happen in South Australia in some way is directly related to the agency that I am responsible for. The Leader of the Opposition has referred to the concerns of constituents in that area. I have already indicated that I am aware of those concerns. I have received representation on a number of those concerns, and it was only in the past day or two (in fact, I think it was only yesterday) that I received a letter from my colleague the member for Colton, in which he

asked three or four specific questions on behalf of his constituents relating to some of the issues that the Leader has raised. I will be seeking a detailed response to those questions, and the EPA will provide that information. The Leader of the Opposition can rest assured that the people who are concerned and who are constituents of my colleague the member for Colton will have their concerns addressed.

**Ms GREIG:** I refer to page 427 of the Program Estimates and Information. As the Government is fully supportive of not only economic development but also ecologically sustainable development within South Australia, where does the EPA fit into assessing criteria and/or offering assistance in this area?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Again, I have been very pleased with the way the EPA has dealt with the responsibility that it has in working with industry, particularly as it is in line with the Government's commitment in South Australia to work towards ecologically sustainable development. A lot of effort has gone into working with industry and being aware of a number of the concerns that industry has. The EPA has reacted positively to the Government's commitment to work towards providing job opportunities for South Australians while at the same time working towards ecologically sustainable development in South Australia. The EPA is fully supportive of development which is both economically and ecologically sustainable.

The EPA has introduced programs and initiatives that will enable industry to improve environmental performance and, at the same time, take account of economic constraints that we are all aware of. These programs will also provide industry with opportunities to participate in evasive environmental technologies: these elements are the essence of sustainable development. As I have already indicated, the South Australian Environment Protection Authority Act commenced on 1 May this year. That piece of legislation replaces six pollution control and waste management Acts. It creates a one stop shop for pollution and waste management and establishes the South Australian Environment Protection Authority. As I said earlier, I am very pleased with the progress that is being made by that authority.

The Environment Protection Authority Act ensures more comprehensive and integrated environmental protection, but at the same time it goes a long way to reducing red tape for business by providing a single licence system for pollution and waste matters. Australia is seeing a new era of environmental management practices for Government, regulators and industry. It is important that that should happen. We are looking more at national standards across Australia, and with that in mind I am again very pleased that a national environment protection council, which is to be established, will be based in Adelaide. Its headquarters will be in Adelaide and it will provide South Australia with a great opportunity to be closely involved in the development of national standards.

In association with the Centre for Manufacturing Technology and the South Australian Economic Development Authority the EPA is taking an active role in the development of environmental technologies. We are very much up-front in the development of those technologies. The EPA has provided assistance by developing demonstration projects. Examples of just how the EPA is involved in facilitating the development of marketable processes include a number of programs that I have already referred to: the cleaner production program, ozone protection programs, recycling, working through the recycling and development fund, working with contaminated site remediation and, of course, kerbside

recycling and waste management responsibilities through the board.

There is a large number of areas and programs where the EPA is working hand in hand with industry and recognising the need to appropriately monitor environmental protection needs in South Australia. I am very pleased with the way in which the EPA has accepted that responsibility.

**Ms GREIG:** As a supplementary question, page 427 of the Program Estimates refers to a number of programs involving a wide range of organisations. What is the EPA doing with industry? How many reports has the EPA had relating to environmental negligence and so on? How many reports have been acted upon? How many warnings and prosecutions have there been?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Some of that detail I will have to take on notice, and some of it might take a little time to put together. I would be happy to work through that with the member for Reynell. As I said earlier, the Government and I are very keen that the EPA foster a cooperative relationship with industry in working towards improved environmental management. I think that that has been recognised. Only this morning, as I indicated earlier, I had the opportunity to launch a very good air monitoring initiative for South Australia. Whilst at that function, I talked to a couple of people from industry who expressed their pleasure with the opportunities that are now being provided for industry and the EPA to work so closely together.

As I said earlier, the one stop shop allows for greater efficiency for both the licensee and the EPA for a number of reasons. I am delighted with the environment improvement programs and audits that are now available. I will provide further information for the member for Reynell with regard to the specific detail that has been requested and will get that information to her as soon as possible.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I remind the Minister that any information provided to a member should be provided to the Committee as a whole through the Clerk, either for distribution on the day or subsequently by way of printed response.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Concerns have been expressed—previously I have referred to this briefly, but I want to go into it in more detail—about the EPA being a toothless tiger. That is patently not the case. Since 1 May the EPA has served four environment protection orders: one to prevent the discharge of seepage of oil and degreasing liquid into Hahndorf Creek; two to control excessive noise; and one to prevent the discharge of winery effluent into the North Para River via stormwater drains. So, nobody can say that it is a toothless piece of legislation. In fact, in a very short time a considerable amount of action has been taken in that regard. In addition, the EPA is pursuing charges against certain waste industry operators for inappropriate waste disposal practices, and that will continue.

**Ms GREIG:** I refer to page 426 of the Program Estimates and the Dog and Cat Management Act. How many councils are working towards this Act? Has an extensive education campaign regarding dog and cat management started? Has the management advisory board been established yet?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Again, I will need to get further information regarding the number of councils that are already involved. The member for Reynell would appreciate that all councils have been consulted in this matter. Some have shown more enthusiasm than others, and that is what we need to work through. Some councils have made it very plain to us that they want to be clear about the educational program

that comes out of the \$50 000 that is being set aside for it. Some councils have indicated that they want to know more about that program and how they can be involved before they go further. Currently no councils are implementing the cat provision of the Bill because, as indicated earlier, that is not possible until the Act comes into effect on 1 July. But there has been a considerable amount of discussion with those councils. The Local Government Association advises that all councils are considering future directions regarding cats. Officers of many of those councils are preparing reports on local cat problems for council members, and councils will be considering the recommendations of those reports in June and July this year.

The development of dog management programs is the responsibility of the board. The board has produced a booklet entitled *The Law and Your Dog*, which has been distributed to councils throughout the State. Cat Watch, a community based consultative group, has been formed by my department to oversee and implement the cat education program. Information has been developed and provided for distribution through all pet shops, veterinary surgeries and councils.

I know that the member for Reynell has a very strong interest in animal welfare and particularly in this piece of legislation. I commend her for the representation that she has made to Government on this matter. This legislation has been of particular interest in a number of other States. Recently, as I indicated earlier, the Chief Executive Officer and I spent a few days in the United States where there was also a particular interest in the legislation. Again, this is an example of where this Government has been prepared to get off its backside and do something about a subject that had been pondered over for many years by the previous Government without any action being taken.

**Ms GREIG:** On page 430 of the Program Estimates reference is made to the protection of the Lake Eyre Basin. What has the Government achieved and what does it propose to do in 1995-96?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** The Government has made very clear over a long period of time that we strongly oppose world heritage nomination for any part of the Lake Eyre Basin. The Government continues to demonstrate a very practical commitment to the protection of the region's natural values through the expenditure of \$1 million over two years for ongoing works in the basin. Much of that work has already been undertaken to protect significant Mound Springs, fence important conservation areas, establish a ranger at Innamincka and survey the Stony Desert.

With regard to the fencing of important conservation areas, we have been very fortunate in the support we have received from those who are responsible for the management of that land. They have been very forthcoming in wanting to work with the Government in that area. In 1995-96 the focus will turn to the management of the Cooper Wetlands and the Innamincka Regional Reserve. Specific works relate to fencing and protecting high value areas, archaeological surveying, a management review of regional reserves and visitor facilities at key destinations. I was very pleased with the positive results that came out of a recent workshop at Birdsville which was convened by the Far North Consultative Committee.

That meeting explored the concept of integrated catchment management and made very real progress in bringing together a wide range of diverse interests. An interim committee is being formed to further advance these ideas and I think a lot more will be achieved in regard to the protection of the Lake

Eyre catchment as a result of that initiative than anything that could be achieved by world heritage listing of that area. I am very supportive of the various States and Territories getting together and looking at how we can work through what is best for this whole catchment area.

One of the things that really bugs me about the current Federal situation is that the Lake Eyre Basin covers a hell of a lot more than just South Australia. It takes in a large area of Queensland, and the Queensland Government has told the Federal Government to get lost: it does not want to know anything about world heritage listing. It takes in areas of the Northern Territory and also New South Wales. If we are really fair dinkum about protecting the catchment of the Lake Eyre Basin, we can best achieve it as a result of the initiatives that were shown at that Birdsville meeting. I will be very supportive of that work continuing.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** I want to pursue the Patawalonga issue. I am a bit concerned that so far, despite hearing the Minister's major announcement about Catch Watch, where apparently he is leading the world, on the nuclear issue, he has deferred to the Premier; on whales he is deferring to the Minister for Mines and Energy; and on the Patawalonga he is deferring to the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations. I know he is a greenie, but it is looking rather pale green so far this morning.

On the Sturt Creek diversion and the Aquatic Centre, SARDI has expressed concern about all three options provided by Kinhill Engineers for the disposal of stormwater that currently flows into the Patawalonga basin. It has said there are serious concerns surrounding stormwater quality and detrimental environmental impacts of the Patawalonga discharge on the marine environment. The State has invested \$14 million in the Aquatic Science Centre at West Beach to support the State's \$200 million fishing industry. The Minister would remember when we were both backbenchers at one stage—just briefly—we both played a fairly major role in getting that Aquatic Science Centre set up.

This centre relies on drawing seawater through an inlet pipe 1.5 kilometres out to sea to avoid the existing discharge arrangements. The centre is most concerned by the Kinhill proposals to discharge the stormwater north of the present lock and near the centre. Has the EPA been consulted by Kinhill Engineers on its plans to redirect the Patawalonga discharge direct to Gulf St Vincent, and did the EPA consult SARDI and evaluate the effect such a plan would have on the Aquatic Science Centre research station?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Can I say again that I hope the Leader—

*The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:*

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** The Leader has had a bit to say about my pale green effects in South Australia. I could say a lot about his previous ministry, if we wanted to dwell on some of those subjects. I just hope that the Leader will be available to ask questions of the responsible Minister in this area when that opportunity arises.

The Leader has asked about the involvement of the EPA. I will ask Rob Thomas to comment on that. Before I do so, I think every member realises that no decisions have been made about what action the Government will take in regard to this matter. There is an enormous amount of consultation taking place and that is why, understandably, people want to be able to seek information. It is appropriate that that should be the case before any decisions are made. My colleague the Minister responsible has continued to say that that consultation will take place before any decisions are made. I know as

far as my own agency is concerned that the water resources division has had a strong involvement, as has the EPA. I will ask Mr Thomas, if he wants, to add to that.

**Mr Thomas:** We have been consulted briefly on this issue and we have expressed again our position. Certainly, no decision has been made yet but, if new outlets are proposed, our minimum position would be that water quality and plume modelling be conducted to demonstrate how those plumes move and the impact of water quality on beach users; in this case, SARDI is one user. We have not seen the results of that, so I cannot comment any further. I would think that would be a minimum.

It is a complex story. Getting the sediments out of the bottom of the Patawalonga and introducing a more regular through flow seawater regime will at least get rid of the current rather undesirable sludge plume that we get when it is flushed on a monthly or bi-monthly basis at night to try to reduce the impact on beach users during the summer. That plume probably would have had a greater impact on SARDI. At least that will be significantly reduced.

When there are high stormwater flows, which is a different issue, it is not just the Sturt Creek and the Patawalonga but also the Torrens and a number of other drains south of Glenelg that contribute to a very dirty plume of water that extends for about two to three kilometres along the whole Adelaide coastline. It can be there for three to four weeks. It is difficult to say what contribution the Patawalonga makes and, if it is half a kilometre closer to SARDI's intake, it is difficult to say whether that would have a significant incremental impact. Under those conditions, you would have to look at the impact of the stormwater at large, and the only way we can deal with that is proper catchment management systems, which will be introduced through the catchment management boards. There are no quick and easy solutions to this: it is long-term stuff.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** In conclusion, can I say that what Opposition members need to realise is that it is already a health hazard. The Patawalonga is a health hazard and it is a health hazard for one reason and one reason only: it has been neglected for decades, as I said previously. The former Government did not do a thing to improve the water quality in any one of our catchment areas in this State. It is a health hazard now. The Opposition, it would seem, would be hell-bent on stopping any of this work proceeding to clean up this area. We are determined to clean up the waterways. We are determined that the Patawalonga and the Torrens will be cleaner as a result of the action that we are taking as a Government, and I only hope that the Opposition might change its tune and get behind us with the work we are trying to achieve for all South Australians.

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

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Has the EPA been involved in plans to clean up and reduce the Sturt Creek discharge; what steps are being taken by the EPA to control the various sources of pollution to the Sturt Creek; does the Minister support the land based disposal of effluent from the Heathfield sewerage works rather than disposal into the Sturt Creek; and will this be a licence condition for the continued operation of this plant?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I will first answer the question about Heathfield, because I have had concerns about that area for some time. It is part of my electorate, and the Minister for Infrastructure and I have had ongoing discussions about that

matter. With the stormwater code of practice that we have introduced recently we are particularly keen to ensure that we resolve some of those matters. The general code of practice for the community was released last month, and I am very pleased with the launch that took place. I presume that most members would have seen the rather dramatic television commercials, 'Don't let our waterways go down the drain' and 'Be stormwater smart'. The code has been used as part of a major public awareness and education program on the problem of stormwater pollution. Both bad and good practices are being pointed out to the public, and it is important that that should happen.

I have already referred to our responsibilities in cleaning up our waterways; it is important that that should happen. It does no credit to the previous Government that so many of our waterways carry signs warning people that they should not swim in or have contact with those waterways. That is a direct result of the previous Government's lack of action and the fact that the problem has been ignored for so long. I ask Mr Hoey as Director of Water Resources to refer to that in detail, because he has been involved in some of the discussions that have taken place. The EPA and the EWS have been working closely to complete the environmental improvement programs. Those programs are required by 1 July, and I understand that some of those matters are under discussion before the EPA today. I ask Mr Hoey to respond to that part of it, and I will ask Mr Thomas to answer the Leader's question about the EPA's involvement.

**Mr Hoey:** As I understand it, the nutrients that come out of the Heathfield treatment works are a fairly minor issue by the time they enter the catchment in the Patawalonga basin. Nonetheless, the members of the Patawalonga board are very interested in this problem and will be visiting the Heathfield site this week or the next. They have it under active consideration. Minister Olsen is very aware of this and his officers are also actively considering alternative disposal means other than into the Sturt catchment.

**Mr Thomas:** A number of initiatives are being made to clean up the Patawalonga catchment and Sturt Creek, which is part of that catchment, and I believe that one of the most important are the stormwater codes of practice to which the Minister referred. We estimate that about 50 per cent of the load can be cleaned up through a change in behaviour. We do not have good statistics to back that up; that is a professional estimate, but we will have to monitor the performance of the catchments. We have just developed protocols for monitoring water quality.

That collection will have to be done by the catchment management board for the Patawalonga, and we expect that material to be reported to us. We would hope to see improvements in water quality over the next five to 10 years, but it will not happen overnight. That 50 per cent improvement achieved by the codes will be brought about by improvements in community, municipal and industrial practices, with regard to nutrient and bacterial loading, silt and vegetation. If these codes do not work through voluntary means we will ultimately consider developing them as environment protection policies under the Act. Those policies will have teeth, so we can enforce them.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** What other steps does the Minister think the new catchment authority should take to clean up the Sturt Creek; will the Minister set a timetable for the clean up of the Sturt Creek; and can he guarantee that the flow of polluted water will cease in time for the Premier to take his promised swim in the Patawalonga next year—like

a Mao Tse-tung? We know of that preference for photo opportunities. Will the Minister assure us that he will be able to assist with that photo opportunity without endangering the Premier's health or life?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I assure the Leader that it will be healthy enough, because I will be swimming with the Premier. We have not worked out who is going first, but the honourable member can be pretty sure that it will be clean enough for both of us; we have made that commitment. As I have said, the former Government placed the health of hundreds of thousands of South Australians at risk because of its inaction on our waterways and rivers in this State. I find this questioning from the Leader incredible, because the previous Government did not do a thing. It might be interesting—

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I am glad the Leader of the Opposition has raised just what the previous Government did in the environment area. Let us just look at its record. It criticises this Government, but look at what it delivered in 10 years: whales, nil; Patawalonga, nil; Torrens, nil; air monitoring, nil; cat management, nil; catchment management, nil; waste management, nil; Islington, nil; national parks, nil; Lake Eyre Basin protection, nil; Murray River, nil. Look at the work we are doing on that in comparison with what was done by the previous Government. What did it do with regard to the Patawalonga Basin, the Mount Lofty catchment and the biological survey? So we could go on. Let us not have the Leader or Deputy Leader telling us what we are supposed to be doing and to have achieved in 18 months compared to their lack of achievements in the past 11 years. On at least three different occasions today I have indicated to Opposition members what we are hoping to achieve through the catchment management program. We have made that patently clear.

The boards are now in place and I am particularly pleased with the people who have accepted responsibility on those boards, with the two Chairs. The legislation is in place with the support of the Opposition. The strategies have been set down: we are now working towards management plans for both the Patawalonga and the Torrens, so that we can immediately commence the capital works that need to be carried out in that area. We have a very good record in the short time of 18 months in working towards the clean-up of those catchments. We are committed to ensuring that happens, and that is why I would be delighted to join the Premier in his swim, whenever that might be.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** I am stunned: it is like being gored by a dead sheep, being attacked by the Minister for the Environment, who I must say over the years has been the only man I fear in this Parliament, if there is any person I fear in this Parliament. In fact, in many ways I have modelled my career on his. The Minister did not mention the massive expansion of national parks. Let us face it: the Minister would mine the gold teeth in West Terrace cemetery if he had the chance, so let him not pretend that he has more than pastel green credentials. What other steps does the Minister think that the new catchment authority should take to clean up the Sturt Creek?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I do not know what else I can say. I have indicated quite clearly what we are aiming to achieve and what we will achieve through those catchments. I hope that before very long we will have catchment boards right across the metropolitan area and in relation to the Murray River. As the member for Kaurna indicated in a

question she asked today, much interest is being shown by other communities within catchment areas wanting to become part of the program, and the member for Kaurna has referred to one. As I have indicated, we have the codes of practice; wetlands are being established; and there is community involvement. Never before have we seen the amount of money that is now being pumped into community education, and that has been helped tremendously by such organisations as the group that has determined that this year should be the Year of the Torrens.

These groups have done a fantastic job and we have been very keen to work with them and will continue to do so. They have shown a commitment; we have shown a commitment; and together we will achieve the clean-ups to which we have committed ourselves.

#### **Membership:**

Ms White substituted for the Hon. M.D. Rann.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** Having listened to what the Leader of the Opposition and former Cabinet Minister said about our Minister, initially saying that he was a pale shade of green and then getting greener, I can tell the Minister that, when I talk to our environment groups and people interested in the environment down our way, compared to the previous Government and its lack of genuineness in getting things done, they would describe the previous Government Minister as an anaemic yellow and see the current Minister as someone who has given an enormous dose of nitrogen to the environment area and given it a rich green colour. The fact is that the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader are full of rhetoric but not full of much that will help get the environmental management of this State under control. I am proud to be a member of the backbench committee with the Minister, who is determined to get the environment aspect of this State back into a good balance.

The Minister gave a very bad report card on the previous Government. Another point on which he could have said 'Nil' was litter control strategies. I note from page 427 that one objective is to develop a litter prevention and control strategy in conjunction with industry, with such legislative programs as are necessary. What is our Government doing about litter in South Australia?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** We have been very lucky in this State with the involvement of organisations such as KESAB and programs in which the Government is involved, but there is a need to look at this whole litter issue in South Australia. It is a matter of concern to me. I do not think there is any doubt that there is more litter around now than previously. Unfortunately, people are not as responsible now as they might have been in the past. People have forgotten what responsibilities we all have in that area. The Government's approach to the control of litter is multifaceted, as it needs to be for optimum coverage and effectiveness. As I said earlier, the Government strongly involves organisations such as KESAB, which has already shown its support for a number of initiatives in working with the community.

The Government strategy includes substantial sponsorship of KESAB, education, clean-up and Tidy Town campaigns; the operation of beverage container deposit requirements; kerbside recycling initiatives and penalties for littering. The member for Torrens noted the container deposit legislation (CDL). There is a need to look at that legislation to determine whether it is still as effective as it might be and where changes are needed. I think everyone realises that changes are

needed: there are huge anomalies in that legislation that have been there for a long time. It is extremely popular legislation. I do not think anyone realises the complexities involved in its administration, but it is seen to be a good principle.

Time after time when surveys have been carried out it has been proven that there is a lot of support in the community for that legislation; but we must sort out some of those anomalies. A number of the measures that I have referred to are complementary to and reinforce the effect of each other. Therefore, it is important to take action when the application of one or more measures is less than optimal. For example, the current form of the beverage container deposit provisions does not provide a level playing field for all beverage manufacturers, and current litter problems and penalties do not provide an adequate incentive to councils in terms of cost recovery, which is something we also need to look at.

Therefore, I have taken the initiative of establishing a litter prevention task group to report to me by the end of September with suggestions for a new and improved litter control strategy. I have asked Mike Jamieson, Chief of the South Australian Litter Recycling and Research Association, to chair that group, which is a very representative one with local government, KESAB, EPA and others involved. I am pleased that the honourable member who asked the question is also a member of that task group. Litter is an area about which there is a lot of concern in the community. We need to look at littering penalties, which are far too low, and I am looking forward to receiving a report from that committee in September.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I refer to the Community Awareness and Education Program on page 430 of the Program Estimates. As Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources you will be aware that the future management of our natural resources will be the responsibility of our children. What steps are being taken to equip today's students with the knowledge they will need to fulfil this role as adults in the future?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Curriculum resources are being developed to address this issue, and I am pleased about that. A prime example is the recently released Water Care Curriculum Resource for Schools. This is very much a cooperative venture involving the Department for Education and Children's Services and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and is part funded through the national Land Care program. The Water Care Curriculum Resource for Schools publication is a lively and innovative teaching resource that encourages passionate discussion about water, water care, integrated catchment, ecological sustainability and informed and active citizenship. I am delighted with a lot of the work that is being carried out in schools.

Recently, I have had a couple of opportunities to look at the excellent work that is being done at Ardtornish School, which has established its own wetland. The school recently asked me to launch an occasion where it had invited about 13 or 14 primary schools around the area to get together to talk about some of these issues. It was great to see how seriously they discussed subjects relating to improved water management and a number of other areas. It is important that these teaching resources encourage young people to investigate water in all its forms, to learn how to make informed decisions and to take appropriate action to ensure the ecological sustainability of this essential resource.

The curriculum to which I have referred also seeks student understanding of the importance of water in Australia, not only in South Australia, and the interdependent relationships

of water environments and society. It is a subject on which I could speak for some time because many opportunities are being provided. I am delighted with the response that is being shown by schools and community groups which all recognise now that water is an important resource. After all, it is our most important resource, particularly in this State. As I have said before, areas that have previously caused huge management problems are now being seen as places where a positive approach can be taken, and a considerable amount of work is being done to ensure that that is the case.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** Talking about participation, on page 426 of the papers I note that Aboriginal participation in the management of conservation research is a key issue. Will the Minister detail the actions he proposes in 1995-96 to promote even greater participation with the Aboriginal community?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I would like Mr Allan Holmes, Director, Natural Resources, to speak to this matter. The participation of traditional owners in park management is an important objective for park managers, and it is something that I support strongly. We have some excellent programs, and we will continue to support the development of joint management of the Witjira National Park; \$80 000 from the Lake Eyre Basin initiative will be spent on the Dalhousie campground as part of the Mound Springs protection works; and \$50 000 of recurrent funding has been allocated for joint management. Complementary funding from other agencies is also being sought, but it makes a lot of sense to involve traditional people in the management of some of these areas. Certainly, I have been made aware of the fact that they are anxious to be involved, to be able to participate and to be able to run programs. Much can be gained by our people working closely with these people in the national parks. Further, \$50 000 has been allocated as part of the park's initiative to facilitate Aboriginal involvement in park management in South Australia. I would like Mr Holmes to expand on that responsibility.

**Mr Holmes:** One of the interesting challenges faced by States in particular is that they are unable to adopt the models that the Commonwealth Government has in relation to Uluru and Kakadu because of the huge resources that are required to work those joint management models. At the end of the day you might question their long-term success, so the challenge for State agencies in increasing the participation of traditional owners requires much more careful thought and a much clearer approach to resourcing. As the Minister indicated, in several locations—at Witjira in the Far North of the State, the unnamed conservation park in the Far West and the Nullarbor National Park adjoining the Yalata lands—the department has taken initiatives to establish relationships with the traditional owners to develop their participation in the management of those parks and, whilst it is a long road to hoe, there certainly have been some successes. We hope that we will be able to increase their participation in a number of other parks.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** In conclusion, South Australia has recently initiated ANZECC's endorsement—that is, the Environment Ministers Council's endorsement—of a national forum to develop a coordinated, creative and relevant support program for Aboriginal land and natural resource management in Australia. I am pleased about that, and I think there is much to be gained out of that initiative.

**Ms WHITE:** I refer to budget provisions in respect of information technology. On 19 October last year the Premier told Parliament that the EDS contract would deal with all

mainframe processing, including the Torrens title system, and that EDS would own and manage the system. Last year the Minister said that his department was targeted in stage 1 of the outsourcing of information technology. Has the decision been made to outsource his department's information technology to EDS? If so, what are the details? If not, why not?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** A detailed response is required to that question, so I will ask Mr Mutton to respond.

**Mr Mutton:** The issue of EDS and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is a pertinent question to raise. The department has an extensive IT component as part of its operations. Part of its core business is the provision of a range of information, particularly in the area of spatial information, and therefore it has quite a significant computer processing capacity. The processing components of the department's information technology are certainly part of the contractual arrangements with EDS. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has provided significant detail in relation to that, and it will also be part and parcel of the early contracting out of computer processing as part of that EDS contract.

**Ms WHITE:** I note that the capital works budget includes a program to spend \$30.2 million over five years on new information technology for the department. This year's expenditure is \$1.2 million. What are the details of that \$30.2 million expenditure? What systems will be upgraded? What are the specifics of this year's allocation of \$1.2 million? Has the system been designed? If not, what is the basis of that budget provision?

**Mr Mutton:** The agency's information technology requirements are quite significant. In the capital works program for this financial year, the major information technology involvement is the completion of the migration of our digital cadastral database—the DCDB—on to an open system, which will allow greater integration of that as a base information network to other Government agencies and out into local government and the private sector. It is one of the Government's key spatial information databases. It will be much more accessible and much more easily accessible to users now that that migration has taken place. That program is almost finished.

The remainder of the work in relation to information technology expenditure this financial year will total about \$3.12 million, including the ongoing lease of one of our major mainframes, which incidentally will shortly need to be migrated on to an open system. Part of that larger overall expenditure on IT is associated with that. The majority of the expenditure this financial year is associated with the digital cadastral database, the implementation and stage 1 upgrade of our other land information systems and computer-assisted valuations and the migration of land titles information to open systems. That is the basis of the expenditure in this financial year. It all relates to the spatial information systems that are the responsibility of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

**Ms WHITE:** Why is the Government funding that new equipment and why is it not being provided by EDS? How will the work be tendered for and what will be the role of EDS?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** The contract has not yet been signed with EDS. We have to continue with the work and with the funding, as the Chief Executive Officer has described.

**Ms WHITE:** As a supplementary question, isn't that \$30 million just a prop up for the EDS deal?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** No.

**Mrs ROSENBERG:** I refer to Recycle 2000 at page 427 of the Program Papers and the establishment of a metropolitan-wide kerbside recycling scheme. Under what mechanism is that being done? How are the rebates being used through the councils for recycling, and how are the rebates funded?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I am pleased to be able to explain that. As the member probably knows, earlier this year the Local Government Recycling and Waste Management Board adopted a new commercial name, Recycle 2000. The board was established in 1993, by agreement between the previous State Government and the Local Government Association, to coordinate and develop the recycling and re-use of domestic waste within the Adelaide metropolitan area. The programs are aimed at current national targets to reduce the quantity of waste going to landfill to 50 per cent of the 1990 level by the year 2000. As the member will be aware, that is very much a part of the policy of this State Government as well, and that is what it is working towards.

I have had several discussions with the Chairman of Recycle 2000, Mayor David Plumridge, and I have indicated to him and to other Recycle 2000 board members the importance of the work that they are doing, particularly in obtaining new markets for recycled goods. I could have put that matter on the list, too. As members will have realised when they have visited schools, for far too long we have encouraged people to collect recyclable materials, but we have not had a market for them at the end of the process. It is hopeless just going ahead and storing material if we do not have appropriate markets. I am keen for Recycle 2000 in particular to be involved in that.

Another of the board's prime functions is to encourage local councils to establish recycling and re-use or resource recovery programs within their municipalities. Recycle 2000 provides rebates on the tonnage of recyclable materials actually sold. That in itself provides a very strong financial incentive to councils to recover those materials from the waste stream. The rebate is funded through a levy administered by the EPA of \$1 for every tonne of waste that goes to landfill. To date, about \$200 000 has been returned to councils through the rebate system, and I am keen for that to continue.

I am very pleased with the response that we have had from the vast majority of metropolitan councils. We now have kerbside collection throughout the metropolitan area. Although I am delighted about that, I recognise that we still have a fair way to go before we can provide facilities for country areas. I have had a fair bit of representation in recent times from regional and country councils which are keen to participate in the same programs but which have huge difficulties with transport costs, etc. I am keen to become more involved in that matter as well.

**Mrs ROSENBERG:** This morning, when explaining my question about catchment management boards, I referred to the Murray River. What else is the Government doing to arrest the declining condition of the Murray River in South Australia, which is evidenced by the near closure of the Murray Mouth, the increased frequency of algal blooms and, of course, increasing salinity?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Major issues were referred to earlier today regarding the Murray River, including the lack of flow that has been recognised, particularly during the past 12 months. Also, the mouth of the river has almost closed. When that occurred previously in 1982 there was considerable concern in the community. It is a fairly natural happen-

ing, but there was great concern in the community regarding the closure of the river at that time.

At the end of next week I will attend the next meeting of the Murray-Darling Ministerial Council, of which I am lead Minister for South Australia. I will put a very strong request on behalf of South Australia to look at appropriate measures to ensure that the environmental flow is recognised and that there is an appropriate flow to try to improve the health of the Murray.

I do not think any of us need dwell on the importance of the Murray to this State particularly. The honourable member has referred to salinity issues. Other issues indicate very clearly that the health of the Murray River is a significant issue. For example, blue-green algae and a number of areas need to be considered. A number of strategies have already been developed and agreed to by the Murray-Darling Basin Commission to approve the management of the broad range of issues facing the basin.

Those strategies include the salinity and drainage strategy; the natural resources management strategy; the algal management strategy, which is of significant importance; and the sustainable rivers program, which is an initiative examining the flow requirements of the basin's river systems and developing flow-management strategies to protect and enhance the riverine environment.

South Australia has been very much up front with the 2001 Murray-Darling Commission project. That project was initiated and put forward by the Premier of this State; it went towards the Centenary of Celebration Committee. That committee, under Joan Kirner (an ex-Premier of Victoria), warmly welcomed the initiatives that were spelt out. I know that Joan Kirner and others were extremely disappointed that the project was not picked up as a major initiative by the Prime Minister. It is now a matter before COAG and it is also under discussion by the Murray-Darling Ministerial Council. We realise the enormous issues we all face regarding the Murray River, and we have strong support, certainly from all South Australians, in the work that needs to be carried out, and the strong stand that needs to be taken by this State regarding the future health of the river.

**Mrs ROSENBERG:** Page 426 of the Program Estimates refers to an opportunity to develop tourism in national parks as one of the major issues for the agency. How is the agency responding to this issue?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I have already indicated that over 20 million hectares in South Australia is included in our parks and reserves. Those parks and reserves are recognised as fundamental to the tourism development of South Australia. As I have said, and will continue to say, they have tremendous potential. They are facilities that can and should be used by as many South Australians as possible, and we are keen to see that happen. They provide enormous opportunities and the potential to provide a revenue stream for park management. In 1995 development works focus on nine key parks: Flinders Ranges, Coorong, Innes, Black Hill, Morialta, Belair, Cleland, Flinders Chase and Deep Creek.

Those parks represent a huge diversity as far as this State's landscape is concerned. Funding will be directed towards visitor facilities, such as picnic areas, car parks, camping grounds, toilets and all necessary amenities. We are keen to see a lot more interpretation and information being provided in the upgrade of signage in our national parks, as well as walking tracks and viewing platforms. The development of Seal Bay, the redevelopment of Wilpena, the Mount

Lofty Summit and the major upgrade of the Flinders Ranges and the Coorong are key elements of that program.

I have mentioned interpretation, and that is something about which I feel very strongly. I am very keen to attract corporate sponsorship and community involvement in working towards much improved interpretive services and centres in South Australia relating to our parks and reserves.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** Minister, in your opening comments you spoke about the need for a proper waste management and, I hope, reclamation strategy. As you know, I have a particular interest in many of these issues. What provisions have been made for waste management for overall services in the metropolitan area and, in particular, for resiting the Highbury dump, and I include in that the Dublin site?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I will ask Mr Thomas to have an involvement in this response, because it is a matter in which the EPA has been strongly involved. In response to a question asked by a Government member earlier this year, I indicated that the Government, the agency and I have been concerned about the standard of dumps, particularly in the metropolitan area. They are well below the required standard. I know that both the honourable member and the member for Taylor have raised issues with me regarding these matters.

Research involved in the preparation of the waste management strategy discussion paper indicated that current land fill resources serving metropolitan Adelaide would be sufficient to cover forecast disposal needs until about 2004 in the northern central areas and 2015 in the southern areas. Much has been said about the new strategy, and I am pleased, because that is the very purpose of the strategy and the consultation. As I have indicated in previous answers, we are very keen to reduce the amount of waste going to land fill. In fact, we have a very firm commitment to do that. We are committed to improving the management of those land fill facilities.

I know of the honourable member's interest in the Highbury situation in particular. Before I ask Mr Thomas to respond—and I know we have talked about this on two or three occasions—I point out that I was concerned to hear yesterday, and again this morning, reference being made by the Chair of HEART, the organisation representing the community out there, that the EPA lacked teeth and was not doing anything constructive, and making all sorts of other statements. I was concerned about that because, as I have already explained, we are committed to doing something positive in that area. I will now ask Mr Thomas to provide more detail.

**Mr Thomas:** It is important to understand that the EPA does not have full control over this matter, and I am not trying to hand ball the issue: it is the reality. Planning control rests with the Development Act, which is under the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The EPA sets licence conditions; and certainly very strong referral relationships exist between the Development Act and the Environment Protection Act, and that was intended. Through that referral process we set conditions and we can have an influence on development approval. The reality is that we do not have direct control over the development site. That rests with local government and with the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and in its case the Development Assessment Commission.

That is the same with this proposal. It is a new proposal, so it goes before them. In this case, there is an EIS as the development approval process. Nevertheless, we will have an indirect influence on the design of that project and will



certainly look towards best practice, assuming it is approved, to go ahead. That is by no means finalised. The strategy was not intended to focus just on Highbury: the strategy was to look at waste management for the whole of Adelaide. Highbury is a new proposal that came in part way through the process. Our preference would have been that no new proposals came in while we were developing the strategy, but the reality is that we have to live with what we have and what comes in. There are many more issues than just Highbury.

I have gone on public record as saying that land fill management in Adelaide is not good. We want to lift and change that but we will not do it overnight. The strategy is laying a foundation for lifting waste management practices and, in particular, land fill practices in this State. We are talking about a 15 to 20 year strategy.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** The honourable member referred to both Highbury and Dublin. Both proposals are currently being dealt with under the provisions, as Mr Thomas said, of the Development Act with EIS requirements having been imposed. Again, during that process there is ample opportunity for consultation and for discussion. It is appropriate that that be the case.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** I find it a bit disappointing, when we talk about being committed to reducing more land fill sites, when there is still the possibility that the Highbury site might go ahead. What waste management company is currently under investigation by the EPA?

**Mr Thomas:** That company has nothing to do with the Highbury proposal. The company is Remove All Rubbish and we have lodged a court action of 48 counts against it.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** The Minister referred to the discussion paper on an integrated waste management strategy for the Adelaide metropolitan area. How widely has that been circulated and when will a decision be made?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I know that I was very keen to have it widely circulated, but Mr Thomas will provide a more detailed answer.

**Mr Thomas:** We targeted a number of key stakeholders—that is the term we commonly use these days. That does not mean we covered every base, but it was intended at this stage to invite all major stakeholders, including community advocacy groups, councils and industry groups. We have sent copies to those groups. If the honourable member has not seen a copy I am sorry about that: we will make a copy available. It is still open for submissions. There is no close off date at this point, and we can make one available. We would be only too pleased to have a submission.

We had an initial forum on the launch of that at the Australian Mineral Foundation about six weeks ago. It was enthusiastically received: 200 people representing community, council and industry were present. We now have four public meetings to discuss that. The first, which represented the northern suburbs and which 200 people attended, was held on Tuesday night at Golden Grove. It was convened by Keith Conlon. I deliberately kept EPA staff from chairing it so that it was seen to be neutral. I believe that was achieved. The HEART people had a fair say, but the broader community concerns were brought out. It did not just concentrate on HEART. The next meeting will be at Port Adelaide to deal with the east-west type land fill and waste issues. The last meeting will be in the southern part of Adelaide.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** As the director of the EPA has indicated, we can make sure that the honourable member has a copy of that strategy. If there are other members who would

like a copy, they are very available and we would appreciate any comments that members might like to make. We will make sure that members are aware of the public meetings that are to take place so that they can participate or have some involvement in those meetings.

**Ms GREIG:** I refer to page 421 of the Program Estimates and Information which indicates that the total expenditure for the department will increase by \$6.071 million over the revised projection for 1994-95. Will the Minister outline the major factors explaining this increase?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** The \$6.071 million increase in estimated payments consists of an increase of \$5.026 million in capital expenditure and \$1.045 million in recurrent expenditure. Increases in capital expenditure for 1995-96 include coastal management, involving \$2.5 million for sand replenishment, \$.790 million for coastal works (\$.0395 million funded from the Local Government Reform Fund), at least \$1.8 million for urgent coastal protection at Semaphore and Tennyson, and \$.8 million on dune fencing, rehabilitation and small protective works; national parks, involving \$1 million for implementing recommendations of the parks review, \$.5 million for major road upgrades, \$.5 million for major redevelopment of the Mount Lofty Summit, \$.5 million for upgrades of tourism infrastructure, and \$.4 million for fire protection in national parks; and \$.3 million for the biological survey of the State.

These increases were partly offset by reductions in capital expenditure of \$1 million for Patawalonga storm water management and \$.72 million for office relocation expenditure. Significant increases in recurrent expenditure include \$1.5 million for the transfer of the Murray-Darling Basin Commission Integrated Catchment Program from EWS; \$1.29 million representing the full year effect of expenditure as a result of the proclamation of the EPA Act; \$.845 million for the full year effect of the \$15 per week enterprise bargaining wage rise; \$.532 million increase in interest expenses; \$.495 million resulting from the full year effect of activities associated with the environmental enhancement levy; and \$.222 million increase in the superannuation guarantee levy. These recurrent increases were largely offset by savings of \$4.6 million.

**Ms GREIG:** I refer to pages 152 and 153 of the Estimates of Receipts and Payments and to grants to various organisations. I understand that the Minister has requested that future grants be project based. What is meant by this?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** In the past, many grants have been made to community organisations based on subjective information about the value of the organisation in the community. I am sure all members would agree that there is a need for appropriate accountability. We are talking about taxpayers' money and we need to ensure that that money is spent effectively and efficiently. The change to project based grants is about improving accountability. Requests for new grants must detail the projects which are to be undertaken rather than just outline the broad activities in which the organisation participates. This results in a number of important improvements which include: encouraging organisations to plan the use of the funds more thoroughly; discouraging applicants for applications for grants for purely administrative requirements; providing much better information for assessing grant priorities; providing information which forms the basis for monitoring progress and which measures achievements resulting from a grant; and ensuring that funds provided are spent in an appropriate way.

Grants are made subject to the strongest and most stringent conditions which specify the use of the money, progressive reporting throughout the life of the project and reporting on the final outcome of the project. In summary, we believe that the allocation of grants on the basis of projects will result in the distribution of funds to the organisations which are working on the activities of greatest significance in the community. It will be far more accountable and equitable as far as the process is concerned. It is important that that should be followed through.

**Ms GREIG:** On page 158 of the Estimates of Receipts and Payments the Royal Zoological Society of South Australia's Adelaide and Monarto Zoos are identified. On what basis are the zoos funded?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Both the Adelaide and Monarto Zoos are funded on the basis of an annual grant. The grant is based on the previous year's grant plus CPI and less 1 per cent, with additional funding for enterprise bargaining agreements. This method of funding gives the Royal Zoological Society greater certainty in making plans and determining how those funds should best be spent, especially for the upgrading of facilities. It also provides incentives for the zoos to examine other revenue raising opportunities within the broader community. We would all realise that the zoos in Adelaide and Monarto are important facilities for the South Australian community, particularly in relation to tourism. As I said earlier, the grant for the Royal Zoological Society for 1995-96 is \$2.2 million.

I know I said the same thing last year, but I will repeat it: if members have not taken the opportunity to look at what is happening at Monarto I strongly recommend that they do so. I know that the Director, David Langdon, would be only too pleased to provide an opportunity for them to be shown through the facility. It has made terrific advancements in recent times. Those of us who have been to the Western Plains Zoo would have realised the tremendous tourism activities that take place there. The Monarto Zoo, I suggest, has just as many opportunities: the potential is significant, and I believe it is a zoo of which we can all be very proud. On behalf of the Royal Zoological Society, I invite members to take the time to go and have a look: they would be very welcome.

**Ms WHITE:** I refer to page 422 of the Program Estimates concerning EPA programs. How many licences have been issued for the discharge of pollutants into South Australian waters and, of those, how many have been issued to the EWS? What conditions apply to the discharge of sewerage effluent into St Vincent Gulf? I am, of course, interested in Bolivar.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I do not have that information with me but we will ensure the honourable member has it within the required time.

**Mr CLARKE:** My questions refer to an earlier question the member for Taylor asked concerning the \$30 million planned expenditure over the next five years with respect to computers. On what is the \$30 million to be spent? Has the system been designed? If so, what are its functions?

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

**Mr Mutton:** The forward estimates of expenditure in relation to information technology for this department range over a number of areas. A forward strategic plan in relation to information technology has been put together. As I said earlier, the majority of expenditure is on core business systems that are involved in spatial and related information—

the digital cadastre database, the topographic database and the land ownership and tenure system—which are very important key components of an information base for economic development in this State. In a number of those areas the actual processing component would become part of the EDS contract and, under those circumstances, the expenditure on those items would not physically be carried out by the department.

In our forward estimates and information technology plan we need to have clearly understood what developments and replacements are necessary in relation to information technology for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. All the expenditure is not associated with processing: however, a significant proportion of it is, and the upgrades will be negotiated with EDS once that contract is signed.

**Mr CLARKE:** If the contract is signed, will EDS determine the expenditure of capital on equipment and/or will the \$30 million be spent with EDS? Was the project provision funded as part of the negotiations with EDS?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I realise that the Opposition questioned the Premier at considerable length on EDS the other day when it had the opportunity to do so. I do not believe that there is anything to add to the information already provided, as the EDS negotiations are continuing. I do not believe that it is appropriate for us to get into a significant amount of detail regarding those negotiations until they are complete. I think it is appropriate that that information be made available through the Premier's Office. I have had the opportunity to look at the questioning that took place when the Premier's lines were being examined, and I believe that he has answered a significant number of questions relating to this issue. I do not believe that it is appropriate to take the matter any further.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The Premier and the Deputy Premier, through their lines on information technology Tuesday and yesterday, particularly last evening, made it clear that negotiations were still proceeding and that a contract had not been signed. I think that that is common knowledge. I am not sure how far this line can go in the light of information already given.

**Mr CLARKE:** Perhaps if I couch it this way in a supplementary form. With regard to the planned expenditure of \$30 million, if before the contract is signed \$2 million or \$3 million has been spent, will the remaining \$27 million be the responsibility of EDS?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to respond but, again, I make the point that I do not believe it is appropriate to go into specific details, because the EDS negotiations are continuing.

**Mr Mutton:** Our agency will be subcontracting with EDS to provide a level of service that is required for us to carry out our fundamental business. How that is provided through EDS, whether it is in fact the expenditure of what our projection has been or something else, is a matter for them. We will be contracting for the delivery of a service, and it will be a service that will continue to do the things we are doing now.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** I refer to page 428 of the Program Estimates and the line regarding the Murray-Darling and recent awards. I understand that the department won a national award for work it has been doing on mapping the River Murray. Within the broad objectives of the development and provision of land information products and services, will the Minister advise us of the nature of the award and the

circumstances leading to the department's winning that award?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I am pleased to be able to report to the Committee that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has won a national award for work it has carried out at what could be described as the cutting edge of mapping technology. It is the prestigious Gold Government Technology Productivity Award for 1995 which recognises the important and essential contribution made by the public sector to the welfare and prosperity of Australia through the use of computer and telecommunications technology. I was very pleased that the department was able to take out that award because I know of the commitment that has been shown by officers who have been working in this area.

The award was given to the department and the Murray-Darling Basin Commission as joint venture partners for their work in developing and producing a map series of the River Murray called 'River Murray Mapping on CD ROM'. This project was initiated by the Murray-Darling Basin Commission at the request of the River Murray States to allow uniform management of the river through the provision of geographical data at a scale suitable for integrated flood plain planning and development. The data is presented in a very compact form, and that is why it has been very much sought after, with the whole of the Murray being available to users in a set of three CD ROMs. I have had the opportunity to view this work, and the detail that can be obtained for the length of the river is quite remarkable. Again, because we are fairly proud of what happens in the department, if any members are interested in viewing that or seeing just what has been achieved, I will be very pleased to facilitate that.

The department has played a key role in the development and production phases of the project, providing the technical expertise, the know-how and resources to produce the series under the broad guidance of the tri-State task force on River Murray flood plain mapping. The project is an excellent example of cooperation between different tiers of government, with a common goal of making data and information more accessible to the user community. It is also a very good demonstration of how technology can be used to the benefit of the environment. That is something we are very keen to see happen.

Personally and as Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources, I am particularly keen to see South Australia at the forefront of this work in environmental technology, and it is very pleasing to see so much work being completed and recognition given, both nationally and internationally, to the work that is being carried out by the department and, as I have said before and in relation to the launch this morning, the private sector as well. It is most encouraging to see the number of opportunities for the private sector to work with Government to be able to achieve these goals and to be able to make it very clear that South Australia is up front in the production of a lot of this environmental technology which is now being made available throughout Australia and around the world as well.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** Talking about the good work being done in this State with the Minister's department, I note the broad objective on page 427 of the Program Estimates for the promotion of cleaner production and the regulation of industrial emissions. Several South Australian industries were selected for financial assistance under the Cleaner Industries Demonstration Scheme inaugurated by our Premier in September 1994. Will the Minister provide an update on the

progress achieved by the scheme so far and express his own thoughts on the scheme?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** My general thoughts are that it is a great scheme. It is a very good project that has been warmly welcomed by industry in South Australia. In the first round of the Cleaner Industries Demonstration Scheme, 14 very diverse South Australian companies that have projects of high economic and environmental value were selected for financial support. These companies were able to demonstrate their commitment to the environment by adopting cleaner production techniques and technologies and, as a result, have been rewarded by both financial savings and improved productivity. That is the good thing about this scheme: it is a win-win situation for those involved.

For example, Cougar Lighting, one of the companies supported last year, is saving approximately two million litres of water annually following the installation of a deionisation unit which has also significantly improved the quality of its finished product. Another example is Carramar Lighting—a small company in the South-East, Mr Chairman, and one which you would know well—which has developed an innovative spray booth through the assistance received under this scheme. This spray booth achieves zero discharge to the environment, recycles all the chemicals, saves electricity, and also provides great occupational health and safety benefits.

In the second round, 45 applications were received from more than 20 diverse industry sectors, including high growth sectors such as automotive manufacturing, foundries and the wine industry. The selection committee has recently chosen 17 projects for funding and a number of projects have been given financial assistance this year, indicating the extent to which the program will be able to develop in the future. It is an excellent program, one which is very strongly supported by my own agency and which also receives Commonwealth assistance. It is one that I hope the Government will be able to strongly support in the future.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** With regard to the document that you recently launched, in conjunction with the Premier, entitled 'A Cleaner South Australia', I understand that that is the first in a series. Would you comment further on that?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** It is intended that that will be the first of a series of documents to be released. I am keen to have a similar document released regarding the responsibility that the Government and this agency have in regard to native vegetation and conservation issues generally. What we tended to concentrate on with the first issue, 'A Cleaner South Australia', were the incentives that are now being provided and the work being carried out by Government with the support of community organisations and the private sector in business, relating to cleaning up the workplace, cleaning up our waterways, and providing the opportunity for people to recognise the greater responsibility that each one of us has in those areas.

That report has been very well received. I am keen for another report relating to conservation issues to be released as soon as possible. I believe that that report should be across Government, and it will involve other agencies as well. The Minister for Primary Industries has a strong role in relation to native vegetation and should be involved in that document. It is a good way of seeking consultation in, and input from, the community, and I am hopeful that we will release a series of these in the coming years.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** How many staff will be employed by the EPA and where have the changes occurred in the number of staff who were employed last year? In particular, how

many of each category of staff will be employed, that is, noise inspectors, etc. in the Clean Air Branch?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** The Director of the EPA has had to leave, so I may have to provide the honourable member with that information later. As far as resource allocations are concerned, and excluding funding from the South Australian Waste Management Commission, the Waste Management Commission was a self funding statutory authority and was funded to 30 April this year. An allocation of \$263 000 was added to the EPA allocation to offset the part transfer of commission resources for the remaining two months of the financial year. The estimated current allocation for the 1994-95 financial year was \$6.8 million, with employment numbers of 78.8 average full-time equivalents. The revised recurrent allocation figure for 1994-95 is \$5.6 million and 74 average full-time equivalents. The reduction in the recurrent allocation reflects the withdrawal of just over \$1 million allocated for the metropolitan kerbside scheme by Treasury and paid directly to the Local Government Recycling and Waste Management Board.

Other reductions included the deferral of projects and programs operating from the Environment Protection Fund and the departmental working account. The reduced number of average full-time equivalents from 78.8 to 74 reflects the EPA's contribution to the Government's 1994-95 Public Service reduction program. The recurrent allocation to the EPA for the 1995-96 financial year is estimated at \$8.5 million, with employment numbers of 79 average full-time equivalents. The increase in recurrent allocations for the 1995-96 financial year reflects the full year funding of the former South Australian Waste Management Commission and the operation of projects or programs funded by the Commonwealth or from the Environment Protection Fund, and both of those need to be taken into account. The increase in average full-time equivalents in 1995-96 reflects the EPA's projected employment growth.

Having said all that, I add that I am totally committed to the work of the EPA. As I have said previously, the Environment Protection Act was introduced into this House by the previous Government. When in Opposition my colleagues and I strongly supported that legislation, and the Government strongly supports it now. I am aware of the need to increase the number of full-time equivalent employees in the EPA, and I am keen to do that as quickly as possible. It is something that we have to work through at this stage of the piece, but I want it known that I have that commitment, which is shared by my colleagues in Government, because it is absolutely essential that the Environment Protection Office work effectively in support of the authority. As I have already indicated, the authority is very effective; we are very fortunate to have the people who have agreed to work on that authority.

**Mr CLARKE:** In the interests of expediency, as much as I like hearing the Minister's non-answers, I will use my time to put questions on notice. First, what advice has the Minister received from his department on the development of residential areas at Wirrina? Has the Minister sought advice on the question of changing the boundary of the coastal protection zone, and what was the nature of that advice? Did the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations seek advice from the Minister on the need for an environmental impact statement for this project? What decisions have been made on freeholding shacks? Which shack sites are eligible for freeholding, and where are the 234 sites that are ineligible? What costs will apply to

freeholding applications? When will the next rent review for shacks on Crown land be conducted? What is the forecast revenue from rent for 1995-96?

Regarding budget cuts and staff reductions, specifically the reduction of \$2.9 million in real terms, allowing for 3 per cent inflation, how many staff will go as a result of the cut of \$1.067 million from salaries, and what cuts will be made in each area? How many staff will be lost from National Parks and Wildlife? How are reductions justified, given the Minister's previous criticisms of parks management? For what boards, committees and councils does the Minister have responsibility within his department or agencies? Who are the members of each committee, board or council? What is the role and function of each committee, board or council? Regarding consultancies and contracts, what consultancies have been let by the Minister's department since July 1994? What was the purpose of each consultancy? Were tenders called, were specifications prepared and did the consultant prepare a report? Did the consultant make any recommendations?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Does the honourable member wish me to adjourn the debate? How long will this go on?

**Mr CLARKE:** These questions are on notice.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** The honourable member has asked more questions in the past minute than he has asked all day.

**Mr CLARKE:** That is because of the length of the Minister's answers. I have heard of people talking under water, but the Minister could talk under wet cement. I continue: if so, have they been acted upon? What was the cost of each consultancy, including the expenses? Will the Minister table a copy of all consultants' reports and list all contracts with a value exceeding \$100 000 let since 1 July 1994? What was the purpose of each contract, were tenders called and were specifications prepared? How was or is each contract supervised? Have agreements under environmental improvement programs been finalised, and will the Minister release details?

With respect to budget variations referred to on page 422, line 7, why has this year's allocation for animal welfare fallen by 30 per cent from \$930 000 to \$659 000, and how will this saving be achieved? With respect to page 422, line 8, why has this year's allocation for State heritage been reduced from \$972 000 to \$913 000, and how will this reduction be achieved? Page 422, lines 9 and 11, shows that the allocation for curation of the Botanical Gardens and Herbarium has been reduced by \$123 000 and that the allocation for recreation and tourism has been cut by \$412 000. How will these savings be made, and how many jobs will be cut?

According to page 423, line 4, land registration has been cut by \$832 000 and 6.5 full-time equivalent positions. How will these savings be introduced, and will there be any impact on conveyancing activities? How many transactions are dealt with on an average Friday? What is the average time delay for dealing with transactions? Will these cuts mean longer delays?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I understand now why I have not been asked a question on the environment since about 17 November last year! Many of those questions have already been answered today, but those that have not I will be happy to answer in the allocated time.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The arrangement in other Committees has been that, rather than permitting questions to be read at the end of the day across all lines, the Chair has insisted that

any relevant questions be asked at the closure of the relevant line, and that was the result a few moments ago.

#### Membership:

Mr Wade substituted for Mrs Rosenberg.

Ms Stevens substituted for Mr Clarke.

#### Additional Departmental Adviser:

Mr L. Powell, Commissioner for the Ageing.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The examination continues on the proposed payments that we opened this morning. Does the Minister wish to make an opening speech?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Yes, Mr Chairman. The Minister for the Ageing portfolio does not carry program responsibilities of its own that appear in the budget papers. The portfolio is a vital one, however, as it deals with the interests of a large section of the South Australian population. An ageing community is undoubtedly one of the key social issues facing our State, with significant whole-of-Government implications. South Australia's population is the oldest in Australia and will remain so into the next century. The number of people aged 75 and over will grow particularly fast, and it is they who are most likely to need more intensive care. The State's aged care services are also having to take into account the increasing ethnic diversity of its older population.

Most older people value their independence, and many are keen to continue contributing to community life. As the population ages, opportunities will be required to support these aspirations. South Australia is generally well placed to respond to the needs of its older citizens, although particular shortfalls have been identified in the provision of some services. However, the community's efforts to keep pace with the ageing of the population will be strengthened if they are pursued cooperatively and with a sense of shared purpose amongst the different interests involved. It was against this background that in October 1994 I announced the Government's intention to develop a 10 year plan for aged services in consultation with a wide range of interests in this field.

I believe that members will have received copies of a leaflet from the Office of the Commissioner for the Ageing setting out the aims and development process for the plan. I am particularly pleased that some 17 members of State Parliament have obtained the series of background papers prepared by the Commissioner to open discussion and consultation around this initiative. An ageing population, of course, has significant economic implications. The major costs will fall on the Commonwealth Government, especially in the areas of income security, health and care services for the frail aged. The main cost increases facing the State Government from the ageing of the population are likely to be in health and community care services and in the concession system.

Indicative 1993-94 costs of these State Government services to people over 65 exceeded \$570 million. The economic implications of an ageing society are canvassed regularly by the media in South Australia and nationally, often with the focus on older people as an economic burden on other generations. I want to emphasise the narrow vision of this approach. For example, it discounts the economic significance of the aged care industry, the recurrent outlays and direct care services of which alone exceed some \$400 million per year in South Australia. Even more important, perhaps, this narrow economic view underestimates the

financial resources and skills that many older people continue contributing to their communities and families.

Many older people act as grandparents, financiers, mentors and carers for the young. Family care is, of course, a two way responsibility. We should not forget the enormous benefits to older people's quality of life from the support of children and grandchildren.

It has been estimated that up to 80 per cent of personal services to older people living at home are provided by family members—usually by women. This contribution comes at very little direct cost to the community at large. The 10 year plan will provide an opportunity to achieve a more balanced perspective on these issues than is sometimes projected through public debate. The past year has been a busy one for aged services in South Australia and I have had the pleasure of launching a number of important new initiatives in addition to the plan.

The Elder Protection Program, the Seniors Information Service and an Ethnic Aged Information Program have all been well received and are already making an active contribution. I and my colleague the Minister for Health recently announced a strategy to improve care services for older people during and after hospital treatment. We expect shortly to be launching the Health of Older Persons policy, developed jointly by the Commissioner for the Ageing and the South Australian Health Commission over nearly a two year period. High quality services for older South Australians remain a key priority for Government, and I hope the tradition of broad bipartisan support for their continuing development will be upheld.

I table for distribution and insert in *Hansard* without my reading it the purely statistical 'Projections of the Older Population (South Australia)'.

Projections of the older population  
(South Australia)

Age Group	1993 ('000)	% of population	2006 ('000)	% of total population	% change 1993-2006
65-70	64.0	4.4	61.7	4.0	-3.6
70-74	52.9	3.6	50.4	3.2	-4.7
75-79	38.0	2.6	46.8	3.0	23.0
80-84	24.3	1.7	35.4	2.3	45.7
85+	16.7	1.1	28.8	1.8	72.4
Total 65+	195.9	13.4	223.1	14.3	13.9
Total 75+	79.0	5.4	111.0	7.1	40.5
Total 80+	41.0	2.8	64.2	4.1	56.6
Total 85+	16.7	1.1	28.8	1.8	72.4

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** That completes my statement.

**Ms STEVENS:** My first question relates to future plans for the Commissioner's office. I refer to the Program Estimates, page 442. It has been announced in the media that the term of the Commissioner for the Ageing (Lange Powell) will end in August and that the Commissioner's office will be restructured. Before proceeding, on behalf of the Opposition, I would like to say that we have very much appreciated the contribution that Lange Powell has made to services for the aged in South Australia. I would mention two or three areas that are worth putting on the record.

Lange Powell will have been the Commissioner for five years, I believe, when he leaves on 8 August. He has been involved in a number of lasting achievements and I will refer to just a few of them. He worked tirelessly and achieved consensus in relation to the passage of the amendments to the Retirement Villages Act; he worked with the Council on the Ageing in relation to the establishment of the Seniors' Information Service; he has been involved in the development of a number of important policy documents, such as 'The

Health of Older Persons Policy' and the impact of casemix on older persons, and earlier he was involved with the Age of Opportunity package. People in the sector have said about Lange that he has worked in a non-partisan and non-alarmist way to confront the issues and certainly raise community awareness in relation to ageing issues. We thank him for his contribution.

My question follows from the fact that the present Commissioner will end his term in August and that the office will be restructured. What is the purpose of the restructure? What is not happening at the moment that a restructure will achieve?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I thank the member for her question. At the outset, I wish to support in this forum the point that the member raised in her strong contribution about what Lange Powell has brought to his position as Commissioner for the Ageing in South Australia over the past five years. A number of initiatives have come about directly as a result of the input provided by Lange Powell as Commissioner for the Ageing, and I would certainly like to acknowledge that.

A question has been asked about the purpose of restructuring the office. The Government has determined that it is appropriate at the end of this five year contract to consider whether there is a need to change the structure of the office to ensure that it works as effectively and efficiently as it possibly can in working with older South Australians. I have given some thought to this. No final decisions have been made regarding the restructure. I am in the process of looking at a number of options which would need to be taken to Cabinet before a decision was made. As one of the options at this stage I am looking at the restructuring of the office to provide that there no longer be a commissioner but rather that there be a director of an Office for the Ageing and that the Minister have an advisory board or advisory council reporting to the Minister on matters relating to the ageing in South Australia.

I say that because I see the need for the greatest possible opportunity to be provided for input from the community. If we opt for an advisory board and if an advisory board is to be formed, it should be not representative of organisations but made up of people who are well respected in the role that they play and who have understood regarding Ageing opportunities in South Australia.

As I have indicated, no decisions have been made. I have met the board of COTA to discuss what it sees as changes that may be necessary in regard to the office. It would be my intention, before any decision is made, to meet people who are not necessarily associated with COTA and who are outside that peak body because, if changes are to be made, it is absolutely imperative that the widest possible cross-section of the community is involved in the process.

No decisions have been made at this stage. I would be very happy to consult the member for Elizabeth on the matter, because I am sure that she or the Opposition would want to express views. I am determined that special legislation will remain. Of course, the legislation that currently provides for the Commissioner for the Ageing would need to be amended, and objectives and aims would need to be spelt out very clearly in that legislation regarding any responsibilities that the office might have. I would be very pleased further to consult the member or the Opposition on that matter.

**Ms STEVENS:** Thank you for that offer, which I am happy to accept. As a supplementary question, one of the matters that I believe was very important about the Commis-

sioner for the Ageing was the autonomy of that person. In the new entity that you have just outlined, will the autonomy of the Director be preserved? Will the new entity be part of FACS or will it remain an independent body?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** As the member is aware, it currently has that autonomy, but it is also associated with FACS. The funding comes through the FACS line. That is why we are talking about the subject. I would imagine that that would continue to be the case, but I believe that it would be absolutely essential that the Director of an office—if that is the direction that we go—and of course the Chair of any advisory board or council, or whatever you like to call it—we call it a board at this stage—would report directly to the Minister and that that should be spelt out very clearly in legislation. It is essential that that should be the case.

**Ms STEVENS:** As a further supplementary question, it seems that the main change will be the reporting directly to the Minister, is that right?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** No, because the Commissioner reports directly to me now. I regularly meet the Commissioner in my office. That opportunity exists, but the funding line is worked through the Department for Family and Community Services. It is a subject to which I have given a fair bit of thought over the past 18 months. If I had my way, there would be a separate line for the Ageing portfolio. I have not been able so far to achieve that aim. It is something that I would like to discuss further with my colleagues in Cabinet and with the Treasurer in particular. It is important that that should be the case.

The member has referred to the importance of its being autonomous. I agree with that, but I believe also that there is a need for the office to have more teeth than it has at present. The Office for the Commissioner for the Ageing, an office for the ageing, or whatever we call it, has an important role in advocacy across government. It will not work effectively if that advocacy is not across government and if there cannot be appropriate advocacy as it relates to the Health, Transport, and Housing portfolios, etc. I believe that there needs to be more teeth provided through that office, and we are currently looking at whether we can provide that in legislation.

There needs to be a closer link, for example, between the office and Premier and Cabinet, because it is one of the most important portfolio areas and it will work only if there are teeth to ensure that all Ministers have responsibility. I am working at this stage to ensure that that can happen.

**Ms STEVENS:** My third supplementary question: currently, the Seniors Card production is handled through that office, and I believe that some aspects of that production have been outsourced. Do you intend further to outsource components of the production of that card?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I am considering that matter. I do not think it is absolutely essential that responsibility for the Seniors Card be handled from within that office. It could be outsourced in respect of the management of that program. I have had some discussions with the Council on the Ageing in regard to that matter. Again, no decisions have been made. Before I make any decision in regard to that matter, I would want to have wider consultation. I also recognise the need for me to determine a direction in a number of aspects as quickly as possible, because I will want to be able as quickly as possible to make the staff of the Office of the Commissioner for the Ageing aware of any changes that might take place. I have a responsibility to do that.

Other than that, I had hoped to be a little further down the track with some of those decisions than I am, but because of

the budgetary issues and the other matters that we have been discussing I have not had as much opportunity as I would like. It is vital that those decisions be made as quickly as possible, also recognising the need for appropriate consultation.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I draw the attention of the member for Elizabeth to a point that was made at the opening of the sitting this morning. It is the normal practice of the Chair to allow three questions and a supplementary question to conclude a line of questioning. I notice that the honourable member is developing a wonderful art form, in which one question and five supplementaries become the order of the day, followed by two further questions. The honourable member is on to her fourth question. There has been one question and three supplementaries. That was not the intention of the Standing Orders. The supplementary question was intended to conclude a line of questioning. I am simply saying that the Chair will not be allowing eight questions of which five are supplementaries; it deprives other members of the opportunity to question.

**Ms STEVENS:** In past budgets the Government has provided grants for seniors groups. In 1994-95 the total grants were expected to be \$169 000 of which \$42 000 was designated for Seniors Week activities and \$40 000 for COTA. During last year's Estimates the Minister said that the Office of the Commissioner for the Ageing was to recommend to the Minister:

... policy to address gaps in aged care programs aimed at encouraging and assisting older people to maintain an active involvement in the community.

How much was actually allocated under the funds for a seniors program in 1994-95, and how much will be provided in 1995-96?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** A total of \$138 940 has been allocated to 137 groups this financial year. The average grant was \$500. I do not have the amount made available last year, but I would be happy to obtain that information.

**Mr WADE:** Taking into account the Minister's stated intention of determining the future direction of the South Australian Seniors Card, could the Minister indicate to this Committee how the card has been accepted by older people and businesses since its inception?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I am pleased to answer that question because I feel strongly that the Seniors Card scheme has been an outstanding success with card holders and businesses alike. I am informed that the net number of card holders has reached 169 000, which represents an increase of over 140 per cent in the population since 1993. I am sure that all members would see that as a huge increase. Business participation in the scheme has increased by 30 per cent over the same period. The third directory of benefits, which will be launched in August, will generate revenue of \$172 000; sponsorship agreements and commissions negotiated by the Seniors Card Unit with participating businesses will generate a further \$75 000.

In short, the scheme has become self-reliant to the tune of nearly \$250 000 over a two-year period. I see that as a remarkable achievement, particularly recognising that the community has experienced a difficult economic climate. I also take the opportunity to mention that several members have contacted me over recent months expressing concerns about sponsorship arrangements in the Seniors Card. This is a difficult situation because obviously the Government is keen to attract sponsorship in this area. I have written to all

members explaining the nature of these arrangements and the privacy protections for individuals which are built into them.

I also emphasise the financial contribution which sponsorship makes to the success of the scheme. If we did not have those sponsors we would find it very difficult to proceed with the scheme. As I have pointed out, sponsorship and commissions will make up nearly a third of Seniors Card revenue in 1995-96, and it is inconceivable that the scheme could operate without this level of support. I would hope members would understand that. I know that two or three members in particular have expressed concern about this issue. They have been particularly concerned because they did not understand exactly how the process worked.

Concern was expressed about privacy protections for individuals. Those protections are built into the scheme and people need to realise that. We have made that information known to the members who have raised that concern. In response to the member for Elder, I would have to say that the Seniors Card scheme has been an outstanding success.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I note over the past couple of years an increased interest nationally in the export potential of Australian aged care expertise, particularly into South-East Asia. Has South Australia been involved in exploring opportunities within this area?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Yes, South Australia has shown an interest. The growing interest in aged care export is readily understood when one considers the enormously rapid growth of older populations, particularly in the booming economies of the South-East Asia region. We often think of Australia as having a fast-ageing population, and I have already referred to the situation in South Australia, but we should keep this view in perspective. While our older population will increase by about 137 per cent over the next 30 years, those of Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore are all projected to grow by about 320 per cent, and that of Indonesia by 414 per cent.

It is clear that growth rates such as these have major economic implications, especially when they are accompanied by fundamental social changes which make it increasingly difficult for transitions of family care for older people to be maintained. Japan, for example, is experiencing growth rates among the elderly roughly comparable to South Australia's but with a relatively under developed aged care infrastructure to support families facing economic pressures of their own. As I indicated in my opening statement, the Government wishes to encourage export orientation in industries for which the State already has a sound reputation.

It is important that that should happen, and I believe we have a great deal to sell overseas. Aged care is just one of those industries, and I have been pleased to note that some South Australian private and non-Government organisations and Government agencies, such as the EDA and the Office of the Commissioner for the Ageing, have been exploring its export potential. Mr Powell provided me with a report, following his recent visit to Indonesia, which listed potential opportunities for South Australia in this area. South Australia has, over recent years, been host to visiting delegations from Japan, China and Indonesia, specifically interested in study tours, visits to aged care facilities and post-graduate medical and other relevant formal studies at our tertiary institutions.

In conclusion, in 1997 Adelaide will host the sixteenth World Congress of the International Association of Gerontology. Over two-thirds of the congress's 3 000 expected delegates will come from overseas and, of course, the event will provide a major opportunity for South Australia to showcase its aged care industry in this professional environ-

ment, and that is something to which we should all look forward.

**Ms GREIG:** I would like to take a minute to thank Mr Lange Powell for the assistance and support he has given me over the past year. The Minister, in his introduction, highlighted the SA Elder Protection Program launched in September last year. Could he elaborate on what measures are being taken through this program to improve the protection of older people from abuse and exploitation?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** The Elder Abuse Program has been very much welcomed in South Australia. Elder abuse is a generic term covering physical, emotional and economic abuse and neglect of older people. We hear a lot about abuse as it relates to children, abuse in the home through domestic violence and in other areas, but we have not heard a lot about the type of abuse to which older people are subjected. It is not something that we should get out of proportion, because we are only looking at an estimated 3 to 5 per cent of people aged 65-plus. However, those people will experience some form of abuse in old age. The Commissioner for the Ageing has developed a policy and operational guidelines for dealing with elder abuse and has identified a need for a clear point of entry to the aged-care system for abusers, victims and notifiers.

The South Australian Elder Protection Program, which was launched in September last year, comprises a management committee of key age service and other agencies committed to a cooperative approach to elder protection. It involves four dedicated staff at a PSO2 level based in metropolitan domiciliary care services, but is responsible to the management committee for ensuring cooperative work by agencies in dealing with cases of abuse. It also comprises training programs and material developed for the South Australian environment. As at the end of May this year, the program has had some involvement with 318 people who were the subject of concern about possible abuse. Further statistical details can be provided. I am sure that the program is succeeding both in enhancing the provision of services to the victims and perpetrators of abuse and in supporting aged services agencies to develop their own capacity to undertake elder protection work throughout the State.

The recent passage of the Guardianship and Administration Act 1993 and the Mental Health Act 1993, along with the establishment of the Office of the Public Advocate, has strengthened and streamlined means to protect people with mental incapacity, including dementia, from various harms. It is something we need to be aware of. It is something that I and the Government are concerned about, and I am pleased that the Elder Abuse Program has been as effective as it has.

**Ms STEVENS:** How much money has been allocated for Seniors Week activities in 1995-96 and how much for the Council on the Ageing?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I will ask the Commissioner for the Ageing to answer that question. We might not have all of that detail, and if we do not we will make it available.

**Mr Powell:** I am not able to provide precise details of the amount given to the Council on the Ageing last year, but the funding for Seniors Week was in the order of \$40 000. I recall that the council has sought a similar level of funding for Seniors Week in 1995. The council also receives other funding through the Department for Family and Community Services, and I am sure it will be possible to get those details through the department.

**Ms STEVENS:** What was the outcome of the review by the Commissioner into gaps in aged-care programs, and what

changes to seniors grants will result or have resulted from this review?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Before I ask Mr Powell to provide some detail on that, I note that the honourable member is correct: I asked the Commissioner for the Ageing to provide me with details in regard to this matter with the gaps in aged care. It is a matter of some concern to me. The funding for ethnic aged is one that has received a considerable amount of attention in recent times. There is obviously a significant demand in the community. It is a matter of history that some groups have received significant funding over a period and, of course, the expectation has grown that that level of funding will continue while at the same time we are being advised on a continuing basis that other ethnic aged groups are looking for funding as well. It is a matter of determining the appropriate funding and whether the funding is available to go across the board.

**Mr Powell:** I will clarify what I think the question is addressing. The Grants for Seniors Program provides relatively small amounts of funding to large numbers of community organisations usually in a one-off or seeding grant mode as opposed to a recurrent funding program. Last year, my office prepared some proposals for an early intervention program for aged care services which aimed to pick up some of the needs that have been progressively more and more difficult to meet through the Home and Community Care Program as that program has focused more and more on the frail aged.

It is a generally held view in the aged care community and among consumer organisations that early intervention programs and programs to deal with specific social problems such as loneliness and depression can help to pre-empt much higher expenditure on community care services further on when an elder person is reaching a higher state of frailty. A report was prepared for the Minister on the design of such a program and some funding options, one of which could have been some modification of the Grants for Seniors Program to accommodate that area of need. However, that was only one option for funding and a decision has yet to be made on which option, if any, will be picked up.

**Ms STEVENS:** Will that review be made public?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Yes, I am quite happy to make that public.

**Ms STEVENS:** I refer to the transport concession review. During yesterday's estimates the Minister for Transport confirmed that a review of the transport subsidy scheme was being undertaken, and she did not take up an Opposition request to rule out cuts to concessions as a result of this review. Will the Minister's department and the Commissioner be involved in this review? Will the Minister assure the Committee that he will oppose any cuts to transport benefits for seniors?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Can I clarify whether the honourable member is talking about the transport subsidy scheme or transport concessions?

**Ms STEVENS:** I am referring to the transport subsidy scheme.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** That scheme has existed since 1987. There are a number of issues. I point out that I have not had the opportunity to discuss this personally with the Minister for Transport, although on a recent occasion it was suggested that we should do so. It is important that the opportunity is provided, and I would certainly want to make sure that both the Office for the Commissioner for the Ageing and I had input into that.



I am told that the cost of the scheme has risen tenfold in the seven years since it began, from about \$300 000 a year to about \$3 million in 1993-94, and an estimated \$3 850 000 this year. In comparison with other States, the Transport Subsidy Scheme provides an adequate service, but it is more expensive overall due to the percentage of members per capita than all other States except Victoria. Approximately 80 per cent of members are not confined to wheelchairs. The limitation on vouchers issued affects only a small minority of members, although for these people that limitation is very significant.

As to the specific question asked by the honourable member, obviously I would want to ensure that older people are not disadvantaged as a result of any changes that might be made, but I am not in a position to give further detail in regard to this matter without consultation with the Minister for Transport. I have already indicated that I recognise the need to do that and will be doing that. As the honourable member would realise—and I seem to have spent most of this morning and some of the afternoon explaining this to her colleagues when dealing with the environment and natural resources lines—ageing and the environment are similar in that they seem to cross over most portfolios, necessitating discussions with Ministers responsible for other portfolios. As far as transport is concerned, I will be having discussions with the Minister in the near future.

**Mr WADE:** In July 1994 the Government amended the Retirement Villages Act. What was the intent and extent of these amendments?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** There certainly has been a lot of debate about this legislation and the changes that are required. I have received much representation concerning it. As all members of the Committee would be aware, the recent amendments were proclaimed on 1 July last year. These legislative changes were recommended to the Minister for Consumer Affairs by the Retirement Villages Advisory Committee. I also met with that committee, which comprises representatives from Government, industry and resident groups.

In respect of non-legal disputes, the tribunal will now be able to act as an arbitrator or invite the parties to conciliate. That in itself is an important move. The Commissioner for Consumer Affairs is strongly committed to resolving disputes by conciliation. Alternative dispute resolution has achieved satisfactory results for all involved while avoiding the expenses associated with prosecution. The problem of the costs associated with prosecution, if the legislation moved in that direction, was one of the points raised with me on a number of occasions, so I am relieved that that has not been the case. As a vote of confidence in the agency, many administrators actively seek conciliation from the Commissioner's staff. Administrators have also shown a key interest in the changes and are taking steps to ensure that their documentation reflects the new legislation.

The changes have been very welcome. I think they were long overdue. In talking to members of the Retirement Villages Advisory Committee, I think they had been requesting changes for some time and, from what I can gather, they are very satisfied with the changes that have been made.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I refer to crime prevention strategy, particularly as it relates to the ageing. When I speak with many senior people, they are concerned about crime prevention and threats to their safety, although it is interesting to see that in my region there has been quite a decline in that, perhaps because of the increased policing but also because of

some of the strategies that have been put in place. What is the Minister doing with respect to crime prevention strategies, in association with the Attorney-General's Department, to assist the ageing?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** In the first place, the Government has allocated \$1.6 million to its crime prevention strategy in each of the next three years. These funds will be targeted towards crime prevention initiatives specifically and not towards programs designed to reduce the fear of victimisation amongst groups such as the elderly. Over half the crime prevention strategy funds will be allocated to local crime prevention committees in areas of high crime. I am a member of a Cabinet subcommittee that is looking at this whole area of how best to deal with crime prevention or to work through crime prevention. I am particularly keen to ensure that the problems experience by the elderly in this area are recognised, and I will continue to make that point known as the subcommittee works through its responsibilities in determining priorities.

Funding will be allocated to local crime prevention committees, which in turn will develop a strategic approach to local crime issues and determine how best to address local issues dealing with all facets of the problem. The State Government has allocated \$275 000 for exemplary projects. It is understood that there is a need, and I am sure that all members of the Committee would recognise that the ageing must be recognised in this area. The South Australian Police Department will be taking up responsibility for community safety. Aged people are recognised as a target group for any community safety program and, as such, I will be working as hard as I can to ensure that appropriate funding and facilities are provided to assist older people.

In conclusion—and I do not want to go on about this—I think it is a great pity that sometimes the media tend to dramatise a number of these issues. They instil a lot of fear into older people when we hear of the occasional incident. We would all recognise that, even if there are only one or two attacks on older people, that is far too many. I am sure we would all regard that as absolutely deplorable. On many occasions it is made a significant issue, and that tends to instil a lot of fear into older people about crime generally. It is a major problem that the Government needs to work through.

**Ms GREIG:** Nursing home bed availability was an area of concern in my electorate throughout most of the past year. What evidence is there that the nursing home bed shortage experienced in much of 1994 will not continue throughout 1995?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Responsibility for the provision of nursing home funding rests with the Commonwealth Government. South Australia is relatively well provided with nursing home beds, although their geographical distribution remains quite uneven. I know that very well in my own electorate. While the national target for bed provision is 40 per thousand aged over 70, at March 1995 the South Australian ratio was over 50 per thousand. Nevertheless, as the honourable member has indicated, an unprecedented bed shortage in nursing homes was evident in the metropolitan area during the first half of 1994.

I received a lot of representation from people who were very concerned about that situation. Monitoring of demand for nursing home beds by the Seniors Information Service suggests that the shortage has not continued into 1995, and I guess that is demonstrated by the following statistics. There were 220 nursing home vacancies registered with the information service in January to May 1995, and 378

prospective nursing home residents were registered with that same service. In short, while there has been a slight decline in the number of vacancies registered, the number of prospective residents registered fell by nearly 46 per cent relative to the same period in 1993-94. I certainly recognise the fact that there was a major hiccup in this area, as the honourable member has indicated.

**Ms GREIG:** Wheelchair accessible bus trials is an area of grave concern for a number of people with whom I am involved. When will the trial of the wheelchair accessible buses commence? Where will the trials occur, and how much will they cost?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** As part of the conversion to an accessible transport system, the Government will carry out trials of wheelchair accessible buses in the metropolitan area, commencing in July this year. I have not had the opportunity to talk to my colleague the Minister for Transport about this issue personally, but I was very interested in the comments I recently heard her make in the media. The Government is certainly committed to trials of wheelchair accessible buses as part of the conciliated agreement reached in a case under the Disability Discrimination Act last year. Since then in principle we have endorsed the national strategy for conversion to an accessible transport system, which is based on buses being replaced through their normal retirement program. If the member for Reynell requires further information, I will be happy to provide it for her, or she might like to speak to the Minister for Transport.

The first wheelchair accessible buses are expected to be delivered for trial purposes in July 1995. The trials of the buses will parallel and provide input for the standards being developed under the DDA. The trials will commence in the City of Adelaide area and then be extended progressively to priority areas identified by the action plan working party which will be established. An important aspect of the trials will be the development of design guidelines for modifying bus stops.

A special working group with local government engineering representatives, operators and wheelchair users is being established to oversee the trials and the modifications to bus stops. The sum of \$450 000 has been allocated for accessible bus trials and development work in the coming financial year. A special working party with representatives from local government and the disability community is being established to oversee the trials and, where necessary, develop guidelines for the modification of urban infrastructure, such as bus stops. A considerable amount of further information could be provided to the honourable member, and I would be very happy to make that available to her.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The Family and Community Services line remains open.

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

Mr Richard Deyell, Chief Executive Officer, Department for Family and Community Services.

Ms Tracy Stephenson, Senior Project Officer.

Mr Adrian Parsonson, Director Administration and Finance.

Mr Leigh Carpenter, Executive Director Operations.

Ms Madelaine Hedges, Director, Youth and Residential Services.

Ms Jan Lowe, Director, Home and Community Care Program.

Mr Rod Squires, Director, Community Services.

Mr Steve Ramsey, Director, Office for Families.

Ms Jill Whitehorn, Director, Policy and Planning.  
Mr Geoff Southgate, Manager, Accounting Services.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I wish to make a statement. The 1995-96 budget for Family and Community Services is an important milestone. The Government has now put in place the foundations for a rejuvenated economy, and this will secure lasting benefits for the families of South Australia. Sound financial management and the restoration of job opportunities is the Government's front line strategy for enhancing the independence and self reliance of families in South Australia. The 1995-96 budget also reflects a responsible and well considered approach to the Government's community service obligations to the vulnerable and families in crisis. The budget of \$237.8 million is more than was available last year and significantly more than the department spent last year.

Through a continuous improvement agenda the department has been able to make sufficient savings not only to cover last year's budget target but also to carry over funds for 1995-96 to offset budget and staffing target requirements. This will ensure that the department can continue with a considered and sensible reform agenda, which contributes to the whole of Government debt management strategy and at the same time ensures responsive and effective services. It has been necessary to review service delivery arrangements across departmental operations. Decisions have been made to withdraw some funding from two services on the grounds of efficiency and effectiveness.

However, no case can be made that there has been an agenda item about slashing services. The facts must speak for themselves: the number of district centres has been maintained; programs delivered from district centres have been maintained, including the anti-poverty program and its important prevention focus; service levels and programs in residential care facilities have been maintained; and funding levels to the non-government sector in all State funded program areas have also been maintained. Funding levels in the SAAP program have increased. The State Government has provided \$1.25 million to contribute towards the implementation costs of the new award. All shelter and support services have been maintained. Funding levels in the Home and Community Care program have increased and the programs to match growth funds from last year have seen significant initiatives for carers. Eligibility and entitlements for concessions have been fully maintained.

This is not a budget about reducing services to those most in need. On the contrary, the 1995-96 budget underpins important moves to strengthen and support families. The initiative to bring together the Office for Families, the Domestic Violence Resource Unit and the Children's Interests Bureau will create a much stronger critical mass for the family advocacy agenda. It will ensure that the family focus becomes the strong thread Government believes it should be in the across-Government agenda. It will build on the energetic work already begun by the Office for Families in pursuing a family frame of reference in Government decision making.

The restructure of the agency will herald further important developments in the planning and delivery of services. In particular, the separation of funder and purchaser functions will ensure that this State is at the cutting edge in developing and applying rational and effective models for contracting out to the not-for-profit sector. I am confident that we will be able to achieve a level of productive and informed discussion

in South Australia that will be driven by the shared concern we have for better outcomes for clients and for customers. There are always challenges in this portfolio. There are challenges about balancing the responsibility of the State to protect children with the responsibility not to be overly intrusive in the lives of families. There is the challenge of responding to those in crisis—the abused children, the broken families, women fleeing from domestic violence, the destitute and the homeless—but, at the same time, keeping a focus on early intervention and prevention.

There is the challenge of ensuring that providers, whether they be Government, private or in the non-government sector, are fully accountable for public money. I believe that, with this budget, the Government has recognised and risen to the challenge of balancing its community service obligations with the strong demands for constraint in public sector spending.

**Ms STEVENS:** I have heard the Minister's statement; I heard the statement that he released when the State budget was tabled; and I have read in detail his Program Estimates. The impression that I get from reading the Program Estimates is very different from the impression I get from the Minister's two statements, and I want to elaborate on that. There are three major points in relation to the environment in which we are operating and in which this budget is important. The first is the greatly increased demand that now exists for FACS funded services. All through the Program Estimates is a continual revealing of a consistent theme of a greatly increased demand for services.

For example, there is a steady increase in child protection notifications and assessments; a recognition of the interrelationship of poverty and the department's statutory client base; a recognition that poverty is affecting most in our society families with three or more children, single parent families, carers, disabled people and mentally ill people. We also know that the situation of financial distress in our community has been exacerbated by the introduction of poker machines. We note that the Government has raked in a huge windfall in extra revenue from the introduction of poker machines, but very little of this comes back to the people who are the victims of this introduction.

The second thing that is happening across the board is the withdrawal of other Government agencies from funding responsibility of community service provision and, in particular, this applies to the Health Commission. As a result, there is a greater burden on the Family and Community Services sector and, certainly, enormous strain on the non-government sector.

Finally, there has been a contraction of this budget in terms of State Government allocation because, clearly, this sector is not a priority for the Brown Government. The net result of all this is a disaster for those in our community least able to pay and least able to stand up for their rights. We have a Government and a Minister that espouse the rhetoric of family values but, when the crunch comes and it is time to put the money where the mouth is, they come a long way short of their professed commitment. We have seen long-term effective programs, preventive programs, scrapped or rendered ineffective. We are seeing current effective programs being undermined in subtle ways while, at the same time, the Government and the Minister proclaim that funding has been maintained. It is only because of the bolstering effect of Federal funding that many programs in this area have been saved.

We are certainly at the cutting edge. Perhaps I mean that in a different way from the Minister. All the while we have

a friendly smile, an affable manner, but those people who are bearing the brunt are those who can least afford it. As the Minister said, the facts will speak for themselves, and it is our intention to expose the facts and ensure that everyone understands the price that certain sections of our community are paying in terms of this Government's management. It is a price that I believe will ultimately undermine our whole community.

*Mr Brokenshire interjecting:*

**Ms STEVENS:** I am really making a point. My first question relates to the budget itself and budget presentation. The Estimates of Receipts and Payments, page 154, indicates that recurrent expenditure for FACS will be \$230.349 million in 1995-96, whereas the Program Estimates, page 435, indicates a recurrent expenditure of \$233.849 million. This difference of \$3.5 million appears to relate to the line 'Interagency support services not paid for' (page 438). There is also a \$5 million disparity in the appropriation from Consolidated Account, \$149.479 million according to the Program Estimates at page 439 and \$144.479 million according to the Estimates of Payments on page 154. What are the correct figures and why has inconsistent information been provided?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I do not believe that inconsistent information has been provided. Before I go into more detail on that issue—and I will also ask the Chief Executive Officer to respond as well—let me say a couple of things about the statement made by the member for Elizabeth. First, there has been no attempt at any time to cover up any facts regarding budgetary measures relating to this portfolio—none whatsoever. In fact, we have been very up front about these responsibilities.

The member for Elizabeth refers to the need in the community, but I remind the member that I know that need very well as on a daily basis I meet with people who come to me seeking more assistance because they are unemployed and because over a long period they have had funding gradually removed from programs on which they have relied. The main reason for that is the disastrous financial management of the previous Government that put us in this situation. Members to my right will continue for the afternoon to say, 'Let's forget about all that and let's concentrate on what has happened in the last 18 months.'

It is difficult to forget that fact. It is difficult to forget that so many of these programs are in need because of the financial difficulties in which South Australia finds itself, particularly because of the problems associated with unemployment in this State. I very much support the emphasis placed by this Government on providing job opportunities for South Australians because I believe that, if we can improve the employment situation, we will remove at least some of the needs or concerns in the community at present: that will remove some of the pressures that are so clearly on families and individuals in the community, whether through abuse, domestic violence or absolute frustration and the result of that frustration leading to abuse of some kind. That is a fact of life. It is also a fact of life that the average South Australian taxpayer at present invests each month about \$30 into the FACS budget and FACS related services. This is on top of their investment through their tax dollar on health, education, Federal social security and welfare payments.

It is not a small amount, and taxpayers are calling on Governments and those who use tax dollars for greater accountability, and that is something I support very strongly. It is not too much to expect this accountability to be shared

by every person or organisation using money taken from the wage earners' pockets and pay packets. We realise that there is significant need in the community and, as I say, I am receiving that information every day.

However, we also need to realise that a significant amount of money is coming from taxpayers. That is where the money comes from; it is not Government money. Taxpayers are providing that money, and that is also recognised in the community at present.

I know that there will be opportunities to respond to individual programs to which the honourable member will want to refer. I have already made clear the facts I have set out regarding funding in a list of areas where there has not been a reduction in funding, including funding made available for non-government sectors. It is all very well for the member for Elizabeth to shake her head, but that is the case. I look forward to questions being asked so that the facts can be put on the table.

**Mr Parsonson:** It is possible to provide a reconciliation between the \$233 million and the \$230 million that you are concerned about and the \$149 million and the \$144 million. I do not have that detail in front of me, but I would be happy to provide a written explanation of adjustments between the two in due course if that would be acceptable.

**Ms STEVENS:** There is an obvious difference. The issue of inter-agency support services not paid for is the other matter to which I referred in my explanation. What does it mean?

**Mr Parsonson:** The \$3.5 million on page 438 of the Estimates reflects expenditure shown in our account but which is undertaken on our behalf by the department of building and management.

**Ms STEVENS:** How are decisions made to determine how much of the department's recurrent and capital expenditure will be appropriated from the consolidated account, and how much will be provided from changes in the deposit account?

**Mr Deyell:** The budgeting process involved identifying for the total portfolio the total requirement for the forthcoming financial year. When that was submitted through the Minister to the Treasurer, we also had to identify the level of current expenditure in the current financial year. That process identified an anticipated level of under-expenditure which I had instituted as part of the current year's financial strategy. The Treasurer required us to identify that current level of under-expenditure maintained and carried across through the deposit account, and we took that into account in establishing the total allocation from the consolidated account to give us a total allocation of funds available for the next financial year.

**Ms STEVENS:** What was the balance in the FACS deposit account on 30 June 1994, and what is the expected balance on 30 June 1995?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** We will answer in general terms and then give the detail.

**Mr Deyell:** The rough order of those figures, although I can produce the actual details shortly, is in the order of \$6 million for the first date you identified and in the order of \$3 million for the second date.

**Mr WADE:** On behalf of the Liberal backbench, I commend the Minister, his staff and officers of the department for their work in preparing and presenting this balanced and positive budget which I believe truly reflects their continuing commitment to family support services, especially in difficult economic circumstances, which I might add we

inherited from the previous Government. These economic circumstances have plagued this State and placed increasing strain on the very fabric of family relations. I believe that this budget will make it possible to ease much of that strain. My question is: what targets have been set for Family and Community Services, and how did the department meet these budget targets for last year and this year?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** The budget target for 1994-95 was \$2.5 million: savings of \$1 million were made through targeted separation packages, and the remainder were evenly applied across the department's operations. As I indicated in my opening statement, through the application of a continuous improvement agenda the department has achieved significant savings above the target for 1994-95, and these have been carried over to 1995-96. Those savings offset the budget target of \$2.9 million for the coming financial year, and will provide the department with the opportunity to continue the improvement agenda as a flow on from the restructure of the department.

The department has already identified \$1.6 million worth of administrative efficiencies, which can reduce recurrent costs. It is anticipated that the departmental restructure will result in savings of \$500 000. Withdrawal from the Carelink program, the redirection of the debt line and options to be pursued in contracting out of support services will further contribute to the budget targets. Concessions, children's payments and funding programs to the non-Government sector have all been maintained, as I indicated earlier. Increased receipts from the Commonwealth are a result of the work undertaken this year by the Home and Community Care Unit to match the Commonwealth growth offer.

In respect of staffing numbers, the target for the department is 25 positions. There were some late negotiations around the budget to reduce the original target, but 25 is the agreed figure, and Treasury will ensure that the appropriate adjustments to the public record are made. I want to put that on the record early in the piece. I believe that the department will be able to contribute to the debt reduction strategy without placing undue stress on service delivery and with due regard to the needs of families and children in crisis. That is our core responsibility; that is what we are on about, and that is what I want to ensure happens as our highest priority in working through the Department for Family and Community Services.

**Mr BROKESHIRE:** I would also like to put on record with respect to Family and Community Services my appreciation, as a member of Parliament, of the Minister and the staff, particularly in the Noarlunga region. I appreciate the support that they give my constituents and my office. My question is partly about a lot of negativism that is being put out about the department, particularly (and unfortunately) by the Opposition. I say that with no apology whatsoever, because if there had been a focus and concentration on the southern area in the past regarding economic development and infrastructure and if we had been given a reasonable go we would not have had to call upon as much support as we do now from Family and Community Services. At least we are focused in the direction of infrastructure, economic development and the support of Family and Community Services. I want to have that clearly on the record, because they are the facts and the truth and they should be recorded. Now and again, there appears to be a rumour going around—I know where it is coming from, and I look across the Chamber to see that—about the Minister possibly narrowing the focus of the Department for Family and Community Services. I

would appreciate the Minister's comments on that matter with respect to this budget, which I see has substantially increased its recurrent expenditure.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** It has always been true that the department's major focus is on the statutory component of the work, and the Government does not resile from that. As I indicated earlier, there simply is no truth to the assertion that the Department for Family and Community Services is narrowing its focus in looking at core businesses. We are talking about abused children; we are talking about broken families; families in crisis, and a number of other areas. As Minister, I have a duty of care and an obligation to ensure that those services are maintained, and they will be maintained.

The value of prevention is fully recognised, not only in my portfolio but across Government, and it is certainly reflected in this budget. Whilst some savings have been generated to contribute to budget targets, the fact is that services will continue to be delivered but in more effective ways, and I have been keen to ensure that that happens. It is not just a matter of providing services but ensuring that those services are provided in the most effective and efficient way possible. In the case of Carelink, one cannot look at that decision in isolation from other programs, which have had increased or new programs funded into the budget, for example, the home visiting program in the northern suburbs funded by the Health Commission, which is a very welcome and innovative move.

Evidence from overseas and the views of social welfare experts point to the fact that these universal type prevention programs, such as home visitations, are the only programs which have been demonstrated to be effective in really reducing the incidence of child abuse. They can achieve the positive outcomes of early intervention, which are simply not possible in the type of programs that come into play where children and families are already damaged.

This is not to say that we do not need services for these families, which are provided through programs such as Keeping Families Together. I am pleased to say that this program has recently been extended to the Iron Triangle. I realise that that particular program was something the previous Government was keen to promote, and I strongly supported that. I am pleased that we have now been able to extend that program. In the case of Debt Line, we need to look at the big picture. There have been some savings but the services will be maintained through district centres as it is one of the department's most significant and successful prevention initiatives.

The anti-poverty program, which is maintained and supported as part of core business recognises the relationship between poverty, child abuse and neglect. It sees financial counsellors and social workers working together to help families function safely, and that is what we are about. In looking at core business it should also not be forgotten that the Government has made savings in programs which fund services in the non-government sector, many of which have an early intervention, prevention and community development focus.

Funds have been maintained to neighbourhood houses and community centres, family development services, programs that include anti-poverty prevention, family preservation services and youth services, to name a few.

To complete the picture, I would point to the initiative to bring together the Domestic Violence Resources Unit with the Children's Interest Bureau and the Office of the Family to create a much stronger critical mass for the family

advocacy agenda—and that is something that I support very strongly. Clearly, that development is not consistent with the view of a narrower focus. On the contrary, my concern is for the strengthening and supporting of families as a fundamental objective across Government. So, I can assure the member for Mawson that I do recognise that prevention programs are a core business of the Department for Family and Community Services and it is something that I will continue to support very strongly.

**Ms GREIG:** Like my colleague the member for Mawson, I also would like to put on the record my commendations to the Minister and his team for the work they have done in not only preparing this budget but for the work that they have done in our term in Government to date. I enjoy working with the team. I believe that we have a good working relationship and I also acknowledge the work of the Noarlunga FACS team and, in particular, Ken Teo and his staff who have supported all three members in the southern suburbs.

I do not have to tell you how angry the community is about the debt level we inherited and are still paying for. Even though we are seeing many positive gains for the State, families are still hurting. Opposition members have been very good at distorting the facts, and in their attack on this year's budget they have left many people asking: as the Minister responsible for the Office of the Family, how can you justify the cuts to Government services in the budget that have slashed services to families; what has happened to the Government's so-called commitment to families when the State budget was handed down; and is the process of preparing the family impact statement merely window-dressing?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I thank the member for Reynell for her question and, as she says, it is not true to say that Government has not considered the needs of families in this budget. I have been at pains to ensure that that was the case. The 1995-96 State budget is responsible. It is a well considered budget. First and foremost, we are working to rejuvenate the economy and, as I said earlier, restore vital job opportunities which are crucial to the economic and social well-being of families. I do not back away from that for one minute because I see that as being a huge responsibility that this Government has in this State at this time. This does not mean, however, that the Government has ignored its responsibilities to maintain and develop the services that families require. Government does have many responsibilities towards families, for example, to provide the education, health and development assistance that children need to support families in their caring role; to provide the essential services of daily life, such as electricity and water; to build a community climate which is safe to foster cultural development; and to do all of this in a way which enhances the independence and self-reliance of families.

It is a significant distortion of the facts to focus on the savings in the budget and not acknowledge the initiative which will benefit families. Many of these initiatives are in other portfolios, which is testimony to the increasing emphasis being placed on family strategy across Government. Whenever I can I take every opportunity to convince my colleagues and to make my colleagues aware of the responsibility that they all have in their responsibilities with separate portfolios in recognising the needs of families and those in need. I give my unequivocal assurance, as the Minister for Family and Community Services, that there is no Minister in this Cabinet who believes that family impact statements are window-dressing. In fact, the success rate, as recognised by

the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, has been very pleasing indeed.

The Premier has been uncompromising in ensuring that Cabinet decision-making fully considers the impact on families. His department has undertaken an independent review of the family impact statement which showed that there was almost 100 per cent compliance rate and 90 per cent were seen to be of adequate to good standard. It was a Government of which I was previously a Minister—not in this portfolio—between 1979 and 1982 that introduced the system of family impact statements. That system was removed by the previous Government and has now been reintroduced by this Government about 12 months ago. The results that have been achieved in that period have been quite outstanding.

Both in Cabinet and in their portfolio areas, my colleagues have demonstrated a commitment to considering the issues for families as a key factor in the often difficult decision-making process. Within the Family and Community Services portfolio, we have maintained our support for families. As a result of this budget, approximately \$2.5 million of new funds have been allocated to programs to support the carers of the frail aged and those with disabilities. This will provide valuable and much needed assistance which ensures that the elderly and those with disabilities can remain in the community, and it is vitally important that that should be the case. As I said earlier, I have extended the Keeping Families Together program to the Iron Triangle so that this service is available as part of an integrated approach to working with families where there is a risk that children might need to be removed for their own care.

A sum of \$2.6 million has been used to fund family support services in the non-government sector. These funds have been reviewed and a funding reallocation has occurred to ensure that this money will be used to provide support for families where it is most needed. This Government recognises the needs that families have, we recognise the importance of families in society, and we will continue to place a considerable emphasis on ensuring that families in South Australia are helped wherever those needs are greatest.

**Ms WHITE:** The details of the FACS budget (page 205, Estimates of Payments) indicate that the appropriation from Consolidated Account for the department has fallen by \$3.4 million in 1995-96 to \$144.5 million. On the other hand, the contribution from the Commonwealth has increased by over \$8.8 million to \$50.2 million. Why has the Brown Government slashed its share of FACS funding by \$3.4 million while the Commonwealth Government has increased its contribution by almost \$9 million? In the face of the ever-increasing demand for services, how can the Minister justify his cut in the State's share of FACS funding, particularly when he must be concerned that the Commonwealth will reduce its contribution to FACS services if the State Government continues to cut its share of services?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to provide more detail, but I thought that I had already explained that situation. I have explained the relevant points of the budget. The budget target for 1994-95 was \$2.5 million. A saving of \$1 million was made through targeted separation packages and the remainder was evenly applied across the department's operations. I have explained that the savings offset the budget target of \$2.9 million for the coming financial year, and it will provide the department with the opportunity to continue the improvement agenda as a flow-on from the department's restructuring, etc. It is as a

result of our working closely with the Commonwealth that Commonwealth funding has increased. We have had ongoing discussions and I have already explained that, through the tied programs with the Commonwealth, extra funding will be made available. I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to explain that in more detail.

**Mr Deyell:** The department has been able to address the majority of the targets that have been set in the departmental operating component of the budget through administrative efficiencies and, in particular, we have targeted accommodation with major efficiencies thereby moving out of accommodation that we no longer require. We have targeted savings of the order of \$500 000 in the next financial year. Savings of the order of \$500 000, again, have been targeted with the closure of the three regional offices which are not service-providing offices but which were part of the previous administrative structure.

Again, that contributes to a share of the budget target and operating costs. Other savings targeted through the administrative areas have occurred through unplaced staff and efficiencies in managing workers compensation and superannuation. Those efficiencies combined have gone a long way toward meeting the targets set in the departmental operating budget.

**Ms STEVENS:** I refer to page 433 of the Program Estimates and Information in relation to family impact statements. Late last year the Brown Government introduced family impact statements. Since their introduction the Government has made a number of decisions which have had an adverse impact upon families, including many of the cuts made in the Minister's own budget. Other changes made by this Government, including those in the education area—the changes to school card and the removal of free travel for school card holders—have been a particularly savage impost on many low income families. Did the Minister subject his FACS budget cuts, including those made to community organisations under the Families with Children Program, to a family impact statement? If so, did the family impact statement indicate that the severe cuts to organisations such as Anglican Community Services would have a dramatic effect on many low income families?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** As I indicated earlier, the 1995-96 State budget is a responsible budget, and it was looked at in terms of its impact on the family. I have already explained that the Department of the Premier and Cabinet carried out a survey to determine whether those impact statements have been successful. I point out to the honourable member that their purpose is to inform Ministers of the impact on the family in their portfolio areas. It is not something that I demand, and it is not something that has to be provided in line with what I request: it is up to individual Ministers to provide this information on the impact on families for consideration by the whole of Cabinet.

I certainly did that as far as this budget is concerned and, as I said earlier, I believe that that has been the case with my colleagues. I believe that they have been able to look in a constructive way at the impact of budget decisions on the family. As I said earlier, the purpose of the family impact statement is to put information before Cabinet on the likely impact on families. This means that the impact on families is considered in a balanced way along with all other considerations, such as environmental impact, economic impact, and so on. It is clear that family impact statements have been successful in putting information before Cabinet to focus

attention on the needs and issues of families. I explained that earlier.

I should say that the preparation of the family impact statement is only one part of a broader family impact strategy designed to bring about a family frame of reference at all levels of Government decision making, not only in Cabinet and Parliament but also in the operation of Government departments generally. That is something we have been very keen to work towards. It is my observation that there has been a change of thinking whereby Government decision making is now much more conscious of the family and the impact of Government decisions in many different arenas. This has occurred as a result of the preparation of family impact statements by Ministers and agencies.

**Ms STEVENS:** I need to clarify again what the Minister said. Did you say that you produced a family impact statement for this budget?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** No. I said that family impact was taken into account when decisions were made in respect of this budget. Family impact statements are prepared when a matter is taken to Cabinet. That gives Cabinet the opportunity to take those statements into account before a decision is made.

**Ms STEVENS:** You also said earlier that it was up to individual Ministers, because there was no requirement to do them. How much commitment is there to these family impact statements that are lauded everywhere? If it means that it is up to individual Ministers whether or not they are done, that there is no requirement to do them, and they do not have to do them on their budgets when they are allocating resources, what is their purpose?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I have already indicated that the Premier has been uncompromising in ensuring that Cabinet decision making fully considers the impact on families. It is the Department of the Premier and Cabinet that works through the Office for Families to ensure that Ministers accept their responsibility in the preparation of these statements. I have already indicated to the honourable member that an independent review of family impact statements has shown that there is a compliance rate of almost 100 per cent across Government, and 90 per cent of those statements were seen to be of adequate to good standard.

When those Cabinet submissions are considered by my agency, we determine whether or not they are adequate, and I have the opportunity to comment, as I do in Cabinet, whether there is a need for more attention to be given to the needs of families, whether the statement needs to be extended, and whether more information needs to be provided. The family impact statements are very strongly supported by the Premier and are required as part of the Cabinet process. I said earlier that it was not up to me, as Minister for Family and Community Services, to tell individual Ministers what information should be included. However, if a submission that comes before Cabinet requires further attention, I will take the opportunity to explain that through the Cabinet process so that everyone around the table ensures that sufficient attention is given to the requirements of the family impact statement.

**Ms STEVENS:** When you all sit around the table, does each one of you have a family impact statement attached to your budget?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** No, we do not. I have already explained that every Minister is required to take into account the impact on families in every budget that is brought before Cabinet. The Treasurer and the Premier determine the final

budget, but it is important—and every Minister recognises the requirement that is there—to take into account any impact that the budget may have on families.

*Members interjecting:*

**The CHAIRMAN:** The member for Elizabeth will address the Chair and the member for Mawson will cease interjecting.

**Ms STEVENS:** I want to pursue that a little more because family impact statements are a major policy plank of the Government, and I think we have a right to know quite clearly what is happening. During Tuesday's Estimates Committee, the Minister for Education and Children's Services said that individual budget decisions were not in the nature of Cabinet submissions and therefore family impact statements were not formally produced. Given that many budget decisions have a huge impact on families, will the Government extend the use of family impact statements to cover all future budget decisions which may affect families?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I say again that Treasury, Premier and Cabinet worked together to look at the impact of the whole budget on families. Some time was spent doing that, and I had hoped that there might be more reference to that in the financial statement and, in future, it would be my intention to ensure that when discussions were held within Cabinet that should be the case because I think it is important. Much effort went into talking to Treasury officials and talking through ministerial responsibilities on this subject, and I regret that more reference is not made to that factor in the financial statement. I would be working towards ensuring that that happened in the future.

**Mr WADE:** Incredibly, reports of child abuse are increasing in a world-wide trend. What steps is the Government taking to respond to this increasing workload within this State?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Regrettably there is an increase throughout the world in reports of child abuse, as the member for Elder has indicated. It is also true to say that there is a trend towards increasing child protection notifications and assessments as a result of the community's increasing awareness of the issues of child abuse and the onus placed on professionals to report. It is also undeniable that departmental operations have been the most challenged by the debt reduction strategy, not only by this Government but also by the previous Government.

While expenditure and concessions in the grants area have been maintained over the past four years, there has been an ongoing trend for Government provided service delivery to receive proportionately less of the allocation. The fact is that the department has responded to that challenge by looking at ways in which responses can be more focused, effective and efficient.

I was interested to hear that, in the recent Health and Community Services Ministerial Council, Senator Rosemary Crowley made exactly that point: that it was essential that that should be the case. Only a small percentage of notified abuse matters require statutory intervention. The majority of matters might better be described as child welfare; in other words, they are matters of family functioning, parental discipline and child raising practices, for example. There is growing concern that a complete child protection investigation in these circumstances is both overly intrusive and not cost effective.

Ensuring that allegations are responded to in an appropriate manner is a very complex issue. On the one hand, there are the fears of front line workers that a child may be seriously harmed if an investigation is not carried out and

blame will be transferred from the family to the worker. On the other hand it is clear that investing the agencies resources in investigating an increasing number of allocations is diverting these resources away from family support and away from these interventions and programs that are focused on strengthening families so they can meet their caring responsibilities. Clearly the challenge is to find the appropriate balance and to ensure that the day-to-day practice for front line workers reflects that balance.

In South Australia this balance is enshrined in the child-centred and family-focused approach of the current legislation. The approach is consistent with trends internationally and in regard to world's best practice. The developments in South Australia are also consistent with issues about practice being addressed nationally.

Each State and Territory is currently examining the system, which utilises a high proportion of child protection resources. This was a matter that was discussed at some length at the ministerial council meeting recently, and it is a matter of investigating ways in which these resources can most effectively be spent. A standing committee of community services and income support administrators is currently addressing that matter. The increase in child abuse and the reports thereof throughout the world is of particular concern to the vast majority of people. That is very much the case in South Australia.

**Mr WADE:** Did the Minister state that it was the previous Government that started to restrict the departmental operations at a time when reports of child abuse were increasing?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** There has been an increase for some time. It is not just with whomever might be in Government. Certainly, there has been a reduction in resources over time, and there is a need to ensure that the resources there now are effective. The whole matter of resourcing is significantly important.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** On page 443 of the Program Estimates, under the program title 'Services for Families and Children at Risk', I noted with interest a line under 'Specific Targets and Objectives for 1994-95', under which referral procedures for family care meetings were established and in place in time for commencement of operation of family care meetings as of 5 January this year. Many of us are interested in that initiative. Will you advise us of the progress to date with family care meetings and how you see them working?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I have recognised the importance of family care meetings. I was very pleased with what I saw in New Zealand some time ago and the progress that is being made in that area. Family care meetings are convened and conducted by coordinators employed, as the member would probably know, by a court administration authority. The Care and Protection Unit of the Youth Court was established in late 1994, when one senior and two coordinators were employed. The service came into operation on 5 January this year.

The department seconded a senior worker to the courts in the latter part of 1994 to assist in the development of complimentary procedures and practice guidelines for the courts and the department. Considerable time has been spent by the coordinators to date in personal skills training, developing and training a register of child advocates and informing agencies and services of the operations of family care meetings. The number of referrals for family care meetings from FACS in the first five months of operation was certainly higher than was originally estimated. FACS referred 81 matters to family care meetings in this time, of which 12 were completed and 40 dealt with by other means. The

rate of completion of family care meetings is now much speedier than for the first five months, when priority was given to training and establishment of the process.

The courts have recently been successful in securing additional resources for the employment of a further two coordinators by the end of this month. It is anticipated that the additional staff will increase the number of meetings which can be held and reduce the delays in holding meetings. In December 1994, the department employed the services of an experienced New Zealander, who was trained to assist FACS staff across the State to embrace the notion of family responsibility in the family decision making process. That worked very well. The department and the court have been working in cooperation to facilitate the provision of this new service to families with children at risk. There is a joint commitment to positive outcomes for children and their families in this process.

I indicate to the member for Mawson that a joint working group has been established to provide a reference point for discussion and resolution of procedural and practice issues. This group may be expanded or extended as required to include representation from other agencies. That is a matter that is still being considered. It is really still too early to evaluate the family care meeting as a model of decision making. There have not been a sufficient number of meetings held from which to draw any conclusion, and during the next year the department will continue to monitor closely the outcome of the family care meetings for clients. I say again in conclusion, it is a concept that I support very strongly. It can work well. It should work well, and I will personally be monitoring the opportunity for family care meetings very closely.

*[Sitting suspended from 5.58 to 7.30 p.m.]*

**Ms GREIG:** There has been a great deal of concern about the Government's approach to the issue of domestic violence. Where are we heading in responding to what is now accepted as a significant issue for the community?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I agree with the honourable member's statement in her question. There is a lot of concern in the community—and so there should be—about domestic violence. It is deplorable and cannot be tolerated, and a number of programs have been introduced to assist in that area. I made a statement on 16 May which I believe resolved any questions about the future of the domestic violence resource unit within the department. I must say that a lot of representation was made concerning the possibility of the closure of that unit. That was not intended. In fact, the decision to bring together the resource unit with the Office for Families and Children's Interest Bureau will create a larger critical mass which I believe will facilitate vital evaluation and strategic thinking around Government's role and responsibilities, and it is important that that should occur.

I would suggest that the challenge is twofold. The first challenge is to broaden the framework to family violence. It no longer seems sensible to separate the issues of domestic violence, child abuse and elder abuse as if they were separate and different social phenomena. In exploring the links, we can ensure that all those vulnerable to violence in the home and the perpetrators of violence are included in these strategic directions. The second major challenge is to continue to raise awareness of family violence across Government agenda, and this Government is determined to ensure that that happens so that we can develop a strategic plan for service delivery. State Government expenditure alone on domestic violence related



programs is conservatively estimated at about \$11 million in this State. Most of the service delivery is at the crisis end. Most of the resources are in the metropolitan area program responses, and that particular program responds to domestic violence in a number of areas.

Domestic violence programs in some communities (and I refer particularly to the Aboriginal communities) are not well developed, unfortunately. The strategic planning exercise needs to address some of these gaps and to look at innovative approaches and responses. Those who are not convinced of the need to focus on preventing domestic violence should consider that the economic costs of domestic violence to South Australia are estimated to range from \$56 million to \$77 million each year. If we factor in on top of that the costs of child and elder abuse, it is quite clear that family violence is a major problem, which is a significant drain on the community, both socially and economically. As I said earlier, it cannot be tolerated, and the community and Government together need to ensure that the programs that are put in place deal with that issue. I find that some of those statistics revolving around the cost to this State in a monetary term, and the cost to individuals, are something that people must recognise cannot continue to be tolerated.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** I was particularly interested to hear what the Minister had to say about the abuse of the elderly members of our society, which is one of the saddest things that occurs at the moment. It is a very sad indictment of some of our communities. I would like to raise the issue of domestic violence. The Government initially decided that the Domestic Violence Resource Unit was not core business for Family and Community Services and would be abolished, and the Opposition commends the Government for bowing to intense public pressure and deciding to maintain the unit. As the unit will now be located within the Office for Families and Children, can the Minister guarantee that resources and functions will be maintained at the current levels or increased?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** A lot of representation was made in regard to that matter. Certainly, there is a strong push from a vast number of organisations and individuals on this issue, and I welcome that. I do not think it is a matter of bowing to pressure, because I was concerned about any suggestion at any time that the Domestic Violence Resource Unit should be closed. That unit plays a key role in maintaining Government's commitment to combating domestic violence. A review of the unit's functions has been carried out, which reinforced the fact that a central focus for the issue of domestic violence is crucial to provide support and direction to community and Government efforts to combat domestic violence, as I said earlier.

As a result of the review and of the department's restructure, the decision has been made to integrate into the Office for Families, and I am very pleased about that. I can assure members that appropriate resources will continue to be committed to domestic violence. It is a core responsibility. As well as the unit there are other areas where the Government can take a significant role in dealing with this matter. I would be very keen to ensure that appropriate services are provided and, bearing in mind the difficulties we have as far as economic issues are concerned, if people can suggest to me that there are better ways of dealing with this significant issue, I would want to hear about it. But I make the point again that it is important to recognise the need to enhance the development of an across Government approach to this topic as well.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** The Minister said that it is important to recognise that these service needs continue to be provided. Will the Minister assure the community that, with the new arrangements, there will be no dilution in the approach to domestic violence as an issue primarily of violence against women? It is that focus we are talking about; determining policy and strategy to address that.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I can well and truly give that assurance.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** Categorically?

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

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** There is much concern in the community that support services for many groups will be greatly diminished in this program. Can the Minister guarantee that ongoing support to the 26 domestic violence action groups across the State will be maintained and that you will continue that support?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I can give an assurance that that will be the case.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** This will relate to the agencies such as FACS, health, the judiciary, the police and the non-Government sector?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** A specific question was asked in regard to those community action groups and the answer is 'Yes'. I recognise the important work being carried out by those groups in the community and I see it being vitally important that those groups be able to get on with that work and be assured that support is there from the Government through the department.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** Will the Minister also give a commitment to actively participate and maintain a commitment to national policy development?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** As to national policy development in regard to domestic violence, there is no intention to change or reduce any involvement with national policy. I have already indicated that it is seen as a major commitment or responsibility that we have. In fact, a number of initiatives have been introduced by this Government regarding domestic violence and we need to take those into account as well. I have said that as far as the Government and I are concerned domestic violence cannot be tolerated and we will take every action to ensure that that is the case.

**Mr WADE:** Some elements in the non-government sector have and do argue that contracting out is an economic rationalist's paradigm that cannot and should not be applied to community service delivery in the non-government sector. What is the Government's intention in respect of contracting out community services?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I am pleased that this issue has been raised because it is of considerable significance in our vision for community services in the future. First, let me be clear about my understanding of what the community, that is, the consumers and the taxpayers, expect from community services. First, I suggest that they expect Governments to meet their community service obligations to those people who are most vulnerable and to those families who are in need and in crisis. Secondly, they expect responsive, accessible and quality services that are obtainable. They also expect that there will be a clear accountability for public money, and that has been made clear recently in letters to the Editor. In that context organisations utilising Government funds, whether they be in the public, private or not for profit sectors, whether they are delivering power, water or welfare services, have to be called to account.

I have previously referred to that matter. It is my view that we have an opportunity in South Australia to strike a sensible and rational balance between quality of life and value for money objectives. The history and development of community services in South Australia has seen a more progressive and evolved sector than has been the case in the Eastern States. Many of the issues around the efficiency and effectiveness agenda which were summed up in the draft recommendations of the Industries Commission are on the table and being progressed in South Australia. South Australia has also done more than most of the other States to grapple with the implications of partnership as a description of the relationship between Government and the sector. I believe that the relationship that we now have is mature and solid enough to examine the implications of any model in a rational and productive way.

I believe also that we need to look at a range of models for contracting out. The issue is not whether we can apply them to the non-profit sector but whether we can achieve the outcomes expected by the community—and I think we should always have that in mind. The department will work towards refining Government policy in this area as part of its vision for the delivery of services in partnership with the sector. That work will also embrace the perspectives, experiences and expertise of central agencies to ensure that South Australia continues its drive for best practice in the contracting out of service delivery. I will also seek advice from my ministerial advisory committee on that matter. In times of financial constraint, I appreciate that individual organisations are concerned for their own position. Some 963 organisations are funded or contracted by the department at a cost in excess of \$84 million. However, the situation of individual organisations should not be allowed to hijack the debate away from the key issues, which I believe are: first, ensuring that the Government's crucial obligations to children and families in crisis are met and, secondly, that the community gets value for money through efficient, effective and responsive service delivery. Those two key issues are what my agency will be striving for.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I refer to page 446 of the Program Estimates, to support services and the line within the specific targets for 1995-96 which refers to the implementation over 18 months of the enterprise bargaining agreement and the achievement of strategies to effect savings and efficiencies. As a member of Parliament, in the interests of both the staff of FACS and also the overall reform of industrial relations throughout Australia regarding enterprise bargaining agreements, I ask: what stage has the Government's enterprise bargaining agreements with FACS reached?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I am pleased with the responsible way in which the Department for Family and Community Services has responded to this opportunity. The first enterprise bargaining agreement for the department is currently before the Industrial Relations Commission of South Australia for registration. An enterprise bargaining agreement contains both the Government's wage offer and identified areas for consideration to improve work practices in order to pay for at least the second and third \$10 per week increase. As members would appreciate, the agreement is between the department and the Public Service Association as the major employee organisation. Employees who were not members of a union did not seek representation on the single bargaining centre and the Employee Ombudsman did not seek to represent employees as either individuals or a group.

I said earlier that I was pleased with the way the department responded. The ballot amongst staff to ratify the agreement resulted in 862 staff agreeing, which was 68.8 per cent of all the staff asked to vote. That is quite remarkable, and I am delighted with that result.

**Ms GREIG:** Page 443 of the Program Estimates refers to the current review of the Adoption Act. The Minister may be aware that I share an interest in this area. What is intended in relation to the review of the Adoption Act, and will the review report be released for public consultation?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Again, this is a matter that is of particular personal interest to me. I regret that we have not been able to move a little faster in this area, but the reason for that is quite understandable: it is an extremely complex issue. There is a need for a considerable amount of consultation in the community. I do not know how many members in the Chamber tonight (I doubt any) would be aware of the debate that took place, particularly in the Upper House, when the Adoption Act was last before the Parliament. It was a very heated debate; it was a very complicated debate; and it is a subject on which there is a diversity of views.

A ministerial committee was appointed to review the Adoption Act, as members would be aware. The committee developed an issue paper, which was distributed widely, and extensive consultation occurred, including a public meeting. Some 168 written and 24 verbal submissions were received from individual people and organisations. The committee presented a final report with recommendations in October 1994. Amendments to the Adoption Act are required in a number of areas, including the discharge of adoption orders, step-parent adoptions and the adoption of adults. In addition, the Adoption Act must be consistent with the requirements of The Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoption.

I am very much aware of the member for Reynell's interest in this matter. The honourable member has spoken to me in the past couple of days about a matter which she sees as being an important amendment to be brought before the House, and I will be having further discussions with her about that. The most contentious amendments are those proposed to the provisions for access to information about past adoptions and the veto of access. That is certainly the subject about which we have received most representation. As I have said, adoption is a highly sensitive area of family life and, in particular, the issues around rights to information are extremely sensitive.

By their nature one person's right for access to information or privacy may necessarily be infringed by meeting another person's rights for access to information and privacy about the same adoption. Cabinet has agreed to the public release of the review committee report with a Government perspective paper. This consultation will ensure that the opportunities provided by the Government on this topic will be complete. A Bill to amend the Adoption Act is planned to be introduced in the spring session of Parliament and, at the same time, the department will have developed an implementation process for the review recommendations, which are supported by Government.

I reiterate: it is a very complex question; it is a matter that carries with it considerable sensitivities, both for those people who are affected personally and generally within the community. I look forward to ongoing consultation in this area, particularly as it relates to members in this House. It is important that members participate in a form of consultation before we move into the debate, so that everybody realises the sensitivity and the need for people to be aware of many

of the issues that are of concern regarding this piece of legislation. As I have indicated, it is my intention that a Bill be introduced in the spring session of Parliament.

**Ms WHITE:** I refer to the Program Estimates, page 442, where there appears a statement that financial counsellors have reported the growing incidence of people seeking assistance as a result of gambling related debt. Who are the individuals responsible for allocation of the gambling rehabilitation fund? What are the administration costs associated with the distribution of those funds, and are those costs charged against the fund?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** It would be best if I asked the Chief Executive Officer to answer some of that detail. In respect of the complexities relating to adoption, there have certainly been some complexities in this issue with regard to the most suitable organisations to deal with this matter and in receipt of funding. It was my intention that my ministerial advisory committee should deal with this issue in the first place. From that a more specialist group of people formed a committee. This committee was made up of industry people, people from within FACS, a Treasury representative and people who it was felt could have a direct input into this decision-making as to the appropriate agencies to deal with this matter. I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to provide more details with regard to the funding.

**Mr Deyell:** In relation to the members of the funding administration committee, the committee is chaired by Mr Dale West from Centrecare, who is also a member of the ministerial advisory committee on family and community development. Helen Lindon is the second member from that committee. There are two members from the industry, Ian Horne from the Hotels Association and Brian Kinnear. The Treasury is represented by Mr Geoff Knight. The Department for Family and Community Services is represented by the Director of Community Services, Rod Squires. They comprise the Gamblers Fund Rehabilitation Committee. The administrative costs to date have been borne by the department through the use of project officer staff and other clerical and support staff in the department. The Treasurer has recently approved a \$50 000 element to be committed to project staff to assist the fund committee. That will be the only cost that is not funded by the department to assist the fund committee.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Did the member for Taylor request details concerning the different agencies that received funding?

**Ms WHITE:** No, I did not, but perhaps you could provide that or take it on notice.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Was that for last year's \$1.5 million or this year's \$2 million allocation?

**Ms WHITE:** I am talking about this year. Why did it take so long after the introduction of gaming machines for funds to be allocated under the Gamblers' Rehabilitation Fund? When can we expect next year's allocation to occur and, when it does occur, will the new funds be used solely for services to gamblers or will there be a broader Family and Community Services agenda?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** As to the coming year, the committee will be making a recommendation to me when it has seen the outcome of the funds that have been provided. Quite rightly, the Government has been very clear about the fact that the program must be underscored by thorough research and evaluation in order to determine the ongoing service needs. The allocation of funds reflects that position.

After this first 12 months, we should be in a position to be clearer about both the problem and the response. It is not a matter of 'should' but that we 'will' be clearer as a result of much of the work that has been carried out.

However, I should like to use this opportunity to respond about the time taken. On a number of occasions, the media have referred to the time taken and have indicated that it has been far too long. The development of the Gamblers' Rehabilitation Program has been relatively fast, and that fact was reinforced by the Associate Director of the Australian Institute of Gambling (Mark Dickerson), who came to South Australia to look at what we were doing in comparison with other States and how we could be sure that we were dealing effectively with this problem. He commended the Government for the speed and soundness with which the funding has been put in place. It is not me or the Government saying that: that is the opinion of the Associate Director of the Australian Institute of Gambling. It was an unsolicited comment and it was reported in the *Advertiser*. If we compare the time taken here with that taken in the Eastern States and elsewhere, we find that we were well and truly out in front.

If we had moved into that more quickly without appropriate consultation, research and evaluation, we would have been criticised. In Queensland, it took two years for the funds to be distributed. Any criticism that we have taken too long is unfounded, particularly if we look at the time taken to carry out this responsibility in other States.

**Ms WHITE:** I have in front of me a letter to the Minister from the Chief Executive of Anglican Community Services, dated 16 March this year, which states, 'Our sector is yet to receive any of the money your Government promised and donated by the hotels industry to help alleviate this gambling problem.'

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** The Adelaide Central Mission was provided with \$25 000 as a once-off because it had been working in this area for a long time and had proven without doubt that it was able to carry out that responsibility. The honourable member indicated that the date on that letter is 16 May.

**Ms WHITE:** No, 16 March.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** It was announced on 28 May that agencies would receive funding from the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund. It was at that time that Anglican Community Services was told that it would receive \$120 000.

**Ms WHITE:** But it was promised last August.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** No promises were made at any time.

**Ms WHITE:** I thought it was announced last August.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** The fund was announced along with the action the Government would be taking and how the funding would be arrived at. At that time the policy was developed. I have already indicated that if we look at the time taken in this State compared with other States—and in Queensland it took two years—we have done very well. I would much prefer to be accused of taking too long than rushing in without carrying out the appropriate research. The announcement was made in August, but August to May is only nine months in any case.

**Ms WHITE:** Given the department's observation of a growing incidence of people seeking assistance as a result of gambling debt, and given the huge windfall that the Government has received from poker machines, why is there no Government contribution to the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** That decision was made by Government. The Government and the South Australian community have been very fortunate that the industry itself, before it was approached by anybody, came forward last year and suggested that it would make \$1 million available. It has increased that to \$1.5 million this year, and there is also the \$500 000 made available through the Casino. So, this year there is \$2 million, whereas last year it was \$1.5 million. The advice I have received is that that sum is adequate for the work that needs to be carried out. I guess it could be argued that the Government should be putting more money into this area or other areas out of the poker machine revenue it receives. However, the Government's priority at this stage is, as I have said a couple of times, to get the State back on its feet and to work through issues like unemployment, the provision of job opportunities, and so on. They have a very high priority.

It needs to be recognised that it is a front-line strategy as far as this department is concerned, if we are working towards families, to get this State back on its feet so that families and their children can stay here. Every member of this House would have heard somebody in recent times indicate that their children or somebody they know has had to move away from this State with the result that families were broken up because jobs were not available. I repeat: as far as this Government and I are concerned, the front-line strategy is to get this State back on its feet and to assist families. That is exactly what we will be doing.

**Ms WHITE:** The Government receives in the order of \$58 million from gambling revenue. It is the view of many of my constituents and of my colleagues that more of that money should go into this fund. With respect to the telephone financial counselling service (or Debtline) that will be closed, in last year's Estimates it was reported that total client calls to Debtline increased by 15 per cent, and country calls increased from 15 per cent to 26 per cent in 1993-94. How many calls were received by Debtline in 1994-95, and what proportion came from country areas? What is the Government's assessment of the impact that the cancellation of Debtline will have in terms of the work load as a result of an increase in the number of financial counselling calls that will now be made to FACS, particularly in country areas?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to provide that detail.

**Mr Deyell:** We estimate approximately 4 000 calls for the period ended June 1995. The percentage of calls from the country has not changed—it still runs at about 26 per cent. We did some more analysis to prepare the recommendation on the future of Debtline, and it became clear that nearly half the calls received—and that is a growing proportion—are either referred to other agencies or are referred to financial counsellors already in the department. As to how the service will be maintained, we are looking at technical solutions to ensure that people who use that number are automatically diverted to the financial counselling service through local Family and Community Services offices.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I am not sure whether the Chief Executive Officer mentioned that it is a toll free number for country callers. It is important that that service is provided. People who need financial counselling will also be able to access the service through the department's 19 district centres, either by telephone inquiry or by appointment at the office. I make the point about the toll free number for country callers because I believe it is essential that people in country

areas are able to access information if they are not near a district centre where it can be obtained personally.

**Ms WHITE:** As a supplementary question, how much is the cancellation of Debtline expected to save in a full year, and will the Minister provide the details of how those savings have been calculated?

**Mr Deyell:** The estimated saving is \$60 000, and it relates to staff costs.

**Mr WADE:** I refer to page 443 of Program Estimates and in particular to the fact that the Children's Interest Bureau has been integrated into the Office for Families. Will this move affect the Government's approach to the issue of children's interests?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** The Children's Interest Bureau has performed an important role in South Australia in bringing children's rights to the fore of public and Government attention. The bureau has been regarded both interstate and overseas as quite a force in promoting the rights and issues of children. There is no doubt that the bureau has been a major contributor to important changes in community attitude about child abuse and particularly child sexual abuse.

The challenge now is to build on that expertise and to ensure a relevant and appropriate response for the 1990s. There is no need nor intention to dilute the significance of the work that the bureau and its board has undertaken and will continue to undertake. In fact, the integration into the Office for Families will ensure a stronger family focus for children's interests and a productive role for the bureau. The amalgamation with the Office for Families will ensure that the agendas can be developed across Government as part of the endorsed family frame of reference.

I believe it is important, while recognising the respect which that bureau has gained both interstate and internationally, that the bureau be able to advise this Government on matters that are of particular significance and importance to the people of South Australia regarding such issues. I believe that has not always been seen as a high priority of the bureau, and it would be my intention to ensure that that is the case. There are on the board people who have a significant input to make in the areas to which I have referred, and it is important that the State is able to benefit from that input from those people as well, and that needs to be taken into account.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I was delighted to see on page 436 of the Program Estimates under the heading, 'Services for Families and Children at Risk' an increase in estimated expenditure of some \$3 million. I refer particularly to the barbaric and deplorable act of female genital mutilation which has continued for far too long. Obviously I assume that FACS would be liaising with the Government in combating this problem, and I would appreciate the Minister's response to that.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I am very pleased to be able to respond to that. In fact, last week I attended a meeting of the Health and Community Services Ministerial Council, and the matter of female genital mutilation was on the agenda. I was very pleased to indicate to my colleagues that the South Australian Government was the first in the nation to enact legislation to outlaw this practice, and there was a considerable amount of interest in that fact. The Associate Minister representing New Zealand was particularly interested in this matter because they have been trying to determine appropriate directions to take in relation to this type of legislation. I am led to believe that the Commonwealth also is looking currently at a national code based on the South Australian statutes.

In the budget for 1995-96 the Commonwealth announced that an allocation of \$4 million over the next five years would be made to the human services and health portfolio for an education program aimed at preventing the occurrence of female genital mutilation. The program is to be developed, we are told, in consultation with State and Territory Governments and affected communities. My department will certainly be liaising with the Health Commission in this State to ensure that an appropriate proportion of those education funds are spent in South Australia.

It is a very complex issue, and the action that has been taken in South Australia in amending the two pieces of legislation is the appropriate way to go. A considerable amount of interest is certainly being shown from other States in the action that South Australia has taken.

**Ms GREIG:** Page 443 of the Program Estimates refers to the Caring Families Program, which I believe is more commonly known as the Strengthened Families Program. I would be interested to hear more about the program. What are the major components of the program, where has it been established and where have you identified a support base for the program?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** The Strengthened Families Program, as it is now known, is an initiative that I have established to extend services to families in the western suburbs. The initiative came out of the policy with which we went to the last election, and it provides a service whereby families can gain support from other families in their local community. I was very pleased, at a function recently in Port Adelaide, to be able to speak to the coordinator of this program. She informs me that there is a lot of interest in the opportunity that is provided through this program.

It is a pilot program and focuses on strengthening and supporting families in difficulty in order for them to cope with the challenging needs of children and teenagers. Support is drawn from identifying, recruiting and using the caring resources—principally other families—within local communities. It has been a feeling of mine for some time that a need exists for people and communities to care for other people. I am sure that on numerous occasions people living in a street could help another family or single parent who might be in need or require assistance. In many cases one person who is lonely might be keen to assist, and in the same street there might be someone who is desperately in need of that assistance. That is what I want this program to be about.

We need to ensure that we do not have people who are interested only in interfering getting involved in such a program. It is necessary to be able to keep a watch-out for that. I believe the program can work, and I am interested in the results of the pilot program, which was funded from July 1994 under the auspices of the Port Adelaide Central Mission. An amount of \$89 879 per annum has been allocated to the mission for a two-year period. The success of the program will be evaluated at that time. Work with families was begun on 1 January this year, with 38 contacts having been made from 1 January until 30 April.

The program component areas are: family carers program, parent support program, group programs for parents and adolescent conflict, and community education. During a recent trip I made to the United States, I was interested to learn that a similar program was operating in at least two of the States I visited, where the opportunity was provided for people within communities to help families in need. The particularly positive aspects of the program are: contact is established with families within 48 hours of referral; work is

conducted within the family home (so there is no need for people to be moving out of their home, changing location or anything like that); and 20 families have already expressed an interest in providing support, and 12 of these are currently in training. For a very new program, that is a very good result. I reiterate: it is a good program, it has a lot going for it, and I will be very interested in the outcome of the pilot program.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** I am sure that the Minister is aware of an organisation called Men Against Sexual Assault (MASA). As I recall, last year the Minister proudly wore the white ribbon—as did other members in here, me included—that the organisation sells to acknowledge the women who suffer throughout the world at the hand of men. In spite of the repeated submissions for funding, the Minister has largely ignored the group. Why?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I did not ignore the group last year, because we made a one-off contribution. I am not sure what the situation is this year. You said 'repeated representation'; I know that it was extremely grateful because I attended its AGM last year. I am very supportive of that organisation and the work it is doing. I know that it was very appreciative of the one-off contribution made at that time. I will need to check through that. As I have indicated previously, a huge number of organisations are funded at the department. I have just been advised that we are not aware of any recent applications, but I will check that through. It is a good organisation, and a lot of the people who attend those meetings and functions are helped considerably through it.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** Certainly, there was the one-off grant, but surely the Minister would agree that, given the service that the organisation provides within the community, a one-off grant would not enable it to continue its activities. Its requests for funding surely are quite worthwhile and should be supported.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** As I said at the outset, a huge number of organisations and individuals are deserving of funding. I have explained, and will explain again if it is the wish of the Committee, the reasons why that funding is not available. If we had that \$3.5 billion that went down the black hole to help a lot of these people, we would be a lot better off, and so would they. But that is not the case. I appreciate the way in which the member for Torrens has asked the question, and I will look into it.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** The Minister will acknowledge that quite a few organisations in our community have ceased to be funded. MASA does not have ongoing funding, and I also mentioned SANDS, a matter I have dealt with on numerous occasions with the Minister. Organisations such as SANDS, MASA and the many others within our communities provide a real and cheap service to members of the community. So, the minor amount that the Government contributes towards these many small organisations overall saves Government a great deal of money, because they are serviced mainly by volunteers and voluntary activities. I would like it to be noted that the small sums that go to organisations such as those I have mentioned may mount up, but they do not mount up to a huge amount of money and the service provided totally surpasses any amount that the Government contributes.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** It is important that I respond to that. I repeat that 963 organisations are funded or contracted by the department at in excess of \$84 million. I understand what the honourable member is saying and that a lot of organisations are in need. In her opening statement the member for Elizabeth referred to one organisation, Anglican

Community Services. I have tremendous respect for the work that that organisation does, but let us remember that that one organisation receives approximately \$2 million of taxpayers' funds through grants. I understand what the member for Torrens is saying, and I find it extremely difficult to come to terms with some of those issues. Some organisations are very large and demand considerable amounts of funding.

I repeat that they do a tremendous job; I am not walking away from that and I respect what they do, but there are other organisations. There are 963 organisations that are funded, and there are probably another 100 organisations out there which do a fantastic job but which are not funded because the funds are not available. Trying to determine those that are more worthy than others in the receipt of funding is one of the most difficult jobs. That is why I have an advisory committee, which is almost identical in form to that which advised Ministers under the previous Government, to give me advice on these issues. It is a very difficult responsibility.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** It is a sad one.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** It is a sad one, because we do not have the funds.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** The Minister's budget press release listed severe cuts to a number of non-government agencies under the Families with Children program. The Lone Parent Family Support Service, the Holy Cross Lutheran Church (Murray Bridge), the Para District Volunteer Service, People Against Child Sexual Abuse and the Spanish Latin American Family Association were all completely defunded by the Brown Government. A significant provider of community services, Anglican Community Service, had its funding cut by \$73 700 or 13.5 per cent; Spark Single Parent Resource Centre by \$38 100 or 33.7 per cent; Tea Tree Gully Family Support Service by \$16 000 or 38.9 per cent; Upper Spencer Gulf Lifeline by \$26 200 or 66.7 per cent; Port Pirie Central Mission by \$106 300 or 47.9 per cent; City of Happy Valley Family Support Program by \$11 100 or 52.6 per cent; Australian Refugee Association by \$7 900 or 33.3 per cent; Migrant Resource Centre by \$15 800 or 50 per cent; and Indo-Chinese Australian Women's Association by \$56 100 or 54.1 per cent. On what basis was the decision made to terminate or to reduce funds to these non-government organisations?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** This is a good opportunity to get a few facts right, because on a number of occasions I have been asked why we have reallocated funds. Let me explain to the Committee that, when members of the Opposition talk about our reallocating funds, they should remember that it was their Government (under the Families with Children program) that determined that that reallocation of funding should take place. In fact, they wanted it reallocated to areas of greatest need; they wanted no reduction in the pool of funding; they wanted full consultation, and we have honoured all that. It was the previous Government that made the recommendation that funds should be reallocated, so members opposite cannot have their cake and eat it too.

They cannot be condemning us for doing what they wanted to do in the first place. If they do not believe that, let them look at the records, because it was the previous Minister who made those decisions. I went along with this because I was advised by the Ministerial Advisory Committee that that was the appropriate way to go. As I have already said, the advisory committee is in very much the same form now as when it advised previous Ministers under the Labor Government. But it was the recommendations that came out of that committee that the previous Government put up as

policy, and it was that policy that I virtually adopted. It is no good their complaining about the fact that funds have been reallocated.

Again I refer to the situation with Anglican community services. I have explained to those people exactly what the situation is. What we have done is reallocate some of that funding to enable funding for families to be made available in country areas. I could say that all the money should have stayed with Anglican community services to be used in the metropolitan area, but that was not what I saw as a need in the community. I saw the need also to get out and help families in country areas. I explained that at the twentieth birthday party of the Anglican Family Support Service, and when I talked to people in that room afterwards there were not many people criticising the decision that had been made. They were disappointed because funds had been cut in their area, but nobody was arguing that funding had been reallocated to provide more of those services for country people. I believe that is totally appropriate.

So, let us just get that right, because accusations have been floating across the floor tonight about this reallocation of funding and what a terrible thing it is. Opposition members need to remember that this Government has followed the policy set down by the previous Government—by their own Government when it was in office.

**Mr WADE:** Referring to Program Estimates Page 334, the Offenders and Rehabilitation Service (OARS) receives funding of \$3 000 a year, but members claim that they are unable to provide counselling services to ex-prisoners. At the same time Victims of Crime receives \$16 000 in funding from the Government and is able to provide a counselling service on this level of funding. Will the Minister clarify that situation for me?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I am very happy to do that. First, I have always been a strong supporter of OARS. The work that it does in the community is fantastic. It has been of concern to me that OARS is one of those organisations that has come seeking funds to be able to provide facilities and assistance for young people after they have left detention. Regrettably, yet again we have not been able to find the funds it requires to enable some of that work to be carried out.

In answer to the specific questions asked by the member for Elder, OARS is supported through the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program for the provision of accommodation services and support to homeless men. I am told that six accommodation outlets are operating across metropolitan/country areas. In addition, OARS receives \$33 000 to operate Banjora House, a crisis youth accommodation service. Funding through SAAP has a specific focus on accommodation services. The homeless men's service and the youth service provide crisis accommodation and support that is very much needed. Counselling is a component of this service, but in the context of addressing accommodation issues. A proportion of the shelter users are prisoners accessing the services on release from gaol. However, both the men's and the youth services are open to use by homeless men and youths generally.

I report to the Committee that OARS also receives funding from other sources. Amongst these it is funded by the Department for Correctional Services. It is not known what level of funding this involves, but I am sure the member would be able to determine that. It would be fair to assume that this funding would include a component of generic counselling to ex-prisoners and their families and this would appropriately be the focus of any discussion concerning

OARS's ability to provide counselling to its target group which, as I have said, are ex-prisoners and their families.

As the member has indicated, Victims of Crime have recently been funded \$16 000 as part of the reallocation of funding under the Family Development Services Fund. This funding is in order to provide a counselling and support service, including the provision of court companions to the non-offending carers of children who have been sexually assaulted. I hope that explains the current situation for the member for Elder. I repeat: I think that organisation is one of so many that does some terrific work in the community.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** Like the member for Torrens, I am also interested in supportive community based services. However, I understand that, given finite resources, most people expect the Minister and FACS to reallocate on a prioritised basis. Most people I talk to realise that this is a fact of life these days. I would like to ask a positive question about support for community based services. I refer to the Torrens Building and recent newspaper reports concerning the Minister's plan for non-Government groups being involved in that building. Can the Minister explain the plan in more detail and when is it expected that an occupation date will be set after refurbishment of the building for use by those non-Government organisations?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** This is another project that has been on the books for a long time without coming to any conclusion. The Government has agreed to allow all agencies currently involved in the project to be offered tenancy with a rental subsidy. Up to \$4.7 million will be spent on a capital upgrade of the Torrens building, allowing the majority of the building to be renovated.

I am sure that the member for Mawson and other members of the Committee would be aware that this is a significant heritage building. It has been vacant for some time and work needs to be carried out, and that sum of \$4.7 million has been set aside for the capital upgrade of the premises. Pending approval of the project by the Public Works Committee, it is anticipated that it will be ready for occupation by non-government agencies in September or October 1996. A total of 21 community service agencies will be accommodated as well as the South Australian Community Housing Authority. As I said earlier, the project constitutes a major heritage initiative as well as providing benefits of collocation and improved tenure and standard of accommodation for the community services sector.

The Government has also committed up to \$258 000 per annum towards rental subsidies and building management costs, further highlighting the commitment of this Government to making the project a success. I reiterate what I said earlier: this project has been on the books for a long time, there has been a lot of consultation about this issue, I think it is a very good project, and I am delighted that it is being dealt with positively, but it has taken a long time to reach this stage. As I have said, in 1996, the Torrens building project will bring to fruition the shared commitment of the community services sector and Government to establish a centre for collocation and improved services for the public of South Australia.

**Ms GREIG:** Page 444 of the Program Estimates indicates an improvement in the area of HACC funding. Together with my southern colleagues, the members for Mawson and Kaurna, I am keen to hear whether any additional funds may be provided to the Noarlunga Volunteer Transport Service for the purchase of a replacement vehicle.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Before I provide the Committee with the detail regarding this particular service, I will take the opportunity to commend the members for Reynell, Mawson and Kaurna: the support that they have given this service is quite outstanding. I have received a considerable amount of representation from those three members, and I recognise the commitment they have shown regarding this service. The Noarlunga Volunteer Transport Service provides a transport service for frail aged people and people with disabilities in the Noarlunga area. As members would be aware, the service allows people to attend day care programs and visit medical services. It operates extensively through the use of volunteers as drivers and assistants.

We should be very much aware of the commitment that those volunteers make to organisations such as this. As Minister responsible for three portfolios, I have the opportunity to move around the State, and I admire tremendously the amount of commitment and dedication shown by volunteers in so many areas. The service has sought additional funding from the HACC program to replace its vehicle, which was previously funded by one of the local service clubs. Apart from the issue of funding for a new vehicle, there have been concerns about the ongoing financial viability of the organisation, given the withdrawal of a significant funding component by the Noarlunga council some two or three years ago. At a meeting between the organisations, the local MPs and representatives of the HACC program, the volunteer service gave a commitment to ensure management within current levels of funding provided it was able to receive HACC funding assistance for a replacement vehicle.

Accordingly, I have approved \$20 000 of once-off capital funds from the HACC program for the replacement of that vehicle. I again commend the local members for their contributions in this regard and, as I said, a number of people who, in various ways, have contributed significantly to this program. One of those people is Jayne Delmore, and I congratulate her on the work she has put into this project.

#### Membership:

Mr De Laine substituted for Mrs Geraghty.

**Ms STEVENS:** Over the past hour or so we have had a couple of bursts from the Minister in which he has told us how hard it is to do his job in relation to the allocation of funds to the welfare sector. I do not disagree that it is hard to make decisions in those areas, but let us all be quite clear that the biggest problem the Minister has is that he is unable to obtain sufficient funds at the Cabinet table in the first place. I refer to a program called Carelink, to which the Minister referred at the beginning of this session and which has been closed. He made the point—and I wrote it down as he said it—that it was important not to look at the closure of Carelink in isolation.

I would like to provide some further information so that we do not look at the closure of Carelink in isolation. Over the past year, certainly since the election of the Brown Liberal Government, the northern area has experienced cuts to five services. They include the Para Districts Counselling Service, the Salisbury Creche Team, the Salisbury Wide Assistance Team (which provided home help), the Friends of Abused Children Task Force and Uniting in Care, a friends and family support program. Let us be quite fair about this and not look at the closure of Carelink in isolation but put it together with the cuts to those other services.

As part of his budget cuts the Minister announced the closure of the Carelink program, which is a joint program with CAFHS, CSO and FACS to support parents and children in the Elizabeth and Munno Para communities. Carelink provides a range of services and practitioners, including CAFHS nurses, social workers, psychologists, occupational therapists and teachers under the one roof. Carelink also visits homes and tailors services to meet individual family needs. I would like to read a short extract from a letter I received from a mother of a child who has developmental delay and spastic diplegia. She writes:

I am a client of Carelink. I have been with Carelink for 12 months. They have helped in so many ways. They have given me support ideas for my son, activities to try at home to help my son, and they have listened to me. It has saved me travelling time. I am not going from place to place for my son's appointments and there is no waiting period. To get this service from hospitals there is a waiting period of up to six months or more.

She continues:

I also have a another child who is 13 months who is doing well. Carelink have helped me with her. They have given me other ways to help to discipline my children. I am not hitting my children and Carelink is also helping them to reach their full potential.

She concludes:

Save CareLink, please reconsider my request.

She is not the only one, other similar concerns have been expressed by people in those sorts of situations. The Minister was reported in the *News Review Messenger* on 14 June as stating that CareLink is not needed because 'its services are basically available through FACS offices'. The Minister also claimed that no-one would be disadvantaged by these cuts. Will the Minister explain how this will happen (that is the services being basically available through FACS), given that FACS district offices primarily refer families to services like CareLink in the community because they do not currently have the resources to provide such services themselves?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** There are a number of issues that I will refer to in response to that little outburst. First of all, FACS will maintain a commitment to early intervention services in the area by ensuring that remaining resources are targeted to priority needs in a way that links into other initiatives and services for this group of people. The home visiting program, for example, being established by the South Australian Health Commission in the northern suburbs will provide a universal prevention program. Evidence has shown that this type of universal program is most successful in intervening early in family situations where parenting skills are of concern.

I say from the outset that I, in no way, accept that the Government has been negligent in its responsibilities to families in the northern metropolitan area. I anticipated that this question might arise. The perspective comes from an inability or an unwillingness to look at the bigger picture. The northern suburbs have traditionally been an area of intense focus for social planners and there has been an overlaying of service delivery which has had to be addressed in the interests of both efficiency and effectiveness. There has been no closure or downgrading of district centre functions in the northern area. The closure of the regional office was for administrative efficiencies and was matched by closures in both the southern and northern country regions. As I have said before, that was not in service providing; that was purely in the area of administration.

In terms of family support and development services, the policy and needs based planning across the State has resulted in lower levels of funding for the north. I am sure that all members of the committee will be interested in this

information. The north still receives the largest portion of metropolitan money from the program—almost \$343 000—compared to the next largest proportion in the south of \$237 000. Local area planning—and that is not planning based on centralised models—has ensured a rejuvenated and revitalised service delivery mix. There is now a level of cooperation and local coordination which I suggest will clearly outweigh any detriment from the loss of particular programs. I can go into some detail about what the member has referred to. I can look at the bigger picture in primary prevention and early intervention. I can refer to the keeping families together program, which is the department's flagship program for addressing some of the early intervention issues for families identified as at risk. That certainly has a very strong focus in the north. We have the partnership with Anglican Community Services covering Salisbury, Modbury and Enfield. We have had the partnership with Catholic Family Services since March 1994 offering services to high risk families in Elizabeth.

I could acknowledge the \$1.2 million over two years allocated by Health for the world's best practice home visiting program that will be piloted out of the Lyell McEwin Hospital. I could go on with a number of other initiatives but, in the broader scheme of things, I believe that the decision to rationalise the CareLink service can only be seen as well considered and responsible in the context of the department's requirements in servicing the community. The member for Elizabeth will not agree with that, but the figures clearly show that that is the case.

**Ms WHITE:** I refer to the program 'Planning services for Aboriginal people' and the allocation of \$102 000 for family and community development grants (Program Estimates, page 440). Under program 4, 'Services for families and children at risk', family and community development grants comprise \$3.767 million. Given the substantial over-representation of Aboriginal people as clients of the department in areas such as juvenile justice, child protection, substitute care, etc., why is it that a greater proportion of family and community development grants are not provided for Aboriginal families?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I am informed that grants in that area are for planning only and not for service delivery. I can provide further detail on that matter on notice.

**Ms WHITE:** Picking up on the issue of funds for Aboriginal families and Aboriginal people, I am sure that the Minister would be aware of a service which is very relevant to my electorate, that is, the Shed Project at Salisbury. That project provides a service to youth focusing on the Salisbury Interchange, working with young people and giving them an alternative. The project is strongly supported by Salisbury police and by the Manager of Salisbury FACS, and it has received funding from FACS in the past. Its current funding runs out in two months. Does the Minister support that project, and is he willing to commit some funds to it?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I do not know a lot about the program. I know that it has been very successful as a youth drop-in recreation facility and that a number of young people congregate there. I am informed that the program received establishment money from the Black Deaths in Custody funds through the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs, and it has been supported by State funds through the Crime Prevention Strategy. It has not applied for and nor does it receive funding from the Department for Family and Community Services.

**Ms WHITE:** I thought there was some small funding for incidentals and such from Salisbury FACS.



**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** We need to clarify that situation and get back to the honourable member. I think it was not as a grant but rather as some assistance that was provided through the district centre at the time. I am informed that the Salisbury district centre manager is working on local service planning with the community. She is in contact with the shed and is aware of the funding difficulties which the facility faces. She will assist it to develop strategies to ensure its future viability.

**Ms WHITE:** Is that a commitment from you, Minister?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** That is what I am saying is happening. She is working with them to assist them in developing strategies to ensure that it has a viable future.

**Ms WHITE:** An article in yesterday's *News Review* quotes the manager as saying that she is optimistic that a way will be found, but she also stresses the need. The implication in that article and in my private conversations with her is that she is very concerned about where the funding will come from. I am looking for some sort of commitment from the Minister towards the shed project.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I am informed that district centres can obtain funding. Regional community development funds are available for such groups, and the district centre will negotiate and look at this. I am told what the current situation is so, if the honourable member is referring to something that was said yesterday, I will have to get back to her. It is made quite clear to me, and I am saying to you, that the district centre manager is keen to ensure that the program's future is viable. We will check out that situation and report back to the honourable member.

**Ms STEVENS:** With respect to the SACS and CASH awards, referred to at page 445 of the Program Estimates, significant additional costs have been added to non-government welfare organisations as a result of changes to industrial agreements under, first, the SACS award for community workers and, secondly, the CASH award for crisis assistance supported housing workers, which includes workers in women's shelters and youth shelters; and a third impost has been increases in the superannuation guarantee levy. Prior to the last election, the Treasurer promised to supplement the budgets of non-government welfare organisations receiving FACS funding for the full cost of wage increases granted to employees working on FACS funded programs. What was the total additional cost in 1994-95 and the expected additional cost in 1995-96 to non-government welfare organisations providing services on behalf of the department as a result of changes to each of these awards?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Obviously I will need to get that information and make it available. I am sure that the honourable member is aware that the Government has allocated a total of \$1 million per annum for distribution to non-government agencies in recognition of increased costs being incurred as a result of the implementation of this award. This funding represents a very substantial commitment by the Government in supporting non-government agencies during a period of economic constraint. It is not appropriate for the sector to assume that the Government will fund award costs at the maximum level. That has been explained in some detail. The Government is not a party to the award, and it is reasonable to expect agencies to look at efficiencies in the context of award adjustments.

The \$1 million has been allocated on the basis of the funding that was being made available to each agency for salary costs prior to the introduction of the award and in the context of the phased implementation that was determined

when the award was handed down. All funded agencies received some funds towards award related costs up to 30 June 1995. However, it has proved difficult to obtain clear and comprehensive information on the awards impact, and this has led to some delays in this process. I am informed that agencies will be advised by 30 June 1995 of funding levels for the 1995-96 financial year, including award related funding increases.

The original phased implementation of the award was subsequently varied to incorporate the \$8 per week safety net increase. No additional funding has been made available in this regard, and it will be necessary to achieve efficiencies on an individual agency and whole-of-sector basis to offset these costs. I am told that the total cost of the SACS award is estimated at \$1.4 million and, as I have said, the Government has allocated a total of \$1 million per annum for distribution in regard to that cost.

The Government has made provision for the increased costs which will result from the introduction of the Crisis Assistance Supported Housing (CASH) award. Also, there will be an additional allocation of \$1.25 million to SAAP in the 1995-96 budget. Additional State funds will be made available to match the Commonwealth offer for the CASH award, and that will supplement existing provisions set aside for 1994-95.

Information is currently being sought from funded services as to anticipated classification levels and the level of after hours work and call-outs in requiring payment of penalty rates. In the administration of the program the department is keen to ensure that the additional funds are applied equitably and that agencies are encouraged to investigate alternative work practices which will minimise costs without reducing service quality. While the full effects of the implementation of the award are not yet known, the department is of the view that services at their present level can be maintained.

Finally, I make the point that the department will endeavour to inform agencies of funding increases as close as is possible to the 1 July introduction date.

**Ms STEVENS:** The SACS award was not covered completely by you, and there is a \$400 000 shortfall. You mentioned the figure of \$1.25 million in relation to SAAP; does that cover what is required or is there a shortfall in that as well?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I am informed that we really do not know what the shortfall will be.

**Ms STEVENS:** But there will be a shortfall.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** We do not know whether there will be and, if there is, we will not know the full effect of the implementation of the award. However, as I indicated earlier, the department is of the view that services at their present level can be maintained.

**Ms STEVENS:** Women's shelters must start paying penalty increases from 1 July this year and, as yet, they have had no undertaking from the Government that it will provide money to enable them to do that. If that money does not come through they will have to cut their services. Will that money come through to the women's shelters so that they will be able to pay their penalty rates from 1 July this year?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I am informed that the award will not even be brought down until 1 July, and I indicated earlier that the department will endeavour to inform agencies of funding increases as close as possible to the 1 July introduction date.

**Ms STEVENS:** With respect, the award is brought down on 1 July; there is a phase-in period for some parts of the award but penalty rates are applicable immediately. So, that is the issue that they are facing on 1 July this year, which is in two weeks' time.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I cannot say any more than that we will get this sorted out as quickly as we possibly can. There is no other way that we can do it because we do not even know what the full effect will be.

**Ms STEVENS:** But can the Minister appreciate how the shelters are feeling out in the field?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Yes, I know that and I can understand that.

**Ms STEVENS:** They are really hoping that the department will get it sorted out within two weeks.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I repeat again what I have said three times now: the department will endeavour to inform agencies of funding increases as close as possible to the 1 July introduction. As it is 22 June today, we are looking at only a couple of weeks.

**Ms STEVENS:** It makes planning difficult in the field.

**Mr WADE:** I refer to the Program Estimates page 442 regarding anti-poverty. One of the department's most significant and successful preventive programs is the anti-poverty program. Does the Government propose any changes being made to its funding?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** The Family and Community Development Program provides funding in five categories, one being anti-poverty services. Currently some 19 organisations are funded to a total of nearly \$600 000 through that program. I recently approved the anti-poverty funding policy, which was developed after a two-stage consultation process with anti-poverty services providers, including currently FACS-funded anti-poverty services. Future funding will be allocated to areas and groups of highest need, including newly arrived refugees and Aboriginal people. I realise that that reflects the priorities for services identified in the consultation process. I am informed that the organisations will be notified by September of any funding changes.

The total amount of funding for anti-poverty services is not being reduced, and I have indicated that previously. The development of the policy has focused on ensuring that funds are allocated in the most effective and appropriate way. We need to realise that those 19 organisations are receiving a significant sum of money, totalling some \$600 000.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I refer to page 443, relating to services for families and children at risk, and the objective to minimise risk of harm and abuse within families and to protect vulnerable members. Under 'Issues/Trends' it indicates that there has been an increase in child protection notifications and assessments over the past five financial years and that there is considerable awareness of the problem of child abuse in the community. What strategies are being employed in our State to prevent child abuse?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Earlier this evening I referred to the discussions that took place at the Health and Community Services Ministerial Council in Alice Springs last week relating particularly to this issue. The national strategy for the prevention of child abuse, commissioned by the National Child Protection Council, is currently undertaking the development of an extensive prevention and community awareness program.

Certainly this State has given full support to the national strategy and is represented on the council by a member of the department's senior executive, who has contributed to the

planning of the campaign in relation to South Australia. We can be very fortunate that we have direct input at that level. The department has assisted the national council by facilitating State consultation forums to assist in developing action plans for the disability sector and the non-English background community.

Several preventive strategies are operating currently in South Australia across the Government and non-government sector. These excellent programs include the primary prevention programs, which target the whole of the community, such as the successful 'Never shake a baby' campaign and the national Child Protection Week. The secondary prevention strategies target the population considered to be more at risk and in greater need of support and include services funded by the Family Support Program, including family support workers, SPARK and the Whyalla Counselling Services, protective behaviours training, parent education training and CAFHS/Torrens House providing intensive support for parents of young babies.

Also, there are the tertiary prevention services to help children and families when abuse has already occurred to prevent re-abuse, including the Keeping Families Together program to which I have referred on a number of occasions. We have excellent teams that are working in those programs. There is also the Central Mission Placement Prevention Program and the Aboriginal Family Care Program. So a number of strategies are being employed in South Australia with regard to the prevention of child abuse.

In response to the national strategy, some new initiatives have been developed with the cooperation and assistance also of the health sector. Two of these initiatives involve the establishment of a parent help line and a home visitation program for new babies. I understand that these services will be publicly announced later this year. To further complement the national strategy, it is important to provide a State sector-wide response, coordinating and linking the strategy to existing programs. This will best be achieved by establishing a joint government and non-government working group to examine the existing preventive programs, to ensure that they are enhanced, and also to develop future initiatives which are targeted appropriately and which complement the national strategy. It just makes sense that we are all working in the same direction.

Mr Paul Madden, the Director of Mission SA, has accepted the invitation to take the position of Chairperson of the working group, and the first meeting of the working group has been scheduled for early next month. I am looking forward to hearing more about what will be discussed and the findings of that working group. It is very important that the Government be informed with regard to this matter particularly. It is a matter that I certainly feel very strongly about. It will be an excellent working group with a large responsibility.

**Ms GREIG:** Surviving Sexual Abuse by Finding Empowerment (SSAFE) is a community-based organisation which is highly regarded for its work in the southern area. This organisation has worked well for a number of years with very little funding and this alone has created an uncertainty about its future? Will funding to SSAFE will be continued?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Yes, I am pleased to be able to inform the honourable member that the program has been refunded for a further three years at its current level of \$17 000. Surviving Sexual Abuse by Finding Empowerment is an excellent community-based organisation. Again, I know that it has the support of the local members in the area. It provides excellent support to the non-offending parents of

children who have been sexually abused. It is a very good program based at Noarlunga, and I am pleased to be able to indicate that that funding will be available at its current level for a further three years.

**Ms STEVENS:** I would like to read in some questions, if I can.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Can you give the Chair and the Committee an indication of how many there are? If there are 40 or 50 that would be unreasonable for *Hansard*.

**Ms STEVENS:** There are 15 or so.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Is the Minister agreeable that the questions should be read into *Hansard* now rather than later, as that would conclude the session? The honourable member has about 15 questions. I point out that, under a succession of Governments the practice has developed over the past several years that questions unasked have on occasion but not without denial been allowed to be inserted into *Hansard*. On the Premier's lines, the Chair did decline the Leader the opportunity to do precisely this and instructed the Leader to put the questions on the Notice Paper. Following discussion with the Premier and other Ministers, it was decided that, if the questions were read in on the line which was currently under discussion, and in this case I would anticipate that the honourable member would stick strictly to the FACS line, the questions could be read into *Hansard* before the termination of the session. There is some discretion with the Minister.

The Chair has another problem with this: if the questions are superabundant, it would make the 7 July and 14 July deadlines a little early. Therefore, I would hope that any honourable member inserting a large number of questions into *Hansard* at this stage would not complain unduly if some of the replies were supplied later than the due date. I simply make those points from observation over 20 years, and the practice has developed.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I have been around this place for 20 years too, and I do not recall that practice having occurred previously, but I will not stop it. I am delighted to be asked questions: it is a long time since I was asked questions by the Opposition. This is a good opportunity. My only concern is being able to respond to these questions adequately in the time that we have been given, and that is where it would be advantageous to have them placed on notice. I am certainly happy for the questions to be asked, as long as the honourable member realises that it might not be possible to have all the detailed answers available in the time allocated.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The Chair pointed out to the Leader of the Opposition to deny the questions being read into *Hansard* on the day of the Minister's interrogation is not denial of the right to question. They can be placed on the Notice Paper in the formal manner.

**Ms STEVENS:** What was the State's contribution to HACC funding in 1994-95 and how much of this contribution was provided by the non-government sector? Will the Minister provide details of the non-government sector contributions, including when the services were provided? Was the State contribution sufficient to achieve the full entitlement to South Australia under Commonwealth HACC funding? What were the comparable figures for State Government and non-government sector HACC contributions in 1992-93 and 1993-94?

Will the Minister confirm that the State's contribution to HACC funds must grow by 6.8 per cent to \$23.6 million in 1995-96 to achieve the full entitlement to Commonwealth funds? Will this level of funding be achieved and how much

of the State contribution does the Minister expect to be provided by the non-government sector in 1995-96?

Because of the Minister's unhealthy reliance on the non-government sector to fill the gap in HACC funding, how will he ensure that State priorities for the provision of Home and Community Care are met? What are his priorities for HACC projects and how much of the available non-government funding has been directed to these priorities?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Some of the comments the honourable member is making, such as 'unhealthy', would not be permitted on the Notice Paper, and the honourable member has the advantage of reading comment into *Hansard*. There is a difference in the nature of the question. I advise the honourable member to stick to the questioning rather than making comment.

**Ms STEVENS:** What are the precise numbers of adolescents requiring specialist accommodation services because of extremely difficult behaviour resulting from psychiatric and behavioural disorders? What proportion are they of the total number of adolescents in community residential care? What were the outcomes of the inter-agency model developed as a first step to providing appropriate placement and therapeutic intervention of adolescents with chronic mental health issues?

Will the Minister provide full details of each of the 115 full-time equivalent positions that were cut from FACS in the period 30 June 1994 to 30 June 1995? How many of these positions involve direct delivery of services to the public? What was the average employment of full-time equivalents in field services in FACS over the previous financial year 1994-95? It is the practice of departments to leave vacancies unfilled to balance the budget: what FTE vacancy rate was carried by FACS to balance its budget? What impact has this had on service delivery? What is the average length of time to fill vacancies in the department when they occur? What effect does delay in filling vacancies have upon service delivery? What is the average sick leave rate per worker for community support workers and other field staff in district offices and residential care units? How does this rate compare with that in each of the past five years?

How many youth workers now remain in district offices and how does this compare with numbers over each successive year since the 1991 restructure? What effect has any reduction in staff had on the ability of the department to manage community service orders and supervision orders? What proportion of children who have been ordered to complete community service orders have defaulted and what is the department's response to these defaulters? How many young offenders reoffend once they complete community service orders or conditional release, and what is the department's response to this? What percentage of placements in community residential care break down and for what reasons? What percentage of young people were charged while in community residential units? How many offences were committed against staff of units, and how many offences were committed outside the units?

What will happen to the training and development unit in the new departmental structure? If staff training is to be contracted out, will the principles of contestability apply so that the existing training and development unit can fairly compete for this work? Who will assess and monitor training courses? Will special courses be developed for the department's needs and how will these courses be accredited? In 1994-95 how much was spent on staff training and development in the department? How many staff attended

courses and what was the total number of hours spent by staff in training programs? What will be spent on staff training in 1995-96? How many staff will attend courses and what is the expected number of total hours to be spent by staff in training programs?

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** You go on about our wasting resources, yet you expect us to waste hours and hours in the department providing this sort of information.

**Ms STEVENS:** I thought this was about accountability, Minister.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The honourable member will realise that she is not to dictate terms to the Committee but is in the hands of the Committee. She has been given permission to insert those questions. The idea of having parliamentary committees is that the right to question should be distributed fairly between two sides of the House, and if the honourable member wishes to dispute the matter with the Chair I simply point out that, on Tuesday, the Opposition had 96 or 97 questions to the Government bench's 36; yesterday in this Chamber it was about 63 to seven. So, the question of propriety and fairness enters into this, too. I feel that the Chair's ruling is being questioned.

**Ms STEVENS:** I am not questioning the Chair's ruling. With respect, I am not disputing the ruling at all. I was simply asking the questions as I had arranged with you at the break, and I was simply running through the questions. It was the Minister who made the interjection there. I was simply asking the questions.

**The CHAIRMAN:** If the Minister feels that much of this information is already available in normal parliamentary papers, his officers are perfectly entitled to point that out to any member who has been too lazy to research that information of his or her own accord—and I am not suggesting that you have; I simply point out that this is parliamentary procedure. If the Minister feels that this information is readily available, he can refer the honourable member to the relevant papers for personal research. I thank the Minister and his staff for their forbearance in this matter. There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the vote completed.

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**The CHAIRMAN:** I wish to thank all members for a stimulating evening; the Minister for his attendance and his advisers; Mr Deyell and others; members for their questioning and *Hansard* for its forbearance, too, because its members will be working a little later tonight, I believe, because of our forbearance in allowing the honourable member to insert a substantial number of late questions; and the table members for their assistance. I thank everyone for their assistance.

#### ADJOURNMENT

At 9.57 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Friday 23 June at 9.30 a.m.