

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY****Wednesday 31 July 2002****ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A****Chairman:**

The Hon. R.B. Such

**Members:**

Mr R.L. Brokenshire  
 Mr P. Caica  
 Mr R.M. Goldsworthy  
 Mr J.R. Rau  
 Mr J.J. Snelling  
 Mr M.R. Williams

*The Committee met at 11 a.m.*


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Administered Items for South Australian Police  
 Department, \$4 105 000  
 Minister for Police and Minister for Emergency  
 Services—Other Items, \$583 000  
 Department of Justice, \$590 669 000  
 Administered Items for Attorney-General's Department,  
 \$49 816 000

**Witness:**

The Hon. P.F. Conlon, Minister for Police, Minister for  
 Emergency Services.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr M. Hyde, Commissioner of Police.  
 Mr D. Patriarca, Director of Business Services, SAPOL.  
 Ms K. Lennon, Chief Executive Officer, Attorney-  
 General's Department and Department of Justice.  
 Ms S. Miller, Acting Deputy Director.  
 Mr K. Penniford, Director, Strategic and Financial  
 Services Unit.  
 Mr R. Mathews, Principal Financial Adviser.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I will read the general procedure for the committee. The estimates committees are a relatively informal procedure and as such there is no need to stand to ask or answer questions. The committee will determine an approximate time for consideration of proposed payments to facilitate changeover of departmental advisers. I ask the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition if they could indicate whether they have agreed on a timetable for today's proceedings.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** As I understand it, we are allowing two hours for police, until the luncheon break, then after lunch I think two hours on emergency services—or, at least, from 2 to 4 p.m. The opposition is welcome to break that up in any way it wishes.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Changes to committee membership will be notified as they occur. Members should ensure that the chair is provided with a completed 'Request to be discharged' form. If the minister undertakes to supply information at a later date, it must be submitted to the Clerk of the House of Assembly by no later than Friday 16 August.

I propose to allow both the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition to make a brief opening statement.

There will be a flexible approach to giving the call for asking questions, based on about three questions per member alternating each side. Supplementary questions will be the exception rather than the rule. A member who is not part of the committee may, at the discretion of the chair, ask a question. Questions must be based on lines of expenditure in the budget papers and must be identifiable or referenced. On that point, the practice we have adopted this week is for members not to have to refer to the particular line or page, because it takes up a lot of the committee's time. Members will be brought back only if they stray from the payments that are under consideration. Members unable to complete their questions during the proceedings may submit them as questions on notice for inclusion in the assembly *Notice Paper*.

There is no formal facility for the tabling of documents before the committee. However, documents can be supplied to the chair for distribution to the committee. The incorporation of material in *Hansard* is permitted on the same basis as applies in the house; that is, it is purely statistical and limited to one page in length. All questions are to be directed to the minister, not to the minister's advisers. The minister may refer questions to advisers for a response. I advise that, for the purposes of the committees, there will be some freedom allowed for television coverage by allowing a short period of filming from the northern gallery.

I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to appendix D, page 2 in the Budget Statement and part 5, pages 5.1 to 5.89, volume 1 of the Portfolio Statements. I now invite the minister to make a brief statement.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** The first thing I should do is confirm (as everyone is probably aware) that the police and emergency services agencies are a part of the larger justice portfolio, which includes agencies under the responsibility of the Attorney-General, the Minister for Justice, Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Multicultural Affairs, the Minister for Correctional Services and the Minister for Gambling. It is because of that overarching responsibility of the justice portfolio that I have on my right Kate Lennon, the Chief Executive of the Attorney-General's Department and the Department of Justice, on my left the Commissioner of Police, Mal Hyde, and Denis Patriarca at the end.

This year's state budget for police includes funding for key initiatives, which will enable the state's police force to continue to effectively serve and protect our community and address the level of crime in South Australia. These initiatives have been funded not at the expense of police numbers on our streets, as was the case under the previous government, but by the government's commitment to deliver a service that is efficient and focused on crime prevention and crime reduction, and which fits within the government's overall commitment to tackling the correct priorities—the priorities which we believe the community wishes us to address. We have identified those as health, education and policing.

This government is the first government in eight years to commit to preventing the regular decline of police numbers that characterised the administration of the previous governments. We have guaranteed that, when police leave, they will be replaced. We saw the police, over the last eight years, put in an extremely difficult position on occasions when the government declined to replace retiring police and allowed

attrition to drive down the numbers of police to the point where in about 1998 (at its worst) the police were, in my view, in a critical situation. I will point out that the previous government was also, in our view, extremely cynical in regard to the way in which it handled matters of police recruitment. Prior to the 1997 election, after three years of cuts through attrition (and, in fact, in the first year of government, there were voluntary separation packages for police for the first time, I believe, in the history of South Australia), we saw the pre-election recruitment by the government. Subsequent to the 1997 election, after we saw that sudden splurge of recruitment in an election year, we saw further attrition, to the point where the police were finding it hard to carry out the difficult job they have.

The opposition has been critical of this new government's position, but I wish to inform members of our certainty that police numbers will not slip 200 or 300 below that which is necessary to do their job. The certainty that we have provided in this budget framework is, I think, an extremely important commitment to the people of South Australia. We faced a very difficult task in this budget. We came to an election saying a few things—that we would improve services in health and education, and that we would guarantee police numbers against attrition but that we would balance the budget. Balancing the budget, in those circumstances, has been very difficult. We were left in difficult circumstances. Pain was felt, and the opposition has talked about that at some length. But we kept our promises: we balanced the budget and we addressed our priorities. We did all that not only while quarantining the police from any budget savings but we also, in fact, increased the recurrent expenditure on the police budget, including some important initiatives. I stress that we believe that is a commitment that the people of South Australia wanted us to make. I also indicate that, should the budgetary position in South Australia improve (and we hope that it will) under a new and positive government, I will be in there fighting hard to make sure that we not only guarantee the police numbers but also that we seek to improve them. But that is down the track.

I should stress that the commitment to quarantining police numbers is not a small one because, in fact, employee costs and vehicles for those employees make up in excess of 90 per cent of the police budget. So, it means that, if we are going to be efficient in it, we have a very small space to work, and I congratulate the Commissioner and Kate Lennon on the job they have done.

We have been able to redirect some funding in order to address some crucial initiatives. We are committed to funding the capital works of the new Mount Barker station. I visited that station, and I have to say that it is ahead of the local service area. When in opposition I was astonished to see the station and the sorts of conditions in which we expected police to work. We have committed that funding to upgrade the station next year, and that is long overdue. We are funding the audio management system project which will facilitate interaction and backup between our emergency services communication centres. The establishment of a DNA management unit within the police department will provide an effective and coordinated approach to the use of DNA as an instrument for the investigation of crime and the protection of the community. This is a matter the previous government talked about a lot but never delivered on. However, this government will deliver on that.

I do not want to take up too much time making an opening statement because I believe—unlike the previous

government—that estimates should be there for questions from the opposition to examine the budget. I will say, though, that the bottom line of the approach for this government is that, as I have stressed earlier, we have identified the priorities we believe are important and South Australians believe are important. We have addressed them in this budget. We have addressed extra expenditure to health and education. We have—entirely as we promised—committed to recruiting against attrition for the police. Let me expand on that, because I note that while I was away the opposition spokesperson on police managed to ask some questions and suggested that we had done wrong by not committing to extra police. I will just run through that before we commence questioning, because I thought there was a great deal of hypocrisy in the approach.

We spent four years addressing the issue of police numbers. We put to the government over and over that the 1993 numbers in police—which it promised to increase by 200 in 1993—were below the base level required to provide policing services in South Australia. We had that fight day after day. The former minister refused to acknowledge that, refused to improve the police situation for a very long time and allowed police numbers to drop through attrition. It was only as a result of pressure from the opposition and, as I understand it, a campaign from the Police Association of South Australia that a response was got not from the police minister but from the former premier John Olsen when he set up an initiative—and I cannot remember whether it was some sort of premier's task force—to look at it. They then met the demands of the opposition and recruited about 200 extra police, which is what we said was necessary to bring us back up to the minimum levels.

I will not apologise for achieving in opposition what you normally can achieve only in government, that is, getting a good outcome. We will take a second step to achieve the second part of our promise, that is, once we achieve those numbers over the life of this government, we will protect them against attrition. It is about time this came out on police. I make this absolutely plain: this opposition spokesperson is now asking questions when I am not here about why we do not have more police. Three years ago, he was in here in estimates defending cuts that they made through attrition. It was only after a major campaign and the facts of the matter were handed over to the premier—and I stress that that is one reason why we should not have junior ministers running the police portfolio—and the premier became involved and the political pressure was put on that we overcame what I think was a crisis in staffing in South Australia.

That is a proper perspective in which to put this government's commitment to recruit against attrition. It is the best deal the people of South Australia have had in policing numbers since 1993 and we make no apology for it. While I am here, I look forward to more questions from the shadow spokesperson on police. I might be able to give him the answers he sought. That is my opening statement, and I am now happy to deal with whatever examination is necessary.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Does the lead speaker for the opposition wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** Thank you, Mr Chairman. I will try to be brief. I do wish to make an opening statement, given the comments of the minister in his opening statements, together with the fact that all members in this committee realise that this is a transitional year in a transitional estimates period. If we are going to write the history books, I would like to write the history books during that transition in a

factual way. First, I would like to put on record on behalf of the then Liberal government—now Liberal opposition—and me as a very proud police minister for 3½ years my and our party's sincere appreciation to all members of the South Australian police for their dedicated commitment, very well lead by the Commissioner in the executive arm of police. I also express our appreciation to the Chief Executive Officer of the Attorney-General's Department and Justice, Ms Kate Lennon, and her executive, and also right through the whole department. The way they went about their business professionally with this government is something we appreciated. On behalf of all our party, I put on the public record—and this is the first chance I have had to do so—our sincere appreciation to both SAPOL and to the officers in Justice and the Attorney-General's Department.

The situation in South Australia today is very much different from what it was in 1993. The minister, with the use of rhetoric, outlined the supposed history of our government. Today we have a budget that is under control, we have core debt way down, and we have a vibrant economy, which is at least the second fastest growing economy in Australia. We have unemployment levels at 6.6 per cent, as against nearly 13 per cent when we came into office. Obviously, that clearly has a big impact on confidence and on the tax basis and the way a state works. These things have an impact also on agencies such as Justice and, of course, South Australia Police. Initially when we came into office some pretty tough decisions had to be made. As best we could, police were quarantined from that, a lot by virtue of their not having to do work that they did before such as carting prisoners and sitting behind speed cameras, etc. We also brought in about 200 additional non-sworn officers over that period.

Also, on top of that, whilst I would recognise there was enormous pressure still on police—and, indeed, I would suggest there is today and will be in the foreseeable future—by the time we got out of office and during the three years that I was minister we were able to focus on SAPOL. We were able to see enormous growth to the point where, by the time we went out of office, we saw the total numbers of sworn and non-sworn officers increase by 6.5 per cent or thereabouts over 400 extra sworn and non-sworn officers, including record budgets in 2000-01. Of course, a lot of capital works were going on which we do not now see with police. I do not see a lot of other things happening when it comes to capital infrastructure for police.

I am pleased that the audio management system we put in place in our budget is being continued, but we must bear in mind that it was budgeted for and planned. The GRN is working well for SAPOL, and I am pleased to see that that is a great tool for them. With regard to the Premier's task force, I congratulate Ms Kate Lennon, my team around me and the Premier's team today because it was actually a partnership agreement with the police that actually brought that together. We had 113 extra police in the 1999-2000 second to last budget and 90 extra in 2000-01, and we would hope that that growth and support will continue.

I want to make a couple of final points. From the very first time when I became minister, I agreed that we would recruit at attrition. That was included in the first budget bid that we examined. Not only that but I also had an agreement with PASA that there would never be a reduction in the number of sworn officers through outsourcing or initiatives to bring in non-sworn officers unless there was discussion with PASA. The police do a great job for South Australia, we are proud of them and, in opposition, we intend not only to be

professional but also to put enormous energy into ensuring that this government with its much better budget situation than we ever had continues to grow the South Australia Police in the interests of community safety.

My first question is: did all of the 90 additional police recruits (budgeted and paid for in the last budget of the former government) enter the Police Academy by 30 June 2002, as well as the recruitment numbers at attrition which was part of our ongoing commitment; and, if so, when will these extra officers go out into local service areas?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Let me revisit this point, because I want to make absolutely plain the situation regarding new recruits. I spent four years in this place pointing out that police numbers were down by about 200 on what was needed to do the job. As opposition spokesperson, I argued about that for four years until, only about a year and a half ago, the former minister conceded (after the Premier got involved) that that would be the level of recruitment that the government would have. Of course, they were coming up once again to a difficult election. From the former minister's own mouth, I put to rest the suggestion that we were falling down on our job. It was after enormous pressure from us and following industrial campaigns that the Premier became involved, and the former minister stood up in the house and said that the level of recruitment that they were undertaking would give the opposition what it had been asking for: that is, an extra 200 police. The former minister stood up here and crowed about it, and I accepted that. I took the government at its word, and we believed that that had, in fact, been the level of recruitment.

To be absolutely plain, I have been consistent on this matter throughout. I established what I believed was a target for our police within our budget framework. I talked about it for four years. When it was achieved by the former government, I accepted that. I did not go back and say, 'Now we want you to put in another hundred,' because we did it on the basis of logic, reason and what we believed the budget would support. The former government was embarrassed or frightened into that position by political pressures, and we undertook to maintain what we said was the necessary base level for police. It would be easy to have hundreds more police to relieve pressure and do more than we do at present, but the budget does not allow us that scope. As we have promised consistently for four years, we did not believe that the budget would allow us that scope. It has allowed us the scope to do what we have promised to do for four years. This would be the first time that a political party has been criticised for keeping its promises as opposed to changing them. That is the position that we are in.

I understand that recruitment has been proceeding apace according to the proper program. I will confirm that with the Commissioner in a moment. However, let me say, first, that a second problem has been created by the former government's unwillingness to recruit against attrition and only to recruit in pre-election years, in that we now have an accelerated recruitment program and, as a result, there are many more inexperienced recruits working together on the job. That concerns me. It is our government's commitment to recruit against attrition to redress that problem over time. Understand this: this government is going to rebuild the police force, its morale and its capacity to do its job. I am quite happy—

*Mr Brokenshire interjecting:*

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The member for Mawson cannot hide behind the member for MacKillop.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** He probably can—he's not a very big fellow and the member for MacKillop is a big farmer. As at 1 July 2002, as expected, there were 109 trainees at courses at the academy, with the final course for the year commencing in June 2002, which should answer the question of the member for Mawson.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** Given the 6.5 per cent growth in the number of sworn and non-sworn officers during my period in office, why is the government not planning any growth whatsoever (not one additional police officer and, I gather, no additional non-sworn officers to assist operational police) during the four year budget projections of the Rann government? Why are there no extra police?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Let me explain this again. In my previous answer I said why I believe it is important to keep your word when you say that you are going to do something. We said what we were going to do, and that is what we are doing. However, let me make plain what we are not going to do: we are not going to treat the police in the way in which the former government did, that is, identify the political nature of the police more than their service to the community. The former government ran them down for three years in a recruitment pre-election year. That led to enormous problems. The commitment that we have given is to keep the numbers at what we believe are 1993 levels.

This fellow keeps talking about 6.5 per cent. We never believed him when he was in government and we do not do so now that he is an opposition. Let me make absolutely plain what we are going to do: we are going to give the police a solid, reliable base on which to do their job. The honourable member talks about a difficult budget. We are the ones who got in here and found an emergency services budget that had been completely wrecked by the former police minister. We had to find \$15 million a year out of Consolidated Revenue to boost the Emergency Services Fund without going to the taxpayer. We had to do all that and we still kept our word.

If the honourable member can point to a statement that is inconsistent with what I say, I invite him to go right ahead, because I said in this place that, on 1993 numbers, the police could take 200 extra. The former minister buckled under pressure—at least his premier did—and put in the 200 extra positions. We did not come back and change our story and say, 'Okay, we've got that; give us more,' because we were responsible. We will do it within our budget because we have promised to balance the budget. I indicate to the honourable member that we will do what he would not do. We will give the police a solid base on which to work year after year. We will not cut them in the off years and then recruit them in a pre-election year, because that has led to dreadful problems. We will rebuild the police force which the former minister wrecked because he played politics with it.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** I never expected to get any credit from this government for any work that my colleagues and I did whilst we were in government. Are the 40 funded positions for the relief pool (20 for the southern region and 20 for the northern region) fully committed; and, if so, what is the situation regarding the status of the relief pool, and what benefits has the relief pool contributed so far to looking after one and two person stations when officers are on extended leave? I incorporate in that question—because it is part of the issue—the commitment to equity and diversity within SAPOL, particularly with respect to its plans to ensure that women get an equal chance for promotion. Also, will the minister say what percentage of women are in positions

above senior constable, and what is the ratio of women to men in SAPOL?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I am happy to answer what are essentially two very different questions. I understand that the former police minister might be frightened that we will not give him enough time, but I assure him that we will. I am very happy to answer his question regarding the relief pool, because one of the consistent complaints that I made during my time as opposition spokesperson related to the absence of a relief pool. At my own expense and in my own motor vehicle, in about 1998 I drove 3 500 kilometres around the country visiting country police stations and police stations all around South Australia from here to Ceduna and back.

One of the things we noted was that the absence of a relief pool was having serious effects in regional South Australia where the Liberal Party would propose to find its natural constituency. Small stations where people were off for long periods of time were being covered by other stations. In many cases, one person stations were remaining unoccupied for 12 months at a time. We railed against this situation. I remember asking questions in estimates when I got back in 1998, and of course this situation was defended by the former minister. It was not necessary to have the relief pool. Again, it was only after a great deal of political pressure from the opposition and the Premier's task force that enough numbers were provided to create a relief pool for police. That is in place. As I understand it, there are 20 in the north and 20 in the south. A relief pool had not existed for many years under the previous government, but we will be able to maintain this one as a result of the commitments we have made in this budget in the out years. I am very happy to talk about that. As I understand it, there are 20 in the north and 20 in the south. I am happy to get back with any detail on that if it is wrong.

In terms of 'women in policing, equity and diversity', I can provide some data from the human resource information system and recruiting database. Women approximate 27.44 per cent of SAPOL's total work force, 20.35 per cent of the sworn work force and 58 per cent of the unsworn work force. The unsworn female level has remained constant for the last three years. The sworn female level has risen by approximately 35 per cent in the same period. Women constitute 3 per cent of SAPOL's officer level, whilst 41 per cent of sworn recruits are women.

The former minister referred specifically to the gender equity action plan. SAPOL has developed a gender equity action plan. I think they would be in big trouble if they did not, given that Kate Lennon is the chief executive of Attorney-General's and Justice. This plan highlights achievable actions relevant to women employees in SAPOL and is consistent with the Commissioner's Australian Women in Policing Advisory Council strategic plan. The plan addresses the following areas: recruitment, retention, flexible working arrangements, decision making, improving organisation performance, promotion and occupational diversity.

The plan has been implemented and conveyed to staff through SAPOL's communications strategy. The first evaluation report has been presented to the senior executive group, with further evaluations expected at six monthly intervals. Current research includes improving flexible working arrangements and relevant policies and an exit interview project to identify any possible discriminatory practices.

There is an inspector qualification program (IQP). Access and equity training modules, including coverage of women's employment issues, have been incorporated into the IQP

course. The promotional qualification framework pertaining to senior constable and sergeant examinations includes equity and diversity issues in the curriculum. All position information documents require key selection criteria to include equity and diversity issues. I would certainly recognise the great deal of work done under the former government and the leadership of the Commissioner in this area. It is an area we support and we will continue the work and support of the Commissioner and the chief executive.

*Members interjecting:*

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr RAU:** It is evident from the answers you have been giving that you are doing an excellent job in your role, and I would like to congratulate you on that. What background information can be provided about the announcement in the budget to replace the Mount Barker police complex?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** As I suggested in my opening remarks, in addition to providing a local service, Mount Barker is the headquarters for the Hills-Murray local service area. The existing facility comprises a collection of heritage buildings, the existing police station and converted residence, leased accommodation and a number of transportable buildings. When in opposition, I visited the Mount Barker site and was astonished to find the conditions in which the police were expected to do their job. I have joked in the past that maybe we should replace a lot of other public servants with police because you can get them to work almost anywhere in all sorts of conditions, but I had better not say that too much or they might arc up about it.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I'll help you get more money!

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** The former minister will help me get more money. That is very decent of him. A substantial increase in population growth and a relocation of operational servicing from Stirling to Mount Barker has led to a significant increase in the level of staff accommodated at this location. A new facility has been announced and is funded in the budget. It will accommodate local service area administration, investigations, intelligence, criminal justice, response, youth and community, police station, cells and support facilities.

The proposed facility will involve the purchase of a suitable site, sufficient to support the long-term needs of the police and possible collocation of the Mount Barker Magistrates Court. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$9.9 million with construction commencing in 2003-04. It is long overdue; it has been promised and promised, and it will be delivered. In terms of some of the opposition's comments suggesting that we are falling down on the capital budget, that is not true. I assume they are suggesting that it looks smaller than last year. That is because of the completion of the major Adelaide police station project, which was a major project and very much a one-off.

Our capital projects compare more than favourably with ordinary capital projects in the past. I point out that in addition to this we have made a significant increase in recurrent expenditure for the police to address cost pressures and needs that we have inherited. Again, we are very pleased to be able to fund the Mount Barker police station, finally to give the police a decent base from which to go forward.

**Mr RAU:** I can see the member for Kavel writing a newsletter now for his constituents about this great announcement! What commitments has the government made in relation to the use of DNA profiling to assist the investigation of crime in South Australia?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** This is again an area that we heard over and over from the previous government of all the good things that were going to happen but we did not see very much happen at all. DNA has the ability to identify suspects for criminal offences and to eliminate those not involved. As such, it is a very powerful source of intelligence, particularly when profiles are incorporated into a database. Currently DNA profiles from suspects can be placed onto a database only following their conviction for the offence in relation to which the sample was obtained.

A database has been established in South Australia and is producing significant results. Currently the SA database holds more than 2 000 DNA profiles which have provided 452 matches between crimes or with an offender. A total of 40 convicted offenders have matched previously unsolved crimes. Profiles from the South Australian database will be uploaded to the CrimTrac National DNA database once it is implemented in the near future.

The Attorney-General has been working on comprehensive amendments to the Criminal Law (Forensic Procedures) Act which will compel any prisoner who has been convicted of an offence, no matter how minor, to give a DNA sample. We believe that this is a very important step forward in what really amounts to, I guess, modern fingerprinting. I was not around at the time but I assume the capacity to identify people by fingerprints was an enormous step forward in investigation and law enforcement; so is DNA technology.

The budget announcements in these initiatives should result in a longer term reduction in the number of old unsolved crimes. I think I can indicate that four extra police have been provided for DNA measures. We have not just met our promise but we have exceeded it. We are over-achievers in the Labor Party. This matter of DNA was something that was talked about and talked about under the previous government. The proper steps have been taken and it has actually been done in the first 100 days of this government.

**Mr CAICA:** Will the minister tell the committee of his concerns, if any, that greater pressure will be applied to the police budget by the commonwealth's proposal to replace the National Crime Authority with the Australian Crime Commission (ACC)?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I will, and I am quite interested to hear the views of the opposition on this. I am very concerned about the pressure that will be put on our budget by the commonwealth's proposal for an ACC. As a bit of history, I think the commonwealth was playing politics—as it has on many of these issues in the past—when it announced after 11 September (and in the light of problems with such matters as heroin imports and illegal hand guns) an enhanced national crime fighting capacity. That is at least what we were told would occur.

However, what we were advised about by the commonwealth is a proposal to replace the NCA with an ACC, which would have, in fact, reduced budgets, with two specific programs of about \$12 million being cut, and which would have its capacity to investigate crime slashed. Under the current commonwealth proposal a maximum of 50 per cent of the current investigative capacity would exist in the new ACC. With the cut programs and that, the state ministers identified that a best estimate would be a transfer to the states of some \$35 million worth of investigative costs.

It is impossible to quantify just what South Australia's share might be because it is really a matter of where the organised crime lords and drug barons are operating, but plainly the states, faced with the commonwealth's vacating

\$35 million worth of investigations a year, would either be picking it up or it would not be done, and neither of those are outcomes with which any Australian would be pleased. I should also say that the commonwealth's proposal was that, while it did undertake to preserve NCA officers in Queensland and Western Australia, we could get no such undertaking for South Australia, so it would also include the closure of the office in South Australia.

It is not surprising that not a single state or territory minister could warm to the commonwealth's proposal. The proposal saw united opposition and, in fact, the current chair of the NCA in his report to the intergovernmental committee on justice, when pressed on questioning by the state ministers, also indicated very grave concerns about the new model proposed by the commonwealth. It is a blatant cost shift to the states. It has nothing to do with enhancing national police capacities—in fact, it appears significantly to undermine them, and it has the support of no-one, not even the current head of the NCA.

We attempted to find out what logic underpinned this approach, and we were told that it was as a result of a report which went to the commonwealth cabinet and which detailed three options. That report is a secret one. Apparently, no commissioner in the country or any state minister is trustworthy enough to see what that report said or even to know what the other options were. We have very grave concerns about the bona fides of the commonwealth in attempting to provide a more enhanced service. We do not believe it is doing so. We believe that it is a blatant cost-shifting exercise to the states.

We are committed to tackling crime in South Australia. We have a tight budgetary situation, and we cannot afford to be picking up work that the commonwealth should be doing. I make it very plain that the states already pick up the massive burden of policing in Australia. Our budget is \$387 million, the New South Wales' budget is \$1.7 billion and the commonwealth's budget for the NCA is about \$60 million. For the commonwealth to be seeking to shift a further proportion of that to the states, I think, is entirely unreasonable. The states, however, have attempted to remain positive. We have put a counter-proposal to the commonwealth and we are seeking an extraordinary meeting very early to deal with this.

I would expect and hope that the Liberal opposition in South Australia would support the proposal of all the states and territories for an enhanced model which includes a greater, not a smaller, contribution from the commonwealth.

*Mr Brokenshire interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** That will not be necessary. Just a statement of support will be fine, Rob. We are not paying your airfare.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** It appears from the budget papers that there is \$3.74 million less for police supplies and services budgeted this year than the estimated result for last financial year. Could I have confirmation that that is the case and, if it is, what impact will this have on SAPOL and how will it manage \$3.74 million less in expenditure in the vital area of police supplies and services?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Can the honourable member identify the particular line from the budget documents?

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** Budget Paper 4, volume 1, page 5.58 under 'Supplies and Services Payments', which line indicates the 2002-03 budget of \$77 803 as against an estimated result of \$81 543 for 2001-02.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I will provide the detail now, which will save my coming back to it. As the honourable member would understand, much of this reflects many increases and decreases. The decrease reflects carry-overs from 2001 of \$2.9 million; a reduced special purpose activity in 2002-03 of \$700 000; GRN once-off funding of \$400 000; operating capital expenditure of \$2.9 million in 2001-02; and expenditure brought forward from 2002-03 of \$7 million. This reflects a \$3.5 million higher expenditure in 2001-02 and a \$3.5 million lower expenditure in 2002-03 as follows: minor building works, \$1.7 million; IT, \$1.7 million; Telecom intersection \$100 000 (partly offset by Microsoft operating system costs of \$2.3 million); CPI, \$1.2 million; change in SAPOL's capitalisation policy (which has resulted in higher operating expenses rather than investing) \$4.3 million; and, budget head room, \$2.1 million. The honourable member can add up all that if he likes.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I will have a close look at that when I read the *Hansard*, but will the minister assure the opposition that, when all that is analysed, if there is a net negative impact on police supplies and services, it will not have any impact on any of the equipment or general support with supplies in SAPOL, and particularly that we will not see the reduction of any police vehicles in the police fleet?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** What I will guarantee the honourable member is that we expect the police, like any other agency (and I know that the Commissioner does this), continually to find better ways of doing things, to find better efficiencies and to find better ways of supplying the police force without undermining its capacity. What I will not do is attempt to second guess the Commissioner on the day-to-day running of matters of supply. I think that the expertise in that regard resides in the police force.

Where we can find efficiencies that do not detract from the service that the police are able to provide, and allow us to put more people on the beat and provide more police service to the people of South Australia, we will continue to do it. We have made some saving strategies, and one of them was the rationalisation of SAPOL's motor vehicle fleet—particularly at police headquarters—of about \$50 000. We do not believe the impact of that affects the services provided to the community. We will continue to look for efficiencies everywhere that we can find them, because every dollar we do not need to spend is a dollar we can spend somewhere else more productively. That is just good management.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I take it then, minister, that there will not be any adverse effect on police supplies and services. I will take your word on that, but I will watch that with a great deal of interest during the budget period.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Well, I hope so. That is your job now, Rob, and I hope you do that.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I will indeed because I acknowledge that police supplies and services have always been under pressure and, while they have had enough thus far, any further cuts at all would, I think, be untenable, no matter how capable the Commissioner and his staff are.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I do not think that you will find that there is much scope for cuts and there have not been many cuts. Most of it is a wash-over of activities from one year to another.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** Can the minister rule out any cuts or reductions or voluntary separation packages for non-sworn police officers during this term of office?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I am not sure that I can rule it out. There may well be changes in the organisational

structure that make that something that you would do. I can guarantee that we have no plans for such at present. We have had a look at the police budget. We have, as I have said, quarantined it from the pain that other budgets have taken. We do not believe that there is a lot of fat to trim there. But the priority for us over the four years of government is the policing services that we provide the community of South Australia. We will continue to look for better ways to do that. We have made commitments on the levels of sworn policing over that period, and we will continue to look at improvements in the way that we do it. We have no plans that I am aware of to offer separation packages at present, but I am not going to rule that out in the future if it improves the policing services we can offer.

Let us be very plain about this too. We have committed in this budget to better priorities in health, education and policing. We have taken criticism because we have also suggested that there will be 600 fewer public servants across government to help us redirect priorities. Well, we made the undertakings before the election that we would set priorities we thought were important and that we would balance the budget. That is what we will continue to do for four years, and that is what people expect us to do. What I will not do today is tie our hands on how we address the proper priorities.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** Given the discussion in estimates today on the additional 90 over and above attrition that were recruited and funded last year, will the minister support me in ensuring that the extra four police for the Aldinga/Mount Compass/Willunga Basin policing area that were funded as part of that additional 90 police in last year's budget are allocated only to that area and not given by way of an increased area to Seaford, which would be against improved policing in the Willunga Basin region? Also, will the additional police allocated for Victor Harbor, as a result of that budget, be going to Victor Harbor?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** You give me the opportunity to give an answer to you that you gave to me many times in this place when I sat there and asked you questions. As you well know, it is an operational matter for the Police Commissioner—

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** You could ask the Commissioner.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** No, you can't ask the Commissioner because you would not let me ask the Commissioner questions, and you are not going to either. I always try to treat people fairly and in an even-handed fashion. I assume that priorities have been identified there and are being addressed. There are many pressures and things can change in policing. As you know, we have had a lot of difficulty from pressures of policing at the Woomera Detention Centre about which we are very unhappy. We will continue to meet our operational responsibilities but it will be for the Commissioner to set those priorities. Given the bizarre comments of your colleague the Hon. Rob Lucas in another place about a month ago, about interfering with operational matters, I am sure that you would not want me to do so.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I have no problem with that. I would just like to know whether those officers will go to Willunga, Aldinga and Mount Compass.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I am sure you would. I thought we would send them up to Elder, but we were not allowed to do that.

**Mr CAICA:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, volume 1, page 5.21, titled 'Crime Investigation Services'. Will steps be

taken to curb the amount of property damage caused by graffiti in the community?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** This is an issue that affects the community broadly and I am sure local government would be the first to tell you that the cost of removing graffiti from their property, and from private property, is enormous. It is a most frustrating situation for those who suffer from it. I do not think there would be a local member in South Australia who has not had complaints about graffiti in one form or another at some time. In June 2001, SAPOL's graffiti management program was completed which reviewed best practice in South Australia and interstate. As a result of the findings, six recommendations were made and approved for implementation on 21 March 2002. The recommendations were that:

- changes be made to the police incident management system, to link SAPOL's major operating system with the graffiti database;
- the Transit Services Branch immediately commence the collection of images on freestanding computer;
- a Microsoft Access database is developed with links published on the SAPOL intranet allowing read only access for SAPOL members;
- a business case for information exchange by way of the internet be developed in consultation with KESAB, the Attorney-General's Department and key stakeholders;
- further consultation occur between KESAB, local government and SAPOL in order to establish criteria for reporting graffiti offences and intelligence so that it may be added to police information systems for intelligence and investigative purposes;
- a graffiti management section be established within the Transit Services Branch, utilising current resources.

So, the graffiti management section was officially established on 1 July 2002. The section is staffed by two police officers, with plans to expand this number with an additional officer and a business analyst. The section has commenced establishing lines of communication and partnerships with the community, councils and interested parties. The development of partnerships in graffiti management should result in the best opportunity to reduce the level of graffiti in the community.

We believe that this is an initiative that will be very much welcomed by the community and local government. I acknowledge that work was commenced under the previous government, but on 1 July the graffiti management section was established under this government. We think this is an excellent initiative.

**Mr CAICA:** I again refer to volume 1, page 5.21: given the recent spate of car thefts involving weapons while vehicles are in use, is any action being taken to address these incidents?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** There has been a worrying emergence in very recent times of a spate of car hijackings, something that I think was relatively unknown prior to this time. It is a very serious crime where the personal safety of vehicle occupants is put at risk by the actions of armed offenders. Since November 2001 there have been eight vehicle hijackings and one attempt, and all nine incidents involved weapons, so it is a matter of very serious concern. Operation Counteract, under the direction of the Drug and Organised Criminal Investigation Branch, is a specific task group focusing on armed hold-ups in the metropolitan area. It appears that criminals hijack vehicles for use in crimes like armed robbery and snatches and that this is a trend that is

apparently prevalent in the US. It is one that we do not want to see develop in South Australia, and I was hoping that this had just a temporary copycat nature about it and that it would go away again; but we have not been relying on that occurring.

The task force members have been very active with this recent form of criminal behaviour. I am pleased to say that four of the vehicle hijacks have been cleared up and the offenders arrested. The Operation Counteract members cleared up a case involving a brand-new Monaro which was hijacked while being taken on a test drive. The four offenders were armed with a firearm and were active and high profile criminals. I am pleased to say that, in due course, those people will be feeling the full brunt of the new Attorney-General.

**Mr CAICA:** With reference to Crime Investigation Services, I again refer to page 5.21. Have any plans been developed to tackle the growing incidence of electronic crime?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** There are, and I can say that this is an area in which the South Australian Police Commissioner takes a lead role at a national level and on which he has given a report very recently to a meeting of police ministers. Electronic crime, or e-crime as it is called, has the potential to impact seriously on all areas of society. It includes fraud, computer hacking, electronic vandalism, cyber stalking, commercial sabotage and child exploitation and pornography. Fraud is found to be the most expensive crime in Australia, estimated at an astonishing \$3.5 billion per year. E-crime includes transnational crime, and there are clear links with organised crime. The rapid change of technology requires policing techniques that are modern and innovative. An e-crime section, once established, will combine the functions previously performed by SAPOL's Forensic Computing Service Unit together with intelligence gathering and investigatory components.

The e-crime section will be responsible for providing an enforcement service for e-crime, developing a strategy for SAPOL—which will act as a deterrent to e-crime—identifying, establishing and nurturing strategic partnerships with other related agencies (government and private) and identifying legislative issues for the effective enforcement of e-crime. The major role for the e-crime section will be, together with the crime reduction section, to develop community education programs to minimise opportunities for e-crime, which is a very important element of it. Commissioner, would you like to add anything to that because I know it is a matter of particular interest to you?

**Mr HYDE:** Thank you, minister. It is a very important issue for us, and nationally all police commissioners are concerned about the direction. A national strategy has been developed to deal with e-crime, and all jurisdictions are using that strategy to implement change within their own jurisdictions. It needs to have not only the specialist resources within police agencies but also the support of legislative change to make sure that our criminal laws are in an environment that can support new-age technology and are used by organised crime and criminals generally. It also requires a strong linkage into the private sector so that through partnerships we are able to get the best outcome for the community. We have taken those changes on board and we are forming an electronic crime section, and that will be placed in the context of the serious fraud branch. We are also reviewing the way that branch operates to make sure that it can complement the way that we need to deal with electronic crime in the future.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** Minister, it is indicated in the budget that the government expects to process some 10 000 extra traffic fines in this coming year. Is there any plan to increase the number of sworn and/or unsworn officers in police traffic services, and can you tell the committee what percentage of the total police force are currently working in police traffic services?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Firstly, that is the sort of detail the Commissioner would have to provide and, secondly, the decision about where police work is, again, a matter for the Commissioner to decide what the priorities are and where people should be working. I am happy to take it on notice, but I will say a couple of things: we would be happy for no notices to be issued. I do not apologise for people getting pinched, because if you do not want to get pinched then perhaps you should not speed or commit traffic offences. So, I am certainly not concerned about the decision of the police to address resources to it. The matter of road safety is an important one for the new government, and you would be aware of the very large raft of announcements from the Minister for Transport in this regard, in regard to speed limits and a whole range of other matters. We do take it seriously. As I say, I would be quite happy if one day there was no revenue from traffic infringements. I think that would be a very idealistic situation.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** It's one the Treasurer wouldn't like.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I am sure there are other ways. People have still got money; we'll find it somehow. That is the role of treasurers. Perhaps the Commissioner would like to say a bit about traffic management within the police.

**Mr HYDE:** Thank you, minister. We do anticipate an increase in the number of expiation notices issued. It is not brought about by reallocating additional resources into that field. We have introduced a new software system into our expiation notice branch which makes that more efficient. So, that does improve the issue of notices there. In addition, there will be more red light cameras being introduced throughout the metropolitan area. One further area being examined is whether or not those new cameras can be used for detecting speeding within those controlled intersections as well. So, they are the measures that are likely to result in increases in expiation notices. I cannot at the moment provide advice on the percentage of police devoted to traffic services, but I can get that information for you.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** The budget indicates that there is a \$600 000 cut to crime prevention funding. What effect will the funding cut have on SAPOL's ability to further develop proactive and integrated agency and community crime prevention programs?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I am not going to be able to answer the specifics of your question. The crime prevention lines are in the Attorney-General's budget, and I assume the Attorney is getting a turn here at some point, so you might want to ask him. I will say that from our perspective we are very pleased with the new graffiti initiative. There are some of those who are complaining about that and, again, I say you need to address it to the Attorney. I think we will be very pleased with the new graffiti initiative we have adopted. Perhaps the Commissioner can make some comment.

**Mr HYDE:** Thank you, minister. I can address the issue of the likely impact on police as a result of those changes in attorneys general. We do work very closely with local government, including those crime prevention officers. We are, obviously, responsible for crime reduction and preven-



tion in our own right, and we do devote considerable resources to being very proactive in reducing crime. We are looking to introduce what we have termed at this stage 'community safety committees', in a pilot phase to begin with, to see how they work. They are designed to have a better, more structured approach of interacting and communicating with the community as well as engaging the community in the development of crime reduction initiatives. With the introduction of that type of mechanism, we do not anticipate that there will be any significant impact on police with these changes in the Attorney-General's office.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** My third question is on the subject of DNA. The minister may recall, and I think it was in my contribution to the Address in Reply debate, that I congratulated the government; and it is one of the few things that I congratulated the new government on. DNA testing is something which I believe has great opportunities to increase the effectiveness of policing and crime prevention and solving of crime in this state.

The minister said either in his opening statement or in answer to an earlier question that all prisoners who are guilty of an offence, no matter how minor, will have a DNA sample taken. I think it was two years ago that I had the opportunity, with the Commissioner and the then minister, to be briefed by the British National Crime Authority on DNA and the system they are using there. In Britain, offenders are DNA tested at the point of arrest and, if they are subsequently acquitted of any criminal offence, the DNA sample is destroyed. Does the government have any plans to move to that sort of regime, or will the DNA sample be taken only after a guilty finding by a court?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** In the interests of a safe answer, we had best address the specifics of this issue to the Attorney, who is handling the legislation. I can only indicate my personal views, and I do not want to suggest that the Attorney or the government should be bound by them. I support DNA testing and would like to see it used more extensively, but specifics are best addressed to the Attorney. Obviously, people have conflicting views about the best way to approach these issues, and the Attorney has an approach that has been approved by cabinet, and he is the one to talk to.

**Mr GOLDSWORTHY:** Why has no money been allocated this year for the Mount Barker Police Station upgrade and only an announcement for it to be built in the next budget year? Does this mean that there are no plans in the forward estimates to build other police stations, such as at Victor Harbor, Port Lincoln, Port Adelaide, Gawler and the Thebarton Police Barracks?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** We have a capital program in the budget and we address priorities with it. It is a capital program of a similar or better size than the ordinary capital program over the terms of the previous government. We would like to be in a position to build everything in the world straightaway, but we are not. We have to work within the budget we have, and we believe that our capital program addresses the proper priorities in the proper order. Plans are fine; money is the issue.

**Mr GOLDSWORTHY:** During which hours will the police call centre be operating once complete funds are spent, and why is it not planned for completion until June 2004? Is the call centre still answering the absolute majority of calls within eight seconds, and what are the statistics?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Before going into that, I would indicate that on the previous question I will get the honour-

able member more detail on the capital works program, on notice.

**Mr HYDE:** The current hours are seven days a week from 7.30 a.m. until midnight. The plan is to take it to a 24 hour, seven day a week service, and we are currently reviewing the communications centre and re-engineering that. It may be possible to reallocate some resources from the communications centre to take it to a 24 hour operation. Certainly, it has been working very effectively. The answering times are still on average 10 seconds. I cannot quickly find the precise percentage, but I can assure the member that the efficiency that was shown some time ago is being maintained; we are very pleased with the service. The surveys we have conducted with the community show a very high satisfaction level.

The new technology being introduced to the communications centre will allow us to focus on 000 numbers in the communications centre and seek better efficiencies there as well. We are quite pleased with the directions in which we have been going in improving the response times and the dispatching from both 131 444 and 000. We still have a lot more to do to make us satisfied with the 000 answering service, but plans are in place and we are sure that we will get there shortly.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The chair would like to ask a question, and this obviously would also involve the Attorney. Is the minister satisfied that the police have sufficient powers now to tackle the various aspects of crime in our community?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** The matter is always the subject of ongoing review. We need to be alert to the changing nature of society and the changing nature of offending, the different risks and the different behaviours that seem to emerge. I think we operate a system of continuous improvement in management, and we are always looking at whether we are doing things right and whether we have all the powers we need. If there are more specific areas that you, sir, would like to address, we can get the Attorney to look at them. All that I say is that we are always considering whether changes need to be made.

**The CHAIRMAN:** One of my hobby horses, as the minister would probably know from correspondence, is the matter of unmarked police vehicles. I have advocated for a long time that we should have more on the road to tackle bad driving. Has there been any change of heart in SAPOL about having more unmarked police vehicles on the road to deal with feral drivers, and is it a resourcing issue or a policy preference that we do not have a lot of unmarked cars?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Operational procedures and administrative procedures are matters that we have left to the good judgment of the Police Commissioner and his officers as to how best to tackle people who offend against the existing law.

**Mr HYDE:** It is always a balance. People like a visible police presence, not only to deter crime and traffic offences but also to reassure the community. On the other hand, you need to detect illegal behaviour that cannot be deterred by those measures, and unmarked vehicles are an important part of doing that. So, there are competing interests in terms of what strategy you will put into place. We are currently looking at creating higher visibility in marking our vehicles up, but not in a way that reduces the number of unmarked vehicles dedicated to road safety and traffic services.

**The CHAIRMAN:** My final question is in relation to Rundle Mall. I am aware that police foot patrols and vehicle patrols go down there from time to time. Has the issue of having a small facility in Rundle Mall similar to that in

Brisbane, say, been discarded as a possibility because of cost or because you favour mobility rather than having a fixed location?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I ask Mr Hyde to answer that question.

**Mr HYDE:** There is a great deal of value in examining these different ways of deploying resources into public space, in particular. Whilst the Hindley Street station is not far away from Rundle Mall, and patrols can easily be introduced from that location, different models are tried in different places. We do not currently have under consideration the form of a police kiosk, or something like that, which could be used in Rundle Mall. However, it is something at which we could have a close look, and we do from time to time review the way in which we deploy resources. That is something that we could take up and have a closer look at for Rundle Mall, in particular.

**Mr GOLDSWORTHY:** What is intended to be done with the Stirling Police Station once Mount Barker Police Station has been completed?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** That will be considered down the track. I can guarantee that there are no plans to remove it at present, so that should be of some comfort. Again, it will essentially be an operational matter for the police as to how they allocate their resources once we can get Mount Barker up and running. But there are no plans to remove Stirling at present. To be as honest as we can with the member, we will just have to look at it in the context of the Mount Barker station when it is completed and operating.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** With respect to the computer aided dispatch and its age, and the fact of modern technology, the call centre, the audio management system and the GRN that was brought in during our term in office (and which this government is clearly continuing with, given the budget papers), why is there no money or documentation at all about CAD upgrades for SAPOL? Even if there is (but of which we have seen none), why has it not been considered as the opportunity for integration with other services? What is happening with respect to redundancy for SAPOL? I am very concerned about SAPOL seemingly not receiving any support for a CAD, when I know very well that its CAD is quite tired.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** It is true that there are issues about CAD and its upgrade with respect to the police. But let us be absolutely plain. As the member for Mawson well knows, bilateral proposals for improvements in CAD for police, emergency services and ambulance went up year after year under the previous government and were knocked off by Treasury. I cannot blame the former police minister, but it was plain that the former government would rather spend money on wine centres and the Hindmarsh Soccer Stadium than on upgrading these matters. The simple truth is that they were put up in the bilaterals. Very strong arguments were put for them year after year, and they were knocked off year after year. We inherited the situation where no funding was allocated in the forward estimates for CAD for any of those agencies. We sat down in a difficult budget situation and had to set some priorities. The first priority was to improve the CAD service for the fire service and the ambulance service, which is something to which we have committed funds. We would like, in a perfect world, to build all the stations and put in all the equipment that would give us a perfect situation for our police, but we do not have a perfect budget situation.

As I said, in considering this matter, we were persuaded by the agencies that the first priority—in fact, a priority that was identified as being long overdue—was the CAD project

for the ambulance service and the Metropolitan Fire Services, totalling approximately \$15.84 million, \$10.43 million of which is capital. That has been approved as part of the 2002-03 budget (as members would know from the other lines), and it will address the immediate priorities by replacing the ageing CAD systems used by the ambulance service and the Metropolitan Fire Services.

We were persuaded that we were perhaps getting close to a matter of life and death in those agencies with respect to the CAD system. Again, I do not blame the previous minister, but his government ignored bilateral submissions on this matter for several years. We acted upon it in our first year, even in a difficult budget situation. Stage 2 of the project, which would replace the CAD systems in police, and stage 3, which would expand and provide increased levels of back-up across the three main communication centres, whilst important, do not currently represent the same level of risk as the first mentioned—that is, the fire service and the ambulance service—and they will, therefore, be the subject of further cabinet consideration. As we have done elsewhere in the budget, we have acted on what we saw as the priorities, and the ambulance and fire services were plainly a priority.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I want to ask the minister a question on a matter that is very dear to me. I have publicly supported the Premier's Drugs Summit, but I have also indicated my disappointment over two years plus in my effort to try to get this government, when it was in opposition, to support our Tough on Drugs strategy and to see the sense in being tough on cannabis. Given that there is absolute bipartisan support for anything to do with reducing illicit drugs, what additional funding has been provided to SAPOL for drug initiatives in the 2002-03 budget?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** One of the first things that we have done is to identify a range of legislative improvements which either have been introduced or are in the pipeline. As I said earlier (and I do not want to traverse the same ground), we have put the police in a better position over four years than was previously the case. Quite intelligently, cabinet decided to hold a drugs summit and devise a specific drugs strategy as a result of those findings. All those who participated in the Drugs Summit were impressed with the success of it. It has not been left there: ongoing work is taking place, including work with the police, to develop strategies out of the information and findings of the Drugs Summit, and an overall drugs strategy from there will be addressed by the cabinet. The member may not agree that it is the best way to go, but it is the way that we thought was best, and I think that is the prerogative of being the new government.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** Sir, I have a supplementary question. I take it, therefore, the answer is that there is no additional funding to help police with respect to the drug initiatives for this budget period.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** We have put the police in a better position than they have been during the previous eight years of the honourable member's government. I do not know how you fight drugs. If the member wants to pursue this by a tough guy, hairy-chested approach, I do not know how he proposes to do it without police resources. We have put in place a better police budget, and we have guaranteed them across the out years in a way that the member's government would not. I do not know how it intended to fight drug crimes without police, but we have not made that mistake. Those resources are there. What I have said is that we made a very serious commitment before the election to a drugs summit to develop a strategy to deal with this issue—an issue about

which we should not play politics, because it is so serious for the community. We are actively working on the outcomes of the Drugs Summit.

Of course, police, and very senior police, are currently involved in devising strategies from the outcomes. However, not only the police but the whole of government is involved in developing a strategy out of the Drugs Summit, because it requires a whole of government approach and strategy. We believe that is the best way to go. It is a better response than the knee-jerk reactions we have seen over the past decade. It is about devising an intelligent and informed whole of government strategy which will be considered by cabinet and to which the Premier has given great priority. I do not think there is anything here of which the member for Mawson should be critical.

**The CHAIRMAN:** An issue that is of concern to me is what the Police Department is doing to prevent burnout amongst police officers, particularly those who are in difficult policing areas in certain areas of Adelaide, where they are subjected to difficult situations. For example, I know from talking to some young police officers that they get spat on. All sorts of things happen to them, and it often makes them wonder whether they want to continue in the force. What does the department do to try to ensure that these young police in particular do not get burnt out and disheartened, and look for a change of career?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Before I ask the Commissioner to say something, I will say that we believe it is very important that the police have some certainty and security in doing their job. We have taken a number of approaches. I have outlined before about guaranteeing police across the four years of this government's term of office. There were periods in the past—especially with the absence of relief staff—and working in many places well below the establishment figures—that put a lot of pressure on police. The police do a very difficult job even at the best of times, and when they are working in less than the best of times that difficulty is exacerbated.

We hope that the measures that we put in place will at least give the serving police officers security across the four years of this government so that they will not be placed in a position in which they found themselves previously. We have discussed other initiatives. I have spoken to the Commissioner—and we will be speaking further as we said we would before the election—about examining issues relating to the police and the career structure in order to make sure that it is as good as it can be. Of course, the major responsibility again for these matters is with the Commissioner. I am sure that it is a matter that occupies his mind; it is certainly one that occupies my mind on a regular basis. Perhaps the Commissioner might like to say something about it.

**Mr HYDE:** This is certainly a very important issue for us, and stress can have a very big impact on your work force. Generally, they are long-term issues that have to be dealt with, and you lose staff from your work force over a long period of time. It is not just those people who are off work because of stress. Stress can affect the performance of those who are at work in terms of their morale and a whole range of things. It is a complex area and not easily rectified. We take our WorkCover and occupational health and safety responsibilities very seriously, and a range of initiatives are in place to deal with those. One recent one was a review we did of temporarily and permanently incapacitated employees. We have a whole raft of measures being put in place to try to manage that part of things better. As the minister indicated,

careers and being able to access promotion are important for people, as well. However, generally variety in our work gives people options so that, if they do find one area is not suited to them because of the pressures of a particular area or the way it impacts on them as an individual, there are other options within the organisation for them to pick up and maintain a very productive career with us.

We are concentrating more on fitness; that is one of our initiatives for this forthcoming year. We will be looking at what we can do to introduce measures to encourage fitness within our employees which helps when dealing with issues of burnout and stress. In that area, we are looking to introduce police and emergency service games. Members of parliament may be aware that we have won the right to host the World Police and Fire Games in Adelaide in 2007, and we have a program leading up to those games—and hopefully continuing thereafter—of concentrating on fitness in the organisation. We intend to introduce state games in November this year and hold them every two years, and we are looking to host the Australasian Games in 2005. That is just one of the things we are doing to help improve health and fitness in the organisation and, therefore, help people with their stress levels.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Another issue that is of particular interest to me is the amount of time and resources the police have to put into dealing with people who have psychiatric or psychological problems. I appreciate that in recent years some in-service training has been directed at police handling people in that situation. What percentage of time and resources is taken up dealing with people who have a psychiatric problem—for example, taking them to hospital—and what is the impact on police resources of this significant problem in the community?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Let me say at the outset—and the Commissioner can talk about the specifics—that we recognise that this is a problem; it is deeply frustrating. My personal experience formerly was as a criminal lawyer seeing people who are suffering from a mental illness tying up the courts and police when really they were suffering from health problems. It is deeply frustrating, and I understand that the new government has made significant commitments in the budget to improving expenditure on mental health through the health services, and we hope this will address some of the issues. This was a matter of some serious concern, both at the Correctional Services Ministers' Forum and the Police Ministers' Forum in Darwin. It is a problem that appears to be growing. We need a national strategy and a whole of government approach, because it is an issue that has grown alarmingly. It is too often the police who have to suffer the wash-up of what essentially are societal problems.

Some startling figures were provided by the New South Wales corrections minister as to the number of people in the corrections system with mental health problems. It was in excess of 30 per cent. To a degree there is some difficulty in how mental problems are reported and whether they are behavioural or mental health problems, but it is plain that society faces a great deal of difficulty in this regard.

As was pointed out, we are developing a whole of justice approach with DHS to mental health, including some key initiatives to assist the police in dealing with mental health problems. I do not understate the size of the task. It does appear that mental illness and mental health problems are at a distressingly high level in the community and provide an enormous stress not only on police resources but also on resources across government. We are seeking to address this

at a whole of government level. I acknowledge the difficulties it places on police. We can take the question on notice as to the percentage of time. It will be difficult, because it will not be easy to identify entirely what issues are related to mental health. However, we can certainly look at the simple issues of who is taking people to hospital and bring back further information.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I was more interested in the quantum of the problem but not a specific percentage. More importantly, I was interested in making sure that the issue is being addressed with other agencies, because I see that the police as being required to carry out tasks on which they should not be spending their time.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I congratulate the police for the great work they are doing with regard to illicit drugs. It is worth while recognising the comprehensive, holistic drugs strategy that has been incorporated in the justice portfolio and other portfolios for some years. I am specifically looking for some answers regarding drug action teams and funding for Operation Mantle. Operation Mantle is currently funded for six LSAs in the metropolitan area. I would like an assurance that that funding and the numbers of officers recruited to Operation Mantle and the drug action teams will be maintained. Tied in with that, I would like to know what work SAPOL is doing to broaden the work of drug action teams and Operation Mantle teams to rural and regional South Australia.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** As to whether we have kept the drug action teams going under Operation Mantle, I can certainly say yes. SAPOL has now funded 436 extra police to permanently fill Operation Mantle positions. The commitment to tackle the drug action teams under Operation Mantle is ongoing from the previous government to this government. The issue of the resources needed is a matter for the Commissioner, but it is very plain that it is a priority for the Premier and this government. The local drug action teams were successfully trialled and have been rolled out statewide to cover all metropolitan and country local service areas, which I think is a positive step.

As I said, this government's commitment to tackling the problem of illicit drugs I do not think can be doubted. The Drugs Summit was one of the first priorities of the government and I hasten to point out that Mike Rann was one of the first political leaders in Australia to go after the outlaw motorcycle gangs and raise our concerns about their role in the production of illicit drugs, particularly amphetamines. From memory, that happened about eight years ago, and he has been a strident enthusiast for tackling those issues persistently throughout his entire political career. So, I assure the member for Mawson that, whilst the operational decisions about how those matters are resourced and tackled lie with the Commissioner, there can be no doubt about this government's commitment to tackling the problem of illicit drugs. It is there in thought and in deed, and it will be there in legislation also.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** The minister mentioned something that is near and dear to my heart when talking about his Premier and that is the success of Operation Avatar and the fact that there was dedicated funding for Operation Avatar, which particularly targets outlaw motorcycle gangs. Does that operation remain dedicated?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Yes, and it would be surprising were it otherwise given that, as I say, the Premier was one of the first political leaders in the country to identify issues with motorcycle gangs and the production of amphetamines.

I will go further and say that, if you hold your horses and bide your time, you will see further initiatives from this government to deal with motorcycle gangs—initiatives which the community has been seeking for a long time and which I think will be very welcome.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I think it is fair to say that most people, even the renowned accountants and financial people in the agencies who do a good job, would say that the budget papers are reasonably complex. I recall your saying that to me when I was minister last year—and possibly even the year before. Reading the budget papers as a layperson, it appears to me that, in real terms, the police budget has not been increased. It concerns me immensely that the cost pressures on SAPOL are quite significant. Will the minister reassure me that, given the tight SAPOL budget for 2002-03, he does not envisage any adverse impacts on community safety from the point of view of either staff numbers (sworn and non-sworn) or the ability of staff to continue to provide the services to which we have become accustomed and equipment and general support for those staff?

I am concerned that cost pressures appear to be building up. As good as the executive of SAPOL are—the minister mentioned earlier its good management—I think it is fair to say that that good management has taken place over several years within SAPOL and that, at some stage, those cost pressures will probably catch up with even the best manager.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** There is a significant increase in real terms in the police budget although that may not appear from the budget figures. I will address that issue first. I agree that the budget is difficult to read. Unfortunately, when we came to government we had to prepare our budget within a compressed time frame, so we have presented it in a similar fashion to the previous government's budget. We will address how budgets might be presented more clearly and be easier to follow. However, there is nothing in our approach that has not been adopted from the previous government's approach. I share the frustration about not being able to see clearly at a glance what is happening with government finances, which are complex and cannot ever be made entirely simple, but part of our commitment of openness and honesty is to attempt to present things in the clearest way possible.

There is an increase in real terms in the police budget. What might have led the opposition to consider that that is not the case is the fact that there was a big lump of capital expenditure in recent years for the Adelaide police redevelopment which, of course, was a one-off. That amount has been reduced in the budget figures to a more normal capital program. I refer the honourable member to current expenditure, which has increased from \$356.6 million in 2001-02 to \$380.5 million in 2002-03, a variance of \$23.9 million (6.7 per cent). That is an increase in real terms which, as the opposition points out, is needed to address significant cost pressures.

If we had more money to spend, we could spend it usefully but, looking across all government agencies and the difficulties that we have had to endure in what is, as the Premier said, a difficult but fair budget, we have been able to get some priorities into health and education and preserve and improve the position. Certainly, the police are in a better position. I should not say this out loud because they complain a lot about many other agencies of government in that regard. There is an increase in funding in real terms and in recurrent funding in real terms. I think it is a very good achievement and it reflects well on the persuasive qualities of the current

police minister, who does an excellent job. The increase in real terms in the police budget is an outstanding achievement, and I am quite proud of it. Keep asking questions.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** We will take up the option of putting a series of questions on notice, as the minister stated in his introduction. Do we have more time for other questions before I read out the omnibus questions?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** The opposition might appreciate the fact that they have had something that was not afforded to me during four years in opposition: that is about an hour and a half of uninterrupted questions—uninterrupted by Dorothy Dixers. They have already got a lot more than I ever got.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Because we are much fairer, and it is an open, honest, accountable and very good government.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** I will read these, and if there is any time remaining my colleague has some further questions to ask. We will indulge in the minister's generosity, and I trust that it will continue year by year. The questions are:

1. Will the minister advise the committee of how many reviews have been undertaken or are scheduled to take place within the portfolios of his responsibility since the government was elected? To which matters do these reviews pertain? Which consultant or consultancy organisation has been hired to undertake this work, and what is the total cost of these contracts?

2. Will the minister advise the committee as to how many of the 600 jobs to be cut from the public service will be lost from within the minister's range of portfolios and agencies, and I name them because I do not have shadow responsibility for some of his others: police, emergency services and gambling?

3. Will the minister advise the committee as to which initiatives contained within the government's compact with the member for Hammond have been allocated to any of his portfolios? How much will each of those cost, and will these costs be met by new or existing funding?

4. Will the minister advise the committee of the number of positions attracting a total employment cost of \$100 000 within all departments and agencies reporting to minister Conlon as at 30 June 2002 and any estimates for June 2003?

5. For each of the next four years (2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06) and for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what is the share of the total \$967 million savings strategy announced by the government, and what is the detail of each savings strategy?

6. For all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what is the share of the \$322 million underspending in 2001-02 claimed by the government, and what is the detail of each proposal and project underspent, and what is the detail of any carry-on expenditure to 2002-03 which has been approved?

**Mr WILLIAMS:** I asked a question previously about DNA. In his presentation the minister mentioned that some 2 000 DNA samples are being held by the police in South Australia. Can the minister provide information about how those DNA samples are held and what firewalls are built between the DNA material storage and retrieval systems and the personal identification details of the people associated with those samples?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** That is complex. I will bring back an answer.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** Closed circuit television (CCTV) has been used by SAPOL in the CBD vicinity, particularly in the Rundle Mall and Hindley Street area. Can the minister provide to the committee any information he might have about the success of that strategy and whether the government intends to extend that strategy to other so-called crime hot spot areas in the state?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** We will probably need to get you a list of offenders identified and such like. We will bring that back for you.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** Is there any commitment by the government to extend that or do you believe that where it is being used at the moment amounts to the full necessity for that technology?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** It is used extensively and the CBD is part of the planning with the Adelaide City Council. It is a matter of ongoing review. I cannot give any specifics as to what might happen this year or next year, but it is a matter on which we deal with the Adelaide City Council. It is used extensively and successfully. We will provide those figures. It is the subject of ongoing review with the city council.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** Does that mean there is no intention to use it anywhere else other than the area under the city council's jurisdiction? I ask that question because the Chairman asked a question earlier about the problems associated with burnouts. It triggered in my mind the issue that has been raised many times about youths doing burnouts which is upsetting people in various areas. I know that the previous member for Morphett raised this issue a number of times that I am aware of. It would suggest that there are some issues down in the Glenelg precinct. Are there any plans to extend the use of CCTV technology to try to overcome those maybe short-term problems?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** It is a matter worthy of consideration. We will take it on notice and talk to the relevant officers within the police. It is plain that cameras are used, not just simply those operated in the city. I am sure that police have access to privately-owned surveillance cameras in going about their duties. It is a matter broader than simply those situated in the City of Adelaide, and we will talk to the appropriate person and provide an answer.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Is the Thebarton Police Barracks still required by the Police Department? If not, what is planned for that site?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Thebarton is still being used, but not to the same extent as previously because of many people being transferred to the new Netley complex. Its future use is under review and will have to be considered by people outside the police and in government as to how the government wishes to use it. The heritage nature of some of the buildings may influence the choices we will have about its future use. That is a matter that the government will be considering in the coming year.

*[Sitting suspended from 12.59 to 2 p.m.]*

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

Mr C. Lemmer, Chief Executive, South Australian Ambulance Service.

Mr C. Frick, Director, Corporate Services, South Australian Ambulance Service.

Mr V. Monterola, Chief Executive Officer, Country Fire Service.

Mr G. Lupton, Chief Officer, Metropolitan Fire Service.

Mr M. Hanson, General Manager, Telecomms, Department of Justice.

Mr B. Lancaster, Director, State Emergency Service.

**Membership:**

Mrs Redmond substituted for Mr Williams.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Minister, do you wish to make a brief statement?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I might make just a short opening statement, which will give a basic overview of emergency services under the new government. There have been significant changes already. The government has increased the funding for emergency services by \$15 million to a total of \$156 million. This was needed to address issues that I have raised previously in the parliament in regard to the mismanagement by the previous government of the budgets of the emergency services.

The increase has been funded from general revenue. However, not sufficient regard has been given to the fact that we have increased emergency services funding by contribution from general revenue. When we took over government we had difficulties with the budget, and it was considerably unpleasant for us to have to find a further hit for emergency services. What was done demonstrates the commitment of the new government to emergency services and to recognising the difficulties people have already faced through the emergency services levy.

Of the new funding, \$2.1 million has been allocated to the construction of fire stations; \$5.4 million towards the replacement of fire and rescue appliances; \$2.5 million for the continuation of building works; and a further \$5.1 million for the purchase of IT and communications equipment.

I mentioned earlier one of the primary new initiatives. In addition, we are addressing cost pressures that arise in the GRN and blow-outs in the budget of the Country Fire Service. One primary cost pressure that we have had to meet is the computer-aided dispatch, stage 1, for the fire and ambulance services. As I said, that proposal has been put forward many times in bilaterals, but the previous government constantly refused in favour of what it saw as sexier items, such as the wine centre and the Hindmarsh stadium. It is, I think, a very clear demonstration of the difference of approach by the new government and the priorities we are setting.

The other very serious issue that we continue to address is that, as a result of the mismanagement in the emergency services budget, and the Country Fire Service in particular, we have had to find a new capital program as some replacement for what we estimate to be about the \$8 million that has disappeared from the capital program to go towards funding blow-outs and recurrent expenditure. These have been difficult issues to face, and I believe that the new government has faced up to its responsibilities very well in this regard. As I say, the contribution from consolidated revenue was not a pleasant thing for us to have to do, but it has been done. I stress that it is part of this government's overall approach to tackle—as we promised we would—the right priorities that we believe South Australians wish us to address. With those comments, I am happy now to be examined on the government's approach.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Does the member for Mawson wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr BROKESHIRE:** Yes, I would. As I indicated, this is a transitional budget in estimates. It is the opposition's first

formal chance to thank each and every one of those people who were involved in working right across the spectrum of emergency services. I have already thanked the Chief Executive, Kate Lennon, and her staff. Emergency services is not an easy area, but it is one of the most important areas and one that needs ongoing attention.

Subconsciously, South Australians are very relaxed and comfortable with trauma from the point of view that they know that if they are ever in trauma or in need of fire and life protection we are in good shape. I recognise that there are cost pressures on the emergency services budget and that will continue—one needs to think only about Ash Wednesday and the enormous need to ramp up the replacement of fire stations. That is just one example. When one looks at SASS and its ongoing workloads, in addition to the other emergency services, one can see that they are under pressure.

Having said that, I believe that our government took one of the boldest, strongest and most deliberate but most important initiatives that should have happened a long time ago, namely, in relation to the Emergency Services Fund. It was disappointing that there was not bipartisanship with respect to that fund. For the benefit of the public record, as a result of that fund, in many ways the life of the current government will be a little harder in terms of delivering emergency services. There are times, as this government indicates to us, when bipartisanship is important. I believe that it was important in that area. It is one thing to vote for something but it is another thing to support it.

I would like to ask some questions about ESAU. Some organisations had a fair amount of pressure placed on them unfairly but, having said all that, I was very proud to be the minister. Our government was certainly supportive of emergency services agencies and, in our new role, we will continue to be supportive of the new minister and his government when they are doing the right thing in terms of supporting emergency services. However, we will also be vigilant to ensure that they are funded and supported properly. I look forward, as much as possible, to working in a bipartisanship way with this most important agency and with the minister.

The men and women of emergency services, both the paid workers and the volunteers, have my utmost admiration and that of my party. We congratulate them on the work they are doing. We thank them for the professional way in which they work with us and, one day, maybe we will work with them again. As I said, in the meantime, we will support this government where we can to ensure that South Australia and the people who supply protection to South Australians continue to see growth and good satisfaction as a result of the professionalism of the agencies.

The SASS target for incidents for 2002-03 is 6 350 more than the estimated result for 2001-02. This is a significant increase in workload. I believe that it is a real workload, from my understanding of the growth—around 7 per cent—and, clearly, it is looking to compound again this year. Additional money has been allocated to the SASS budget over recent budgets. I am not seeing that money in this budget, and I am concerned that there are virtually no additional employees or extra ambulance stations being built. I acknowledge that there are replacements but not extra, and I am concerned very much about the pressure on those officers who are delivering the service.

What plans does the minister have to address this issue, both this year and in forward estimates; and, secondly, why has the minister not been (and I acknowledge that he is only

one minister around the cabinet table, as indeed I was for 3½ years) supported by the government in terms of additional funding to see some growth in the ambulance service?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Goodness me! Sometimes the first one of the day is a doozy, isn't it! I suspect that this additional funding that the former government had allocated exists only in the lurid imagination of the former minister. The truth is that we faced a very difficult situation in emergency services. We inherited that, and we faced up to our responsibilities including the ambulance service. In a moment I will say a few more things about the budgeting and funds provided by the former government for the ambulance service.

The former minister is correct in saying that there is a growth, which is about 5.5 per cent next year, following on from about 8 per cent last year, and I think the annual growth in requirement for ambulance services has been around 5 to 5.5 per cent in recent years. There are a number of factors for that, including the ageing population, but there is no doubt that we face a growth in ambulance services. There is an increase, as I understand it, of about 34 full-time equivalents in this budget to deal with the growth in requirement. We will continue to manage the ambulance services responsibly and to the best of our ability, and within the constraints of our budget.

The former minister would be fully aware, as opposition spokesperson, that ambulance services are funded by subscriptions and by governments, so it is not entirely similar to other agencies. Let me comment, though, on the budget for the ambulance service and criticisms that we are not committed to building the stations that they were committed to building, and funding it as they did. Firstly, as I said, there is this kind of fantasy running around about money, that we are unaware of, which the former minister claims his government committed. If it is anything like some of the member for Mawson's activities as former minister for the ambulance service, I am not surprised that it is more fantasy and fond hope than reality.

I refer specifically to the McLaren Vale ambulance station, which would have been one of the new services, as opposed to a replacement for an existing station. It would not have been the first priority for the ambulance service. What occurred is that the former minister, the member for Mawson, went out and announced the new ambulance station at McLaren Vale. Because it was a new service there was requirement on the government, as I understand it, to fund the recurrent funding of it. The member for Mawson did not let little things like that stand in his way. The fact that he did not have any funding for it; the fact that nothing was funded for it in the bilaterals; the fact that, as I am advised, his former treasurer was not in the least bit interested in funding the promise of the member for Mawson, did not prevent him going out and announcing the new ambulance station at McLaren Vale.

It reminds me very much of an episode of *Yes Minister*, in which they had a hospital: without beds or nurses, but they had a hospital. He was going to have an ambulance station without ambulance employees because, and I repeat, there was no recurrent funding for it in the budget. Actually, no, there was some funding for it: he found some money for recurrent funding for it once he had failed in his own bilaterals. It is not good government to announce something before you have actually made your bilateral submission and before the treasurer has actually agreed to it, because you run the risk of falling flat on your face.

The former government, and the member for Mawson, facing the small difficulty of not actually having any funding for a station he had announced, got a receipt of, I think, about \$170 000 sponsorship for the rescue helicopter and decided that, given his cash flow difficulties, he would address that to funding the new ambulance station at McLaren Vale.

There are some substantial differences between ambulance stations and helicopters. Some of them are fairly fixed: others get off the ground and have little whirly bits that go above them. I just repeat this because it appears that the member for Mawson was not actually clear about what is a helicopter and what is an ambulance station. I am sure he is learning now in opposition. Let me be absolutely serious. We are not going to take criticism about how we handle the ambulance budget. We have dealt with it responsibly, within the terms of our budget. No doubt later the member for Mawson is going to criticise the fact that we are not funding the McLaren Vale ambulance station.

I continue to point out that we are funding it to the full extent that the previous government did. It committed nothing; there was nothing there for us to take away. The situation at McLaren Vale, as we have said to the ambulance service, is that if it is a priority then we are going to have to consider how it is funded, but we are not going to play games or run rorts on the people of South Australia by announcing things that do not actually exist. We take a very good different approach. I would advise the member for Mawson that we are going to spend money we actually have; we are going to do it within budget; we are going to address priorities; and we are going to do it responsibly.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I will add a preamble if I may, given that the minister has raised this, and this is probably a reasonable forum in which to raise it—

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I would prefer that you ask a question. You have already had a lot of leeway today. We have pulled the pictures off for you, and we have allowed you a lot of time. Maybe you could just concentrate on asking a few questions and I will answer them.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** In fairness, I will do that but I will put the facts on the public record at some stage in the future, on the basis of approval that I sought and obtained for what was recurrent expenditure through additional money being available. Approval was sought; approval was given. It went through the board, and the only other thing that had to be done was a commitment to make a priority budget bid for additional—

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** This is an interesting story. It is precisely what I said, member for Mawson. You had the commitment but you did not have any money from your government.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** No. I will put it on the public record at another time because that is twice that the minister has said that, and it is not factually correct. What I would like to know, and you have not answered minister, is that, given the report that was organised and initiated by the board, not by me as minister, that shows that priority A alone for the McLaren Vale region is over twice, or thereabouts, the time it should be; that is priority A—life-threatening. Recently, sadly I came across a double fatality—I acknowledge that in that case the ambulance officers could not do anything—and the nearest ambulance to Mount Compass, in the McLaren Vale Basin area where all the work is supposed to be getting done, was supporting Victor Harbor.

Given that the report shows just how far out of kilter it is, given that the workload has increased, and given also that last

year we had to contribute considerably more money to community obligations, etc., within the ambulance service when money was tight for us as well, what is the minister actually doing to address this issue? This is a matter about life and death. It is not about whether or not you put \$5.48 million into the Social Inclusion Unit. What are you actually doing, minister, to address a major problem within the ambulance service?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Let me assure the member for Mawson that we have given the people of McLaren Vale one thing in addition to that which the former government gave them, and that is the truth. The former government gave them no funding for a station announced by the former minister. You run through your rhetoric about life and death, but I am not sure what an announcement without money does for people's requirement for ambulances. I suspect it is absolutely nothing. We are giving them one thing more than the former government gave them, and that is the truth. There is no funding for it. You cannot announce an ambulance station if you do not have it funded. There was no funding anywhere. As I understand it, there was nothing but hostility from the treasurer of the former government.

Let me make this plain too: we will address priorities. The best advice we have is that if you were looking at new stations it would be a priority but, if you are looking at spending money within the ambulance budget at present, it is not the priority. So, we are going to take the advice on where the priorities lie. That is why, if it were to be built, the government would have had, as I understand, to commit the recurrent funding. Let me repeat that we have given the people of McLaren Vale, the people living in your electorate, something more than you ever gave them: we have given them the truth. We are not going to announce a station that does not have funding, as you chose to do.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I will not comment on that any more, because there are too many officers here and we have limited time and resources to work with, but the situation stated there is not correct by any stretch of the imagination. Is the minister concerned about the occupational health and safety of ambulance officers, given their increased workload; and what is the minister going to do to address the potential breakdown, physically and mentally, of ambulance officers who have to deal with major trauma?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I am concerned. I would just point out that it is always great when the conservatives get into opposition because all the things they oppose through their time in government—good occupational health and safety, winding back people's WorkCover entitlements, etc.—they suddenly now find a concern for. You will have to forgive me if I suspect it is not entirely genuine but more a desperate attempt to fish around to find some questions to ask in estimates. We are concerned about it. We are the party that has always been concerned about workers and their health and safety.

In 2001-02 I am advised that the ambulance service achieved a significant reduction in the numbers of injuries. Shift hours lost amounted to 18 734 compared to 27 676. I am not attempting to suggest that that is our responsibility, but it does indicate a better trend than the former minister's question would seem to suggest. Let me make it absolutely plain: our approach is straightforward and honest, and you may call it simple. What we have said is that you address the priorities as identified in the ambulance service—address the areas of most need, and fund them.

That is why we are not funding your invented ambulance station; that is why we are funding the first priorities. That is why we have taken some hard decisions that the former minister was unwilling to take, while in government, on matters such as the country communications centre. We were advised there, for example, that we were politically brave that we would improve the service for country people and reduce the cost. So, what are we doing? We are actually doing everything we can in a serious, sensible and responsible fashion to spend the money that is entrusted to us by the people of South Australia in the best way possible.

**Mr RAU:** Can the minister advise the committee about the government's budgetary commitment to emergency services?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I can. I alluded to this in my opening statement. We have heard some nonsense about Labor's not supporting the emergency services levy, and the former government doing great jobs for the emergency services and hoping to continue. I can tell you that we inherited a situation whereby budgets had been out of control in areas of emergency services when real and pressing needs had been ignored; where costs driven by the GRN had not been addressed because they were an embarrassment to a government that had already allocated \$257 million (and I refer to driven costs of about \$25 million over four years); and where CAD systems, life-saving systems, in fire and ambulance services had been refused year after year while the former government built its wine centres and its soccer stadium.

We inherited a situation where, if we did not increase the funding for emergency services, we would have, I think the estimate was, about \$1 million for a capital program in 2002-03, and none at all thereafter. We inherited a situation where the CFS was persistently each year addressing its funding from its capital program to recurrent expenditure; and we inherited a situation where people were already being heavily hit with an emergency services levy. Those were not a set of numbers that you like to inherit when you come into government. And, as I said, we sat down and, I think, very responsibly made a decision to contribute an extra \$15 million each year to emergency services to address those costs and problems.

We also did a number of other things: we set about addressing the underlying problems as to how this could have occurred. The former minister, I think in his opening statement, referred to our own unfair attacks on ESAU. I would like to refer the member for Mawson to some of the comments made by the head of ESAU, and letters, about not being allowed to do his job while the member for Mawson, as the former minister, ran around and, in his own very clumsy and confused fashion, used the volunteers in this state as a set of votes. That was why ESAU was never allowed actually to fix the problems that were occurring; at least that is the story that we were given.

So, what the Labor government inherited was an absolutely dreadful mess. We have taken a number of steps to fix the funding: as I have said, we have put in the extra \$15 million—and, to be absolutely clear, \$12.7 million of that comes from consolidated revenue, and \$2.3 million from a natural growth in some of the collections in the levy. So, we have addressed that as you would put out a fire.

We have addressed the structural problems in two ways. Also, I have referred, through the Treasurer, to the Auditor-General the management of emergency services funds under the previous government because, frankly, they were



appalling—and I make it absolutely plain that I do not blame the people who do the job for us; it plainly involved the shortcomings of the former government. The bureaucrats that worked under the former minister repeatedly brought to his attention the things that were going wrong, and he simply chose to ignore them. Do not take my word for it: the Auditor-General will come back with a report in due course, and I look forward to reading that.

Also, we will be having a quick and thorough going review of the administration of emergency services with terms of reference to be announced; and I will in due course make a further announcement on how that will be done. But understand this: we have been in government now for some four or five months. We have addressed the first problem: we have put out the house fire, because we have put the extra money into emergency services. And I stress: the level of contribution under the former government, with the way in which the budgets were being run, would have allowed an across emergency services capital program of \$1 million in the next year, and none in subsequent years.

This is at the same time that the former government was running around announcing new fire stations and new trucks. I do not know what they were going to pay for them with. I guess it was more like the old McLaren Vale ambulance station—the *Field of Dreams* reasoning: if you build it, they will come. So, that is the situation we inherited. We addressed it responsibly. As I said, we put out the fire by addressing the funding, and now we are going to address the structural problems with the reviews that I have identified.

**Mr RAU:** I have a supplementary question to that. The minister mentioned about the administration review. For the benefit of the committee, can the minister indicate what percentage of the money raised from the fixed asset levy in the last financial year was consumed in administration?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** The cost of raising the levy has been a sore point for us for a very long time. I do not have the exact figures in front of me, but I understand that we pay about seven and a bit million dollars each year, for which I guess we should be grateful, as it is a reduction, I think, from the initial cost of about \$9 million. As I said, it has been a sore point for many years.

We certainly believe that there were many ways of raising those funds more cheaply when the levy was introduced. We suggested local government, but apparently the former minister had a dummy spit because it was too hard with local government to come up with an arrangement for raising the levy. It has been a very poor approach but, again, it is a matter that we are reviewing and trying to improve. It is our responsibility; we recognise that. We will do our best to reduce those costs of collection.

**Mr RAU:** Can the minister update the committee on the current situation with the CFS budget?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** As I said a little earlier, we have had very significant difficulties with the CFS budget. I indicate again that I do not blame the people who are actually doing the job there, and I have every confidence in the new chief executive, Vince Monterola, to address the difficulties that we have—and they are very serious difficulties.

It does appear that occasionally the former minister got something right by accident, but you would expect that. When you got so much wrong you would think that on the law of averages you would occasionally get something right. The problem we have is that there have been overruns in the CFS budget every year for three years—

*Mr Brokenshire interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I love this: the member for Mawson says ‘and there were top-ups’, and there were. But what the member for Mawson did was try to hide his problems from his own treasurer by not topping up the recurrent funding, which was running into deficit, but by topping up the capital program which was, again, like his McLaren Vale ambulance station—it was all a fraud. This was not a capital program: it was to plug holes in his recurrent funding. So, what we actually saw was the former minister announcing these grand capital programs, in excess of \$8 million of which were eaten up in holes in recurrent funding.

I am in the position as a new minister where volunteers want to know where their fire station is. And I say that the question should perhaps be addressed to the former minister, who spent the capital program because he refused to address his problems in recurrent funding. And perhaps the member for Mawson could tell us when he finally did tell his treasurer about the holes in recurrent funding and asked for some money because, as I understand it, he did it in about December last year.

After three years of holes in recurrent funding, he decided to fess up to the treasurer, and even then he was forced into doing it by some of his bureaucrats. I can tell the member for Mawson that we actually know what you were up to. You were playing politics with the volunteers, with the CFS budget and, therefore, with the safety and security of South Australians.

I accept responsibility now for going out and finding the money to fill the holes in the capital program that the previous minister knowingly spent year after year on matters on which it should not have been spent. We have a good chief executive who is addressing the structural issues and we have allocated extra funding, but there are still difficulties. I make it plain that we have set ourselves a high bar in terms of the CFS budget. There are still difficulties and we are working through them and seeking to address them. Above all, what we are doing is making sure that the difficulties we have inherited from the previous minister do not affect our ability on the fire ground and do not affect the provision of services to volunteers.

Perhaps the former minister at some point could start facing up to the responsibility, facing up to the difficult situation with which he left the incoming government and facing up to the fact that we are not making it up. He did year after year spend his capital budget on recurrent funding. That is a problem. Where does it end? What happens when you run out of a capital budget, as the former minister was going to do under the existing funding system? Do you start selling fire stations and fire trucks?

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** No, you leave them with a \$13 million debt like you did, and fully unfunded.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I didn’t leave anyone with a \$13 million debt.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** Your party did.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** To come back to the point, we have inherited an extremely difficult situation with the CFS budget, one that is very unfair on those volunteers who do so much for South Australians every year. The most embarrassing thing is the fraud that has been practised on them in regard to their promises for extra equipment and for new stations. But we faced up to it. We put in the money that the minister could not get from his treasurer. In some ways I do not blame his former treasurer: who would want this fellow

coming to you year after year? We have faced up to the responsibilities. We have put in the money and we set a high bar, and we hope over time to get things on an even keel.

**The CHAIRMAN:** A question I would like to ask relates to smoke alarms in homes. I am not suggesting that we have special police who go around to check but, from what I gather, no-one has ever been prosecuted for not having an effective smoke detector in their home. I understand the penalty is up to \$750. What sort of campaign, advertising or other strategies are in place to try to ensure that, as far as possible, people have a workable smoke alarm in their house?

Invariably we hear from MFS or CFS personnel after a fire, saying that someone lost their life but the smoke alarm did not work or did not have a battery and, where it was an electric one, it was faulty. Has any thought been given to a program to make people more aware of that, other than obviously the sad occasions on which we see fire and its consequences on television?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I am certainly aware of the long campaign by the Metropolitan Fire Service in regard to smoke alarms. Given the nature of the agency, you would not be surprised that its primary approach is an education process. I do not have the details and I do not know whether Mr Lupton has them to hand, but I believe that the education program has had a great deal of success in the uptake of smoke alarms. I understand that programs have been run in the past by the MFS either subsidising or distributing smoke alarms in homes. As was pointed out by the member for Colton, that was a program assisted by the United Fire Fighters Union, which has a long record of addressing its concerns about public safety.

In terms of the notion of prosecutions for failure to abide by the law, it is a relatively new compulsion under the law and I would have to undertake to obtain figures on that. Given the nature of the agencies, they primarily see their role as an educative one. Of course they have to do that within their budget, but they do it very well and have a long history of doing it very well. I do not have the figures; I will seek them for you. But I would say that our uptake in terms of smoke alarms in recent years has been very high.

I certainly sympathise with your viewpoint, sir. Very sadly, almost always, in house fires where there are fatalities it is the case that smoke alarms have not been fitted or have not operated. It is very plain that smoke alarms save lives and save them in dramatic fashion. I certainly take on board the Chairman's concerns. We will bring back some of the other detail, but I would defend the education programs of the agencies: I think they have done a good job for a long time. As I have said, the United Fire Fighters Union itself used to distribute fire alarms to people either free or at a subsidised level. The people who work in our agencies take it very seriously: they are the ones who attend fires and who have to endure the aftermath of tragedy, and they do take it very seriously.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The reason I raised it is that I have been in several homes lately where the smoke detectors have been inactive and people say, 'I must get it fixed. I must do something about it.' I have often thought that perhaps with the council notice that goes out it would not cost much to have a reminder, or to use other government communications, including on the back of envelopes. It would not cost much to have something printed there to remind people to make sure their smoke alarm is functioning; that they have one, first of all, and that it is functioning. I would be interested to know what is done to try to get that compliance rate up.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** The chief officer just told me that he thinks your suggestions are good. Perhaps I can give you a little more detail on community safety education. The MFS promotes the prevention of emergency incidents through education of the community and has recently established a community safety education section within its fire safety department. Among the projects begun or completed in 2001-02 are:

- a multicultural home fire safety pamphlet, produced in five languages and currently being translated into seven more;
- a fire safety audit program through the Housing Trust;
- an MFS Isolated Elderly program that targets isolated persons 65 years of age and older, using community carer groups to link the elderly with the fire service;
- preparing a junior primary fire safety program for delivery in schools; and
- adopting a Queensland Fire and Rescue Service program on road safety.

In particular, and a good initiative, there is a campaign to run at the end of daylight saving, the 'Change your clock, change your smoke alarm battery' campaign in conjunction with Duracell. There are other initiatives there, too, and we are always happy to hear ideas to improve awareness of fire safety and fire alarms. I can assure the chair that it is a very serious issue for the agencies.

**The CHAIRMAN:** While the minister has his MFS CEO there, I have often wondered why greater use is not made of foam rather than water in fighting fires, because often the water damage seems to be equal to the fire damage. Is it just cost?

**Mr LUPTON:** The modern approach is to use water but through a fog application, which reduces the volume of water required, and by breaking the water particles into smaller particles so that you have a greater heat absorption capability. The use of high pressure lines and tasked nozzles certainly reduces the amount of water. The type of tactics that we use enable us to try to find the seat of the fire, and the old adage of pouring copious quantities of water into buildings definitely does not happen any more. We use foam quite widely in different applications.

Traditionally, we have used what is called an AFFF foam, which is used primarily for flammable liquid spills. We use medium and high expansion foam in certain industrial applications. We have researched the recent move to compressed air foam that is being used in North America, which is a combination of water and foam produced under high pressure. There are some benefits to this in areas where there is limited water supply, but we are still doing research in that respect. This would result in a major investment. I believe that our current tactics limit the amount of water damage, and there is a fairly wide application of foam used at the present time.

**Mrs REDMOND:** I was pleased to hear the minister say earlier that SAAS has achieved a reduction in the number and severity of injuries—and I take it that meant amongst staff, because I note that there has been an increase in the number of injuries they are attending to in their professional capacity. Is the minister able to confirm that the anticipated benefits of SASFIT have been justified on a cost benefit basis? What is the cost of the SASFIT scheme thus far, and what has been the benefit in terms of a lower number of injuries? Is that benefit directly attributable to the SASFIT program?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I will get that information directly from the horse's mouth. I recognise that the member

for Heysen was formerly a member of the ambulance board and made a valuable contribution, for which we are grateful. They had to replace her when she went. I also acknowledge that she is likely to ask more astute questions than some of her colleagues.

**Mr LEMMER:** I do not have the figures on me on the costs of SASFIT. I can come back with those. SASFIT is a program that was introduced a couple of years ago now, amongst a number of other initiatives, including some major re-equipment, some major changes in education (particularly in the manual handling area), and introduction of new equipment as well as re-engineering of equipment. We believe that all those measures are contributing towards the reduction in workplace injuries and the reduction in lost time that we have seen this year. We do not know how we could possibly indicate what component of that was attributed to SASFIT and what component might be attributed to the engineering, the new equipment or the greater education. But I think the trends that we predicted are now evident, although it would be too early to claim success. These trends have only just become evident, and we would need to see them sustained for at least another couple of years before we would claim that the initiatives that we put in place have done this and we have not just come across a particular statistical aberration.

**Mrs REDMOND:** In terms of that further equipment, is it still proposed at any stage to extend the availability of the little portable cardiac units that were available (I forget the name of them)? Are they going out further than they initially were, or will they be funded any further?

**Mr LEMMER:** The extension of automatic defibrillation, not only within SAAS but also to the community, is one measure that we are continuing to progress. Every operational vehicle in SAAS now has a front-line ambulance defibrillator (which is considerably more expensive than the smaller semiautomatic defibrillators), and the support vehicles and our patient transfer vehicles now all have semiautomatic defibrillators installed. It is the intention, as part of our capital program, to extend those into administrative vehicles (such as my own) and also to support the development and distribution of them through the community. We have a strategic planning team at present looking at what we call a First Responder program. That First Responder is to engage us more into the community. The sooner that defibrillation is given, the greater the impact it has—even seconds improve one's chances. Therefore, the best way for us to make the difference is to get the units into the community so that patients are defibrillated before our arrival. It may involve involvement with the community; it may involve involvement with the other emergency services. That will come out of the First Responder program that we are developing and researching at present.

**The CHAIRMAN:** If you have any spare defibrillators, we could use a couple in here!

**Mrs REDMOND:** My third question relates quite specifically to my electorate. There are no specific ambulance stations, and so on, named in the budget. There was a plan to put a new ambulance station on the interchange at Crafers. Am I able to assume that the funding for that is still in the budget?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Yes.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** Given the minister's comments a while ago about an increase of about 34 or 37, I think, full-time equivalent staff for the ambulance service, why is it that, on page 5.74 of the papers, for 'work force' under the

South Australian Ambulance Service, the estimated number of ambulance service employees for 2002-03 is 703? The estimated result for 2001-02 was 701. Where are the 34 or 37 extra numbers?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I can say that it is because when the budget figures were prepared the recruiting was still being worked on. It had not been completed and does not appear in the budget figures properly. There should be an additional 34, as I understand it. I will get the member a proper reconciliation of that. It is merely a discrepancy between the information as it was collated on the day that the papers were put together and the completion of recruitment programs.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** Can I also have the indication of the increased funding for those 37 positions given that, with add-ons, we would be looking at about a \$2.2 million, \$2.3 million increase in the budget to fund those 34 or 37 positions? I would like to see the funding increase at the same time.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** That is not necessarily the case. As was pointed out, there have been increases in workload. As I understand it, one of the outcomes of that is working levels of overtime that would be reduced by the replacement with full-time equivalents. So, you cannot draw a direct line between the costs and the number of FTEs. We will get the detail and bring it back to the member.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** I would now like to ask some questions about SAMFS, given that the chief fire officer is here. I would like to know whether there has been a real increase in the budget for SAMFS as against last year. If that increase has been there (which I cannot find, but I am not saying it is not there), what is the increase? Does the increase include money sufficient to pay an enterprise bargaining agreement that is currently due?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I hope it has, because the enterprise agreement has been signed off in the commission, so we will pay those rates. I assure the honourable member that we have set aside sufficient money to pay those rates. The honourable member asks whether there has been an increase in the Metropolitan Fire Service budget. As I understand it, there will be a necessary increase in terms of the enterprise bargain. I can indicate that the outcomes of that enterprise bargain (the negotiations for which were conducted under the aegis of the Minister for Industrial Relations) are entirely consistent with outcomes across the public sector—in round terms about 4 per cent a year over a three-year term. Obviously, we will fund that.

The Metropolitan Fire Service has a fairly fixed rate of staffing per station. There is no intention to increase MFS staffing levels, so there is no need to budget for that. There are a number of other budget initiatives and some things that appear off budget. There has been one very positive step forward for the Metropolitan Fire Service in terms of training. I hate to tell the honourable member this, because we keep on harping about his government's shortcomings, but training in the Metropolitan Fire Service was neglected under the previous government. We will take pride in having the best trained volunteers and paid firefighters in the country. One initiative that we have taken is to convince Treasury to hand over the Angle Park facility without charge.

*Mr Brokenshere interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** The former minister says that that was one of his initiatives. I am glad that he had the right idea; the difference is that he had an idea but I did it. It was not signed off until we prevailed upon the current Treasurer

in a Labor government to do it. This is another of those fire station ideas, those *Field of Dreams* ideas of the former minister: if you build it, they will come. One of the very positive initiatives of the new Labor government was for the new Labor Treasurer to hand over to the Metropolitan Fire Service without charge the Angle Park land for training facilities. It will be a great boost for them, because funds that might have been set aside for that group can go directly to providing training services for firefighters.

I point out that one of the things endured by the Metropolitan Fire Service under the former government was when the former minister was running around trying to hide the holes in his CFS budget. He was actually plundering cash reserves of the Metropolitan Fire Service quite improperly to do that. I take it that his newfound sympathy for the MFS is extremely newfound; it came with occupying the opposition benches.

This government inherited a huge number of accumulated and chronic problems in emergency services. We put out the fire by addressing them with an extra \$15 million a year out of our money—not by taxing the poor old punters further but by adding our money to it. We have addressed some long-standing problems in all the agencies and we have fixed a number of problems that we inherited. We will continue to do that because we pride ourselves on being a new government that sets the right priorities for government. We have put our money into health, education and the police, and we have fixed up chronic problems in emergency services. We have not built a soccer stadium or a wine centre: we have put our money, resources and time into the priorities that the people of South Australia want us to address.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** Not right now, but I would like to see in writing the actual SAMFS budget outcome for 2001-02 and the \$71 million for 2002-03. I have a supplementary question regarding the enterprise bargaining agreement. The minister referred to the Treasurer and the Minister for Industrial Relations. Has that additional money been funded out of the Emergency Services Fund that he announced back in June; and, if so, how much of that increase of \$12.3 million is to fund the enterprise bargaining agreement for SAMFS employees?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I will obtain more details for the honourable member later, but I make it plain that the need for that \$15 million was not driven by the firefighters' enterprise bargain. I am sure that even the honourable member must have been aware that he would have had to give them an enterprise bargaining agreement, unless he was going to go against the trend in the Public Service and have the only agency that did not actually increase wages for its workers. I am sure that even the honourable member realised that he would have had to fund an enterprise bargaining agreement.

I make it absolutely plain that the extra \$15 million a year is addressing this problem. We could have funded that, but in 2002-03 we would have had only \$1 million for capital programs and none in subsequent years. I will tell the honourable member where the cost pressures were. There is another \$25 million, not all of which is attributable to emergency services; however, the vast bulk of it is. I have driven costs over four years for the government radio network because the honourable member's mob hid it from the people of South Australia, as he was so embarrassed about the costs to date. With that extra \$15 million, we are addressing the enormous hole that he put in the capital programs for the CFS, because he spent their money on recurrent expenditure.

That is where that money is going. I assure the honourable member that an enterprise bargain for public servants is not an extraordinary event.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** My question still has not been answered. It is very simple. We would have had to face increases, because you cannot live forever on an existing budget. You can do better with an existing budget—

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** You didn't have anything in your out years for it, I can guarantee you.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** The point that I want answered is very simple: out of the \$12.3 million increase, how much is for the MFS enterprise bargaining agreement? That is a simple question.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I can answer that very simply, but I assure the honourable member that it was not a major cost pressure that we faced. Let me talk about how the honourable member was going to fix the problem. I do not know whether he understands fully the complexities of budgets, but I inform the member for Mawson that this government is not the first to have out years: to put forward estimates in the budget to show what is going to be spent in future years. His government did it, too, and it had nothing at all in there to address these problems in the out years. Either its forward estimates were a fraud on the people and it was going to fix it in next year's bilaterals or it knew of some strange and magical process for getting money that is unknown to this government. We fixed the problem which we inherited from you and which your forward estimates said you had no intention of addressing. In terms of the cost of the completely unextraordinary enterprise bargain—

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** You can put it in writing.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** No, I can tell you. It is not \$15 million.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I would like to know how many million dollars it is in a full year.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** As we are an open, honest, accountable and very good government, I will let the Chief Fire Officer give you the answer.

**Mr LUPTON:** According to the forward estimates for 2002-03 for the enterprise bargaining agreement, 4 per cent is \$954 000. For public sector employees who are also covered by enterprise bargaining, the amount is \$34 000. The provision for long service leave is \$551 000. There was a provision in the forward estimates for \$3.75 million to pay for retrospectivity and long service leave, but that money has not been required due to successful negotiations on behalf of the enterprise agreement. I believe that we have given that money back to the Treasurer. The other item is a provision for review of the substation officer rank, which is \$180 000. The total I have here is \$6.6 million minus the \$3.75 million, which was not required. So, that is about \$3 million.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** What outcome do you reckon we should have got under the enterprise bargain? Would you have got less than 4 per cent?

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I don't have to worry now; it's your problem.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** You would've got less than all your colleagues did.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! In estimates, members question the minister, not the reverse; otherwise, we will be here all night.

**Mr SNELLING:** Can the minister explain to the committee any CFS initiatives that will assist with learning from previous incident operations?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** The Country Fire Service has a very good initiative. I will give the details, and perhaps Mr Monterola might like to comment further. Following the 2001-02 fire season, the CFS established the Centre for Lessons Learned, which is self-explanatory. It is a collective of personnel from National Parks and Wildlife Service, Forestry SA, Emergency Services Administration Unit as well as the Country Fire Service. It is an ongoing forum. Its purpose is to monitor and advise on the best practice for incident management.

Some of the specific areas to be covered include the impact on volunteers, occupational health, safety and welfare of personnel, communication and information flow, fire management planning, and protection of the environment. This group will work together to ensure that the system of work for incident management reflects best practice, the safety of firefighters in the community as well as being efficient and effective.

**Mr CAICA:** I refer to page 5.17, output 4.1. Can you please inform the committee of the current situation of the SA Metropolitan Fire Service station at Renmark?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** A tender was let to Cox Constructions in March 2002 and construction started with the demolition of a large concrete water tower. As at 30 July 2002 construction is well advanced with the latest estimates for completion in early September 2002. The fire service will be collocating with the SES. Work valued at approximately \$1.2 million has been completed and tax invoiced to the Emergency Services Administration Unit. Latest estimates predict the final cost to come in under budget. Isn't that good! It wouldn't have happened under the other mob! Work is being overseen by the Department of Administrative and Information Services.

I did acknowledge the former government's commitment to looking after Independents in the Riverland—I should not say that—but I will say that it is my intention at present to invite the member for Chaffey to open the new station, because we are an open and inclusive government that likes to include local members of parliament in all that we do.

**Mr CAICA:** Far be it from me to use this forum to solicit an invitation, but that would be nice. I refer to page 5.16, and it is something I was involved with during my period in the fire service. Can the Minister inform the committee about the new appliance replacement program for 2002-03?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I congratulate the member for Colton on his keen personal interest in firefighting. I thank him, as I did the member for Heysen for her contribution on the ambulance board, for his many years' contribution protecting the lives, safety and property of the people of South Australia as an operational firefighter, as he was for so many years.

*Mr Brokenshire interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** He may well be the next minister, as long as it involves a promotion for me! This year the Metropolitan Fire Service will acquire four mid-urban pumpers, each to cost \$300 000, for a total of \$1.2 million; five regional operational support appliances, each to cost \$85 000, for a total of \$425 000; 10 demountable recoverable operational pods—and the member for Colton knows well what they are (in fact, he might tell me a little later)—at an average cost of \$15 000 each, for a total of \$150 000. In addition, the Metropolitan Fire Service will undertake a program of mid-life refurbishment to ensure that all heavy urban pumpers are able to reach their full life expectancy of

15 years. The cost of this is \$40 000 per unit, compared with a replacement cost of \$400 000.

This program includes an overhaul of pumps and the fitting of a new mechanical seal, removing corrosion from cab and body of vehicle, respraying and restriping using tape to current standard, enhancing the warning light system to enhance safety and upgrading equipment in storage to current standards. Again, they are initiatives that demonstrate this government's overall approach of setting the right priorities and funding them and living within our budget.

**The CHAIRMAN:** How confident are you that we are well prepared for any major disaster? I hope we never have one, and I am not expecting one, but how confident are you that we have the strategic plan and resources to deal with, say, a major earthquake or bushfire?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** The question you ask traverses a range of agencies and responsibilities. If I could address first the risk of bushfire, I will ask some of the agencies to comment further in a moment. Before coming to other areas of what we might call disaster planning, we are very concerned about the risk of bushfire. As the new minister responsible for energy, electricity and the Country Fire Service, I find myself looking forward to cool summers more than I ever have done in the past, but I am very concerned about the level of fuel load in the Adelaide Hills and other areas. We have been very fortunate in escaping serious bushfires for many years in South Australia, since way back to 1983, and we need to be vigilant about that.

I have said in this place many times before that I will continue, despite some political unpleasantness and pressure, to support the Country Fire Service's programs of burning off in national parks. It is absolutely imperative that we are properly prepared for the bushfire season. I am much happier to take the occasional flak from people not liking a burn-off in a national park than I am to take a major bushfire in the coming summer, and I will continue to state that. We are very keen to learn the lessons from New South Wales, and I have spoken to Vince only in recent days about the draft report out of the New South Wales bushfires.

We are concerned obviously at other issues. There have been a number of exercises in recent years addressing different varieties of possible misfortunes. Take, for example, the Minotaur exercise, an exercise in relation to a national foot and mouth disease strategy. People might not think this is a disaster of the magnitude of an earthquake or a flood but, on the presentations we have had on the effects of the foot and mouth outbreak in the United Kingdom, it would be an absolutely disastrous situation for South Australia, its economy and in particular some of the people that the Liberals might think are their natural constituency.

*Mr Brokenshire interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** The member for Mawson has a very keen interest in that, being a cow botherer himself. Perhaps rather than my boring the committee with reading out details that are better given by the heads of agencies, I will invite Vince to talk about some of the more recent operations, and I will introduce Brian Lancaster from the State Emergency Services who will have something to say.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Before they do respond—and this is an issue I have taken up with the minister responsible for planning—we still see people building in what I call suicide-prone bushfire areas where, in my humble opinion, they would not have a hope in hell of surviving. I know that it is not under the minister's jurisdiction, but it concerns me that we do not seem to get enough input from agencies, such as

the minister's, in terms of influencing some of the planning and development activity that occurs. If one travels through parts of the Adelaide Hills one will see that today people are building in areas such as Upper Sturt. My family has had an association with that area for a long time, and there would be little chance of anyone surviving a major fire in some of those areas. The way in which people are building and what they are building is in total disregard for what could occur to them. I appreciate that it is a cross-ministerial responsibility, but I would be interested to hear what the minister's CEOs have to say about it.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** That matter is under current review. We will be introducing, I hope sometime soon, a bill in regard to increased powers for local government to require the clearing of combustible material around houses. The issue of granting approvals to build in bushfire prone areas and the role of the CFS are matters that are currently under review, but they do have a role in those planning approvals. In fact, some inconsistency between that and the protection of native bush has recently been raised with me.

It is a matter that is on our mind and is a matter of ongoing review. I agree with the Chairman that sometimes we need to protect people from themselves, and very soon we will be bringing some submissions forward to the parliament about how we can improve that. In terms of other disaster management, Mr Monterola and Mr Lancaster might like to add their contribution.

**Mr MONTEROLA:** Our prognosis for the coming fire season is not particularly good. We are expecting an early start to the season and, because of the various conditions we have factored into our modelling, we expect it to be a dry, hot summer. I will comment very briefly on the two degrees of preparedness. We have the standard fire response, where we receive a number of calls to bushfire and wild fire, that is, fires of less than 24 hours duration, and I will talk particularly about the preparation for those. The other fires which are of more concern to us, and which we are addressing constantly, are what we call campaign fires, that is, fires that burn for a number of days.

I will give the committee an idea of the areas in which we are prepared for this coming fire season. First is the area of training volunteer firefighters. It is a requirement that on joining the Country Fire Service all volunteers must complete what we call level 1, which is basic training, safety and elementary firefighting, within six months of their joining. Current figures estimate that close to 90 per cent of our volunteers have completed that training. Over 50 per cent of volunteers have completed level 2 training, which is advanced training in wild fire firefighting.

The people we sent to New South Wales earlier this year were required at least to have completed level 2 firefighting because of the knowledge gained from that training and subsequent experience. We have been addressing the issue of protective clothing for a number of years, and all wild fire fighters have the approved level 1 personal protective equipment that conforms to the national standard. We have done a recent audit of that and we are satisfied. We have close to 800 fire appliances in the CFS, and we are constantly maintaining and monitoring their effectiveness and road worthiness.

Before the fire season, all those appliances will have undergone a pre-season maintenance check. Aerial fire bombing is something that is particularly relevant to the Adelaide Hills in the South-East area of the state. Recently, with the minister's assistance, we have extended an aerial

fire-bombing contract, which we predict will need to start earlier than normal this year. It will be starting late November or early December rather than one month later, and perhaps it will need to go into May or June. In addition, the federal government is also working with the agencies around the country on a national aerial fire-bombing strategy.

There is a possibility that we may have access to one or two further helicopters for use in this state at no cost to the Country Fire Service. Communication continues to be a challenge for us. We are doing a lot of work in the operational communications area with regard to fire-ground communication and command and control. We are doing a lot of training and reviewing of practices and procedures in the communication area. It is important that we liaise with other agencies and, in recent months, we have been reforming organisations, such as the interagency fire group, which brings together all the South Australian state agencies that have some interest in anything relating to land management, fire prevention and firefighting.

That is working particularly well, and the relationship between the Metropolitan Fire Service, the South Australian Country Fire Service and National Parks and Wildlife is extremely good at this stage. The community Fire Safe program is something that is also being enhanced to help us with our preparation for the season. This is really where we are going to help communities. We will be working with communities to help prevent the outbreak of fire and the mitigation of fire spread should it occur. We are currently working in 126 communities, mainly in the Adelaide Hills, on Yorke Peninsula and in the South-East of the state.

We expect to continue that program in the coming summer months. With respect to the operational audit reports, we are working through the staff in our six regions to undertake a thorough audit of all our appliances, firefighters, fire stations and all operational equipment to present a report to the Country Fire Service Board in September in order to ensure that readiness for the season has been ticked off in all the important areas.

**Mr LANCASTER:** I will address my remarks to the disaster management arrangements in South Australia, which would cover declared disasters, such as Ash Wednesday, potential earthquakes, and so on. The State Emergency Service is very heavily involved in these arrangements, in that we have nine regional managers. Their salaries are subsidised by the commonwealth through Emergency Management Australia to ensure that disaster management arrangements exist in their regions. Those regions are located in existing local service areas where, in fact, the LSA commander is the regional coordinator in each of those areas.

My officers are executive officers and the full-time nexus between the commander there and the arrangements in Adelaide. Their job is to make sure that regional plans are in place, and they are; that they are updated annually; and that exercises are conducted. They use the 'all hazards' approach in preparing these plans—all hazards meaning a bushfire, earthquake, plane crash or whatever. They also incorporate the comprehensive approach, which includes all agencies, be they departments, agencies or non-government organisations.

Further up the scale, we have the State Disaster Committee, which is a statutory authority under the State Disaster Act. That is chaired by Barry Greer, an independent appointee to that position. The membership includes all the CEOs of the emergency services and representatives of the Local Government Association and health and medical services. Above that particular group is the Emergency Management

Council, chaired by the Premier and consisting of the ministers responsible for the disaster side of events. Below that is the Emergency Management Council Standing Committee, which consists of the chief executive officers of those portfolios represented by the ministers, plus some of the other major CEOs.

Exercises are conducted annually to test the plans. Normally, the State Disaster Committee will sponsor a major disaster plan just prior to the fire season to ensure that the procedures that are laid down in the disaster plan can be brought to bear should such an event occur. The minister mentioned the national foot and mouth disease exercise, which has been brought about by the Commonwealth Government and which will involve most of the states. I am assured that, for the purposes of that exercise, South Australia will be an affected state, not an infected state. Most of the activity will happen in the eastern states.

To get us ready for that, three minor exercises have been developed, and the last of those will be in a couple of weeks' time when the state emergency operation centre is tested. It is controlled by the Commissioner of Police as the state coordinator, and all functional services represented under the state disaster plan are there, along with their liaison people and their appropriate communications. Until recently, that was located in the Police Communications Centre building at 20 Carrington Street. Because of the need to refurbish and reappoint the communications centre to the ground floor in that centre, the SEOC has been moved to the police barracks at Thebarton. It has been tested and is operating from that site. It is hoped that that will return to the top floor of 20 Carrington Street in about June next year, hopefully complete with more up-to-date IT equipment and communications. The planning is in place, and the organisation has been structured. It is whole of government, and all agencies are involved in some way or another, either as an identified functional service or as a participating organisation within the 14 functional services of the state disaster plan. We are confident that we have a very effective plan and set of procedures to meet any major event, as this was put in place during the Ash Wednesday disaster of 1983.

**Mr LUPTON:** I will add a few comments regarding the Metropolitan Fire Service's ability to respond to a major disaster within the state. Our first step in that area is to ensure that all our command staff are trained in the Australasian incident management system, which is used throughout the agencies represented here and across Australasia. That allows us to interface with agencies as an incident expands, whether it be across some local jurisdictions or interstate. That structure has been well tested, and we continue to work in enhancing our ability to use that to handle major incidents. It was recently tested with our involvement in the New South Wales bushfires. The experience that both the CFS and the MFS gained in attending that was extremely valuable in working in a large-scale incident and putting into practice our training on disaster management. One of the positive benefits of that was also the close working relationship between the CFS and MFS that was developed under the umbrella of the South Australian fire services. We have continued that spirit at the executive level, and also many of our stations cross train with the CFS so that it can assist us with major structural fires and we can do the same with bushfires.

The Metropolitan Fire Service participates on the State Disaster Council in the operations and exercises that have been held to date. One interesting fact is that we recently acquired a command simulator which allows us to simulate

exercises—both structural and major incidents—through the computer generated simulator. We purchased this through a national purchasing scheme under the Australasian Fire Authorities Council and that allows us to practise in realistic situations. Finally, we monitor global disasters that have happened and measure how we stack up against that. We ascertain what lessons can be learned so that they can be applied here. I am confident that we are a best practice organisation, and have a good plan and working relationship with the other emergency services agencies in the state.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** Given that the government has increased the emergency services fund this financial year, the fact that it has been put in budget lines and the report of the Economic and Finance Committee that there is a carryover of money sitting there for fire appliances that were budgeted, funded and were on their way during the last budget period, and also the fact that other expenses and project budgets show for 2001-02 \$14.4 million and 2002-03 \$9.8 million, my question is twofold: what is the specific carryover of funds for the period? Clearly there is a carryover of funds from my understanding. Secondly, given this additional funding, why is it that there are no new works for fire appliances, and fire stations have been reduced by over half from 2001-02?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** We can give you some of the carryovers, but really we will not know the rest of the detail until we see the books of agencies. I made very clear that I am not happy about some of the administrative arrangements in agencies, and that matter will be subject to some review. Out of an abundance of caution, we will take the matter on notice and bring back some detail. However, I will say this about the member for Mawson, who keeps asking questions about the emergency services budget: it reminds me of Charlie Brown. Lucy is always holding the ball and she is not going to pull it away and he is going to kick. He just does not seem to learn, does he? Why on earth this fellow would want to talk about the emergency services budget is beyond me. However, since he seems to be a glutton for punishment, we will go away, get the details and bring them back for him.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I look forward to a detailed and enlightening response. Given that the report to the parliament in 2001-02 on the emergency services levy showed that the cost of collection was anticipated to decrease by approximately \$5 million and that \$2.05 million allocated in 2001-02 would complete the collection system development and future years estimated collection costs were therefore reduced to approximately \$5 million, why then did your budget paper show costs of \$7.645 million, with no reduction on 2001-02?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I will drum up some detail on what you are talking about. I will make it absolutely plain. I will clear up a comment I made earlier when I talked about the former minister having a hissy fit. It was not the former minister but the former former minister who instituted it in terms of having a hissy fit with local government about collecting it. Again, I will make it absolutely plain: the cost of collecting this tax as a proportion of the amount collected, to the best of my advice, is just so way out of kilter with any other tax collected by Treasury. The member may not have caught up with this, but there were changes in the allocation of responsibility in terms of the emergency services levy. It really should be directed to Treasury but because I am a generous man—

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** It's in your papers.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I can assure you that the budget collection costs are with our Treasury line. The sum of \$7 million will be paid from the fund in 2002-03 revenue

in fixed property levy collection costs. Revenue SA has estimated its actual collection and system costs will be greater than \$7.3 million. The 2001-02 budgeted payments from the levy for Revenue SA were \$7 million, comprising \$4.95 million for collection costs, and \$2.05 million for system development costs, which are now completed, as the honourable member would be well aware. However, the collections costs—and you cannot take a trick with this thing we inherited from them—have risen from \$4.95 million to \$7 million as a result of changes to the collection of the levy on government fixed property. We wish we did not have to pay it, but that is the summary.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** I will not have a go at this minister on that. I will make sure that I take up with the Treasurer the matter of why he cannot reduce the costs as the previous Treasurer and Minister for Emergency Services did. There is no point in picking on this minister any more today.

*Members interjecting:*

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** For one moment I thought he was blaming me for the electricity prices going up.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** They had better not; I thought you would bring them down. Under Workforce at page 5.74 we see that for Emergency Services (Admin Unit and Operations) there is an increase of 31 in staff positions from 2001-02 to 2002-03. Would I be able to have the details of the increase in numbers, please?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** It is attributable to:

- 9.5 full-time equivalents from the Office of Volunteers, transferred into Emergency Services, that were not reflected or budgeted for in the 2001-02 estimates.
- Nine full-time equivalents ex-Fire and Emergency Services Authority staff transferred to ESAU, not previously counted.
- Eight full-time equivalents from the Metropolitan Fire Service additional training staff.
- Five additional full-time equivalents in ESAU, being one to support the CFS board, two new IT service positions and one additional position in the project management office, and one volunteer marine rescue coordinator in the SES, which you would be well aware was something that has been off again/on again and keenly sought.

The bottom line, as I say, is that if the member for Mawson is patient we will be announcing a comprehensive review of the administration of emergency services, as we are very unhappy with the situation we have inherited. I will not be forecasting any outcomes because, what we will be asking—and I will release the terms of reference later—is that the government funding that we commit, the taxpayers' funds that go to emergency services, are spent in the best way possible, which means the maximum number of dollars going out there to the people doing the job and on the fire ground. That is our position at present and we will certainly be doing a very long, hard and forensic job very quickly on how we administer emergency services in this state.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** I have a supplementary question based on what the minister just said. I support his endeavours there and I must say they are certainly no different from what we had. We see additional people coming in there, but it is interesting that we were attacked when apparently we let additional people be employed—but anyway.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I do not think you can sell them all as additional people, and I do not think you can sell the responsibility for them being there all down to us, but ask your supplementary.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** I remember that when you were in opposition your now premier said that you were going to abolish ESAU. Now you are doing a review, so I take it that you are not definitely going to just categorically abolish ESAU—because that was what your policy was. And further, are you aware that there was already a document done recommending some finetuning of ESAU? The third point within all this is that I trust you will—and I am confident that you will—have a look at all of the outcomes and delivery and requirements of supporting volunteers and paid staff at the operational level and that ESAU will be looked at constructively and objectively.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I am so pleased that you raised this because I can indicate that I announced prior to the election an intention to abolish ESAU. But it is one of the very few changes that we have made on what we might say were our pre-election commitments. That is because we are very fair people and the information given to me, on becoming a minister, caused me to at least have a more full review. One of the most important pieces of information—after I had spent a lot of time in opposition being very confused about the role of ESAU—that I was apprised of was that the former minister, by all accounts, would not allow ESAU to do the thing it was set up to do. The exchange between ESAU, the former minister and the Country Fire Service in attempting to allow ESAU to do the job that it was set up to do is most instructive. I am not going to go through it at great length because I do assume it will be a matter of some interest to the Auditor-General.

Having come to office and being apprised of all of the information, we found out that a lot of the sins that we attributed to ESAU were in fact the sins of the former government and, in particular, the sins of the former minister, in that he plainly would not allow ESAU to do what it was set up to do. Our information is that the former minister was so obsessed with trying to run a political line with volunteers in the state that he was prepared to ignore good administration. That may be wrong and that will be the subject of findings, not by me but by other people who are more appropriate to do that.

One of the things that is obvious, having been given that information, is that it would not be fair to execute ESAU without a proper hearing. What we want to know, and I stress this, is whether the situation would improve if ESAU was allowed to do the job it was set up to do, or whether we would be better off without ESAU. Everything is on the table. What we are driven to do is to ensure that the maximum number of dollars that we take from taxpayers to put in to emergency services is delivered in protecting lives and safety. I am certainly not going to apologise for that, and I am not going to apologise for changing our position on ESAU, having been given better information.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** Mr Chairman, I will watch with interest. I was always happy to give the information, and I still am—but anyway.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I asked you last year whether the CFS budget was in shape and you told me that everything was tickety-boo.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** What I said was that it would be on track at the end of the financial year.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Well—

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** I think you will find that it is, minister.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!



**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** Sorry. I was antagonised a little bit there, Mr Chair. At page 5.63: why have administration costs increased from \$670 000 in 2001-02 to \$1.5 million in 2002-03? Given that increase in administration costs, what extra support will be delivered to the services with the extra funds?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I will give the member for Mawson credit for one thing and that is for having more front than the former John Martin's used to have—having lost that, of course, under the former Liberal government as well. For him to continue to ask questions about the emergency services budget takes more hide than one of those great creatures that he milks on his farm. We inherited—and can I stress this—an absolutely disastrous situation in the budget. For the member for Mawson to now find some sort of commitment to budget management is more than the light on the road to Damascus. I will see whether we can give him detail here on the spot. If not, I will bring it back later.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** If you are not able to, I am happy to move—

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** We will take it on notice and bring an answer back for you.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** Before I ask some questions on CAD and GRN and a couple of other things, I would like to know whether, now that you have finally got this enterprise bargaining agreement with SAMFS sorted out, we will see SAS in Camden Park and, if not, why not.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I'm sorry, are you asking me whether we fixed one of those other problems you left us? I can tell you we did it some time ago. Is SAS in Camden Park and everyone is happy? Yes. Apparently that was something you set out to do about 12 months ago. We managed to fix it in a considerably shorter time than that.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** How long ago did you fix it? When did the ambulance officers start moving in? On what date did they move in?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I will find out for you, but can I just say that, having inherited a budget that you had shot to bits and having to find an extra \$15 million, the day that they actually moved has not been something that has occupied my mind, right up the front of it, you know. However, I assure you that they are in. The advisers cannot really remember the day because apparently they do not have your same obsession with it.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** No, I did not say a couple of days; I said they cannot remember the day because they are not as driven with it as you are. You had a long time to try to get them in there and you never even got close. Well, they are in there now. There is a new minister and a good government.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I actually listened to the chief fire officer and what was going on at the time, but I tell you what: after an election, or with the time you had, I would have had the staff in there rather than wait four months. My question is: why was there no consideration (and certainly there was an announcement about this) of a fully integrated CAD between all the agencies and SAPOL, and why is not the CAD announced for SAAS and SAMFS able to utilise and capitalise on the statewide benefits of the GRN, because you, minister, like it or not—

*The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:*

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** No, the fact of the matter is that the GRN is a good product.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Can I ask a question about CAD? Let me make this plain, as I tried to before.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The chair has been very tolerant and very flexible. We need to have order in this place, and I would appreciate it if the member for Mawson would direct his questions through the chair, and if both the minister and the shadow minister do not provoke each other unnecessarily.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Thank you, Mr Chair. I shall try to be good, but he really is an awkward fellow. He would try the patience of a saint, and I must say that I fall just slightly below that category! Let me make this as plain as I tried to earlier: the emergency services agencies and the police in this state, year after year at bilaterals, sought funding for a CAD program. They were refused year after year because the former government did not find providing equipment that would save lives and property sexy enough. They preferred to build wine centres and soccer stadiums.

I can tell you this: if we had taken the money that that mob squandered on the soccer stadium and the wine centre, there would be a fully integrated CAD system for police, emergency services and ambulance. As it is, they were refused year after year in the bilaterals. After those applications year after year, the new government is the first one to accede to the requests of the agencies but, because the former government did waste the taxpayers' money, we are not able to spend the money that has already been spent on the soccer stadium or the wine centre. What we will be doing is spending money within budget, so we have addressed the first priority.

We are advised by our agencies that the first priority in protecting lives and safety in South Australia is the Metropolitan Fire Service and the ambulance service, and we have committed the \$15 million funding for that as stage 1; and I addressed stage 2 and 3 earlier. But, I can tell the honourable member that I would have preferred that we had inherited a four-year outlook and forward estimates that had the funding in there, because it is long overdue.

I find it quite extraordinary to now be criticised by the opposition spokesperson on a subject that he should have addressed, for which he should have been in there fighting with his cabinet, instead of letting his miscreance waste taxpayers' money on sexy white elephants. I find it quite astonishing that we now take criticism for having addressed a priority that the previous government left unaddressed for years. Mr Hanson, do you want to say anything?

**Mr HANSON:** I want to say just one thing. In relation to stage 1 of CAD, it still actually enables full integration at some later stage, but stages 2 and 3 will be subject to further cabinet consideration. It is not preventing there being full integration of the CAD systems across the organisations concerned.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** Supplementary to that, will the functionality of GRN be fully able to be utilised by the new CAD?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** That is certainly our intention. Given the amount of money that has been committed by the previous government and this government to the GRN, we hope to make the best possible use of it. And, as I say, we would love to have the funding to put all three stages in place at an earlier date, but we are addressing the most pressing priorities first. However, I can assure the member for Mawson that by the end of this government's term people will be much better off than they were at the end of the previous government's terms.

**Mr BROKESHIRE:** Minister, why did the government criticise the GRN for a squealing noise when it was known that the GRN would not be able to function correctly with existing CAD until the interface unit—known as the audio management system and fully funded last year at about \$9.6 million—was installed for SAMFS and SAAS? The targets for 2002-03 show that completion of the statewide GRN rollout for SAAS in 2002-03 and AMS will only be installed in 2002-03. It was always known that it was a dangerous exercise, and not one that was recommended, to try to use the new GRN as it was rolled out, before the AMS interface got there.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I have to say that what was always known seems to have changed a great deal since about 9 March. I will allow one thing for the member for Mawson, that is, that I did suggest that the AMS system was not funded. It was in fact funded, and that creates an embarrassing situation for him because my estimate before was that the \$247 million plus the \$25 million driven cost should also include the \$10 million driven cost for the AMS. Every time we have turned around, we have had a bulge in the cost driven by this GRN. We are trying to rein that in and restrain it.

Why did the MFS try to turn on the GRN? As I understand it, it is because it is paying for it. Because it was paying an awful lot of money for it, it decided that it might try to turn it on. I have to say that I do not think that is exceptional. I do not think that is extraordinary. I reckon if I were paying millions of dollars every year for a communication system I would have a whack at turning it on; and that is what I understand the MFS did.

**Mr BROKESHIRE:** Mr Acting Chairman, one can only ask the questions: one cannot guarantee the right answers. Whilst I acknowledge, minister, that if I had to go in like any other minister had the compact not occurred and we stayed in government, I would have had to budget for increases which—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Mr BROKESHIRE:** Yes, but this is part of the question. I would like the minister to acknowledge that his government had said that the previous government had spent no money and that effectively there was no planning for a CAD. We always knew that CAD had to occur after you got your new GRN up and your AMS. That was what your government said: that no money was spent and there was no planning—they were the words—yet in the budget papers it actually shows provisions for CAD within the Emergency Services Fund. I would like to know why your government said that.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Are you suggesting that in the \$141 million you had funding for CAD? If we had left that \$141 million, it would have left \$1 million for a capital program across agencies in 2002-03 and would have left no capital program in ensuing years. I am amused at how the member for Mawson was going to fund the CAD system. I think the three stages are worth a total of about \$55 million, and out of that only \$1 million was available for the capital program in 2002-03 and none thereafter. The position being put forward is an absolute nonsense. There is no money there. It is another one of the McLaren Vale ambulance stations: it was an announcement. It was a plan, but there was no money.

I assure the member for Mawson that if the money had been there we would not be kicking in out of consolidated revenue to build things. You allocated no money in the forward estimates. As I said, \$141 million was not enough to

fund even the ordinary capital program, so let us not keep manufacturing these fantasies. We are the first government in eight years to act responsibly on this matter. We have put the funding in. We will fund the CAD system. I am advised that the current system in the Metropolitan Fire Service and the ambulance service is at such a state that lives would be put at risk if we did not fund it; and that is what we are doing. But do not perpetuate these fantasies that somehow you people were suddenly going to fix it if you were re-elected.

**Mr BROKESHIRE:** I make just a supplementary point.

**The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr Snelling):** I will allow a supplementary.

**Mr BROKESHIRE:** The supplementary point, Mr Acting Chairman, is that my question was: why did this government say that no money was spent and there was no planning? I did not say that we had all the money ready to buy the CAD. If you look at page 5.77, you will see:

A further \$2.1 million will be provided through appropriation in 2002-03 for contributions to the cost of the CAD/AMS project. . .

I simply say that there was planning; there was money spent. Yes, the overall capital had to be acquired, but to say that we did not do anything is just not right.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I can assure the former minister that, while there was a notional contribution of \$2.3 million, it had to be diverted to pay for AMS. The cost of the integrated CAD system that he is talking about is about \$54 million. That money was diverted to pay for AMS. This fellow has been playing with the funds for three or four years. We know what we inherited: we inherited a bloody disaster. The fact that the previous minister would like to fund ambulance stations with state helicopter funding, and that he would like to fund a \$56 million project with \$2.3 million that was already spent, speaks volumes more about his inability to live in the real world than it does about his government's concern for emergency services.

**Mr RAU:** The minister has noted a number of problems that he inherited from the former government in relation to the GRN, and the heroic efforts that he has put in to try to get it all together in four months. How long will it take to get this thing to the point where it actually works properly, and how much extra public money is going to be sunk into it in the process?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** We are hoping that the total funds now will be the 247 original, the \$10 million to put into the AMS system and the \$25 million-odd driven cost over the next four years. We are committed to making sure that, regardless of what we think of the previous government's commitments and expenditure, the communications system works properly for all the users and, in particular, for the Country Fire Service for the upcoming fire season. I am advised by the Country Fire Service that they will make sure that the system works satisfactorily for them by maintaining the use of VHF radios on the fire ground. I understand that we have not been able to overcome that issue yet. The member for Mawson will tell you that, just as it was always intended that they needed an AMS, it was always intended that they keep the VHF radios.

**Mr BROKESHIRE:** It was their choice.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** It was their choice: I see. It was not their choice, however, to be paying \$9 million a year for a GRN that they cannot use on the fire ground. Despite the fact that we have very great cause for complaint about the situation we have inherited, we have made the commitments we need to make to ensure that the people who do the job on

the fire ground, those who place their lives at risk for the community, will have proper communications. In the CFS that means not only the use of the rolled out GRN but, on the fire ground, the use of the VHF instead of the GRN Simplex, which they have found to be superior to the system that was purchased for them by the previous government.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** Can the minister advise why his government has delayed the tender call for the rescue helicopter service and decided to roll over the existing contract for many months? Every government has to prioritise, and he would have been briefed just as I was about the importance of getting a new tender up quickly. I cannot find one dollar anywhere in the budget papers for that, albeit that Rescue 1 and 2 are under enormous pressure to deliver.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** What we have got for it is the \$170 000 back from the ambulance service that the previous minister sent over for the McLaren Vale station that should never have gone there. That is one of the things we do have. Cabinet will deal with suggestions about improved services and the ambulance service. We do have priorities, but if we did not have to find all the money out of consolidated revenue to fix the hole in the emergency services budget, we might have been in a better position. It is something we are dealing with as one of our range of responsibilities and priorities. The member for Mawson will be among the first to know when we have made a decision.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** This can be put on notice if the minister is not in a position to answer it now. I would like details on an issue that was still being investigated when we left office, that is, the ordering of radios for the Country Fire Service. I understand that part of the money required now is for additional radios for the Country Fire Service, and I would ask that I be given a written answer, if you cannot give it now, as to which agency made the mistake when it came to the lack of ordering the radios, how many radios were under-ordered and what types of radios were under ordered.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** As I understand it, the member for Mawson would like me to go away and identify just whose fault it was under the previous government that things went so badly wrong. I can indicate that I am prepared to do that.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** This is not a funny issue.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** No, the member for Mawson is right: it is not a funny issue. We picked up the need for emergency services funding across the board and are finding now that we are up to about \$300 million on the previous minister's radio system, and he wants me to go away and find out whose fault it was. I can tell him that that is something we have been engaged in since we came to government, and I will be happy to bring back a report for him.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I think the minister might find that not everything works out through agencies as one would like in government. I look forward to watching that over his term. The fact is that it was always acknowledged that there was an issue here. I would simply like to know how many radios were under-ordered and which agency was responsible for the under-ordering.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** One of the things we will do for the former minister is go back through other information and see why some of these problems apparently were identified a year ago but then disappeared, it seems, off the cabinet agenda because it was a bit too embarrassing to bring them forward. We are happy to bring the member for Mawson a full report on that.

**Mr GOLDSWORTHY:** The Nairne CFS station has been identified as a site requiring upgrading for some time now, and the CFS Region 1 Regional Commander has had the deficiencies pointed out to him. Will the minister tell us what budgetary allocations may have been made to commence work for that upgrade? Also, what is the situation regarding the Inman Valley, Blackwood and Aldgate CFS station developments?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I urge the member for Kavel to consider having a talk to his colleague the member for Mawson, because spending your capital expenditure on recurrent expenditure, as I have said over and over, means that you cannot actually fund those capital programs you promised. We were left an \$8 million plus hole in that capital program. That is one of the reasons we have had to chip in money.

**Mr MONTEROLA:** Across CFS, more than 40 per cent of the stations that we have inherited from local government over the last two years need considerable work or, in some cases, replacing. We have six regions, and each of the regional commanders has been asked to prioritise the stations that need urgent work. My recollection, and I will give the member information through the minister if need be, is that we are aware that work needs to be done at Nairne but it is not on the priority list, certainly not for work to be done over the next three to five years, the reason being that many stations are in a far worse condition. We do not identify any occupational health and safety risks at that station, and we prefer to put the effort into those where that risk exists.

**Mr GOLDSWORTHY:** The Aldgate CFS station upgrade did have \$580 000 confirmed by the previous treasurer last year. In addressing the serious CFS funding issues the minister states that they have set themselves a higher bar and have put in the money that he says the previous minister could not get from the treasurer. Does that mean that the funding allocation for the building of the Aldgate CFS station is in this budget?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Before I ask Vince to answer, let me say what I said before. What the previous minister could not get was funding for the whole in the recurrent expenditure, and that is why, instead, the CFS was shifting its capital program over to pay for a \$2.5 million or \$3.5 million (depending on which year) hole in its recurrent expenditure. I just stress that you cannot spend that money twice, only the once, and if you allocate it to a capital program and it is spent instead on recurrent expenditure you lose that capital program. That is one of the simple facts of life. It is not a magic pudding. You only get to spend the money once. The former minister, had he the courage, when he first identified the problems in the budget, might have trotted up to his treasurer and fixed the hole in recurrent expenditure; then you would not have lost your capital program. But that is not what he chose to do. I can now address the problems we have inherited, but I cannot fix the past.

**Mr MONTEROLA:** The minister has almost answered the question. Essentially, what I needed to do in the last few months of the last financial year was to address some problems that I was facing in the recurrent budget. One of the decisions I made was to delay the construction of a number of fire stations, including Aldgate. Aldgate had been told that the station would go ahead. They had been told in the last 12 months that money had been put in the budget. For the reasons I have just described, I took money from about three other brigades along the same lines, transferred it into

recurrent, and I have been communicating with Aldgate and other stations explaining what is going on, trying to give them an indication of what lies ahead in future years. So, it will not go ahead this current year.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** And we certainly regret its having happened.

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**Additional Witness:**

The Hon. J.D. Hill, Minister for Gambling.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr B. Pryor, Liquor and Gambling Commissioner.

Mr R. Chappell, Director, Independent Gambling Authority.

Mr D. Reynolds, Manager, Revenue and Gambling Policy, Department of Treasury and Finance.

**Membership:**

Mrs Hall substituted for Mrs Redmond.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Does the minister want to make a brief opening statement?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Yes, sir. With this budget, the government has honoured its election promises with respect to gambling. All policy commitments are fully funded. At election time, the Labor Party promised an additional \$4 million over four years to the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund (GRF). This promise has been funded in the 2002-03 budget to provide programs such as counselling facilities for problem gamblers and to fund awareness campaigns. Funding to the GRF in 2001-02 amounted to \$2.3 million. This comprised funding from hotels and clubs of \$1.5 million and a government contribution of \$800 000. In 2002-03, funding will be increased by \$1 million to \$3.3 million. The government contribution will increase, therefore, from \$800 000 to \$1.8 million—a significant increase.

This government saw the necessity of the Independent Gambling Authority having the funding to fully undertake its crucial research function. Accordingly, an additional \$1.1 million over four years has been provided to the authority in the 2002-03 budget to assist it in performing its functions and increasing its research agenda. This also includes the development and promotion of strategies for reducing the incidence of problem gambling and to research the social and economic costs and benefits to the community of gambling and the gambling industry. The authority will also be able to increase its capacity and scope of research into the social and economic costs and benefits of gambling activities, including research into new gambling products and industry trends.

Young persons who turn 18 are particularly vulnerable to the advertising of gambling. To address this, the government is introducing a program that teaches schoolchildren about the risks of gambling as a key preventive step towards harm reduction in later life. The Department of Education and Children's Services has been provided an additional \$800 000 over four years in the 2002-03 budget for an education campaign aimed at warning young persons about the impacts of gambling, including an advertising campaign on the impact of problem gambling.

I will refer briefly to the gaming machine freeze inquiry. The gaming machine freeze ceases, as members would know,

on 31 May 2003. I have requested that the authority review the freeze on gaming machines, and that report will be tabled in parliament. The authority must identify within the context of its statutory functions all practical options for the management of gaming machine numbers after 31 May 2003.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Does the lead for the opposition wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** Yes, Mr Chairman. Given that this is really what I would describe as a transitional budget and a transitional time from our government to the minister's government, I want to thank the officers who are now working with the minister, who so professionally work for either government and who worked so hard when the Liberal government was in office. I want to place on the public record my appreciation to Mr Chappell and all those in the Independent Gambling Authority and also Mr Pryor and those in liquor and gambling, because they do excellent work (as I know that the minister would agree). Of course, last year was quite groundbreaking. I think it is fair to say that South Australia led the way in trying to address the matter of problem gambling and gambling generally for that sector of the community on whom it has an adverse impact. I am pleased to see that the minister's government has continued with a very similar model to what we set up, and I would like to think that that model continued throughout Australia.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Justice, who was my CEO at the time, because she had to be involved in leading all that as well. I think some pretty good outcomes have occurred already, but I guess that, from now on, we are interested as an opposition in what the government can do to further address the problems and what it will do when it comes to managing the codes, and so on. Wherever we can, we will be offering good opposition support. But, if we see that problem gambling is continuing to get out of control, obviously we will have to ask some questions around that matter and follow them up.

In the minister's introductory statement (overview, I guess you would call it), he indicated some of these issues, but I would like more specifics. Yesterday, the Treasurer announced a backflip, to an extent, of some of the heavy taxation measures on the higher hotel gaming proprietors in this state. However, I still think, from listening to the minister, that it indicates that his government will see this year an overall increase of approximately \$33 million in revenue, because I understand that the initiatives that the Treasurer took yesterday still show that they will bring in as much tax as he initially indicated in the budget papers. That is an enormous increase, but the minister has indicated the allocation of only about \$1 million per year over four years to assist problem gambling, and I understand that that also includes some other research initiatives. I would like clarification on that. Whilst I am sure that he would have been like I was at the time (always fighting for more for rehabilitation), I just do not think that the cabinet seriously looked at putting enough money into problem gambling. I would like to know what the minister's thoughts are and what he intends to do on in that respect, and indeed how much money his government is putting into problem gambling.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I am not sure whether that was a question or a statement.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I will repeat the figures that I gave. Prior to the election, when the government was in opposition, we promised that we would put \$1 million extra into problem gamblers—into the GRF. That is \$1 million each year for

four years—so, \$4 million over the course of the government—and there is additional funding for research and education programs. So, that is \$4 million: \$1 million a year.

The honourable member implies criticism—and actually was critical on radio this morning—that the government is not serious about this because we only put in \$1 million out of an extra \$30 million of tax that we will generate. I make the point that the honourable member's argument is a bit hollow and that he is crying crocodile tears because when his party was in government it put in less than \$1 million—in fact, \$800 000 out of a revenue take of \$200 million. According to my figures, about .4 per cent of its tax take was going into the GRF. We are putting in \$1 million out of an additional \$30 million, which is about 3 per cent. On a PR basis, we are being about eight times more generous than the previous government and, in real terms, we have more than doubled the amount of government contributions going into the GRF. I think that is a significant contribution.

One would always like to see more money but, unlike the former government, we are only spending money that we have available to spend; we are not putting figures in books and documents that we will not be able to achieve. We are announcing what we will deliver, and we are going about delivering it. Before the election we said that we would put in \$1 million a year, and we are now doing that. In a tight budgetary situation there are very few areas of government which have additional resources put into them, but this is one because it is a priority for the government.

**Mr BROKESHIRE:** I note that of this additional unexpected \$33 million increase there is still no extra money going in—that is my point. The minister indicated that he would increase funding to the Independent Gambling Authority—I do not have a problem with that—but, specifically, how much money is being put into the authority generally for recurrent expenditure? Also, how many extra staff are needed? The authority was just starting and, arguably, there will be a need for additional staff if they have not been appointed as a result of this budget. Also, the minister talked about research. What funding is specifically for research, and is he satisfied that the authority is now staffed and supported adequately?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** We have put an additional amount of \$1.1 million over four years into the IGA for research. The former government, prior to its defeat, agreed to sufficient funds to employ three additional officers and to upgrade accommodation. We have honoured those commitments. All but one of those staff are now on board, and they moved into the new accommodation last week. So, we have not altered what the former government committed to and, in addition, we have put in \$1.1 million over four years.

The IGA and I and the other people seated at this table are talking through what the research priorities ought to be. One of the things that we have talked about is the need for research. I think this is something that the committee chaired or set up by the former minister identified: the link between gambling and crime. We are certainly looking at that. We are also working at a national level on a ministerial council which I think is to meet early in October to see whether we can get coordinated research because, whilst we have only a small amount of money, if we can use it with the other states and the commonwealth we will be able to leverage it and get a better outcome. We certainly want to pursue those matters.

**Mr BROKESHIRE:** So that everyone is clear on this, I gather that the minister is saying that he has increased funding to the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund to the tune of

\$1 million a year for four years, which is a total of \$4 million over the government's term of office—and that was announced before the budget. He is then putting \$1.1 million over four years into the research component. Is that \$1.1 million per year for the four years or over the four years?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** It is \$1.1 million divided by four. In addition, we have put \$800 000 over four years into children's services. The research money is broken up into \$200 000 in this budget year and \$300 000 in each of the following three years. That takes into account the fact that it takes a little time to establish a new program.

**The CHAIRMAN:** This issue overlaps portfolio areas, and the Attorney raised this matter in parliament a week or two ago. I refer to the question of so-called happy hours and free drinks, particularly when offered to young women. Is there a code of practice for people who hold a liquor licence and/or a gaming licence that relates to providing either heavily subsidised alcoholic drinks or free drinks at licensed premises?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Are you asking that question in relation to gaming?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Particularly in relation to liquor licensing, which I understand would be a responsibility of the Commissioner. Is that covered by a code of practice?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Codes of conduct in relation to drinking generally are outside my responsibilities. The Independent Gambling Authority is developing codes of conduct for all forms of gambling. There is a code of conduct for the casino; a code of conduct is being developed for lotteries, the TAB, scratchies and X-Lotto; and there will also be a code of conduct for hotel venues. There is no specific code at the moment, but a review is scheduled for December and that may well pick that up. Mr Pryor tells me that we have codes in relation to alcohol but they are under the responsibility of the Minister for Consumer Affairs. Mr Pryor can provide some information.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I would be interested in that and also gaming and gambling incentives.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** We are developing codes of conduct for gambling, and one will be developed in relation to hotel or club venues towards the end of this year. A code has already been developed for the casino—and I guess that will be the model for the other venues—but alcohol comes under consumer affairs.

**Mr PRYOR:** As the minister said, the Minister for Consumer Affairs has responsibility for this, but there is a statutory code of conduct under the Liquor Licensing Act which becomes a condition of every liquor licence in South Australia. It covers issues such as responsible service and the consumption of alcohol. It is not prescriptive when it comes to what constitutes a responsible happy hour or what constitutes an irresponsible happy hour. We have taken action against quite a few licensees (including some of the large brewers) and, consequently, they have withdrawn various promotions, but there is no doubt that the code could be updated.

I have written to the AHA and it has agreed to participate in a review of the statutory code to try to develop some specific examples of what is acceptable and what is not. We have a practitioners' forum which meets every four months. Three of those firms have also agreed to participate. I expect that I will develop a discussion paper by the end of October.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I can add, Mr Chairman, that as part of the development of a code of conduct for gaming venues the IGA will look at inducements to gamble and that

will cover the issues that you raised as well as other issues such as loyalty systems, free gifts, and so on.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I know there was a lot of interest and discussion a year or so ago about internet gambling. Do you as minister have any idea of the extent of under-age gambling, or gambling by minors in various forms, or is that just unknown? Do we have any information on how many young people engage in gambling of one kind or another?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I can indicate that we have no statistical evidence. The Commissioner indicates to me that he is currently investigating one possible illegal under-age incidence of gambling involving the TAB, and there are three other matters that he has investigated in the past. This could well be an area for further research, and we can certainly take that on board as an important issue.

**Mr CAICA:** You referred briefly in your opening remarks to the expiry of the freeze on the number of gaming machines. What does the government intend to do at the expiry of the freeze on the number of gaming machines in 2003?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** As the honourable member would know, the freeze came into effect on 7 December 2000. It was a conscience vote of this parliament. At 30 June 2002 there were 14 647 gaming machines operating in 592 gaming venues throughout the state. A further 311 have been approved and are on line to be installed or are under licence suspension. The point needs to be made that there was somewhat of a gold rush prior to the freeze being introduced at the end of December 2000. Former premier Olsen I think had announced it on a number of occasions which gave sufficient notice to anybody who was even vaguely contemplating having a poker machine licence, so they all applied, and we had a bit like the effect that the GST had on housing approvals—it brought forward a whole lot of machines which otherwise may not have been brought into play until considerably later.

For example, one hotelier who has a very good hotel near my electorate did not have poker machines in his venue, and did not want to have them, but when the freeze was announced, he put in an application to have the machines installed because his accountant said to him, 'If you don't do this, you're a mug. You will devalue your pub by \$1 million' or whatever. He did not want to do it, but while the option was there to do it, the value of that hotel stayed up. Once that option went, he was forced to do it. I am sure there are many examples across the metropolitan area of publicans who either put machines in for the first time or increased the number that they had. That is by way of background.

The freeze finishes at the end of May next year, and I have asked the Independent Gambling Authority to conduct a public review into the freeze and look at all the issues associated with the freeze to see whether the freeze is having the required impact, whether or not there should be conditions, if the freeze generally were to stay in place, on how machines could be transferred from one venue to another if that was what was desired, or whether or not greenfield sites should be able to be exceptions, what the impact has been on clubs, and so on. All these issues will be reviewed, because I want to be able to provide the house with some thoughtful work in relation to the impact of the freeze, rather than just have a kind of a debate and vote based on no knowledge but just prejudice or whatever.

**Mr CAICA:** Relating to the topic raised by the chairman a few moments ago, is the minister concerned that loyalty programs could exacerbate problem gambling, and could he advise of any progress made in addressing loyalty schemes?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** A number of loyalty schemes have been developed by the hotel industry, individual hotels, groups of hotels or even larger schemes, which act as incentives to people to use particular venues. In my view, that is reasonable. Patrons could go to a particular hotel and be given points if they kept going back to that hotel, a bit like the way frequent flyer schemes work. There was a scheme starting up in Adelaide, the J card scheme, where points were able to be accumulated from venues which were not hotels or clubs. In one particular example back in March this year, a delicatessen in Taperoo was giving points for the sale of products over the counter, and the purchaser would accumulate the points and could transfer those points into money which could be used at gaming venues. I thought that was inappropriate.

I had a meeting with the proponents of the J card, that is Jackpot Club World Smart Technology, and they agreed to suspend that aspect of their operation. I thought that would lead into gambling people who had not before gambled, and could therefore produce problem gambling. I have asked the IGA to look at it in the development of codes of conduct and look at it as something that requires codification. I gather that is something that will happen in December as part of the review of the gaming venues in December this year. I am just advised that, in preparation for that, the IGA is doing a survey of all gaming venues to see what incentive schemes are being offered.

There is potential in this kind of smartcard technology to allow gambling to take place using poker machines and at the same time protecting problem gamblers. If you could imagine a scenario where the only way you could play a poker machine was to use a smartcard, and you could have only one smartcard, it would be conceivable for problem gamblers to set limits, and for that limit to be zero, so they could not activate the machines. It could also be conceivable for the families of problem gamblers or those dependent on the income of problem gamblers to go to court to have a limit of zero or some other limit introduced. It seems to me that there is potential to really deal with problem gambling. It is one of the issues I am very keen to see some research done into.

**Mr CAICA:** I refer to Portfolio Statements, 'Strategic Context' on page 5.3 of Budget Paper 4, which states:

This portfolio aims to enhance justice and safety by various services including rehabilitation programs.

Can the minister inform us of the measures the government is taking to assist problem gamblers?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I guess in part I have really answered that previously. We have three initiatives that we advise of in this budget: the additional \$4 million for the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund over four years; an additional \$1.1 million over four years for the IGA to conduct research; and \$800 000 over four years for the Department of Education and Children's Services to conduct educational programs.

**Mrs HALL:** I was very interested to hear the minister talk about the need for some additional research to be done on that smartcard that he was talking about. I have a suggestion and perhaps he may take it up. I do not know whether the minister has read *Hansard* from yesterday, but his colleague the Treasurer, as we now know, has changed the government's position on tax rates, growth and revenue projected from this industry. He has now agreed that some new economic modelling confirms that additional growth in the industry will

take place and it will provide additional taxes to the state's coffers.

The minister has also made specific reference to the Magee report. He said that it is now irrelevant to the debate; that there are elements of the report with which he does not agree; and that many of the assumptions made by Magee were wrong but that he had kept his colleagues appropriately aware of what they needed to be aware of. Will the minister have some rather urgent discussions with the Treasurer—given that he is going to get so much more money out of the industry—to see whether he can get a larger take of the tax to put into this fund to do just the sort of thing about which the minister was talking?

Yesterday, the Treasurer seemed pretty pleased that at least another \$5 million is coming out of the industry. Everyone shares the concern about problem gamblers, but it would be an ideal scenario for the Treasurer to be very generous and give you, minister, some more money to put into the fund to do that sort of research.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** That is, in fact, identical to the question asked by the member for Mawson at the beginning of this session. I suggest that the honourable member look at that answer. I will not go through the rhetoric that I used at that time. We are more than doubling the amount of money that is going into this area compared to that put in by the honourable member's government. So, we are honouring that commitment, and that is in the context of a very tight budget.

*Mrs Hall interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** We had to get the extra money because we did not know about the black hole that the honourable member's government left us. We have done quite well in this context. As I said to the member for Mawson, we have a small amount of research budget. We would like to leverage that, I suppose, by working with the other states and the commonwealth. I understand that, federally, there is \$5 million for a research program. That is a reasonably large sum of money. We must argue the priorities that we believe are important, and I have identified a couple. I am very keen to see someone in Australia (it does not necessarily need to be someone here) look at the potential for smartcard because it seems to me that it is a way of getting the balance right.

You can allow people who want to gamble to have a flutter without their feeling that they are somehow part of the criminal class, because there is a fair bit of media which makes people think that gambling and using poker machines is somehow not a proper thing to do. So, it will allow people to enjoy gambling, if they wish to, while protecting them and their families if they are just not able to control themselves. It seems to me that a smartcard is the way to do it. If it operated like a Visa card, or some other card, that had a code and you had one identified card that you owned, there would be no point in stealing anyone's card: you could not put any more money on it because you would have a set limit. I think you would be able to restrict people in that way. I am confident that we can get the resources to do it if we can leverage the commonwealth and other states' research budgets.

**Mrs HALL:** And your colleague.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The Treasurer?

**Mrs HALL:** Yes.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The Treasurer is very sympathetic to my portfolio needs.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** Whilst I am pleased that the minister is looking at the problem of impact gambling and

crime, I am disappointed that he has not resourced, supported or given the go-ahead for the IGA to do some multi-research projects. I take the minister's point about the government's implementing strategies in conjunction with national programs, which is what we would have done. Why reinvent the wheel? When I think of issues, such as the real impact of problem gambling on families and children and the other issue raised by the Chairman about the potential impact, some work must now be available on the potential impact of internet gambling, given that it is quite new to South Australia. Will the minister look at doing some multi-research projects in the near future that I believe are paramount in assisting not only problem gamblers but also your office and the authority to set further strategies?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The point is that we have not specified what research programs the IGA must undertake. We have given it some money to do some work. It is not a lot of work but it is some money. We want to ensure that we do not, as the honourable member says, reinvent the wheel: we want to make sure that we are doing it in conjunction with the commonwealth and other states. It is a bit early, I think. These matters will be discussed at a ministerial meeting in October, and we will decide what will and will not happen. We could do research into a range of issues, but I am not too sure that internet gambling will be the highest priority.

*Mr Brokenshire interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** In response to the Chairman, I mentioned that the issue of gambling and children is probably worth looking at. We will go through this process over the next few months with the IGA, the commonwealth and the other states. We need to work out the priorities at a national level, and we also need to work out what resources are available and put those resources behind the priority. Perhaps at the next Estimates Committee I might be able to give the honourable member a little more specific detail. We are really at the beginning of the process. I am not ruling anything in or out at this stage.

I need to get proper advice. We want to talk to the Christian churches and the gambling task force. I know that when the honourable member was minister he met with a range of groups that identified some priorities. I have not overturned those priorities. I certainly see those as the sorts of things that we should be looking at. It is a matter of trying to work out which of them we need to do and what can be done in other jurisdictions.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** They are a good group to work with at a local level, of course. How much additional funding has the minister's government provided to churches and non-government agencies to support problem gambling and provide financial packages for families that are in need of basic goods and services assistance?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I am perhaps the wrong person to ask because I am not responsible for the welfare budget. As I said, we have put \$4 million over four years into the GRF. I have some responsibilities for that, but only minimally, in that I get to announce it but I do not get to spend it. The honourable member would have to ask the Minister for Social Justice those questions.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** As I did, I know that the minister is enjoying the challenge of being Minister for Gambling, because it is an important social issue. Given the increase in funding of \$33 million in tax to the government, is the minister prepared to make representations to the Treasurer for additional funding to be provided to churches and non-government agencies for problem gambling and to provide

financial packages for families in need of basic goods and service assistance? Clearly, the churches and non-government agencies are saying that they need more money. Would the minister be prepared, around the cabinet table, to lobby for additional money?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** As the honourable member knows, the budget process is assessed on an annual basis. There will be bilateral discussions, bids and all the rest of it in the lead-up to the next budget. However, the budget we have introduced is the budget we have introduced, and it relies on all the revenue to pay for the things that have already been announced. I know that the Treasurer is sympathetic to the needs of people who are affected by gambling, and he and I and other members of the cabinet will discuss these priorities in due course.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That completes the questioning regarding this portfolio line.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I thank the various officers who have assisted me today, and I thank you for your patience, sir.

#### Additional Witness:

The Hon. T.G. Roberts, Minister for Correctional Services.

#### Departmental Advisers:

Mr J. Paget, Chief Executive, Department of Corrections.  
Mr A. Martin, Director, Financial and Physical Resources.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I welcome the Minister for Correctional Services. I trust he is not overawed by being in the House of Assembly. I ask members to be very gentle with the minister. Minister, if you wish you are able to make a brief statement, and I invite you to introduce your frontbench officers for the sake of Hansard. I remind people that they need to be fairly close to the microphone otherwise Hansard and the rest of us will not be able to hear them.

**The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS:** Thank you, Mr Chairman. As the Minister for Correctional Services, I would like to acknowledge that the Department for Correctional Services is part of the larger justice portfolio, which includes agencies that are under the responsibility of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Attorney-General, Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Multicultural Affairs and the Minister for Gambling. This highlights the collaborative nature of justice and the need for strategies that work across the whole portfolio. The current budget ensures the Department for Correctional Services is able to contribute to a safer community by working in partnership with other criminal justice organisations in the community to prevent crime and reduce repeat offending. Certainly, this involves community participation, and we as a government will be encouraging it for a number of reasons.

This year's budget, being the first under the new Rann government, addresses a number of key issues for the Department of Correctional Services that were overlooked or ignored in the previous Liberal government budgets. The Labor government recognises the critical role that corrections plays in the criminal justice process in South Australia, and this has been reflected in the budget. Recent rapid growth in male remand numbers and growth in the length of sentences have been matters of ongoing concern for the state's prison system, and in this budget we take several major steps to address these issues. Firstly, the funding of \$6.45 million will be provided over four years for the construction of 50 additional medium/low security beds. Whilst this initiative will

increase overall prison capacity, it will also increase the flexibility of the system and enable more effective and efficient placement of prisoners throughout the system. Secondly, \$564 000 is being allocated over four years to community corrections for the intensive bail supervision program. This will enable, where appropriate, the electronic supervision of more offenders in their own homes rather than holding them in prison on remand, further reducing pressure on the prison system. I understand that the previous government was keen to see that program running successfully.

The safety of our staff and of the prisoners and the duty of care that we have in our system is critical. Accordingly, \$2.143 million has been allocated towards implementing recommendations made in a fire safety audit conducted by the Metropolitan Fire Service. Lack of past investment in fire safety systems and overcrowding have exacerbated the risks existing within the prison facilities. Work will commence immediately on upgrading thermal alarms and fire detection and monitoring systems, and this will include the installation of a very early smoke detection alarm (VESDA) system. The additional funding will also enable adequate staff training and ensure that fire procedures and equipment are maintained and kept up to date.

The government has also acted to address long-term cost pressures relating to workers' compensation costs. An increase in funding of \$1.6 million has been approved to relieve the department of cost pressures in this financial year. Whilst the department has recognised that, although the additional funding is extremely valuable and a major step forward, it has made clear that it must and will continue to seek ways to improve its performance in occupational health and welfare to the benefit of our correctional staff. This budget also demonstrates the Rann government's commitment to provide a safer community for the people of South Australia. The security upgrade program which has included Mobilong, Yatala, Port Augusta, Port Lincoln, Mount Gambier and the Adelaide Remand Centre will continue into 2002-03. Furthermore, a funding commitment has been made to upgrade and replace the Adelaide Women's Prison security systems. Plans have been made to construct and fit out a new control room, replace surveillance cameras and provide a security detection system around the new mothers' and infants' unit. Completion of this project is anticipated to be December this year.

Overall, the budget for corrections has increased on the previous year. However, in addition to the increase in funding provided, some internal saving strategies have been required to enable more resources to be allocated to address higher and more urgent priorities. Savings from previous enhanced targeted voluntary separation payments will be redirected to fund other cost pressures within corrections. With difficulty in recruiting a social worker, the Cadell Training Centre therapeutic unit, which has not been operational for 12 months, has been closed as a saving initiative. The accommodation will be taken up with other activities. Funding for the two psychologists at the University of South Australia has ceased and funding for the chair in forensic psychology will cease at the end of January 2003. The department will now explore alternative methods of delivering services to address the mental health requirements of offenders.

The just consequences program was conducted through community services for the benefit of schools and community groups. Cessation of the program as a savings initiative will have no effect on custodial services. The Operation Challenge



at the Cadell Training Centre has been directed to predominantly younger, first time offenders and is also aimed at preventing young offenders from reoffending. With the closure of this program, corrections will examine what alternatives are available to service this group of offenders. The year 2002-03 is one in which the government seeks to address a number of key longstanding operational and funding issues. Addressing these issues will leave the department in a much better position to achieve outcomes in public safety and to fulfil its role as an integrated part of the criminal justice system.

Strategies focused on meeting the needs of community and managing demand in the future must be defined to ensure resources are best allocated to achieve priorities. Last year, the Department of Correctional Services initiated a strategic service planning project, *Towards Corrections 2020*, with the objective of defining strategies and resource plans for service delivery in custodial services and community corrections over the next 10 to 20 years. This project will be completed in 2002-03 and will define pathways for the future. I am sure the previous minister will know all about the starting up of that program.

I will now deal with challenges for the future. There are many challenges ahead due to the complex nature of the justice system, such as changes in community expectations and the limited resources available to address social and legal issues in the community. We need to balance the immediate needs of the community with longer-term goals.

In addition, many of the causes of crime and antisocial behaviour originate beyond the capacity of any single government and portfolio. Therefore, a number of our initiatives require a cross-government agency effort and support from community groups and volunteers. We need to find better ways of working together to solve problems.

In conclusion, there are many positive initiatives occurring throughout the Department of Correctional Services, often in partnership with agencies within the justice portfolio and other government agencies, and with community groups and volunteers. I acknowledge that funding constraints have limited our ability to fund more initiatives. However, the savings produced will, in the longer term, provide us with greater budget flexibility to implement future programs.

It has been decided that a business reform process is to be implemented across the justice portfolio to ensure that a portfolio-wide approach is taken to determining that we are operating consistently with best known practice in governance and service delivery, and delivering our service in the most effective and efficient manner possible.

It is important to continually review Justice's current commitments to ensure that the best use is being made of existing resources. The government is taking on the responsibility of constantly examining the ways in which agencies are doing business and to finetune the balance between resources and demands. The Justice business reform process will require agencies to examine whether there are opportunities to redirect resources to meet strategic demands in the Justice portfolio. Reinvesting resources within the Justice portfolio is a primary goal of the reform process. We recognise the invaluable contribution made by more than 40 000 volunteers to the work of the Justice portfolio, and I met many of those volunteers at a day at the women's prison just recently.

I am confident that the measures we have taken in the budget will deliver a South Australia which is safer, more inclusive and equitable and which provides the community with greater access to the understanding of the justice system.

This budget is about establishing a foundation on which to build that future.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, minister. Does the lead for the opposition wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** As I have indicated when other agencies have been before the committee today, given that this is a transitional budget—a transition to another government—I want to place on the public record my sincere appreciation and that of our party, when we were in government, and particularly mine as minister, to the agencies. I have already talked about Justice on the public record and the leadership there from the CEO right through. I want to thank the Chief Executive Officer of Corrections and all of his executive, and indeed all his staff right through to whatever rank they may have in their department.

It would be fair to say that the Correctional Services Department is exceptionally well run. It is visionary and strategic, and it would match any correctional services department that I have seen. I would say to the new minister that he is in good shape from that point of view. You can buy me a beer one day for that, for my little bit!

Having said that, I must say that there are a number of issues that we will want to question. But, if you want to look at benchmarking thus far, I think that the South Australian DCS is up there with the best of them. So, congratulations to all those who have worked so hard so far. In opposition we will very much take an interest in the portfolio to ensure that it is able to continue that work.

Minister, having said that, I am concerned that things are at a crossroad with this agency. I am sure that the minister went in and worked as hard as he could to get a reasonable budget, but we do not see this as a reasonable budget for correctional services. In fact, even though you say there has been an increase in this department, in real terms blind Freddie would see that there has been a savage decrease for this department. The increase in fees to the local footy and netball games has been more significant than the meagre increase here.

If you look at page 5.51, you will see that expenditure is within a couple of hundred thousand dollars of what was estimated for last year, and we know that there are many pressures there. This is unfortunate, because some of the great programs have been cut and, as I said Mr Chairman, we will continue to watch this portfolio and hope that the good work that has been done can continue to be done.

Minister, I refer you to Budget Paper 4, pages 5.3 and 5.7, Output Class 1.1. Among other things, it refers to the 'provision of educational or vocational . . . and offence focused services for offenders and alleged offenders including pre-court, court based and prison based activities and services'. The table shows that budgeted net expenses on this output in 2003 is \$18.85 million: that is about \$1.5 million less than the estimated net expenses for the year ended 30 June.

We are concerned, after questions asked in another place, about the cut in funding for psychological services, and the abolition of the Therapeutic Drug Unit and Operation Challenge, which have been primarily axed. Will you, minister, inform us what other programs have been cut, and, given that your government seeks to portray itself as tough on law and order, say why expenditure for prison programs is being cut? It does not seem to make sense if you are cutting when you will have to put more people through. Do you agree with the sentiments expressed by Mr Loveday of Blakeview, whose letter to the editor was published today and who

suggested that conditions in gaol should be made more arduous.

**The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS:** In reply to the letter to the editor, I disagree with the personal expressions of the individual concerned. I think the primary roles for corrections are rehabilitation and to minimise the risk of reoffending, as well as to secure those prisoners who need to be secured to make the community feel safe. I do not see corrections as a place for meting out punishment or making things tougher than what taking away that person's liberty has already made it for that individual.

In relation to the budget strategy, or the difficulties with which the budget has confronted us in relation to the allocation of funding, there is an overall gain within the budget of \$19 million over four years and a cut in some of programming of \$2.8 million. So, we have placed a high priority on some areas and we have made some savings in others.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** I have just a quick supplementary to that. I would appreciate—not now but on notice—more detail on just what those other cuts within the department might be. If you have other cuts, we would like to know what they are.

**The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS:** We will give full detail of the cuts, or the impact of the budget. I will take that question on notice.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** Minister, you spoke, in your opening remarks—and it is in the budget papers—about a new 50-bed medium security prison at a cost of \$6.6 million. Will you provide more details of this project, such as where it will be located, when it will start and how many additional staff positions will be created? Your budget paper states that the new prison beds will address recent growth in the number of offenders being remanded in custody. It is a well-known fact that we have one of the highest rates of accused persons remaining in custody in the country. As minister, do you have any view on strategies to reduce the incidence of custodial remands, or will the government look at that issue in the context of my first question, which ties in with this, about the 50-bed medium security prison?

**The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS:** The location of the increase of capacity by 50 beds has not been finally decided, and there are discussions ongoing on the siting of the increased capacity. It is more likely to be in a regional site, but those discussions are still taking place. Communities and other people have to be consulted, but there is no final position determined on that yet.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** Will it have any additional staff, and when will it be started?

**The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS:** Advice given to me is that the starting date will be as soon as possible and that prison design and other features of the prison will probably determine staff numbers. Those numbers are being discussed, and an agreement will be reached with the PSA.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** A final question, minister, with respect to remands in custody: will you be looking at the issue as Minister for Correctional Services, and do you have any view on strategies to reduce the incidence of custodial remands?

**The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS:** The Courts Administration Authority and DCS are in consultation at the moment to try and come to terms with those problems. As you would know, being the previous minister, it has been a longstanding problem in South Australia (the number of remandees that we have), but we are looking at a number of options to deal with those problems as they are making it difficult to manage the

prison numbers, and the management tools will certainly be made easier if we have better options than we have now. We are also supporting the drug diversionary program set up under the previous government.

**Mr CAICA:** Thank you, Mr Chairman. I would like to join you in welcoming the minister to this chamber. Minister, I refer the committee's attention to the target for 2002-03 as set out on page 5.24 under Output Class 6—Offender Supervision. It is noted in the final dot point that maintaining a safe and secure custodial environment is a target in the upcoming financial year. You mentioned fire safety briefly in your opening remarks, but could you provide details of what steps are being taken to improve fire safety in this state's correctional facilities?

**The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS:** Thank you. I also welcome the member for Colton to the chamber and recognise that, as a firefighter in a previous life and having 19-20 years of service to the organisation, he is well versed in asking the question. I think the member has also fought fires inside the prison system, so I may be seeking advice from him at some stage. From time to time there have been a number of small fires in our prison system. The risk of those fires in an environment such as a prison is as great as is the potential for loss of life. Indeed, the history of corrections in Australia reveals instances of complete units of prisons being destroyed or significantly damaged by fire. I am not sure that Yatala will burn very easily, but smoke inhalation is a bit of a problem.

The risks are particularly acute after hours when staffing levels tend to be much lower than during the day. For DCS in places like Port Lincoln the risks are particularly heightened as the local fire services are not in a position to respond as quickly as they can, for instance, in the Adelaide CBD. During the term of the last government, the risk posed by fire was not adequately addressed and the lack of past investment in fire safety systems and the overcrowding in our prisons has exacerbated that risk.

In 2001 the Department for Correctional Services arranged for the MFS to audit the fire safety systems in the state's prisons and other facilities. As a consequence of this audit an additional \$2.14 million has been budgeted for implementing recommendations made in the MFS fire safety audit. This is made up of \$1.863 million in capital funding over the next two years and \$70 000 in recurrent funding to create the position of fire safety officer. This position will ensure the maintenance of the DCS fire safety system's assets, the procurement of breathing equipment and escape equipment and the training of staff; and this is a long overdue appointment.

The purpose of the capital is to commence immediately on upgrading magnetic hold-open devices on fire doors, the installation of thermal alarms and fire detection, and monitoring systems to Australian standard AS 1670, including the installation of very early smoke detection alarms (VESDA), as I mentioned in my introduction, in a variety of locations. I commend the staff at DCS, especially those serving on the department's occupational health and safety committees, responsible for this initiative. As the previous minister would understand, it is money that you have to spend, but there are no significant visual improvements, either in the prison system for any management purpose, or it is not viewed in a lot of cases by the public as having any rehabilitation or impact on the prison system as a whole; but it is something that has to be done.

**Mr SNELLING:** The previous government developed for itself quite a reputation as being lenient when it came to the matter of criminals, and there is now a transition to a new government with a very different attitude, a tough on crime attitude, which we never saw in the previous government; and you would expect that this transition would inevitably have an effect on prisoner numbers. Given recent media attention that suggests our prisons are operating at near capacity, could you outline what steps are being taken to increase the capacity in the state's prison system?

**The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS:** In 1997 the Department for Correctional Services forecast the need for additional prison capacity. This has been made urgent because of the high remand rate in South Australia, as alluded to in the previous question, and the length of sentences. In response to this need, the government has provided \$3.8 million in capital funding over two years and \$0.85 million in recurrent funding for staffing and operations for prison capacity expansion. In real terms this will mean the addition of 50 medium security beds. Advice from the department on the location of these beds, as I mentioned in an earlier answer, is yet to be finalised.

The expansion of prison capacity will, to some degree, address some of those problems referred to. Prison overcrowding will also be addressed and we will try to redress the balance and the accommodation type compared to the accommodation needed. For example, 40 per cent of the cells in the South Australian prison system are designed as high security accommodation, when only 20 per cent of the prison population is classified as high security. High security accommodation is more costly to build and operate than medium or low security accommodation. In addition to the provision of funding the government is pleased to report that the Department of Correctional Services embarked on a major project to analyse the future needs of the department and the prison system over the next 20 years.

This project aims to establish a future direction for corrections in South Australia and establish time frames for infrastructure within the program development. It will form the basis for the forward plan for budgeting and resource purpose in the future. Hopefully the crime prevention programs that are in place and the—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS:** No. There are lots of crime prevention programs, and the social community building helps us to do that.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I would be interested to know (and this is in approximate terms) what percentage of prisoners are working a full day's work over a five day period and how many might be studying over the same time span. I know that it is a tough issue: I am familiar with the issue of the workshops and of trade union concern, but is there any figure showing what percentage of our prisoners are actually engaged in meaningful work for the whole week? I mean a normal working week, say a 35 hour week. I am familiar with the gaol system: I have been in there many times and I know that it is a challenge. How many actually do a day's work, spread over the week, 35 hours or something approximating that? In my previous experience, some went to the workshops but many did not do anything. Some did a bit of study but, in essence, there was probably more idleness than activity, and I wondered whether things have changed.

**Mr PAGET:** About 71 per cent are employed in prison industries and in services, but we would have to break that down separately. If you want that, I will have to take that on

notice. The issue about how many of those working in prison industries actually clock up 35 hours as a minimum I would also need to take on notice.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I am not concerned so much about whether it is a minimum but whether they are doing something that is realistic and real, rather than tokenistic work or working in, say, the kitchen for two or three hours a day. That is what I am hinting at. I will be happy if you can come back with some sort of answer on that. As I say, I appreciate that it is a very difficult issue.

**Mr PAGET:** The search for business partners in South Australia is always difficult. We have a joint committee of business and trade unions who have to approve any work or business partner we have, to ensure that it does not take jobs out of the community. Recently, we constructed a \$1.5 million workshop and training facility out at Mobilong at Murray Bridge, and we hope to commission that in August. That is being done in conjunction with some business partners from the community, but it is exceptionally difficult to attract a business partner when there are high rates of unemployment in the community. That is particularly so outside the metropolitan area. But I will provide for the Chairman the figures he was after.

**The CHAIRMAN:** What about those low risk prisoners who can work outside? That was something I promoted years ago when the Hon. Susan Lenehan was the minister, using electronic bracelets and working on a trust system, doing environmental projects. Is that still operational or has that been discontinued?

**The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS:** The general philosophy of keeping prisoners busy in constructive work and education that could lead to positive employment outside is a philosophical position that the government agrees with. I hope to be able to report pre-budget next year that we are going to have more success in placing more prisoners in gainful employment and training programs, and the electronic monitoring program that was commenced by the previous government, which is an alternative to gaol and certainly for early release, is a program that we will be maintaining.

**The CHAIRMAN:** On the point about a possible new regional prison, will the minister take into account the impact on families, the travel situation and the disconnection that a prisoner is likely to have with their family if a prison is built away from the main centre of population which, obviously, is Adelaide. What I am concerned about is the Texas model, where a prison location has more to do with priming the pump than consideration of the welfare of the families of prisoners or, indeed, of prisoners themselves.

**The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS:** The management tools that are available to us at the moment will be used to correct the position that exists now as much as we can, given that we do have a number of country prisons in operation in South Australia, which some of the other states, perhaps, do not have; they tend to move towards larger aggregated institutions which, in many cases do not appear to have any sort of rehabilitation component to them at all. Although they cost more, there are benefits in regionalised prisons, but they do present problems, such as visiting times. In many cases, the relatives of the people who are incarcerated do not have access to funds, and it will need to be a consideration. But I suspect that if the extensions are to be made to Mobilong, say, which is within a hour's drive, that would be seen to be in part reasonable, but you certainly would not want to be driving to Port Lincoln, Mount Gambier or Port Augusta to visit your relatives if you only had one or two days for a visit.

The placement of prisoners becomes important, but we need to be a bit more sensible about how we use the management tools that we have at our disposal.

**Mr RAU:** My first question is one that I am sure the minister will have to take on notice, so I will explain it and leave it with him. Will the minister at some stage advise how the proportion of people in the prison system lines up as compared with the general South Australian population as reflected in the most recent census? For example, the percentage of people of Aboriginal identity who are in prison as opposed to the general population, and the percentage from Indo-China, and so forth. In the same vein, also, comparators in relation to the prevalence of communicable diseases such as HIV, hepatitis C and so forth in those populations as compared with best guesstimates in the general population. I do not expect an answer to that now: it is just something that I think will be interesting.

**The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS:** They are very important questions as far as the prison population is concerned and I will be happy to take them on notice and bring back a reply.

**Mr RAU:** In relation to prisoner vocational training and education, will the minister advise the committee as to why the additional spending, which I understand to be some \$86 000 in 2002-03, is needed, and report to the committee on how successful this program has been?

**The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS:** I am pleased to announce that this government has agreed to maintain the current level of educational hours in prisons by funding and liberalised bargaining wage increases for hourly paid instructors. This will cost \$86 000. The vocational education and training program operating in the prison system is an important program, as pointed out earlier. It is generally recognised that 60 per cent of prisoners have low literacy and numeracy rates and over 40 per cent were classified as long-term unemployed.

The vocational education and training program directly addresses these areas of social disadvantage and, hopefully, when prisoners are released it gives them a better than even chance of participating in the broader community in being able to find gainful employment. Vocational education and training are integral parts of offender rehabilitation, and being linked to stable employment is a critical factor in reducing recidivism on release from prison and also monitoring the home life into which prisoners are released.

At June 2002, 738 prisoners were enrolled in 2 879 units of competency. The completion rate for units of training at June 2002 were 49.53 per cent; that is 1 426 units. The prison educational system identifies those offenders who require educational assistance and, in conjunction with prisoners, develops a plan to address each prisoner's needs throughout the period of imprisonment. These plans are supported by trained professionals who, where appropriate, properly accredit prisoners at the completion of each program. Some need a satchel to take their certificates out when they leave!

In March, the department of education endeavour was successfully audited by the Accreditation and Registration Council. In order to make a lasting impact on the crime rate, we must attempt to address the underlying social issues that contribute to the causes of crime; hence the department's focus on education. That will continue while we are in government.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** In the targets, Output Class 6, there appears the following dot point:

Continue with the accommodation expansion program for Adelaide Women's Prison.

In the budget last year, the former government allocated \$300 000 for spending on additional accommodation at the Adelaide Women's Prison, and the amount was an explicit line in the budget. On page 5.34 of this budget paper, it shows that, during that period of time, a total of \$530 000 was spent on the project. Given that in this paper it is stated that the accommodation expansion will continue, will the minister indicate what money will be allocated to task this measure this year, and will he say whether his government has made any provision in the forward estimates for the establishment of a new women's prison? I understood that full moneys were allocated and expenditure occurred for the expansion, yet it appears, from reading the budget papers, that there is additional money on top of what was allocated last year. I am keen to know what the minister is doing with respect to a totally new women's prison.

**Mr PAGET:** I am not quite sure what that figure refers to. The member may recall that the original proposal was to use ex-Olympic demountables outside the main area of the prison—the main block. An alternative solution presented itself to construct the additional 11 bed capacity inside to make use of the secure walls. That was the difference in the original design and the one that was eventually approved and funded. I will take on notice the question regarding the differences in the cost.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I thank the CEO and the minister for that information. I gather that we are talking about the project that was announced and funded last year, and that there is no additional women's prison accommodation being built over and above that which was announced and funded last year?

**Mr PAGET:** That is correct. However, since that time, additional funds have gone into the women's prison for the security upgrade. The additional security upgrade that was essential has been approved, and work is commencing on that. The other thing, of course, is the PPP for the women's prison, which was initiated some time ago. Our prime business case has now been presented to Treasury.

**Mrs REDMOND:** I want to ask a couple of questions about intensive bail supervision. I also refer to Output Class 6 on page 5.24 of Budget Paper 4, volume 1. The second dot point states:

Increase the use of intensive bail supervision.

Perhaps because of my own ignorance I need first of all to clarify exactly what is meant by 'intensive bail supervision'. From what I can glean on the subject, perhaps that refers to a sort of bracelet system rather than a physical supervision by employees. Is that correct?

**The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS:** That is correct, yes.

**Mrs REDMOND:** What steps does the minister propose to take in order to achieve the increased use of intensive bail supervision, and what new resources will be allocated for it? What is the cost of that proposed increase?

**The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS:** The information provided to me, very helpfully and carefully, is that the significant increase in the intensive bail supervision numbers has made it necessary for the department to seek funding for the continuation of this program. In the latter part of the 2000-01 financial year, the Attorney-General's Department provided \$30 000 to assist the department to cope with the increased numbers. Some \$141 000 has been provided in the 2002-03 financial year for the intensive bail supervision program, and \$60 000 of that funding will be allocated for the purchase of electronic monitoring equipment. The remaining \$81 000 will

fund an additional position to supervise approximately 15 to 20 offenders under intensive bail supervision. So, some of it is capital expenditure on capital items and other parts.

**Mrs REDMOND:** By way of clarification, with respect to the additional person, do I take it that that really relates to people being released on bail after serving a sentence in custody, or is it bail that is granted on certain conditions by courts when people are not kept in remand? I am trying to get at whether any of this money is directed to any supervision of bail that is imposed, for instance, by a magistrate in a criminal case, where someone is not kept in custody but is released on bail subject to conditions. Is there an allocation of funding to cover the cost of supervising them in any physical way—because, presumably, they are not the sort of people who generally will be on a bracelet system?

**The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS:** It is a court supervised direction.

**Mrs REDMOND:** In the same volume, on page 5.5, Output Class 1, the sixth dot point states that targets for 2002-03 include 'expand methadone maintenance program to all prisons'. The latest annual report of the Department of Correctional Services states that the department, in conjunction with the Department of Human Services, expanded the prison methadone maintenance program in 2000 to include all prisoners who were seeking to reduce their opiate dependence. How much has been allocated to this program in 2003, and how much was spent on it in 2002?

**The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS:** The total funding for the program is currently \$513 000 per annum. This caters for an annual average of 150 prisoners on the program. At the time of writing and presentation, 146 prisoners were participating in the program. During 2001, the federal government included another opioid substitution therapy, buprenorphine, on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. Of the 146 prisoners involved in the program, 20 were receiving that drug.

**Mrs REDMOND:** The Therapeutic Drug Unit at the Cadell Training Centre is to be closed under the budget proposals, as I understand it. Surely there is some inconsistency in wanting to expand the operation to provide help for drug dependent prisoners whilst at the same time removing the Therapeutic Drug Unit which, as I understand, was specifically designed to cater for those people. How is the closure of the unit at the Cadell Training Centre justified?

**The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS:** There is no doubt that it is a difficult area to manage. The unit was suspended approximately 12 months ago when it became impossible to attract qualified staff to manage the program. There is difficulty in managing—for want of a better word—outpatients or prisoners who take their problems out into the community. I have spoken to pharmacists who administer alternative drugs to heroin users to try to get their lifestyle back together and prevent them going back into crime. Pharmacists find it difficult to deal with many of these people who have alternative or substitute drug management programs because of the way in which clients have to be handled within, in many cases, the confines of pharmacies. So, in some cases, you have people under the influence of substitute drugs constantly badgering pharmacists and doctors for an increase in their medication and also aggregating their collections of prescribed drugs.

This is a problem with which not only the prison system must deal: it is a problem across the board in the general community which I think needs to be looked at across agencies. Many of these issues relating to how we treat people on substitute prescription drugs within the community

were raised at the Drugs Summit. The correctional services system is looking at better ways of dealing with these problems. Having 70 per cent of correctional services clients (prisoners) incarcerated for problems associated with a drug habit or for being affected by drugs is a growing problem that needs to be addressed.

**Mr GOLDSWORTHY:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, volume 1 (page 5.25), Output Class 6.1—Custodial Services, and my question relates to the movement of prisoners between gaol and the court. Soon after the new government came into office, it renewed the prisoner transport contract with the private company, Group 4. The minister was heard on radio on 29 May saying:

The benefits for the taxpayer and the court system have been weighed up and those contracts will be renewed.

Will the minister outline the benefits to the government of renewing the Group 4 prisoner movement contract?

**The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS:** The South Australian Prisoner Movement and In-Court Management Contract provides transport and in-court management services to four agencies: the Department for Correctional Services, South Australia Police, the Courts Administration Authority, and the Department for Human Services. The service covers adult prisoners, young offenders and extended detainees and is critical to the operation of the criminal justice system. In 1996 the government outsourced the function of moving prisoners and prisoner in-court management to Group 4 Corrections Pty Ltd. The contract was for a period of five years.

The renewal process commenced in December 2000 about one year prior to the above expiry date. In early 2001 the relevant agencies undertook a comprehensive review and analysis of the options available, including the possibility of bringing this function back in-house or re-tendering. At that time, a market analysis was done which indicated a small (if any) market of appropriate providers. It was the agencies' belief that the cost would not be reduced through a tender process. That means that there were not too many people operating in this field. Detailed benchmarking also indicated a significant additional cost in bringing the function back in-house.

Following PMG endorsement, in June 2001 the former cabinet approved that, in the first instance, an attempt be made to renew the existing contract. If an acceptable price could not be reached the government would go to the open market for the new contract. The benchmarking exercise signed off by Treasury showed that it would cost \$1.387 million per annum to bring the function in-house. Further issues considered in this analysis were: the time it would take to establish infrastructure (vehicles, systems, etc.) which is conservatively estimated at between six to nine months; start-up costs including uniforms, handcuffs, recruitment, office accommodation (in both city and country locations) and vehicle warehousing; the time it will take to recruit, train and put 95 staff in place; the logistical issues to be decided about which agency should operate the services and how the stakeholder agencies (courts, police, correctional services) would work together to oversee the function; and the substantial establishment costs with staffing and infrastructure now not in existence in government. It was estimated that this set-up would cost \$840 000.

In addition it was estimated that it would take at least six months to implement a change of this size and that five project staff would need to be devoted to this task for this

period of time at an approximate cost of \$250 000 (for salaries). So, there were a number of mitigating factors against changing the existing way of dealing with the problem.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** I would like to put the following questions on notice. Will the minister advise how many reviews have been undertaken or are scheduled to take place within the portfolios for which he has been responsible since being elected? To which matters do these reviews pertain, which consultant or consultancy organisation has been hired to undertake this work, and what is the total cost of these contracts? How many of the 600 jobs to be cut from the Public Service will be lost from within the portfolio area and agencies for which the minister is responsible?

Which initiatives contained within the government's compact with the member for Hammond have been allocated to his portfolio; how much will they cost; and will these costs be met by new or existing funding? What is the number of positions attracting a total employment cost of \$100 000 within the minister's departments and agencies reporting to him as at 30 June and what are the estimates for 30 June 2003? For each year, 2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06, for all departments and agencies that report to the minister, what is the share of the total \$967 million savings strategy announced by the government and what is the detail of each saving strategy? Finally, for all departments and agencies which report to the minister, what is their share of the \$322 million underspending in 2001-02 claimed by the government; what are the details of each proposal and project underspent; and what are the details of any carry-on expenditure to 2002-03 which has been approved?

**The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS:** I will take those questions on notice.

**Mr SNELLING:** This is a bit of a curly one, minister. I know that a lesser minister would take it on notice but, knowing the command that you have of your portfolio, I am sure you will have the answer to this question at your finger tips! The government recently announced strong measures for drug dealers who peddle their drugs in the community. Do similar rules apply to those who may seek to introduce drugs into prisons, and what steps is the Department for Correctional Services taking to identify these people?

**The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS:** Well, 'good question' was the consensus of all my colleagues. It is one to which I gave a lot of thought last night. I put together a composite of all the reading material that I had perused over the last six months, and this is the reply that I put on paper this morning.

The short answer to the first part of the question is yes; anyone who seeks to traffic drugs within prison or anyone who chooses to bring drugs into prisons will be dealt with severely. Some 75 per cent of prisoners have alcohol or other drug related problems. Because of this culture that exists within prisons, the prison population is a prime target for both drug traffickers and those who, through some sense of misguided loyalty, choose to supply drugs to friends and relatives.

Drugs in prisons are a very dangerous commodity. They are often used by the most violent and unscrupulous within the prison system to control and influence the behaviour of drug users, and many of the most serious incidents that occur in prisons are the consequence of the supply or use of drugs. Most often it is the weaker prisoners who are preyed upon by drug traffickers, and many escapes, attempted escapes and assaults are directly linked to the fear associated with the failure to pay drug debts. They do cause a wide range of management problems within prisons.

Drugs are also major health hazards not only for prisoners but also for those in the wider community. Some 98 per cent of prisoners will eventually be somebody's neighbour. Of those who inject drugs in prisons, 60 per cent will share needles with between four and six other prisoners. This significantly contributes to the high incidence of hepatitis B and C in prisons which stands at roughly 17 times the community rate. That relates to one of the questions that the chair asked earlier. Prisons therefore have the potential to become epicentres of infection, and this poses a significant threat to public health. When these prisoners are released from prison, they present real problems to the broader community.

The question is often asked: how can we stop drugs getting into prisons? The realistic answer to that question is that it is highly unlikely. As there is a demand, there will always be somebody who will supply that demand. Unfortunately, the rewards are great for the way in which we administer and treat drugs in society at the moment.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I have a couple of questions that I will be happy if you take on notice. I am not expecting an officer to spend a lot of time on these. What is the average cost per day of keeping the various categories of prisoners? An approximation will do. Secondly, what is the typical daily regime in the prison system? I realise that it would be different for some categories of prisoners in terms of when they are released from their cells until lock down. What are the typical meals that are provided in our prisons? What are the current visiting arrangements? Once again, some typical representations of what exists in the prison will be sufficient. Finally, what percentage of prisoners would be suffering from an identified psychiatric, psychological or related personality disorder? Once again, I am looking for an approximation; I do not want an absolute, precise answer.

That concludes Estimates Committee A in regard to the Minister for Police and Minister for Emergency Services, Other Items, \$583 000, and Administered Items for the South Australian Police Department, \$4 105 000. I declare the examination of those votes completed. The remainder, under Department of Justice and Administered Items for Attorney-General's Department, will be further examined tomorrow.

#### ADJOURNMENT

At 6.06 p.m. the committee adjourned until Thursday 1 August at 11 a.m.