

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**Thursday 19 June 2003****ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A****Chairman:**

The Hon. R.B. Such

Members:

Ms L.R. Breuer
 Ms V.A. Chapman
 Ms V. Ciccarello
 Mr M.F. O'Brien
 Mr G. Scalzi
 Mr I. H. Venning

The committee met at 11 a.m.

Department of Education and Children's Services,
 \$1 419 931 000
 Administered Items for the Department of Education and
 Children's Services, \$129 443 000

Witness:

The Hon. P.L. White, Minister for Education and Children's Services.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr S. Marshall, Chief Executive, Department of Education and Children's Services.

Mr G. De Gennaro, Executive Director, Business and Resource Management.

Mr D. Travers, Director, Office of the Chief Executive.

Ms R. Bos, Director, Financial Services.

Ms J. Riedstra, Director, Infrastructure Management Services.

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 committee secretary by no later than Friday 25 July. The minister and the lead speaker for the opposition can make an opening statement if they wish. There will be a flexible approach to giving the call for asking questions based on approximately 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. I do not insist on that because it takes a lot of time but, if members wander off into extraneous areas, I will bring them back. I do not ask members to quote the line because it takes up a lot of question time. 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 incorpora-

tion of material into *Hansard* is permitted on the same basis as applies in the house, that is, it must be statistical only 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 the advisers for a response. I also advise that, for the purposes of the committee, there will be some freedom allowed for television coverage by permitting 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 8, pages 8.1 to 8.31, Volume 2 of the Portfolio Statements. Does the minister wish to make an opening statement?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Yes, sir. Labor's first budget in 2002 signalled an unprecedented funding injection into the state's education system and delivered on our promise to South Australians to begin to overhaul education and change the things that matter to families. By providing record funding, the government has been able to make the goal of smaller class sizes in our junior primary years a reality through the extra 160 junior primary teachers salary initiative. South Australia now has among the smallest average junior primary class sizes of any state in Australia.

Similarly, the government's attention is focused on improving the retention rates in our high schools, particularly our public high schools, focusing on engaging students in their education and finding new ways of improving their future options. Improving morale in the teaching profession has been a major focus in the last 14 or 15 months. The state government resolved the long-running salary and conditions dispute early on coming to government. More than 1 000 teachers, early childhood workers and Aboriginal education workers have gained permanency since September last year. That commitment by the government to permanency will continue.

This year, we are building on those gains. The amount spent on each school student in South Australia has risen by \$439 to \$8 902 per year. This is an increase of at least 2.9 per cent in real terms. The government has again responded to the need for additional counsellors in our primary schools to provide children and their families with expert help on many social issues. On top of the extra \$1 million for the additional counsellors who were put in place at the start of this school year, a further \$2 million per year for the next four years has been committed to our primary school counsellors. This is the second time the state government has increased the number of primary schools serviced by counsellors. This will see the number of primary schools serviced by counsellors raised to 244, over 100 schools more than at the time of the last election. This initiative provides an extremely important service to the work of the classroom teacher and it will be valued.

Primary schools and preschools will also benefit from the equivalent of 140 extra staff salaries being made available from 2004 in a \$24.8 million allocation over the next three financial years. The 2003-04 capital program is \$104 million, which includes building, purchase of land and other infrastructure, including school buses. New building works include major projects in the city and regional areas of our state. In last year's state budget, the government provided an extra \$8 million over four years to address the massive backlog of maintenance in our schools and preschools. This injection of money was necessary after a significant build-up under the former government. A new plan for school maintenance has been introduced in line with the extra

funding to ensure that we tackle the most urgent maintenance priorities, provide extra support to schools to get the work done more quickly, get better value for money for that work by packaging the projects together for greater cost efficiency, and ensuring that money distributed by government and contributed by parents also is spent on today's cohort of children.

As a result of this work, a comprehensive plan for school maintenance works has been prepared, and orders for 1 171 projects have recently been placed. This amount includes an extra one-off injection being provided in the 2004 state budget of \$2 million, and that \$2 million is on top of extra funds announced in last year's budget. A further \$12 million will be allocated at the time of next year's budget. This funding is part of the government's ongoing commitment to improve the health, safety and comfort levels of students and staff in our schools and preschools.

The Labor government recognises that working families need greater support. Lack of adequate child-care places from the federal government in three consecutive federal budgets now has excluded many families, particularly those in lower socioeconomic areas, from adequate child-care services. Despite intensive and consistent lobbying from my department and me over the last 12 months, the federal government has provided no new additional child-care places for family day care or outside of school hours care to our state. While the responsibility for the provision of child-care places remains a federal responsibility, additional state funding will provide up to 105 new child-care places in the northern and western regions of Adelaide, with the flexibility to service approximately 300 families and their children, and reinforces the state government's ongoing commitment to social justice.

In addition, the state government has recently announced a \$130 000 per annum scheme, which will enable child care workers to access financial assistance to gain qualifications. This will help to increase the number of qualified workers in South Australian child-care centres.

Encouraging young people to complete their schooling to ensure their future success has been a key policy of this government. We have assisted schools to put in place a challenging curriculum that takes into account the diversity of student needs and learning styles through, for example, our Futures Connect initiative, and also helping students to develop personalised learning and transition plans for their future. In the last budget, I announced \$28.4 million over four years to assist in improving school retention as part of the wider range of packages, including Futures Connect. The student mentors program is providing intensive support to young people to help them to successfully complete school. In this budget, we give further support to students at risk of leaving school early through a cross agency project to increase the effectiveness of programs for youth at risk.

South Australians had had enough of 8½ years of the previous government, whose only commitment was to privatisation. We have now started to deliver on the promise to South Australians to begin to overhaul education and the things that matter to South Australia. In just over a year, record funding has been provided to education, which has realised many changes, and we are building a very real path to opportunity for the people of South Australia as they embark on lifelong learning. That concludes my opening statement.

Ms CHAPMAN: It is a sad day when the Minister for Education presents to the house an outline in relation to education for South Australian children and young adults that

reflects a reduction in the total state budget allocation in this state—a budget announced by the Treasurer that describes a surplus of over \$80 million, and yet the education actual funding for the 2001-02 year was 25.24 per cent for education out of the total budget. The estimated actual for 2002-03, as presented by the minister's section in education, is 23.9 per cent, and a budget this year for 24.27 per cent.

The minister, in her attempt to deflect the validity of these documents, says, 'No, no, you cannot possibly extract information that relates to actual, estimated actual and budget: you must compare budget to budget to budget for the three relevant years.' She presents it in that way, and yet in the Treasurer's presentation of every portfolio in the budget indeed every breakdown is presented with actual, estimated actual and budget. If one looks at the budget papers and identifies education, which is in the total component of funds allocated by this government, it is quite clear that the Treasurer has, in his decision, with or without the support of the Minister for Education, allowed this situation to prevail where education receives a diminished amount.

In the process of this attempt the minister has suggested the budget-budget-budget proposal. She got the figures wrong but, leaving aside her mathematics in relation to that, it is simply not a sufficient argument to say that exclusively in this area there should be that parallel, when in every other presentation in this budget the Treasurer, at least, looks at reality, reality and estimate for this year. So, it is a false presentation to assert that there has not been diminished funding.

The sad aspect of this is that, in fact, the minister appears to believe that she is getting a better deal. That is concerning, because she is the one who is supposed to be fighting in cabinet to ensure that education is kept at a level for South Australians that is commensurate with the commitment that both she and the Premier made at the last election, that education would be a priority, and that that would be delivered. So, a sad reflection in relation to the understanding by the minister and the clear lack of contribution and commitment that the Treasurer has made to education, both of which have let down the Rann promise.

Let me use the concluding minutes of my opening statement to illustrate what is a real example of what has happened with respect to education. The Cora Barclay Centre—a centre which has been operating for more than 40 years in this state, which teaches deaf children to listen and to speak, and which has extraordinary, world-class and world acclaimed outcomes—has received notice that its funding, a recurrent necessary funding of a minimum \$150 000 to keep its doors open, has been axed. The previous three-year program by the former government expires in about 14 days, and this government's position is that those funds will no longer be available.

As of approximately 6 o'clock last night, not the Minister for Education, not the Minister for Health, not even the Premier, has stepped in. But I am pleased to say that there has been an attempt, at least, by the Minister for Social Justice (Hon. Steph Key)—and I congratulate her—who has stepped in to offer some help. A letter which was presented to the school last night, which offers \$40 000 recurrent spending (which is totally inadequate to keep its door open, and which is, effectively, a threat that, if it wants to stay open, it has to sell its home), is what has been delivered to the centre to enable it to stay open.

This is an example of the commitment that has been made to education of children with disability, with the disadvantage

that they face—if that is not enough already. The discrimination against them is totally unacceptable, and this is illustrative of what the real position of this government is and continues to be. It is a callous cut, and completely heartless consideration of those children, who will now only receive the leftover services that the department can provide, when an efficient, operating and excellent service is already in place. This threat is unacceptable.

But there is worse to come. I wish to place on the record my condemnation of the caller from the Premier's office this morning to advise the President of the Cora Barclay Centre that, should he proceed with the press conference that was called for this morning on this issue, reconsideration would have to be given to the offer by the government that was presented in the letter on the preceding evening. That is totally unacceptable behaviour, and the person who presented that proposal should be dismissed.

Mr Venning interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Schubert should just calm down.

Ms CHAPMAN: The Premier should consider this situation seriously. That person should be removed from office and, if necessary, the Premier should intervene in this matter and instruct the Treasurer and his cabinet that these funds be properly restored.

Last year, \$150 000 was spent on all sorts of projects, but let me give the committee an illustration. The organisation SHINE has been contracted to provide a sex education program in schools. It operates on recurrent funding in addition to funds paid for the initial implementation and provision of this program. It has been given in excess of \$150 000.

Irrespective of the merits of that program, if this government can find funding for new programs (controversial as they might be), surely, it can find funding for ongoing projects and protect those people with disabilities. In this case, young children not only have a chance to learn, to listen and to speak and to participate in their ordinary lives but also to have the advantage of being able to catch up and have outcomes similar to those of able-bodied children who are not hearing impaired. The conduct this morning is a disgrace. I call upon the Premier to intervene.

It is shameful that the minister for education, along with her colleagues, has failed to address this matter. I particularly sheet it to the minister for education. This has been her responsibility. She has abandoned it. I think that every effort should be made to resurrect it. That is my opening statement.

I advise that I have a number of omnibus questions. I am happy to refer to those initially on the clear understanding that I have no expectation that the minister will have material immediately available to answer them.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Perhaps we can take those questions at the end of the session.

Ms CHAPMAN: I am happy to do it at the end.

The CHAIRMAN: Omnibus questions must be read into the record. They cannot be tabled.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I do not want to impede proceedings.

The CHAIRMAN: It is up to the honourable member, as long as she is aware that they must be read into the record.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Okay, we will do them one at a time then.

Ms CHAPMAN: I will follow that by a request—and the minister may wish to attend to this while I am reading the omnibus questions—for production of the full list of the

capital investment program, which I had called for in correspondence. Perhaps that could be located. That document cannot be tabled as part of a record, but it is a document I have asked to be provided. The minister had attended to the provision of that document during estimates on the last occasion.

The questions I place on the record for the minister to take on notice are: for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, are there any examples since March 2002 where federal funds have not been received in South Australia or not been received during the forward estimates period because the state government has not been prepared to provide state funds for a federal state agreement and, if yes, what issues and what level of federal funding has been or will be lost?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I will take that question on notice.

Ms CHAPMAN: Did all departments and agencies reporting to the minister meet all required budget saving targets for 2002-03 set for them in last year's budget and, if not, what specific proposed project and program cuts were not implemented?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I will take that question on notice.

Ms CHAPMAN: Will the minister provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure on consultants in 2002-03 for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, listing the name of the consultant, the cost and the work undertaken?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Obviously, I do not have that information before me. I will also take that question on notice.

Ms CHAPMAN: I am not sure why the minister said 'obviously'. I asked that question of the Attorney yesterday and he presented the list immediately, with even extra detail. Nevertheless, for each department or agency reporting to the minister, how many surplus employees are there, and for each surplus employee what is the title or classification of the employee and the TEC of the employee?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The honourable member is asking for a very detailed amount of information. We will attempt to provide that within the time frame.

Ms CHAPMAN: In the financial year 2001-02 for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what underspending on projects and programs was not approved by cabinet for carry-over expenditure in 2002-03?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I prefer to take that question on notice.

Ms CHAPMAN: For all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what is the estimated level of underexpenditure for 2002-03, and has the cabinet approved any carry-over expenditure for 2003-04?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Again, I will take that omnibus question on notice.

Ms CHAPMAN: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.2, 'Work Force Summary.' I have several questions on this area.

The CHAIRMAN: I am not insisting that people quote an exact line.

Ms CHAPMAN: I can give it; it is just that the format of the budget papers now is slightly different in relation to this. It is the graph at the top of the page, if the minister is having some difficulty locating it. It is titled 'Work Force Summary'. The papers record an agency reduction of 78 full-time equivalent employees for 2001-02 to 2002-03. It is noted that in 2002-03 an extra, at least, 155 teachers are claimed to have been employed together with extra counsellors and mentors

in that period. The papers further indicate an agency full-time equivalent decrease overall, that is net, of 98 from 2002-03 to 2003-04.

So, there is an increase net of 78 between 2001-02 and 2002-03 and an overall decrease of 98 for 2002-03 to 2003-04. Has the minister yet activated the termination of the 55 surplus employees in the 2002-03 year inclusive of the three executive positions she identified on 26 May 2003 in the parliament and, if so, what are the positions and when are they to be terminated?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: These employees are on the redeployee list. The government has a policy of no first terminations of employment for public servants. These staff will be offered TVSP packages together with staff offered TVSP packages out of the 2002-03 budget announcement across government that was published in last year's budget papers.

Ms CHAPMAN: As a supplementary question, what are the positions, and if they are to be offered TVSP packages when will that be?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: That process will begin shortly. There has been, I must say, consultation with the relevant unions that represent employed staff over several months as the Department for Education and Children's Services has been reorganising. We discussed that reorganisation in last year's estimates. The answer to the question is yes, shortly, but there is a proper process of consultation in those activities and there will be formal consultations about the TVSP offer to education staff with the relevant unions. There will be no offers of TVSPs to school staff, and all public school sites in the state were notified accordingly towards the end of last year, I believe—I cannot remember which month that would have been—and that commitment stands.

Ms CHAPMAN: I have a second supplementary question, and I am still referring to the same 55 positions. Do I take it that no position has been concluded by the taking of a voluntary separation package or by being deployed?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: These are 55 staff on our books currently.

Ms CHAPMAN: That is right. None of them has been deployed?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: They have not left.

Ms CHAPMAN: Will the minister confirm that she has identified further cuts in the 2003-04 year for employees, including 25 in Mr DeGennaro's division, 15 in information technology, 25 in Mr Fletcher's department and 15 in Ms Eban's department, and, if so, which positions are to be concluded, terminated or redeployed, and when?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: As has already been made public and stated in the budget, there are approximately 98 staff in the reorganisational exercise and there will be a TVSP call I believe within weeks, or shortly (over the next month). I think the member is talking about the 55 staff who have been redeployed. Some of those are in funded positions.

Ms CHAPMAN: The minister is assuming that I am making that inquiry, and I am not. I am referring to the further cuts in 2003-04, which is different to the 55 surplus that you referred to last year.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Yes, there is a reorganisation of the department going on and there are obviously salary savings out of that, and already that has been partly discussed with unions. Any process of reorganisation needs to involve the relevant unions and that has been an ongoing process, and there will be further discussions before a TVSP call is made.

The member might also be referring to changes in staffing numbers that arise out of the splitting of the former Department of Education, Training and Employment, with DECS and DFEEST being part of the product of that split. There were salary movements associated with that split.

Ms CHAPMAN: The minister suggested that I am referring to that.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Mr Chairman, how many questions will there be? What is going to be the procedure?

The CHAIRMAN: According to the official keeper of records, that was the second question.

Ms CHAPMAN: That is right, and the supplementary question was because the minister suggested I am presenting something, so I would give the minister an opportunity to clarify this. I have identified 2003-04 and, as I understand your answer to date, there will be a process of offering VSPs in relation to this financial year—

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Will be offered.

Ms CHAPMAN: —and that there needs to be some consultation, and I understand all that. I think you are assuming that I am assuming (and this is the question as I understand it) that the 100-odd who are leaving the department have been transferred to the responsibility of another minister. I am not referring to those—I want to make that clear—and I have not asked you to indicate the ultimate outcome. My question is: do you confirm that these are the figures in each of these departments that you have identified to be cut, irrespective of whether, down the track after negotiations, that changes?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: There is something that needs to be clarified here. The Portfolio Statements released on budget day suggest that my department's projected staffing numbers are expected to decline throughout the 2003-04 financial year. The published estimates show an opening balance of 19 244 full-time equivalent staff as at 30 June 2003, with a closing estimate of 19 146 full-time equivalents at 13 June 2004, an estimated reduction of 98 FTEs. However, the budget papers are estimates only and at the time of preparation of those figures did not include at least 180 additional FTE salaries provided by the government in the education portfolio.

The effect of those additional salaries, in fact, achieves a net increase in the total number of staff in the Department of Education and Children's Services, meaning an increase of 82 FTEs. So, the final figure for June 2004, had those staff been included, would be 19 326.

Ms CHAPMAN: Given that, my third question is: are you suggesting that, irrespective of what you intend, this figure of 19 146 is wrong and there is estimated to be another 180 full-time equivalents included in the forthcoming year?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: That is right. That figure, with that extra 180 staff, would be 19 326.

Ms CHAPMAN: And what are the extra 180 FTEs?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I can give you a breakdown of those.

Ms CHAPMAN: And why were they not in the budget as at May 2003?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: At the time that section of the budget papers was prepared some of the calculations for estimations of staffing had not been completed, so those figures were not included.

Ms CHAPMAN: Supplementary to that, what else, if anything, in the budget is inaccurate in relation to education?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I am advised by my department that those figures were accurate at the time of calculation.

However, it is now known that those staffing salaries should have been included, but were not.

Ms CHAPMAN: That is what I am saying to the minister: what else is different?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I am not aware of any other variations.

Ms CHAPMAN: Is there any other correction that the minister wants to make?

The CHAIRMAN: I think the member has had a fair go asking her three questions: it is probably more like 33. The member for Giles.

Ms BREUER: Yes, sir. I was wondering how you would define a supplementary question! Minister, I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.16—'Performance commentary', where reference is made to the demand for family day care outstripping supply. I know that provision of family day-care places is a federal responsibility and that there has been a reallocation process for family day care. How did South Australia fare in that reallocation of family day care places?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: South Australia has lost childcare places, despite the demand for places reaching new heights in this state. In the latest allocation of family day care places in the recent federal budget, South Australian needs were not met. In reference to the reallocation of family day care places figures from the federal minister's own department, it is clear that South Australia did not receive any places out of a possible 444 places redistributed. New South Wales received 352 reallocated places, while Queensland was given 92: these were the only states to receive an increase from the federal government's reallocation process. The demand clearly exists here in South Australia. We do have long waiting lists across all forms of child care, but we are just not getting the places. Family day care in South Australia has waiting lists of over 1 000 families.

Recently, the Prime Minister made a call for a long school day: obviously, it was simply an attempt to divert attention from the real issue of acute childcare shortages in South Australia. This is now the third year in a row that children's services in South Australia have been forgotten by the federal government. As the statewide sponsor of family day care in South Australia, the education department would be capable of establishing very quickly new family day care services in areas of high demand if only the commonwealth would release the funding for those places.

Similarly, the extensive provision of out of school-hours care, through government schools, means that my department is well placed to establish new OSHC services, if only the commonwealth would start rowing with us instead of against us.

Mr O'BRIEN: I refer to page 8.17, in regard to long-day care. Can the minister explain what is in place to deal with childcare demands in the western suburbs?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Very importantly, Labor recognises that working families need greater support. Lack of adequate childcare places by the federal Liberal government in Canberra has excluded many families, particularly those in low socioeconomic areas, from adequate childcare services.

Despite intensive and consistent lobbying by me and my department over the last 12 months, the federal government did not provide us with any new childcare places for family day care or outside-hours care throughout the state. Although it is a federal government responsibility to provide these places, in order to help support and strengthen families and communities, this state budget provides an additional

\$600 000 to increase access to child care for families in high need locations.

While the responsibility for provision of childcare places remains a federal responsibility, the \$600 000 of additional state funding will provide up to 105 new childcare places in the northern and western regions of Adelaide with the flexibility to service approximately 300 families and their children, and reinforces the government's ongoing commitment to social justice.

There were many examples of childcare service closures under the former state government's term. The Parks Children's House for child care in the western suburbs was, since its inception under an initiative of the federal Labor government in the 1970s, an example of the sort of integrated services that provide a very good and unique service to families. That service was linking physical activities with a learning environment in community services, with collocated children's services, and it was highly valued—and these services are highly valued and utilised by the local community. That childcare centre in The Parks was closed by the previous government back in 1996, along with five other childcare centres in the western area. The buildings still stand but are under-utilised.

This state government is valuing the whole area with this measure, with urban renewal bringing in new residents and a new spirit of enterprise for the areas planned by the government. This sort of removal of childcare services really does place a burden on families and removes a family's ability to participate in the work force, to study, and all those sort of things. So, the state government's commitment in this budget, with this \$600 000, is aimed at building up infrastructure in areas of need, so that those extra places can be delivered to those disadvantaged communities where they have, in the past, been withdrawn.

Ms CICCARELLO: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.17. In the 'Performance commentary' it is stated that the demand for out of school hours care continues to outstrip supply. However, I note that the estimated 2002-03 results for the number of OSHC places is 1 000 fewer than the 2002-03 target. What is the reason for this and how much current demand is there for OSHC places in South Australia?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Again, despite the demand for out of school hours care places in South Australia, we have again lost out with the federal government. Commonwealth government figures show that we currently have a shortage of some 2 357 out of school hours care places in South Australia (that is, February 2003). The 2002-05 target for out of school hours care places of 26 016 in the budget papers was based on an estimate that would be required to meet demand for out of school hours care in South Australia.

The commonwealth has not responded to the need for those places, preferring instead to rely on a very slow process for reallocation. As I have mentioned in answer to a previous question, we have not done so well out of that process here in South Australia. There have been no new out of school hour care places in the past two federal budgets. In fact, the number places for this year (25 040) is exactly the same as for last year. So, there has been no growth. This has placed enormous pressure on services and families. The target for 2003-04 represents the status quo—no growth. My department anticipates that more places should be coming through from the commonwealth, but that has not eventuated so far. Even if the 1 000 places had been provided, it certainly would not have met even half the unmet demand we have here of 2 357 places in South Australia.

The CHAIRMAN: It is a concern in my area and I have written to minister Larry Anthony many times without success. One difficulty we have is that we suffer from what I call postcode discrimination because we have affluent and less affluent suburbs with the same postcode, which works against my electorate in terms of the state bureaucracy as well as the federal one. In terms of childcare places and out of school hours care, is it something that maybe the Premier needs to take up through COAG? There seems to be no movement on this issue whatsoever. It is no reflection on the minister, but it looks as though, maybe at the level of the Prime Minister, someone has to give this issue a bit of a shake.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: It would be very effective if the shadow minister here today, the member for Bragg, and her colleagues on this committee made some representations to their party colleague in Canberra for provision of those places. South Australia has done quite poorly in the national allocation of places and that is not just a recent thing but has been happening over a number of years under the former government as well. It seems that, with a Liberal federal government, members opposite should have some pull with their ministerial colleague and should at the very least be putting the case to him that we do, across all childcare categories here in South Australia, have a demand that is unmet and is impacting on South Australian families.

We have families who have to forgo work opportunities because they cannot get adequate child care. We have people wishing to return to the work force and need to study to do that but are unable to get the skills they need because they cannot find care for their children. This is impacting not just on women or young families but also on the potential economy of South Australia. My department and I have been lobbying strongly in written form, personally, through meetings and so on. My most recent meeting with the Hon. Larry Anthony was only a couple of months ago in the lead up to the federal budget, but our pleas are not being heard in Canberra. There is a constructive role the state opposition could play, by making approaches to their federal Liberal colleagues and trying to convince the Hon. Larry Anthony and his cabinet colleagues that we are behind the eight ball in South Australia if we cannot resolve this issue.

The state government does not have the capacity that the federal government has. This is a federal government funding responsibility. The state government is doing what it can in terms of the additional funding measures I have outlined and are present in this budget and with the new training subsidies and the like, but this problem needs to be addressed by the federal Liberal government. To have the Prime Minister, as a diversionary tactic, come out and suggest that the solution is to lengthen the school day, which is simply some sort of distraction from the demand and need for extra childcare places in South Australia, is frankly an insult.

Mr SCALZI: It is about flexibility.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Member for Hartley, it is about the federal government not wanting to fund childcare places. What is the solution the federal government comes out with? To simply lengthen the school day, to shift the cost to the state government and let the schools look after the children. It is no solution. While members opposite may support that as a solution, it is quite plain to the families of South Australia that the real issue here is the commonwealth government putting its hand in its own pocket and providing the funding we need for sustainable childcare services and extra childcare places in South Australia.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to sex education. How much money has been paid to SHINE for the purchase and implementation of the SHARE program in the 2002-03 budget and how much has been allocated for payment for services in the 2003-04 budget?

The CHAIRMAN: We are dealing with children's services which, as far as I know, are not subject to any sex education program from SHINE. The minister may wish to respond, but technically it comes more within the schools line.

Ms CHAPMAN: On a point of order, Mr Chairman, it may be that you have a document in front of you which makes provision for children's services. The published program is education and children's services until 4.30 p.m., when SSABSA and non-government schools are specifically provided for on the most recently published list today. The minister and I have exchanged correspondence in relation to her indication that she may wish to have officers of her department present on children's services during this early period. I have not asked any questions on children's services to date, and I have given notice to the minister that I would not be until later this afternoon.

The CHAIRMAN: The list I have in front of me—and I am not sure why it differs—indicates that children's services concludes at 12 noon. Do we have the same hymn sheet?

Members interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The members for Giles and Bragg will come to order. I have in front of me in black and white that at 12 noon the focus switches to schools. It indicates, from 12 to 1 p.m., schools: metropolitan and country vocational education, then lunch; and from 2 to 4.15 schools and vocational education are listed. After afternoon tea it is administered items, SSABSA and non-government schools until 5 o'clock.

Ms CHAPMAN: Yesterday I received a number of items of correspondence from the minister, one giving notice that she had omitted some information, but it went on to include 11.20 to 12 noon, children's services, to which I responded:

Please note that I will be commencing questions in relation to education at the conclusion of my abbreviated opening statement. I will be raising questions in relation to children's services later in the day and, to assist your staff in this area, indicate that this will be at approximately 3.45 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN: The chair is neutral on the agreement, but it is helpful if we are all dancing to the same tune.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I am happy to answer questions from the honourable member, however they come.

The CHAIRMAN: So, in other words, this sheet is only a very crude guide, is it?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: What item to do you think we are on now, sir?

The CHAIRMAN: According to this, we are now moving to schools as a topic.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Yes, I believe that was agreed. I believe that the member agrees with that. Is that correct? I do not know what the confusion is.

The CHAIRMAN: Is the minister happy to answer the question? I am just pointing out that I would have thought that a question relating to SHINE does not involve preschool children or children of that age group. However, if the minister is happy to take it—

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: It does not, but I am happy to answer it. Would you remind repeating the question?

Mr SCALZI: Certainly. How much money has been paid to SHINE for the purchase and implementation of the share program during 2002-03? How much has been allocated for payment of services in the 2003-04 budget?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I have been advised that there is no payment to SHINE out of the education budget. If the department needs to get further advice on that, we will come back to you. However, as far as I am aware, the advice to me today is that there is no allocation out of the 2002-03 or the 2003-04 budget for payments to SHINE. However, there may be some in-kind contribution to the program.

I will add some further information for the committee's benefit. SHINE SA received funding from the Department of Human Services to develop, pilot, monitor and evaluate the share program. So, that is from the Department of Human Services, not from the education department budget. I do not believe that I can add any further information for the committee at this point. The departmental officers have confirmed (and have advised me just now) that my department did not provide any funding.

Mr SCALZI: Except for in-servicing of teachers and so on. It would have to be.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The in-kind support to which I referred was project officers working in the central office, which may include some support in terms of the organisation of the professional development.

Mr SCALZI: If there is support of the organisation, there must be a cost to the minister's department.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I will seek some advice on that. I will ask the chief executive to provide some further information, rather than my relaying it.

Mr MARSHALL: The education department has been providing support in terms of sex education for decades and has had officers who, on a regular basis from year to year, as part of their job, do this type of work. So, there is no associated abnormal cost. It is a recurrent piece of work that the department does.

Mr SCALZI: As a supplementary question, in the annual report on sex education, in 2002 the government provided an extra \$50 000 to Family Life SA in addition to its annual grant of \$115 000 to help the association continue to offer appropriate services for primary age children. These services implement the work of classroom teachers in teaching about relationships and sexual health education. Is that correct?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I believe that the member for Hartley's question was about funding to SHINE SA.

Mr SCALZI: That is part of Family Life.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: For the record, we are talking about administered items now, which are not due to be discussed until the last item this afternoon. However, I point out that Family Life is not the same organisation as SHINE SA: they are two separate organisations. The share program, to which the member referred, has the connection with SHINE SA not Family Life.

Mr SCALZI: Thank you; I understand that. How much money has been paid in the 2002-03 year and will be allocated in the—

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Could you give us a budget paper reference for our ease, please?

Mr SCALZI: I am sorry; I got the wrong question. I will give the budget reference in other projects. Will the minister confirm whether SHINE has been contracted to provide any other programs to the Department of Education, either commenced or implemented in the 2002-03 year, or to be

implemented in the 2003-04 year? If so, how much has been paid, or will be allocated, respectively?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I do not believe that I am aware of anything, but I will check with my officers. The officers who are present today are not aware of anything. However, we will check.

Mr SCALZI: Surely, some evaluation will be made of the pilot program, and funds would have to be allocated.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: As I indicated before, the Department of Human Services provided money. I will say what I stated before. SHINE SA received funding from the Department of Human Services to develop, pilot, monitor and evaluate the share program. I think that answers your question.

The CHAIRMAN: I remind members not to overdo the supplementary questions, otherwise I will have to cut them back. Your last question, member for Hartley.

Mr SCALZI: My final question is on the share review costs. How much money, if any, will be allocated in the 2003-04 year for professional, independent assessment of the share program from the education department?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: What do you mean by 'professional assessment'? My understanding is that Latrobe University is evaluating the program professionally. Is the member saying that they are not professionals?

Mr SCALZI: Is the education department—

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I will expand my answer. I understand that the program was developed by professionals.

Ms CHAPMAN: Teachers?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Teachers are professionals. If the member for Bragg is implying that they are not, I think that she should say so clearly. Professionals have been involved in delivery of the training. Professionals have written to the department and to me, having viewed the program. There are professional organisations who support the program, and La Trobe University will formally evaluate the program.

Mr SCALZI: Will they report to you as minister on their evaluation of the program?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The chief executive of the department, under the legislation, is responsible for curriculum, and I would anticipate that any reporting of evaluation or feedback would be done through the department and to the chief executive.

Ms BREUER: My question refers to Budget Paper 3, page 2.24: employment of school counsellors in primary schools, additional cost of \$2 million per annum. What benefit is the government anticipating from that investment?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The state government has decided to place more counsellors into state primary schools as part of this 2003-04 state budget education package. An additional \$2 million will fund the equivalent of an extra 29 counsellors in more than 70 schools. It will bring the number of counsellors to 138, up from 95 two years ago, servicing more than 240 schools. That is, I might add, more than 100 extra primary schools that will be serviced by this initiative since the time of the last state election.

Primary schools and preschools will also benefit from the equivalent of 140 extra teaching salaries being paid in 2004 as part of a \$10 million annual commitment agreed to last April in the enterprise agreement with the AEU and CPSU/PSA. Those staffing salaries will be applied to leadership time. The extra counsellors will be important in ensuring that our school leaders have the extra time they need

so that they can more effectively plan and coordinate the teaching and learning in their classrooms.

The extra primary counsellors that we are putting into schools will work to improve student behaviour. Many of the schools that I have visited have benefited from the \$1 million injection of primary school counsellors at the beginning of this school year. As I visit those schools, the feedback is that these extra counsellors are doing a lot of work to improve student behaviour, and that is leading to less disruption in classrooms. A lot of those counsellors are being employed to implement anti-bullying and harassment policies, and they are helping schools in overall behavioural management. It is a significant investment.

Some of those counsellors are involved in supporting teachers and students with issues of cooperation and communication to reduce levels of bullying, as I said. Significantly, they are used to address all sorts of issues that a child brings with them to school that are outside strictly educational issues. They are people who care about the whole child, the social wellbeing of the child, and assist teachers in getting on with their core job in the classroom, and that is teaching and learning.

Ms BREUER: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.5. Amongst targets for 2003-04 is a focus on improved student attendance. What work is being done to reduce absenteeism in schools?

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: It is interesting that the member for Bragg is critical, and I remind her that it was her former minister who refused to admit that there was an issue with absenteeism in our schools. If you do not acknowledge that there is an issue to be dealt with, obviously you are not going to put forward any solutions. She may well be critical, but I remind members that the former Liberal government did not even promise any funds for reducing absenteeism at the last election. In contrast, this government promised, and then when elected funded, a four-year allocation of \$2 million towards addressing this program.

Last year I set up a task force on absenteeism which was established in June. It included, and continues to include, key stakeholders from parent, principal and preschool director associations, officers of the department, the Department of Human Services, the South Australia Police, the Australian Education Union and others. An attendance strategy has now been developed. So, for the first time in the South Australian department, there is a strategy in place for improving student attendance. It is a strategy across the department and it impacts on every public school.

An attendance improvement package was delivered to all school and preschool sites early in 2003. The package includes guidelines for the development of school attendance improvement plans. Each school is required to have a school attendance improvement plan. There are exemplars of successful practice in the package and there is information for parents and caregivers about the importance of regular school attendance.

All schools will have an attendance action plan by the end of the year that will include management of movement in and out of the school, practice around late arrival for lessons and school, improved monitoring of attendance, and required follow-up with parents. Schools and preschools will report on their attendance within their annual reports, commencing in 2004. Schools will refer students who are particularly poor attendees earlier to their district-based student attendance counsellors. New protocols are being put in place for the way

in which those counsellors interact with schools to help reduce absenteeism rates.

This government, for the first time in many years, employed extra student attendance counsellors. Some of those are responsible particularly for dealing with 15 year olds who fit into the at-risk group of students. Prior to the appointment of these new counsellors, there were 10 such counsellors across the state. There are now 14 counsellors.

So, we have significantly increased that resource. We have revised the department's relationship with the South Australia Police, and a truancy schedule has been drawn up with the force. Consultation is occurring regarding a new draft attendance policy for the department, and a range of technology solutions is being investigated and implemented in our schools—things such as hand-held technology to help schools more accurately record and monitor patterns of attendance throughout the school day, and there are some trials under way on that front. Efforts are being concentrated, under this new push, to improve attendance rates among our students. Emphasis is being placed on those areas and schools that have particularly poor attendance records.

Mr O'BRIEN: I refer to page 8.5. Among the targets for 2003-04 is implementation of the mentoring program in schools. How are student mentors being used as part of the schools' retention strategies?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Part of the government's focus on improving school retention rates has made it clear to government that a significant portion of students do not see the relevance in continuing with their schooling. The student mentoring program is an initiative that is targeted at that type of student in an effort to help them re-engage in their learning. Some 45 government high schools across South Australia have been selected to take part in this program. It is a \$5.6 million state program totally aimed at helping support students to stay at school longer. Each school has put in place either one or two school mentors, depending on the particular school, as part of the new student mentoring program. Some 80 mentors are working initially with 15-year olds at risk of dropping out of school or disengaging significantly from their schooling, and intensive teacher support is provided for that group of children.

Overall, about 800 high school students will receive that intensive support from the mentors. The feedback from the mentors, who are very excited about the initiative and very committed to the difference they believe they will be able to make with this program, is that it is being well received right across the state. The program will assist schools in their important work to encourage students to stay at school longer, engage them in their learning and help them to achieve success with their learning.

The process of applying for this scheme was that schools put up proposals of how they would deploy these mentoring resources within their schools. The programs that are being put in place at individual schools differ from school to school, and they depend upon the particular cohort of students that an individual school is aiming to support. The mentors are working with individuals as well as small groups of students. The aim of the program is to build an individual rapport between the student and the mentor; to assist the student by providing guidance; to assist with confidence building and personal issues that impede the student from progressing in their schooling or educational training; to help the student with goal setting and organisational study skills; to provide any remedial aids, or advocate for them; to provide all the organisational support—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Bragg will listen to the minister.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I point out to the member for Bragg that not only did the former government not even address this issue, or even admit that there was a problem to address, but it also went to the last election promising zero funds to put programs in place. It is a bit rich now to take a pot shot at a program that is receiving wide support—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Bragg has asked her questions. This one was asked by the member for Napier.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The member for Bragg gets a lot of things wrong, as she did just then. This is an important program. Members opposite may detract from it, but the bottom line is that schools are very excited about this extra resource. It is significant, and it is the exact type of program and support service that will make a difference to our young people. And that is the bottom line.

The CHAIRMAN: There are a couple of issues that I would like to take up. I was contacted by Allan Lawson, who works with Morrie Thompson and some of the others in youth projects. He sent me an email on Tuesday, in which he raised a concern about the provision of second-hand computers. He claims that I set up a unit called Computer Recycling Services when I was minister. I must say that I had forgotten about it. He said that, because of delays in the bureaucracy, the provision of these second-hand computers to charitable groups, and so on, could all fall over. He understands that the minister has responsibility for this program. I am not sure whether that is correct, but that is his assumption. Is the minister able to ascertain what is happening in relation to computers that are no longer needed by schools and other groups within government, so that they can be forwarded to charitable groups and other community non-profit organisations?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I am surprised to hear that matter raised, because, in my regular nightly noting of correspondence, I have just noted a letter that thanked me—and, through that, the department—for a quick response in relation to a certain organisation (and I am struggling to remember what the organisation was) having just been provided with such computers. The Chairman's question comes as a surprise.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr Lawson may have the information wrong, but he said in the email:

Unfortunately the whole show is about to fall over because decisions about the funding arrangements for CRS are taking too long. . . I suspect because the bureaucracy is taking too long to get it all through to Trish White for her approval. Is there any chance you could have a whisper in her pink shell-like ear to ask a question. . .

This is one of those community groups—Teen Challenge and similar groups—asking what has happened to the program.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: My officers do not appear to be aware of any issues with respect to that matter. The Chief Executive tells me that he has had very recent contact with this individual, so I will ask him to comment further.

Mr MARSHALL: Mr Lawson emailed me yesterday and acknowledged the program and his support for it. He has also been in contact with me in the last few weeks about another matter relating to mentoring. I have agreed to meet with him to pursue these matters, but the email he forwarded certainly was not one that contained a complaint of any sort.

The CHAIRMAN: He is not complaining: he is just concerned that something may have happened in the system that recycles computers no longer needed by government agencies, including yours.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I am not aware of that and, given that I just noted a big 'thank you' letter last night, I do not know that there is a problem at all.

The CHAIRMAN: Also, one of my local high schools, Reynella East High School, is very grateful for the money the minister recently provided to upgrade the science labs. An issue has arisen where the school says that, because of changes in cleaning standards, it is now required to pay an extra \$30 000 a year for school cleaning. Has there been a change in departmental policy? The school is saying that it cannot do anything about it. It is a requirement imposed on the school which will cost \$30 000 more than last year's cleaning costs for no additional benefit.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: From time to time the area that needs to be cleaned changes. It is possible that there is a change in that school and the area that needs to be cleaned. However, when that happens, the school is funded for that.

The CHAIRMAN: I am not aware that the school has expanded. Perhaps that could be checked.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I am not aware of what issue they might be referring to. I will take that question on notice and investigate.

The CHAIRMAN: The other query relates to Futures Connect, which will have an impact on curriculum in the school. Concern has been expressed about how that will interface with the VET programs, and whether any direction is to be given in terms of Futures Connect and how that will relate to existing VET programs.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Two new positions are associated with the Futures Connect strategy: one is a transition broker. These individuals are required to broker opportunities for young people. Also, we have VET coordinators who negotiate and concern themselves with vocational education and training options for young people. Vocational education and training programs are very much an integral focus of Futures Connect. It is much broader than that, of course. The Futures Connect program came about as a result of the Labor government's responding to the needs and wishes of people in this state about better coordination and clearer pathways for young people.

It was also responding to concerns that had been raised at the federal level through the ECEF organisation, in addition to an independent consultant's report into the former government's EVE strategy. The Labor government took on board all those recommendations for improvement about how we manage transition programs, vocational education and training programs and providing pathways and future opportunities for young people. It brought together all that wealth of feedback, experience and commitment from the field in the new Futures Connect strategy. It is clearly focused.

It is focusing on improving student engagement in education and training, improving school retention rates and improving pathways for young people, and it is improving the services that are provided through the school and through other training providers and training and community organisations. It is also improving the links between those institutions, schools and groups which are all centred around giving young people a better chance in life. The strategy does build on those existing programs and relationships. The strategy is developing more networks for students in our schools.

The program brings together schools in the community, including enterprises, further training and education agencies and community support services. The whole strategy is about making connections. It is also about connecting schools and other services; it is about connecting young people with relevant curriculum and learning; it is about connecting each young person with their future options; and it is about connecting young people and schools with their community and industry groups that strengthen their transition from school.

Every government secondary school student in South Australia will have their own transition plan for moving through school and beyond. It is aimed at empowering students to achieve their short-term goals and to give them the skills to realise their lifetime ambitions via lifeline learning. As part of the strategy, each plan will include a learning plan, a transition portfolio and an exit map. Those devices are aimed at giving each student a tailor-made concrete plan to guide them from school to further education, training or employment. There are 17 focus—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The concept is about continuous learning and improvement. The concept is infused into so much of what we do in modern education. Seventeen focus clusters are associated with the Futures Connect strategy. They work collaboratively to deliver and improve services to students. The objectives of those clusters are to improve retention rates, to improve student attendance and to improve participation in their education and training. Each of those 17 clusters have the services of the transition broker and a vocational education coordinator.

All those mechanisms are aimed at ensuring that every student has the opportunity to excel in their chosen field and is given the chance to pursue those aims in a clearly defined manner, from providing students with the subjects they want to study to monitoring and tracking the students after they leave school. Futures Connect is about providing students with a system within which they can excel. In areas of low student retention and attendance rates, the focus clusters are targeted with additional resourcing linked to very specific goals.

The transition brokers and vocational education coordinators are working in those 17 clusters with schools and the community in an attempt to deliver improved support to young people and their families. There are innovative programs in nursing, engineering and the racing industry, which are all aimed at enabling students from a number of schools to form viable programs. They are linked to the SACE certificate and vocational education and training qualifications. Approximately 40 students are undertaking accredited nursing training. The programs are delivered to students across the cluster with the active engagement and support of local enterprises and TAFE.

Critical to the outcome has been the capacity of the community and local enterprises working with the schools to form strong focus cluster working groups. On Eyre Peninsula, for example, the focus cluster schools and community have structured programs in aquaculture in conjunction with Spencer Institute of TAFE and the Australian Fishing Academy. They have been involved in horticulture and automotive engineering. We know that those sorts of programs lead to significant retention of students, particularly in those regions—and, in that case, Eyre Peninsula—rather than losing them because the options are not there.

Ms CHAPMAN: Mr Chairman, the minister has been answering for 20 minutes so far.

The CHAIRMAN: It was a long answer. I guess that the schools want to know whether it means that the VET programs continue or will be just part of the broader package of Futures Connect.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: There are a lot of vocational education and training programs offered across our system, so it depends on what you are particularly talking about. We have had a recent expansion of vocational education and training programs.

The CHAIRMAN: They are looking for certainty or some direction, I guess.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The funding for the Futures Connect strategy is assured—it is recurrent funding. Unlike the former government's EVE program, which was aimed at vocational education and training in clumps of three-year, one-off type funding, the Futures Connect strategy has recurrent funding.

Ms CHAPMAN: Like your junior primary school proposal: that is not recurrent and a major commitment.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Junior primary school proposal? The member for Bragg brings up again the 160 extra junior primary teachers, trying to imply that that is not recurrent. They are permanently employed teachers and have been allocated to the schools where they are currently. They are given surety for, I think, three years, but they are permanently employed staff.

Ms CHAPMAN: In answer to my question as to whether you had identified the deployment or conclusion of 25 positions in each of Mr DeGennaro's and Mr Fletcher's divisions and 15 in each of information technology and Marjorie Evans' division, you responded by indicating that, whilst there is an overall 98 net deficit disclosed in the budget paper on this matter, there are an extra 180 full-time equivalents which had not been included in the budget papers at the time of their publication, although accurate at that time. Perhaps I can clarify this position, because the extra teachers, counsellors and mentors were all in place by at least April this year, so was this information provided at a much earlier date?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The member for Bragg is not quite right. These are new salaries—

Ms CHAPMAN: I haven't got on to that, yet.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: You just asked me about the 180 staff.

Ms CHAPMAN: You said it was accurate at the time of provision.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: That is right.

Ms CHAPMAN: Well, when was it provided?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Whenever that part of the budget papers—

Ms CHAPMAN: You have all your officers sitting there. What time, what month, what week this year was the figure provided to you of—

An honourable member: Is that a question?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

An honourable member: Well, it's the manner.

The CHAIRMAN: We will have one question at a time, not a barrage.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I am not sure what the difference is. This 180 staff relates to new initiatives of the government in the 2003-04 budget. We knew the dollar figures of those initiatives but the calculations of staff had not been done at the time that that particular part of the budget papers was

prepared. That is now known and I can give a breakdown if the member would like it.

Ms CHAPMAN: I will ask about that next, but will the minister answer the first question? It was published on 29 May, if that helps.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The budget figures (the dollar figures) were known, but it is a simple salary calculation from budget figures.

Ms CHAPMAN: The published information of 19 146 is in the—

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Exactly, as I just explained.

Ms CHAPMAN: When was the 19 146 provided?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: That is the calculation that includes the 180 extra full-time equivalent salaries.

Ms CHAPMAN: I am sorry, I completely misunderstood. When I put to you 19 244 decreasing to 19 146, that is 98 fewer overall in response to the cuts being proposed that we asked about. You said in addition to the 98 deficit, which is the figures difference, there are 180 missing. In other words, you are suggesting that 19 146 plus 98 is the actual estimate for 2003-04.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The final figure, as I said before, for 30 June 2004 is 19 326.

Ms CHAPMAN: I presume, on a quick addition, that is the additional 180.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Yes.

Ms CHAPMAN: The 180, you say, is the reflection, then, of the extra appointed people who will be, in one way or another, added in 2003-04, between 1 July this year—

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: That is right.

Ms CHAPMAN: Are any of them teachers—

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Yes.

Ms CHAPMAN: —and, if so, how many? Do you have a breakdown?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Most of them are teachers.

Ms CHAPMAN: Do you have a breakdown of the 180?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Yes, I can give you that: 140 full-time equivalent salaries are for additional leadership time in primary schools.

Ms CHAPMAN: Whose jobs are those? This is to facilitate additional leadership time: is that what you are saying?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: School leaders in primary schools, who are teachers.

Ms CHAPMAN: That is what we are talking about, an extra 140 teachers?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: That is teaching salaries. It is estimated that the \$2 million of extra counsellor time would be 29 new full-time equivalent salaries.

Ms CHAPMAN: Counsellors, yes.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I do emphasise—

Ms CHAPMAN: They are estimates, yes, I understand.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: —they are estimates. These are dollar figures converted into salaries. There are seven extra full-time equivalent salaries for preschool high need support.

Ms CHAPMAN: These people are in the schools, are they? They are in the preschools, on site?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I believe so. My advice is that they are in preschools. And there are four extra salaries for the cross-agency retention initiative. That is listed in the budget papers and is a new initiative.

Ms CHAPMAN: I have not added that up, but I presume that is the 180 or thereabouts?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Yes.

Ms CHAPMAN: And the four are in the actual department, not on site?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: No; they are not school staff.

Ms CHAPMAN: Will the minister provide Mr John Gregory's terms of employment with the department, including his salary, contract period (if applicable), and the purpose of his appointment?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I do not have that information, but I will ask the chief executive to comment.

Mr MARSHALL: Mr Gregory has been appointed to a temporary position in the department until January. Previously, he has been on leave without pay since mid 1999, and has returned to the department because he is a substantive employee. At the moment, his contract is until January and, during that time, he can apply for any positions.

Ms CHAPMAN: Temporary or otherwise, why was this position not advertised and available to other applicants?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I will ask the chief executive to comment, as I do not employee staff.

Mr MARSHALL: The position will be advertised before January. We expect it to be advertised during late term 3, in which case we will have an opportunity to then prepare the appropriate administrative work to make that happen.

Ms CHAPMAN: I meant in relation to the contractual position that he has until January, because that is not actually a continuation of his contract from 1999—that is a contract, as I understand it. The work that he is doing—that position was not advertised?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Wasn't that the member's last question?

Ms CHAPMAN: That is what I am saying: the minister is saying that it will be advertised, but I am talking about his present position.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I will ask the chief executive to comment.

Mr MARSHALL: The principal positions are not advertised at this point in time. Mr Gregory is a substantive principal. So he has been placed temporarily against a position which will be advertised and, at such time, he may or may not apply for that position, or may or may not apply for other positions that become available. As you know, it is important that schools have principals at the beginning of the year, for continuity purposes. We anticipate that the position that Mr Gregory is placed in will be advertised. Whether he is an applicant or not has yet to be noted.

Ms CHAPMAN: Supplementary to that, I think I did ask you what his actual duties are in relation to the work he is undertaking. What does he do? Also, what is the amount of his salary?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I will invite the chief executive of my department to comment.

Mr MARSHALL: The work that he will undertake is in the important areas of enhancing student retention in schools, students at risk, and the Pathways program, which was referred to earlier, in terms of Futures Connect. So, the work he will be undertaking is in the area of student engagement, students at risk, and student retention. In terms of his conditions, this position has been classified as a superintendent position, so he will receive the commensurate salary to that level.

Ms CHAPMAN: Which is?

Mr MARSHALL: There is a range.

Ms CHAPMAN: Which is the amount he is getting?

Mr MARSHALL: I would need to take that—

Ms CHAPMAN: Approximately.

Mr MARSHALL: Approximately \$90 000.

Ms CICCARELLO: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.5. What has been achieved in the government's aim to provide more stability in the teaching work force?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Since coming to office, the government has delivered on its commitment to provide teachers with more secure employment futures and to provide schools with more stability in employment. I am very glad to say that over the past nine months more than 1 000 teachers have been made permanent in government schools and preschools. The placement of those teachers is across a wide range of positions across the government school and preschool sector of South Australia.

This government values and respects teachers but, more importantly, it recognises the contribution that teachers make to the learning of our children and in securing their future. Teachers are, of course, at the centre of all that happens in a classroom, and they are ably assisted by some very dedicated and talented school services officers in our system as well as other staff. The permanency changes within our department have been not only for teachers but also for SSOs and people who work in our preschools as well.

The government wants to give our state's teachers a boost to their morale, because that impacts on what happens in our classrooms, not only for the individuals themselves but also to provide certainty to the staffing in those schools. The feedback I have strongly received this year has been particularly in some of those hard to staff schools where, at the beginning of each school year, there is a lot of turnover of staff as contract staff are uncertain about their future placements within our system. Many of those schools have reported to me that, for the first time ever, they had all their staffing in place at the end of last year, and that is a significant boost to those schools. They can, of course, plan their curriculum programs earlier and hit the ground running at the start of the school year and have more settled classrooms, and that is very important for young children, particularly starting children.

So, this is an important thrust of the government. Many of the teachers who have been converted to permanency from contract positions had been in those contract positions for more than 15 or 20 years, and many of them for more than 10 years. This government looked at that situation, which was a deliberate policy by the previous Liberal government to casualise the work force to the point where the former education minister at the time that this particular policy started (Hon. Rob Lucas) made comments in the Legislative Council about how proud he was of the new Liberal policy of casualisation of the work force and having a greater proportion of contract staff.

It is having a big impact in our classrooms and it is having a big impact on morale. Everywhere I go, I meet teachers (and there is over 1 000 of these school staff) who say that their life has changed, the life of their school has changed and, most importantly, parents are saying that they are very pleased with that change. This is just one aspect of a real drive by the department to improve the health of our work force, because that impacts directly on classrooms, and looking after our work force is very important to this government.

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

Mr O'BRIEN: I refer to the investing payments summary on page 8.6 of Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, which details an

\$11.050 million expenditure for the Australian Science and Mathematics School for 2002-03. Will the minister advise on the progress of this project?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The Australian Science and Mathematics School (ASMS) is an exciting project not only for the inaugural 165 students enrolled in 2003 but also for education in our state and for South Australians generally. The total project cost is \$14 million, which includes \$5 million from the commonwealth and \$400 000 from the Flinders University of South Australia. The project was approved by cabinet on 30 August 2001 and received Public Works Committee approval on 19 September of that year. I am pleased to advise that capital funds were fully committed and the project was completed on time and within budget. The project phase was completed on 17 March 2003.

The ASMS, apart from Seaford 6 to 12 school, which opened in 1996, is the first new government high school to open in South Australia in more than a decade and is reforming the way in which students are learning. Since coming to government in 2002, the Labor government has helped shaped the direction that this project was taking, particularly by ensuring that this school is able to offer places for students from all walks of life. This is not an elite school that quickly gets out of the reach of bright and passionate young Australians who have a talent and ambition for science and mathematics. I am advised that the ASMS school council recently moved a motion endorsing this inclusive enrolment policy and commenting on the positive effect that this strategy has on the enrichment of student interaction.

Enrolments for 2004, when year 12 will be offered for the first time, officially commenced this week, but I am pleased to report that the school already had some 130 students on the waiting list to attend, including some students currently in year 3. Admission to the school is by application, based on interest and aptitude. All students and their families undergo an interview process. Specific strategies, including scholarships and quotas, are designed to strengthen the participation of learners from educationally disadvantaged groups. Students at the ASMS do not study traditional subjects such as biology, mathematics, English, or physics by sitting in traditional classrooms for six 40 minute lessons per day. This semester the students have completed just three subjects: body in question; sustainable futures; and, mathematics and abstract thinking. Embedded within these subjects are the traditional elements of lessons we used to attend.

The curriculum offered at the ASMS is an interdisciplinary curriculum, reflecting a combination of SACE, university and industry studies and the SACSA framework. It is jointly developed and delivered with Flinders University and incorporates the eight learning areas in the SACSA framework: the arts, English, health and physical education, mathematics, design and technology, science, society and environment and language other than English. Units are designed to provide learning opportunities and experiences that link the key ideas within all the learning areas.

During years 10 and 11 students satisfy the SACE stage 1 and have an opportunity to extend their learning in undertaking some units in stage 2, some university modules and industry credentials. The methodology is predominantly inquiry, problem and project based. Embedded technology is the vehicle for learning. The school will organise and deliver the year 12 curriculum according to SACE stage 2 and SSABSA (the senior secondary board) guidelines in order to facilitate university entry. The prerequisite knowledge and skills required for these subjects will be mapped for each

student from 2003, based on their personal learning maps or plans. Staff from the school, my department and Flinders University are currently working with the Senior Secondary Assessment Board to develop a new stage 2 curriculum that reflects the innovative work in science and mathematics knowledge and learning that the ASMS is leading.

I am advised that the school recently conducted its first parent-teacher meetings as students begin receiving results of their first semester's work. The ASMS has quickly become and will remain a school which delivers outstanding curriculum and which provides motivation and professional development for students, their families and staff who work at the school—but importantly to students and staff in our whole system.

Ms BREUER: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.20. With regard to employee entitlements, supplies and services, how is the government addressing inadequate living arrangements for teachers in some country areas?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: For many years now teachers in some of our country schools have endured substandard living arrangements. Some of the homes are as much as 40 years old and have had only patch up work done over the years. In other areas there is simply not enough housing to cater for the number of teachers who require it. This problem was known by the previous government but not addressed. This government has committed \$5 million to purchase and build 32 homes in 12 country towns from Fregon in the Far North of our state to Mount Gambier in the South-East. So far, we have identified areas of greatest need and, in consultation with the Administrative Services Department, we have determined country area locations. In support of this, the department has already prepared tender documents for remote area locations as they are the ones that require the longest time.

In fact, this government has committed more money this financial year to that purpose than was committed in the last seven years under the former Liberal government's reign. This is a very important initiative. It is a problem we are addressing where some country schools are, as a consequence of not being able to provide attractive housing, having difficulty in attracting and retaining quality teachers. That is not a new phenomenon but one that has been around for quite a long time. Indeed, some of our hardest to staff schools have faced this problem for some considerable time. The move will ensure that our country teachers also have access to better housing, and it is part of this state government's commitment to regional areas of the state. That commitment is also backed by our initiative to assist financially country people to train as teachers and to return to a country school to teach when they qualify successfully, guaranteeing them a job in a public school in the country region. That is a scheme that we introduced at the start of this calendar year and is called the Country Student Teaching Scholarship Scheme.

One of the advocates for this measure was the Australian Education Union, representing, of course, teachers all over the state, including many remote and country locations. As a response to this 2003-04 state budget measure, in a circular to schools dated budget day, the union gave the government credit for the initiative, saying that the government was listening and acting on its concerns as educators. So, this has been a welcome move, and it is a significant investment in our teaching work force. It will have an impact in our country and remote schools.

Mr VENNING: My three questions are about children's disabilities. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.5, with references also on pages 8.18 and 8.16.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I think that is the family day care page.

Mr VENNING: No, it is children's disabilities.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Page 8.18 is the children's services page. Where on page 8.5 is the member referring?

Mr VENNING: Half way down the page it states: 'Develop a framework for inclusion', and so on. My question relates to dyslexia. Will the minister advise what funding is provided to enable special assistance to children with dyslexia in the 2003-04 year? Will the minister advise why a 7½ year old year 2 dyslexic child in a country school is still in a class with 28 students and is provided with no other assistance, given the government's claim of smaller class sizes and special assistance for children with disabilities?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I will ask one of my officers, who is the senior officer in this area, to approach the table. I introduce to the committee Stephanie Page, who is Director, Learning Improvements and Support Services. Does the member have more details about the student's needs? The member has just said that this is a dyslexic student.

Mr VENNING: I believe that this child has been assessed to have dyslexia.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: What supports have been put in place for the child so far?

Mr VENNING: Apparently none. The school is on the far West Coast.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: It is very difficult when members come forward without details of a particular case. It does not allow us to approach the school for an answer, nor does it allow us to identify any resources that have been provided. The member's question is specifically about resources to this child.

Mr VENNING: I will ask the first part of the question, which is not specific. Will the minister advise what funding is provided to enable special assistance for children with dyslexia in the 2002-03 year?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Quite a range of resources are put into schools that are of benefit to any one particular child with any range of needs. I will ask Ms Stephanie Page to address the issue.

Additional Departmental Adviser:

Ms S. Page, Director, Learning Improvement and Support Services.

Ms PAGE: First, I think that probably the best thing to do in relation to a specific child is to provide that information to us so that we can check in relation to that child and their specific circumstances—perhaps through the minister's office. However, generally speaking, our approach in the department for children with learning difficulties (a category into which dyslexia falls) is that normally it is our policy to develop an individual learning plan, and that may require some negotiated changes to the curriculum. That negotiated education plan would include what kinds of supports the child would need.

Mr VENNING: As a supplementary question, what funding is provided to enable special assistance to these children? The minister must have it in her books.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Funding is provided to schools through their global budget for children who have varieties of needs. In addition, targeted support is given to children for

their particular need. The level of support obviously depends upon what that child's needs are at a particular time. So, that varies from child to child. As Ms Page pointed out, many children of varying disabilities have negotiated education plans, which set out specific supports for the individual child and are arrived at through discussion between family and teacher. As to the member's question about a specific child, the answer is that it depends on the need.

Mr VENNING: My next question is in the same area of children's disabilities. Again, I have looked at pages 8.17 and 8.18, and on page 8.18 it is referred to as 'children with disabilities maintaining existing levels' in 2002-03 and 2003-04. In this instance, I am aware of the individual case. What is the 2003-04 budget allocation for the Autism Association? Is the annual funding being provided for—

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: We are now straying into lines under administered items, and I understood that we would stick to the timetable on that, the reason being that the officers who could assist the committee in the provision of information on the administrative lines will not be here until later this afternoon.

The CHAIRMAN: Is the member for Schubert happy to hold that question back?

Mr VENNING: I can.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I would like to add something to my previous answer about children with disabilities. Budget Paper 4, page 8.9, refers to subprogram 1.2, which is reception to year 2 children. In the notes to that page, item 9, which refers to additional students with disabilities funding, lists as the estimated result in 2002-03 a figure of \$4 197. In the note referring to that item is the following explanation:

Weighted cost per student with disability. Actual costs range from \$1 343 to \$24 876.

It can be seen from that that there is quite a range of funding when it comes to individual students with disabilities.

Mr VENNING: Following the same budget line, I refer to special classes for intellectually disabled students. Given that there are 27 children with intellectual disability currently in schools in the western metropolitan region, with only eight available positions in special classes in high school, what provision has been made for high school education within that region?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The honourable member said 'class'. Is he talking about children's services, primary school or high school?

Mr VENNING: Just special classes.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Yes, but at what year level?

Mr VENNING: High school—years 8 to 12.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: If the honourable member points to the place in the budget papers from which he has derived his question, it will assist in our responding to it.

Ms CHAPMAN: The only point that we can find relates to years 11 and 12. This year the format is broken up into payments out to schools, and it may not even be there, although we are assuming that it is. For years 8 to 10, which is on page 8.11, and years 11 to 12, on pages 8.12 and 8.13, reference is made to funding for students with disabilities in each of those new program categories. On the information we have, currently 27 children are enjoying special class facilities in junior primary and primary schools in the western area, and with the knowledge that only eight secondary spaces are available and, further, that the minister is aware of this.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: If the member for Bragg is talking about junior primary children, obviously it will be

some years into the future before they reach high school. Is she asking generally about the provision of special classes? With children with high level disability, there are several options. There are special classes within a school, there are special schools, and there are special education units. Where a child ends up being placed depends on the conversation between parents—sometimes students are involved in that process, too—and departmental officers. To some extent it is governed by parent attitudes and choices about what sort of setting they desire for their child. The other factor is where a special class, unit or special school exists. Where a student ends up being placed depends on all those factors.

Ms CHAPMAN: I appreciate the invitation to qualify that. The concern raised is that there are a number of children in the western suburbs at present who are not being catered for and are being taxied out into areas quite distant from their homes.

The second concern raised is that they are being encouraged—that is the best way I can describe it—to place their child into Woodville, which is one of the special facilities for children with intellectually disability, because there are simply not enough places in the special classes. Some parents have raised with me specifically that they have enrolled their children in private schools, where they have been accommodated in the western area, because of the shortage.

The most chronic of the issues raised is that these children are currently in primary school and there is no provision in the senior schools, whether it be Ocean View, Le Fevre, or others. They think that has occurred for two reasons. One reason is the policy that, if a junior primary or primary school in a certain area has a special class, they are not eligible to have a special class in their sister schools.

Irrespective of the reason, they need some answers. They understand that the minister is aware of it, and they want to know what places they are going to have for their intellectually disabled children in the next few years. They are seeking some sort of answer, and really the question relates to what provision has been made for this, because they do not want to be forced to place their child into Woodville or to take them great distances. They are asserting that there is a shortage and they would like some confirmation from the minister about what she is going to do to assist these children in a pretty critical situation.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I understand that a senior officer of the department has been looking at this problem and has extensively reviewed the issue in the western suburbs. I must apologise because I thought the honourable member was talking about the West Coast.

Ms CHAPMAN: No, metropolitan area.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Sorry, I heard West Coast so that is what I was thinking. The department will be working to provide the very best service that it is able to, taking into consideration the wishes of parents and the feasibility of placing children to comply with those wishes. We will try to find the best solution possible to meet the needs of those children.

Ms CHAPMAN: I have a supplementary question. According to the information that I have, whilst this review has been conducted by a senior officer in the department, and while it may well have been extensive (and, hopefully, it was), that has been reviewed, and the review recommendations are with the minister, and have been for some months. Again, I ask the question: what will the minister do about this, not what some officer in the department, as I understand it, has already done about it, with respect to special classes?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: We have just released a new budget, and budgets for the 2003-04 financial year are being put in place—because, of course, internally, the budget sections within our department look at their resourcing needs for the year. This is a matter that, like a number of others, is under active consideration.

Mr VENNING: The third question—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Ms Breuer): There have been two questions since your last question.

Ms CHAPMAN: With due respect, Madam Chair, on a point of order, the member for Schubert had his autism question held, then asked the question in relation to intellectual disability, and I responded to the minister in relation to her inquiry as to which area was being covered.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: The member has asked two more questions since then.

Ms CHAPMAN: I have asked them as supplementary questions, and you have not ruled against them, with respect. So, I would ask that the member for Schubert be allowed to ask his third question.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I really think that we need to start looking at the definition of ‘supplementary question’. We have had so many supplementary questions today that I think we have lost the real point of this exercise. However, I will give the member for Schubert the third question.

Mr VENNING: Thank you for your understanding, Madam Chair.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I am not very understanding. My patience is wearing very thin.

Mr VENNING: My question relates to the basic skills test (Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.5, 2003-04 Targets/2002-03 Highlights). How much has been allocated to rewrite the basic skills test? How will the team to rewrite the program be selected? When is it proposed to commence a rewrite, and what is the time frame for completion?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I cannot find a reference to the basic skills test on page 8.5.

Mr VENNING: The top item states:

Establish systemic performance standards for literacy and numeracy and embed these in a new standards and accountability framework.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Is the member referring to the basic skills test for 2003?

Mr VENNING: For 2002-03, yes.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: For the school year 2003?

Mr VENNING: For 2003-04.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The basic skills test is held in August this year, so the member is referring to the 2003 basic skills test.

Mr VENNING: Yes, in this budget. This budget is for 12 months—from this budget to the next one.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: But is the member referring to the 2003 basic skills test or the 2004 basic skills test?

Mr VENNING: We are asking what it will cost to rewrite the new basic skills test.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: If the member is referring to the 2003 basic skills test, a contract was let some time ago for this test. By ‘new test’, I am assuming the member is referring to the recent public announcements.

Mr VENNING: Yes, that is correct.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The basic skills test for this year was cheaper than our previous contracts. In fact, we made a saving from that contract. I believe that the saving in the contract for this year’s basic skills test was of the order of \$350 000.

Mr VENNING: It is to be rewritten: what will it cost to rewrite it?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: It was cheaper than the contract that was in place under the former government by \$350 000. I do not have the details of the total cost of the contract with me, but I can obtain that information for the committee.

Mr VENNING: It has not been rewritten yet, so what will it—

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Yes, that contract was let some time ago—and it had to be, to prepare the tests for August 2003. It is not that far away.

Mr HANNA: I have three questions around the issue of retention and transition from school, which I can really only relate to the items on page 8.7 generally—although I note that on page 8.5 there is a specific reference to the Futures Connect program. My first question is: what funds are allocated to schools to fully implement the transition portfolios and exit plans to support the successful transition of students beyond school? I am interested to know to what extent schools are expected to fund that internally out of existing money that they have.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Several different ways of funding come in here. There is a funding structure for the 17 focus clusters of Futures Connect, and that is funding from the central agency to each cluster. In addition, there is employment of staff—the transition brokers, the VET coordinators and the like—and then there are the expectations of schools. One of the expectations of this government that differs from the expectations of the former government is the priority that this government places on improving school retention rates, improving student take-up and participation in programs and connecting with their schooling or their training pathways. There is an expectation that schools will strive for the government’s agenda of implementing those goals. However, I will ask the Chief Executive to talk in more detail about the roles and responsibilities of the schools in relation to the Futures Connect strategy work and the work in schools on development of learning plans, exit plans and the like.

Mr MARSHALL: The retention issue is a significant one, not just for secondary schools but also for primary schools, particularly in the later primary years. Schools are constantly—

Mr HANNA: Are you saying that students are leaving the education system before high school?

Mr MARSHALL: No. Retention is one of those issues that is not just about looking at 15, 16 or 17 year olds. It is an issue where attitudes are formed early in a child’s life as to whether or not they will continue in education, and their view of their success starts in those later primary years. It is important that not only do the senior secondary students obtain access to programs but also students in the later primary years.

Schools are constantly working on programs, and they are doing that individually and also collectively as groups of schools. They have been using their funds on a range of students-at-risk programs. For example, most secondary colleges, secondary high schools, would have school counsellors. Those school counsellors have welfare programs where they are connecting to other employers and agencies in the community to look at ways of ensuring that students continue in the education sector, continue to have good attendance and continue to have a high retention rate. They are already committed to doing that, and examples are littered

throughout all our schools where they are focusing in on those activities.

Mr HANNA: Are you saying that it is up to the individual school?

Mr MARSHALL: The schools have a commitment to those. They desire it. They spend their own resources. They deploy staff to it. They have the commitment to the young people they serve. Irrespective of any other external issues, schools do have that expectation.

Mr HANNA: But why are those programs not designed centrally, minister?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: With the Futures Connect strategy, schools are supported on these matters both financially and with in-kind support through their focus clusters. The chief executive was explaining the commitment expected of schools towards the government's agenda of working towards this goal, and they do that on a daily basis. Some of it will be seen as core business in what they are doing, and aspects that need extra resourcing can be allocated in a range of ways. However, there is funding of the clusters to support some of this work in schools. The funding of the clusters is not a straight per capita amount. There is not the same number of schools in each cluster.

Mr HANNA: I am conscious that the chair is carefully monitoring my supplementary questions, so I will move onto my second question. Why is money not spent centrally to design programs, such as the Hallett Cove Pathways Program, which has been so successful in my area? Why is that not funded centrally and, essentially, facilitated in schools right across the metropolitan area rather than on this ad hoc individual site basis?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The issue of raising retention rates is being addressed on a range of levels. Individual schools are putting in place programs. Many of them have put in place programs to improve attendance and retention in their schools. There is funding at a Futures Connect focus level. If the honourable member recalls, there was forward funding in the 2002-03 budget over this four-year period of some \$28 million for a range of initiatives. That is an \$8.1 million annual allocation to support the raising of the school leaving age, for example.

In this 2003-04 year, we will be making some further announcements about how that money will be spent in schools in 2003-04, and some of that involves, just as the honourable member says, initiatives that are more statewide than individual school based.

Mr HANNA: Does the minister want to give us a preview of those announcements?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Cabinet would probably say not.

Mr HANNA: My third question relates to the way in which we go about solving the retention problem. It seems to me that it is essential to monitor and track what happens to students after they have left school. My understanding is that if an individual school takes upon itself the responsibility to send out surveys and to make follow-up phone calls to students who have left school, for example at 15 or 16 years old, the resources required for that must be found within the school. It must fall to a counsellor, a teacher or a deputy principal to devote hours of time to do this sort of tracking.

It is addressing a statewide problem, one which the government has promised to address, so why are additional resources not allocated for this problem? Surely, only by finding out why young people are leaving school early can you then provide the programs in schools to make sure that they want to stay there.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The honourable member might be interested to note a new initiative in this 2003-04 budget, which appears under the title 'Increase School Retention. Coordinated Cross Agency Approach to Increasing School Retention', in which a lot of the matters to which the honourable member just referred are addressed. It is an allocation of approximately \$400 000 in 2003-04 and \$467 000 in 2004-05. That project has several factors, including systems to track students, not only within the schooling system but also outside it.

Also, my department, the Department of Justice and the Department of Human Services are linking together to coordinate, in a cross agency sense, a framework for dealing with a lot of these matters. It is addressing the tracking of students and student success on their pathways, and it is about better linking the services available, not only across department but also across the community.

Mr HANNA: Would that involve a central reporting back to the department from each secondary school site?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Is the honourable member talking about data reporting?

Mr HANNA: It would be very easy, would it not, in the monthly returns from schools, to have not only statistics about who is leaving but also reasons why?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Part of the policy or practice changes that are being driven by my department are centred around getting better information about students, that is, student attendance and better information about transition of students within schools as they pass from school to school. For example, the basic skills test results were mentioned earlier in terms of student achievement and knowledge, which I announced a couple of weeks ago. The system will have a better flow of that data within our system to track achievement. So, in a whole range of spheres there is a focus within the department on getting better information about our cohorts of students so that we can better support and serve them in providing pathways—not only transitions through school but also pathways into the future, the work force, further training and the like.

Mr HANNA: As a final supplementary question, can I have a page reference for the figures that the minister quoted a moment ago?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: That is at page 2.24 of Budget Paper 3.

The CHAIRMAN: I have some questions on behalf of the Hon. Kate Reynolds in another place, and I do not expect an answer on the spot. You might want to take them on notice.

In relation to the Birdwood High School, what are the criteria for the allocation of funds for feasibility studies for schools (including, obviously, Birdwood)? What are the criteria for the allocation of funds for capital works for schools? If funds are allocated on a needs basis, why has the work at Birdwood schools not commenced this year? When can the Birdwood schools expect an unambiguous answer about the scope and time line of their redevelopment plan? How much has been allocated for the feasibility study for the Birdwood schools?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I can say that, in the lead-up to the budget, the governing council chair, I suppose it was, wrote to me requesting that in the 2003-04 budget we fund a feasibility study for work at their school. In this budget there is funding for that, and it is scheduled to commence in January.

Ms CHAPMAN: Can I ask a supplementary question? It may have been answered by the minister. In relation to the

feasibility study for Birdwood, that will commence in January this year and is covered in the 2003-04 budget; is that right?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Yes, it is.

Ms CHAPMAN: I do not have the capital works list: has that been provided yet? I asked for it this morning at 11 o'clock. This is the full capital investment list for the 2003-04 year.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Yes. I can provide that now.

The CHAIRMAN: You can circulate it without having it incorporated into *Hansard*. It will not be incorporated in *Hansard* unless you read it. If it is purely statistical, you can have it incorporated but, otherwise, you cannot.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: It will not take long. In the capital investment statement there is a category called 'Other' which shows the allocation for 2003-04 for the following projects: Pasadena High School, \$650 000; Peterborough Community Kindergarten, \$425 000; Marryatville High School, \$1 million; Willunga Preschool, \$750 000; Christie Downs school, \$700 000; LeFevre High School, \$740 000; Mannum school, \$950 000; Marie Dunstan preschool, \$350 000; Port Lincoln, \$950 000; Salisbury High School, \$750 000; Southern Fleurieu, \$400 000; targeted asset program, \$6.5 million; and, Woodville Special School, \$1.25 million.

Ms CHAPMAN: I ask that a copy of that be provided. Is that the document which is compiled each year, and does it include the full group, or is that just a summary of those that are missing?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: That is all schools and preschools that are not listed.

Ms CHAPMAN: What I called for, and I had last year, is a complete summary of all investments which detailed all other projects.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I included the targeted asset program, if that is what the member is talking about.

Ms CHAPMAN: I understand that the minister included the \$6.5 million. I am saying that there is a document, I was advised by her department last year, that is created annually and is a complete document of the investment. And I was provided with it last year.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: There is no document other than the budget papers for this. This information has been compiled for this request today.

Ms CHAPMAN: I would like this clarified because the request I put in on Monday is in exactly the same terms as last year, and it was provided.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Your request was for all schools or preschools that were not specifically listed, and that is what I have provided.

Ms CHAPMAN: No, what I have asked for, with respect, is the full program. I appreciate that the minister has provided a compilation of the things that were missed out in publishing the budget, but there is a document which is produced at or around the time of the budget and which allocates the total amount and details each of the projects. Last year that was provided eventually—later in the day—but it was an initial inquiry that was put to your acting minister (minister Hill) and it was provided on the day. So I have written to the minister again this week to ask for this year's document—and it is not available, apparently, until the time of estimates committees. It is that document which is kept as a record in her offices of the total capital investment program. I will get last year's document and tell the minister what it is called.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: There is no other item here. I have just given the member the breakdown for the category

'Other'. If she refers to page 30 of Budget Paper 5, which is the capital investment statement, the member will see that the total is given—\$54.934 million—and the only category that is not expanded is that category of 'Other'. There is nothing else. It all adds up.

Ms CHAPMAN: I appreciate that. I am looking for the document from which the material is extracted for the purposes of preparing the budget paper, which is the full comprehensive list that makes up that item. The document exists, and I appreciate that the minister's officers may have compiled all of what they have from their records—

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: What document exists? We have the budget papers which have the total—

Ms CHAPMAN: It is a typed document prepared by—

The CHAIRMAN: We can come back to this. If the member for Bragg can find the one from last year, the minister can see it, to save time.

Ms CHAPMAN: I will do that.

The CHAIRMAN: I have just been reminded by the member for Napier to ask a question close to my heart, and that is about technology high schools, which is an issue that has been raised with the minister and the minister for further education, the Premier and the federal minister. The federal minister, Brendan Nelson, has indicated that he is happy to support some technology high schools. I have written back asking whether he will provide extra funding, and I am still waiting for that answer.

I just want to put this matter before the minister to ensure that it gets some consideration, and I do not think the member for Napier or I will get upset whether it is done ultimately as part of the TAFE arrangement or through the school sector. I am just putting before the minister the issue of technology high schools—not necessarily the same as in New South Wales, but a mark two version of what used to be called technical high schools which would embrace robotics, advanced electronics and all those sorts of things. Students queue in New South Wales to attend those high schools.

I do not know whether the issue has advanced in the minister's department or whether she is talking with the federal minister or with her colleague the Hon. Jane Lomax-Smith, but I think I can say with confidence that the member for Napier and I are keen that this matter does not fall away into the history books.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: This government's new focus on improving the pathways of high school students is to develop more strategic relationships with TAFE institutions and other training providers. We have springing up in schools a number of examples of new methods of delivering programs to young people, linking them with, say, TAFE or in clusters of schools with a regional TAFE facility or regional training providers. We are going down that path, and we are keen to further those relationships because, at the end of the day, it is all about giving better options to young people. Of course, some of those options are in training, some are in bridges to further education, and some are options into very practical hands-on types of activities that engage students and are the hook to their continuing in the education and training system.

So, it is an area that we are exploring, and schools—and training providers and communities—are coming up with very innovative suggestions for ways in which they might better link together to deliver a service to this cohort of students in a different way from the way in which it has previously been delivered, thereby engaging and offering students a better pathway than they had in the past. It is

something that we are pursuing, because it is very much in line with the government's aim to improve options for our senior students.

The CHAIRMAN: I hear what the minister is saying, and I appreciate that programs relating to VET, and so on, are occurring, but the model that the member for Napier and I have discussed—and we have looked at the UK experience (which is not the same) and also New South Wales—is to have schools which have as their core focus high level technology and not what has tended to happen in the past, where comprehensive high schools have tried to be all things to all students and have not done many of those things well, and where the hand and the head are required to be used and are often seen as fringe activities or of a lower order.

So, our concern is to elevate technology to the status it should have in maybe a few schools—not across the board—which may be under the umbrella of TAFE (which I appreciate is under a different minister) and which I think would help fill a gap the community is crying out for in terms of an alternative focus for many young people. I am pleased to hear what the minister is saying, and I think that it is an ongoing issue about which we are both passionate. As I indicated earlier, the federal minister is supportive, but I would like to know whether he would put in some special extra money.

Ms CHAPMAN: I refer to a document called 'Investment summary statement' (I have the original, but I do not have a copy with me). At the time of receiving the document during last year's estimates committees, I said, and I quote from *Hansard*:

I want to record on the transcript that two pages of a document dated 6 August 2002 (which is today's date, and I presume the date it was faxed) have been provided to me. I want to record on the transcript that what has been produced is the complete list of the investment summary statement consistent with the total investment for the year 2002-03 of \$71.234 million as published in the budget papers and was the complete list of approved projects, including those specified in this list, as at the date of the budget, which was 11 July 2002. This is the document that I requested be produced on 12 July and then confirmed in correspondence on 31 July 2002 as the document relevant to that day. Will the minister identify whether or not there has been a change—

And I think the minister indicated that there may have been. *Hansard* details the minister's answer as to whether that document coincided with the day the budget was delivered (and it did), and then the minister had an opportunity to say whether or not there had been any changes. My letter to the minister on Monday specifically stated:

In the event the investment program as published on pages 26-30 inclusive is not a complete list of new works, new works carried forward or works in progress, please ensure that a copy of the complete statement is provided at estimates on 19 June 2002. Notwithstanding a written request prior to last year's estimates sittings there was considerable delay until this document was produced and apparent confusion. I trust this won't be repeated.

So, I ask for that document to be produced again this year. I appreciate that the minister, in response to this letter, had compiled a list of extra projects she says will proceed in 2003-04 which are not published in the document. I fully accept that, but that is not what I asked for: I asked that a copy of the document that existed on budget day (that is, 29 July) be produced. It is the full and comprehensive list, excerpts of which are contained in the budget papers.

The CHAIRMAN: I point out to the member for Bragg that the minister has considerable discretion in terms of how she chooses to answer, including providing detailed information. The minister cannot be compelled to provide a document—

Ms CHAPMAN: The minister indicated that she would, but it has not been received.

The CHAIRMAN: Well, it is up to the minister, subject to standing orders and all the traditions of Westminster, and so on, to respond in the way in which she wishes to respond.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The member for Bragg misunderstands. Last year, a list was compiled for her at her request.

Ms CHAPMAN: That is not what was said in here; that is not the correspondence.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: For the member's benefit, a list, which was provided to her last year, was compiled especially as a result of her request: it did not exist.

Ms CHAPMAN: That is contrary to what I asked, and the minister said something different last year. Minister Hill confirmed that that document was there and available on budget day and that it would be produced. I specifically asked the minister during the estimates committees last year whether or not that was the document that existed as at the date the Treasurer delivered his budget, and the minister confirmed that.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: If I could finish my answer, member for Bragg. The list that I just provided—

Ms CHAPMAN: When?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Just then, in answer to your request. It is a piece of paper prepared at your request.

Ms CHAPMAN: Not last year's.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The equivalent document appears in the budget papers, including totals—everything. The equivalent document to the information given to you last year appears at page 8.6 of Budget Paper 4. I am sorry, member for Bragg, but you do not know what you are talking about.

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: I think that we should draw this to an end. As I have said earlier, it is up to the minister: the minister can change the format in answering. I suggest that the two of you might want to talk privately and sort out what the document is. However, if the minister does not want to provide a document different from the one she has provided, that is her—

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The information provided on budget day last year was prepared for the member for Bragg. It was current as at budget day. When she refers to some supposed comments by me that it was current at that date, I assume that to be the case. I do not understand the point that the honourable member is trying to make. I sense that she is trying to portray an impression that information is not there. More information has been provided in these budget papers than has ever been provided before—I make that point. If the member does not know what information she wants, it is pretty hard for one to supply it.

Mr SCALZI: I understand that the minister has spoken in this area before. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.5, 2002-03 highlights, output class, Futures Connect. How many persons have been employed to commence the Futures Connect program, including intensive teacher support and mentoring in 2002-03, and what is the amount spent on the total program in that year? How much is budgeted for the continued implementation of this program in the 2003-04 year?

I understand that the member for Bright has a particular interest in this area. The minister may be aware of concerns raised by the southern metropolitan schools, particularly the health and safety of staff and students due to violent,

aggressive and abusive students with significant behavioural, mental health and learning issues. The behaviour support unit at Christies Beach is constantly full, and many teachers met recently at Hallett Cove to express concerns on this issue. The increase of the school leaving age to 16 years without adequate central support could result in enormous problems for schools in this area. I appreciate the hard work teachers do in these difficult areas, but unless there is central and coordinated support we have a big ask on teachers.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: It is hard to pick out what the question was. There was mention of the Futures Connect program and the mentoring scheme, which is not the same thing as the Futures Connect, and then there was mention of behaviour support, so three different things were mentioned—and I am not sure how the member was trying to link them.

Mr SCALZI: How many people have been employed in the Futures Connect program, including intensive teacher support mentoring? If you are to get teachers to mentor and support, they are still people who are employed.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: That is a different program from Futures Connect.

Mr SCALZI: Can you give the number of staff who have been employed?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Under what?

Mr SCALZI: Who directly support the retention of students.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Under what program?

Mr SCALZI: Obviously it is a big priority to make sure that we do not have disinclined students specifically in that age group, and it is a fair question to ask how many staff have been employed in that area.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The honourable member mentioned Futures Connect. Futures Connect has 17 focus clusters, and each of those clusters has available to it the services of a transition broking and vocational education training coordinating service. There are 13 transition brokers and 17 VET co-ordinators: that is the structure of the focus clusters. The honourable member mentioned the mentoring scheme and I talked of that earlier and the 80 mentors in that scheme. However, there are teachers in our high schools supporting the government's goals of improving retention of students, and there are salaries which may be teacher or other staff salaries for people employed right around our system on a whole range of programs. It is therefore difficult for me today to enumerate each one of those.

Mr SCALZI: I understand and have stated that teachers should be commended for the work they do. I was asking for those numbers and the minister has indicated the numbers in those programs. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.5, 2002-03 highlights, output class, 16 year olds. What is the increase in the number of students aged between 15 and 16 years in the 2003 academic year compared to the 2002 academic year as a result of the passing of the school leaving age legislation? How many of those students are attending school full-time during 2003?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: That is a very difficult question to answer. The department takes census statistics each year in August, and a 15-year old could turn 16 at any time of the year. The department takes those statistics at the same time each year.

Mr SCALZI: When that happens there would be a comparison with previous years?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: It is not that simple, because the policy change of raising the school leaving age has influenced

behaviours in a whole range of ways. It may have influenced an individual 15 year old's decision making, it may have influenced what peers say to each other. Indeed, it may have influenced how a parent will advise a child. There is a whole range of ways in which the decision making about whether a child decides to leave at any particular age is made. This is not a new revelation. The former minister, in trying to work out funding to cover such an initiative, came up with several different figures of how much extra funding would be required with such a change of policy. A young person who is today in primary school may otherwise have set the scene in their primary years for leaving school early, and it will be some years before you see the effect of that change in policy for that young person. At the time of the last election, when both parties were deciding how much to allocate in their policy platforms towards such a change in legislation, the Labor Party devoted \$2.5 million per annum in its forward estimates. The Liberal Party decided to allocate nothing. Both parties went to the election with the same policy.

After the election, when the Labor Party was put into government, in our budget in 2002-03 we allocated a lot more than that: we allocated \$28 million over four years to raising the school leaving age. However, that recognised that behaviours in decision making change about dropping out of or even underachieving at school (which eventually leads to dropping out) and recognised that these decisions are made at various year levels. It is not a simple equation of merely saying, 'We changed the law, and this is the immediate impact of the policy.' The impact of that policy will be long term.

Mr SCALZI: I understand that. As a supplementary question, will there be a review, for example, of those students who are required to be at school to find out how many are there because they have to be or they want to be? Is there any way that we can look into that? That is a very important question to answer to know which programs will be successful and which ones will not, if we are to have increasing returns in educational output.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Evaluation of our programs and supports for young people is a central plank of what the government needs to do to support children, not only those who are at immediate risk of dropping out from school but also those who might fall into patterns of underachievement or disengagement from their learning. That also includes those young people who get into patterns of regular non-attendance at school. If some of those patterns are not changed early enough, the odd day here and there can turn into something more regular, until eventually all interest is lost and the child drops out. Of course, children who drop out of their schooling to get into patterns of behaviour or on the streets are at risk. So, we need to guard against that. Evaluation of the supports, programs, and performance of what programs—

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Indeed. An interesting by-product of raising the school leaving age at the start of this year has been the response of schools. I must say that I have been very pleased with that response, particularly by those schools that have been prompted by that change in legislation to have a whole rethink about how they deliver curricula and programs to particular cohorts of students and in what environments. So, out of that change in law, a lot of change has occurred in what is being offered to our young people, which is very pleasing and is being encouraged by the government. For example, some principals have said to me,

'For the first time, towards the end of last year, we asked our year 10 students what would make school more relevant for them next year,' and some student-initiated changes to the curriculum have been made in those schools. That is very positive and is the sort of feedback that leads to improvements in what is offered, what is taught, and the way it is offered in schools.

Mr SCALZI: This question is closer to home. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 8.8, subprogram 1.1, Delivery of Preschool Education. Given the reference to interest from the field in relocating preschools with low attendances to school sites (which has been currently trialled and developed), will the minister confirm whether funding has been set aside in this budget for the relocation of Hectorville Kindergarten to the East Torrens Primary School site?

Following public meetings held in November and December 2001, where overwhelming community desire to relocate the kindergarten was expressed, the minister confirmed support in principle for this project by letter dated 9 May 2003 to Mr Franz Wenger, Chair of the East Torrens Primary School Governing Council. Despite \$200 000 funding approved in a commonwealth grant in July 2001 to assist with the redevelopment of preschool facilities at East Torrens Primary School, the department does not appear to have progressed the issue beyond the negotiation stage over the last two years. The governing council has been unofficially informed that Hectorville Kindergarten will be closed at the end of this year.

The kindergarten and school communities are extremely concerned that the closure could endanger the whole project and, at the very least, add significantly to the cost and inconvenience for families. On their behalf, I ask whether the government is committed to financing the project. What are the firm time lines necessary for the work? Is there transitional funding to continue Hectorville Kindergarten until the relocation is complete?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: First, the member referred to some correspondence from me when I was in opposition. Is that right? I was not minister in 2001. I do not recall a public meeting that I attended.

Mr SCALZI: The minister confirmed support for the project on 9 May 2003 by letter.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Will the member read my letter, please? I am trying to be helpful, but I do not know what he is talking about. I point out that if something was written to me in May 2003 (and the budget was coming down in May 2003), it sounds very late in the piece to get into the 2003-04 budget.

Mr SCALZI: I have a letter from the Chairperson of the East Torrens Primary School which states:

We have recently been informed by the Minister for Education and Children's services of the government's intention to relocate the Hectorville Kindergarten to the East Torrens Primary School site. This is something that the East Torrens Primary School Governing Council, and the parents in the area, fully endorse. However, there seems to be a condition attached to that relocation. This is the issue of funding. As a governing council, we have been under the understanding that we have been granted a commonwealth government grant, just for such a purpose, as outlined in the attached letter dated 19 July 2001 by the federal member of parliament, the Hon. Christopher Pyne MP. To date we have not received the benefit of that grant.

As we understand, you have been instrumental in the application of this grant, and therefore we request your assistance for the funding to be provided now. This is urgent as we have been unofficially informed of the closure of the Hectorville Kindergarten at the end

of this year. This is clearly not in the interests of the parents and the school community in the area, as we seek the continuation of the kindergarten on the East Torrens Primary School site.

As parents and Governing Council at East Torrens, we envisage an extension of the operation of the Hectorville Kindergarten for a short time period, to allow for facilities at East Torrens to be altered, for a smooth, uninterrupted relocation to the new site.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I think that there is some misunderstanding by the member for Hartley. He mentioned an allocation of commonwealth funds. First, I have been advised that, under the schools program, the commonwealth does not distribute funds for preschool relocations. That is my advice today. If the member is referring to the amalgamation of the East Torrens Primary School, there was an allocation of \$200 000 of commonwealth funds for that, but that was not for any preschool relocation, and those funds have been fully spent and acquitted against that project in the way that they were intended by the commonwealth. I am happy to look at this for the honourable member, but I do not believe that the information being given today is correct.

Mr SCALZI: I am reading from a letter from the Chairperson of the Governing Council. My understanding of the argument from the school community is that they were sent a letter from the federal member in the area—

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: That was in the lead-up to the federal election, mind you, and that would be the \$200 000 that has been spent.

Mr SCALZI: I would be happy if we could get the relocation of the kindergarten on the East Torrens site and that we work towards getting the gymnasium for the school, as has been promised to the community. However, we do not want the kindergarten to close in the meantime. The previous government made a promise, which was consented to by this government, to amalgamate the school and to put on the East Torrens site resources to enable the school to continue. I believe that they have done very well under Principal Frank Mittiga, and the school is flourishing in numbers, but they need those facilities and they need to have Hectorville Kindy relocated onto the East Torrens site. I am sure that could be done, given the facilities that are there, provided the right resources are made available.

The CHAIRMAN: The minister may wish to respond later to this matter.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I will come back to the house on that, but I advise the committee that the East Torrens Primary School has put in an application for a school hall/gymnasium, and the process for that is that the school does its planning work and the application goes before the School Loans Advisory Committee. That is happening next week.

The CHAIRMAN: In relation to raising the school leaving age, which I support, providing there are adequate resources and the curriculum is appropriate, by world standards, it is not a radical move, even though I welcome it. I am not asking the minister to commit to raising it further, although in the few years ahead we will see it raised to at least 17. Many countries insist that teenagers aged 16 or 17 are in school, in training or in the workplace; they are not idle. Unfortunately, we have not moved to that point, but I trust that we will.

The minister mentioned the importance of reviewing the implementation of the raised school leaving age. Does the department have in place a process to evaluate and to report on that increased school leaving age? I know it is not an easy thing in methodological terms. Does the department have an

active process in place to provide some evaluation following the implementation of that changed age requirement?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: As I tried to indicate earlier, with all activities within the department, it is my expectation that they are monitored and evaluated for effectiveness, and that includes effectiveness in achieving the goals of the program, cost effectiveness, and a whole range of other measures, depending on the particular program. The differences in schools this year can be seen on a number of fronts and, as I have stressed to the chief executive, and I know that he believes it also, when we are attracting precious taxpayer dollars, we must make sure that we get the outcomes that we strive for. There is a very practical reason for doing that, which is to encourage my colleagues to keep providing the necessary funds for education.

Given that South Australia does not have the budgetary position of some of our interstate counterparts, it is important that we make sure that our services hit the mark. That is very important to me, and I know it is important to the chief executive, and a lot of the change that the chief executive is promoting throughout our whole organisation is about effectiveness in everything we do, and making sure that we hit the mark for young people. We must ensure that our decision making, right through the whole organisation, is very student focused, with every officer in the department asking, 'What will this new initiative, what will this change, mean in practice for students in classrooms, schools and preschools?' I agree that monitoring and evaluation are very important to the government.

The CHAIRMAN: My next question is a curly one and old favourite, referring to the 10-year placement, and it is probably harder to deal with than splitting the atom. What is the department doing in terms of reviewing the 10-year rule, which requires teachers to move to other schools, in many cases, which can lead to a waste of talent because of the strictures imposed by the 10-year rule? I have written to the minister about one situation. I know it is not an easy matter because people expect a commitment, and have understandings. Is the department still locked into the 10-year placement, or is it looking at it with the union? What is happening?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: This obviously cuts across an industrial matter. There are certain flexibilities. For example, in the setting up of the ASMS (Australian Science and Mathematics School), the department approached the Australian Education Union and negotiated for some flexibility about tenure of appointments at that school. That is the advice that I have been given by my officer. So, these are questions not only of an education policy nature but also of an industrial nature. While I find myself not always agreeing with the Australian Education Union, it is the aim of the state government to work collaboratively with that organisation for the benefit of employment conditions for teachers and other staff. My approach to that matter is that negotiation in good faith on industrial issues can lead to positive outcomes. Employment, placement and tenure of teachers, and all the issues that surround those matters, are not straightforward. My aim, as minister, is to work within the legal and industrial boundaries that exist and to negotiate the best possible outcome for schools and preschools.

The CHAIRMAN: I guess I was asking whether it is under active consideration. We can all come up with cases where the system has not delivered the best outcome. I can think of one such case that involved my local high school, Aberfoyle Park, where someone who helped set up the state curriculum, because they had been at the school for X number

of years, was transferred to a school where they are not used within the area of their expertise. Basically, they were not using their talent to its fullest extent, simply because we have what appears to be at times a very rigid rule: 'You have done your time there; move on.' Even though the students, the parents and the staff want that person to stay, and the person is a top performer in that area, simply because the clock has ticked away, they must move somewhere else, where they might be teaching some other subject, even though, in the case that I am talking about, they have helped to set up the state curriculum.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I do not profess to be an expert on industrial matters. In the department, obviously, there are officers who have a lot more of that information than I. From my understanding, there are positives and negatives with respect to a lot of these issues. Regarding the 10-year rule (as the Chairman put it), I receive correspondence from parents, schools and teachers on all sides of the debate. There are good arguments on all sides of the debate. A view has been put to me by different groups—parents, individual teachers and schools—that career structures are blocked when teachers stay in a position for a long time. Also, schools sometimes want to regenerate staffing. So, that is one side of the argument.

The other side of the argument is along the lines put by the Chairman. Parents hear of or experience or taste, in the sense of their children's education, an outstanding teacher and, of course, they want that teacher to stay in their school; that is natural. Under the current staffing arrangements, sometimes those teachers move on. I also receive correspondence expressing the same reaction when a teacher chooses to move on. I have received correspondence from parents saying that a teacher should not be allowed to do so. There is, therefore, a whole range of interests, ranging from the teacher's interests and those of the teaching work force. And, of course, in a public system—or any system, really—one must have regard to staffing schools in the best possible way. Sometimes what an individual school may want may not, on an overall view of the world, be the best outcome. There are conflicts, and they are difficult decisions. But the bottom line for me is that, where there is goodwill, better outcomes for all are possible.

The CHAIRMAN: I guess I was really hinting at whether the department is able to sit down with the union and parents to try to come up with maybe an improved system, not only in terms of the 10-year tenure but also regarding other impediments to flexibility and, I guess, movement in the system. I know there have been some changes in relation to principals being able to stay on. But some of my schools have had a frequent turnover of principals, much to the annoyance of parents. It seems to be because of rules that have been established in the dim, dark past. Maybe it is time to have a look at some of those matters to see whether they are still relevant, whether the union is amenable to some change, whether parents want change and what is in the best interests of children, which should be the main consideration. I am really asking whether that can be looked at.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Yes, there are opportunities for change. Last year, an enterprise agreement was struck. Attached to that enterprise agreement is a staffing allocation document, which includes many of the sorts of matters that we are talking about. Last year, there were changes to the teacher placement process. There has been feedback on those changes, and that feedback is listened to, not only by the union involved but also by the principals associations,

individual teachers and the like. The aim is to constantly improve the way in which we place teachers in schools by negotiation and consultation with the parties. Of course, at the time of negotiating the next enterprise agreement, there will be an opportunity for negotiated agreement on aspects of an industrial nature.

Ms BREUER: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.20. Has the government included anything in this budget to assist teachers in leadership positions—to improve planning and development of teaching and learning in their classrooms?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: There is an allocation. From 2004, the equivalent of 140 full-time equivalent staff salaries will become available for leadership time in our primary schools. It is a \$24.8 million allocation over the next three financial years, and it arises out of the enterprise bargaining agreement that was struck in April 2002. That is a significant number of salaries, and I anticipate that it will have a significant impact on our primary schools.

Mr O'BRIEN: My reference is pages 8.5 and 8.10, which refer to literacy and numeracy. What is the government doing to encourage a seamless academic progression of students from primary to secondary schools?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: From next year South Australian high schools will receive primary school test results for all incoming year 8 students as part of a revamp of the basic skills test, which has also been renamed. From this year it will be known as the literacy and numeracy testing program. I might just say that some of that data has been available in the past but it has not been provided consistently to all receiving high schools. It now means that year 8 teachers will have a more ready access to understanding the skills and abilities of their students—or one measure of them, of course—at the beginning of the year to help assist them in planning their programs for that particular cohort of students coming into their year level.

The member for Schubert mentioned earlier that there had been a revamp of the test this year, and that is correct. The new tests for years 3, 5 and 7 were developed by a team of the state's excellent teachers. Previously, tests developed in New South Wales were used. They will accompany, together with this year's basic skills test, a more comprehensive report to parents of test results. It will provide them with more information than they have had previously to assist them in understanding more specifically the progress and abilities of their child and, perhaps, will assist them in a starting point for the conversations they might like to have with classroom teachers who, of course, can provide a lot more information than the tests alone.

The new reports parents will receive will list every question of the test characterised as its function; for example, it might have the word 'spelling' and a word to be spelt. It will show, in a very easy to follow way, whether that particular child attempted the question, whether they got it right or wrong and the percentage of children across the state who got that particular question right. I believe it will assist parents in understanding specifically where their children might be doing extremely well or needing a little more support. The department will also be taking the improvements to reporting one step further. Next term the department will be surveying parents about exactly what information they would like provided in the reports they receive. That information will be collated and analysed, and the report format will be revised as a result of that information.

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: That information is currently available to them at the request of the school already. The test that students sit this year will be aligned to the South Australian curriculum, and it will be marked by a team of more than 100 South Australian teachers. This is an important improvement, I believe. It certainly seems to be getting some considerable support, and feedback to me from parents is extremely positive.

Ms CICCARELLO: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2 pages 8.5 and 8.20 regarding computer upgrades. What is the latest development in computer provision for our schools?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Computing technology, of course, is a crucial element of the modern education provision in schools. This government is proud to make a significant increase in this area not only in last year's budget but also in this year's budget. The state government is purchasing 1 318 new desktop computers for use in school offices and classrooms as part of a \$2 million program to upgrade technology in government schools. That announcement comes as schools prepare to buy an extra 4 768 new computers for student use under a separate \$3.4 million computer subsidy scheme announced earlier this calendar year.

Those extra 6 000 computers will make a significant difference in schools. More than 600 of the extra administration computers will come complete with CD burner, network connection and 17-inch monitors. That has been welcomed by schools. The rest will be purchased to the same specifications but with a CD-ROM instead of a burner. Schools will have some flexibility with the computers they purchase for student use, receiving a government subsidy that will cover up to two-thirds of the cost of those purchases. Those two initiatives together will go a long way to updating our stock of computers in South Australian government schools.

The department undertook an audit, as I have already mentioned in this place, of computer stock in our schools. The provision of the subsidies and the administration computers will go quite some way to improving both the number of computers and the age profile of computers in our government schools. Before the injection of this funding, quite a large number of our computers in government schools were purchased prior to 1998 and, in modern educational terms that require increasing multimedia applications, those are a little limited in capability.

As part of the subsidy scheme, the department is asking schools to develop by the end of this year a plan that will, among other things, ensure replacement and upgrading of computer equipment. Some schools have been doing this, but there is a significant number that have not, and now, systematically, it will be a requirement that schools have a plan in place not only for the hardware upgrade but also for what will be needed in terms of the skills of staff. Schools need to plan ahead for their computer replacements, and the \$2 million in subsidies in this next year will help them look forward with some confidence in relation to those replacements.

Membership:

Mrs Hall substituted for Mr Venning.

Mrs HALL: I seek some information about the Paradise Primary School. I know the minister is aware of the background because she has been to the school, and she would probably remember that the decline in enrolments has been caused by a number of factors; in particular, the relocation of the learning centre caused some difficulties in the early days. Therefore, one could deduce that the decline in enrolments

seriously affected school funding at the time in terms of its capacity to raise money. I think it is a generally held view at the school that there were limited funding capabilities for probably a couple of years when that transition took place. The minister would be aware, I am sure, that the playground is 25 years old. A significant amount of the equipment is now closed for use because it does not meet occupational health and safety requirements. I have a couple of questions relating to those issues.

We obviously accept that sport is an integral part of any school curriculum and, given that all other curriculum equipment is provided by the government—that is, computers, etc.—why is safe playground equipment a site responsibility and not a government responsibility? To follow on from that, who would be legally responsible if a child was injured at school whilst on playground equipment that did not meet occupational health and safety standards?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: We will send out an inspector tomorrow and, if it is the case, as the member suggests, that this playground does not meet occupational health and safety requirements, the inspector will ensure that it is not used. In the light of the member's raising the issue with me, we will send somebody and, depending on the verdict after that visit, we will make a decision.

Mrs HALL: If I could put on the record a couple of additional questions. I appreciate that the minister will send someone out to look, and whoever goes out might take into consideration this issue of responsibility, and in this case Paradise Primary School has an identified project that is good for the school, and the project is not part of an asset management plan for the school because of its school size. They would contend, of course, that they do not have—

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Is this the small size of the project or the small size of the school?

Mrs HALL: The size of the school. The minister has had an amount of correspondence over probably the last six months or so with this school. She has indicated that it is not appropriate for asset funding to be directed to playground equipment, and the school asks why the playground equipment is not an asset for the school and the children. I understand that this issue has been raised in correspondence.

There is a third part to my question, and I am sure that the minister will find numerous references to these issues. In her media release of 21 February the minister announced a \$12 million plan to improve school facilities, including playgrounds, and that work was to address health and safety hazards in government schools as a priority. One of the recommendations made to the school and the council is that they seek support from the local community or perhaps local service organisations and, again, my understanding is that the school and the school council in particular contend that, in their circumstances and given the history, it is very difficult for them to attempt to replace entirely 25 years' worth of playground equipment—some of which, although well maintained, has already been closed off for use because of the issues I have raised.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: What is the question?

Mrs HALL: Could whomever you send look at the history of the correspondence with the minister's office over probably the last eight months, I guess? The people at the school are concerned that they are falling between the gaps. It is not classified as an asset of the school but they are being told that they must close off some of the playground equipment, and this raises legal obligations if something goes wrong.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: On the first point, the member referred to a press release in February that mentioned playgrounds. That was in relation to the \$17 million targeted asset program, and the line in the press release reads '\$17 million over three years to upgrade the worst'; and it goes through a number of categories. So that is very targeted, and it has been targeted on need. We will consider all those issues once the officer who goes out to the school comes back with the information.

Ms CICCARELLO: I refer to Budget Paper 4 Volume 2 pages 8.5 and 8.11. What initiatives is the government introducing to extend ICT provision to state schools?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: There have been 30 ICT teachers appointed across the state's teaching districts to provide further ICT courses for teachers. They are known as ICT coaches, and will be based within districts. Notably, they will spend a good portion of their time on the road, so to speak, travelling to schools in the area for which they are responsible. The idea of putting these skilled coaches into a mobile environment is to ensure that all schools have person-to-person access to ICT training. The person-to-person aspect of training is important, particularly for country schools, which obviously have more difficulty in accessing training than Adelaide-based schools. The purpose of the coaches is to work with teachers to ensure that they get the assistance they need, particularly to keep abreast of changing technology and software use. Each coach is equipped with a laptop computer. They will deliver training to help teachers become increasingly competent users of information and communication technologies.

The content of the courses will be learning to use the internet and will consist of 10 hours of face-to-face training. Participants will be encouraged to spend an additional 10 hours on site-based activities (reading or researching), including an online component. The courses will consist of a series of workshops run as four sessions of 2½ hours, or by negotiation with the participants in the districts to suit the needs of individual participants. The workshop materials (a set of CD and web-based resources) will be provided to each participant, and each school in the state will be entitled to have 40 per cent of their staff attend these courses some time in the next four years. Once again, the aim is to improve and offer further professional development in the ICT area.

Mr HANNA: I have a series of questions, which I will read into the record, for the minister to take on notice, if she would be so kind. My questions are:

1. When will government schools go to a unified local management system, and what changes will that involve?
2. Is there a penalty on schools that have built up funds in their SASIF account? I say that because the amount in that account is a criterion for allocation of computing subsidies in the next round for computer upgrades.
3. Does the minister acknowledge that the amounts in SASIF accounts are mostly committed funds and, therefore, the media got it wrong to suggest that those surpluses are too large?
4. Are the administrative network file servers in schools a priority for upgrading?
5. Will there be a common approach across schools in relation to management of email within schools, and is Outlook or Dingo, or some other system, preferred?
6. Will resources for additional bandwidth for secondary schools be provided to facilitate e-learning?

7. Will there be any support for the establishment of home-based web access for learning and self-assessment via school web sites?

8. Does the department support the International Computer Drivers Licence (ICDL) and its implementation in schools? If so, how, and, if not, why not?

9. Does the government decision to provide funds in respect of the Brighton High choir, which had to return to Australia en route to China due to the SARS scare, provide a precedent for other trips which need to be cancelled due to international emergencies?

10. Is there money in this year's budget for the removal of unwanted transportable buildings? I understand that there has been a tender process for that, and transportables across a whole range of schools will be removed as part of the one contract. I am particularly concerned about the situation at Dover Gardens Primary and Seaview High Schools.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I cannot remember all the questions—

The CHAIRMAN: Hansard will kindly provide a copy.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE:—but I will attempt to answer them all. One question related to the computer subsidy scheme and penalisation to schools, according to their SASIF account. While I believe there may have been a communication or discussion about taking into consideration SASIF balances with the computer subsidy scheme, that is not what occurred in the end.

Mr HANNA: Thank you.

Ms CHAPMAN: Given your indication, sir, to allow the previous speaker to table his balance of questions on notice, I indicate that I will also have a number of questions after the afternoon tea break.

Additional Departmental Adviser:

Ms M. Klass, Office Manager.

Ms CHAPMAN: In light of the fact that we are now well into the last part, I have only four questions and I am happy to read them in. The minister can take them on notice. I refer to the 2002-03 highlights on page 8.5. How does the government propose to improve global budget mechanisms and will the minister explain why there is a drop of over \$150 000 in payments to schools and preschools to year 12 plus? Has there been a reduction in enrolments in preschools to year 12 plus from the 2002 academic year to the 2003 academic year and, if so, how many and what is the estimated further reduction?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Will the honourable member repeat the part about \$150 000?

The CHAIRMAN: The minister can take the question on notice.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I have the option of answering any question asked.

Ms CHAPMAN: Will the minister explain why there is a drop of over \$150 000 in payments to schools and preschools to year 12 plus? Has there been a reduction in enrolments in preschools to year 12 plus from the 2002 academic year to the 2003 academic year and, if so, how many and what is the estimated further reduction for the commencement of the 2004 academic year?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The part of the question on which I would like clarification is the claim that there has been a reduction of \$150 000. From where does that come?

Ms CHAPMAN: The Treasurer has identified new formatting—rather than outputs into programs—and the

expenditure allocated for programs is now in categories of preschool, reception to year 2, years 3 to 7, 8 to 10, and 11 to 12 plus. The addition of those for the budget year relative to the current estimate year is the basis of those calculations.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Will the honourable member detail exactly how she got that figure?

Ms CHAPMAN: I refer to pages 8.8 to 8.13, net cost of sub-program.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The bottom line?

Ms CHAPMAN: Correct—each of those divisions for the 2003-04 year, relative to the 2002-03 estimated result. If you add up the five categories the attendances for 2001-02 total 192 047; for 2002-03 it is 189 140; and the total for the sub-programs for 2003-04 for each of those five divisions as against the total of the five sub-programs for the estimated result 2002-03, on my estimate is a \$150 000 drop.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: In each category, with the net cost of the sub-programs, the 2003-04 target is greater than the 2002-03 estimated result, so how does the honourable member possibly get a reduction?

Ms CHAPMAN: I do not have my original notes here so I will check the years for the minister and give more detailed information so she knows exactly what we are comparing. For 2003-04 for R to 2, 3 to 7, 8 to 10, and 11 to 12, not including preschool for obvious reasons, there is a total of \$1 314 574. For the previous year, which was presented in a different format, the total for reception to year 12 (which was in two sections) was a total of \$1 472 008.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: You mean the previous year as in the previous budget papers?

Ms CHAPMAN: Yes, last year's budget. You have changed the format.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: It is not only a change of format but a whole change of categorisation of budget figures. In the activity of splitting the Department of Education, Training and Employment into parts, one of which is now in the Department of Education and Children's Services, the budget has been built up from its base and as a consequence of that the claims that the member for Bragg has made are not comparing apples with apples at all. This is an important aspect to note because the honourable member has been out there in her press release and budget speech and all over the place claiming that there is a decrease of some \$150 000 in global budgets. Now I see where she got it. The honourable member gave this amount right down to the last dollar in her press releases. Anyone looking at the budget papers will understand that all these figures are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars. So, quite clearly, it is not a figure derived from these budget papers.

If we refer to the papers in 2003-04 Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, pages 8.9 to 8.13, which are the tables to which the honourable member was just referring, we find that in every category the target for 2003-04 in those net costs of subprograms is greater than the estimated result in 2002-03. In the budget papers that do compare apples with apples, it is quite clear that there is no reduction on this item.

The other point for the member to note is that the net cost of the subprogram does not equal the global budget. So, the claim in the member's press release, and the claim that she has been making in parliament, is false. Going around the countryside, trying to make schools believe that there is a very specific reduction in schools' global budgets in this budget is quite mischievous, particularly when, in attempting to promote some credibility in this figure, the honourable member gives a figure down to the nearest dollar which, quite

clearly, could not have been derived from these budget papers. So, perhaps the honourable member would like to acknowledge that what she has been saying publicly is not the case.

Ms CHAPMAN: I will add to my question. The minister may wish to indicate what increase in this year's budget she claims is for total global budgets for schools in South Australia, if there is one.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The member's claim has been shown not to be right. Perhaps she should have the integrity to admit that her claim is not correct.

Ms CHAPMAN: That is not the position that I take, minister.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Why?

Ms CHAPMAN: I am not here to answer questions. Unfortunately, the minister has the chequebook, and we know what damage has been done in that regard. I am here to ask the questions; if the minister has a different view, she is entitled to put that, and I accept that our views are different. I simply lay my question on the table, and if the minister has a different view she is entitled to express that.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: It is an admirable thing to admit a mistake, member for Bragg.

Ms CHAPMAN: Thank you, minister, for your advice. I will go to my next question. How does the minister propose to increase the occupational health and safety performance across the organisation in 2003-04? How much has been allocated for that purpose? How does the minister propose to implement targeted assessment programs in schools, and will schools in any way be prevented from continuing their assessment management plans, as previously submitted by schools and approved by the department? If any schools have been redirected to spend funds marked for maintenance projects, what are they, and why?

When will the pilot for a corporate data warehouse, announced by the government, be implemented? What amount has been allocated in the 2003-04 year for the same? On locally managed sites (in particular, the announcement of the government), how does the minister propose to improve service delivery to locally managed sites and at what cost in the 2003-04 year?

On the transfer of teachers from contract to permanent, how many more contract educators are proposed to be converted to permanent placements in the 2003-04 year and at what cost? What is the organisational development framework proposed to be implemented, and at what cost, in the 2003-04 year?

On the priority schools (with a capital 'P', as defined by the government), which schools have been identified as priority schools in the 2003-04 year? Will there be any addition or change to those schools in the 2003-04 year? On school security, what amount has been allocated—

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I raise a point of order. Other opposition shadow ministers have asked approximately six omnibus questions. This shadow minister has put an awfully large number of questions on notice. If this is to continue for the remaining five minutes, because obviously quite significant resources will be required to answer this huge number of questions, I ask that I be released from the requirement to report within the time frame.

Ms CHAPMAN: I am happy to agree to that, as I was last year. This is exactly the same procedure we followed at that time. When I have concluded my questions, I am happy for the minister to indicate the time frame that she thinks she will require to answer them.

The CHAIRMAN: The time frame is an indicative one.

Ms CHAPMAN: Yes, I appreciate that. On the last occasion, I agreed that it was appropriate for the minister to have extra time for her staff to attend to that.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: There are a lot of questions.

Ms CHAPMAN: What amount has been allocated in the 2003-04 year to upgrade school security arising out of the audit undertaken in the 2002-03 year? Which schools will receive upgrades? The total number of attendances of children at government schools in 2001-02, from preschool to year 12, was 192 047; in 2002-03, it is estimated to be 189 140—a drop of nearly 3 000 students. Which of the years (either 2001-02 or 2002-03) incorporates the actual attendances as at May 2002? As at May 2003, how many children are attending from preschool to year 12?

On the student number decrease, the total number of students in each of the categories from reception to year 12 is not disclosed. The notation explains this as follows: 'Not available: new statistical model being developed'. When is it expected that the minister will know how many students are expected to be attending schools in the 2003-04 year? I assume that it is a reference to May 2004.

As to the dollars spent per child, a press release dated 29 May 2003 states:

In fact, the amount spent on each school student in South Australia has risen by \$439 to \$8 902 per year.

It also states:

This is an increase of at least 2.9 per cent in real terms.

I note that the minister made a similar assertion today in her opening statement. If the minister is unable to identify the number of students attending from reception to year 12 plus in 2003-04, from what financial information has this calculation been extracted? Is it a comparison between the 2001-02 year and the 2002-03 year?

Given the continuing trend of declining enrolments in SA government schools (a reference I take from the budget paper at page 8.13) and the increasing number of students going to non-government schools, what action is the minister taking, other than to prevent establishment of a new independent school at Port Augusta, to address this issue?

Will the minister confirm what funding, if any, has been provided for the distance education supervisor training program? Funding was provided by the previous government in 2001-02; the first group commenced training in mid 2002, and there was no new intake at the beginning of this year. I refer the minister to correspondence from the Isolated Children Parents' Association which remains unanswered. Will the minister advise what has been done to reduce the delay between work achieved, billing, and cost recovery by the department to schools? That is obviously requesting—

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: My watch says that it is 5 o'clock.

Ms CHAPMAN: My watch says that it is two minutes to 5, but I am happy for the Chairman to make an adjudication.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The member has been going for five minutes, and I think that the number of questions being put on notice is pretty unprecedented.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the member have any more?

Ms CHAPMAN: In this category, sir, I have another 12 questions.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: In this category, none of those questions has been on administered items—none!

Ms CHAPMAN: All those projects have been announced as highlights by this government in the document on page 8.5.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: None of those questions has been on what was timetabled for this session—none!

The CHAIRMAN: The member can put the questions on notice. She is not denied that opportunity. I do not know whether other members have any questions relating to the administered items. I have one that I want to raise in relation to year 12 assessment.

Ms CHAPMAN: May I suggest that I ask four questions in this session, and then you, Mr Chairman, will have the opportunity to ask your question.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the member ask those questions quickly?

Ms CHAPMAN: Will the minister advise why school-based apprenticeships for child care cannot be undertaken by government agencies under her control, particularly as child care in the country is a growth area of great need. In regional areas, government agencies are major providers of child care. Does the minister propose to cause the non-government schools' planning policy to be reviewed? If so, who will undertake the review and what provision for cost of the same has been made in the 2003-04 budget?

On child protection, what funding has been made available, if any, to facilitate non-government schools to access services of obtaining police checks on prospective employees at no cost to the applicant school, or is it intended to remain restricted to government schools, that is, free of cost, and their attention in respect of child protection? On the question of funding, will the minister confirm that non-government schools will receive their 85 per cent of funding in the 2003-04 year in July this year, and if not, why not? I have one matter for St Patrick's Special School. Has the government made any provision for children with disabilities attending non-government schools to assist in their transport costs, and if not, why not?

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to raise some issues relating to year 12. I have met with Dr Jan Keightley, who heads SSABSA, and raised some concerns with her. One relates to the stress experienced by many students doing year 12. I do not advocate that it should be stress-free, but it is ironic that year 12 is often more stressful than university itself when year 12 is the basis for university entrance and gives rise to the tertiary entrance score (TER). I ask that that issue be addressed in terms of offering some assistance, such as a help line. I believe that is the sort of thing that SSABSA is looking at and I know of many cases first-hand where year 12 students are under incredible stress.

Another issue relating to year 12 is the way in which assessments are carried out. Given that the system has moved away from being exam-based, a lot of parents are now doing year 12 because they are helping their children. I do not criticise them for that because I would do exactly the same thing, but the question arises as to the integrity of the year 12 assessment process, given that much of the assignment preparation is done outside the school environment, outside an exam environment. I am aware that Victoria has taken steps to address that aspect.

A related issue is that, if people can afford it, they can get tutors and they can put their child in a special program during vacations. However, if a child comes from a poor family, they do not have that opportunity, so there is no level playing field in terms of undertaking year 12 and having the opportunity to increase the tertiary entrance ranking.

Another point relates to English as a second language. If a student is competent in a foreign language because their parents have come from a non-English speaking background,

they can do an exam in that and claim English as a second language, even though in English they may be as fluent as any other student. The consequence of that is that such students can boost their score, vis-a-vis other students, when in reality they are not genuine non-English speakers. They may have grown up in a family where they have access to a foreign language, they can nominate that as their main language, do very well in it, and undertake English as a second language, where the expectation is a lot lower, and still do well because they are a very competent English speaker, as competent as anyone else in the community.

I am concerned with the way in which the current year 12 programs are offered and are operating, and I ask the minister to consider undertaking a review of the process. I know that Dr Keightley does not favour a review and believes in incremental adjustment, but I think that some serious issues have resulted from the way in which year 12 has evolved in South Australia, and it is time some of those matters were addressed.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: My response in general to all three questions is that the department is focusing attention on year 12, what is offered at year 12 and the way it is offered, with a view to anticipating improvement in a whole range of aspects for students into the future. In response to the first question, I am happy to have discussions with Janet Keightley, the Chief Executive of the Senior Secondary Assessment Board, on that matter.

The Chairman has raised some significant issues regarding year 12 and how it is provided here in South Australia in comparison with the approaches taken interstate, and in general terms my departmental officers and I are paying some attention to those matters at this point.

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

Department for Administrative and Information Services,
\$119 011 000

Administered Items for the Department of Administrative
and Information Services, \$5 254 000

Witness:

The Hon. T.G. Roberts, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation and Minister for Correctional Services.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr G. Foreman, Chief Executive, Department for Administrative and Information Services.

Mr B. Miller, Executive Director, State Procurement and Business Development.

Ms J. Ferguson, Director, Policy, Planning and Community Services.

Mr P. Buckskin, Chief Executive, Department for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to Appendix D, page 2, in the Budget Statement, and Part 6, pages 6.1 to 6.36, Volume 2 of the Portfolio Statements.

Membership:

Mr Goldworthy substituted for Mr Scalzi.

Ms Kotz substituted for Ms Chapman.

Ms Bedford substituted for Mr O'Brien.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the minister wish to make an opening statement?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I have a short introductory statement. Once again, I take this opportunity to place on the public record my pleasure in having ministerial responsibility for Aboriginal affairs and reconciliation, and the honour of representing the interests of Aboriginal people within and on behalf of the state government of South Australia.

Major steps have been made in the past 12 months to ensure that Aboriginal specific policies, programs and service delivery are revitalised and reinvigorated. At the recent successful reconciliation conference, the Premier launched the new Doing it Right policy framework, in which the government provides commitment to making a positive difference to the lives of Aboriginal people. It formalises our intention to work closely and in partnership with communities to overcome social and economic disadvantage that can no longer be tolerated.

The complex, interrelated and often cyclical problems facing Aboriginal people in South Australia, such as high unemployment, poor health and high crime and imprisonment rates, require concerted action across many fronts on priorities agreed collaboratively with Aboriginal communities—and, Mr Chairman, as you would know, it is not only in South Australia; it is right across Australia. Measures for tackling family violence, drug and alcohol dependency, substance abuse and other symptoms of community dysfunction need an urgent and centrally coordinated response, supported at the highest levels of government and the public sector. Decision making and priority setting must be fully inclusive of Aboriginal views, opinions and participation.

The social injustices that Aboriginal people continue to experience are acknowledged, and we recognise that too many Aboriginal people come into contact with the criminal justice system. During the past 10 years, imprisonment rates in South Australia have been at least 15 times greater than those in the non-Aboriginal population. Aboriginal people die at a much younger age than non-Aboriginal people, and Aboriginal unemployment is high and education participation low.

The Doing it Right policy is a challenge to all ministers and their department heads to make a difference and to change previously accepted outcomes for Aboriginal people in this state. South Australian departments will be required to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of their programs based on the outcomes experienced by Aboriginal communities. Public servants will need to become culturally aware and deliver culturally appropriate services. It is imperative that the Aboriginal affairs portfolio adopts a strong leadership role, a role that engages with Aboriginal leadership and the communities that they represent. It is essential that working partnerships be developed and strengthened with peak Aboriginal bodies such as ATSIC, the Indigenous Land Council, the commonwealth government and local government, and that a joint effort is focused on providing a high level of quality services that meet the needs of Aboriginal families.

There has been a determined effort to reshape and reinvigorate the department to provide leadership and engagement since the appointment of Peter Buckskin as Chief Executive. I am extremely confident that, under this new leadership, the new Department for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation (DAARE) will continue to break new ground

and promote and engage the leaders of the Aboriginal community. Leading DAARE, Mr Buckskin will be an important catalyst in successfully engaging the Aboriginal communities, and I know that he is committed to building cooperative and successful relationships. Other champions of Doing it Right and the government's new approach to the Aboriginal affairs portfolio generally will be enlisted from within communities to build the momentum for change.

The process embarked on within the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands will continue, and we are now looking to commerce working in this way with other remote, regional and urban communities. The services provided on the AP lands needed a renewed commitment and a new approach to tackle a health, education, housing, employment, substance abuse and infrastructure profile that would simply not be accepted by the wider community.

Governance issues on the lands are also being addressed. The current Chairman and executive have shown a major improvement in leadership and cohesiveness. Indeed, this executive has worked (and I am confident will continue to work) in partnership with the government to engage Anangu Pitjantjatjara. Unquestionably, this will progress initiatives in the region. The Council of Australian Governments has also recognised the urgent need to address the myriad issues on the lands by agreeing to establish the COAG reconciliation trial in the region. The commonwealth government supports the cross government tier 1 approach to coordination and cooperation on the AP lands, which lends further weight to the state government's approach. The new Department for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation (DAARE) has begun the process of changing its focus and direction. This is reflected in the development of the Doing it Right policy framework and the DAARE charter. DAARE is engaging with the state government through cross agency coordination at a commonwealth level with local government and non-for-profit organisations. The budget provides new funding of \$11.96 million over four years, with \$2.4 million earmarked for 2003-04 funding for cross agency initiatives on the AP lands.

A clear message has been sent to the community that this government is committed to Aboriginal affairs and reconciliation. I intend to make sure that this commitment is followed by action and tangible outcomes, and I look forward to the discussions and the questioning within this forum.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the lead speaker wish to make a statement?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: No, sir. My first question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2. Some 15 months ago, the Aboriginal affairs portfolio had a budget of \$12.43 million for the 2001-02 year. The actual expenditure from that budget was underspent by \$2.488 million. Last year's budget shows an allocated budget of \$10.290 million. The estimated result shows an underspend of \$138 000—overall and, for 15 months, a huge cut of \$2.626 million. This year's budget provides only an extra \$303 000. What happened to the \$2.323 million cut to this portfolio, and what programs were cut commensurate with \$2.323 million?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I will pass that question to my officers.

Mr FOREMAN: The main component and difference is commonwealth money that comes into the department, and the difference in that between the two years that flow through the budget. There is a \$1 million drop in commonwealth funding going through the budget between the two years.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Is that the completed answer—purely commonwealth funds, you are saying?

Mr FOREMAN: That is the main component. We will provide the full detail of the other components.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: In Budget Paper 3, page 2.19, under 'Savings initiatives', the minister appears to have removed funding of over \$400 000 for AP roads over four years. This funding would provide road maintenance. Agency operating costs have been cut by \$1.58 million over four years. Essential services have been cut by \$526 000 over four years. Landholding Authority Coalition funds have been cut by \$325 000 over four years, and the revised telecommunications contract takes another \$20 000. A total of some \$2.852 million has been cut from the essential services portfolio for the next four years.

Minister, I do not know whether I should ask you whether you have an essential services portfolio, but these are huge cuts from a significant area of service provision for Aboriginal communities. I would be most interested to hear the minister's explanation that he will place on the public record, particularly for the benefit of Aboriginal communities on the lands.

Mr FOREMAN: The savings initiatives have been undertaken by the department as part of overall savings being sought across a number of departments. They need to be read in the context of the additional moneys that are also provided for the department for operating initiatives that are listed. Also, one must take into account the additional moneys that are being provided to the department, particularly for the AP lands areas, as a result of an initiative from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (which the minister mentioned in his opening statement) of \$11.96 million over four years.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: As a supplementary question, I have read the budget papers and I understand them. I know where the extra money has been reprioritised. I also understand that health, education and other areas will receive different types of funding from different areas. The point is that all of what we have here, under this savings initiative, as far as I can see (unless the minister can tell me otherwise), is in the area of essential services. You have roads, water, sewerage and power. These are not health cuts. These are not education cuts. This is not extra money. This is to provide essential services to 18 communities on the AP lands involving a population of over 3 000 people on 103 000 square kilometres. How on earth would anyone consider it necessary to make these types of cuts? It almost totally obliterates the area of essential services.

Ms Bedford interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: They were already there. That is why it is called a cut.

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: There will be some budget funding programming running through other budgets. In relation to my own budget, in addition to the 2003-04 budget, there is additional funding for the following initiatives: almost a half a million dollars over four years for reconciliation; \$412 000 to assist reunions (which is not an infrastructure issue: it is a social welfare issue); and additional funding of nearly \$800 000 over four years to ensure the introduction and operation of licensed electrical operators who are working on infrastructure programs but not directly related to infrastructure.

You certainly need safe operation of electrical power plants and equipment, which was clearly shown with the death of a young Aboriginal person from electrocution about two years ago. Licensing requirements needed extra funding

with which we have come to terms and there are ongoing funding programs for the electrical services that are required, and they will be rolled out over time. The sun farm activities still continue and, over time, there will be prioritisation of road funding.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: The minister is well aware that in 2001 I set up a cross-section of public officers to work on a strategy to address the significant issue of petrol sniffing on the AP lands. This task force was chaired by me and included the ATSI Commissioner and officers from the Attorney-General's Department, SAPOL, Department of Education, Human Services and Ageing, federal government representation and officers from DOSAA. An interim strategy was put in place whereby two five-day police patrols were to be deployed for a six-week period during what was determined to be the most vulnerable time—January/February 2002—'vulnerable' being assessed as the most at risk period for potential domestic violence, enhanced by substance abuse, including petrol sniffing. An evaluation of the strategy was undertaken at the end of that period. The election overtook that process and the new minister was appointed. Will the minister advise what action has been taken since that time on that significant issue? Is the task force still current, and has funding been allocated to implement any strategies formed by the minister?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: Petrol sniffing is a key issue which we are addressing through a range of initiatives across government. The responsibility does not lie only with my department but certainly with health and, as the honourable member has pointed out, the police, etc. Progress is being made in relation to petrol sniffing. The AP Lands Intergovernmental Interagency Collaboration Committee (commonly referred to as Tier 1) was formed in August 2000, as the honourable member indicated. In December 2002 members of Tier 1 agreed to the establishment of a series of Tier 2 subcommittees to be championed and actioned by senior executives of Tier 1 on various priority issues.

The working groups identified were community health and wellbeing, arts and culture, economic development, community safety, education and training and the setting up of a petrol sniffing task force. All these other issues may appear not to be related to petrol sniffing. Prevention is part of the key, but dealing with early sniffers and chronic sniffers is a task that governments find difficult to deal with.

The findings of the Coroner's inquests into deaths that resulted from the inhalation of petrol fumes made a number of recommendations that require a multifaceted approach. These recommendations have been taken into consideration and, in fact, were discussed in detail between the Coroner and Mr Buckskin, Chief Executive Officer of the Department for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, held on 21 February 2003, and will be actioned through the AP Executive's vision and Tier 1.

At the national level the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) recently agreed to undertake further work to advance reconciliation and address the social and economic disadvantages experienced by many indigenous Australians. As part of this commitment, COAG agreed to trial a whole-of-government approach in up to 10 communities with the aim of improving the way governments interact with each other and with other communities. We are trying to ensure that the problems of the communities that move between Western Australia, Northern Territory and South Australia are addressed using the integrated approach of talking to the

commonwealth, Northern Territory and Western Australian governments.

The Premier has provided endorsement for the AP lands to be South Australia's site for the trial, with reports on progress to be part of the report on reconciliation to COAG. This was formally announced through a joint statement between the AP Executive and the state and commonwealth governments on Thursday 22 May 2003 at Umuwa on the AP lands. The announcement was a culmination of the first stages of consultation by state, commonwealth and ATSIC representatives and took place on the AP lands and included a visit to the lands by myself as well as my commonwealth counterpart to discuss issues of priority and to continue the improved working relationship between all key stakeholders.

Through this trial we are already seeing improved communications between state and commonwealth, and a formal shared responsibility agreement is currently being developed for signing between the state and commonwealth governments, the AP Executive and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission.

Additional state government financial commitment to addressing the problems suffered by people in the AP lands is evident in the recent state government allocation of new funding totalling \$11.96 million over four years with \$2.4 million of this to be spent during 2003-04. Improved service delivery and a greater government presence on the AP lands will allow for a more concentrated on-ground effort to address the range of issues contributing to the current petrol sniffing epidemic. \$650 000 of this funding will specifically address the problems of petrol sniffing through respite care and management programs during 2003 and 2004, and further information on petrol sniffing and management strategies in the AP lands was recently made available through the University of South Australia study into the matter. The final report, commissioned by DAARE at a cost of \$50 000, is currently being examined by the Tier 1 committee.

So, there is a continuation of the work being done from the early stages. It has advanced to a point where South Australia is not the only state that is involved in these activities, and the department has been able to coordinate cross-agency activities that will present us with a platform to come to terms with a whole range of problems, including community health, economic development and education and training, which are keys to dealing long-term with the problem of petrol sniffing being taken up particularly by young people.

So, there is no silver bullet and there is no single individual action that will stop or interfere with the processes that are in place at the moment, but the well-being of community is the key to what we are trying to advance at the moment—that is, to get the governance questions right and to form partnerships between government—commonwealth and state governments and Anangu—to take ownership of the problems and the programs that we intend to put in place. Governance is a key question that relates to the taking of ownership and responsibility, and we in South Australia—

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: And for the last 15 months you have done nothing at all. That is the answer to the question. We are still at a jumping off point.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Newland is out of order by commenting. The minister has the call.

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I think I have explained that it is difficult to put in place programs that you are able to get instant action and activities from.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Especially if you have no money.

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: There are programs being put in place that have a direct impact on people's lives and can make changes, but the first challenge was to build a cooperative approach through the communities to take ownership of the problems. Petrol sniffing has been a problem in this state and in Australia for the last 20 years or 25 years. Every government that has tried to deal with it has tackled it by way of integration of our own governance and the determination of our own and commonwealth bureaucracies to come up with programs that provide opportunities of choice and participation within community—that is, the challenges that we have to deal with are to eliminate poverty, boredom and to protect culture and heritage, and these are not single issue problems. They are very complex problems.

I think the member made reference to policing. There has been increased activity in relation to policing but policing itself is not an issue that will deal with the problem. Similarly, with courts. We are talking with the Western Australian, Northern Territory and commonwealth governments about some of the judicial difficulties and are cooperating to get the best possible outcomes, and we are pursuing them as a government in cooperation with the other states and across agencies—health, education, housing and other agencies that need to be aware of the problems and to be able to deal with them. We want Anangu to take ownership of those difficulties so that we can work together in partnership and not leave them on their own to deal with these problems.

Mr HANNA: I am glad to hear the answers given in estimates this week by the Minister for Police and the Minister for Health, and they have specific budget lines to deal with problems on the AP lands. I am concerned that I cannot see anything in your budget to deal with those second tier issues—the categories which you read out a moment ago that are dealt with by the Tier 2 committees, if you like (that is, the background issues around community development, etc.) So that there is money going into health and there is money going into policing, but what about those other categories which you have mentioned? And how does the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation drive progress in those areas if he does not have money to do it?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: The first activity that I was encouraged to do by the cross-agency partners—that is, health and other bodies—was to chair Tier 1, which allowed the minister's office to drive the initiatives through DAARE with the cooperation of the other departments. So that when their budgets were being drawn up, Tier 1 was able to coordinate the priorities of the other departments (health and others) and drive the initiatives and when they were framing their budgets they prioritised their budget process to the tune that DAARE and my office through Tier 1 had been able to prioritise. So, it is a cooperative effort, when you see the budget lines, for support within the AP lands, and it has come through my office and through DAARE. I ask Mr Buckskin to supplement that.

Mr BUCKSKIN: Thank you, minister. I think the answer is that we have a more integrated and coordinated approach. This year, the government formulated a multilateral bid to the Treasury and government for consideration, and, as the minister pointed out, we are fortunate to have about \$2.4 million. Again, Aboriginal Affairs is not just about new money: it is about better coordination and better integration of the work we do, and having a really good look at the way we currently deliver services to ensure that our people are better targeted and better skilled in the way we deliver those services.

People ask what else we are doing in the area other than addressing health and education. With economic development, we know that the Department of Primary Industry has always been keen to do work on the lands in terms of exploration and mining. Through their current outlays, and the work that they do, I believe it is the responsibility of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation to work with the governance of the AP executive to ensure that they are being engaged with that department about the work they want to do in the economic development area. The Department of Tourism will also be working under tier 2 to develop strategies to enable the arts industry and other parts of ecotourism on the lands identified by the AP executive as areas of economic development that they wish to pursue.

In the areas of art and culture, they also work hand in hand with economic development to develop economic strategies for those communities. As Chairman of the petrol sniffing task force, I have been trying to ensure that there is an integrated approach across the other areas. Every subgroup has work to do developing their actions, in consultation with Anangu.

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: We also thought it necessary, very early on, to put in place an executive officer (Mr Rod Williams) to support the AP executive. Mr Williams has a background not only of working with communities to bring about a unity of purpose but also of encouraging education, training and opportunity. He has a valuable role up there building a program for the AP to be able to examine where their future lies and to get their governance questions to suit what would be regarded as putting together programs for better choice and opportunity for the future. So, it is slowly putting together the building bricks that were not in place before.

As I have said, we will not see instant change to the circumstances in which people live their life in that remote region of the state. However, over time, there will be changes that will certainly impact on the communities. We are trying to deal with the difficult problems of dysfunction, petrol sniffing, drug and alcohol abuse and violence within the communities by engaging the communities in a way in which they feel confident, and putting forward solutions with a cultural flavour that we are able to assist them to put in place.

Ms BREUER: Minister, I want to talk about the AP lands new funding initiatives. I refer the minister to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 6.7—Program 1. It is noted that one of the government's objectives is to support the state's landholding authorities and the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of government services aimed at improving the social wellbeing of Aboriginal people.

The minister has talked a lot today about the petrol sniffing problem, but will he provide details of what the government is doing to assist and improve the community's capacity and the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people, particularly those living in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara or AP lands?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I thank the honourable member for her question, and note her keen interest as the local member for the region. I thank her for assisting me in finding my way around some of those remote parts.

Over 20 per cent of South Australia's land mass is administered by the three Aboriginal landholding authorities on behalf of the Aboriginal community. Vast areas of these lands are in remote areas, making the provision of necessary resources and services, both human and physical, difficult and expensive. I believe that we as a government can have a

positive impact on addressing the longstanding problems in the area of education and training, employment, infrastructure, health and general wellbeing. I referred to those matters earlier, in relation to a plan to deal with the single issues.

The continuing disintegration of the family and cultural values of the people living on the AP lands has been of particular concern for many years. Since becoming the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, I have worked with the community leaders to identify priorities for the AP lands and its people and to build stronger relationships with government agencies. A clearer understanding of the issues and improved working relationships have resulted in the development of the AP pilot initiative, which is a joint AP executive and cross agency approach to improving the health and overall wellbeing of the AP people.

This type of collaborative approach to regional capacity building will be adopted in other areas of the state through a number of 'action zones', a new approach which we have developed and which forms a key component of the recently launched 'Doing it Right' Aboriginal affairs policy framework. We do not have difficulties with communities only in the remote areas: it applies in the regional and the metropolitan areas as well.

The government has given high priority in this budget to addressing the inequalities of living standards faced by those people living on the remote lands. The government is addressing the inquest findings of the State Coroner into the deaths of three Aboriginal people on the lands caused by the inhalation of petrol fumes.

New funding of \$11.96 million over four years is targeted to the AP lands, through a multifaceted and better coordinated approach to service delivery, and we are working with AP to enable that to happen. An increase in a permanent government service presence on the lands will allow a more concentrated on-ground effort to address the range of issues contributing to the petrol sniffing epidemic, which is one of the key issues that has been lacking in the past.

The new funding initiatives include the establishment on the AP lands of a regional office, a respite care facility for service providers and associated staff housing (the absence of appropriate housing has also added to our difficulties); the provision of primary health prevention programs and general wellbeing services; an increase in community safety by expanding the police presence in the area; and the introduction of licensed electrical operators on the lands.

New funding has been made available over the next four years through the recent state budget for these initiatives, with significant investment in the various areas scheduled for 2003-04; specifically:

- \$1 000 000 is allocated for primary prevention programs to improve the health outcomes for Anangu families;
- \$650 000 is allocated for a regional office/respite care facility for service providers dealing with petrol sniffing issues;
- \$500 000 is allocated to address the chronic shortage of accommodation available on the AP lands for service providers;
- \$151 000 is allocated for the introduction of electrical licensed operators; and,
- \$250 000 is allocated to increase community safety on the lands through the provision of a greater police presence.

So, you can see that we are trying, through the budget process, to deal with a whole range of areas that are impacting adversely on the communities within the AP lands.

Obviously, we would like more funding—more funding from every budget would help. However, we are dealing with a problem that has been with us for some considerable time. However, over time, we have to deal with these problems, and that is what the state government is dedicated to doing.

Ms CICCARELLO: I refer to Aboriginal heritage sites and refer the minister to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 6.8, under 'Performance commentary'. Will the minister explain how the government will enhance the administration of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988, including the determination of heritage sites, and will he also provide an example of how Aboriginal heritage sites have been protected yet allowed development to successfully proceed?

The HON. T.G. ROBERTS: The Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988 is the cornerstone to the protection and preservation of Aboriginal culture in South Australia. This landmark legislation contains key principles for inspecting and embracing Aboriginal people's cultural heritage. I am proud to say that the legislation was an initiative of the previous South Australian Labor government. The act makes provision for recording and registering of Aboriginal sites. It has mandatory provision for consultation with traditional owners in the wider Aboriginal community. It also has provisions ensuring certainty for landowners, developers and miners, which enable ministerial determinations to balance cultural preservation priorities with development opportunities. This does require a high level of goodwill and trust between the traditional owners, government and applicants for development. Development can proceed, even in cases where there may be an impact upon sites of some significance. However, it is important that the developer works within Aboriginal heritage parameters. The recent consideration relating to staff issues is a positive example of three parties working together to achieve common agreement.

The recent considerations relating to Starfish Hill are a positive example of three parties working together to achieve common agreement to the benefit of all concerned. A broad consultation process was undertaken following a request by Tarong Energy Corporation Limited to determine whether the area earmarked for the Starfish Hill wind farm project contained Aboriginal sites pursuant to the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988. Letters were sent to individuals and groups seeking submissions regarding the area, while a series of advertisements calling for submissions were placed in national, state and local newspapers. Two public meetings were also held. The Department for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation coordinated the process, and the State Aboriginal Heritage Committee provided advice and support.

The government is committed to taking a proactive approach to Aboriginal heritage issues by properly administering the act and by involving all parties, supporting sustainable development as well as providing strong support for the recognition and preservation of South Australia's unique cultural heritage. I welcome the positive approach taken by Tarong Energy Corporation in dealing with this issue, and other developers have acted in the same way. The company has shown that it is serious about Aboriginal heritage and by using the act was able to obtain the highest degree of certainty for both the company and the protection of Aboriginal heritage.

Another positive outcome in the process was the ability to add an additional 19 sites to the register of Aboriginal sites and objects. This was the first time in many years that sites had been added to the register. Management and maintenance

of the register is an important facility for the long-term protection and preservation of Aboriginal sites, and by entering the site on the register the Aboriginal community and developers can recognise their responsibilities in preserving the state's cultural heritage. In 2003-04 the South Australian government will further promote preservation of the state's Aboriginal culture and will work collaboratively with the Aboriginal community, heritage organisations, developers and primary industries to ensure that all parties understand their obligations and are able to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes under the auspices of the legislation.

The CHAIRMAN: In relation to the AP lands, obviously the people have a cultural connection going back probably 60 000 years. The minister highlighted the fact that there needed to be a focus on economic activity, and that is one of the keys in terms of developing tourism opportunities, pastoral activities and craft. A lot of good work happens with Batik. The question relates to the dilemma with regard to opening up those lands for tourism because the lands have special protection and that was meant to be a positive thing but in some ways has probably worked the other way. As a result of this budget do you have any particular aspects in relation to developing economic self-sufficiency for the people there as the first step towards giving them real control over their own destiny?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: The re-establishment of TAFE was one of our first priorities, which had not had a presence on the lands for some time. We found it necessary to put together education and training programs as a matter of priority in those areas where we could at least establish employment opportunities for young Anangu as soon as possible. The stores policy allowed us to do just that in relation to working through programs where we will be building up training and mentoring for the simple programs associated with stores keeping and nutrition, making sure that edible food at a reasonable price was being provided by these stores. Over the years the stores policies of the remote regions have worked in many cases against the communities. We have developed a stores policy and in conjunction with that we will be developing an employment policy associated with the stores policy.

The other areas where Anangu opportunities can present themselves is in the human services area, that is, teaching assistance to start with and hopefully encouraging young Anangu to raise their sights and horizons to become teachers in their own communities. Similarly with health we encourage them to provide at the earliest opportunity mentoring for nurses and health workers working in traditional health service delivery programs through the clinics but also to introduce what the AP want, which is its own health service programs, dealing with the traditional ways of healing. A combination of those opportunities will present employment opportunities for young Anangu and for those who are prepared to train and participate.

Environmental tourism, protection of culture and heritage, are other areas we have been able to talk to Anangu about. The traditional owners who were at first guarded about what their role and function would be if the lands were opened up are now asking us to provide them with support for, first, protection of their sacred sites and objects and their cultural business. We have been talking to the elders about the protection of cultural heritage but being able to show as well, for those who have been in the area (and I know that the former minister has spent time there), that the road system up there is not conducive to safe tourism.

The Hon. D.C. Kotz interjecting:

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: Roads are expensive and there needs to be collaboration with any prospective users up there.

Ms Bedford interjecting:

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: That is it—it has to be managed. The point the former minister made in relation to the transport of goods and services is an important one. There are employment opportunities that could avail themselves of the setting up of a reliable transport system guaranteeing that food, particularly fruit and vegetables, are on the shelves in a reasonable state. At the moment, in a lot of cases the stores do not have fresh fruit or vegetables, because the transport system is not reliable.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: Yes. So, we hope that some self-managed reliable transport system may be able to be set up. However, those discussions are in their infancy. Although savings have been identified in the area of the Aboriginal lands road maintenance program, \$643 000 will be spent on road improvements in 2003-04. As the former minister knows, one wild storm or storm event can leave government a bill of many millions of dollars to fix some of those roads.

Similarly, the infrastructure of electricity and sewerage is subject to damage (and quite severe damage) by storm and tempest, which cannot be predicted. However, we have to try to make the electrical services as reliable and as safe as we can and improve the sewerage works and water quality, and ensure that those who choose to live in the outstations or the homelands have reliable water and back-up electricity. The community faces many challenges.

We are talking to some of those people who will be involved in exploration and who may be interested in assisting government to integrate some of their programs with those of government. Those discussions are in their infancy. However, again it gets back to development at a rate that the communities can live with and participate in. Too often, service providers, by tender, move into the region and do the work that they have to do; and, as you, Mr Chairman, understand, no training programs are built into the tendering process which guarantee that young Anangu people are able to take opportunities that may present themselves with maintenance, building, housing programs, and so on. So, they are the challenges.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Some time ago, we talked about the petrol sniffing task force. At the media conference which launched that task force, the previous commissioner, Mr Brian Butler, raised some allegations that the problem of petrol sniffing had been made worse by government contractors and profiteers who, allegedly, bring in small bottles of petrol and sell them for \$50 each. He also alleged that pornography is brought into the Far North community. Has the minister taken any action to address these very serious allegations?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: The problems associated with the declaration of dry areas and what is commonly called 'grog running' have existed in the region for some considerable time. The present problems associated with drug abuse are prevalent. Petrol is being brought in, where communities have locks on their petrol bowsers, where they try to change over to diesel, and where communities are trying as hard as they can to keep petrol from being freely available. There are those who take the opportunity to bring in petrol at exorbitant prices and sell it to young people.

The police budget is not part of my responsibility as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation. In 2002-03, a special operation was set up by the police, who spent some considerable time on the lands and built their numbers up on a temporary basis. They stayed in DAARE accommodation and let it be known that the police presence was going to be stronger and that there was going to be a campaign against those who were bringing drugs, alcohol and petrol into the communities.

It was quite successful but, as soon as that police presence moves back into the metropolitan area, those who avail themselves of those programs move back in. So, at the moment, we are trying to increase the presence of police not only in Marla but also at Umuwa as well. We have a commitment from the police budget for one permanent house in Umuwa for one permanent police officer.

We will be discussing an increased presence with AP and where they would like those police officers to be placed. However, we also need assistance from AP to supply support officers for those police officers who will be working in a very difficult area.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: The minister will also be aware that the very extensive and planned maintenance program for water and effluent infrastructure in the remote Aboriginal communities of South Australia has previously been managed by DOSAA. I am not quite sure who does it now, or whether it is the same organisation with the new name. The essential services team of employees obviously requires substantial recurrent funding, which is provided usually by grants from the commonwealth and the state government.

However, I want to ask a question related to one of the essential service areas. As the minister knows, the water issues for the lands will continue to become a matter of significance for Aboriginal communities. Has the minister read the report advising that investigation of the internal conditions of bore casings, through videoing, found that many bores with steel casings, upon which communities are quite dependent for water, are severely degraded and require attention?

Will the minister advise the committee what program and funding has been provided over the past 15 months to deal with these significant issues on the lands, or indeed any program that he might have in place for this current year?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: Water is an essential commodity in that area, where the temperature gets up to some 55 degrees during summer. It is an ongoing problem, and it is not only the volume of water but also the quality of water that is a problem. Continuous testing takes place, but the supply issue is a constant problem with which we have to deal. DAARE and ATSIC are jointly assisting to improve the delivery of water and effluent services to the remote communities. An additional \$1.8 million was allocated over four years to the water and effluent upgrade as part of last year's budget. The 2002-03 funding was \$214 000. The amount of \$463 000 has been allocated for 2003-04.

Contracts are now in place with SA Water in which I am sure that a high level of service is delivered, particularly with respect to water quality testing. Extensive community consultations continue, and further contracts with SA Water will see water and effluent services aligned with the state's regulatory framework, which will give remote Aboriginal communities access to greater engineering resources than under previous service delivery arrangements.

The program which SA Water has undertaken in partnership with DAARE includes standard water testing sampling

points, which have been identified within South Australia's major Aboriginal communities. An initial round of sampling and analysis of water supplies from remote locations has been completed in the AP lands, the MT lands and Yalata. No evidence of contamination was detected. However, that is a continuing process.

Construction of a laboratory at Marla is under way, and this laboratory will greatly assist microbiological sampling in remote communities. The quality and safety of the Fregon water supply was raised recently by members of that community, and the following information confirms the integrity of that supply. The state has tested water supplies for chemical composition in major remote Aboriginal communities since 1981. I found that the people who had their own filtering system had far better tasting water than those without.

Water supplies to all AP communities are chemically tested biannually. Samples are collected by the contractor responsible for bore maintenance and processed by the Australian Water Quality Centre of SA Water at Bolivar, South Australia. Results are made available to all stakeholders upon request. More recently, SA Water has been contracted to test water supplies in Aboriginal communities, including those at Fregon, to microbiological contamination. Results from 2 April 2003 indicate that these supplies are free from microbiological contamination. As I say, that continuous testing has to be done, and we do not want to see a deterioration of the health of people in the lands through the supply of poor quality water.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: My question relates to the capital investment program, where I note that, under new works, there is \$6.650 million for the Central Power Station. I recall quite clearly my involvement in putting together the concept, design and details relating to the Central Power Station on the AP lands. I also recall negotiating with ATSIC, seeking its financial support to match the state government funding, which I also negotiated, of some \$6.650 million. Further, I recall negotiating with Greenhouse Australia to fund the photovoltaic converters or the solar-generated panel infrastructure and successfully acquiring a further \$1 million, enabling a project of \$14.3 million to be constructed in the AP lands to service seven communities through 135 kilometres of distribution lines. As I stated, under 'New works' there is an amount of \$6.650 million for the AP lands Central Power Station. Will the minister explain where this new power station to be built next year will be located?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: The AP lands electrical power project has a total capital value of \$14.3 million. It is a joint state-commonwealth initiative, with the state government contributing \$6.65 million in 2003-04. It will result in significant electricity supply improvements for the AP lands. A high-tech sun farm, which the honourable member referred to, is being developed to take advantage of the 'green' electricity for a remote, centrally located power station. This \$3.4 million component of the overall project is a joint effort between Projects Pitjantjatjara Council Incorporated, the commercial supplier Solar Systems Pty Ltd, the Australian Greenhouse Office, DAARE and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC). The sun farm is part of a three-stage electrical power project: stage 1 is the sun farm and site for a centrally located power station; stage 2 is the powerhouse and diesel generation; and stage 3 is the high voltage power stations.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Would it not have been more appropriate to mention it as stages rather than new works in

the capital investment program? When we open it up, that is exactly what it looks like, new works, when in fact it is stage 3, the final round. It is constructed, it is on the lands, unless there is some other power station that I do not know about; hence my question.

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: The honourable member is talking about the same power station.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: The minister would also be aware that Yalata Aboriginal community has its own water treatment plant. He would no doubt have been briefed by his department that the existing reverse osmosis plant in the Yalata Aboriginal community has been in service for nearly 20 years, and that refurbishing the plant every three years is no longer classed as an economical option. I am told that, due to advances in water treatment technology, the cost effective option is to replace the plant in its entirety. When is the reverse osmosis plant at Yalata due for refurbishment, and has the minister considered the cost effective option for replacement, and also for the security of the water supply, as a future plan to deal with this issue?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: The honourable member's information is quite correct. She has a very good source! It is something that we have to look at. The reverse osmosis system is one that can be picked up and used in other communities when and if funding is available, but we will be looking at the infrastructure and the declaration of Yalata as an action zone, because it is not just the water that has deteriorated over time. The community needs the same support as we are giving to other communities within the state. It has been noted by DAARE that Yalata will be declared an action zone.

Mr BUCKSKIN: It will be declared after further consultation with the Yalata community and with the ATSIC Regional Council.

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: The honourable member is on the ball with that question and we will be working with anyone who wants to help fix up the problems over there.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I thank the minister and his officers for their assistance.

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

[Sitting suspended from 6.16 to 7.30 p.m.]

Department for Correctional Services, \$117 694 000

Additional Departmental Advisers:

Mr G. Weir, Acting Chief Executive, Department for Correctional Services.

Mr A. Martin, Director Financial & Physical Resources, Department for Correctional Services.

Ms K. Lennon, Chief Executive, Attorney-General's Department and Department of Justice.

Mr K. Penniford, Director, Strategic & Financial Services Unit.

Mr R. Mathews, Assistant Fund Manager, Strategic & Financial Services Unit.

Membership:

Mr Venning substituted for Mrs Hall.

Mr Brokenshire substituted for Mrs Kotz.

Mr Scalzi substituted for Mr Goldsworthy.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to Appendix D, page 2,

in the Budget Statement and Part 4, pages 4.1 to 4.11 and 4.158 to 4.171, Volume 1 of the Portfolio Statements. Does the minister wish to make a statement?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I have an introductory statement to make, which I am sure members will enjoy—and enjoy pulling to pieces! Over the past 12 to 18 months, the Department for Correctional Services has made a considerable effort to develop a detailed strategic asset and operational plan encompassing its long-term needs and objectives. That work more than anything has provided the foundation for the funding which has been provided to the department in this budget (which has surprised a few, I must say). The 2003-04 budget outcome is a good one for the department in terms of fulfilling its role as part of the justice portfolio. In the budget the government has addressed a number of longstanding cost pressures and problems that the department faces, while simultaneously agreeing to fund several key initiatives that are focused on the department's meeting current and future challenges.

Importantly, the government has committed to funding two key strategic initiatives. One is the new women's prison to replace the existing women's prison, which is no longer fit for the purpose, and has not been for some considerable time. The other is rehabilitation programs to reduce reoffending. Successive governments have identified that the existing women's prison is entirely unsuitable for accommodating prisoners, and new facilities are critical if the department is to effectively manage female prisoners and provide them with the most appropriate programs. The existing prison is clearly unsuitable not only as accommodation but also as a positive environment within which to provide rehabilitative programs.

It has fallen to this government to provide the funding required to construct a new women's prison. Although it is intended that the prison will be procured through a public private partnership, it will be managed by staff of the Department for Correctional Services. The government will provide \$5.77 million in 2006-07 for that purpose. Work will commence as soon as possible to begin the procurement process. For the first time, staff will be able to provide services to meet the needs of women in a safer and more humane environment that enables effective rehabilitation. While we go out to the marketplace for a new women's prison, simultaneously, government will be seeking to procure a new juvenile detention centre. This will reduce costs through not having to go to the marketplace twice. I emphasise that the two facilities will be completely separate.

Following submissions from the Department for Correctional Services, the government has agreed to provide the department with an additional \$6 million over four years for rehabilitation programs for higher risk, higher need prisoners and offenders. This is consistent with the department's advice that rehabilitation programs can reduce reoffending and, therefore, the economic and social cost of crime to the community. The department's priority will be focused on sex offenders, violent offenders, appropriate rehabilitation programs for indigenous offenders and proper program evaluation and monitoring. It must be remembered that all offenders will some day be released from prison. This funding is about the department's contributing to a safer and fairer society and improving outcomes in key areas.

For sex offenders, it is strongly argued that sex offender treatment programs based in the prisons and in community corrections are essential for addressing recidivism. It has been estimated that these treatment programs can reduce recidivism in the order of 10 per cent. In South Australia, violent

offenders constitute about 40 per cent of the sentenced prisoner population, many of whom have a reckless disregard for others, exhibit antisocial behaviour and are extremely aggressive. These prisoners often require a mix of programs to address their offending behaviour and to help them develop skills that reduce the risk they pose to the community upon their release.

Indigenous offenders are grossly over-represented in the prison system. They constitute about 17 per cent of the prison population. Funding provided by the government will assist the development and delivery of rehabilitation programs that are designed to meet the needs of indigenous people, particularly in the areas of drug and alcohol rehabilitation, victim awareness, anger management and the prevention of domestic and sexual violence, and programs that address grief and loss issues. These programs are intended to improve outcomes for indigenous people in the justice system.

It is one thing to provide significant public funding for the development of programs to target prisoner rehabilitation: it is quite another to ensure that the funding provided is spent effectively. The government has, therefore, placed a strong emphasis on accountability and the quality and evaluation of these programs. To ensure best value for money and that the department's approach is effective and coordinated, the department will establish an executive committee to overview and report on this initiative and other existing rehabilitation programs. Programs will be closely monitored to ensure that they provide best value for money through an independent evaluation process.

Other key funding initiatives for the Department for Correctional Services for the 2003-04 financial year have included funding for a number of cost pressures and capital works, including (in approximate terms):

- increased costs across community corrections and prisons (\$1 million in 2003-04 and then ongoing);
- additional staffing in the prison system (\$500 000 in 2003-04 and then ongoing);
- additional part-time staffing to enable meal breaks to be taken by prime staff in the prison system (\$286 000 in 2003-04 and then ongoing); and
- additional funding for capital works has been provided to assist the department to maintain its ageing infrastructure, including the elimination of hanging points in prisons (\$560 000 over three years); upgrading of security and building management systems (including \$2.99 million over four years); replacement of air treatment units at the Adelaide Remand Centre (\$375 000 over two years); replacement of elevators in the Adelaide Remand Centre (\$800 000 in 2004-05); and upgrading of the water supply at Cadell (\$350 000 in 2003-04).

Mr Venning interjecting:

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: The member has been up there recently, I understand.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: It is a part of his electorate, I understand; he has a special interest in it.

Mr Venning interjecting:

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: The member has lost it recently, that is right: the redistribution has taken it away. I am sure that the member will continue that close contact that he has had with it.

In summary, the budget outcome better positions the Department for Correctional Services to safely and effectively provide humane supervision and rehabilitation to prisoners and offenders. This level of funding will assist the department

to work with Justice and Human Services around critical issues such as mental health, drugs and programs for Aboriginal people and with the Social Inclusion Board on issues such as through care and access to housing. I now welcome questions in relation to the budget funding allocations.

Membership:

Mr O'Brien substituted for Ms Bedford.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I also wish to make an opening statement. My statement will be brief but I want to put on the public record some important points. The first and most important point is to acknowledge the great work of John Paget, who was CEO of correctional services until the last couple of months. As someone who had the privilege of working with him as minister for 3½ years, or thereabouts, I found him to be a man of loyalty and integrity and, indeed, a man committed to a balanced management structure in correctional services, whether it be community services, rehabilitation programs or the general welfare of those for whom he was responsible, namely, the prisoners. I refer also to his genuine passion and concern to see Aboriginal prisoners rehabilitated so that they did not become repeat offenders.

Also, it is very important to place on the record the way in which John Paget worked with his staff. They were an absolute team. In my opinion, the Department for Correctional Services should be very proud of its commitment and efforts. The correctional services' budget is not a big budget bearing in mind the expectations of the work required by all the officers—and in this respect I talk about the executive right through to those doing the work in the general prison system. I know that the minister agrees with me because he is nodding his head. I believe that, over several years, correctional services in this state has come a long way.

Never for one moment would I think that this current minister would not want to see it continue. However, the difficulty for this current minister will be getting his cabinet to keep an eye on the importance of correctional services. I know that the concerns of the shadow minister (whom I represent tonight) from another place are about the lack of a strategic focus from the so-called executive of this government.

I do believe that John Paget left the department in a good, sound position based on the limitations of his budget and other parameters. He certainly worked within the whole of the justice approach, which I thought was also important. I believe that John has touched a lot of people and that the department will continue with his passion and desire. I believe also that all the people in the department will have been personally developed more than some of them probably even acknowledge by virtue of their contact with John over that period of time. I ask the Acting CEO, Greg Weir, to pass on to his staff the opposition's appreciation for their work. It is a difficult area. Managing prisoners is not easy at all.

My first question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 4.165. As a preamble to the question, so that it gives the minister a chance to see where I am coming from, last August (during the current financial year and after the first Labor budget) the Public Service Association issued the following statement:

Community corrections is in crisis. Workload issues are enormous with a continuing expectation to do more. Staff are experiencing significant difficulties and requiring early intervention.

The PSA represents most of the 287 staff who are employed in community corrections.

In answer to a question asked in another place, I note that the minister acknowledged that the only new money allocated to community corrections in last year's budget was \$141 000 to strengthen the electronic monitoring of home detainees and bailees, and \$61 000 through the Drug Court to support the electronically monitored curfews. Does the minister agree that community corrections is an essential part of correctional services and, if so, will the minister indicate what new resources have been allocated to community corrections in this present budget?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I thank the honourable member for his question and agree with his opening statement in relation to the tribute paid to John Paget and his staff. I also agree that it is difficult for ministers in any government to get the increased funding that is required to back up and support the programs and staff within the system. Also, there is a recognition, in a bipartisan way, about what the correctional services system needs in relation to community support. The number of people who involve themselves in community corrections as volunteers and as paid employees are a tribute to the state.

South Australia is well placed in relation to people in community corrections and in volunteer organisations who do a lot of good work. I know that the bipartisan way in which we have tried to work and operate through corrections enables that to happen; and the transfer of that goodwill from the previous government to us is appreciated.

With respect to the honourable member's question, this government has provided an additional \$2.614 million to corrections during 2003-04 to allow the department to address a number of longstanding operational staffing cost pressures. This funding is in addition to the \$828 000 that was especially appropriated during the latter part of 2002-03 to address urgent staffing issues within the department. In addition to the \$2.614 million provided for operational staffing initiatives in the 2003-04 budget, the following allocation has been made: additional operational costs in prisons and community correctional centres (that is, prisoner food, clothing and allowances and community corrections accommodation), \$1 million. Also, prison community corrections operating costs have continued to rise faster than CPI funding increases. We have to keep track of that, I suppose.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: As a supplementary question, can the minister confirm that the measures announced in last year's budget to increase the electronic monitoring of home detainees has, in fact, been implemented?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: Advice to me is that it has been implemented.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: The Parole Board is established under the Correctional Services Act, which is under this minister's administration as, indeed, it was when I was minister. The Premier recently asked the head of his department, Mr Warren McCann, to undertake a review of parole. The results of the review were announced by the Premier the day before he went overseas—I think it was Tuesday. Does the minister agree that the implementation of the proposed changes to the parole system will involve more work for officers in preparing reports, assessments, and the like?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: Yes, I do agree with that. More work and more effort must be put into making the assessments on individual prisoners before parole is con-

sidered, because more people will be considered under certain categories.

Mr BROKENSHERE: What is the department's estimate of the additional cost of administering the proposed new laws, and has there been an allocation in this existing budget to manage those additional costs to the department?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I might hand that question over.

Mr WEIR: We have initiated an assessment of the likely impact on our resources as a consequence of the proposed changes but it is likely, with additional funding for rehabilitation and the additional staff provided last year for community corrections, that to a certain extent some of that demand will be alleviated quite reasonably and quite soon.

Mr BROKENSHERE: Do you know what sort of dollars would be required?

Mr WEIR: We have not yet consulted with the Parole Board in terms of its expectations for reporting. We hope to do that in the near future. Basically, our responsibility is to meet the needs of the Parole Board, so we would hope to meet with Ms Nelson in the immediate future.

Mr HANNA: There is a press release without any of it being planned, as usual.

Mr BROKENSHERE: That is correct. Minister, did you have Mr McCann consult with you during his review and did he discuss his recommendations with you before he presented them to the Premier?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: There were brief discussions about changes, but the details of those changes were worked out by Kym Kelly, who worked on my behalf on the detail in relation to the subject matter related to the new parole conditions.

Mr HANNA: I have a question about the rehabilitation program, which is referred to on page 4.161 of Volume 1 of Budget Paper 4. Recently, there was an announcement by the Premier, as I recall, of an additional \$6 million for rehabilitation funding. I ask the minister to point out where in the budget documents that additional funding appears. There is another part to the question but it may be a supplementary question. I am looking at pages 161 and 162 and I cannot actually see the increase in funding from previous years.

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I understand the funding line is on page 4.156 of the AG's budget, and it was an administrative line under 'Sex Offenders Rehabilitation Program'.

Mr HANNA: That is an additional \$1.5 million for this current year and presumably the \$6 million means that the same amount is to be replicated over the four years?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: Yes.

Mr HANNA: This is a supplementary question. I had understood the Premier to indicate that it might be for more than just sex offenders. This budget line would suggest that it is only for sex offenders. Is that the case?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: Treasury put the tag on the program but there is an understanding among those who see the issues in a more detailed light. I have seen it as, in part, sex offenders, violent offenders, appropriate rehabilitation programs for Aboriginal people, and a strong emphasis on accountability and the quality and evaluation of programs that work. So, there will be a breakdown on a broader range of rehabilitation programs within that budget number.

Mr HANNA: I am glad to hear that you know more about it than the Treasurer. As a further supplementary question, how does this compare with what I understand is an amount of \$335 million budgeted for in Victoria for similar programs?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I am not too sure what Victoria's budget program is but some of that could have gone to capital works rather than programs. It sounds like a lot of money. It would be difficult to spend \$335 million on programs.

Mr HANNA: My second question relates to one of the targets for the coming year which is listed on page 4.159. In relation to a new men's prison—and my question applies equally whether it be a men's prison, women's prison or a place for detaining young people—it has been put to me that best practice would be to house prisoners in a series of smaller prisons rather than the Yatala style pantechon where everyone is kept closely confined and watched more or less from a central point in one big institution. Does the minister have advice on whether that would be best practice and, if so, is he willing to fight for that sort of new category of prison beds in cabinet?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I have gone on record saying that small is beautiful in terms of prisons and that regional prisons are better managed, if you like, as far as contact with prisoners is concerned—that is, prison officers to prisoners. But there are trade-offs in terms of costs and budgeting. You can spend more on capital works for large prisons and perhaps provide better rehabilitation through funding better programs and concentrating on managing individual prisoners—that is, case management of prisoners within larger systems—that bring about perhaps the same results. But I think that, for those who have had a lot to do with the way in which country prisons work and operate and the way in which the community gets behind prisoners within those regions, there are a lot of pluses. But they can be, I think, mirrored in a system that provides for better trained officers, better human contact and better methods of rehabilitating prisoners, if attention is paid to those details. So, I think you can have a large cold prison, there is no doubt about that, and some large prisons may tend to be like that, but they do not necessarily have to be. I think we can design larger, humane prisons that bring about that necessary human contact that facilitates rehabilitation.

Ms BREUER: In his speech the Treasurer announced an allocation towards the construction of a new women's prison. Can the minister advise of that allocation and the reasons for the proposed new women's prison?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: While dealing with the justice portfolio during the budget speech, the Treasurer referred to the women's prison and stated:

I can announce today that we will build a new \$32 million women's prison and a \$46 million youth detention centre.

When the government came to office, it assumed responsibility for a prison system based on ageing infrastructure and which was of a design and capacity not suitable for the present standards required of a modern prison system. It was also recognised that reconfiguration of the prison system was critical to achieving justice outcomes more efficiently and effectively now and in the years ahead, and I think that has been recognised in a bipartisan way.

Problems with the existing women's prison have long been recognised. It was clear that the existing women's prison could not humanely accommodate current or potential prison numbers, and it was not an appropriate environment for the rehabilitation of women prisoners. Other problems with the current facility is that it does not permit secure single accommodation. Few cells are secure, and cannot be configured to separate remand from sentenced prisoners, as little

pre-release accommodation for prisoners does not provide a proper environment for children who must be with their imprisoned mothers, and as primitive options for managing women at risk of self harm or suffering psychological problems.

The capacity for women prisoners has been regularly exceeded and there have been instances in recent years where female prisoners have had to be held in police cells or the watchhouse because of a lack of suitable accommodation and capacity at the women's prison.

The Department of Correctional Services was directed by the previous government to investigate the feasibility of replacing the women's prison through a public private partnership. An outline business case was prepared in which the potential to realise improved value for money through the PPP arrangement was compared with traditional procurement approaches.

When this government came into office, it requested that the work continue in recognition that a new prison was needed and that upgrading an existing facility was not an option. Further work was conducted in accordance with the government's PPP guidelines, under the clear understanding that the prison would be operated by the public sector. The conclusion of that work was that replacing the women's prison through a PPP arrangement would result in value for money benefits to this state.

It is expected that the new prison, which will accommodate 120 prisoners (with the capacity to further expand, if required), will be available for occupation by 2006. Simultaneously, government will be seeking to procure a new juvenile detention facility. This will enable the cost of procurement to be significantly reduced for both the public and private sectors by avoiding having to go to the market place twice. The two facilities will be separate.

In the meantime, to overcome the present accommodation problems, the government has allocated \$500 000 to provide 11 additional beds at the Adelaide Women's Prison. The decision to provide a new women's prison reflects the government's commitment to law and order and the effective and humane supervision and rehabilitation of offenders. It also reflects the need for women prisoners to have their special and unique needs met to better achieve justice outcomes.

Mr BROKENSHERE: Minister, in relation to the new women's prison, the capital investment statement in Budget Paper 5, page 3, under 'Justice', states:

Significant expenditure in the area of public safety in 2003-04 includes...

... a new women's prison will be implemented as a PPP—

which is actually privatisation. This government said it would not get involved in privatisation; notwithstanding that, it is there. However, the table on page 2.17 shows that the government has not budgeted any operating payments for the new women's prison until 2006-07. Does the minister therefore agree that the new women's prison will not be operating until 2006-07 at the earliest?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: That is the time frame that it will take to develop and to build.

Mr BROKENSHERE: Supplementary to that, in the interests of a true record—and I do not blame you, minister—would you inform the Treasurer, in cabinet, that his statement that significant expenditure in 2003-04 includes a new women's prison is a very misleading statement?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: The Treasurer may have been looking at the money needed to extend the existing prison, or it may be for the business case.

Mr BROKENSHERE: Well, we cannot find any allocation, but be that as it may. Budget Paper 5, page 4, states:

... a new women's prison will be implemented as a ... [public/private partnership]—

And then it has an interesting caveat, which is identical to the police capital works privatisation program, that says, 'providing [that it is] value for money'. In answer to a question without notice in another place, I note that the minister acknowledged that the women's prison is in an emergency situation. Therefore, given the 'emergency situation' (the minister's own words), what is proposed will happen if the private sector cannot provide 'value for money' on this project?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: When the PPP process is finalised, the government will consider its options after it has received the final bids. There is a disciplinary process that allows for government not to proceed with a project if it believes that it is not getting the value from the PPP that the public would expect.

Mr BROKENSHERE: As a supplementary question, with this government's privatisation capital works, are we about to see a return to the Bannon era with the Southern Expressway or the third arterial road announcement where it was announced three times before an election but never delivered? I understand what the minister has said, and I qualifying it by saying that I interpret that he is saying that if it is not value for money there is no guarantee by the cabinet that the women's prison will be built with general taxpayers' money?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I think it is generally acknowledged that we need a new women's prison. If a PPP process is rejected, cabinet would make a fresh assessment of how it would use the money available to it in a particular budget year, or over a period of years, for a new prison. The government realises that a new prison is needed and also that an extension to the existing prison is required.

Mr BROKENSHERE: We are happy to bat with the minister if he needs support to get some capital works going. The issue of drug use in prisons was of interest to me when I was the minister (and remains so), and has been topical in the media lately. I acknowledge that it is a concern in all prisons. In March this year, James Vlassakis, who has pleaded guilty to some of the Snowtown murders, publicly acknowledged that heroin and marijuana were readily available in South Australian prisons.

Mr Bill Power of the department went on radio and explained that prison officers:

... have the right to take urine samples from any prisoner at any time.

He went on to say:

We have found that a bit over half of those prisoners have tested positive to some form of drug.

As I have said, as a former minister, I know that officers face a very difficult task in keeping drugs out of prisons. It infuriates me to see the lengths to which some people will go to get the drugs into prisons. Does the minister agree that the public is entitled to be outraged by news that drugs are readily available in prisons, and do you believe that the department has an obligation to take steps to minimise the entry of drugs into prisons?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I certainly agree with the shadow minister's assessment in relation to drugs in prisons.

There is a real problem with the increasing use of recreational, prescription and designer drugs within the community generally and, given the fact that some 70 per cent of prisoners have problems associated with their being in prison, prison officers are under instructions to keep drugs out of prisons.

As you know and understand, there are many inventive ways people have of transferring drugs to other people within the prison system. I do not think there is a prison in Australia, either public or private, that is able to say that it is completely drug free. We have some innovative methods of trying to keep drugs out of prison. The Dog Squad, although not unique to South Australia, has been operated quite successfully in this state. I was at a demonstration recently where a dog bypassed me and went to the person who had the drugs put on them, fortunately. We have urine analysis and intelligence operations operating within prisons and searching regimes for visitors, and the balance between the method of searching visitors and encouraging visitor contact is a balance that prison officers daily wrestle with.

In 2001-02, 1 570 tests were conducted and 56 per cent were positive. In some cases visitors have been banned and prisoners have lost privileges. Certainly there are ways in which prisoners are discouraged from encouraging visitors to bring drugs into prisons. It is a problem for the broader community in relation to the increasing use of drugs and in some cases the social acceptance of that, but it is intolerable that drugs can be freely brought into prisons. We do not tolerate that, and one way of being able to encourage prisoners to change their lifestyles is to drug test and ascertain the problems that have brought them into gaol, with counselling on entry and exiting. The long-term benefits we have through the justice and correctional service systems is to follow the exiting prisoner into the lifestyle they have on exiting and try to encourage further contact by that exiting prisoner with programs we may have to develop over time.

A lot of people are doing considerable work in prisons. We will be trying to evaluate what programs are being put together in other states and overseas to try to get the best we can for South Australia with the budgets we have.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Before handing over to my colleagues, I put on notice four questions. Over each of the past three years, how many people have been detected by dogs or otherwise bringing drugs into prisons? Over the same period, how many people have been charged with an offence for bringing drugs into prisons? What penalties have been imposed? Finally, what additional resources, if any, will be devoted in the next financial year to address the issue of drugs in prisons?

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

Ms BREUER: I refer to the capital investment statement 2003-04, Budget Paper 5: on page 15 I note a capital project to replace security and building management systems, stage 2, at an estimated total cost of \$2.990 million. Will the minister inform the committee what was achieved in stage 1 of that project and what can be expected from this next stage in the project?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: The security of a modern corrections system relies on many things. Chiefly, it requires well trained, professional correctional officers who are vigilant, effectively supervising prisoners and providing the human contact I was talking about earlier. It also requires reliable prisoner assessment processes, effective case management and sound rehabilitation programs.

Modern correctional facilities also rely on appropriate use of electronic security and surveillance systems to extend the capacity of staff to supervise prisoners and the security of correctional facilities. Over the past five years the Department of Correctional Services has undertaken a major upgrade and replacement of its aged and obsolete security and surveillance system with current state-of-the-art technology. This work has involved departmental project managing specialist security, electrical and electronics contractors working together with equipment suppliers and installers.

Stage 1 of this project has seen the upgrade and replacement of the security and surveillance systems at Mobilong Prison, the Adelaide Remand Centre, Yatala Labour Prison, Port Augusta Prison, and stage 1 of the security upgrades at Mount Gambier Prison. The electronic security and surveillance systems at these institutions are now world class and have been procured by the department through a process which delivered outstanding value for money.

New security and surveillance systems have dramatically improved reliability and reduced maintenance costs. Stage 2 program of security upgrades continues this work and includes completion of the works at Mount Gambier Prison, upgrade of subcontrol stations at Yatala Labour Prison, replacement of the microwave system at Port Augusta Prison, replacing intercom systems at Mobilong and Port Augusta Prisons and completing system documentation.

Good electronic systems still require well trained, vigilant, professional staff. The government decision to fund stage 2 of this project will provide staff with the best available systems to ensure the safety and security of the prison system in the interests of the prison staff and the community.

Ms BREUER: I refer to the capital investment statement 2003-04, Budget Paper 5, page 15, where I note a capital project of fire safety systems upgrades at an estimated cost of \$1.863 million. Will the minister tell the committee what is included in those upgrades at various prisons?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: The state's prison system consists of nine prisons—five in regional locations and four in the metropolitan area. The major risk in the management of these facilities is fire, which is exacerbated by the multiplicity of sites, the lack of past adequate investment in fire safety systems, lower staffing levels after hours when prisoners are locked down, external fire service response times in remote locations, non-standard and ageing breathing apparatus, and high occupancy levels in most parts of the prison system. As part of the department's occupational health, safety and injury management plan, the DCS commissioned the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service to complete a comprehensive fire safety audit of each prison. In October 2001 these audits were presented to the DCS and a significant number of recommendations were made.

The Rann government recognised the extent and seriousness of the risk to both staff and prisoners and last year allocated \$1.863 million for the upgrade of fire detection systems in prisons. This program is being continued in the budget this year. I acknowledge the continued support of the Metropolitan Fire Service, which has worked closely with DCS to conduct at-risk assessments and prioritise these important works in what is a complex correctional environment.

The risk assessment process has regard to the number of cells to be unlocked at each location, the number of staff available at each prison to unlock prisoners during evening shifts, average response times by staff and external fire service personnel, reliability of existing systems and the

added risk in multi-story buildings. This risk assessment methodology was applied to each prison in the priority of works established. In most prisons the existing fire detection systems employ 15 to 20 year old technology and depend on a level of heat to activate the first level of alarm. It is well known that smoke inhalation is the most common cause of injury or death in the event of fire and modern fire detection systems therefore alarm on the detection of smoke.

Fire detection systems in the Adelaide Women's Prison and the Port Lincoln Prison have now been upgraded in accordance with the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service recommendations. Consulting engineers are currently finalising tender documentation for the fire system upgrades at other locations in preparation for tender calls in the new financial year. Project scheduling is complicated by the need to ensure minimal interference with normal prison operations, particularly with the prison system operating close to capacity, as are ours.

As part of the fire safety upgrades in prisons, new breathing apparatus (BA sets) and fire escape sets have been purchased and installed, together with comprehensive staff training in their use. The primary objective of DCS in the event of fire is to evacuate the staff and prisoners safely and to clear the way for the professional firefighters to suppress and extinguish any fire.

It is anticipated that all high priority prison areas identified in the MFS audit will be upgraded by the end of 2004, and we will have continued the good work that the previous minister had started.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, pages 4.163 to 4.164, Custodial Services. In the latest annual report of the Department for Correctional Services the following statement appears under the heading Operation Challenge:

Historically, concern has been expressed that first-time offenders entering the prison system learn and are at risk from habitual long-term offenders. Operation Challenge was developed by the department to address this concern.

In last year's budget, the Labor government defunded Operation Challenge as a cost-saving measure. What amount was actually saved by not continuing Operation Challenge? What programs have been developed for first-time offenders to replace Operation Challenge? What is the cost of those new programs? We can get tough on crime, but if we do not have rehabilitation, especially for first-time offenders, we are not going to have any progress.

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I have to take that question on notice, or the part in relation to the amount of funding saved on Operation Challenge. However, I can say that the prisoners who were involved in that program were picked up by mainstream programs. I will take that question on notice and bring back a reply.

Mr VENNING: Before I ask my question, I want to put on the public record the appreciation of the Mid Murray Council and the communities of Sedan and Cambrai for the minister allowing the inmates of Cadell Training Centre to assist with the clean-up after the recent huge dust storm. I can report this evening, minister, that the work has been of excellent quality and was done in very good spirit. The whole exercise has turned a rather negative scene into quite a positive and happy outcome, and there was a barbecue, which the prisoners and community enjoyed. Hopefully, they may get another four or five days out of it yet! Thank you very much, minister. I appreciate it.

My question is again on prison staffing. I refer to Budget Paper 1. Under the heading 'Ensuring safer communities', on page 12 the Treasurer said:

... \$7.2 million over four years to increase staffing and reduce workloads in Correctional Services.

Budget Paper 3 at page 2.17 reveals that this \$7.2 million will be spent in prisons—i.e., not on administrative officers, community corrections, or on parole officers. The Public Service Association recently claimed a significant victory in the Industrial Relations Commission, when the department was ordered to make back payments to staff in respect of lunch breaks.

I am aware that the department has appealed this decision but, until it is overturned, the department must abide by it. Therefore, my questions are: will additional prisoners be appointed with this \$7.2 million over four years, or will the money be used to fund back pay or new rostering arrangements? How much has the department budgeted to meet the Industrial Commission's judgment?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I will answer that question in parts. First, I thank the member for Schubert for notifying the government, in a bipartisan way, of the need for allowing prisoners to work in that community, and for the cooperation with the department in meeting that request. Prisoners do a lot of work out in the community that goes unrecognised. Certainly, that incident received wide coverage, and I thank the honourable member for his suggestion.

In relation to the question, there is additional funding in the budget for 23 staff (that is ongoing funding), comprising 13 in prisons and 10 in community corrections, but no provision for funding has been made for back payment for those meal breaks. We are awaiting the outcome of the appeal.

Mr VENNING: What will happen if the appeal is not successful?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: That will be a matter for cabinet and Treasury.

Mr SCALZI: The Productivity Commission's 2003 report on government services examined correctional systems in all states. In its response to the report, the South Australian government said:

South Australia continues to have a high percentage of remandees in the prison population. For the financial 2001-02, the average prison population was 1 436. Remandees made up over 33 per cent of that total population. Of these remandees, approximately 61 per cent are released within two weeks of incarceration. The percentage of total remandees released within four weeks of incarceration is around 74 per cent. Approximately 80 per cent of all remandees receive no further custodial sentence upon conviction and are released or sentenced to community-based supervision.

The South Australian government provided a response which also stated that, despite the falling corrections population over the last few years, South Australia still has one of the highest cost per prisoner rates, because costs do not fall in direct proportion to prisoner numbers, particularly fixed costs, which can only be significantly influenced by the closure of a cell block or a prison.

What does the government propose to do about the high number of remandees in our prison system? How does the average cost per prisoner at Mount Gambier Prison, which is privately operated, compare with the average cost across other comparable institutions?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I will refer that question to the Justice representative here tonight.

Ms LENNON: Remand has been an issue for some time. It is quite correct that we have one of the highest remand rates in Australia. We have done an extensive review into why that may be the case, but we have not come up with a clear answer as yet. We have a team of people who are looking at this issue, which includes Corrections, and the Justice Strategy Unit is looking at that issue with the Office of Crime Statistics. The review will not be completed for quite a while, but we are trying to look at why that is the case as well. We are with the Legal Services Commission piloting a program, which will begin in August, to consider from the immediate time of arrest whether the bail conditions that are set then and whether a person has legal representation right there and then make a difference to the remand rates.

We also have a program that is looking at adjournments in the courts. The number of adjournments before a case comes before the courts is turning out to be quite extensive. It can be anything from 10 or 11 adjournments up to 30 or

40 adjournments, with long periods in between each one. This program to look at the adjournment rate is being chaired by the Chief Magistrate, Mr Kelvyn Prescott, again with the Justice Strategy Unit and other officers in the department. Once we have reviewed that, and if we change the way that adjournments are carried out, that may also have a significant impact on the number of people who are on remand. It will be several months before that information is available, and I believe it will be of interest to quite a lot of people.

The CHAIRMAN: Will you take on notice the question about Mount Gambier vis-a-vis other institutions?

Ms LENNON: Yes, we will take that on notice.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 8.32 p.m. the committee adjourned until Friday 20 June at 11 a.m.