

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**Friday 20 June 2003****ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A****Chairman:**

The Hon. R.B. Such

Members:

Ms F.E. Bedford
 The Hon. M.R. Buckby
 Mr P. Caica
 The Hon. J. Hall
 Mr E.J. Meier
 Mr M.F. O'Brien

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

 Planning SA, \$16 606 000
Witness:

The Hon. J.W. Weatherill, Minister for Urban Development and Planning

Departmental Advisers:

Mr T. O'Loughlin, Chief Executive, Department of Transport, Urban Planning and Development.
 Mr N. Savery, Executive Director, Planning SA.
 Mr P. Smith, Director, Policy and Assessment.
 Mr B. Burman, Technical Director, Planning Policy.
 Mr B. Teague, Technical Director, Systems Improvement.

The CHAIRMAN: Changes to committee membership will be identified as they occur. Members should ensure that the chair is provided with a completed request to be discharged to 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. I propose to allow both the minister and the lead speaker to make a brief statement, if they wish. There will be a flexible approach to giving the call for asking questions based on approximately three questions per member. 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 ask members to read out that information, because it takes up the time of the committee, but if members stray into distant areas, I might bring them back. Members unable to complete their questions during the proceedings may submit them as questions on notice for inclusion in the House of Assembly *Notice Paper*. There is no formal facility for the tabling of documents before the committee. However, documents can be supplied to the chair for distribution to the committee.

The incorporation of material in *Hansard* is permitted on the same basis as applies in the house; that is, it must be purely statistical and limited to one page in length or less. All questions are to be directed to the minister, not to the minister's advisers. The minister may refer questions to advisers for a response. I advise that, for the purpose of the

committee, some freedom will be allowed for television coverage by allowing a short period of filming from the northern gallery. I now declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to appendix D, page 2 in the Budget Statement and part 10, pages 10.1 to 10.9 and 10.94 to 10.114, Volume 3 of the Portfolio Statements. Does the minister wish to make an opening statement?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The state government is committed to planning South Australia 'with a conscious purpose'. The Redirections package, which I released late last year, is made up of a number of key planning initiatives that will help to achieve the government's vision for planning in South Australia.

The budget for Planning SA for 2003-04 is \$23.4 million, which includes an appropriation of \$16.4 million, plus fees and other income sources. Of the total budget, the operating expenditure is \$22.9 million, which includes employee costs, policy investigation costs and grants. The budget also includes \$.4 million (\$.8 million over the next two years) for the development plan improvement program and also a capital investment of \$.3 million (\$.8 million in total over three years) for development of the electronic enhancement and lodgment system.

These two complementary exercises will form part of several significant improvements to the South Australian planning system, which will ensure greater levels of consistency and certainty in the decision-making process as well as streamlining the policy amendment process. These initiatives will also help deliver on several recommendations of the Economic Development Board.

An amount of \$5.7 million is budgeted in the Planning and Development Fund for strategic open space projects, including implementation of the Second Generation of Parklands, the continued implementation of Coast Park along the metropolitan coastline, and as financial assistance through the Places for People program.

The government has a commitment to strategic planning in areas of economic development, community building and environmental management. This year's program aims to enhance the role and function of the State Planning Strategy as one of the government's most important policy tools for guiding decisions on land use planning and development activity.

A new metropolitan volume of the planning strategy is currently being prepared. This New Generation strategy will place greater emphasis on the environmental sustainability of metropolitan Adelaide, encourage social inclusion and promote appropriate and necessary development. A spatial development framework is also being prepared to provide visual mapping of the elements that comprise the urban system as well as an urban design framework and a regional open space framework. A new inner regional volume of the planning strategy is also being prepared to provide broad policy guidance to land use, environment protection and development activity in the northern Adelaide plains and the Adelaide Hills through to the Fleurieu Peninsula.

Urban design and sustainability will achieve greater prominence through the planning system with the release of the government's urban design charter, the promotion of good design principles (through the work of people such as Professor Jan Gehl and Charles Landry). We will also be developing an urban regeneration policy.

Improvements to some features of the state planning system will also place greater focus on strategic planning and policy development at a local level. The improved policy and

procedures program aims to create a better planning and development system that provides policy and procedural certainty to the community and applicants in the delivery of sustainable outcomes. It is worth pointing out, given that there has been a bit of media controversy about this issue, that while these changes are responsive to the Economic Development Board's report there are equally many people in the community who feel that the planning system does not adequately protect local heritage, environmental values or other amenity values. In the past, there has been too much focus on development assessment and not enough on the development of sound policy that will assist in guiding that development assessment.

Other Redirections key initiatives in 2003-04 include:

- release of the Planning for Wind Farms package;
- implementation of the outcomes of the state's significant tree controls;
- a review of swimming pool legislative requirements;
- continuation of the Places for People program;
- a review of the Hills face zone policies;
- a smoke alarm safety campaign; and
- continuation of Planning SA's work within the Australian Building Codes Board for the next stage of energy efficiency requirements for commercial buildings.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the lead speaker for the opposition wish to make an opening statement?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Thank you, Mr Chairman. I will make a few brief comments. The opposition was very pleased to see the government complete the urban growth boundary PAR this last year. It was introduced by the previous government and completed by this government, and that is good planning for South Australia.

I am very interested to see what this government will do about urban stormwater, because I believe that is a huge issue in our community, concerning not only those downstream suburbs which are subject to flooding in a storm event but also, given the importance of the River Murray and the potential reuse of stormwater, what the government might be planning, if anything, in terms of working with developers to ensure that stormwater on new developments is kept within the boundaries of that development. I have six omnibus questions that I would like to put on the record now, if that is agreeable with the committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, the member can read them quickly and provide Hansard with a copy.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: My questions are:

1. For all departments and agencies reporting to the ministers, are there any examples since March 2002 where federal funds have not been received in South Australia, or will not be received during the forward estimates period, because the state government has not been prepared to provide state funds for a federal-state agreement? If so, what issues and what level of federal funding has been lost or will be lost?

2. Did all departments and agencies reporting to the minister meet all required budget savings tasks for 2002-03 set for them in last year's budget and, if not, what specific proposed project and program cuts were not implemented?

3. 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, cost and work undertaken?

4. 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?

5. 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?

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

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: A range of that information may be available within the annual report, in particular the reference to consultancies, but I will take the questions on notice in any event. In the event that the member seeks that information in a more timely fashion than the answer we will give in due course, some of that information is contained within the annual report.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: I refer to the North Terrace redevelopment. What amount was carried over to 2003-04 relating to the North Terrace redevelopment and how much has been spent on the project to date?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The carry-over figure approved is \$1.596 million. I am ascertaining what amount has been spent to date. I will take it on notice.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Will the minister advise the committee why Planning SA underspent its program budget by \$2.687 million in 2002-03 and what programs were not undertaken as a result of the underspend? I refer to page 10.97 of Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, which shows that \$18.882 million was budgeted for programs in 2002-03 but that only \$16.159 million is estimated to be spent.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The three items that comprise the \$2.596 million are the ones I mentioned before—the \$1.596 million with respect to the North Terrace upgrade, the \$500 000 for the regional open space enhancement scheme and \$500 000 for the places for people grants. Each matter has been approved for carry over, and at least the last two—the regional open space enhancement scheme and places for people—are the subject of grant applications, so the process of driving the expenditure is the subject of arrangements with third parties in relation to, first, securing a grant and, secondly, submitting to us the relevant material that would be necessary for us to make the payment with respect to the secured grant. They are going over into the next year and have not been lost.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Will the minister advise the committee what policy coordination development and investment strategy programs will be delivered over and above those of 2002-03? In 2003-04 the budget is greater by \$2.294 million than the estimated result for 2002-03.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The lion's share of the difference is the allocation of the North Terrace project into the next year, and there are two other explanations, namely, the allocation of more of the operating expenditure across the whole of the agency to this set of programs. That aspect of it is more of a bookkeeping exercise in relation to where arbitrary dividing lines are made regarding the allocation of the whole of the operating salaries across Planning SA and how much of it is put against this program.

Mr CAICA: Our series of questions relate in particular to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.96. What is the government doing to promote urban regeneration within the metropolitan area, particularly in areas of socioeconomic disadvantage?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Broadly, the government is wanting to ensure that many more of its resources are focused in those areas, so the strategic planning resources which, upon coming to government we felt had been captured by the squeaky wheel, needed to be redirected towards areas of greatest need. It is a broad policy direction on those matters. Secondly, the notion of urban regeneration is a fairly broad concept and can be used to describe a whole range of individual issues. A number of important projects are going on within the Adelaide metropolitan area and are focused on areas of socioeconomic disadvantage, for example, the Westwood redevelopment and the Port waterfront development. Also, investigations are continuing by the South Australian Housing Trust in the course of its better neighbourhoods program to revamp a number of its housing estates in low socioeconomic areas. There are also other proposals still yet to be concrete but are in their final investigation phase, including the Playford preferred precinct.

In a broad sense, in relation to our planning programs, such as the grant applications for regional open space or places for people, I have asked the agency to consider alongside the other criteria about making more lively public places an additional criterion, which includes socioeconomic disadvantage. It would be unfortunate if we had a situation where all the grant funding went to making it attractive so that it became even more attractive. There is a sense in which well-organised councils are better expert, if you like, at attracting grant funding, and other councils are less so. That may not match up with the suburbs of greatest need, which do need invigorating. So, that part of the analysis has been put into the way in which we approach grant funding.

The other approach that we have taken is to try to coordinate a range of activities that are occurring across government in, essentially, agency offices. In that regard we already have the Office of the North, the Office of the South, and arrangements in relation to the north-west, to focus on a whole-of-government basis activities for specific urban regeneration project in those areas of greatest socioeconomic need.

Ms BEDFORD: Given that the government is a significant urban landowner, developer and tenant in this state, what is the government doing to ensure that our towns and cities, where the vast majority of people live, of course, are well designed as living and working environments, and with particular emphasis on pedestrians?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Broadly, we will be ensuring that those principles are embedded in the whole range of our various planning mechanisms. Essentially, they are the principles of good urban design. It is ensuring that places that are built take people into account as well as the function of the building in question. I think that there is a growing recognition that we need to ensure that all the various interests, whether they be environmental, social or economic, are catered for in the built form.

The government will be promulgating a document called the Urban Design Charter, which will ensure that the South Australian government has a significant influence on the extent, performance and appearance of buildings in places under its care and control. One of the ways in which we can do that is to ensure that these principles are embodied when we purchase buildings. The state government engages in a considerable amount of building activity, so it can have a substantial influence on the way in which the state develops.

In addition, application of the charter seeks to create the motivational capacity within government agencies to pursue

these outcomes. Often, they are not about costing more money but about thinking about the civic dividend, if you like, associated with building. Invariably, that will involve communicating with local communities. Good design flows from the advice of skilled and multidisciplinary teams, which usually returns net benefits when measured across the whole lifetime of the project. Obviously, there are spin-off benefits beyond the project to the broader community. This has received broad support from the Property Council of Australia and local government. Once this matter has been dealt with by cabinet, it is our intention to promote this broadly in the community.

Mr O'BRIEN: What is the government doing to encourage appropriate tourism development in regional South Australia?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The government has recently concluded a discussion paper in relation to sustainable tourism in regional South Australia. It has been jointly prepared by Planning SA and the South Australian Tourism Commission. It was released for public comment in November of last year. The discussion paper outlines policies that could be included in development plans, including initiatives for regional planning policy approaches at that local level.

Planning SA and the Tourism Commission are now considering their responses to that discussion paper and are presently preparing an implementation plan for consideration by me, with, obviously, input by the Minister for Tourism. There is an important need to balance tourist accommodation needs with the obvious reasons why people go to these tourist regions. Wilderness, coastal, marine, and other environmentally sensitive areas need to be considered very carefully before we launch straight into the idea of creating a whole lot of opportunities for accommodation in these areas, because we will destroy the very values that created the tourist opportunity in the first place. So, it is a careful process.

A lot of the policy changes are likely to be implemented through our broader planning reforms in relation to the Development Plan Improvement Program. Broadly, we want to shift the planning system so that much more work is done on policy, so that we have high-quality development plans that have really dense policy environments within them, and we shift the attention away from development assessment. At the moment, a lot of attention is paid to development assessment against relatively undeveloped, unsophisticated plans. If we can get the attention on high-quality policy in plans it will make the process of development assessment so much easier and better for both the community, because they will know what they are capable of protecting, and for the developers, because they will have certainty.

Mrs HALL: Will the minister advise the committee of the reason for the value of non-current assets (land and improvements), having fallen from \$5.296 million in the 2002-03 budget to \$1.22 million in the 2003-04 budget? I refer to page 10.104 of Budget Paper 4, Volume 3. The value of land and improvements has fallen by \$4.076 million.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: That variation is attributable to the removal of the land and buildings at Monarto Zoo from the accounts of the Planning and Development Fund. The removal of the asset occurred because it was not considered appropriate for that land management function to reside in Planning SA. It was more appropriate to be in a land management agency. I think that the Department of Environment and Heritage has been transferred the control of that asset.

Mrs HALL: I refer to the 2003-04 targets, page 10.96. I will blend a couple of questions. I notice that listed under that section is the completion of the review of the swimming pool safety legislation. Will the minister give the committee some details about the consultation process that has taken place and time lines for the operation of the legislation? Will there be any transition provisions? On a separate issue, in relation to targets for 2003-04, I notice that one item is not listed in which I, of course, have a particular interest. Will the minister give the committee details about any time lines, consultation, or processes on the report and inquiry into the land use in the Adelaide Hills?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: First, the swimming pool safety review was announced on 19 December last year. A working party has been established and is working. The first report of the working party was, in fact, presented to me very recently—I think a few days ago. It included a draft discussion paper for public consultation. The working party established for the review is chaired by Gavin Lloyd-Jones, and has representation from the Swimming Pool and Spa Association, the Royal Life Saving Society, the Injury Surveillance Unit of the Department of Human Services, the Local Government Association, the Australian Institute of Building Surveyors, an officer of local government who is experienced in administrative requirements for swimming pool safety, and Planning SA.

The working party has considered the issues outlined in the terms of reference and is in the process of responding to the consultation process that is proposed. It is a six-week consultation process. Once the public consultation period has closed, submissions will be reviewed by the working party. That period of six weeks has not yet commenced but it will commence shortly. After that period, the working party will need to consider any comments that have been received from the broader community and make recommendations on the outcome of the review. We want to be in a position, if possible, to consider any legislative requirements in the latter part of the year, with possible introduction of provisions for January next year. That is the present time line, but they are all subject to the nature and extent of the responses that we receive.

Mrs HALL: This is a supplementary question on that point. Would the minister provide a copy of the draft discussion paper to the opposition?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes, that will happen as a matter of course, and I will make sure a copy is specifically directed to the honourable member, as well as the shadow minister for planning. Was the second part of the question about the hills face zone or was it about the planning for what used to be called the outer metropolitan area but which we now call the inner region area?

Mrs HALL: The specific report that I was referring to has the title, I think, 'Land use in the Adelaide Hills'. Originally it had a time line of October 2001 and it was extended into June or July 2002. I am not too sure where it is now.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We think that it has been subsumed by a new concept that we have developed called the inner region area, what used to be called the outer metropolitan area. An essential part of that was the Adelaide Hills review process. It might be best that I take that question on notice and give a specific answer about that document.

Mrs HALL: I can copy the front page of the last couple of reports and the department might be able to track it down in the system.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will take that on notice so that I can identify the precise document that the honourable member is talking about and give a more precise answer.

Mrs HALL: Will the minister explain to the committee the reason for the underspend of \$800 000 in the electronic development application system (EDAS)? In the 2002-03 budget, \$1.069 million was allocated for investing payments for the EDAS, but the estimated spend for the year is \$269 000. Depending on that answer, will the minister advise the committee of the work that is to be undertaken this year on the electronic development application lodgment and assessment system? Page 33 of Budget Paper 5 shows that \$300 000 is to be spent in 2003-04.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The two things are related, and the explanation is that the program called EDALA began dealing with the electronic formatting of subdivision applications. It completed that task. It was about to go on to the next task of moving into development assessment. However, that required the cooperation of local government, and also to make it work effectively, national standards. That work has not yet been progressed. At this stage, although certainly in the longer term this will be forthcoming, there is not support to proceed with the development assessment aspect of the electronic system, and a feasibility demonstrated that moving to that at this stage, with the lack of buy-in of both national standards and local government, would mean that the costs would outweigh the benefits of this system.

In a related sense, we have bid for an electronic lodgment system in relation to development plans, and that is the money that is allocated in the present budget of \$300 000. That capital project has ceased at the stage of subdivisions and has not gone on to development assessment, and now a new electronic capital works project concerning electronic lodgment of development plans has been put in place. That has been assessed as having very good opportunities for actually improving efficiency and certainty in the system, for a number of reasons.

As members would be aware, development plan discussions between council and Planning SA are an iterative process; plans go backwards and forwards. That is so much more effective if there is a capacity to have it in a computerised format. Also, computerised formats lend to standardisation in a way that assists the speed of analysis. One of the important recommendations of the Economic Development Board is that we need a speedy and consistent planning system. So, this is responsive to that matter.

As I said in my opening statement, we prepared a discussion paper in November last year on the development plan improvement program. It is about providing standardisation in relation to the format of development plans. It is not to be confused with standardising policies. It is about standardising the language so that we do not get 67 different ways of describing a dwelling, or 67 different ways of describing a zone. We have a suite of zones that can be tailored for local variation. That has been an important reason in slowing down the capacity of Planning SA to assess each of these plans and to get a speedy response to local councils in a way that can then make sure that these development policies end up becoming law so they can be used.

The real dilemma in the planning system is that many councillors have, at one level, abandoned the development plan as the means by which they can protect the character of their suburbs and concentrate on development assessment,

hoping to knock off bad development. However, it is inevitably a Pyrrhic victory, because a developer can go to the ERD Court, which can overturn a decision that is not in accordance with the plan. We are trying to drive attention back on to plans, which is good for developers, because they get to see in a much clearer sense what they can and cannot do. Further, for people who are worried about protecting local heritage, if it is in the plan, it is protected. We cannot wait for development assessment to try to fix up these problems.

The CHAIRMAN: I have raised the following issue with the minister by correspondence, but it is a matter that concerns a lot of people. In regard to the adequacy of future house building sites, what is the situation facing new house builders in Adelaide? Is there an adequate supply of vacant land? Do we need to consider something like the Monarto concept, which was probably ahead of its time? In short, is the minister confident that, in the foreseeable future, there is adequate land for those who wish to build a new house?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: That is a very good question—a very topical question. Certainly, in relation to the thinking that has occurred with respect to land within the existing urban growth boundary, we have had to grapple with sufficiency of land supply. I think the estimates are something of the order of a potential land supply of 15 years—that is assuming existing land densities—subdivision densities—within the urban growth boundary. If one considers opportunities for brown field developments or, indeed, denser forms of development, it could be that that figure is extended even further.

One of the real dilemmas about the whole notion of land supply is that, unless it is driven by a strong policy framework which makes it clear to developers that we are serious about an urban growth boundary, we are likely to see the continuation of fringe development which is very expensive for the community to bear in terms of infrastructure costs, and which often is not incorporated with the sorts of social services that are necessary to sustain good communities. We have to send a very clear message to developers that we want to encourage them to turn their attention to urban regeneration, in many respects, or, certainly, activities within the urban growth boundary. That is the first broad concept.

While there has been some recent media speculation from the large land supply companies about the potential possibility of there being land shortages, certainly, the advice that I have received is that there is not, indeed, that threat of land shortages. To the extent that there is a need for future land releases, the Land Management Corporation has substantial holdings within the urban growth boundary and it will, no doubt, consider the need for particular land releases as they arise. There are also substantial private sector holdings within the urban growth boundary that could be used for the purposes of further dwelling construction.

The government is also committed to providing the Metropolitan Development Program, which is a state government program that coordinates the staging and location of urban development over a five-year period and provides a framework within which agencies can forecast their provision for public services and infrastructure. That goes hand in hand with the urban growth boundary that we have recently announced. The idea of the metropolitan development program is to deal with precisely the issues that the Chairman mentioned—to identify development trends in different sectors of Adelaide, providing demographic forecasts and dwelling commencement data. This program was prepared on a biannual basis but, unfortunately, the most

recent production of it was 1997. So, it has fallen into relative disuse. Industry groups have recently lobbied for the Metropolitan Development Program to be reactivated and, with the privatisation of some service providers, this coordination of infrastructure provision becomes quite critical.

A revised version of the Metropolitan Development Program is due for completion this year, and will be a feature of the new metropolitan and inner region volumes of the planning strategy. The production of the forecast of population and dwelling demand for a revised Metropolitan Development Program have commenced as part of that process. Planning SA is also undertaking a baseline infrastructure study, which will be described in the Metropolitan Development Program and will inform the government and the private sector of preferred areas for new urban development.

The principal task is to describe and evaluate infrastructure systems of identified key development areas within the metropolitan urban containment boundary, based on long-term capacity and the efficiency of providing physical infrastructure services. The Metropolitan Development Program is likely to be of assistance to the recently established Office of Infrastructure, which is an outcome of the Economic Development Board recommendations.

In summary, the Metropolitan Development Program will examine and then define new locations for increasing residential choice within existing areas as well as these green field areas. In a sense, there is a challenge here, and that is that the land development industry needs to change the paradigm of the fact that cheap land on the edges of a city is an infinite proposition. There is a 15-year land supply within the urban growth boundary, and the challenge will be for us to implement some sensitive urban consolidation—not urban consolidation that completely wrecks the character of suburbs but sensitive, targeted, in-fill development that respects local character and, at the same time, realises that one just cannot plonk a block on the edge of the city and then call it cheap land.

It really is not cheap when the whole of community costs are built into the fact that we need new schools, new police stations, new hospitals and also to create communities. The very thing that we are trying to do in existing communities with these Places for People grants is create lively civic places. If one looks at some of the suburbs on the fringes of our cities (and the Chairman would be well aware of this), one sees that they can be quite soulless places, where people feel quite isolated. There is no public life, and that just adds to the disadvantage that people suffer. It is a big challenge for us. It will require the development industry to think differently about dwelling construction.

The CHAIRMAN: I agree with the minister's last point. I am not picking on Craighburn Farm (or Blackwood Park, as the developers call it), but we are not too far off having 1 000 homes there, I think, and there is no social infrastructure whatsoever. The assumption is that those people will live off (and I use that term in a nice way) existing social infrastructure nearby. Sure, they will pay rates, but nothing is factored into the cost of their land that will be linked to services that they will receive. I guess the developer, in a sense, gets off very lightly.

I also have a question about a related matter, that is, open space. It has been nibbled away in the metropolitan area over the last few years: schools have been sold off, and so on. Is there any program that monitors and assesses the situation as it exists now and, more importantly, that tries to protect areas

where, in the future, young people can kick a football or throw a netball? With urban consolidation, if we are not careful, we will reach a point where people playing cricket will probably be arrested.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: That is a crucial point. One cannot expect there to be urban consolidation without protecting important pieces of open space. This matter is receiving an enormous amount of our attention, and some announcements will be made about these matters in due course. In broad terms, there has always been this notion of Adelaide as having a range of, I suppose, regional open space features that define it as Adelaide—the parklands; that is an obvious example. In a sense, the urban growth boundary really began with the sort of planning that occurred in the 1990s, when Don Hopgood, with the metropolitan open space system, created, in effect, the second ring of parklands around the metropolitan area.

We are putting in a much stronger framework to ensure that that green belt that does exist around the metropolitan area is strengthened and protected; but within the urban system there are still also other important open space links that need to be made. First, Coast Park is an open space system which extends from Largs down to Sellicks and we are seeking to continue to develop to make that link. There is a range of waterways: Linear Park, for instance, and a range of other waterways cut through the metropolitan area that can only be enhanced and protected as open space. Drilling down into the more local area, local government has some responsibility, obviously, for its community land.

We are looking at the whole question of local government and its relationship to its open space and how that can fit within a metropolitan system. But, also, as you say, Mr Chairman, state government has important holdings of open space in relation to its school ovals and other assets. We are in the process of developing an over-arching strategy that we will be releasing shortly, but the point is taken.

Mr CAICA: Our line of questioning again refers to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, pages 10.9 and 10.6. Minister, you would be aware of the strong concerns (just as I have as a former firefighter) regarding the level of enforcement for the requirement of domestic smoke alarms. Will the minister advise the committee what steps are being taken to address these concerns?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I recognise the member for Colton's obvious interest in this issue. I appreciated his advice in relation to some of the measures about which I am going to speak. It is probably worth setting out some of the history of the regulation of smoke alarms. The mandatory requirement to install smoke alarms in all homes (including residential rental properties) in South Australia has been progressively introduced since 1 January 1995. The Building Code of Australia, which is called up under our Development Act, required that all homes built on or after 1 January 1995 must have a 240 volt hard-wired smoke alarm installed under the Australian Standard.

From 1 February 1998 the regulation required that all detached homes, boarding houses and sole occupancy units must be fitted with one or more smoke alarms by 1 January 2000, regardless of the construction date. Basically, smoke alarms were mandatory and it was retrospectively applied to all buildings. As a minimum all such buildings owned before 1 February 1998 must have been fitted with a replaceable battery-powered smoke alarm by 1 January 2000. In addition, existing buildings purchased on or after 1 February 1998 must be fitted with either the 240 volt or the 10 year life

smoke alarm within six months of the transfer of title by the new owner.

From 1 January 2000, as per that regulation, if the owner of a building does not comply they are liable to a fine of \$750. Following a number of deaths from house fires in the 12 months to 30 June 2002, there have been ongoing thoughts about how to improve the level of compliance. The difficulty, in terms of achieving compliance, is that there is not an obvious means of detecting these things because they are inside homes. Investigations have indicated that in excess of 80 per cent of homes are fitted with smoke alarms. However, there is some evidence to suggest that tenanted properties are not well served by smoke alarms as are owner/occupied homes.

So, whilst most home owners are aware of the risk and install their own alarms, residential rental tenants must rely upon their landlords. Many tenants, particularly elderly, disabled or low income tenants, are completely unaware of the landlord's responsibilities. We have launched a campaign to implement a series of actions about raising the level of compliance in that particular targeted area. We are launching a 'Smoke alarms save lives—Winter 2003' fridge magnet campaign. The fridge magnet will be aimed at helping to raise tenants' awareness of smoke alarms and what to do if an alarm has not been installed in the property they are renting.

The new magnet features a space for tenants to write the contact number of their landlord or agent for quick reference, which might be useful for other reasons. The magnet complements two publications already produced by Planning SA. The magnets are being widely distributed with the aid of community groups, local councils and relevant government agencies. If the honourable member would like some of these fridge magnets, I am sure that we can make arrangements to deliver some to his office. They are an attractive fridge magnet—slightly lairy colours, which should attract the attention of tenants.

It sounds like a small thing but, as the honourable member would be aware, the number of home fires he may have attended where either a smoke alarm was not present or the battery had run out is alarming. It is a life or death issue.

Mr CAICA: I would be delighted if the Colton office would receive some of those fridge magnets.

The CHAIRMAN: You were really hoping for a fridge rather than the magnet. Are members strict on this time frame of a changeover at 12?

Mr MEIER: I have a few questions, Mr Chairman, but I recognise that if we go over the time frame here then suddenly we will go over for the rest of the day. The next shadow minister is ready. I am sure that I can raise my questions during either the 10 minutes or the 20 minutes in the post budget reply speech.

The CHAIRMAN: We do not have to be fanatical. I guess that we can go a little into lunch time if we need to.

Mr CAICA: We are willing to forgo our questions on this side to allow the honourable member to ask his questions.

Mr MEIER: All right. I will be very brief. I was interested to hear the answer to the member for Napier's question on Planning SA's association with tourism development in South Australia. I was delighted to hear that. My question relates to developments on Yorke Peninsula, and particularly the Port Vincent marina. If the minister has not seen it, hopefully he will take the opportunity in the near future. It is an excellent example and future generations of tourists will have the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from that because of the open concept idea on the one side of the marina.

The minister would be well aware that I raised with the ERD Committee the question of the Wallaroo marina, the Copper Cove marina. The developers are endeavouring to close up with intense housing what was identified as an open space and commercial area. I thank the minister for at least making a shift in planning so that the area must be a category 2 rather than a category 1. But, as the minister would acknowledge, category 2 is still not sufficient, necessarily, to stop any intense development in what was to be an open area. Is the government considering using its powers, as it is now taking a greater interest in tourism, to stop developers literally destroying what could be a great tourist facility for the next 20 to 100 years simply because they want to make a few more dollars in the next year or two?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: That question requires a lengthy answer, so I will take it on notice.

Mr MEIER: I am happy to forgo my next question to the member for Light.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Will the minister advise the committee what areas of Planning SA are targeted for TVSPs, and what impact the loss of staff will have on operations of Planning SA? From my memory, either in the Treasurer's speech or in the budget papers, six employees are identified for TVSPs in Planning SA.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: There is not a clear answer. While the budget papers refer to the potential for a reduction from 146 to 140, it is likely that that will be managed, in large measure, by natural attrition. There is a possibility of a single TVSP but it is in the order of magnitude of one or zero TVSPs.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: And the second part of the question is: what impact will the loss of staff have on the operations of Planning SA? If there is an attrition of five or six people, you might not be able to identify exactly where they will come from, but you must have some idea.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: If it is a reduction, it will not be in any sensitive public policy areas that we have identified as priorities: it will be at a relatively junior level. We think we can make the accommodation with certain efficiencies within the organisation.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the member for Light have any further questions?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Yes, I do, but I can put them on notice. It depends on how long we want to go on. I think we need to be mindful of the rest of the day, so I will put the rest of my questions on notice.

Independent Gambling Authority, \$1 386 000

Departmental Advisers:

Mr R. Chappell, Director, Independent Gambling Authority.

Mr B. Pryor, Commissioner, Office of Liquor & Gambling.

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

Membership:

Mr Brokenshire substituted for the Hon. M.R. Buckby.

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

the budget statement and part 3, pages 3.1 to 3.30 in Volume 1 in the Portfolio Statement. Minister, do you wish to make an opening statement? You have only half an hour for the session.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes, I would like to make a statement. The state Labor government recognises that many South Australians enjoy leisure time gambling. The gambling industry is obviously a very successful one and employs many South Australians. Our casino and hotels provide attractive facilities for people to enjoy themselves and, for many years, governments have recognised that gambling is a legitimate part of the available leisure options for South Australians.

More recently, however, there has been an increasing tide of concern in the community about the amount of money being spent on gambling activities, particularly on poker machines. There has been concern about the increasing numbers of young people involved in gambling at one level or another, and the community has expressed concerns about access and availability, advertising, the addictive behaviour associated with problem gambling and, most of all, the harmful effects of problem gambling upon the families of those with such difficulties.

While recognising the importance of maintaining a sustainable industry for responsible gambling activities, this government intends to directly address the need for harm minimisation. This will ensure balancing these two difficult concepts of the individual responsibility that people take for their own conduct and the fact that businesses which make money in this industry need to accept responsibility for those who work in this industry. So, they are the issues that need to be balanced.

Before this government took office, South Australia lagged behind other states in harm minimisation. Very little was done to address community concerns about problem gambling. The previous government took no step to establish how many poker machines there should be in this state, and this matter was referred by our government to the Independent Gambling Authority. That inquiry is under way and the report will be tabled in parliament in due course.

As well as providing a number of options for government on gambling machine numbers, this inquiry will also address questions of transferability. The government has also asked the Independent Gambling Authority to consider how we can introduce a protocol in the nature of an early intervention order to help families who are affected by problem gambling behaviour. This will enable people who are directly affected by problem gamblers to help themselves and to restrain the problem gambler from wasting the family's income and savings and requiring them to seek help.

Other areas currently being looked at by the Independent Gambling Authority include the finalisation of the first stage of the uniform Advertising and Responsible Gambling Codes of Practice for all commercial codes of gambling, the outcome of public consultation to be undertaken by the Independent Gambling Authority, and a range of additional measures.

In the budget are three cost recovery measures and one new initiative for the gambling portfolio. The cost recovery measures are in respect of regulatory action in relation to the casino and the TAB, and the new initiative provides the opportunity to publish an information booklet in relation to gambling machines to assist as a harm minimisation measure.

Mr BROKESHIRE: I also would like to make a few brief overview remarks, particularly given the comments of

the minister in his introduction. First, I think it is important to place on the record again that the current structure that we deal with in respect of the matters around gaming machines, particularly, was set up by the previous Bannon-Arnold Labor government. I think it is important to put that on the record again, given the minister's comments.

Also, the fact of the matter is that the previous Liberal government has a record on which it can stand quite proudly with regard to efforts and input to address matters right across the spectrum of gambling and gaming, and members will recall that South Australia still today leads the way as a consequence of the initiatives that were put forward after a lot of work by members in the Liberal Party when they were in government to address harm minimisation and overall management structures for gambling and gaming. In fact, South Australia was the first state in Australia to have a minister responsible for gambling. Some states had a minister for gaming but not for gambling. We were working through a number of issues. For example, a freeze on gaming machine numbers was put on when we were in office and, in fact, work was being done on that when we left office. It is this government, I remind the parliament, that has dragged the chain by requesting an additional extension of the freeze. So, I think it is relevant to put those points on the public record.

The other point I want to raise is that, while I believe the general concept of the Independent Gambling Authority (IGA) is a good concept, I place on the record some concerns that I have as shadow minister for gambling, having been the minister for gambling responsible for setting up that authority. I do so on behalf of a lot of players within the industry, and I talk about those who are providers as well as those who pick up the pieces of the negative sides of gaming and gambling—the church groups, service providers and counsellors.

I particularly point out the way in which it appears the IGA—certainly from advice I have received—is almost taking the word literally, almost like a separation of powers that there is in the Police Act, for example. If we do not see some improvement there, the parliament, which is ultimately responsible for all the legislation regarding the IGA and any other matters pertaining to gambling and gaming, may have to actually address the matter. I want that on the public record, because I cannot believe the amount of angst coming to me as shadow minister from all sectors of the providers and those in the industry who profit from gambling and gaming, particularly in the last few months.

Given the provisions of section 74A of the Gaming Machines Act 1992 that due consultation should occur before alteration to any codes of practice are put forward initially to the minister and then to the parliament, can the minister assure the opposition that this is, in fact, occurring? I want to highlight a letter—and I do not want to see the AHA being attacked for this, because whilst the letter is on an AHA letterhead it has actually been signed by the South Australian TAB, the Australian Hotels Association (SA Branch), Thoroughbred Racing (SA) Ltd (also representing Greyhound Racing (SA) Ltd), Harness Racing (SA) Ltd, Clubs SA, SA Newsagents Association, and SkyCity Adelaide Casino.

I believe it is a very interesting and unprecedented letter, which expressed their great disappointment with the lack of time they were given (the minimum 14 days requirement), and the fact that this material was sent out on Friday 30 May, in the late afternoon, and there was a long weekend involved as well. That effectively gave them only nine days to comment. They sought an extension. I do not believe they

should have had to seek that, minister, and I would like some feedback from you on behalf of all these organisations who are very concerned about some of the way the IGA is operating at the moment.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The member for Mawson wants his cake and to eat it too. He wants to suggest that the Independent Gambling Authority has not been speedy enough in relation to its work, but at the same time he wants to criticise it for not consulting. The reality is that more people have been consulted in relation to these important issues of the codes of practice, and in relation to his other point concerning gaming machine numbers, than has ever occurred in this state. There has been a thorough-going exercise, which has been superintended by the current presiding officer of the Independent Gambling Authority, in a way which is more sophisticated than has ever occurred. It has been handled in a way so as to give all parties the opportunity to be heard.

Going to the specific question raised about the codes of practice, public hearings in relation to these matters were held in December. All these questions were canvassed. The Independent Gambling Authority promulgated a report that put draft codes in place. It heard the submissions of the parties, it then promulgated a draft code and invited further submissions in relation to that code. It heard everyone, it arrived at a tentative view, it gave parties the opportunity to consider its thinking through the promulgation of the draft code and invited response within a time line. I am advised that as soon as concerns were raised about the inadequacy about the time line to respond, it was automatically extended, and I think that it has presently been extended until 19 July this year. So, a further extended period beyond the 14 days was allowed so that the parties would have a full opportunity to respond to the matters raised in the codes.

The opposition seems to reserve the right to criticise the authority if, in the course of carrying out these extensive consultations, this takes time and delays the delivery of its final report. You cannot have it both ways. There has been an extensive public consultation process, and I might say that there are voices being heard in this debate that have never been seriously listened to before. People in this sector realise that they have an authority that is now giving careful considerations to their experiences. These are people who work at the coalface on a day-to-day basis with people who suffer the effects of problem gambling. People are now being given an opportunity to tell their stories in front of an authority that carefully listens to their concerns and gives them every opportunity and encouragement to put those points of view. By the same token, it gives industry the opportunity to express its views about its experiences. The authority has gone to enormous lengths to hear those voices as well.

Sure, there is some controversy. This is an incredibly sensitive and complex public policy area about which the authority has been asked to provide advice to the government. It would be amazing if there was no controversy and people were not expressing concerns about where this was all heading and what the ultimate outcome from the authority will be. To the extent that there seems to be a criticism that the Independent Gambling Authority is behaving in an independent fashion, I do not know whether I would regard that as a criticism. I would have thought that it is an indication that it understands the nature of its statutory charter and is performing it.

Mr BROKENSHERE: As supplementary to that, the authority does have to consult properly, and I am not sure that is happening at the moment. I will give the minister one example: a report entitled 'Inquiry concerning advertising and responsible gambling codes of practice'. This was received by only one of the organisation I have previously listed and that was only after they requested it. That report details the changes to all codes which have ramifications for many of those signatories to the letter I have spoken about. I do not know why this sort of material is not distributed openly. I agree with the independence to a degree, but within that independence there needs to be fair and reasonable consultation right across the spectrum.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I am advised that the Independent Gambling Authority chose to await the tabling of the document in parliament before it distributed the material to each of the relevant stakeholders, and, upon it being tabled, it took that course. It seems to me to be an entirely proper way to approach the matter.

Mr BROKENSHERE: Minister, why are not the casino and the TAB contributing to the Gamblers' Rehabilitation Fund?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I think that this question would be better directed to the Minister for Social Justice, because she has responsibility for the Gamblers' Rehabilitation Fund. I understand that she has had discussions of that nature, but it would probably be best if that question was directed to her.

Mr BROKENSHERE: I will do that, minister. This government is taking an additional \$35 million over and above last year from gaming. The budget papers clearly show an additional take over three or four years of a projected \$35 million. How much extra money will the IGA be receiving? Whilst I stand by what I said about the IGA today, I believe it needs better resourcing and funding from the government to do its work. How much of the extra \$35 million is the IGA receiving in its budget, particularly for research and/or programs, and how much extra money is being put into rehabilitation and social welfare programs with that enormous increased tax grab?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: As would have been clear in the last budget round, there has been a substantial increase in the funding provided on an ongoing recurrent basis to the Independent Gambling Authority and it has been continued this year. Since the last time, when the previous government was responsible for funding the Independent Gambling Authority, its budget has increased by 19.3 per cent. It has gone from \$1.016 million to \$1.386 million in terms of funding, which is a 19.3 per cent increase.

Mr BROKENSHERE: Will it be able to utilise more of that money for some of the urgent research projects?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The authority will be allocating it as it sees fit, having regard to its priorities.

Mr BROKENSHERE: And the other part of the question was how much extra money is being put into rehabilitation and social welfare programs.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Again, that is a matter for the Minister for Social Justice, as she superintends the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund.

Mr BROKENSHERE: By way of supplementary question—

Ms Bedford interjecting:

Mr BROKENSHERE: This is a very important question. Rehabilitation through social welfare programs for the negative impact of gambling is very important. I will take it

up, albeit that it is primarily the social justice minister's responsibility. Does the minister responsible for gambling in this state consult with the Minister for Social Justice about the issues around increased budgets and programs for rehabilitation and social welfare in South Australia as a result of the downside of gambling?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Of course I work closely with the Minister for Social Justice. As the honourable member would be aware, an additional \$1 million was allocated by government on a recurrent funding basis to the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund. Recently an indication of the use to which at least some of that funding has been put was the announcement of an extensive public awareness campaign based on the Victorian model of advertising in relation to problem gambling. The Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund and those aspects of the portfolio under my responsibility work together and they will continue to work closely together in relation to our two portfolios.

Ms BEDFORD: What is the government doing about the future freezing of gaming machines?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: In relation to the freeze on gaming machines, members would be aware that in March the Independent Gambling Authority released its draft discussion paper inquiry into the management of gaming machine numbers. The Independent Gambling Authority received submissions on this paper by 16 May and held further public hearings on 17 and 18 June, with a report to be completed in September 2003. Pursuant to the Independent Gambling Authority Act, unless the authority recommends otherwise, I will table in the parliament the report within six sitting days of receiving it. The report will provide options in respect of the number of gaming machines in South Australia. The government will respond to these options and introduce legislation into the parliament as appropriate. The existing freeze has now been extended to 31 May 2004 to allow that time scale to run its course.

It is worth remembering that, despite the freeze being introduced by the previous government, there was a suggestion that an inquiry be undertaken, but no steps were taken to undertake such an inquiry into gaming machine numbers in this state until we took office. So, the so-called inquiry they are so worried is taking so long to complete could have been initiated and it would have been well advanced by the time we came to government, but no steps were taken, despite there being commitments in parliament that such an inquiry would take place. We resourced the Independent Gambling Authority with additional resources, gave it its terms of reference and the inquiry has been undertaking a sophisticated public consultation process. Public hearings have been held on a number of occasions—as recently as 17 and 18 June. The Independent Gambling Authority has commissioned and received independent research into the question of the distribution of gaming machines and gambling related harm in metropolitan Adelaide.

Mr O'BRIEN: What has the Independent Gambling Authority achieved, what are its priorities for 2003-04 and what research is the Independent Gambling Authority currently undertaking?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: As I previously mentioned, the Independent Gambling Authority has been funded to the tune of \$1.386 million, including \$300 000 for research. The functions of the authority include the development and promotion of strategies for reducing the incidence of problem gambling, coordinating research into gambling matters and ensuring that effective and efficient supervision

is maintained over gambling licensees and the administration of a statewide voluntary barring scheme.

One of the priorities for the IGA has been the codes of practice we have spoken about and I have outlined the time lines in relation to them. The second obvious priority has been the inquiry into gaming machine numbers I have just mentioned. The other referral made to the Independent Gambling Authority by myself is the investigation of a legislative proposition about a family protection order—a compulsory system of barring, if it came to that—of somebody causing demonstrable harm to their family through problem gambling. Often the effects of problem gambling are extended much beyond the person concerned and the harm is spread to other family members who may not be in a position where they can effectively deal with or stop this harm from occurring.

Before people lose their homes, before they lose their relationships or before they turn to crime, which is an increasing issue, we want to put in place a legislative opportunity to ensure that the state has a role in saying that enough is enough and provide support to families. Families cannot handle this problem by themselves. Caring agencies are often treating the victims of problem gambling, which is not just the person themselves but also the family. If you wait until there is a complete crisis and breakdown, while those services are important, they may be so much more effective if you could intervene before the massive crisis hits. We are looking forward to the response from the Independent Gambling Authority in relation to that proposition.

Mr BROKESHIRE: I will ask two quick questions and put the others on notice. The minister talked about the Victorian advertisement program to try to stop problem gambling, which we support. However, I believe that this will put considerably more pressure on the Breakeven program. Is further funding being provided for that program?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: That question ought to be directed to the Minister for Social Justice. However, from attending the launch with the minister, I know that she has made it clear that additional resources are available to grapple with what is expected to be a rise in the use of services as a consequence of the advertising campaign.

Mr BROKESHIRE: I will raise that with the Minister for Social Justice. With the second stage recommendations of the Code of Practice measures, will the minister rule out what we see as a ludicrous proposal from the IGA to take Keno and similar product sales from newsagents and chemist shops and put them into lotteries agencies and hotels?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will pay the Independent Gambling Authority the respect of reading its report before I rule anything in or out.

Mr BROKESHIRE: I want to place on the public record my appreciation of the minister's Chief of Staff, who works well with me as the shadow minister. However, I understood that the report from the IGA with respect to its recommendations about the matters pertinent to the freeze would be with the minister's office by October and that we, as members of parliament, would have the opportunity to have those tabled prior to our getting up in December.

Only this week, I read in the print media that the IGA is indicating that that report may not now be completed before the end of this year. That concerns me immensely, because of what I have just said, in addition to the fact that I also understand and appreciate that the minister's recommendations as Minister for Gambling, on behalf of the government, will be put to the parliament by February of next year, so that

the parliament and community of South Australia will have adequate time in which to debate all the issues surrounding the recommendations regarding the pokie freeze prior to the end of May 2004.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I have had no formal communication with the Independent Gambling Authority in relation to the alteration of the time line. However, the only caveat I would put on that is that, if people continue to suggest that they want an opportunity to be heard in respect of propositions, and they can put a persuasive case about needing more time, that obviously will put pressure on time lines. However absent that, I have heard no other suggestion about an altered time line.

However, whenever that report is issued, I am obliged to table it within six sitting days of parliament. We will build into the process the capacity for the honourable member to have sufficient time to consider those measures.

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

Department for Administrative and Information Services,
\$119 011 000
Administered Items for Department for Administrative and
Information Services, \$5 254 000

Membership:

The Hon. D.C. Kotz substituted for Mr Brokenshire

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, Executive Director, Policy Planning and Community Planning.

Ms M. Marsland, Executive Director, Building Management.

Mr M. Grillo, Executive Director, Government Information and Communications Services.

Ms K. Rainsford, Senior Project Officer.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments opened for examination and refer members to Appendix D, page 3 in the Budget Statement, and part 6, pages 6.1 to 6.36, Volume 2, of the Portfolio Statements. Does the minister wish to make an opening statement?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: As Minister for Administrative Services, I am committed to restoring confidence in government by encouraging measures that enable greater transparency of our processes and easier access to government services. The key priority is to ensure the continued provision of consistent and reliable services that support the activities of state government, local government, businesses and the broader community.

Through the department's broad range of functional responsibilities, we are delivering policy and service strategies that demonstrate that we are an open, accountable, and accessible government; a consistent and coordinated government; a productive and efficient government; as well as being known as a fair and just employer.

The department's priorities for the coming year include improved customer relationship management, implementation

of FOI legislative and non-legislative changes, across government efficiency savings, modernisation of the state's Supply Act, and development of new ICT arrangements for government. I take this opportunity to outline some of the major achievements of the department this year and to touch on the themes which will guide work and expenditure of the department over the coming months.

Significantly, I am pleased to report that, further to the Premier's commitment to open and accountable accessibility measures, the Citizens Right to Information Charter has been launched, and the FOI Officers Forum has been charged with development of policies and guidelines in relation to FOI and the development of an FOI statement on all government forms that describes the public's rights. The bill to amend the FOI Act has been passed in the lower house. When the bill is finally passed, it will pave the way for agencies to adopt the new regime.

A review of the state's Supply Act to ensure best practice in procurement has been completed. Consultation is now under way across government to determine how best to achieve the government's objectives. Changes to the act seek to broaden and strengthen the state's Supply Board and align its activities with government objectives; to provide the board with the responsibility to ensure consistent best practice for all government document operations; to streamline accountability frameworks; and to ensure that the board has the power to audit and measure compliance with board policies.

In addition, the obligations of government procurement officers to carry out their duties with honesty, integrity, care and due diligence will be reinforced. The work that is being done on the Procurement Act demonstrates the government's commitment to productive and efficient government.

The government's target of reducing 5 per cent of its electricity requirements by sourcing at least five per cent from renewable energy sources has been exceeded. I am pleased to report that cabinet has approved purchase of 32 000 megawatts per annum of renewable energy from AGL. This represents 6.4 per cent of the government's total electricity requirements, which will be sourced ultimately from the Starfish Hill wind farm project. Of note, electricity from wind farms started flowing into the national grid on 30 April. It is also set to produce about 2 per cent of South Australia's residential electricity demands.

In addition, an energy consumption audit program of government buildings is in progress. An audit of major energy consuming buildings has been completed and strategies have been identified to achieve reductions in energy in government tenancies. Building refurbishments, including energy-efficient lighting and airconditioning, have been incorporated into energy management strategies.

Other initiatives to reduce greenhouse gases in line with the government's commitment to be a productive and efficient government include an aim to achieve 13 per cent of the motor vehicle fleet operating on alternative fuels by June 2004.

The government has also reviewed its full range of information and communication service arrangements. The review confirmed the importance of taking a cohesive approach to meeting its technology requirements. The state public sector's requirements in the area of information and communication technology have changed in recent years, partly due to the way in which government departments and agencies and businesses wish to interact with the community.

In line with our commitment to open, accountable, consistent, and coordinated government, the Treasurer has

advised parliament that there would be opportunities for the ICT industry to provide a range of services for government. Work is on track for the tender process to commence in the second half of the year. Online access to government services is another important area for DAIS.

DAIS launched a web site in May 2002 for Service SA. Since the launch, the site has had over 107 000 user sessions, with over 600 people accessing the site daily. The new government directory facility will provide details about the structure of government and information on parliament, and is now featured on the home page of the site, along with an Aboriginal services directory. The new directories support the government's social inclusion policy. Four new hotlines have been established to deliver services on behalf of other government agencies through Service SA.

Another agency that falls within DAIS is State Records, the home of much of South Australia's documentary heritage. The archival collection consists of official records of government considered to be of sufficient historical importance to be retained permanently. They date from 1834 and include many valuable documents relating to the state's beginnings as a colony and its role in Federation. Access to these records is another area where the government is committed to openness and accountability. To better preserve the history of the state, a climatically controlled environment is being established at Gepps Cross to house the treasures and fragile items from the collection. The new controlled environment will have the capacity to hold 18 000 shelf metres of records. Building work for that will commence in July 2003 and be operational by about February 2004.

The Department of Administrative and Information Services also plays a role in the government's promise to reduce crime by providing independent forensic services which support the criminal justice system. Now that the Criminal Law (Forensic Procedures) Act has been amended, systems are in place to commence prisoner testing before the end of the financial year. There are now almost 3 000 DNA profiles from crime scenes and 500 DNA profiles from convicted offenders on the database maintained by Forensic Science. Almost 100 of these offenders, 20 per cent, have been linked with other crimes on the database.

One of the priorities for the whole of DAIS is to improve customer relationships, and to that end the Interact customer relationship program has been adopted. Staff development awareness is currently in progress to ensure the organisational cultural change necessary to implement the Interact guarantee. Streamlined customer interfaces in the Land Titles Office have been implemented and there is now a defined direction for electronic conveyancing in South Australia.

Over the coming months, the development of an electronic data interchange in access to land information from and to local government will strengthen the interface between the two sectors. The land services group will also be focusing on business processes in the LTO that will reduce processing times for divisions and plan lodgments. Implementation of new property management systems to improve the management of office accommodation leases and government-owned buildings has been a major achievement. So, too, is the completion of the design phase of the strategic asset management information system for the management of public assets.

Other achievements include work in relation to the Torrens Parade Ground and the repaving of the grounds. The building maintenance support policy for regional development is another area of achievement. Building maintenance

supports regional areas through work and employment. DAIS is an extremely diverse department which provides a range of services that assist government across a range of agencies. I have touched on a few of the achievements in the last 12 months and some initiatives for the coming 12 months.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Under program 6, Forensic Science Services, in the Portfolio Statements, performance commentary states:

The number of DNA database reference samples is anticipated to increase to a maximum of 12 000 in 2003-04 due to amendments to the Criminal Law (Forensic Procedures) Act 1998, providing police with the ability to collect samples in a wider range of crime categories.

If the department is unable to reduce the backlog of DNA reference samples this year, does it have infrastructure and administrative resources to reliably contain new samples without fear of contamination or error until the resources are available to enable effective and efficient processing to an up-to-date level?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The essential proposition is that increased recurrent funding has been allocated to the order of \$1.2 million to Forensic Science, which includes 11 additional employees. In order to take advantage of new technology and automated instruments, additional capital funding of \$765 000 over four years has also been approved. The successful implementation of the act and the achievement of the predicted law enforcement outcomes relies on the ability of Forensic Science to receive, extract and analyse those samples and provide SAPOL with reports within a reasonable time frame.

Prior to the proclamation of the act, Forensic Science commenced recruitment of the seven officers to enable training to be implemented in preparation for the influx of samples. A further four employees will be recruited as sample numbers build. A specialised punch has recently been purchased to speed up the process of removing the DNA sample from the carrier card. Investigations into robotics and automation options are also under way. A major upgrade of the DNA data management software is due for implementation at the end of May. Forensic Science has received 1 200 reference samples since the act was proclaimed in April and it is using these samples to consolidate protocols, in conjunction with SAPOL, to streamline the submission of samples.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: The same commentary also states that the estimated 2002-03 turnaround time for SAPOL cases and investigations was impacted by increasing DNA backlogs, which resulted in the output being dominated by older cases. What proportion of the projected target of 12 000 DNA reference samples expected to be dealt with this year constitutes older cases and what was the turnaround time for police cases and investigations?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We do not have with us the breakdown of that 12 000 between the two categories, but we will supply that material and also the additional aspects of the honourable member's question that relates to it.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Under program 6 on page 6.20, under the 2003-04 performance indicator section, the number of DNA database reference samples is projected to increase from 400 to 12 000 this year. I notice that Budget Paper 3, page 2.20, under 'Operating initiatives', shows that some \$5.747 million over four years will provide resourcing requirements for Forensic Science to handle additional testing, with \$1.665 million allocated in this year's budget. In which part of the operating statement for program 6 does

the \$1.665 million appear, as the previous budget estimated results show an expenditure of \$6.554 million? If the \$1.665 million is in the 2003-04 budget, the increase of additional funds from last year is only \$1.044 million, which is missing a sum of \$621 000.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The comparison is between the previous year's budget and this year's budget. That gives the figure that is contained in the budget papers. Towards the end of this year, because we were forced to, we began spending money on the preparations for this. Money was reallocated within the DAIS portfolio to begin the process of expenditure in relation to the training of the relevant staff, which I mentioned before, to be geared up to commence and prepare for the influx of additional samples. What one is seeing is the budgeted result being compared to the actual result. The actual result, though, embeds in it steps that we were already taking before the end of the last financial year to make expenditure in relation to these matters.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Are we talking about the portion of the \$5.747 million—the \$1.665 million? Is that what the minister is saying has partially been spent at this point?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Not spent; it has not been spent for next year, because next year's allocation is provided there. It is just that the previous year's financial expenditure included some expenditure that was directed at the increased resources that would be necessary to gear up for the additional demand because of the introduction of changes to the Forensic Science Act. No expenditure has occurred of moneys that are budgeted for the coming financial year that we are considering in this estimates process. It is just that, last financial year, more money was spent than was budgeted in relation to this area.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: So, when I see a disparity between the estimated result shown last year and what we are seeing as this year's potential expenditure—

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Is the \$621 000 missing between those two amounts accurate in terms of what may have been spent from the previous budget?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It is not missing. It is just that, instead of our waiting for this financial year to increase the expenditure, some of the increased expenditure occurred in the previous financial year.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: So, the full amount that was expected and projected in this year's budget is all in this year's budget?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes. It is not as if we have spent some early and that is taken off what we will spend in the coming budget. It is additional to what we will spend in the coming budget.

Mr O'BRIEN: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 6.16. What strategies is the government putting in place, in regard to its property management responsibilities, to improve efficiency in office buildings occupied by government employees?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: That is a very good question. Government agencies are currently developing one-year and five-year strategic plans to establish their expected future office accommodation requirements. The government is continuing to encourage agencies to plan for the development of functional and productive workplaces that provide a stimulating environment for employees, while effectively utilising space and resources. A range of space and cost targets is in place, and these are progressively being imple-

mented as new fitouts are required. The new fitout currently under construction in the Education Centre is an example of the current thinking in office design, where the use of natural light is maximised, and a high level of flexibility is incorporated into design. A range of meeting, office and open plan facilities is provided, and open space targets are achieved. When all plans have been completed, the Government Office Accommodation Committee will review the plans to determine the common needs of government agencies and their future space needs.

Ultimately, more efficient space planning will lead to cost savings in government with respect to the use of office accommodation, but it can be done in a way that makes these places better to be in. We can do both things at once: we can save space, but we can also make a more attractive work environment. This is a matter on which we will be working closely with the relevant unions to ensure that their needs are met, because these are very important decisions which are made at a workplace level and which very much affect the wellbeing of employees.

Ms BEDFORD: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, pages 6.5 and 6.17. How is the review of the State Supply Act progressing?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The State Supply Act obviously is an important document, which reflects an important piece of legislation that superintends the procurement of government purchases. It is a commitment by the government to modernise the State Supply Act. The whole notion of supply is a very old concept of government procurement. We need to ensure that we have a modern State Supply Act which effectively ensures that the relevant accountabilities are in place in relation to the modern system of procurement. We now know that government procures something in the order of, I think, \$1.8 billion per annum across all its operations. It is a huge buy—in fact, I think something of the order of three-quarters of the things that we purchase are services, whereas in previous days many of them would have been goods. So, there has been a complete change in the structure of our procurement operations.

We know that modern procurement policy can also be used to ensure that government objectives can be immediately achieved through, basically, encouraging good supply behaviour. We could have, for instance, relevant industrial relations standards that are contained within legislation, and that is one thing; or we could have relevant environmental standards that are contained in legislation, and that will give us the minimum basic level of compliance. But the procurement process can be used to drive government policy to go further than the minimum basic requirements.

Obviously, if we are able to introduce in our procurement process measures that reward performance that has good outcomes in those matters to take to industrial relations environmental performance, we can have companies competing for the work of government that demonstrate their best practice in that area. That can be a much more efficient and effective way of the government's achieving its overall public policy objectives, rather than just feeling that it has to legislate and require people to do things because, inevitably, that means that it tends to be more of a lowest common denominator approach. Those philosophies need to be embedded within the State Supply Act to bring it up to speed with modern notions of procurement. That process is well under way. We expect quite soon to be in a position to bring a draft bill for public consultation.

Ms BEDFORD: I again refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, pages 6.5 and 6.17. Can the minister advise the committee how the procurement reform program across government is progressing?

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, we can take that question after the luncheon break.

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

The CHAIRMAN: The committee resumes. I understand that the member for Florey is awaiting an answer which, no doubt, will be very comprehensive, given the lunch break.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: With the benefit of the luncheon adjournment, I have been able to consider that question. The procurement reform across government is progressing extremely well. The State Supply Board is currently superintending that process through the development of a next generation procurement reform strategy. As I mentioned earlier, it is a substantial opportunity given the extent of the goods and services that are purchased. Procurement reform needs to be undertaken in a coordinated manner. There are massive opportunities to do things in a coordinated manner, which will achieve value for money outcomes.

For example, and without suggesting that this is a particular policy that would be adopted, if the government put in place a zero waste policy in relation to its building construction sites, obviously, that could avoid landfill through the process of resource recovery. I think that with respect to most building sites the technology exists to ensure that most of the resources are recovered and recycled rather than put into landfill. That could achieve an important public objective but driven through the procurement system. That is the style of thing we are looking to drive through procurement reform.

The other aspect of procurement reform is that modern understanding of procurement is that you really need to put resources into having expert buyers, because we know that a lot of expert sellers are out there who are keen to sell us things. Obviously, they are out there to make a profit, and government needs to be very clear about its capacities and what it needs so that it is not driven, essentially, by supplier objectives. We held a procurement conference in Adelaide in March this year, which focused on procurement as a key enabler of the achievement of government objectives. That was really a catalyst, I suppose, for the next step of procurement reform. We expect to be making further announcements about these matters in the coming months.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: In last year's estimates the minister made some comments in relation to the Forensic Science Centre and some of the staffing that had been undertaken in the 2001-02 year. The minister said that the Forensic Science Centre had allocated and trained three technical officers and a graduate scientist to form the database team within the molecular biology group. He also said that, as part of the 2002-03 budget, forensic science services received additional funding of some \$543 000, which includes two additional DNA staff and additional DNA consumables. Will the minister outline the current status in staffing numbers of the database team within the molecular biology group, and what portion of funding constitutes employees' salaries and entitlements as opposed to any DNA consumables funding in this budget?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will take that question on notice.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Again, in program 6, under 'Employee Entitlements', there is an increase in entitlements

of some \$2.57 million from the 2001-02 budget to the current budget—some 15 months. Will the minister advise the committee of the relativity of the increase of \$2.57 million from the 2001-02 year to the current year in terms of full-time employment numbers, as well as any other staffing arrangements that complement total staffing levels in the forensic science area and any projected increase in staffing numbers in the coming financial year?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We will take that question on notice also. Just to refer to my earlier answer, the proposal is 11 employees, but if the honourable member is asking the specific question about how many will be delivered, we will take that on notice.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: In the operating statement under 'Supplies and Services', the operating expense is \$3.969 million, which is an increase on last year's budget of some \$561 000. Will the minister explain the intent of this increase, that is, what does \$561 000 purchase and provide in supplies and services, and what part of the budget line provides funds for what the minister has talked about as improved, upgraded or new technology resources to deal with that huge increase in DNA database reference samples?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Can I clarify that the last matter the honourable member raised, the new technology and the nature of capital equipment, is not contained within that budget item. What is contained within that budget item are those consumable items that go with DNA testing.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Does that cover the increased portion of operating expenses?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I am advised that the main component of that are kits that cost of the order of \$35 per kit. That is the main component of those consumables. The additional new technology is not contained within that budget line.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Where is it contained, minister? I know that some very detailed resources are required to upgrade forensic sciences, and I think I identified a lot of them in one of my speeches in parliament.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It is in the investing program. I understand that it is contained within the general DAIS investing program line, but I will provide the honourable member with the precise reference number and where it exists within the budget.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: To his knowledge, can the minister identify what, if any, new technologies or equipment purchases will be purchased in this coming budget?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I think that I mentioned that in an earlier answer. Taking advantage of new technology and automated instruments, additional capital funding of \$675 000 over four years has been approved. I can provide more details about the nature of that new technology or automated instruments on notice.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: In what portion of what line in the budget is that \$675 000?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We will clarify that. It is in the investing program. It is at page 6.6 in the general investing payments summary under 'Annual Provisions or Other Projects', but we will clarify that for the honourable member.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: So, that is \$675 000 over four years?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: No, \$765 000, I think was the answer I gave earlier. Can I just clarify that it is also mentioned in Budget Paper 5, page 21, under 'Annual Programs' for DAIS. It refers to the fact that forensic services

are contained within an annual contribution sum of \$4.993 million.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: It is very ambiguous when it also relates to asset management, maintenance contract, procurement, accommodation, project management, land services, record management, etc.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Sure; it is aggregated within that but, if the honourable member would like more details of the component of that that is attributable to forensic services, we will provide that for her.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: That would be helpful.

Mr HANNA: I refer to sub-program 9.5 on page 6.27 of Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, in relation to ministerial and VIP vehicles. Can the minister give an approximate cost for each car—in other words, aggregating the cost of the car itself, maintenance, the driver and support staff?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I refer the member to page 6.27 of the budget papers, sub-program 9.5. The approximate relationship to the number of vehicles and the operating cost per vehicle is \$100 000.

Mr HANNA: I have a supplementary question. Can the minister rule out that a car would be provided to the chairperson of the proposed natural resources management committee, which was the subject of an amendment in the House of Assembly and is yet to be considered by the Legislative Council in relation to the River Murray Bill?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I cannot rule it in or out. As I understand it, that is a matter that will need to be determined by parliament and/or the relevant minister. My responsibilities are to provide the service to whoever it is deemed appropriate should have the relevant service. So I do not make the decision about who is entitled to a particular vehicle: that is a decision for the relevant minister and, in some cases, parliament, I suppose. Certainly, I do not have a proposition before me to approve or otherwise a change of that sort, and I am unaware of whether another minister has such a proposition before them. The question of ministerial vehicles and their applicability to various committees has been discussed in broad terms but there has been no particular resolution, on my understanding.

Mr HANNA: I have a further and final supplementary question. Will the minister take on notice this question: can he provide a written policy which determines which committees get cars and which do not, and the reasons? That may be a question that he cannot answer now, but I presume that somewhere within the vast array of policy documents within government there is something by which one can adjudge whether or not a particular committee warrants a car.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I think it is the case that there is no particular policy that exists except to the extent that there is a document that summarises the current position. It would tend to be based on historical matters. To the extent that I have explored any of these matters, my understanding is that certain services have been provided to the chairs of certain committees on a historical basis and sometimes that historical basis has been altered from time to time in a way which has not necessarily been the subject of a particular written policy decision. I am unaware of such a policy existing.

The CHAIRMAN: To follow up on that: as I understand it, the government now leases all vehicles, which is a move away from the previous approach of purchasing and then reselling. Can you enlighten the committee whether it is a lease operation or whether the government has gone back to purchasing and doing its own resale?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will ask Mr Barry Miller to explain the answer to that question, because it is not as straightforward as it might sound.

Mr MILLER: Approximately seven years ago the light motor vehicle fleet was sold and a facility in the order of \$200 million was established with the Commonwealth Bank. Subsequently, Fleet SA has always bought and sold cars: it simply used that facility to finance the deal. So it was a financial leasing arrangement with the Commonwealth Bank. That facility is about to finish and SAFA will take on that role. But the government will always continue to buy and sell its vehicles itself. It is a question of how they are financed rather than leasing individual vehicles. The facility with the Commonwealth Bank did not lease individual vehicles: it was a facility for a certain amount of money against which to buy and sell the vehicles.

The CHAIRMAN: I have raised this with the minister previously. My concern is that many of the vehicles bought in the light fleet are not equipped with air bags, and I am concerned about the safety of public servants because they are important people. Is it a requirement that vehicles being purchased now have air bags for both driver and front passenger?

Mr MILLER: I can answer that, also. We have always had a policy of procuring the vehicles that the manufacturer specifies. There are lots of issues associated with whether we specify extra air bags. The community standard was that most vehicles had a driver's side air bag. Now, that has changed slightly and most vehicles—I understand the new Ford and a few other vehicles—have the passenger side air bag as standard as well. So, we buy the standard configuration of the car and we do not specify additional options, primarily because if we were to specify additional air bags it raises many questions in terms of what the manufacturer says is safe. They clearly say that a driver's side air bag is safe and they are now moving towards having a passenger side air bag as standard as well, so we will procure that standard vehicle.

The CHAIRMAN: But, as I understand it, you can request air bags to be fitted for the front seat passenger. Many of the European cars have them on the sides as well. But, if someone becomes a paraplegic, the cost (apart from the human suffering) is enormous, and I would have thought it is a very effective protection device for government-owned vehicles where you will often have someone sitting in the front seat as a passenger. I guess that is a policy question for the minister.

Mr MILLER: If I can go on a bit further. Not all the vehicle fleet is, in fact, passenger sedans. There are a significant number of four-wheel drive vehicles and there is a whole range of vehicles in the fleet because it is designed to meet a different range of needs within government. If we were, for instance, to specify that passenger vehicles have to have driver's side air bags—although, as I said, many of them are becoming standard—it becomes difficult if you are buying a car or a van that does not have them because we are specifying an occupational health and safety standard which is not achievable in delivering some of the other vehicles. So, we have always stuck to what the manufacturer says and, over time, the manufacturers eventually meet the public demand for higher standards with things such as the additional air bags, which is happening now—as I said, it has become standard on the Ford and I think Holden and Mitsubishi are moving towards that as well. But it is a difficult question in terms of providing that sort of safety standard across the fleet

because many four-wheel drive vehicles and vans simply are not made that way.

The CHAIRMAN: I was thinking of a smaller van where it is an optional extra, but you have covered the point.

Mr CAICA: We have only one final question on this side and the committee discussed it over the lunch period so I trust the minister is prepared. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 6.33. What are the key projects completed in the historic buildings conservation program this year?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Currently, there are 397 state heritage places owned by the government of South Australia. The heritage group within DAIS building management manages the historic buildings conservation program and has a budget of \$1.35 million for that program. The activities delivered include: a program of works which conserve the fabric and character of state heritage assets; preparation of dilapidation surveys, building conservation plans, and building audits; liaising with and assisting government agencies with regard to ongoing asset management; and providing advice to consultants, project managers, and the community on heritage matters relating to specific projects.

The program completed the following significant projects during 2002-03: the conservation of the women's statewide health service at 64 Pennington Terrace; facade restoration in the South Australian District Court; and the restoration of pioneer graves at the West Terrace Cemetery. The program for 2003-04 will include Mount Barker Police Station conservation works, State Library of South Australia conservation works, Cummins House conservation works, Dingley Dell conservation works, Old Customs House conservation works, and the Turretfield Holland House conservation works.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: We are talking about the different amounts of funding that appear throughout the budget papers relating to forensic sciences. On page 6.36, Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, there is mention of additional funding of \$12.9 million in 2003-04, as follows:

... which relates to functional resources for amendments to the Criminal Law (Forensic Procedures) Act 1998 (DNA testing); contract research, development and evaluation costs for the future ICT service arrangements; and increased occupational health and safety inspectorial function.

Could the minister identify the actual allocation of funds for DNA testing out of that \$12.9 million that relates to functional resources and advise the committee what specific resources are 'functional resources'?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: In accordance with my previous answer, the increased recurrent expenditure is \$1.2 million and the increased capital expenditure is \$765 000 over four years. I will endeavour to break down what is expected to be the case for this financial year and give the member an aggregate figure, but I will take that on notice.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: And the term 'functional resources'?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I think that the notion of that phrase is essentially the various functions rolling in both capital and investing. It is contained within the Budget Summary section of the budget papers, and I think it is one of those wonderful terms for how they function.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I presumed that things must work, but I was not quite sure how. Again under 'Program: 6', the 'Performance commentary' talks about the amendments to the Criminal Law (Forensic Procedures) Act. The minister would probably recall that, during the debate on the bill, I

was quite disappointed that the government had introduced legislation into the parliament that would require considerable financial resources to support the implementation and outcomes required from this legislation without first having costed the implementation of the new legislation to understand the financial requirements. As we now have within this budget an allocation of some \$5.747 million over four years, can the minister advise the committee of the cost implications arising from the legislative implementations?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The amount contained in the budget is based on an estimate supplied from information provided by the South Australia Police Department to the Forensic Science Unit about what it would need to carry out the relevant function. Having said that, it is an estimate and, if there are variations to that estimate, it may be that the cost of the implementation of the legislation could exceed the sum provided. However, we can act only on the best information available to us.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: In his answer, the minister suggested that it was the South Australia Police that advised him of possible estimation. Did I misunderstand the minister?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: South Australia Police did not advise me of anything. South Australia Police supply information to the Forensic Science Unit of my department and, on the basis of those estimates of the likely crime scene samples, they make their own judgment, having regard to the resources that are necessary to carry out the relevant tests, of what funds would be necessary to implement the legislation. On that basis, the budget figure was crafted, with the caveat that it is an estimate and that it may be less or more, presumably.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I understand that. The minister is talking about the crime scenes, South Australia Police and the resources that are required to be utilised under those circumstances, but is this \$5.747 million purely for the use of the South Australia Police to instigate its determinations of DNA sampling, or is there a portion of this that relates to the actual forensic science centre itself that specifically looks at the DNA reference sampling, the data base, and all the other required technical aspects that end up with the final report to the police? I am not quite sure whether the \$5.747 million the minister is talking about is for one specific purpose, through the range of aspects of criminal investigation undertaken by the police, or whether some of this money is actually utilised by the scientists and for technical results through the forensic science centre.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The money allocated is purely for forensic science. There is no allocation within that sum for police appropriation. So, the \$5.747 million has been provided to conduct additional testing, resulting from the new legislation, and it is for expensive DNA profiler plus kits used in the process, 11 new technical and scientific staff, and some \$765 000 in capital funding. It does not go to funding anything beyond that.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to 'Program 8—Records Management' under 'Performance Indicators' on page 6.24. Minister, the number of boxes of records assessed for conservation totalled 8 000 in actual figures for 2001-02. The target for the following year (2002-03) was 20 000, but achieved only 13 000, as shown in the estimated results. This year's target has been further downgraded to 5 500, and yet a further \$247 000 has been allocated for support and services expenditure.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The explanation is really a shift in focus. Much of the effort that will be going

into records management over the coming 12 months will be embedding in the new facility, which will be put in place at Gepps Cross, and into the new facility in Leigh Street. There is a dramatic change in the way in which we are presenting and storing material, so they will receive a lot of the attention and resources of the department and, therefore, other things will receive less attention. That is the fundamental difference. In the short term the number of boxes assessed for conservation will not be as high as the target for previous years because of the need for that reprioritisation. I will ask the public servant responsible for State Records to add to that.

Ms FERGUSON: In the process of creating the new temperature controlled archive at Gepps Cross, a lot of the boxes have to be shifted from Netley to Gepps Cross and stored away so that the ones most regularly accessed by the public are easily accessible and those the public are not so interested in are parked at the back of the archive. There is a huge amount of effort going on in looking at the collection we have and ensuring that what is used most regularly by the public is most accessible to them. Our emphasis in the next 12 months will not be on the accession of new boxes but on making sure the collection is accessible. Part of that service will operate from Leigh Street in the city, where people can have access to those records in a timely manner.

Mr SCALZI: Under the performance commentary, I refer to the decrease in record assessment for conservation for 2003-04, which reflects the outsourcing of temporary records to the private sector. What is the cost of private sector management of temporary record storage?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We do not have that detail but can supply it. It is obviously a short-term proposition to facilitate the change between facilities.

Mr SCALZI: Does the temporary record storage mean record assessment for conservation does not include those held by the private sector, and can those records held by the private sector still be received upon request?

MS FERGUSON: There are two types of records—temporary and permanent. The records collection State Records holds is the permanent collection. The records stored by the private sector are temporary records ultimately destroyed at the end of their life. The State Records Council, a representative body, makes those decisions over what is held and what is not. All those records are accessible during their life, but determinations are made on what we keep and do not keep and are on publicly available disposal schedules. The temporary records upon which that decision has been made are in the storage of the private sector. It was a decision of the previous government to go down that path and is based on that distinction. They are perfectly accessible and safely stored.

The CHAIRMAN: For a long time I have been interested in the possibility of using government resources to market messages, whether it be road safety, tourism or saving water. You have a large government fleet—and I am not suggesting you plaster them with signs—and I notice that some jurisdictions use appropriate non-damaging, removable advertising on vehicles as there are many out there in the public arena. I refer also to stationery and, whilst it is not the simple system of years ago, I notice that some countries and UK counties use the exterior of the envelopes from government agencies to promote either a tourism message such as visiting certain areas or a message about saving water or checking your fire alarm. We put out many envelopes to people in communication and miss the opportunity to convey an appropriate message on those envelopes. Could those issues be looked at?

The government is missing an enormous opportunity to promote messages as well as promote tourism through vehicles or envelopes that could otherwise go out carrying information to the public.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will be more than happy to look at those ideas, assess their feasibility and bring back an answer.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I refer to program 4, building management, sub-program 4.1, major projects. Under performance commentary we are advised that the significant increase in 2003-04 reflects the commencement of several new projects, including the Outer Harbor redevelopment and the Marion State Aquatic Centre. Will the minister identify what is meant by the significant increases in this budget area?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Those items reflect the value of the projects that are under management by major projects. It is not as though the major projects area is spending that money itself. These may exist in other budget areas. The Outer Harbor redevelopment may exist in a different budget line in relation to transport. The Marion State Aquatic Centre may be handled differently. The previous government was exploring a PPP. The values of the projects are significant and the role of DAIS is the provision of the budget line to pay for the relevant managers of the project rather than the provision of the money to fund the project.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: The cost of sub-program 4.1 is \$967 000 this year. The 2002-03 year shows a budget allocation of \$1.263 million, which is an underspend of \$258 000. Did cabinet agree to the carryover of \$258 000, and why is this year's allocation \$38 000 less than last year's estimated expenditure when the project values you answered for me are now actually six times greater than those that were managed last year?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Apparently, it will not be known until July or August whether the carryover will be approved, once the estimated result becomes known as the result. The second part of the proposition is about the reduction of the expenditure. Frankly, there is a reduction. This is an area where the government has sought to make savings. So, it is a budget saving initiative to reduce the amount of resources that are applied to this section of government.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: One of the two projects listed, creating a so-called 'significant increase' for 2003-04, is the Marion State Aquatic Centre. However, on page 2.210 of Budget Paper 3, under 'investing initiatives', the aquatic centre does not show any funding for this year or next year; only in the out years of 2005-06 and 2006-07 is \$1 million available, explained as provision for operating payment under PPP arrangements. Have any funds been expended to date on the proposed Marion State Aquatic Centre? What arrangements, if any, have been made to initiate a PPP to date, or is nothing expected to happen over the next two years to progress the State Aquatic Centre?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Minister Wright has responsibility for the project, but I can help the member to this extent. Because major projects is engaged, essentially, as a project manager, its work is about developing the feasibility of these projects. It is not yet determined whether this project will go ahead. Of course, one option is the PPP. So, in any event it would not appear as a capital works project. Ultimately, if it were approved as a PPP, it would be approved as an ongoing stream of operating expenditure.

However, I do not know enough about the decision making processes, or the funds that have been expended up

to this point, in relation to that matter, as Minister Wright has responsibility for that decision making. I could find out, but it would probably be best if the member directed those questions to Minister Wright.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: There is a dilemma in terms of what the budget papers are showing. Does the minister consider that it is anomalous or incorrect that, under those performance commentaries that suggest the significant increases in the value of projects this year, the aquatic centre is one that is named? That is under DAIS's management responsibilities. To me, it is an anomalous situation if, as the minister says, it is only management. However, management at this stage does not occur until resources are developed for a PPP or whatever happens in the future.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: There are two steps in good quality capital planning processes. The first is to explore its feasibility, and that is part and parcel of the project management task. The sensible thing to do is explore carefully whether projects are feasible, which will involve the devotion of considerable resources; sometimes, it will mean—

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: What work will your department undertake this coming year?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Administratively, the major projects department sits within DAIS. As the member is aware, that is an arrangement that the previous government had in place. However, on behalf of a range of portfolios and a range of individual functional areas, it manages particular projects. Part and parcel of its project management work has always been managing the feasibility part of the project. We are a fair way through the exercise, as I understand it, but that is being supervised by Minister Wright. There is no inconsistency in including the project within this section of the budget papers.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: They are all about expenditure refunds. All I am trying to ascertain at this moment is where there is an expenditure that relates to an identified area that the budget papers show. If there is no identified funding, I think there probably is an anomalous situation; if not, I really do not know what the answer is.

However, it still seems to me anomalous that we are talking about this project under DAIS. If there is a feasibility study (and I do not think I need lectures on the aspects of management with regard to this area), obviously they can be rather expensive items as well. Usually, budgets provide projected amounts of what may have been put aside to conduct the very feasibility study that the minister is talking about.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I think there is a misunderstanding. It is obviously a budget, so it is about what we are going to spend. It involves our future projected expenditure in relation to this project team and its work in relation to this project. It is providing, and will continue to provide, project management services to Minister Wright to assist him at the feasibility stage, even if it gets the go-ahead to the next stage. That is the nature of that budget item.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I refer to Budget Paper 3, page 220, savings initiatives. In relation to the major projects group, there is an identified savings initiative of some \$92 000 for rationalisation of service. Has the \$92 000 already been cut from the major projects budget, or is it still to be removed from the \$967 000 that currently shows in the budget?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It has already come out. So, the \$967 000 is the figure after the cut of \$92 000 has been applied.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: What projects have been reprioritised to account for the \$92 000 cut in funding?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: That is not the nature of the role. It provides project management services. There is a unit that provides services, and no projects have been cut. We are reorganising the way in which this government deals with capital projects. The member will recall that we recently made an announcement about the construction of the new Office for Infrastructure and a new Minister for Infrastructure. There is a cabinet committee process and an Office for Infrastructure that sits underneath, and that will superintend future capital investment needs of the state.

It is very much the thinking of the Economic Development Board that we need to move away from the major project driven approach to capital planning and that we should be looking at more strategic infrastructure projects, so that we do not have a repeat of the National Wine Centre, or the Hindmarsh Soccer Stadium. Those sorts of capital projects would have benefited from a reprioritisation of expenditure.

Indeed, in our forward estimates we saw quite considerable amounts of money set aside for the redevelopment of the Adelaide Oval. I think certainly that something in excess of \$10 million was set aside for the grandstands at Adelaide Oval. The government reprioritised its expenditure. It is very difficult to see how that was a crucial piece of public infrastructure that needed public money. Indeed, without barely a whimper, it seems that the grandstand has been built, presumably finding money from somewhere else. So, that money has been reapplied to schools and hospitals—precisely where it should be going.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: It is always remarkable how smart we seem to be in retrospect. In terms of the \$92 000 that has been cut from this area, that is only for this year. With the reprioritisation that the government is undertaking—which the minister has explained extremely well—it is not only \$92 000 that will be cut from the major projects group but some \$2.658 million over four years. Obviously the government is determined not to look at infrastructure. It needs dollars to manage projects, and the minister has advised that the government will not be managing too many projects, so the \$2.658 million looks as though it will come out of the minister's portfolio area for the management of major projects.

I turn to page 2.20, which is the Department for Administrative and Information Services savings initiatives. For commercial properties there is a reduction of \$3 million over two years in annual maintenance, upgrade and replacement expenditure, which is not actually building things but rather maintaining them. For efficiency measures there is a reduction in operating costs across the agency of some \$4.1 million over four years. Electronic government, a reduction in resources for the promotion and development of electronic services across government, a \$4.4 million cut over four years. Equipment replacement, a reduction in annual provisions, \$3.4 million over four years. Land services group, \$4.287 million over four years. Ministerial support—it looks like the minister is not being looked after too well—\$70 000 this year and \$620 000 over four years. The South Australian Government Information Centre, rationalisation of services, \$1.149 million.

This is a cut across four years of \$27.386 million in each of these areas, and only one is minimal in terms of project

management. If the annual maintenance, upgrade and replacement expenditure is cut drastically, we usually end up paying far more for maintenance than we save by cutting it. Now that I have identified the savings initiatives, can the minister take me through the identification of each of those areas that are subject to such severe structural cuts within his department? Will he explain to the committee just exactly what the impost on the ground will be? What does 'reduction in annual maintenance, upgrade and replacement expenditure' mean? Are programs in place to assess the difficulties? What type of maintenance upgrades and replacement will not be part of this government's procedures over the next two years?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: In a nutshell, the simple answer is that this government has different priorities from the previous government. We are constrained by the promises that we made about revenue raising. We are constrained by the promises that we made about raising debt, simply to pay for recurrent expenditure, and we are content with those constraints. We made a range of commitments about being prudent financial managers. So, to the extent that we have reprioritised spending into education, health, police and security matters, we have had to find funding from elsewhere in the budget. As I have said before, there are very few programs that could be described as worthless. Most have some value and it is a question of priorities. Our priorities are reflected in this budget. We are asking an enormous amount of agencies. We are often asking them to do more with less so that we have the resources to apply to our priorities.

To address the question as to what the impost will be on the ground, in relation to commercial properties, while there are savings of \$1.5 million over the forward estimates, as suggested, that is from a program that already has a substantial appropriation. What remains in 2003-04 is \$5.58 million; in 2004-05, \$4.85 million; and in 2005-06, \$5 million. It is already a substantial program. What we are talking about is a reduction in a program that is already a substantial program. An assessment has been made about what could be borne without causing a substantial rundown in the state of our assets.

In relation to the measures that have been put in place to monitor the impact of these proposals, we have made as careful an assessment as we possibly can about targeting these cuts to areas where we think the effect on crucial public services will be minimised. We will continue to monitor the situation. If necessary, adjustments will be made, but we will monitor the situation. In relation to equipment replacement, once again that provides for a \$1.7 million cut in each of the two estimates periods referred to in the budget papers in 2003-04 and 2004-05. Because it is a much bigger program, it retains an appropriation of \$4.49 million in 2003-04, \$3.446 million in 2004-05 and \$3.626 million in 2005-06. As a proportion of the total budget, it is not as if we are completely cutting the budget in this area. We are attempting also to make savings where we possibly can which minimise the reduction of full-time equivalent staff and we are attempting as far as possible to confine the savings to services and equipment where we can possibly afford to.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Does employee housing come under the classification of commercial properties?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: No.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Is there any intention to reduce the upgrade, replacement and maintenance on employee housing?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: No. In fact, there is an increase in relation to education of \$4.5 million in 2003-04, and, of that, \$0.5 million is for the AP lands. The total increase in contribution in relation to government employee housing for education is \$4.5 million. That is on top of an existing program of \$3.9 million.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I am pleased to hear that. That is one up for the employees! Under the savings initiatives that we have just been talking about, there is one that I did not mention. The budget paper shows that some \$24 million over three years will be removed from the government radio network's operational budget. There is also an alteration to the total cost of the project in the capital works paper. Last year the budget advised the total cost of the project to be \$247.7 million. This budget advises that the total cost is \$114.099 million, a reduction of \$132.6 million. The capital investment statement provides for \$15.214 million this year and informs the reader that works will be completed in August this year, two months from now. Will the minister explain what the government's intent for this program is and why it has been downsized and what its expected outcomes will be, as opposed to what was intended to be provided in the original contract?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: There is no downsizing of the project. The aspects that have been returned to the budget amount to contingencies. Since we came to government, we were presented with a troubled, to say the least, South Australian government radio network project. It is true to say that many of the expectations that emergency services employees were given to have about this particular network have not been realised, and we have had to take an entirely different approach. We have been served by the excellent work of Mr Jim Hulleck, a former president of the Local Government Association, who also has significant expertise in bushfire management, having been involved in the evaluations of Ash Wednesday 1 and 2. We were fortunate enough to secure his services as head of a government radio network monitoring committee. We expanded the remit of that committee to include the whole question of communications and see the government radio network within a broader context—about attempting to achieve an outcome, rather than simply seeking, as the previous government was forced to do, to defend a project.

If one takes that unit of analysis as the communication needs of emergency services personnel and approaches the question in that way, it throws up a very different set of potential solutions to the ongoing problems of the South Australian government radio network. We are in the process of holding Telstra to its contractual commitments to complete its project in accordance with the project specifications, and we are also finding a smarter way of dealing with the issues associated with communication needs of emergency services, rather than attempting to flog a dead horse in terms of holding up the South Australian government radio network as being the solution to everyone's problems.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: The savings initiatives show \$24 million being removed from the cost of the project over the next four years, with only \$15 million being spent this year—this is the revised costs of project implementation. The minister told me that there are no changes. It hardly sounds feasible, with that amount of money being removed from this project, that there are no changes.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It is a contingency provision. There is also another factor, and that is that we were the beneficiaries of a favourable variation in the

exchange rate. I also refer the honourable member to an answer that I gave to a question on notice asked by the Hon. Mr McEwen on 16 July regarding the costs associated with the SAGRN, which included a reference to the fact that there was a contingency provision for project costs in the order of \$25.7 million.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: That is very similar to the amount that is no longer in the project over the next four years.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: With respect to the \$15 million that is shown in the budget, I can only take it, from the budget papers, that that is all that will be expended on the government radio network, and completed by August next year—that is, the total completion of this project—with \$15 million being expended this financial year, 2003-04. It appears as though the \$24 million or \$25 million that has disappeared from this area becomes the contingency fund and, from what I can assess from the budget papers (and I am certainly willing to be told that that is incorrect), that \$15 million plus is all there is to be spent, and the works will be completed in August this year, which is two months from now.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will ask one of the officers to explain the situation.

Mr MILLER: I refer the member to page 6.6 in Volume 2. Where it talks about the government radio network, if we look at the 2002-03 budget, it was \$25.546 million. The actual spend the year before was \$36 million, which exceeded the budget by something like \$11 million. As the program is running down, we have budgeted to spend \$15 million, but money was spent ahead of the budget. As a consequence, the estimated results this year are only \$9.8 million. That is purely because we had spent so much the previous year in the program, in terms of meeting targets, and things such as that, regarding the construction of it. This is about the construction of it, and there are two components. The construction is about \$100 million; then there is the ongoing maintenance and running of the system for seven years. This relates purely to the construction of it.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Is the \$114 million that is talked about as total cost—

Mr MILLER: That is the construction of the network. The \$240 million odd involves the seven year running of it as well. This line here talks purely about the construction part of it. In the previous year, the program was ahead of schedule and we had spent more money on it. Therefore, this year, we did not need to spend as much money.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Where do we find in the budget lines the explanation of the maintenance and ongoing costs that make up the difference to the \$247 million?

Mr MILLER: The ongoing cost would be under the ICS services to government, which would be—

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I am glad that you had as much difficulty as I had.

Mr MILLER: It would fit in program 9. That is just part of the ongoing running of the agency costs.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Just to make this absolutely clear, the minister has talked about the contract. Can I ask him quite categorically whether the original contract has been renegotiated or terminated? If it has been renegotiated, what are the current terms and provisions? If it has been terminated, what is the cost to government?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Neither.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I refer to Budget Paper 4, page 6.6, 'Works in progress'. Some \$4.771 million was allocated this year to the ATLAS project. Last year's budget allocation

provided some \$4 million, of which \$1.877 million was spent, leaving \$2.123 million unspent. Did the minister manage, in this instance, to convince cabinet that the \$2.133 million be carried over into this budget as part of this year's \$4.771 million allocation, which would mean that the minister would only have to fund \$2.648 million from his total budget this year? Was this request denied, and is this year's budget funding the full \$4.771 million?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: A decision has not been made about that matter. We need to know the final end of year result. As the member noted, I think we received a carryover last year, and it will be a question of negotiation as to whether we would be able to keep the carryover for this year. But there is a commitment to the project.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: So, you do not approve carry-overs prior to the budget; they come after the budget?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: You do not know whether you have a carryover until you have completed the financial year, presumably.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Do you not take this to cabinet to obtain approval as to whether or not you can carry over funds? Is it not a cabinet decision?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes, after 30 June.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: With respect to this project, you underspent, in the 2001-02 year, by \$1.412 million, and you underspent last year by \$2.123 million. By underspending a total of some \$3.535 million over the last 15 months on this ongoing project, what cost liability did the project incur in terms of the projected overall savings outlined in the project's business case by not progressing this project as planned?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I am advised that a number of factors have been at play, including the unavailability of computing business analysis expertise to be able to participate in the project—so, difficulty in recruiting the relevant expertise. In relation to the liabilities incurred, it is not like a capital project (which the question seems to assume). These are essentially staff salaries. No liabilities have been incurred because no contractual arrangements have yet been put in place in relation to that aspect of the project.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: In the 2001-02 year the budget provided \$40 million for this project. To date, only \$38.777 million has been spent, with some \$10.223 million still to be spent. We are talking about 2003-04. What assurances can the minister provide that the allocated \$4.771 million will be spent this year? And if the computer analysis expertise is not there, perhaps the minister needs a few more funds in his portfolio.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I do not think it is a question of funding: it is a question of availability of the relevant resources at any price. Like any capital project, all one can say is that one will take all possible steps to expedite the program to ensure that it is within a set of priorities that exist for government and that it is properly pursued. And if, along the way, there are barriers that simply make it not feasible or desirable to press ahead at the same rate, obviously, that will bear on the way in which the project is scheduled and the extent to which it is able to be completed within the budgeted period.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I have a couple of questions, as we are coming close to the appointed time. Does the minister mind taking them on notice if I read them into the record?

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr Caica): My understanding is that this line of questioning can continue until the appointed break, which is at 3.45 p.m.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I thought that it was 3.15.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: The honourable member might be running under the old timetable.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Not, it is 3.15. It was renegotiated. I do not know whether anyone has mentioned it.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Even better, I have misunderstood. Please finish.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I cannot take umbrage with you, Mr Acting Chairman, because we helped in that negotiation. For the financial year 2001-02, for all departments and agencies that report to the minister, can the minister provide information about the underspending on projects and programs that were not approved by cabinet for carry-over expenditure in 2002-03 and provide the same information for the year 2003-04? Will the minister provide a list of all consultancies undertaken during 2002-03, including the name of consultants and the cost?

Will the minister also provide the nature of the consultancies? Will he also provide information on the number of reviews and any research undertaken during that period, again, including names and the nature of papers and the relevant costs. I note that the Treasurer has altered his Treasurer's Instructions that only enable consultancies to be publicly released plus \$500 000 and reduced that to \$25 000. I trust that we will receive information that starts at \$25 000 upwards.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It will be much more than that. If you ever pass the FOI legislation you will get every contract in government.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: It has not helped us so far.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Well, you will have to let our bill through the upper house, and then you will have the most open regime of access to contracts that exist anywhere in this country.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: You are taking out commercial in confidentiality, are you?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: As you did, always. The other point I should raise is—

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: No, I said: 'Are you taking it out?' Obviously, it was something we had in there.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes. The honourable member knows what our reforms are about that. We are removing the broad capacity to claim commercial in confidence. The other issue I should draw to the honourable member's attention is that, to the extent that the honourable member wants answers to those questions, obviously, we will prepare and provide them within the relevant period. However, some of the answers to the honourable member's questions may exist within the annual reports, especially in relation to the use of consultants.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I understand that annual reports do some wonderful things but there are other procedures for papers to be provided more directly than waiting for the publishing of annual reports.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: They are already published. It may provide you with a quicker access, that is all.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: You have them printed now? Well done!

Departmental Advisers:

Ms A. Howe, Chief Executive, SA Water.
Mr P. Mendo, Chief Financial Officer.

Mr R. Perry, General Manager, Operations.
 Mr P. Prodanovski, Group Financial Controller.
 Mr J. Randell, Head of Business Services.
 Mr J. Ringham, Head of SA Water Services.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will make a brief opening statement. When we came to government, obviously we had to consider our involvement in West Java, and we thought it was probably useful if SA Water concentrated on South Australia rather than West Java, which it has been willing to do. On coming to government, we also asked for a reorientation of its activities so that it not only delivered a dividend to the state government but also made its business practices sustainable. SA Water is now taking a leading role in the building of a sustainable future for South Australian communities with a strategy that includes the sustainable use of water resources and reducing the impact of SA Water operations on the environment.

Legislation has been brought to parliament, and passed (the only legislation of its type in Australia), which governs SA Water authority activities. It provides for not only short-term water conservation measures but also for long-term water conservation measures, and SA Water has obviously been a participant in the development of that process.

SA Water has also contributed \$1 million towards developing Waterproofing Adelaide, a 20-year water conservation plan that will make Adelaide less dependent on the Murray River. This is the most comprehensive consideration of a long-term water strategy that has ever been undertaken in South Australia. SA Water has also established a new Sustainable Business Unit to introduce environmental, social and economic sustainability into all areas of its operation.

SA Water's annual investment in infrastructure across the state is in excess of \$100 million. Next year's investment totals \$168 million. Nearly two-thirds of this expenditure will be directed towards existing commitments to environmental works of \$69 million aimed at improving the quality of treated waste water discharged to the environment, upgrading reservoir infrastructure costing \$13 million, and improving water supplies and water quality in country regions at a cost of \$23 million.

Water reuse is also a priority under this government and we have worked to increase the effectiveness of the metropolitan waste water treatment plants at Bolivar, Port Adelaide, Glenelg and Christies Beach. The work will also reduce the impact of waste water treatment on the environment, in particular the impact of nitrogen on seagrass beds, an issue which has received some coverage in today's press. Other reuse projects are operating at Myponga, Mannum, Woodside, Murray Bridge, Gumeracha, Millicent, Port Augusta and Willunga.

In addition, the state government has allocated \$28.5 million to construct a sophisticated waste water treatment plant at a new site on the outskirts of Victor Harbor. The new plant will produce clear product water equal to the best quality in Australia for irrigation. The state government and SA Water have a long-term target of 50 per cent reuse of waste water and 30 per cent to be achieved by 2005.

As well as managing these longer-term objectives, there are many challenges facing SA Water over the coming year as it grapples with managing the water restrictions that will be introduced from 1 July. The level of restrictions is similar to those imposed in other states and earlier on Eyre Peninsula.

As the state has not introduced widespread water restrictions before, the precise implications cannot be known with any certainty. However, we will be in a much better position to analyse the level of restrictions that will be required to meet our requirements in about October this year. Notwithstanding this year's shortage of water, it will not stop SA Water taking a progressive and responsible approach to its business, and we will work to protect the state's valuable water resource.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: With the minister's indulgence, I would like to ask what I can class, I think, as an omnibus question, which is all relevant to the one subject, and at the conclusion perhaps he would care to address any of the matters raised or otherwise take the substance on notice. This is a question that was raised with me by the member for Morialta. Given that a great majority of South Australians will be affected by water restrictions to come into effect on 1 July, and given the significant penalties that are available for breach of these restrictions, will the government undertake an extensive public education campaign to make residents aware of their responsibilities under these restrictions? Will the government undertake a household drop of written material for South Australians affected by water restrictions explaining the consequences of these restrictions before they are actually implemented, bearing in mind that any written material sent out in the next round of South Australian water bills will not be received until after the restrictions have begun?

Has the government taken steps to inform people from non English-speaking backgrounds of their responsibilities under the new water restrictions, and will the government initiate a campaign on ethnic radio (SEBI) and in an ethnic print media to educate non English-speaking residents on the coming restrictions? Will the government consider distributing a brochure such as the one that was devised by the former Liberal government (the ambulance brochure) to educate non English-speaking residents on water restrictions? What is the time frame for the government's education program for non English-speaking residents, bearing in mind again that water restrictions begin in less than two weeks' time and that breach of these restrictions carries significant penalties?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: All the points that the member raised are very good points and they are receiving, as you can imagine, our active consideration. The precise format of the communication and whether it will be delivered by way of household drop or the way in which we configure the public education program is in the process of being finalised, and we are well aware of the time lines.

The question of having a specific form of communication for non English-speaking background people is also receiving our attention. So, all those issues are intelligent questions about how we ought to communicate the restrictions—especially as, which the member notes, they carry legal obligations, and we will be making announcements imminently.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Under the capital investment statement, Budget Paper 5, page 43, I have not been able to find mention of the \$32 million desalination plant for Eyre Peninsula which I believe was promised by Mr Conlon in September 2002. I have found a reference only to augmentation of water supplies to the Eyre Peninsula region, the total cost of the augmentation project under consideration being listed as costing \$25.2 million, including ancillary works of \$6.5 million, to be undertaken by SA Water. If it is to be a PPP, this should be mentioned. The minister at the table was

also quoted in the *Port Lincoln Times* on Thursday 5 June as saying:

The total costs for the plant will be outlined in SA Water's operating expenditure and not as a capital works allocation.

Can the minister advise what the proposed expenditure of \$3.2 million in 2003-04 for ancillary works for the Eyre Peninsula water supply will actually be used for and why the proposed desalination plant (which cannot be found in the budget documents) would have been mentioned in SA Water's operating expenditure when it is obviously a capital work?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I think I have had this debate on regional radio, but I do not know whether the member has had access to that media monitoring. The relevant reference is on page 43 of the Capital Investment Statement 2003-04 (Budget Paper 5), which talks about works in progress, as follows:

Ancillary Works Eyre Peninsula Water Supply

Completion due 2004-05. Augmentation of water supplies to the Eyre Peninsula region. Of the total project cost of \$25.2 million, ancillary works of \$6.5 million will be undertaken by SA Water Corporation. The project is to be considered for delivery through a private sector provision arrangement.

That is the reference to the project that has variously been described as the desalination plant project or the Todd River desalination plant, which arises out of the Eyre Peninsula water supply plant. As was announced at the time the decision was made, cabinet approved the preferred solution to water supply problems on the Eyre Peninsula, based on the findings of the Eyre Peninsula water supply master plan. The three-part plan involved construction of a plant to desalinate water from the Todd Reservoir, as well as the reuse of treated effluent water and a water efficiency program to achieve a minimum 5 per cent reduction in water usage.

From February 2003—and I think that it is continuing—the pilot plant study is being conducted at the Todd River Reservoir to determine the pre-treatment requirements for a full scale plant (2.3 gegalitres per year). This plant is expected to be delivered by a public private partnership (which is the reference there) into a private sector provision arrangement, and is estimated to cost \$25.2 million, subject to its final size.

Obviously, a pilot plant study is put in place so that you can work out what the ultimate specifications will be for the final project. So, it is an estimate of the total cost of the project and may have to be adjusted, depending on what we learn out of the pilot plant study.

In the nature of public private partnerships, because they are ongoing, they are structured in a fashion which is an ongoing series of payments over a relatively long period. They are addressed in the operating expenditure of SA Water, so they are not identified as an individual capital works program, but you do see it contained here because, associated with the public private partnership arrangement that it is contemplated would deliver the desalination plant, there are some associated capital works which are funded not through a public private partnership but through the capital works program. Those capital works arrangements are essentially to connect the Todd River Reservoir with the relevant desalination plant. So, that is the \$6.5 million over a period, with initially \$3.2 million in the relevant budget period.

The earlier estimate of \$35 million, which was given in the 2002 budget papers, includes works to upgrade the Todd reservoir dam. This item has been removed from this particular item, because it does not relate directly to the desalination project. The Todd Dam upgrade is included in

SA Water's capital works plan as part of the \$150 million 20-year dam safety improvement program.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: If there is a partnership with government and private enterprise, I am not quite sure why that would not be mentioned somewhere in the budget papers.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It is.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: It is? At what point?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I just read it out. I have spoken about this in horrible detail on regional radio. However, for the benefit of the member for Flinders, it states on page 43 (and I cannot imagine how the member could think that we will spend \$25 million on anything else on the Eyre Peninsula other than the identified desalination plant. It has been announced to everyone: every man and their dog on the Eyre Peninsula knows about this):

\$25.2 million, ancillary works of \$6.5 million will be undertaken by SA Water Corporation. The project is to be considered for delivery through a private sector provision arrangement.

It is true that it does not say 'public private partnership', but I would have hoped that is clear enough language to describe what has variously been described as 'build, own, operate, transfer arrangements, public private partnerships or a private sector provision arrangement.'

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Initially, I should say that, quite obviously, despite the minister's saying that every man, woman and their dog on the Eyre Peninsula should know about this, the fact is that the constituency of Eyre Peninsula is extremely concerned about all matters relating to water, as the minister would know. The member for Flinders is obviously as concerned as her constituency is, and she has spoken to me about these concerns, and that is why I am raising these issues now. There are other concerns that I need to raise with the minister as well.

SA Water is conducting a study of the water table level in Lens A, which supplies the Coffin Bay township. As there is no data regarding the size and capacity of this particular lens, until the findings of the study are available, no further development was declared possible within the township of Coffin Bay. However, SA Water has since allowed further development by collecting an augmentation fee of \$5 500 per block, which is supposedly to go towards either a desalination plant or a pipeline from the Uley Basin area.

Can the minister advise whether the \$5 500 augmentation charge for each new block developed at Coffin Bay is retained in trust for the ancillary water supply for the township and, if so, where is it located in the budget documents, or will it simply be used as general revenue? Can the minister advise what the legal basis is for the collection by SA Water of \$5 500 for each new block purportedly for an ancillary water supply to the township of Coffin Bay?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Apparently, there is quite a lengthy answer to that proposition that may require us to obtain other information as well, so I will take that on notice.

Mr CAICA: Minister, I refer to Budget Paper 5, page 43, to which you have just referred. Could the minister advise of progress being made in relation to the Clare Valley water supply scheme?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The government approved the Clare Valley water supply scheme in November 2002 for the estimated capital cost of \$27.1 million. Construction commenced in April 2003, and expenditure in 2003-04 is expected to be \$14.8 million, with commissioning progressively commencing through the summer of 2003-04 with completion due in 2004-05.

The scheme involves construction of 83 kilometres of below ground pipeline and other works to transfer filtered water from the Morgan-Whyalla pipeline into the Clare Valley region and to enable augmentation of water supplies, the pipeline serving the Barossa Valley, the Mid North and Yorke Peninsula. The Clare Valley towns of Watervale, Leasingham, Penwortham, Sevenhill and Mintaro will, for the first time, have access to the same high quality of public water supply services as other urban populations in South Australia.

By providing capacity for irrigation water, the scheme will also assist horticultural production and limit dependence on existing local water resources, which are overstressed. The scheme is based on the major proportion of water for irrigation being privately licensed. This will result in the transfer of water from existing usage along the River Murray to higher value adding applications in the Clare Valley region. Trading water to higher value uses is a key outcome of the national water reform agenda, and uses away from banks of the River Murray is a net environmental benefit. SA Water will transfer privately licensed water during the off-peak period of April to November. Water supply for irrigation during the peak period December to March can be obtained from SA Water's allocation. Potentially there will be water resource and environmental benefits. Importation of River Murray water will be carried out in accordance with policies for the protection of River Murray catchment resources, including cap limits.

Domestic users will be charged SA Water's standard connection and usage fees. In addition, irrigators will be required to make a capital contribution of \$1 500 per megalitre of peak period water for commitments made. This will rise to \$2 000 per megalitre for those who commit late. An environmental assessment has indicated that the Clare Valley water supply scheme is ecologically sustainable and the importation of River Murray water into the Clare Valley region for use in irrigation can be managed to avoid potential adverse environmental effects.

Off-site work on the project, including pipe manufacturing and deliveries, is progressing to schedule. SA Water temporarily suspended pipe laying in May pending consideration by Environment Australia of vegetation studies, which have now confirmed that no species of national significance will be affected by construction activities. Following favourable advice from Environment Australia, pipe laying resumed on 10 June 2003.

The CHAIRMAN: On the question of water restrictions and the River Murray levy, a lot of people would see them as one and the same. Obviously there is an interconnection and some special symbiotic relationship, but if we get sufficient winter and spring rains in the Adelaide Hills you will not need restrictions, but you may still have a problem in terms of the Murray. You certainly have a long-term problem in relation to salinity and other issues. If you get heavy rains in the catchment for the Murray-Darling, I guess that will flow down ultimately, so even if we do not get heavy rains in the Hills you can tap into the Murray. What is the current level of holdings in our reservoirs and how do you intend to convey to the people that the water levy and restrictions are not really the same thing and that the River Murray issue will be a long-term issue, whereas the restrictions may not be, depending on winter and spring rains?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: That is a communications dilemma. In some ways there is an advantage in that the short-term crisis has heightened awareness of the River

Murray in a way that will assist us in focusing people's attention on the long-term issues of the River Murray. They are quite separate issues and there is a need to communicate carefully the disconnection between the two things. The River Murray levy is a proposition which within government is being handled by minister Hill. Minister Hill's portfolio is fundamentally responsible for the long-term health of the river as he is the Minister for the River Murray. The point of gathering that pool of money is to direct it at long-term issues and not any short-term fix, as there are none in relation to the River Murray.

There are a range of communication issues with which we will have to grapple over the coming weeks and months. Even if heavy rains fall in our catchment or upstream catchment, they may not necessarily supply us with water as they need to be heavy rains of a particular sort—rains which fill catchments. We are advised, especially in relation to the drought conditions that exist in the Murray-Darling Basin, that there will be an enormous amount of absorption with slow, steady rains, even if they fall for a considerable period. I have certainly noticed that whenever I announce water restrictions it rains the next day! There does need to be a degree of education of the public about our reliance upon the River Murray and the fact that it does not necessarily equate to our having the capacity with local rainfalls to meet our water needs.

The CHAIRMAN: How do you convey that to the public in simple terms, given that South Australia's total allocation of the Murray is only about 6 per cent and about half of that is used for water supply? There is a feeling that we depend heavily on the Murray for reticulated water when it is not the case, except in an exceptionally dry year.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We take something like 6 per cent of the total river, but only 10 per cent of South Australia's take is water supply. A process of education is going on as we begin to discuss the important issues of upstream irrigators. People are beginning to become aware that the issues of the River Murray are not capable of being solved without a national solution, that those who exist upstream and take the lion's share of the water with their irrigation uses will need to make a contribution, whether by way of changing practices or substantial changes to the whole shape of farming communities that exist in these upstream communities. That is not something South Australia can negotiate as it is beyond our territorial competence to make those changes. We have to persuade other states and the federal government.

People are beginning to appreciate that we have to engage the national government and also appreciate that one thing that demonstrates our seriousness about these issues is coming up with a pool of money to which the River Murray levy is making a contribution to have those negotiations. Massive adjustments cost money and need to be made. We simply cannot appropriate people's rights to use water. If it is to be done in any sensible way that has a prospect of succeeding, it would need to be done by negotiation.

The CHAIRMAN: What are our metropolitan reservoirs holding now as a percentage of their capacity?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I am advised it is 35 per cent.

Mr CAICA: I refer to Budget Paper 5, page 44. Will the minister advise the committee in relation to the environment improvement program for the Heathfield waste water treatment plant?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: SA Water conducted a biological monitoring program to assess the impact of the Heathfield waste water treatment plant discharge on the Sturt River. The work was undertaken by the Australian Water Quality Centre and the resultant report was audited by an independent consultant. While the evidence available suggests the Heathfield discharge is not causing significant damage to the Sturt River, agreement was reached with the EPA concerning the acceptable levels of nitrogen, phosphorous and ammonia in the effluent. The upgrade of the plant will reduce by 50 per cent the amount of nitrogen and by 85 per cent the amount of both ammonia and phosphorous discharged into the Sturt River. This upgrade will include an increase in capacity sufficient to cater for the backlog from the Adelaide Hills sewerage scheme.

The project was approved in late 2001 and construction commenced in December 2001. In December 2002 construction was delayed due to higher than estimated tender prices for some parts of the works and the need for SA Water to reassess the scope. While the project could be delivered within the then current budget and produce an environmentally improved outcome, SA Water sought approval from cabinet for the additional funding of \$1.5 million to provide the full environmental benefits of the plant's full capacity envisaged within the original scope of works and in February additional funding was approved, bringing the total to \$10.4 million. The forecast completion of construction as agreed with the EPA is October 2003.

Mr MEIER: I refer to the new River Murray levy as well as it applies to farmers seeking further information. The minister is well aware that farmers are very concerned about the amount they will be paying. In fact, examples that have come to my office have ranged from farmers who have three to those with up to 17 meters on their property. I have provided some details, which I think may have arrived at the minister's office only today or yesterday.

The key issue is that farmers realise that they could amalgamate the meters. However, immediately they do so, they are then entitled to only one base allowance of 125 kilolitres, and they would also be entitled to only one leakage allowance every 10 years, compared with, say, 17 leakage allowances. On the figures that I have worked out, if they did amalgamate and use all their meters, they could still be up for in excess of \$1 000, because of the extra cost of water for which they would be paying now. Some of these meters are in individual names; others are in family trust names. So, it is not necessarily simple. What proposals are in hand? I know from responses in my two local papers, namely, the *Yorke Peninsula Country Times* and the *Plains Producers*, that contact was made with the hotline; however, the answers given were not necessarily sufficiently prescriptive to know what farmers will be able to do, or what they will be charged.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The fundamental answer is that Minister Hill is handling the application incidence of the levy. While it is being collected by SA Water, it is really for ease of a collection in the most effective way. Minister Hill is making the public policy decisions on the incidence of the levy, and it would be best to direct questions to him. However, I know that the minister has had recent discussions with a range of interests who have raised questions similar to those that the member has just raised. I understand that those matters are now resolved or, if they are not, they are in the process of being so. Information is likely to be updated on the SA Water hotline as those issues reach resolution.

Mr MEIER: I will not continue with any further questions on that issue. As I am on Minister Hill's committee, I will be able to obtain further information that way. However, I have a simple question following on from the desalination question from the member for Newland, and I note that the minister identified that some \$25.2 million has been set aside. If my memory serves me correctly, the desalination plant that I visited at Penneshaw about two years ago cost \$3 million. Why is there such a massive difference in the cost of desalination plants of between \$3 million and \$25.2 million? As the minister knows, I believe that desalination plants are the answer for Yorke Peninsula's water supply in future years.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I think a simple answer is that the Tod River reservoir is approximately 30 times bigger.

Mr MEIER: The desalination plant at Penneshaw takes water out of the sea, and I would argue that the sea is bigger than the Tod reservoir. Is the plant much bigger, or is there a multitude of desalination plants rather than just one?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: A volume of 7.5 megalitres a day is treated at the Tod River reservoir, and .25 megalitres per day is treated at the Penneshaw desalination plant.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Has the minister identified any cost-related areas in forming a new process to invoice a water levy for the River Murray through SA Water? Will the costs of administering the scheme be absorbed by SA Water, or will they be deducted from the pool raised by the levy, thereby decreasing the amount of money available to improve water flow in the River Murray?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Presently, SA Water is absorbing the cost of the collection of the levy, and there is no proposal for it to be taken from the levy.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: The minister would probably be aware that South Australia has an annual flow allocation of some 1 850 megalitres. However, for the first time, during the next water year from June 2003-04, South Australia will not receive its entire annual allocation. Current indications from the Murray-Darling Basin Commission are that South Australia will receive just 59 per cent of its annual flow allocation, which is some 1 091.5 megalitres; therefore, a drop of some 758.5 megalitres. What identified implications does this have for the distribution of water throughout South Australia; what are the cost implications in the area of water restrictions; and what further increased water costs will this impose on South Australians?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: First, we are talking about gegalitres not megalitres. The first figure is correct, but I am not certain about the actual figures. That whole process is managed by Minister Hill. As a consequence of what he tells us, that is what we are allowed to enjoy under our licence. He has provided a 20 per cent cut in our licensed allocation.

The Hon. D.C. Kotz interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: He is the regulator of the River Murray, and we are regulated by him. In relation to distribution, it falls to us to determine how we pass on that 20 per cent cut over the course of the year, and we have chosen to manage it using water restrictions. Presumably there are a number of ways we could deal with it, and we chose water restrictions. Water restrictions have been introduced at level 2. Level 2 allows us to achieve about 5 to 10 per cent in the initial part of the season, and there will be a need to move either forward or back from that. These

changes are all about degrees of probability. There is still a substantial possibility that we will receive our ordinary entitlement if conditions change within the basin. So, there is a need to pitch the restrictions at a level which is sufficient to move up from if things worsen or are as bad as predicted, or to relax them in circumstances where that becomes possible.

So, in terms of cost implications, if we draw less from the River Murray we may reduce our costs, because we do not have to pump as much. Water costs, which is what the honourable member is asking about, could reduce as a consequence of the reduced capacity to draw water from the River Murray. However, if things get much worse there may need to be additional public works augmenting our off-take pipes so that we can go further into the river to get what water may be available. If it gets to that stage, we might have a whole range of difficulties to deal with as well, such as water quality and rising salinity levels. There is a scenario that could be much worse than that presently contemplated, and that could lead to substantial increases in water costs to maintain even a modest level of water usage.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I realise that it is very difficult to determine these decisions ahead of time. We are in a state of flux at present, depending on a lot of weather elements over which we obviously have no control. In terms of receiving information from the water minister and operating through that information, the figures I gave the minister earlier about South Australia's receiving 59 per cent of its annual flow allocation would cause that 758.5 drop. By way of an aside, the minister was right: I did say 'megalitres'; I know it is 'gigalitres'. Is SA Water aware of that particular range of figures—the 59 per cent of its annual flow? Is this where the information we are hearing now is coming from, because this is directly from the Murray-Darling Basin Commission?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes, those communications occur with us as soon as the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation hears them from the commission.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: There are several other issues that SA Water needs to take into consideration with its responsibility for distribution to its constituency throughout South Australia. Although I am not aware what the percentage is, I believe that a reasonable percentage of South Australia's water allocation is lost as wastage through poor infrastructure, antiquated pumping facilities, seepage, drainage and leaks; and I guess there are many other causes that could have that effect. Would the minister agree that funds need to be allocated to improve the substantial water delivery infrastructure to reduce this form of wastage and also to look to reduce the state's reliance in future years on buying extra water? Knowing that SA Water is a very professional group, I am sure this has been considered. If so, what has the government done in order to achieve this outcome?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: This goes to the heart of the long-term water strategy that will be looked at under Waterproofing Adelaide. It really is a cost-benefit analysis about whether we try to track down every leak or seepage in the system to find the water that is unaccounted for and therefore lost in the system, which could be an extraordinarily expensive exercise. Alternatively, it may be that individual definable capital works projects are a better use of funds; it may be that water reuse schemes are a better use of funds; it may even be that water-saving technology is a better use of funds; or, to use the other proposition that the honourable member raised, perhaps purchasing water licences from South

Australian users who are less efficient or even from upstream users could be an option.

They are all options, they all have a price tag and it is a question of finding the right mix. Of course, the other factor is taking the long view about what is sustainable over the very long term, having regard potentially to an increased population size within South Australia. There are no simple solutions to that. We cannot compartmentalise one area and say, 'We are leaking 10 per cent across the network; let's fix that,' because that might involve myriad individual capital works projects. Even if we ramped up all the maintenance so that people were there within five minutes of a leak occurring, we would need to look at the cost of having a maintenance system of that sort versus a new capital works project somewhere in the Murray-Darling Basin. That is the equation, and that long-term work is occurring.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: In terms of the nature of the levy and its required outcome of a buy-back situation to put more water into our flows, is the minister aware of what the value of water is at the present time in terms of per gigalitre purchase? What market value may be placed on water? I do not believe there would be a government discount, but perhaps the minister could give us an indication of an approximate cost.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Approximately \$800 000 to \$1.2 million per gigalitre. I understand that is the purchase of a permanent right to water on an annual basis for that sum. Of course, that is subject to the fact that I do not think there is a coherent like-for-like system of water rights which exists across the whole basin. That is subject to a range of caveats about how it can be used. It is also subject to the regulatory environment, as we are seeing now, with water conservation restrictions or water restrictions because of a reduction in usage being applied. I do not want to create the impression it is an unalienable right.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: If we were to maintain the current situation for the next couple of years, because of the reasons that have been brought upon us, what is the amount in gigalitres that we would require to maintain our systems?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Our total usage per annum, on average, is in the order of 230 gigalitres. The split, on average, is 180 gigalitres from the River Murray and the balance from our catchments. It depends on the relative state of the catchments, what is happening there, to answer your question about what would be needed to sustain the current average level of use. That is leaving aside the additional amount we need for environmental flows.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I promise this is a last supplementary question. In terms of the comment you made in relation to the permanent licensing that the purchase of water would bring to South Australia, when you say 'permanent' what are you talking about? Are you talking about a long-time situation? I know that much of what occurs in our downstream state is affected by the upstream states.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Traditionally, they have been traded as rights in perpetuity, but, obviously, there is now a different view about the ongoing rights to this water. Certainly, traditionally that has been the case. Someone purchased a certain water licence which entitled them to ongoing use of the waters at that level in perpetuity. In the broad, that is the case.

The CHAIRMAN: I have a couple of questions. In effect, we have allowed one generation that is not so conscious about saving water to come through, compared with some older people, like me, who had it drummed into us. In your pub-

licity campaign, will you be encouraging people to plant appropriate native species? I say that because, even now, people not far from where I live are planting lawn, not only in their own garden but right down to the kerb. It seems amazing that in this day and age in Adelaide we still have an obsession with trying to look like England. I love England, but I do not think that we live in England. In your publicity and brochures, will you be promoting appropriate native species—not Tasmanian blue gums a metre from the house—which have a spin-off in terms of encouraging bird life, as well?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The answer is yes. Because the water restrictions have targeted outside use, which will tend to have its greatest impact on the garden, we felt it appropriate that there be some corresponding resource that we can provide to people to assist them in making decisions that will mean they can plan their gardens in that way. We certainly have been preparing material. I think there are existing fact sheets, and more material will be directed to those matters.

The CHAIRMAN: I have a question regarding the Happy Valley reservoir wall upgrade, which is in my electorate. Is that project on track, and is the completion date still as publicised earlier this year, bearing in mind that that project (which we understand was necessary) has resulted in the total closure of one of our main arterial roads for up to 12 months?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I am advised that the program is on track. The only thing that could potentially affect its progress is a very wet winter—but that may be beneficial for other reasons. Certainly, its present progress is consistent with its expected schedule.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 4.22 p.m. the committee adjourned until Monday 23 June at 11 a.m.