

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 17 June 2004

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A**Chairman:**

The Hon. R.B. Such

Members:

Ms F.E. Bedford
 Ms L.R. Breuer
 Mr P. Caica
 Mr R.M. Goldsworthy
 The Hon. G.M. Gunn
 The Hon. W.A. Matthew

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

Attorney-General's Department \$63 278 000
 Administered Items for the Attorney-General's
 Department \$43 868 000
 Administered Items for Police and Emergency Services
 \$6 655 000

Witness:

The Hon. P.F. Conlon, Minister for Infrastructure,
 Minister for Energy, Minister for Emergency Services.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr V. Monterola, Chief Executive, Emergency Services
 Administrative Unit.
 Mr E. Ferguson, Chief Executive, Country Fire Service.
 Mr G. Lupton, Chief Officer and Chief Executive,
 Metropolitan Fire Service.
 Mr T. Pearce, Manager, Financial Services, Emergency
 Services Administration Unit.
 Mr M. Smith, Business Manager, Country Fire Service.
 Mr L. Bignell, Chief of Staff, Office of the Minister for
 Emergency Services.
 Mr R. Mathews, Fund Manager, Attorney-General's
 Department.
 Mr N. Cooke, Acting Director, State Emergency Services.
 Mr M. Hanson, General Manager, Telecommunications,
 Attorney-General's Department.

The CHAIRMAN: Estimates committees are a relatively informal procedure and, as such, there is no need to stand to ask or answer questions. The committee will determine an approximate time for consideration of proposed payments. Have the minister and lead speaker organised a timetable for today's proceedings?

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: We have.

The CHAIRMAN: Changes to the committee membership will be notified as they occur. Members should ensure the chair is provided with a completed request to be discharged form. If the minister undertakes to supply information at a later date, it must be submitted to the committee secretary by no later than Friday 23 July. The minister and the lead speaker can make a brief opening statement. There will be a flexible approach to questions based on about 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 should be related to the budget papers but I do not ask members to read out the budget line because that takes up a lot of time. 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 tabling of documents. Normal rules apply. Purely statistical material can be accepted for inclusion in *Hansard* provided it does not exceed one page in length. All questions are to be directed to the minister, not to the advisers. I point out that television coverage is permitted from the northern gallery during estimates. I now declare the proposed payments open for examination. Are there any opening statements?

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I wish to make a brief statement, more by way of observation. Mr Chair, I like you have sat through 14 budget estimates over the last 14 years, so this is our fifteenth. During that time I have had the opportunity to be in this committee in pretty well every position. I have been an opposition backbencher in one of those committees, I have sat in the chair in one, been a minister in seven and a shadow minister over two periods of time in six committees. I believe that qualifies me reasonably well to make observations about the success or otherwise of these proceedings.

As we know, budget estimates were introduced by the Tonkin government and have been in operation for more than 20 years, but during that time we have seen very little refinement of the process. I believe there is value in the process but it disappoints me that our house of review, the Legislative Council, is not involved in the process. My colleagues well know that I have a personal view that the upper house in this state should be abolished; it is a view that I have expressed before. But in view of the fact that the upper house continues to exist I find it particularly disappointing that the upper house does not have the ability to be involved in budget estimates, other than the two ministers from the government who are able to be addressed by estimates committees. I would hope, at the end of this process, that people, regardless of political persuasion, can work through sensible reform to the estimates process.

Any such reform must, by necessity, involve those people in the upper house who, during the two weeks that these estimates committees sit, will not be involved in a parliamentary process and, I believe, could contribute to that process. I encourage all members of the parliament to sit down sensibly after this process and evaluate its benefits and failures in order to come up with a more reasonable process that involves the upper house.

By interesting observation, I note that the upper house of the federal parliament, the Senate, is heavily involved in the budget estimates process, not just immediately on the handing down of the budget but, indeed, on the application of that budget throughout. I believe that a number of members of parliament from both sides share that view. I know that you, Mr Chairman, have a view that there should be considerable change. I hope that together we can arrive at a more beneficial system than the one we have at present. That is not to say that this process is not of value; it does have some value, but I believe that value can be increased and strengthened in the interests of the people of this state.

My first question relates to the Emergency Services Administrative Unit. I note from the budget papers that it is expected that this unit will blow its budget by about \$700 000

in 2003-04 compared with a spend of \$10.414 million. I note that that spend is also \$3 million more than the 2002 spend. What are the reasons for this budget overrun, particularly considering the increased revenue that was received?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Probably the problem is that the shadow minister is misreading the figures. It may be that Treasury should describe things differently. I assume the shadow minister is referring to the estimated result, which in fact is a revised budget. The \$700 000 was simply a revised budget for the agency. It was well within the overall budgets for the emergency services for the year. In fact, I understand we were getting criticised for having some cash left over in the fund, so I am absolutely satisfied with the budgetary activities. We will come in under \$600 000. Treasury could make those figures clearer when it presents them.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: My second question relates to emergency incident management of the Metropolitan Fire Service. I refer, in particular, to the target of the percentage of MFS arrivals at an incident within seven minutes. I note that in 2003-04 a target was set of 90 per cent of calls responding within seven minutes but that only 70 per cent of that target is now acknowledged as likely to be achieved. What are the reasons for not reaching the target that was set?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Can you tell me to what you are referring?

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The reference is to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 4.59. There is a line that refers to the percentage of MFS arrivals within seven minutes.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: The target for 2004-05 is 75 per cent; the estimated result is 70 per cent; the 2003-04 target was 90 per cent; the 2002-03 actual was 66.4 per cent. I will ask Mr Lupton to explain why the targets seem to vary, but it is fairly consistent. In fact, it is an improved response over 2002-03 and 2003-04 from 64 to 70 per cent. Mr Lupton will understand why the target is 90 per cent there and 75 per cent somewhere else. The bottom line is that it is a very consistent performance over recent years.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: But below what was targeted.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: If you change the target that tends to happen. Maybe Mr Lupton can tell us why we changed the target.

Mr LUPTON: I think it is a good performance by anyone's standards around Australia. It is only in recent times that we started to measure the actual response performance. Initially, the targets set are what would be most desirable. As we become more efficient in measuring them we get a more accurate picture of what is achievable. The 75 per cent target is what we feel is the achievable result, based on our past performance. In 2002-03 our percentage was 66 per cent, so we have increased that to 75 per cent; and we are hoping to achieve it at 90 per cent. It is not a realistic target nor is it reflective of other standards across Australasia.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: So the target was overly ambitious?

Mr LUPTON: Yes, exactly.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The opposition has been advised that there have been considerable problems with communications and dispatch, not just last year but certainly into the last financial year as well. There have been reports to a variety of members of parliament that some calls that were going through the 000 number have finished up in different states. Indeed, one report given to us was that a

country brigade in Victoria finished up telephoning a 000 request.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I do not think Grant Lupton can help you with 000 numbers. I mean, it is a federal service; it is not ours.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I understand that, minister. It is not an accusation. By way of seeking information, have these problems had a significant effect on the response target that you were seeking?

Mr LUPTON: I cannot respond to the specific incidents. The way in which to measure this is in the response that is actually dispatched to calls, not the response time. There has been very close monitoring of our communication centre and, as you know, we have transitioned to a new comm cen, which is a state of the art facility. There has been no instance of delays as a result of that transition, and that has been very carefully scrutinised through questions on notice and freedom of information requests that have been passed on. However, there is no relationship between the calls that have been alleged to have been sent to other areas of the state, and we have been setting targets that are more realistic of our actual time to get through traffic to get to a call.

Any of the incident issues, as far as going to other parts of the state are concerned, are only part of our normal contingency. With the advent of mobile phones it means that when people drive by an incident (they might see a car fire) they start phoning in, and we can get 200 or 300 calls on an incident when previously we might have got 10. So, there is a point where our comm cen cannot handle those calls at the same time, so they are transitioned over to other communication centres around Australia and then re-presented as soon as possible, and that contingency is the same with all dispatch centres.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I can say that there has been very substantial commitment of investment to the communications in the Metropolitan Fire Service. We have transitioned recently to new equipment. As with all new equipment we are still dealing with one or two issues, but I am absolutely confident that, despite what has been said, there has been no difficulty with dispatch. There is no evidence of any difficulty with dispatch. We would prefer that the 000 number worked a little differently. However, it is a federal service, and it has been that way through changes of government. There is not a great deal we can do about federal services. I am absolutely confident that the numbers you see for performance criteria for the Metropolitan Fire Service are comparable to any similar fire service in Australia or New Zealand.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: With your indulgence, Mr Chairman, could I just clarify this to make sure that I have this correctly ordered in my mind. As I understand what is being put to me, if a lot of phone calls come in for an incident, and, if it is a significant incident, it is not surprising that a lot of members of the public ring in to report that incident. You may even have staff of the Metropolitan Fire Service ringing in to see whether their services are required. If you get to your threshold of, say, 230 calls, then any other calls that come may get flipped anywhere else in Australia and will not come back to you until your lines start to clear. If I understand this correctly—

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I do not think firefighters calling in would be in the same position. They would not ring that number. They do have other phone numbers at the fire station.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: But if there is a fresh incident—

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: It is the same system that applies around Australia. I remember a decade ago carrying around a house brick as a mobile phone, and being the only kid on the block with one as a requirement of the job. The truth is that you drive around now and every 15-year old school kid has a mobile phone, too. The truth is that, in a major incident, there are far more people ringing things in. Every service in Australia has had to have a communication system that deals with it. The one in South Australia is, I have to say, state of the art now after considerable investment, and it works the same as everywhere else.

The bottom line is that there has not been a single incident where there has been a delay in dispatch because of the volume of traffic. That has just not been the case. Allegations were raised irresponsibly sometime ago, but it simply was not the case.

Mr LUPTON: The point is that, after several hundred calls being received at the same time, the only way that could be dealt with would be to have several hundred operators answering them, and, obviously, that is not efficient.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: We would prefer them to be putting out the fire.

Mr LUPTON: That is right. The first step is that if all calls cannot be answered simultaneously because it is not physically possible they get repositioned within a matter of seconds. I do not have those figures. They get answered quickly once it has been determined as the same incident. But if there is a huge number, where the system is overwhelmed, rather than a call not being answered it would get repositioned to another communication centre in Australia. That would be a very rare occurrence, but there is a contingency there. So, if you are a caller, at least your call does get answered, but that is the third phase of the contingency phase.

The first phase is that the call gets answered immediately; phase two is that, because the line might be busy as a result of 700 calls, the call would get re-presented in a matter of seconds, and, if it cannot get backed up, then it would go to another state and get re-presented from there. You have to keep in mind that the very first call that comes in would be the one that despatched the appliances to the incident. All the other calls coming after that would be the public phoning in. The goal is to make sure that every call gets answered by someone, but that is becoming increasingly challenging with the advances in telecommunications.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: Where the public are concerned that they had their phone call answered in another state, you would like us to forward those to you, minister, personally for individual assessment.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: No. Do not get two things confused here. The 000 number is a federal service. Most of the concerns arise from the 000 service being a federal service and not immediately recognised. It is understandable that people in an emergency are often under stress and do not give information clearly and without a local knowledge. In the ideal world we would love all emergency numbers to be answered locally, but that is not the service provided by Telstra. That is where the bulk of complaints are. I am not sure that the incidence of several hundred calls spilling into other communication systems has ever occurred.

Mr LUPTON: No.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: In fact, it has not occurred. Certainly, there have been no complaints about it because it has not occurred. The point is that that is a better system than

someone ringing in and believing that they are ringing off. It is better that someone answers the call. The option would be, in those extremely rare events, for us to have, as the chief says, 200 people in the comm centre. But I think that most people would agree that we would prefer to have 200 trained firefighters out there putting out fires. It would be a much better use of their time.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: My third question relates to another Metropolitan Fire Service target and the inspection of public entertainment places. I notice from Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 4.58 and 'Performance commentary table', which is under 'Fire Safety', there was a target of 750 public entertainment places to be inspected in 2003-04, but that it is now expected that only 400 inspections will be achieved during this financial year. A target of 600 inspections has been set for 2005-06. What is the reason for achieving less than 54 per cent of those inspections, which all members realise are very important inspections to be undertaken by the Metropolitan Fire Service?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Maybe you would like to expand on what they do when they do all those inspections.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I know what they do, but—

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: You don't know what they do but you know they are important. Perhaps Mr Lupton can tell us.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I was minister for three years: I am well aware of what they do.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Yes, we remember the outriders, Wayne: we will never forget them.

Mr LUPTON: My function as chief officer is to make sure that the resources we have are applied as effectively as they can be. One of the areas that is challenging is in fire cause investigation and inspection of public premises. In South Australia our fire cause investigators also conduct the inspection of licensed public premises because it is an efficiency. When there are not investigations (because we cannot always predict when there will be), we are making sure that their time is well utilised. In other words, in the down time, they are not waiting to have another investigation, they are out on a schedule of inspections. Also, the investigations are unpredictable, whereas inspections can be scheduled. If there is an increase in investigations or in their complexity, we have to adjust the number of site inspections that we do.

Over time we have found that we have a finite resource in that area. We have three fire cause investigators and they also do all the fire cause investigations for the Country Fire Service, and the number of fire incidents that they have to investigate increases, or the complexity of those investigations may increase. If we have a large industrial site fire, they would have to spend more time. What we have found is that it is a challenge for us to meet both those initiatives. In the interim, we are trying to do a better job of the licensed premises inspections when we do them but not do them as frequently. At the end of the day, it is the owner or occupant who is responsible for complying with the law. The fire service legislation puts that onus on them. Our job is to go there and make sure they are doing it. They are not abrogated of that responsibility.

We are also tied to the threshold of the \$25 000 loss for the criminal act that requires us to investigate at that level, because we partner with SAPOL in doing that. That is a very low dollar loss and property values have increased, but we are still investigating to that threshold. So, we have a number of influencing factors. As chief, it is not possible for me to cover

all those factors with the existing staff, so I have made an adjustment for now. Ultimately, like every other agency in government we would like to have more staff. But I cannot do that, so I made the judgment that we will continue to do our fire cause investigations to meet the threshold of \$25 000, I believe it is, in the criminal code, and then do fewer public inspections but more thorough ones and, in the course of doing that, re-emphasise with the owners of these premises that they are in fact the ones responsible for making sure that they are safe.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: If I can seek further clarification of this, I appreciate the fire chief's difficult task in managing his resources. This is a very important issue. We are talking about places of public entertainment, such as hotels, that are crowded with young people. God forbid, if a fire occurs there, the consequences could be absolutely disastrous. The fire chief has told us that his tight resources have also been preoccupied with investigations, and we understand that. But this is about prevention rather than investigating something after the event.

If only 54 per cent of the target is achieved—and that clearly is not satisfactory—and all South Australians are paying their emergency services levy, why is it that the resources have not been increased or are not being increased in this next financial year to ensure that these inspections are done? This is about people's lives, potentially.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: One of the things we have here is Mr Matthew declaring himself the best expert on what are the priorities of the fire service. The truth is, if there is any truth in what he says, it must have been a disastrous—

The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: You'll get your answer, sunshine. The truth is it must have been a disastrous situation under the previous government because of the huge increases in resources to fire services under this administration: something like 15 per cent in total. What I do not do as a minister is what the former minister must have done, and declare myself the expert. Every year the chief officer and the services bring to me requests for their major priorities. The honourable member may have declared this a major priority but the fire services never did. They have increased funding for protective equipment this year and increased funding for training. Wayne, you may think you know better than these blokes but, frankly, South Australia is safer with it in their hands, not in yours.

This chief officer has determined the priorities with his resources, and what I will tell you is that they have many more resources than they had under the previous government. What occurs every year, in case you have forgotten, is that they come and tell me what their wish list is for new spending and we go off and argue for it. We have been very successful because of the commitment of this government to the emergency services: a higher level of commitment than we have seen for years. But this has not been put forward as the first priority. If the chief were to do that, I would listen to him. You doing it, I am not that impressed.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: He just said that he's understaffed—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: If he is understaffed he is in a far superior position today than he was two years ago, because your government did more harm to the Metropolitan Fire Service than any government for years. You under-resourced them; you left the Country Fire Service in the situation where they were spending \$3 million of their capital

budget every year on recurrent expenditure. We inherited an absolute crock. We inherited fire services in this state run down to dangerous levels where they could not sustain capital programs. We put a 15 per cent increase into the Country Fire Service. I do not have the numbers, but we put substantial increases into the Metropolitan Fire Service, and we did that without increasing the levy but by increasing the government's contribution. All I can say is that, whatever you believe were the priorities, the fire services in this state are demonstrably and significantly better off than they were two years ago.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Bright has asked about three or four supplementary questions on top of his three main questions.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: with respect, Mr Chairman, the question has not been answered.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Colton.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: So, the minister think this is okay?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Colton.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: You have raised your point. Can I say that it is a 6.6 per cent increase in the Metropolitan Fire Service budget. It is not a question of what I think is okay. The point I am trying to get through to you is that I do not place myself in the position of the Chief Officer who determines the most important priorities. These fire services have had more success in getting funding from the government in the last two years than they did in the previous eight.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: Because of the emergency services levy, minister.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Come in Spinner—'Because of the emergency services levy'. I point out that all of that increase came from consolidated revenue, not from an increase in this dreadful tax. They introduced the emergency services levy as an impost on South Australians. We inherited a disastrous situation in terms of funding for emergency services. We have made significant funding increases to fix the problems in the GRN, which was a disaster when we inherited it, and we did it all from consolidated revenue, not by placing an additional tax burden on the people. The contribution from the emergency services levy to the overall funding of the fire services has declined in real terms since we came to government, because we are picking up the burden and not putting it on to householders.

Membership:

Mr Gunn substituted for Ms Chapman.

Mr CAICA: In one of the minister's responses, he mentioned personal protective clothing. Will the minister explain funding for PPE for the Metropolitan Fire Service and any changes in the approach that might have taken place with respect to funding that type of equipment?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Over the last two years through the injection of a lot of funds we have been sorting out some of the problems. I mentioned earlier—and I think it is no secret—that the Metropolitan Fire Service was the poor cousin under the previous government. The member for Colton has served the state as a firefighter, so if he tells me what the priorities are I will probably take more notice. As a station officer in the fire services he has placed his life on the line for his community, and it is always good to hear from him.

Whilst personal protection equipment is essential for our firefighters doing the job, for the Metropolitan Fire Service

the previous government declined to fund it on an ongoing basis. This year, we have had to put in a spike of funding for the Metropolitan Fire Service of \$1.324 million so that our firefighters are funded for the protective equipment that they deserve when they put their lives on the line for the community. We will fix the chronic problem that has existed. In out years there will be ongoing funding to make sure there is regular turnover without blowing the budget for the fire services. It is about \$400 000 in 2005-06; \$399 000 in 2006-07; and \$395 000 in 2007-08, after the initial spike of \$1.324 million in the next year.

This involves being honest with people and putting in place funding arrangements that recognise the ongoing needs of the fire services, not trying to hide them under the carpet, as has occurred in the past. In the past, these pressures were met out of the existing budget, and you would have to spend something on personal protection equipment that you were going to spend somewhere else. So, when the former minister cries shock, horror about some targets not being met, that was structural under the previous government. It was structural that they would not be able to do everything that they were funded for because there were some things that they simply had to do for which they were not funded.

We have been correcting that since we came to office with a substantial increase in funds, as I said, something like 15 per cent for the CFS and 6 per cent for the Metropolitan Fire Service with some increased funding in joint areas to overcome that. We are committed to recognising the true costs—not hiding them from people—and fronting up and committing the funds. Again I stress that we have done that without increasing the emergency services levy, but by making a greater contribution from consolidated revenue. This government is serious about emergency services. We have some of the finest officers in this state, and we resource them properly.

Mr CAICA: I noted over many years a breakdown in the relationship between the CFS and MFS. Whether or not that was orchestrated, I make no comment, but I congratulate you, minister, and those sitting alongside you for the way in which that relationship is now working. There is mutual respect between both organisations, and that is the only way that those organisations can work to their maximum efficiency. My specific question relates to the Country Fire Service. Will the minister advise the committee of the steps that are being taken by the government towards supporting the training of Country Fire Service volunteers?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I do not take credit for what is a very improved relationship between the services. I will not venture into discussion on the bill for the creation of SafeCom, which is before the house, but I will say that all of the impetus for reform that we see—I think it is the most significant reform ever in the history of the fire services—has come from the services themselves and, in particular, from the working relationship between these officers sitting at the front and the SES. Reform has been created and driven by them. The government has placed a level of trust in the people who perform these services to devise an administrative model with which they feel comfortable. It is all about resourcing these people properly and putting the running of the services in their hands.

I stress that it is the fundamental difference between us. While we think we are very good ministers, some of us, we do not believe that we are better chief officers or better administrators than the fire service. It is about letting people develop their skills and putting the confidence in them to

work up to their very best standards. The member for Stuart laughs. He has never had much respect for the CFS, I know that, but it is about putting faith in those people.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Gunny can handle himself; don't worry about that. Graham can look after himself. I take it back: I actually have some grudging respect for Graham. He is a decent fellow. He is passionate about what he believes in. I am just not sure about grazing the animals in the national parks.

The Hon. G.M. Gunn interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: He says it is a good idea; that is his method of fire prevention. He reckons that you do not have to worry about fires in national parks if some animals have eaten all the vegetation. It is a very good approach. One thing I will say is that he has never changed his tune in 30 years. He has always been consistent. One of the initiatives we have taken this year in order to keep continuous improvement is an additional \$11.6 million in funding, allocated over four years, to the Country Fire Service. This is to further the training of volunteers. The funding will allow for additional curriculum development officers at the CFS State Training Centre. The officers will develop and deliver incident management training for CFS volunteers and, in light of the new relationship, personnel from other emergency management agencies including police, the MFS, SES, DEH, PIRSA, SA Water and Forestry SA.

The CFS training will receive about \$2 million over the next four years, I should say, which would ensure the delivery of nationally accredited firefighter training packages to CFS volunteers. The \$11.6 million is the overall increase. The member's point about agencies working together is so extremely important. It also comes for the first time a decade after the Bushfire Summit last year. We are cross-agency funding, driven by emergency service concerns, into the Department of Environment and Heritage for planned burns in national parks to prevent the sort of dreadful bushfires that we saw. We are about getting all of these people to work together. I know the member for Stuart has talked about the need to get into the national parks and make sure that you have your cold burns and—what other things do you need, Graham?

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Fire breaks.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Clearly fire breaks, that is it. For the first time, we are not talking about it, we are actually funding the Department of Environment and Heritage to work with the Country Fire Service to achieve those things. It is fundamentally important. Unfortunately, because the work has not been done for a decade it is going to take two or three years to catch up with the work that needs to be done, because of the high level of danger in those national parks areas. Along with improvements in the aerial fire fighting strategy and a significant improvement in funds for the bushfire safety program, the Bushfire Blitz, it is about doing everything we possibly can and supporting the agencies that do the work. The point the member for Colton makes is absolutely central. It is about the agencies working together, not just the emergency services, but with people like Environment and Heritage, in order to get a good outcome for the community.

Mr CAICA: I applaud the integrated approach. Minister, can you please explain to the committee why \$1 million has been allocated for breathing apparatus in the Metropolitan Fire Service for this financial year?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: This is another thing that was neglected under the previous government and not a priority. The shadow minister talked about his priorities; we strive to meet the priorities that are identified by the service. The extra \$1 million is for breathing apparatus in the Metropolitan Fire Service. The SAMFS has in service 300 BA tests which, although they are fully maintained and well maintained, are currently 13 years old. Our commitment is absolute to providing the best equipment for our firefighters. Breathing apparatus is vital for life support when used by personnel. As you would know, as a former firefighter, firefighters walk into a structural fire not knowing what they face in many circumstances. It is not simply the danger of burning buildings and smoke, but the danger of modern chemicals, a mixture of things, and breathing apparatus is essential to doing the job properly. This is a spike in capital expenditure that cannot be absorbed into the annual provision and we are not requiring the service to do that. That is what would have happened in the past. It has not been provided in previous budgets. We are putting the money in there because it is the same theme. We are determined that our firefighters within the resources that we have available will have the best resources that we can give them according to priorities set by the officers.

The CHAIRMAN: We often hear of arson attacks. I know it is a matter that would involve the police as well, but I would be interested to hear from the head of the MFS in particular of strategies that could be employed to deal with this issue, including the possibility of offering rewards. I think it is a two-edged sword for the insurance industry, because they need some fires. They do not want to be too cynical, otherwise people will not insure. There seems to be almost a code of silence about what I see as frequent incidents of arson attacks on buildings in the metropolitan area in particular. Have you got any views on how this matter could be tackled, including rewards, or promoting it more through Crime Stoppers?

Mr LUPTON: Certainly the area of great concern to ourselves and the police, especially in the last 18 months, is the arson attacks on schools. Let alone the dollar loss, which has been about \$1.5 million in property loss, the collateral loss that goes onto the students and teachers is worse. I have had some discussions with the Minister of Education, but as far as a code of silence, it is possibly because there is a task force that is currently working between ourselves and the police on the arson issue to look at what initiatives we can and cannot employ. They meet regularly. We have not publicised those initiatives as yet, because we are still in the process of formulating them, but the concept of the reward system is something that is a possibility. It would be somewhat premature for me to elaborate right now because of the work we are doing behind the scenes to try and approach this, but I can say that SAPOL and MFS have a dedicated taskforce to look at the arson problem and how we can take steps to try and counter it.

The CHAIRMAN: In relation to the number of house fires and sometimes resulting in tragedies, is it the result of people smoking in bed, the lack of a proper alarm? What is behind the terrible situation where we see a loss of life in house fires, both in the city and the country on a frequent basis?

Mr LUPTON: I think that what that indicates is that residential fires or fires in people's homes, are the areas where normal fire prevention measures have the least impact. I believe over time we have done a great job through

legislation, through building safety and our public buildings, but trying to change people's habits, people's attitudes, is the biggest challenge and that is where the majority of fire deaths occur. It is also the area where legislation has the least impact—people do not like to be regulated in their homes. So, the response to that is through community education and trying to change people's attitudes over time. If we compare ourselves to other countries such as Japan, for example, where they live in highly combustible houses with paper walls, this type of thing, very close together, they have a very low fire death rate in residences and that is because of their attitude to their own safety. So, we are trying to learn from that.

This last year we have formalised the funding for our Community Safety Education Branch and put in a considerable amount of money—just under \$1 million that has been provided by the government—to fund our community education activities, and that is with specific community campaigns like the 'Change your clock, change your battery' smoke alarm campaign that we run in conjunction with a battery supplier—and that has had very wide public awareness. We see smoke alarms as being the best form of defence because of the type of materials we find in houses that are ignited by cigarettes, as you say.

The type of materials that furniture, clothing and furnishings are constructed from these days are totally different from what they would have been 20 or 30 years ago, and the synthetics produce toxins that will overcome somebody in their sleep long before the fire damages them. So, the smoke alarm campaign has been our primary focus on trying to change those terrible statistics but we are also very proactive in school campaigns, trying to get to young people, and then hopefully they will influence their parents, and over time, affect a generational change, so that a decade from now our fire loss of life and residences will be closer to some of the other countries where they have a different culture.

So, the short answer is that we are trying to change from a reactive approach to a proactive approach, and put more money into community safety education, and target residences and people's attitudes where legislation against safety (which we have in public buildings through fire alarms and exits and these type of things) does not apply.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Mr Chairman, information can also be provided by the Country Fire Service as to these issues because, of course, while we have very great concerns about bushfire arson and bushfires, the Country Fire Service has substantial responsibility for structure fires as well. So, maybe Euan could add something to that.

Mr FERGUSON: Thank you, minister. CFS in the funding announced by government this year is proposing to review and reissue the School Fireguard kits which have been around for some time but have fallen into disrepair. The School Fireguard kits are a school-based program which educates school-aged children, primary school-aged children about both structural and domestic fire safety as well as bushfire safety. In addition, the CFS is again running, in conjunction with MFS, and local government, a number of community fire safety forums during June and July of this year. These are based on the bushfire forums which were held last year leading up to the Bushfire Summit. This year, though, we are expanding them to have a whole fire safety focus. They are involving the Metropolitan Fire Service and are being held in 12 locations around South Australia during June and July, and in addition we are continuing the Community Firesafe program and the Bushfire Blitz program.

Whilst those are targeted at bushfire safety, they are very much targeted also at domestic fire safety and keeping the house tidy, and it has a flow-on for structural fire safety as well.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, how confident are you that the government could cope with a major disaster, whether it be fire, earthquake or flood? I know that we almost had a disaster in relation to gas supplies at the beginning of this year and, hopefully, that will not occur again. But how confident are you that we are well placed to deal with a major emergency situation?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: It is a very good question. Let us put it in context that the ordinary progress of any disaster situation usually involves the overwhelming of all services in the first instance. Of course, that is the ordinary progress of disasters around the world and it is how fast we can recover from that initial overwhelming of services that sets out how well we will respond. There is no doubt that the priority is prevention of major disasters. Some of those are not preventable by any measure and the focus needs to be on recovery, but for others such as bushfire, with the Bushfire Summit and the increases in aerial firefighting we have been taking the path that prevention is not only important but it is community work too. Therefore, from the Bushfire Summit, we saw the creation of the Bushfire Blitz, a heavily funded new program by the government that goes out into people's suburbs with street corner meetings, and all sorts of information sources, to make sure that the community plays their part in the prevention of bushfires.

The aerial firefighting strategy, which we have beefed up, is about getting to a fire in that crucial first 20 minutes before it becomes a bushfire. The truth is that those fires, if they get beyond that point, when the weather is bad and conditions are right, are not controllable by any agency and if we do not get them at that early stage and have not done the work in national parks to make them more preventable, we will be sitting back and waiting for the weather to take its course and carry out the important role of recovery.

We have put a number of things in place, and I will not go into some of the things before the parliament but it is sufficient to say there is a new disaster management bill before the parliament at present. It has been pointed out to me that there is, of course, a new State Emergency Operations Centre that the Premier and I visited some time ago. We also have increased funding for the incident control system and incident management, and training for emergency management agencies.

We have put as many resources as we can into this very important area. Of course, you would be well aware, Mr Chairman, that since September 11 and Bali there are other types of emergency which unfortunately we need to contemplate as a nation. We have stressed the beefing up of the work between all our agencies that would need to respond in an emergency, but the bottom line is the comment that I made at the start: the first thing that occurs in most disasters is that services are overwhelmed and what is important is how quickly they can recover from the overwhelming demand in the first instance. We believe we are as prepared as any jurisdiction in Australia. We certainly have the leadership in our services, which is second to none, which is terribly important, and we will work on prevention. Some things cannot be prevented but we are as prepared as we can be. I do not know whether any officer from any of the services wants to add anything to those comments.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I say at the outset that I think we have been fortunate in this state to have volunteers who have given great service to the people of South Australia. I do not know whether it has been brought to the minister's attention that the major fuel companies have attempted to downgrade supplies of aviation fuel in Port Augusta, Whyalla and other places and, obviously, in times of emergency if those services are done away with or access to them is reduced, emergency aircraft may have difficulty getting fuel. I wonder whether the minister is prepared to make representations to the oil companies, because I personally believe they need to clearly understand that they have some community responsibility. They cannot take the cream and not provide some services.

This matter was highlighted recently during debate about the future of the Flying Doctor Service, and that is another story which we will deal with on another occasion, but, if services in places such as Leigh Creek and Port Augusta are downgraded and fuel is not readily available for the excellent aircraft that are used in fire operations (for example, helicopters), there could be a problem. I wonder whether, from a government perspective, the minister is aware of this and would he make some representations to try to sheet home to these people that it is all very well for people in London to make decisions (as I understand is the case in relation to one company), where they have no understanding of Australia but, if they want the revenue, they ought to provide some services?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I can only agree. We have had some notice of the issue that the member is talking about, and I will bring back more information on notice, but I can say that we have contingency programs in place for aerial firefighting in terms of the storage of fuel in drums and the rotation of it. Something I did not know until I was energy minister is that, apparently, fuel 'goes off' if you leave it too long. So there are contingencies in place.

But this is not strictly emergency services. The broader issue is one of genuine concern, and that is the fact that oil companies increasingly operate on a 'just in time' basis in order not to have stock in hand. This is a situation we have already seen exhibited in things such as diesel supply at harvest time because, if there is a slight upkick or an earlier harvest, we see tightness of supply. That is because they believe they do not want to hold a lot of stock. One of the things I did about that, although not related to the area of emergency services, is to now require weekly reports on diesel and unleaded petrol supplies from fuel companies, and I think we should do something similar about the matter the member raised.

So far that information has been satisfactory. I would be slow to intervene in the market directly with regulation because, ultimately, people pay for regulation, as you well know. But we have that reporting requirement in place now in regard to unleaded petrol and diesel and it could be we could do something similar about that. These people are there to make money and they have worked out that stock in hand costs them money and does not make them money, but I agree that they have to face up to their responsibility. We are not talking about a substitutable item, we are talking about an essential item, and corporations should act responsibly in that regard.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: The next matter I want to raise, and it has been briefly touched on, is in relation to ensuring that appropriate hazard reduction programs are in place. Is the minister satisfied that in particular the director of the Country Fire Service has adequate powers to ensure that in relation to

government-owned land as well as privately-owned land appropriate steps can be taken to ensure adequate fire breaks, access tracks and hazard reduction programs? I firmly believe that, where necessary, the director should have the authority to give orders to people and ensure that these steps are taken.

There is a problem at the present time. The Country Fire Service advertises and encourages people to take steps to reduce fuel hazards but, on the other hand, if they do these things, there is another group of people running around wanting to fine them and ping them—they are the hobos in the native vegetation section who have no regard for commonsense. Every time I see those—

Ms Breuer interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Well, I think the honourable member would have a good knowledge of fire control measures. I do not know whether the honourable member has had to fight a large native vegetation fire but she would understand the difficulties. It is very dangerous for people to go into these things. It is very dangerous if you have ever been in one, let me tell you, or if you are trying to save someone's assets. Every time I go home there is a monument to a person who has lost their life, so I take it seriously.

It concerns me that, every time I see the advertisements on TV or radio, on the other hand we have another arm of government that does not appear to have any commonsense. The commonsense thing is that we should be encouraging people, not inhibiting them. Can the Director take some positive steps to ensure that land-holders and managers do make sure there is access and there are firebreaks, and controlled burning off takes place? As the minister pointed out, there are some parts where we ought to put in the sheep for a few weeks. I know where that has happened—

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: You had better not tell anyone!

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: It has had outstanding results; so I pose the question.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: The member for Stuart might be surprised to find out that—not on all these things but on some of these things—we are closer together in personal viewpoint than people might expect. Beyond my personal viewpoint, as a minister I have to balance conflicting interests and viewpoints. I will let the Chief Officer of the fire service talk about whether the powers are sufficient. I hope that all officers deal in a commonsense way with property owners who, I know, in the remote locations are left to their own devices or that of local volunteers. I would hope that when they have acted in the heat of the moment to protect lives and property, commonsense would be brought to the issues about which the member talks; that is, whether in fighting a fire they have offended someone at the Native Vegetation Authority.

One of the things I expressed earlier, and one of the things we have worked hard to achieve, is to bring the agencies together to work more cooperatively on issues of fire protection. We have certainly committed a lot of resources to it but, in terms of the powers available to the chief, my view was that if he were to tell us that he has not got enough I would be agitating for an increase in them.

Mr FERGUSON: I will outline the basic structure for dealing with these sorts of issues. Many of these areas are under the control of the Department for Environment and Heritage. Within that organisation there has been a substantial shift in policy in the past two or three years from one where burning was perceived to be an act of land clearance to one where burning under appropriate prescription is now regarded

as an appropriate land management tool; and supporting that change in policy has been a significant amount of funding provided by the government over a four-year period. That is a very significant change from what occurred in the previous 10 to 15 years.

It needs to be recognised that these burns are planned by the agency in conjunction with the district bushfire prevention committee. In fact, we are requiring that their land management planning and fire management planning be endorsed by those district bushfire prevention committees. That allows local government to become involved. It allows the locals, particularly CFS volunteers, to become involved and provide advice on what the priorities are.

There is also the state Bushfire Prevention Advisory Committee, which has a range of stakeholders including DEH, representatives of CFS volunteers and a Conservation Council representative. It would be fair to say that DEH is still building its capacity for both planning and conducting these prescribed burns. As you would know, sir, some particular skills are required to conduct these burns safely. We need to recognise that many of these areas have not had the appropriate prescribed burning done for a long time. They are adjacent to areas of private property where there is a substantial risk.

My advice to both my minister and the Minister for Environment and Conservation is that the prescribed burning program needs to start slowly and build in capacity. My understanding is that in the past 12 months about 500 hectares of prescribed burns have been done. That is still not enough, but it is growing over the years. My advice to both those ministers is that it probably will not be for another two or three years, until CFS and DEH have improved their capacity and are undertaking sufficient burns for it to be sustainable, that I can report there is an adequate amount of burning going on.

In relation to the Native Vegetation Council, we have had a number of discussions with their officers in taking away the individual burning approval approach, which they have employed in the past, to one where a more landscape plan is presented at the district bushfire prevention committee. Once it is approved there then the Native Vegetation Council has indicated it does not need to have a specific approval of burns. That process started straight after the Bushfire Summit. It is already proving successful, but there is some lag time in getting all those plans up and running.

The other comment I make is that fuel reduction prescribed burning is a fickle activity, one which is determined by the weather conditions, both during the burn and immediately afterwards. For the past two years the window of opportunity for prescribed burning has been smaller than we would have liked. In summary, there has been a substantial change in the policy within DEH. That has been backed up by additional resources by the government. It has also been supported by changed planning processes. I continue to have dialogue with both the Conservation Council and the Native Vegetation Council so that there can be an easier way for private landholders also to conduct prescribed burning on their property.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: That is very important.

Mr FERGUSON: Yes; and that process is continuing. There is plenty of scope for improvement, but we are getting encouraging responses from both the Native Vegetation Council and the Conservation Council.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Will the minister assure volunteers that, when they take decisions to fight a fire, they

will be supported if, at a later date, other government agencies then set out to try to take unreasonable action in relation to them or the landholders?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: As the honourable member well knows, I am as bound by the law as any other member of the community. Certainly, I would not be in a position to interfere with the ordinary process of the law. What I will say is that any CFS volunteer acting in good faith in the discharge of their obligation will have my personal support. Some people will occasionally do things that they should not do, and I cannot support that. But anyone who is in the process of doing their job and acting in good faith will have my personal support; although, as I say, I can no more interfere with the due process of the laws of the state than anyone else.

Mr CAICA: As important as I think my additional questions are, to avoid Wayne squealing we will defer the rest of my questions and let him have the rest of the time.

The CHAIRMAN: The honourable member does not have to be that kind. Does the member for Kavel have a question?

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: Yes, Mr Chairman. I follow on from the comments concerning prescribed burning from the Chief Executive of the CFS. Given the fact that you said that, over the next two or three years, we are still in a catch-up phase—and I have asked this question of the minister in the house but, as yet, I have not received a detailed response from him on—

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: How long ago was that?

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: A number of weeks.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: A number of weeks? Stop putting out fires and get that answer!

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: Can the minister inform the committee of the actual area that has been prescribed burnt this autumn, this year? As a result of talking to people involved in this activity (Forestry SA staff and the like), I understand that autumn is the optimum season for cold burning, particularly in the Mount Lofty Ranges. I am interested in what area has been prescribed burnt this autumn and what area is proposed for this spring before the onset of the bushfire season at the end of this year.

Mr FERGUSON: I would have to take that question on notice. We have responded to the honourable member's question, although it was a little tardy, because DEH had to gather all its data and analyse the success of some of its burns. From memory, the total was of the order of about 500 hectares, but I do not have the information at my fingertips in terms of how much of that was within the Mount Lofty Ranges.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Unfortunately, we did get a late start. We had an unseasonably late close to the fire season.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: As a supplementary question, are there any plans to do any prescribed burning this year in the Ansteys Hill Conservation Park?

Mr FERGUSON: I would have to take that question on notice. I do not have that level of detail. I would imagine that that would be covered in some forward planning by DEH—because of its location it is in a high-risk area. I will take that question on notice and provide a response via the minister.

The CHAIRMAN: How much is the cool-burn approach—which I support in general terms—based on science and how much is based on folk lore, and, similarly, firebreaks? In my view firebreaks tend to give people a false sense of security. I am wondering whether you could comment on that notion that people are safe if they have a

firebreak when the experience from Canberra and elsewhere shows that firebreaks often are not useless but not always that helpful.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: It is all based on science. However, the truth is that even in the science there are strongly conflicting opinions. There are people who scientifically suggest that no level of cold burning should ever occur and others who will suggest a very high level. What I can say is that it is all based on science on the best advice we can have. It is a program based on the advice of people, such as Mr Ferguson who has a very strong background on this issue in the Victorian Country Fire Authority (CFA) and on the views of those in the Department of Environment and Heritage.

As I said, it is based on science, but, Mr Chairman, you know as well as I do that there are very strongly conflicting views even within the scientific community, within the experts, about the efficacy of those things. A Bushfire Summit was held last year and we intend to make it a regular feature. We had one recently in Adelaide hosted by the Department of Environment and Heritage and the CFS. We constantly review and update the knowledge in this area. There will always be conflicting viewpoints but I rely on the best advice of the experts as we can find it.

The CHAIRMAN: And on firebreaks as a false sense of security?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I am not sufficiently expert to be able to comment on that. I do not know whether Euan would like to comment.

Mr FERGUSON: I could make a comment on both subjects. Prescribed burning is a science and an art, but there is a strong scientific background to it and, as the minister has indicated, it is an inexact science. Over 30 to 35 years, CSIRO has conducted a number of trials and experiments on fuel reduction burning. Funded by the federal government, the Cooperative Research Centre on Bushfires continues to seek more information on the efficiency of fuel reduction burning. If one looks at fire behaviour and the things that you can change that affect fire behaviour, there is only one factor that you can change, and that is fuel. That is why there is so much focus on fuel modification, both by burning and by mechanical means.

The science of prescribed burning, fuel reduction burning, is proven. It is effective. What is out for debate is the frequency, the intensity of burning, and in which season the burn should be conducted. That is something where further research is going on. In respect of firebreaks or fuel breaks, again the most significant factor that affects fire intensity and fire behaviour is fuel: not only the quantity of the fuel but the arrangement and moisture content of the fuel. We would recommend that, where there is a specific asset, for example a dwelling, a minimum fuel break of 20 metres is absolutely mandatory for any guarantee of survival of that structure. As the fuel break increases in size, you then get a consequent reduction in fire intensity and, therefore, increase the chances of survival of that structure.

It is a fairly complex formula, because it also relates to the siting of the house. For example, a house built on an easterly aspect will be safer than a house built on a northerly or westerly aspect. The design of the house is important. One of the features that was very apparent in Canberra was the substantial ember attack that occurred over a long distance. You, sir, quite rightly have drawn the analogy in questioning the efficacy of firebreaks in the Canberra situation. In that instance we saw massive ember attack on houses that were

protected by a substantial fuel break. That has resulted in a focus on the design of those houses and also resulted in a focus on the fuel in the environment around those houses. There is now a lot of focus on the design of fences between houses and plantations.

There is also an increased focus on the role played by woodchip and mulches and the contribution of those to houses being burnt down after the main passage of the fire. In summary, I suppose that firebreaks are effective. They are an essential part of the formula for protecting structures, but there are many other variables, particularly related to the siting and design and the housekeeping around the house, which can be very important in guaranteeing or not guaranteeing their survival.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: Earlier this morning the minister spoke about a continuing program of clearing fire tracks and so on. I know quite a number of people who are involved in Forestry SA work, as fire prevention officers in the Mount Lofty Ranges and in the CFS. I grew up with a number of those people involved in those different areas and I support the member for Stuart's comments earlier that the CFS does a tremendous job, particularly those brigades in the Adelaide Hills and the Mount Lofty Ranges. A specific issue came to my attention earlier in the year when the Adelaide Hills Council, I think it was, was overseeing the clearing of some fire tracks in the Lenswood area running down into Forestry SA land.

Some of those gentlemen raised with me concerns that, in clearing those fire tracks of overhanging vegetation and the like, they were worried that members of the public use those tracks for recreational purposes, such as mountain bike riding, walking trails and other activities, and that if members of the public came along and saw them cutting down branches and clearing overhanging vegetation they would lodge a complaint, and their lodging a complaint would stop them carrying out that work. What can your agencies do to ensure that that work is not impeded by people coming along and complaining so that those workers who are instructed to carry out that work are stopped?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I am not absolutely certain why the complaint would cause the work to stop. I have to say it probably would not cause it to stop if I were in charge of it, unless there was a law about it.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: It is just that those workers were concerned that someone comes along, complains about what they are doing and that will stop them carrying out that task of clearing the fire track to make it safer for CFS brigades to run down there.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I do not think you will ever be able to conduct any of that sort of work without possibly upsetting someone. There are people who would complain about motherhood if it was being suggested for the first time, so you should not take that too seriously, but there are people who, if they do not understand the purpose of the work, might see it in the wrong light. We are trying to make sure that it is done as well as it can be and that people understand what we do. One of the Bushfire Summit recommendations was the creation of the Government Agencies Fire Liaison Committee, which is developing a draft standard for the construction and maintenance of fire management access tracks on public and private land. This means that the work will be done as well as we can with each agency understanding what the others are doing.

In terms of upsetting the community, I think we have to think about what the answer to that problem might be. I think

most members of the community, if they understand what is going on, if it is explained to them and if we put up a sign to say that firebreak work is in progress, will accept it. Of course, there are members of the community who would still not accept it, but I will not go down that track because I might say something I regret. I take on board what the member says, and we will examine the best way of making sure that people understand why we are doing this type of work. We need to do this with a degree of sensitivity and in a manner that does not make us look like visiting vandals and Visigoths. It is a delicate matter and it needs to be handled appropriately. We will take it on board and see whether we can come up with an answer for that particular circumstance.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: I refer to some earlier comments about the Bushfire Blitz program, which endeavours to engage the community in bushfire awareness and reduction programs in and around dwellings. I have publicly commented on this and last year I made several speeches in the house about imploring residents to clean up around their homes. Mr Ferguson spoke about this earlier, too. Is there any plan to expand these programs? I understand that there are Bushfire Blitz community meetings. I believe the facilitator of a meeting in my district came from the Riverland. I could not attend that meeting, so I rang him to put in an apology and I think that, from memory, he came from Renmark. That is not an issue, but are there any plans to expand programs to further educate members of the community particularly on fire safety issues in and around their own home and property through advertising in the local newspaper or on TV?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: The Bushfire Blitz program is fairly new; it is about two years old, I think, and it is under constant review. A very good idea has been for all the agencies to meet annually to discuss how things are going, what has worked and what has not. Despite a significantly increased effort by the service, nothing has worked as well as the vision of the Canberra bushfires, which focused people's minds. We reviewed the level of advertising, and it simply was not getting the purchase that we wanted. That does not mean that you stop; it means that you constantly review how to do it better.

This program has had the most substantial commitment of resources to any new program for many years. It went from a pilot program to having an ongoing commitment of funds. We were able to secure SGIC sponsorship for Bushfire Blitz, which we hope to make ongoing and perhaps talk about increasing, which would give us more resources. We think it is very worth while, and we are continuing to review it but, at the end of the day, there are always conflicting priorities. We may do more if we think that is wise, but it is difficult when people want a million bucks a year for another aircraft contract. I have to say that this is the first time I have been to estimates where an opposition member has not asked me about their bushfire station. I do not know whether that is another question on the list.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: It is coming.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: There are always priorities. We believe it is a worthwhile program. We have committed funding to it in the out years, and we will keep it under review. From our point of view, getting the community to do more is the number one priority in improving fire safety preparedness. If you lose a fire in 20 minutes, you lose it for ever. It takes only one wrong move to create such a situation. We believe that getting the community involved is the number one priority. During the last bushfire season, we put a major focus on bushfire arson on high risk days and, with

thanks to Kevin Foley, we had an increased number of police patrols. In those increased bushfire risk days we found people actually listened to the message and went out themselves to keep a lookout for people acting suspiciously. So we know that elements of it have clearly worked, but getting people to do work around their home has always been difficult. That is something that we will continue to work on. I will now ask Mr Ferguson to talk about the particulars of the program.

Mr FERGUSON: I will run through the results of the program for the past 12 months. Bushfire Blitz conducted 90 community meetings, and (according to our records) over 1 580 residents took part. Attendances were down for the first three or four weeks of Bushfire Blitz. It was not until early February when we got a blast of hot air and started getting some of those extreme fire risk days that attendances started to improve. We have judged that as being a very successful program again. As the minister indicated, SGIC provided \$100 000 sponsorship of that program. We have already met with their parent group, talking about extending that resourcing in the future.

The second program is the Community Fire Safe Program, which has now finished six fire seasons of operation and is, again, very successful. We are finding with the Community Fire Safe Program that it is a bit more of a sustained program. The intention of that program is to set up a little group that then becomes self-sustaining, which then allows us to extend it into new areas. So, it is growing. For example, in the last 12 months there have been 31 new community groups formed. There are 150 groups that were formed prior to the fire season, and about half of those we have revisited. When we do not get a call, it does not necessarily mean that the group is not meeting, it just means that they are sustaining their own interest and doing things themselves. Our records indicate that 1 850 households have been involved in that program. There is plenty of scope for continued development of that.

As I said, each year we increase the influence of that program in a new area. For the next fire season, we are hoping to extend it into the Lower South-East and the Lower Eyre Peninsula. They are the two areas where the highest risk is and the greatest perceived benefit would be. I mentioned the Fire Guard Program, for which the government has provided some additional funding this year. I think that is over a four year period, which will be updating the fire guard kits at schools, with a school aged target there.

I would also like to mention that the Council of Australian Governments have had over the last six months a national inquiry into bushfire prevention and mitigation. South Australian fire and emergency services have been involved in making submissions to that. My information is that the report has been completed and that South Australian agencies will now be involved in costing out the implications from that COAG inquiry. Very significantly, one of the recommendations from that COAG inquiry will, I understand, be that more resources go into the education of the community, particularly school based programs. One of the reasons we are now entering into some discussions with the commonwealth is that there may well be an opportunity to seek some matching funding from the commonwealth. There are a number of things which are occurring there.

I suppose the final comment is that our winter Community Fire Safety Forums are seen as an opportunity to seek constant feedback from the community as to how well we are going, but also to take on board new ideas as they occur from members of the community. So, every year, after these

community forums, we then do a stocktake. We might modify our programs on the basis of what we have been told. Alternatively, we might go to government through the bilateral process to seek additional funding, if there is something that we cannot absorb within our normal funding base.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: In view of the time, I seek the committee's indulgence to read into the record the omnibus questions that the opposition has asked of each minister. The minister is familiar with the process.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I wish we were able to table them.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: If I could, minister, I would do so, but regrettably the standing orders do not allow me to. It is perhaps another one of those changes we need to make. With the committee's indulgence, I have some seven questions to read into the record, as follows.

1. Did all the partners and agencies reporting to the minister meet all required budget savings targets for 2003-04 set for them in the 2002-03 and 2003-04 budgets, and, if not, what specific proposed project and program cuts were not implemented?

2. Will the minister provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure on consultants in 2003-04 for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, listing the name of the consultant, cost, work undertaken and method of appointment?

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr Caica): I believe that yesterday a decision was made in agreement between the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier in relation to that particular matter and that it would be limited to \$5 000.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I am not aware of that agreement, but if that agreement has indeed been made between the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier, then I agree that that agreement should stand for that question also. The other questions are:

3. 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 total employment cost of the employee?

4. In the financial year, 2002-03, for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what underspending on projects and programs was not approved by cabinet for carryover expenditure in 2003-04?

5. For all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what is the estimated level of under-expenditure for 2003-04 and has cabinet approved any carryover expenditure into 2004-05?

6. (i) What was the total number of employees with a total employment cost of \$100 000 or more per employee, and also, as a sub-category of the total of the number of employees, with a total employment cost of \$200 000 or more per employee for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister as at 30 June 2003?
- (ii) What is the estimate for 30 June 2004?
- (iii) Will the minister list job title and total employment cost of each position between 30 June 2003 and 30 June 2004 with a total estimated cost of \$100 000 or more (a) which has been abolished and (b) which has been created?
7. (i) What is the difference between consultants and contractors, and how many people or such services that were previously classed as consultants are now shown as contractors?

- (ii) What is the value of their contracts and what are the services that they provide?

I also ask the minister a question in relation to the number of employees within the Emergency Services administrative unit. I note that employee expenses for 2004-05 are expected to be \$10 297 000. Obviously, I am also aware that there is before the house a bill that may change the nature of the body that we are talking about, and I ask how many full-time staff are presently employed by ESAU, and is it expected that that same number of staff would continue with the passage of any bill through the house that may change the nature of that organisation?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I have some information on the current number but in an abundance of caution I will take the question on notice because of those things; they are not the sort of detail that we usually go into at this level. In regard to the future, the brief that we have for the people running this (the services themselves) is that, in the transition, if they can make administrative savings in any particular area of administration, they are free to do so, and they will retain the savings to go into the budgets of the emergency services. So, I would unashamedly say that if, in the future, there were fewer administrative staff and more people at the coalface, I am not going to be embarrassed about that. We have given a firm undertaking to the services that if they can find a better and more efficient model, whatever savings they find will be returned to be expended on services at the coalface.

So, there are no targets. We have no targets about cutting people; it is about letting the services themselves devise a better way of running themselves and finding efficiencies. We have already seen in a closer relationship the opportunity for efficiencies. The proposal to collocate stores is a more recent one, and another is a greater cooperation in training and training resources. So, there are efficiencies there. The overall approach is that whatever they can save they keep and, if they want to find a better mix, I personally am a supporter of more operational people where possible.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: Minister, could you tell the committee of the number of staff presently within—

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I will get that for you. I have some figures here, but I think I will have to check. ESAU includes SES (State Emergency Services) in the way we do the numbers currently, so you will need to be clear about that.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I have questions in relation to the performance criteria set by the Country Fire Service. I would not want them to miss out on some questioning in view of the fact that their cousins in the Metropolitan Fire Service were asked questions about their performance. I note that on page 468 of Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, there is a line that refers to the percentage of building development assessments that were completed within 42 days, and I note that only 50 per cent of building development assessments were completed within the legislatively required period of 42 days. I note also the comment that 'new systems are to be developed to improve timeliness of building development issues.' I ask the minister what are the reasons for these delays and within what elapsed period of time were 90 per cent of the applications actually completed, and what is being planned to rectify this unacceptable situation.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: The question is all right until you get to the unacceptable situation. You had better be careful about that because if we go back over the previous few years you might find that it is not a change, or, actually, that it is an improvement on previous performance. That is not the level of detail that I have here but, unless someone

wants to comment quickly on it, we will have to bring it back for you.

Mr FERGUSON: This is something that we have little control over—the numbers of development assessments that we need to comment on. Secondly, we are effectively operating a free consultancy to people who want to develop in their bushfire prone area. We have spoken with Planning SA and, as a result of the Bushfire Summit, we now have greater powers—including the power of direction—but we are also looking at changing the way in which we provide this service. So, at the moment if you want to build a house in a bushfire prone area you can come along to us with a very flimsy plan and we end up doing the plan for you, but we do not charge for it. So, the proposal is that we move to being more an auditor of plans, ticking them off, and if they do not meet our requirements we send them back. Having said that, I must say that we have recognised that there is a backlog and we have in the past month allocated an additional person to try to get this performance indicator up because we recognise that there is a problem there.

Under the new fire and emergency services bill, rather than it being a free consultancy, we will be able to make an appropriate charge for the service, which means that the use of our officers' time will be better. We will not be asked to make comment on everything. Secondly, if we generate some revenue, that will allow us to plough that back in to employ more people if needed.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: As a supplementary question, has a cost been determined for the likely charge?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: No, and we are probably getting into the area of debating the bill, which we should avoid at present. We can do that in the committee stage of the bill.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: My next question relates to page 4.70 of the same budget document and the line that refers to the average cost of a rural fire investigation. I note there was a target cost of \$1 150 for 2003-04. At this stage that has blown out to an expected cost per incident of \$1 700. I realise these are very difficult things to estimate but, in view of the fact that there is a 48 per cent increase, I ask the minister whether he can advise if there are any extenuating circumstances that resulted in this cost blow-out. Were there a number of particularly large fires that caused it, or is there another reason for that increase?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: As I understand it, it is a fixed cost, but, in putting the figures together, a mistake was made in the number of actual investigations.

Mr FERGUSON: Perhaps I could correct that. We have a fixed cost in the number of fire investigators we have and the cost of providing the service, but there were fewer fires that required investigation. There were 100 in 2003-04 and 80 in—

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: It all adds up.

Mr FERGUSON: So, because of the reduced number of fires, the cost is spread over the fewer number of fires so the cost per fire has increased.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: I have asked this question on two previous occasions during estimates committees—

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: You probably got two very good answers.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: I did not get a tremendously acceptable answer, but my question relates to new CFS fire stations in the Adelaide Hills region. The issue that I have raised previously concerns the Nairne CFS fire station. I understand there is a priority list in CFS headquarters and

formulas are used to move specific projects up and down that priority list. Also, the Birdwood CFS station is in pretty significant need of renovations. Are there any plans in the next, say, two or three years for either the Nairne or the Birdwood CFS fire stations to be renovated? Secondly, I understand the Mount Torrens CFS station was to be upgraded but, because the township has been recently heritage listed, the proposed infrastructure improvements were not able to be delivered and more work has had to be done on the project.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I will have to get the detail for Mount Torrens, but one of the things we had to do, and I have said it over and over and will not go on, is that we had to replace \$3 million a year that was missing out of the capital program. We did that, with an increase in funding. We have funded to a sustainable level an asset replacement program. Also, this year, following on from last year, we had to increase the budget for cost pressures for asset management and transfers from local government. It was an unforeseen consequence of the introduction of the emergency services levy and the transfer of equipment that has placed stress on the budgets of both the CFS and the SES, which has been most unfortunate. The member for Bright says it was not unforeseen, but I have to say that, if they foresaw it, they did not budget for it. The cost of asset transfer has been very high for us.

There is a capital program there. The truth is I do not believe a minister should ever be involved in picking which stations should be built. I think the former grants program of the previous administration was—you could not call it pork-barrelling because that is too small—probably piglet-barrelling. Funds should not be given out on that basis. I will defend these guys: they are given a budget for the capital program and they pick the priorities. That is always going to be the answer you will get. It would be very sorely tempting for a minister to pick stations in certain electorates, if that were my role—as has happened in the past but will not happen in the future.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: As I said in my question, I understand that, but I want to know where they are on the priority list, and where is the Mount Torrens fire station upgrade?

Mr FERGUSON: This is our forward capital works program, which sometimes changes because council kicked us out of a fire station so it is a little bit flexible. Birdwood is listed on our 2005-06 forward program for a new one bay station, so that is a couple of years away. I am aware of the issues with Mount Torrens and, at the moment, until those development issues are resolved, our plans have been shelved because we need a location which meets the requirements of the brigade but also those development requirements. At the moment I cannot tell you when that will go on to a program.

In relation to Nairne, that does not figure at the moment on our five year program. At the moment we are trying to do what we call condition audits. As you have mentioned, we have a series of criteria that are involved in the ranking, and currently we are trying to complete condition audits on as many of these fire stations as possible so that we can put them into the melting pot. At the moment Nairne is not on the five-year plan. It might come up on the five-year plan if the condition audit indicates that.

The CHAIRMAN: Are you still integrating services such as SES and ambulance wherever possible?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I have had a golden rule since I became the minister: that that will occur wherever the

services want to do it and are comfortable with it. I think the model we have created with the SAFECOM bill will allow people to explore those opportunities without being shoved into them. Our experience is that, where it has been forced upon people, if they go in resenting it, it never works. We will not do that. Ceduna is a remarkably successful example of people who have chosen to do it themselves. They have done it extremely well and it is a credit to the people over there.

The CHAIRMAN: The head of the CFS was talking about approving and designing houses for bushfire situations. What about the earlier stage of not approving development in areas where it would be suicidal, whether or not one builds a concrete bunker? Are you intervening at the early stage, which in my view is the most important stage?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: That is the subject of much debate. People want to live in bucolic splendour. I know there are strong views that there should not be any building in bushfire prone areas. That might be a brave thing for anyone to attempt.

Mr FERGUSON: There is a formal process of declaring parts of the state a bushfire prone area. At the moment in South Australia, the only bushfire prone area is the greater part of the Mount Lofty Ranges. One of the outcomes of the Bushfire Summit is to do a statewide review. Indeed, a number of areas, for example, Kangaroo Island, and parts of the Lower Eyre Peninsula and Lower South-East have indicated they want to submit new areas to be declared as bushfire prone areas. Once an area is declared a bushfire prone area, the planning process changes. Australian Standard 3959 (for design of houses being constructed in those areas) then comes into play, and the CFS has an opportunity to comment on whether or not a development goes ahead. Those processes are changing, and CFS is increasing its influence to determine whether houses are built in bushfire prone areas.

The CHAIRMAN: That concludes the part of the examination relating to the Minister for Emergency Services. I adjourn the remainder of the examination of the estimate of payments—Attorney-General's Department, \$63.278 million, and Administered Items for the Attorney-General's Department, \$43.868 million—until Friday 18 June.

[Sitting suspended from 12.56 to 2 p.m.]

South Australia Police, \$361 606 000

Witness:

The Hon. K.O. Foley, Minister for Police.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr M. Hyde, Commissioner of Police.

Mr D. Patriarca, Director, Business Services.

Mr B. Cossey, Chief Executive Officer, Department of Justice.

Mr N. Stephenson, Manager, Budgets, SAPOL.

Mr K. Penniford, Director, Strategic Financial Services, Department of Justice.

Mr R. Mathews, Fund Manager, Department of Justice.

Membership:

Mr Brokenshire substituted for the Hon. W.A. Matthew.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments open for examination. Does the Minister want to make a brief statement and introduce his officers?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: No, Mr Chairman. The Police Commissioner, Mr Mal Hyde, and Mr Denis Patriarca, Director, Business Services, SAPOL are with me at the table. I will introduce other officers as and when they need to come forward.

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

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: No, sir.

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

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Thank you, Mr Chairman, I will be brief. On behalf of the opposition, I would like to place on the public record our appreciation of the commitment of the Police Commissioner and the South Australia Police Department. Policing is a complex area, and it is getting more difficult as communities get more complex. I simply want to say—but with very meaningful words—that the opposition thanks the Commissioner and the South Australia Police Department for the great work that they do. I congratulate them, and I offer our full support to the Commissioner and the South Australia police in their role of protecting and keeping the South Australian community safe.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Me, too, Rob? Don't leave me out on my own.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: As shadow minister, I enjoy working with the police minister.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the member for Mawson wish to ask his first question?

Mr BROKENSHIRE: With respect to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 4.15, under 'Public order', will the minister explain why the public order employee expense's estimated result for 2003-04 is \$122.6 million when the 2003-04 budget allocation was \$134.6 million? Why has only \$127.2 million been allocated in the 2004-05 budget?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: This issue would, I think, have arisen under the honourable member's tenure as minister. The budget papers are presented in a way to try to categorise expenses against functions. The honourable member will see that we have public order, crime prevention and road safety. As we categorise the functions of the police force we must apply employee expenses to each function. The Commissioner has explained to me that we have a survey approach and, from year to year, it does lead to variations. It has been, I assume, a way in which to deal with the new reporting function of our finances; it is the way that accrual accounting requires us to allocate expenses to particular functions.

In a police force an officer might be doing road safety one day, crime prevention the next and public order the next day. There is a survey approach to it, which does allow for these sorts of swings and roundabouts a bit.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: As a further point of qualification, will the minister provide to the committee, and within the prescribed time for responses to estimates, detail as to why there are those variations both in dollar terms and where the numbers of officers have gone that are relevant to the employee expenses' line? When one looks at other programs one can see that most of those are fairly consistent in their pattern across the 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 years. Can we be given detailed information with respect to that?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: In fact, I am provided with a public order briefing. I am just looking at some of the variations up and down. I am advised that the main reason for

an increase in 'employee entitlements' include provision of a wage increase, \$2.3 million; revised contribution rates for police superannuation, \$0.796 million; employee costs associated with PSSB restructure, \$0.168 million; employee costs associated road safety, \$0.074 million; additional police resources (200 additional police over three years), \$2.010 million; and AP Land support, \$0.092 million.

These are then partly off-set by reductions in salaries and wages, that is, costs associated with special purpose projects, \$0.23 million and reduced employee costs due to the completion of the hand gun buyback scheme 2003-04, \$0.661 million. We then have supplies and services. There are decreases, namely, reduced costs due to the completion of the hand gun buyback scheme in 2003-04, \$7.895 million; reduction in government radio network payments, \$0.127 million; and EDS market review reduced costs, \$0.116 million.

They are partly off-set by the following: provision of allowance for CPI, \$0.562 million; increased rental fees, \$0.096 million; costs associated with road safety reform, \$0.046 million; additional costs associated with the PSSB restructure \$0.142 million; additional workers' compensation costs \$0.16 million; costs associated with additional police resources (200 additional police over three years), \$0.724 million; and costs associated with AP lands \$0.194 million. I bet that the honourable member wishes he had not asked that question. If there are any more like that I will provide written answers, which might save the committee's time.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Thank you. I would like detailed answers because, given the concerns raised about the public order section of SAPOL, it is important that, on behalf of the opposition, I am advised why we have gone from \$141.384 million back to \$127.260 million in that three-year period.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I just need to add that there should be no interpretation from the honourable member's remarks that that has resulted in a reduction in services or budget allocations. It is the dynamic nature of policing and the flexibility required, I assume, to move resources from one priority to another in the operation of the force. In fairness to the police, it is also having to comply with the Treasurer, who requires a reporting approach that is perhaps easier for departments such as education and health to conform to but a bit more problematic and somewhat more difficult for an agency such as police to actually categorise its functions as black and white.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Notwithstanding that, having looked at the global situation with respect to the funding allocations for the programs, I would appreciate, when SAPOL gets enough time during the next 30 days, if it could detail exactly where all that expenditure is when it comes to employee expenses and supplies and services, so that the opposition and the parliament have the capacity to look very carefully at what has happened with the financials. I am sure that, if what the minister has said is right, it can all be accounted for.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: If there is more information required than I have given, we will supply it. Just to give an example of what I mean by this, if you turn the page to Crime Prevention, I note the 2003-04 budget was \$92.786 million when the agency spent \$97.885 million and we are budgeted to spend more in 2004-05. So, there is a little less on public order and more on crime prevention. That clearly would illustrate the argument that it is a dynamic and flexible

service, and trying to allocate what you do in each area is extremely difficult. I can look at road safety on the same issue that the honourable member raised. In 2003-04 when it was \$31.5 million we spent \$33.5 million. The important point is to look at the summary of all the functions instead of cherry picking a particular function that might suit your argument, because I then went to the next page and picked one that suited my argument.

Let us look at the aggregate. The net cost of services for 2003-04 was budgeted at \$389.94 million. In fact, the estimated result was \$395.578 million. So, on just the issue of the cost of services the budget was exceeded from what was allocated, and clearly there would have been a decrease somewhere else because the budget would have, I assume, balanced out over all functions. On public order, you are right: the cost of service is down, crime prevention is up, road safety is slightly down, emergency response and management is well up, and criminal justice is up. But on balance, on the overall comparison of those with net costs of services when looking at that, we in fact exceeded budget.

Mr BROKENSHERE: Whilst I take the minister's word for that—

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: It is in the budget paper at page 4.14.

Mr BROKENSHERE: This type of accounting system was in place in our later years as well, and I know it is not always easy to read the budget papers but, just so that we know that globally that employee expenses line is consistent, I would like to have that information in due course.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I think I have just given it, but if there is any more I need to give, I will.

Mr BROKENSHERE: Will the minister give an overview of the sorts of items that are in supplies and services and whether or not globally supplies and services in the appropriate budget lines for the total of the programs is actually going to be allocated to the same amount in 2004-05 as it was in 2003-04? I am using an example of page 4.15, Supplies and Services, where you will see that you budgeted for \$37.562 million in 2003-04 and actually estimate spending \$35.165 million, then in 2004-05 you are budgeting \$28.9 million.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: It is the same argument as I have just used. It is picking one function, and I am sure that if we go through other functions we will find some up and some down.

Mr BROKENSHERE: The minister may well be right, but I need to get to the bottom of it. My dilemma is that, when I look at most of the other supplies and services lines, they are reasonably consistent over that three-year period.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: We are happy to provide that to you.

Mr BROKENSHERE: Have there been any instructions by SAPOL from the point of view of executive or from SAPOL from the point of view of individual local service areas as to whether or not during the last 12-month budget period there have been any memos or verbal directions given to officers to curtail overtime requests? Has there been any difference in direction from local service areas or indeed from the executive of SAPOL when it comes to overtime matters?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I will ask the Commissioner to respond to that. As I have continually told the house, I try to keep the division of what is my responsibility and what is the Commissioner's fairly clear, and I consider the operation of the LSAs clearly an operational matter and defer to the Commissioner.

Mr HYDE: During the year we did find it necessary to reinforce with our staff that they needed to manage their overtime responsibly. I cannot say whether at local level any memos or written directions were provided to their staff but, certainly, I did reinforce with senior staff that they needed to manage within their overtime budgets. However, I think that turned out quite well for the year. I can give you some figures that will give you an appreciation of where we went during the year on overtime.

We have had an extra \$300 000 for the last six months of this financial year to cater for understaffing in some areas. We knew that it would take some time to bring on the extra 200 police that the government has announced, and we received an additional \$300 000 to help us with that. The total budget for overtime for the financial year was \$4.290 million. Until May, \$3.855 million had been spent. At the time of preparation of this information, which would have been fairly recent, we were underspent by \$154 000. In a nutshell, the amount budgeted for overtime was quite normal, and we received in addition an allocation of \$300 000. So, our work force had a bit above the normal amount for overtime, and at some time during the year, when we found that some areas were close to spending their allocation, it was necessary to reinforce the fact that they should work within their budget.

Mr BROKENSHERE: In the light of that information, I ask that in due course we be advised of which areas may have had problems with their overtime budget in respect of their LSAs, because I know for a fact that one LSA—I am happy to share this information with the minister but I do not want to put it on the public record because I do not think it would be fair to identify this LSA—was giving information to police officers as early as November 2003 that they had to carefully consider any request for overtime and that they were advised to do it with TOIL if possible. Officers have advised me that it was difficult to do it with TOIL as TOIL was at full capacity. They wanted to investigate these cases because they believed them to be important. So, we would appreciate being given that information.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: If you want to make an allegation that you have information from an LSA but you are not prepared to provide it publicly to me—

Mr BROKENSHERE: I am prepared to provide it privately.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: But then you say to me, 'Can I give you all this information publicly,' as you just have. The Commissioner has given a comprehensive explanation. We will look at your question and see whether there is anything further we can add to that which the Commissioner has not covered. The police force of this state is well resourced and extremely well-managed but, at the end of the day, one would expect that, within the boundaries of an unpredictable business (which policing is) the police department would operate within its budget. I was somewhat amused when I think you or another member raised the issue of an email which, from memory, said something about officers or LSAs saying 'Please don't spend money you haven't got.' I would think that is a fairly reasonable, routine and normal thing to say, because the police department should be under no less discipline in terms of meeting and managing its budgets than any other area of government. Given the unpredictable nature of crime and the fact that there can be an unexpected flurry of activity in this area, government then has to make decisions about whether or not, from time to time, extra resources are required. That is an eminently normal and sensible practice.

I defend strongly the fact that we need to have within the police force adherence to good and proper budget management. That will mean that, from time to time, there will be stresses. It is the responsibility of the Commissioner and his management to manage those stresses. If they reach a point where extra allocations are required, the Commissioner will talk to me about it and we will address those concerns. There is no better evidence of this than our decision to recruit 200 extra police.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I am sorry, Mr Chairman, but I will have to ask a further supplementary question on that.

The CHAIRMAN: We can come back to that. I have a question for the Commissioner. As we are aware, some police services have run into strife, not just recently but over a period of time. What is it about our police force, which is held in high regard, that we have not gone down that sad path as have other police forces that have had corrupt officers? We have had the odd bad egg over a period of many years, but what is it about our police force that sets it apart from many others?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: The Commissioner and I have had a number of discussions about this. In the last few days at a national level events have been occurring in other jurisdictions. From the government's perspective, like all politicians we believe that our police force is not just extremely well-managed but that it has extremely high integrity. We have received the highest rating of all police forces in Australia from a community perception point of view of the quality and integrity of our force, but we would be naive to think that, from time to time, there are not elements within the force that should not be there. I think the force has shown over a long period of time that it has been able to deal with that. They are of a minor and minimal nature, but we have to be vigilant.

Within the force we have the Anti-Corruption Branch and the Police Complaints Authority, but I think the best way of maintaining a good-quality police force with high integrity is to continue what we have done in the past. We have a very open, community focused police force, in which the community has confidence, and we have to keep up our high level of scrutiny to make sure that we maintain that high standard. We have a high standard of recruitment for new officers and we have a very high standard internally. I am not aware of any issues in this state that give me concern, but we have to be vigilant always. To conclude, it is noted, I think Australia-wide, that the South Australian police force has been a class above most, if not all, forces in Australia for many decades. We must maintain that, and the best way to do that is to continue to keep the force well motivated, well led and well resourced.

Mr HYDE: Thank you, minister. I endorse those comments. Essentially, it is about setting standards. Standards have been set rigorously over a long period of time here. So, it is a matter of outlining what the expected behaviour is and working vigorously to make sure you maintain those standards. In the process you develop a culture within the organisation. If you get the right culture, it helps to reinforce the expected behaviour. After all, many police work in situations where they are not closely supervised in exactly what they do. So, you need self-discipline in order to make sure that you avoid the pitfalls of corrupt and other forms of behaviour.

I think we have here probably the best culture that I have seen in any police organisation. I am not by any stretch of the imagination talking in an exhaustive fashion about that, but

I have seen a lot of policing. I think the culture here is far more positive in dealing with corrupt behaviour than in many other jurisdictions. It does require police officers, for example, to report corrupt behaviour, because they set their own standards in the workplace as well. By being able to report corrupt behaviour, they are saying what they will tolerate and what they will not tolerate from their colleagues. I have noticed here that the level of reporting of misbehaviour by police officers is much higher than I have seen or expect in other jurisdictions, so that is an extremely good sign.

In relation to dealing with the issue, we have had structures in place to deal with it: the Police Complaints Authority, the Anti-Corruption Branch and the Internal Investigations Branch. So, there are a number of different mechanisms for dealing with it, but it really has to involve many different things within the workplace and working studiously to make sure that the right standards are set. We had included, for example, in an amendment to the Police Act a few years ago, a definition of merit, which now includes integrity.

So, whenever somebody who is being selected for a position, particularly a promotional position, their integrity is raised as a question. If there is any misbehaviour or misconduct, that is brought to account in how far they can advance within the organisation. That is just one of the things that we do to help to set the standards.

As the minister indicated as well, whilst we are rigorous in the way we deal with these things (and we do from time to time apprehend officers who have conducted themselves in a way which is inappropriate), it would be foolish to say that you do not have some police officers doing the wrong thing, because the very nature of corruption is that it is a very clandestine activity, where the stakeholders involved, both officers and those who might engage in corrupt behaviour with them, all have no desire to bring it out into the open. So, it is one of those things that is quite clandestine and, whilst I have not seen any broad or systemic corruption within the organisation, you are always alert to the fact that there might be some there.

Ms BREUER: Before I start, I would like to say how much I appreciate the work that the police do, particularly in outback Australia and in some of those smaller communities where the police are absolute linchpins, and on whom the community is often completely dependent for their safety and security. It is always a pleasure to go in and find out how much they are respected in those communities.

In line with this, in fact, we often have trouble filling our positions in country regions. It is an ongoing issue for any professionals in country regions, and the police are no exception. I am interested to know how SAPOL's recruitment strategy for 2004-05 and 2005-06 will be implemented.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I thank the member for Giles, and I am sure the member for Mawson would have had this high on his list of questions as well, but I am glad the honourable member has raised the issue of recruitment. As a general rule, the South Australian police force recruits in advance against predicted attrition. However, recruitment in any one year does not necessarily equal attrition, as intakes may be modified to take account of adjustments in staffing levels resulting from new initiatives, civilianisation and other budget imperatives.

Trainee courses are of 28 weeks duration. The old ones were, two or three years?

Mr HYDE: Under the old cadet scheme they were two to three years.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: We now move them out in 28 weeks. Total recruitment for 2003-04 is predicted at 154 trainees. It is projected that there will be 100 trainees in academy courses as at 1 July 2004. The final course of 2003-04 commenced in May 2004. As part of the government's initiative to increase police numbers by 200 over and above attrition, SAPOL has recruited an extra 50 cadets in 2003-04; an extra 75 will be recruited in 2004-05; and there will be an extra 75 recruits in 2005-06. It is estimated that a further 208 trainees will be recruited in 2004-05 and 202 in 2005-06 in line with attrition—approximately 130 per annum—and increased police numbers to ensure that SAPOL's approved police strength is maintained.

I do not think we can table them in this house, but last year the member for Mawson said he was amazed that I did not know how many courses would be graduating over the next six months. For your benefit, if you would like, I am happy to give it to you. I have a schedule of intakes for the next two financial years.

The recruitment strategy is continually reassessed to ensure that the intakes are adjusted in line with fluctuations in the attrition rate and other staffing level adjustments. For the benefit of members, one of my staff did a little bit of work that I thought would be very good information for the committee: that is, police recruitment under successive governments. When Labor lost office back in 1993, that was the base line, the red line, and under successive Liberal governments—we see probably at the time of the member for Mawson—police numbers dropped very low, and then, under this government, they took off like a sky rocket.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: We see that in 1996—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Displays are out of order.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: The largest police force in the state's history, courtesy of this government. I can get you a framed copy of that if you like!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I point out that displays are out of order. The same standing orders apply.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I had to indulge myself, sir. I will not do any more indulging.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think that would fit into *Hansard* anyway; it is too big.

Mr Brokenshire interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Has the minister finished his answer?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I wanted to indulge in the one and only question, sir.

Ms BREUER: Is the government considering any legislative change to the system of paedophile restraining orders to assist in the protection of children—

Mr BROKENSHERE: Mr Chairman, having regard to your ruling, it seems that the facts about police numbers are not being answered properly by the Minister for Police, and the fact of the matter is that the Opposition paid for extra police, not Labor, and he knows it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Giles has the call.

Ms BREUER: Thank you Mr Chairman. Regarding Budget Paper 4, page 4.13, is the government considering any legislative change to the system of paedophile restraining orders to assist in the protection of children from paedophiles?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I thank the member for Giles for this question. Mr Chairman, and for the benefit of the committee, this is clearly, for all of us, a very distressing,

difficult period in our state's history and we as a government are continually looking at ways, both through additional resources, be it for policing or for child protection, to do what is necessary to protect the most vulnerable of our community. Clearly, from a legislative point of view there are many things we can and should be doing. The Police Commissioner has recently provided me with a paper outlining significant law reform as it relates to paedophile activity in South Australia and if I could just make the following comments.

Section 99A of the Summary Procedures Act currently allows for the granting of paedophile restraining orders in South Australia. In general terms, these allow a court to grant a restraining order against a person if the person has been found loitering near children. The act enables the criteria to be considered before a court may impose a restraining order.

There are a number of checks and balances and other safeguards built into the legislation to protect the abuse of the procedures. When introducing the Statutes Amendment Paedophiles Bill in 1995, the then Attorney-General said that the intention of the measure was:

To restrain strangers lurking about without no reason at all to be doing so.

Since this time there has been a rapid evolution, or revolution, of strategies used by governments and relevant agencies worldwide to combat child sex abuse. The evolution has occurred in South Australia as it has throughout the globe. The South Australia Police Force has been quick to respond to the needs associated with the investigations of child sexual abuse through the introduction of special investigation units and the formation of dedicated intelligence and analysis functions. However, the response required to investigate needs are not always organisational in nature and from time to time a legislative response is needed.

The Commissioner for Police has advised myself and the government that the law as it stands now is currently not sufficient. While capable of dealing with the stereotype of the dirty old man loitering near playgrounds, it is not equipped to deal with paedophiles now being seen by the police who could best be described as wolves in sheep's clothing.

Recent cases have highlighted the fact that child sex offenders do not conform to a particular stereotype and in fact have been able to commit crimes by a sophisticated process known as 'grooming'. Generally this process has been shown to include the forming of an association with a child, the gradual building of trust, often by the child and the child's parents, the gradual erosion of boundaries and then the eventual committing of a sex crime against a child. This behaviour, occurring more often in private than in public, has been recorded time and time again by the Paedophile Taskforce within our Police Force.

The police have developed a proposal for dealing with these enemies from within. The Commissioner of Police has advised me that amendments to the paedophile restraining order procedures would assist in early intervention in circumstances where there is a distinct likelihood for imminent or future child sexual abuse. The proposal would enable a court to make a restraining order where the defendant has been found to have engaged in an improper association with a child or children. The idea is to stop child abuse from occurring in the first place. An improper association on the advice of the Commissioner would be defined as: the defendant is not a member of the child's immediate family; that the association is based on the defendant's apparent prurient intent or purpose; that such intent or purpose would

be considered as a probability by the average person applying contemporary community standards and viewing the circumstances as a whole; and that there is no serious or apparent social, educational or recreational purpose to the specific activity complained of.

It would make clear that the defendant need not be convicted or charged with any offence. Audits of this type are designed to prevent an offence from occurring instead of dealing with the tragic results. I have today written to the Attorney-General outlining this proposal and I have asked him to consider this matter as a matter of urgency. It should be understood that this is a proposal at this stage and that the government has not made a final decision on whether or not this proposal should be adopted. Quite clearly, there needs to be debate and consultation before changes of this type are adopted. However, this government will always put the interests of children and child protection ahead of hollow assertions about the erosion of civil liberties.

If the measures are needed, and they can be made to work, this government will give them very favourable consideration. If adopted, the legislation will contain safeguards to ensure the courts can prevent abuse. These would include mandating that when deciding whether an association was improper, the court would have regard to: the historical association or lack thereof, between the defendant and the child; the nature of the relationship if any between the child and the defendant, for example, proximity of residence; the nature of the relationship, if any, between the parents or guardians of the child, and the defendant; the age difference between the defendant and the child; and other relevant factors.

These proposed new laws are sweeping. They put South Australia at the forefront of major law reform in these areas. Very few jurisdictions/other states, have adopted similar approaches. These will be criticised. There will be those from the civil liberties part of our community—people with strong civil liberty views (many in this house, perhaps)—who will see these as going too far. The government's view is that you can never go too far when dealing with the most evil people (paedophiles) in our community and giving our police the strongest powers possible to protect our young. The civil libertarians in this state can stand aside because nothing will come between this government and ensuring that we do all we can to protect our children. I ask the Commissioner whether he would like to add anything from an operational perspective.

Mr HYDE: Only to endorse that proposal. Essentially we are looking to take the legislation one step further. The current legislation is fine and serves a very useful purpose in preventing people loitering in certain places where children might be at risk, but this proposal goes beyond those places where people might be loitering, and is designed to deal with all of those different associations that an adult might form with a child for improper purposes. It might be male or female persons. We have seen, for instance, in other jurisdictions an adult female teacher having a sexual relationship with a student 14 years of age. This is the sort of provision which could be used to restrain that sort of association before it went too far. In the main, we would expect to be dealing with male potential offenders but certainly it can extend to females as well.

Mr HANNA: I ask the minister whether he has a response to the issue I raised in the House of Assembly on 26 May this year. To be fair to the minister, I remind him that I had written to him on 30 January raising some questions about the

Star Force and allegations of excessive force. The minister replied by letter dated 1 May 2004 and answered one of those questions. The answer was:

You asked for information about the number of complaints received by the [PCA] about Star Force officers using excessive force. I have been advised by the Attorney-General that this information is not available because complaints are registered by reference to the complainant, the allegation and officers complained about. The authority does not index by the unit to which the officer is assigned. To obtain such a number, that authority would have to manually check about a thousand files of allegations of the use of excessive force.

I wonder if that issue could be addressed now.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I do not have sufficient information with me and would need to take this question on notice. I do not know whether the Commissioner is able to add anything.

Mr HYDE: No, I do not have any information available at the moment to answer that.

Mr HANNA: I have a supplementary question. I am surprised at the assertion that the PCA would have to manually check about a thousand files of allegations (that refers to the last three years) when, in fact, the local service areas are given reports of complaints against officers in their area on a routine basis. That suggests to me that there is some recording somewhere of the number of complaints received about police officers in particular areas or in particular branches. If there is not, how is there a safeguard against one particular group receiving an undue number of complaints?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I will take that on notice. The Commissioner has just had a word to me. We should have that information, and we will look at it and come back to the member. I assume that previously the answer to the question has gone to the Attorney and then the Police Complaints Authority. Is that probably the route that it took?

Mr HANNA: That could explain it, and I do not mind whether the answer comes from the PCA or the police. But I ask it here because I have information from other sources that this sort of statistical breakdown is available to segments of the Police Force.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: The Commissioner has confirmed that is the case, and we are happy to look at that and come back with it as soon as we can.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Will the minister advise how many officers have been transferred to the child exploitation and abuse unit and/or the Anglican child abuse task force and where these officers came from—that is, where these officers were taken from to enable them to do this work?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I will ask the Commissioner to answer that.

Mr HYDE: Yes. I refer in general to the Child Exploitation Investigation Section. We increased the number of staff by two in the second half of last year. That was an increase in establishment, so those staff would have been reallocated. It is not a matter of taking them away from somewhere else, although I think on that occasion it was an adjustment to levels, and I cannot tell you exactly where they came from. We also started the Paedophile Task Force from about June of last year. Initially there were only several officers to assess the scale of the inquiries that they had to make and, as that went into the next stage of preliminary investigation, we increased the number to 11. Then for full investigations the number went up to 17. I think I have those numbers correct. I could not tell you exactly where those staff were drawn from, but certainly the Paedophile Task Force staff were seconded from other areas of SAPOL, and we could make

inquiries to identify those areas. I suspect that it would have changed from time to time and that not all staff were in the Paedophile Task Force from the beginning until now. There would have been some changes with staff coming and going, so that might have made a difference but, in a nutshell, that is the extent of the staffing. I am unable to go into any exact detail as to where they were drawn from within the organisation.

Mr BROKENSHERE: Going back to what the minister had to say regarding the budgets, I know that one LSA was already having problems with overtime as early as November of last year, and that fact has been confirmed in the chamber today. There were clearly some problems in some areas with overtime. Can the minister assure the house that there were no situations where investigations were hampered by virtue of local service areas having problems with their overtime allocations? Is the minister confident that we will not see a repeat of this problem with overtime allocations in some LSAs in the next 12 months?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I am very confident that the police force in this state is very well managed. It might surprise the honourable member, but I do not get down into the nitty-gritty of how the force operates at an LSA level. It is good practice for a police minister to know the role of a police minister and the role of the Police Commissioner. Unless I misheard information here today—and I stand to be corrected; I may be wrong—I do not think we acknowledge the issue of there being a problem. The fact is that there are issues from time to time. If it is a problem, it needs to be carefully defined. Clearly, there will be times when LSAs are to full capacity. There would be a serious problem if we were overfunding our police force. I would want to know why LSAs were consistently underspending budgets. That could then lead to a series of other questions.

The honourable member mentioned an LSA in November. Well, he has not shown us any documentary evidence of that, so I am not taking his word for it. I am confident that our police force is well run and well resourced. I acknowledge from time to time that there will be stress points. That is obvious from the nature of the business. If there were not stress points, we would not be budgeting properly for the police force. It is the sort of area of government that you would expect to be running up against its budget consistently. That is good management, I would think.

Mr BROKENSHERE: I have the utmost respect for the Commissioner and police, but they have to work within a budget. The difference for SAPOL is that it is not like the Education Department, where almost everything is fixed. Where there are urgent or important investigations, clearly, at times, police officers do need to have that flexibility of overtime. The fact is that I have been advised from a number of sources that there were restraints in overtime in the last 12 months.

My next question is: why is the employee expenses budgeted for 2004-05 showing \$273.6 million, given that there have been EB increases, when the actual in 2002-03 was \$270.9 million? Why did the estimated result for 2003-04 drop to \$263.9 million when the budget was actually higher than that?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: To what page are you referring?

Mr BROKENSHERE: Page 4.32.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I might ask Dennis to look at that. Before I do, I will make a couple of comments. I have been on a few committees in the last couple of days, and this issue of governments' having an open cheque for the

provision of government services seems to be a theme that the opposition consistently pushes; that is, there is an endless stream of money available for the community.

Government is about allocating resources. The honourable member has said already that he thinks an extra \$10 million should be spent on police. I think that was his statement in recent months; I might be wrong and I stand to be corrected if I am. If he thinks there should be more spent on police, that is fine. He is entitled to have that view as a member of a political party, but he has to be honest. He then has to be able to say what other area of government he will cut to provide extra money to police. What tax will he increase to pay for it or will he run a budget in the red? The honourable member shakes his head on all three—

Mr BROKENSHERE: No, I shake my head on the fact that you are budgeting for an extra \$22 million revenue from traffic offences this year. Surely, police are entitled to half that increase? Surely, if you are a so-called tough on law and order government—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The minister is answering the question.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: That is a different question altogether, I think. At the end of the day, the salaries and wages bill figures are published in the budget. We are going to be employing more police under this government. I can get the chart back if that helps. Would members like to see the chart? The chart points out that there are a lot more police under this government going forward than there were under the last government. I stand behind what is in the budget.

Mr BROKENSHERE: Tell the whole story.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: We should try to keep a bit of decorum; I am talking to myself there, as much as to the member. I can get the honourable member some more information.

Mr BROKENSHERE: Mr Chairman, I think in estimates we are entitled to some basic elementary answers. If the Treasurer's own budget papers show a reduction in the global amount of money for employee expenses when that relates directly to numbers, we need to know why there has been a reduction from budget to estimated result when talking about full-time equivalent numbers and a reduction in the amount of money.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Estimates is a process where you seek information and clarification, but the chair cannot make the minister do anything.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: The Director for Business Services in the police has quite rightly identified the reason for that anomaly in the figures. The 2002-03 actual result of \$270 million, as against the budget of \$262.756 million for 2003-04, rising to \$273 million for 2004-05 (I might add), was an accrual accounting of the outstanding WorkCover liability for the police—workers' compensation. So, because of accrual accounting we brought that to account in the 2002-03 year, which saw that figure inflated to \$270 million. It is not the trend number that would normally be the number. If we went back to 2001-02, I assume we would see a more realistic number. It was a year in which an accrual accounting measure was taken—a change in actuarial calculation by the department.

But I conclude by saying that, if you compare 2003-04 with 2004-05, we are seeing a budget increase, which is an extra \$4.9 million provision for wage increases and \$0.4 million for new initiative funding for the PSSB; that is, police security services that keep us safe and secure in this place. There is new initiative funding for road safety,

\$1.2 million; a \$4.4 million cost for additional police resources (which is part of the 200 additional officers over three years); new initiatives for AP lands, \$0.2 million (again, off-set by a reduction in salaries and wages associated with special projects of \$0.7 million); and reduced employee costs due to the completion of the hand gun buyback scheme of \$0.6 million. In fact, you have an increase this year—the year that the honourable member has tried to compare. I understand that the honourable member would not have been familiar with it, although he probably would have been the minister. It occurred in the latter part of his government. It was a new actuarial assessment of the workers' compensation liability.

Mr HANNA: Minister, I must ask this question on behalf of a few hundred concerned residents, even though you might think it an operational matter. Is it due to resources that the regular police presence at Westfield Marion has been reduced?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I would have to ask the Commissioner and, in fairness, I am not sure whether he would have that information on hand.

Mr HYDE: No, I do not have any specific information about Westfield Marion. However, our local service areas are structured in such a way that the local management is able to make decisions about local priorities, and that is what we want them to do. We simply cannot sit in headquarters and direct what should happen at a local level. Often we have to stand or fall by the decisions they make, but I think that is the best way to do business. They are at the local level and they know best what to do. There has been a presence at the Marion Shopping Centre of which I am aware, and I am not aware of any changes to that.

Specific operations could have been in place that have been discontinued because the need is no longer there, but I would only be guessing at those sorts of things. We can certainly get the information if the honourable member would like that.

Mr HANNA: Thank you. Secondly, I note in the Police Complaints Authority report that the Commissioner, Mr Hyde, who is present, advised the PCA in August 2003 that drug exhibits would be weighed when they were deposited. It was recommended then that scales be purchased for that purpose. In fact, do we have scales for weighing drug exhibits at all police stations now?

Mr HYDE: Certainly, it was decided to put that measure in place. It is an accountability measure to make sure that there is no shrinkage of drugs that have been seized whilst in storage. In weight terms, cannabis does shrink when it dries out. That was one of our concerns about weighing it, because cannabis does change a bit. But to get to more specific parts of the honourable member's question, I would have to check to see to what extent that has been put into place. It is certainly a policy, but I do not know specifically whether each and every place with a storage capacity has scales. I will have to check on that.

Mr HANNA: Finally, I ask a question in relation to the provision of additional police on the AP lands. I was up there last week and one of the issues that came through was that it is not just a matter of offering the remote area allowance to police officers to get enough police officers to serve there, and particularly to serve for extended periods. What scope is there in the additional money the government has responsibly allocated for, perhaps, varying leave provisions? For example, you might have two months off per year, or something of that nature. What enticements are possible,

given the budget allocation, to get sufficient police to want to live on the lands?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I will ask the Commissioner to comment, but I preface his remarks by saying that, like the honourable member, the visit I made to the AP lands was extremely informative—some would say too informative—

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I think it was long overdue.

Ms Bedford interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Some may say not informative enough. We have increased resources over and above the baseline allocations for a number of areas, policing being one of them. The Commissioner and I have had a number of discussions about how we improve and increase police presence on the lands—how we do it, how we house the police and what physical structures we have up there. It would be fair to say that the police stations (if one could even begin to describe them as such, and one cannot, as they are far from that) need some attention.

The Commissioner and I looked at a facility in Kintore in the Northern Territory, which is a police station just over the WA border in the dead centre of Australia. You get off the plane and a sign says that this is the closest point in Australia to all the beaches of Australia. At Kintore there is literally a compound. The governments have spent \$2 million to \$3 million building a large compound with, I think, a police station, a small courthouse from memory and two or three homes, a barbecue area, some lawn and a pool to attract officers and their families to reside in that town.

It is extremely expensive. The cost of delivering a home to the AP lands is as much as it costs to buy a median home in Adelaide. We are looking at all of that. Also, you have the wishes and the wants of the local community in terms of where housing should be. It is a complex issue, but we are working fairly diligently on our options. With respect to the more specific issues, I will ask the Commissioner to comment.

Mr HYDE: Yes, getting a permanent police presence in the AP lands is a big challenge for us. At the outset, I offer my support to the indigenous community constables who work there. We have asked them to perform a role which is probably a little beyond their capacity. Essentially, we have in place a self-determination model with indigenous community constables policing their local communities, and they have worked diligently to try to make that model work. Time has shown that they need to be supported by permanent police in the lands, and that is what we are looking to do now.

There is a difficulty getting police to work there on a permanent basis. We have an operation in place which brings in police from Adelaide and Marla on a rotational basis. We have increased the police presence there. Over this year we are looking to try to put in place permanent arrangements, which include housing, to which the minister referred. Probably the biggest challenge in the lands is to get housing to a condition that would attract not only police officers to reside there but also their families.

We cannot expect to get a permanent police presence in any satisfactory way with police officers having to live by themselves in the local communities. That is a big challenge for us to overcome. We are looking at different terms and conditions of employment and are currently in negotiations with the Police Association for a new enterprise bargain, and we are dealing with those issues as part of the new enterprise bargain.

Ms BREUER: As a supplementary question, having spent a lot of time up there, it being my electorate, what concerns

me is how we solve this problem of getting permanent officers to reside there. One of the questions I keep asking but do not get any real answers on is this: if we could set up reasonable accommodation there, is it possible that you could fly in and fly out officers on a permanent basis as they do with the work force in Moomba, for example, so that you have the same officers there continuously? They are the same officers, so they do not fly in and then three weeks later you have a new officer who does not understand the situation. They could fly in for three weeks, say, and then fly home for a couple of weeks. I can understand that for young officers it is a huge ask for them to move to those areas. Is it possible for them to fly in and out? Have you considered that?

Mr HYDE: That is essentially what we are doing at the moment but with a bit of a variation. We are looking to use the same officers over this 12 months. As we have for quite a few months now, we fly them in and fly them out. But the best police service that can be provided to the community is with police officers who reside in the community with their families and who are generally part of the community. Ideally, that is what we would be seeking to achieve. The housing has been a big issue for us. We do have some additional housing now at Umuwa that is being used on this basis, but not enough to have permanent police residing there. We have a bit of a difficulty with the council at the moment because we wanted to build more accommodation there for police officers. They would prefer us to have police officers living in the local communities, so that is an issue for us to work through.

We have also obtained accommodation at Murputja in the north-west corner of the lands, but that is only until the end of the year. It is Education Department accommodation, so we have it for only a limited time. Whichever model we adopt, it will be hard to get the right sort of accommodation there. Essentially, we are flying people in and out at the moment but we would prefer to have a model where you have police living there, who wanted to be there on a permanent basis and who had all the support and comfort of home as well.

Mr BROKENSHERE: As a supplementary question, minister, you and the Premier made an announcement after Bob Collins was assigned to look at some restructure and initiative in the Pitjantjatjara lands that whatever police numbers Bob Collins needed would be going to the lands. There was a figure bandied about of 13 being required. Will the minister confirm that that additional number of police that are going to the Pitjantjatjara lands will be over and above the extra 200 that have been discussed and allocated already?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: What are we talking about with 13 police?

Mr BROKENSHERE: During the media debate and the debate generally with Bob Collins and the concerns of the Pitjantjatjara lands, Bob Collins highlighted the fact that there needed to be a significant increase in the number of police, and at least the Premier and possibly you, from memory, said that whatever was needed would be provided, and there was bandied around a figure of as many as 13 police being required. Whatever the number, will that number be an allocation over and above the 200 that we have already talked about as being additional police?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I do not know who has bandied the figure around. Was it me?

Mr BROKENSHERE: It was either you, the Premier or Bob Collins.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: You may be right, but I do not recall that figure being bandied around. Again, these things have to be done carefully. The Commissioner and the government have a relationship, I think I would be fair in saying, where, if there are pressure points anywhere in policing, the Commissioner talks to me about it and, if we are able, if we agree that it is something that requires additional resources, we will provide it. In the main, that is exactly what happens. Equally, the Commissioner has a large and flexible budget and in many cases is able to deal with issues as they arise, given the nature of policing, from within his existing resource. We have made it clear on the AP lands that if Bob Collins, the Commissioner or others can put a presentable case to government that we should be spending more on the lands, we will.

That is why we spent more in the budget. In my second budget we allocated extra money, although I cannot remember the exact figure, it was a couple of million a year. In this budget we have allocated, from memory, \$2 million extra for the AP lands and are still working through exactly how that will be spent. I had a conversation some hours ago about further expenditure that we are looking at on the AP lands, not just in policing. What has concerned me about the AP lands—and many things have—is that the police have had to shoulder too large a burden of responsibility for the provision of services on the lands; that the police de facto become the civil order as much as the policing authority on the lands. That is not something that can be sustainable, because that will lead to unfortunate consequences that both the police and the wider community—and the government in particular—would regret.

Police have an important role on the lands. Given the nature of the problems and the tyranny of distance, the police are expected to do more than perhaps police may do in a suburban environment. But we cannot allow the police to become the saviour of the lands, to become the principal deliverer of social order and civil society on the lands. That has to be our responsibility as a government and the responsibility of the community, and it has to be the responsibility of the commonwealth government. So, we are putting more resources onto the AP lands and, if the Police Commissioner believes that he needs more resources over and above his allocation of resources, he will come to me and, as he has always found, we are very receptive to those approaches.

Mr BROKENSHERE: Will the minister advise whether South Australia Police has changed any of its methodologies or mechanisms for the reporting of crime and/or offences since 2001-02, and is the accounting system which Sapol uses now with respect to crime statistics different from what it was prior to 2001-02? In other words, is the accounting system used now similar to that used by the Victorian police?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I will ask the Commissioner to answer that question.

Mr HYDE: It is not similar to the system used by the Victorian police. There are many different issues involved in recording and accounting crime. To begin with, the initial accounting rule relates to whether or not you take a prima facie approach or an evidential approach. Prima facie means that you accept the report and you take a report for it unless it is nonsensical to do so. So, you accept on face value (prima facie) the report that has been made to you. In South Australia, we use the prima facie approach.

The evidential approach is where you make an assessment of whether or not a crime has been committed according to the material that is presented to you in the initial report. If

you do not think a crime has been committed, you do not put in a report. So, effectively, a screening goes into place for that evidential approach. That is the model used in Victoria and some other jurisdictions. You can end up with large differences in recorded crimes which have more to do with the way they are recorded rather than reported or what actually occurs in the community. Is that the area on which you were seeking an explanation?

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Primarily, I wanted to know whether there have been any changes over the last two or three years. For example, if someone broke into a car and stole a handbag, prior to 2001-02 would that have been reported as two or possibly three offences (depending on what else occurred) and is it now recorded as one offence of breaking into a car?

Mr HYDE: That is a good point. To finish my response to the first question, I have raised this matter with the National Crime Statistics Unit, which is part of the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The board of management of the National Crime Statistics Unit is comprised of police commissioners, and I have raised with them the issue that if we are not going to record crime in the same way, they should report it in a way that is comparative, because people go to the bottom line, they do not look to see how it has been recorded.

With regard to the second question, we have made some changes to our counting rules which relate to multiple offences. We have sought to take out the effect of multiple recording. If someone breaks into a car and steals some property and then kicks the door on the way out, you could end up with three offences, but if you ask someone in the street how many crimes have been committed, they would say one: the car was broken into. So, we record crime by taking out that multiple effect. However, in the annual report we report both forms. We compare apples with apples and oranges with oranges. If we are going to take out the effect of multiple recording, we take that out of previous years as well so that we are making comparisons against the right set of rules, but we do report both ways in our annual report.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Like the member for Giles, I have spent a lot of time in the Pitjantjatjara lands during my time in this parliament. I say to the Commissioner and the minister that I have found the police department to be the most professional group in the lands. They have set a very high standard of local administration, which I think other government agencies would do well to model. The training and the effort that those regional officers have put in to get the police aide scheme going has been outstanding. Whatever resources this government needs to put in, it will have my full support, because I believe that we have an obligation to fix a problem. The stance that the minister took when he came back from his visit was long overdue. If he has ruffled a few feathers, so be it, but I say to him: finish the job, because the next generation of young Aborigines will not have a future if he does not. If you have to put in more police officers, ignore the bleeding hearts. I do not always see eye to eye with the police, but that is healthy in a democracy, is it not?

I have witnessed on the TV a great deal of media coverage in relation to the fiasco in Victoria with speed cameras and the injustices that have been perpetrated against people who have lost their licences but it has been proven later that they were innocent. What assurances can the minister give that speed detection devices used in South Australia are accurate, and what monitoring is done to make sure, because from time to time people have complained to me vigorously that they

were not exceeding the speed limit when they were pinged. It boils down to an argument between them and the officer. As someone who has occasionally been pinged, I have not had this problem because I was going at that speed, but can we be given an assurance that that sort of thing cannot happen here and that there are processes in place to prevent it happening?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: That is a bit like the opening question about whether or not we have any corruption in our police force. I am not going to say here that our speed devices are 100 per cent hunky-dory, because I do not know. I am not aware of any particular instances of late, and I am sure that, as in all areas of our police force, we have good, solid management of all of this. However, with any technical devices, I am sure from time to time we have problems. I, like you, as a local member, get a lot of people who are writing to complain, and I can tell you that you get a hell of a lot as police minister. You would be surprised who writes to the police minister complaining about a police fine. I think I am just going to have the standard response, just a few words saying: 'Got an idea for you, don't speed, and then you will never have to complain again.' But that probably would be a little too abrupt, even for me. Anyone who tells you when they have been caught speeding that they were not speeding reminds me of when mum used to catch me out doing a few things. I was never guilty. But the truth was I was certainly guilty. Commissioner, do you have anything to add?

Mr HYDE: Yes, minister. I have raised the same issue, of course. When you see these things happening interstate you then go and have a look at what you have got to make sure that it is solid and sound. I have been assured that everything is okay. They are different cameras from those that Victoria was using. I think there are essentially three differences with Victoria in respect to these cameras. The first is that with a speed camera we test it each and every time we use it. A situation arose in Victoria with the fixed cameras where I do not think they were being tested regularly enough. I think that was part of the problem. The second thing is that ours are activated by electronic beams, whereas they had some pneumatic type device which could wear over time. The third thing is, we take two photographs, so you are able to check against the photographs and get more of an assurance that things are accurate. That is roughly the situation here in South Australia. I have been assured that we do not have the same difficulties Victoria has.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: The next question I have to raise does concern the corporate extra which people get slugged when they get an on-the-spot fine and I have got one here where a constituent of mine got \$139 plus the \$10 levy, then a \$300 corporate offence.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: What offence?

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Corporate offence. He is as upset and surprised as you are.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I'm not upset, I'm the Treasurer.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: My constituent is, let me tell you that. He does not dispute that he was doing 70 in a 60 kilometre zone here in Adelaide, but what has upset him is that he has got this extra. The vehicle was owned by the company which he is involved in—he and his partner own the company, a machinery agency—and I wonder whether there are any steps he can take to recoup the extra \$300 which he has been levied? Obviously, a number of people would be in the same situation, but it was news to me. I happened to see

him not long ago and he drew the matter to my attention quite vigorously.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: That is actually a very good idea, what we have done there.

The Hon. G.M. Gunn interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: No, it is. The reason it is a good idea is that it is a corporate fine. If it is a company car, or it might be a taxi driver, or a fleet car, if the company does not identify the driver and simply picks up the fine as a fringe benefit, I assume, to the person, and pays the fine on behalf of the driver, there is no signal sent to the driver that he or she should have slowed down and observed the limit. If you have speeding fines designed to change driver behaviour, and if you are a travel sales rep or you have a company car and you are caught speeding in the company car and the bank or the office or the factory you work in picks up the tab where is the signal to you? There are no demerit points, either. You could be a travelling company salesperson, and you could speed all around Adelaide to do 24 calls a day instead of 15, pick up a thousand bucks worth of fines a day, and, if the company was paying your fine, you would not lose your licence, because you would not have lost demerit points and you would not have been sluggish. The company might be prepared to pay \$1 000 a day extra if that is getting an extra dozen calls made. That is somewhat of an off the top of my head, embellished sort of scenario. But what we have to do is sting the company and say, 'Listen, if you want to hide the driver you are going to pay more.' I think that is a sensible initiative.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: In this case, the driver is identified; he certainly identified himself, and is he aware of the penalties. However, he finds it a gross discrimination that, having identified himself as the driver of the vehicle, he is now getting whacked with this extra \$300.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: If you would like to provide that to us, we will have that followed up, Graham.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I will give it to you. There is no problem, because I just think there would not be too many people actually aware of the situation. I do not disagree with the point you are making, that if companies are just picking up the tab and not passing it on, I do not have a problem with that. However, in the case where the driver is identified, I think that is a bit over the top.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: That may or may not be an error. We are happy to have a look at it and correct it if it is seen to be wrong.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, as you know, I have been lobbying for a while to have Community Road Watch introduced, similar to the New Zealand model, where citizens can report not only bad driving, but over there they actually report good driving as well. I was just wondering, has any progress been made in considering the feasibility of following suit here in South Australia?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I will ask the Police Commissioner.

Mr HYDE: Yes, I am familiar with the proposal that the Chairman has raised and it is being actively looked at at the moment. Essentially, it builds a more structured process into the reporting of drunken drivers and other bad driving on our roads—reporting from the community, that is. We already have processes in place to receive reports from the community about bad driving and that is processed into our system. We are looking at the model from New Zealand to see whether it might have some advantages to us. We are not

yet in a position to be able to give a definitive answer on that, I am afraid.

The CHAIRMAN: Commissioner, you have obviously had a lot of experience in dealing with matters where there is anti-social or criminal behaviour. What in your view are the key factors giving rise to that behaviour at the moment, and what suggestions, if any, do you offer to the community, to government, to parliament, to try and address those criminal and anti-social acts that are occurring in our community? We often ask you on the policing side, but you have obviously had a lot of experience in looking at what is giving rise to these issues. I was just wondering whether you could share some of those observations, if you are inclined to do so, with the committee.

Mr HYDE: This is something that we are actively looking at at the moment and the Police Ministers' Council has looked at some work, which was prepared for it, concerning the issues behind drug-taking behaviour and criminal behaviour. Whilst people seem to be putting into place programs to deal with those things in isolation, the reality is that the same type of people that get into trouble with drugs are also, in a general sense, the same sort of people who are getting into trouble with normal delinquent behaviour. So, what we are doing is looking to see whether or not there are some benefits of looking at schemes which cover both fields of endeavour, and as part of that examination we have been looking at some things which are in place in other places, particularly the US.

I recently saw a presentation by a Dr Catalano, who had a particular program in mind, and he had been involved in these sorts of initiatives, studying them over a period of about 20 years. I cannot, off the top of my head, remember the name of the program, but essentially it related to looking at risk factors in the community such as: poor attendance at school, the presence of drugs in a community, the presence of delinquent behaviour and inappropriate associations—things of that nature. It then looked at protective factors such as: providing sensible entertainment avenues for young people, alternative programs to drug taking, and things of that nature. He had about 50 to 60 different types of interventions. So, it was a matter of evaluating a particular community to look at what risk factors there were, what protective factors were in place, and then to put some sort of program in place to deal with the situation that occurred. He reported quite significant results in looking at that.

Of course, that goes well beyond what the police can do. You are really looking at social conditions within a community. We have some programs in place to address those issues such as Blue Light Discos, Blue Light Camps, and there are many other different types of youth programs in the community. If I can comment from a personal point of view, I think what occurs is that we put a lot of programs into place which are looking at dealing with the symptoms, not necessarily looking at things from a very structured way, right from the very word go within a community. If we are simply dealing with the symptoms all the time then we are not going to put into place any sustained changes within the community.

If I can just wrap up by saying I think that there is a great deal of merit in looking at these sorts of programs. We are doing some work for the Police Ministers' Council which we hope to have ready for their second meeting this year. It is a fairly radical step for them to be looking downstream, so to speak, in trying to make sure that the social conditions in any given community are conducive to eliminating anti-social

behaviour, but if we do not do some of those things, then all we will be doing is responding to the anti-social behaviour when it occurs. And, of course, it is behind drug-taking as well. I will just extrapolate with another example: I saw a presentation from a young woman who had been abused as a child, and this had led to her taking drugs, and the drug-taking behaviour had led to her becoming engaged in crime and prostitution, and she had turned it all around. I suppose that really highlights the point: we can address somebody's drug-taking behaviour but unless we actually address the factors that came out of the child abuse for her, then we are not really getting to the nub of the issue and we are not really putting into place a solution which is going to fix the problem. Quite simply, for her, it was the emotional outcome that had to be addressed from that child abuse, not simply her drug-taking behaviour.

The CHAIRMAN: Just following up on that, they are related aspects and ultimately come down to resourcing, but some of the issues that I have been interested in: having youth or social workers based at police stations to try and divert people before they go too far down the criminal path; police officers based in high school—specially trained police; and police youth clubs—and some states run those. Now, ultimately it comes back to the Treasurer being generous to the police department but I guess this links in with your previous answer—it is really part of an alternative or an additional police strategy going beyond the conventional to the more innovative. Would some of those things be considered as part of this new strategy—or could be?

Mr HYDE: They certainly could be. I think we are a long way from putting into place a new strategy at the moment, and quite frankly it would have to be something well beyond policing if we were going to adopt a more holistic approach to anti-social behaviour by young people—it is probably much broader than the police. So, there is a fair bit more work to do to examine the issue and decide what is practically possible. Always, we have to come back to what is practically possible and the issues that you raised there could well be worth considering in developing some way forward.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: From my perspective we are actually seeing a reduction in a number of crimes in South Australia. Do we have the statistics there, Commissioner? Again, we have to be very careful with statistics as only a treasurer could know. As soon as you cry about one number they come out the next month in the other direction. Total crime reported by a victim year to date is down 6.9 per cent in South Australia; when we look at shoplifting, for example, it is down 26.9 per cent; offences against the person down 16.6 per cent; total robbery down 19.3 per cent; driving causing death down 22.2 per cent; attempted murders down 30.6 per cent; the murder rate is slightly up, I am not sure if that is a correlation.

There are some offences, such as sexual offences, where there is a higher incidence of reporting because there is a lot of publicity and a lot of effort by police to deal with these crimes. Of course, the pre-1982 decision by the government and the parliament led to a number as well. But, overall, we are seeing some significant reductions. Serious criminal trespass in the residence is down 15.6 per cent for the year to date; in non-residence it is down 4.2 per cent. Illegal use of motor vehicles is down 3.2 per cent. I think these are good statistics but we need to be careful because, like any statistic, they could jump the other way.

When trying to measure the effectiveness of policing, it is very difficult to put key performance indicators, etc., on a

Police Force but, when you can see that, year to date, theft from shops (that is, shoplifting) is down 26.9 per cent, serious criminal trespass in the home is down 15.6 per cent, assault against police officers is down 30.4 per cent, and serious assaults is down 12.3 per cent, it shows this government—and, I think, the wider community—that policing in this state is working, and that is a good, positive message to send to the community.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Some years ago I raised an issue in relation to administering the north of South Australia, and again I raise it with the minister today. The national parks department thinks it is in its interests to have a light aircraft and someone to fly it around to get people from place to place quickly. Has the Police Department given any consideration to locating an aircraft at, say, Marla or Oodnadatta? I do not think it would be very hard to get some officers to learn to fly, and it would cut the travelling time by a large amount and we could get people to difficult locations very quickly. There are a lot of suitable aircraft, and there would be someone who has had some limited experience in these sorts of things. I am conscious of cost but, in view of the need to get people quickly to Marla, Pipalyatjara or somewhere like that, has any thought been given to that suggestion?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I will say a few things, and I am sure the Commissioner will have a view on this. When we went to the AP lands we took the police plane, and it was a good trip but a long trip. It was a cramped trip. We talked about the fact that, with all due respect to the Commissioner and me, we can handle a bit of squeezing into a plane, but when we are dealing with operational matters when we have to move police quickly to parts of our state—and, in particular, I am thinking of the tactical response units within the Police Force—the truth is that we have to improve our air wing, and we have money in the budget for a new police plane. I think the Commissioner might know what I am leading to: I have my hat on as police minister here, not as Treasurer.

During this trip we looked at policing within the Northern Territory because we were looking at better relationships with the Northern Territory and, hopefully, Western Australia, in regard to cross-border policing and such things. In the Northern Territory they do not do things by half measure: they have an outstanding plane. It is a pressurised plane called a Pilatus and has a big propeller at the front.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: It was not a jet.

Ms Bedford: Size does matter.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Absolutely—size matters when you are flying to the north of the state, I can assure you. The size of the plane matters. Clearly, it was a much more comfortable plane, although I have to say that it would not have mattered what plane we were in when we hit the air pocket flying into Pipalyatjara. It was a fair drop.

We have money in the budget for a new police plane. I suppose I am almost opening myself up for a bid in excess of what we have in the budget, but I think we need to look at something quicker. That is probably not the right terminology for your flying parlance, and I have probably just done myself in the eye for a million or two as a result of that contribution! The Police Commissioner will trot out this piece of *Hansard* in a year's time when he puts it out to tender.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I think that the upgrading of the police air wing is overdue and current aircraft are out of date. You need to be able to fly in comfort, not at 8 000 or 9 000 feet. It should be 20 000 feet.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I think the consideration is whether we have a police plane which is sufficient for the extremely large distances and the speed at which we need to get police to an emergency should one occur. We have just allocated funding for a third helicopter, so we are increasing the helicopter fleet in South Australia, but I think there is an argument that we need to improve our air wing. I do not know whether I have left anything for the Commissioner to add.

Mr HYDE: I think the minister has covered it pretty well. The Pilatus is the correct name for the Northern Territory aircraft. It was able to fly to 10 000 feet and was quite comfortable, apart from that air pocket that we hit.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: You should have heard the then head of the justice department, Kate Lennon, as she clawed the back of the Police Commissioner, from memory, and screamed obscenities!

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: The Port Augusta council has installed some video cameras in its main thoroughfare, and I wonder whether the Police Department is looking at supporting other communities which think that this particular process is essential so that police can be directed much more quickly to trouble spots. Does the Commissioner have any comments in relation to the operation of these systems and how they can be improved? From my limited understanding, they have been successful, and I suggest there is a need for government to support these communities to extend this sort of community policing to make it easier for police to get to trouble spots quicker.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Again, I will ask the Commissioner to comment on that. I have only sketchy information, but I think there was debate about policing in Port Augusta which I thought was very unfair on the police in Port Augusta who, under Superintendent Wayne Bristow, do an outstanding job in a difficult area. I thought some of the public comments by certain people in the area were a little unfortunate.

Mr HYDE: Other areas also have shown an interest in closed-circuit TV in public places. I think Mount Gambier might be another area where it is being looked at. We are happy to have the monitors located within police stations where a 24-hour service is provided. However, we cannot undertake the responsibility to watch those monitors all the time. Quite simply, they are put into a busy location in the police station and there are other duties to which the officers must attend. With those limitations I think they are a good measure to take. They not only help to direct police to trouble spots but they also act as a very good deterrent for people who might want to misbehave in those places. Thirdly, they are capable of recording the incident so that we have some evidence to deal with something at court, as well.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: I want to raise the matter of the construction of a new police station at Mount Barker. I have raised this issue in the house previously. At what stage is the project currently?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I do not know whether we can answer that. It may be a better question to put to the Minister for Infrastructure, who is responsible for PPPs. The Commissioner has pointed out that the tenders have gone out for the PPP and we are in the process of evaluating those tenders. The State Supply Board approved the acquisition plan; in September 2003 cabinet approved the outline business case for the project; expressions of interest respondents were short listed for the request for proposal phase; and tender documents have been provided to all short-listed respondents. It

is anticipated that the tender assessment process will commence in September 2004, subject to the receipt of competitive bids. The construction of these facilities will commence in the first quarter of 2005. The facilities will then be commissioned for use by SAPOL progressively during the following year as construction is completed. We are dealing with Mount Barker, Gawler, Victor Harbor and Port Lincoln, and, from memory, it also includes some courthouse development works to bulk it up. It will be a good police station.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: Has a site been located in the town?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: We cannot comment on that. We have identified a site but it may be that the proponents wish to offer other sites; we do not know, so it will be part of the bid process.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: You have to be a reasonable way along the track in identifying the site if you are going to start building it in the first quarter of next year.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: But we are in a competitive tender process. I am advised that the government has identified a site. These are the dynamics of these processes. The dynamics of a PPP process are that a tenderer may come up with a different site which they want to put in their bid or they might want to put up alternative sites.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: Are you at liberty to advise the committee of the site that is preferred at present?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: My advice is that, clearly, one site we have available is the existing site. There may be others but we would rather not say at this stage, given the nature of the commerciality involved in the tender process. The PPP is about the residual value of the property, so we need to be careful and sensitive about that.

Mr BROKENSHERE: Will you explain why the number of prisoners processed through police holding facilities has dropped from an actual figure in 2002-03 of 34 951 to an estimated result in 2003-04 of 23 475; and why the target is 23 000 for 2004-05?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Given the statistics I have just read, maybe it is that we are tackling crime and there is less crime in the community. I do not know the answer, but I will ask the Commissioner to comment.

Mr HYDE: I do not have any specific answer for those figures, except to say that a number of things do go into how many people we manage in our facilities as prisoners. First, it relates to the crime rate, and we have seen a reduction in the crime rate of some 6.9 per cent in crime reported by victims. Secondly, we need to take into account the detection rate, and basically the clearance rate is the same or 1 or 2 per cent lower in some offence categories. Thirdly, it depends on the circumstances in which we deal with particular people. Are we able to arrest them in accordance with the requirements of the legislation? Is a person admitted to bail? Do magistrates take a different view about these matters at a later point in time? I have been given a document which might also elaborate on the things I have raised. I will have a quick look to see whether it does.

Mr BROKENSHERE: If it assists, I am happy for the Commissioner and the Police Minister to take the question on notice and give a detailed answer in due course.

Mr HYDE: I do not think it adds much to the generalities that I have raised already.

Mr BROKENSHERE: If I can have more background when appropriate that would be appreciated.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: We will go through the answers and, if we think more information needs to be given in order to add value to our answers, we will do so.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: As a point of clarification, I seek the minister's guidance on what was a policy when I was police minister. With respect to the status of police stations, that is, either removal of one or building a new police station, ultimately, governments have the say on budgets for new police stations and facilities. The minister has invited me (and I will take the opportunity when appropriate) to write to the Commissioner rather than the minister. As the minister has said many times in the chamber, certain issues are the responsibility of the Commissioner and certain issues are for him.

I therefore write to the Commissioner on matters that I see as operational, and I will continue to do that. However, with respect to this policy that we had, will the minister confirm that it would be his policy to confer and consult with local members, of whatever political colour, prior to a final decision being made about, first, where a police station may be located and, secondly, the closing of a police station because it has been determined to locate a police station in another part of that region? For example, in my own electorate there are matters concerning the review of Willunga policing. Would the minister agree that local members should have an opportunity to be briefed by either himself or the Commissioner on that matter?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I will answer that as best I can, and the Commissioner may wish to add to it. First, I am looking at the fact that we are building police stations at Mount Barker, Gawler, Victor Harbor and Port Lincoln. The truth is that I do not know whether I have changed any policy from what the honourable member had. I have not considered what the honourable member's policy was. I operate in a reasonably cautious way, and with something like these stations—and I have listed new stations at Mount Barker, Gawler, Victor Harbor and Port Lincoln—it would not automatically come to mind that I would consult with the local member as to the location of a police station given that these are PPPs and, to a large extent, the market will dictate the location of these sites.

Out of courtesy, I would brief the local member if I thought that a specific issue was involved. I do not think that, for example, the member for Kavel would necessarily have a view about whether the police station at Mount Barker was located at one end of the street or the other. He may have a view if it was located in Hahndorf or Littlehampton, and that may be something that I would choose to discuss with the local member. However, I am not saying that I would. I would not, as a matter of course, want to have extensive dialogue with a local member as to where local stations were located, primarily because I would not expect the police to have extensive consultation with me.

I mean, we would consult but I do not believe that it is my job to tell police where they should be building police stations. My view would be that, wherever possible, we should act on the advice of the Police Commissioner on these matters. That is not to say that—and I am being quite upfront about this, because politics is the business we are in—there may well be reasons why governments choose to build a police station; that it may be a priority of the government that is not necessarily a priority of the Police Commissioner. We should identify those priorities and those programs if and when they ever eventuate.

I think the Commissioner would be correct in expecting the government to resource that accordingly. To date we have not had that situation on which I can comment either privately or publicly. I have to say that members on my side are lobbying me for police stations, and there are members on the honourable member's side lobbying me for police stations but, ultimately, the decision must be governed by what is good policing. If the argument for a police station can fit within the principles of good policing, then perhaps the body politic and the police can be at one on it; if we are not we will be upfront about that, but, at this point, I have not seen such a situation developing.

I know that the members for Wright and Florey have discussed with me the issue of policing in the north-eastern suburbs of Adelaide. I am sorry; I am rambling a bit.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Supplementary to that, clearly, in terms of increases in police numbers and all the capital works that we built and paid for, when I was police minister I asked for strategic planning for those capital works, just like you, minister, through the Commissioner, because he is the man with the expertise, and, similarly, when we had the then premier's task force. I understand where the minister is coming from in that regard. Also, when we had the additional 113 after that, the guidance was, obviously, and always should be, from the Commissioner—there was total confidence there as he was the expert.

Given that there is a review into the policing structure in the Willunga Basin, and on behalf of my electorate of Mawson, I ask whether the minister will agree to meet with the local member (irrespective of the colour of the seat at the time) and his advisers and/or the Commissioner and his executive so that we are aware of what sorts of thoughts are coming through on that matter?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I am happy for the honourable member, as the shadow police minister and a member of this house, to seek a meeting with me to discuss matters relating to his electorate as regards policing. I have made it clear that I will be very careful (and I think that the members for Florey and Wright would be the first to tell the honourable member) not to be pressured on these matters, either by MPs of my own party or of the honourable member's party. I will consider what members request. I will consider the information and argument put to me, and, if appropriate, I will share those views with the Police Commissioner.

Ultimately, the Police Commissioner will give me advice as to where he thinks police stations should be located. If the government chooses to have a variation to that, I need to be upfront and open about that with the parliament and the Commissioner, state our reasons and, if we want to do it, fund it accordingly. In terms of the colour of someone's political seat with respect to allocating capital to build police stations, I think it is a bit rich to suggest that I would make a decision based on politics, because this lot over here almost want to lynch me.

I am building police stations in the seat of Kavel and the seat of Flinders, the safest Liberal seat in the state. I am building the deputy leader a police station and we are building the shadow minister for transport a police station. I am getting some stick for it, too, just quietly.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: In defence, and on one of the rare occasions when I will defend the current police minister, all of that strategy started when we were in government.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Everything started when you were in government! You're the only minister who continues to serve as minister beyond the grave.

Mr BROKENSHERE: Performance indicators show that there has been little improvement in the number of casualty crashes per 100 000 people and also in casualty crashes involving alcohol between 2002-03 and the target for 2004-05. Will the minister explain why this is the current situation?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I will take that on notice. I am just looking at the statistics, and detection of drink driving offences are up 6.4 per cent. We are working harder, better and smarter. As I said, when I look at the statistics that are up, it would appear that they are in areas where we are putting more activity into policing. But I will get a more detailed answer for the honourable member.

Mr BROKENSHERE: In the budget papers on page 4.35, the police budget shows that revenue from fines and penalties is expected to increase by \$22 million in 2004-05. That is after an estimated result of \$55 million to the end of this financial year for traffic offences, including a lot of speeding offences, and takes it to a record collection of \$77 million. Will the minister assure the house that, in the event of SAPOL not being able to reach that target of revenue, the police budget will not be affected?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: The police budget will not be affected. The expenditure authority for the police will be voted on by the parliament, and we are about providing more resources for policing, not fewer. Speeding fine receipts are up because there is more activity by government, by the number of detection devices. But no, the police budget will not be decreased if there is a reduction. The Commissioner makes a very good point: I have to separate my Treasurer's hat from my police minister's hat and, from time to time, I do stray. There is no connection between speeding fines and the police budget. You could make an argument between government revenue and speeding fines and politicise that, and you can argue whether you think the government has raised more money than you think they should from speeding fines.

You can also argue the political point about whether or not speeding cameras have a revenue impact. But the police budget and revenue are not linked. We have the Road Safety Fund, where the money goes into a dedicated fund used for improving road safety in our community. But the police operational budget is not linked to speeding fines.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I do not often get the chance to raise these issues when the Commissioner is present. From time to time it is brought to my attention that, when people want to pass road trains, they have to exceed the speed limit, and there is always a concern that they will get zapped, because you want to get past as quickly as possible. Does the Commissioner take that into consideration, because sometimes some of the roads trains are actually doing more than 90 km/h and these excellent passing lanes, which are a great safety measure on the roads, often do not have a lot of room to get past in. Is that a consideration and is the Commissioner aware that this can be a problem for motorists?

Mr HYDE: I think there are problems where people exceed the speed limit to overtake other vehicles, and I am aware that often people want to pass in a reasonable time rather than go slowly past, but the law does not distinguish between those sorts of reasons for speeding. However, might I say that I am sure that our officers take it into account in determining how they should exercise their discretion whether or not to take action against someone in those circumstances, or whether or not they should caution someone. We do have a cautioning program in place, but we

do not have any specific rules about the circumstances you raise and the law, unfortunately, does not distinguish, either.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Should it be clarified to account for that?

Mr HYDE: I am not sure how you could clarify it in a reasonable way.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Just on that issue of policing of speeding etc., there has been an increased level of speeding detection devices put into the community. It is made very clear that the decision on much of this is that of the Police Commissioner, not of the government, in terms of devising what is an appropriate response to the increasing tragedy on the road. The Treasurer of the day might see some blue sky in terms of revenue receipts from increased policing measures when it comes to speed detection, and the Treasurer always tends to have an eye for those things, but I have to say that the increased activity that has been undertaken on road safety principles is actually working, and I can talk as minister responsible for the Motor Accident Commission.

The last advice I had was that road accidents are down 15 per cent and reckless and negligent driving is down 5.7 per cent. I am not sure where our fatality rate is, but I think that is down at present.

Mr HYDE: The fatality rate is 60 compared to 66 at the same time last year. I could be one or two out on that but, roughly, it is down six on last year and our calculations are that, if the current pattern holds true to the end of the calendar year, we would be down 9 to 9.5 per cent for the year. Of course, there are big variations in the road toll. You can have, as we saw last week, five fatalities occurring very quickly, so it is not something on which you can act with a great deal of confidence.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: We do not have a lot of weapons in our arsenal in terms of speeding. We have the police, community education and deterrents such as speed cameras and red light cameras, which work. If people do not want to pay fines, they should not speed and they should not run red lights. I think we are hitting a point where this activity is starting to bite in the community; it is starting to work.

Mr BROKENSHERE: I have a series of omnibus questions which I will read into *Hansard*.

1. Did all departments and agencies reporting to the minister meet all required budget savings targets for 2003-04 set for them in the 2002-03 and 2003-04 budgets; and, if not, what specific proposed project and program cuts were not implemented?

2. Will the minister provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure on consultants in 2003-04 for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, listing the name of the consultant, the cost, the work undertaken and the method of appointment?

The CHAIRMAN: For the information of the honourable member, the Hon. Rob Kerin has accepted a cut-off point of \$5 000 for consultancies. (Estimates Committee A of 16 June, page 26).

Mr BROKENSHERE: Thank you, Mr Chairman.

3. 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 total employment cost (TEC) of the employee?

4. In the financial year 2002-03 for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what underspending on projects and programs was not approved by cabinet for carryover expenditure in 2003-04?

5. For all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what is the estimated level of under expenditure for 2003-04, and has cabinet approved any carryover expenditure into 2004-05?

6. What was the total number of employees with a total employment cost of \$100 000 or more per employee and, as a sub-category, what as the total number of employees with a total employment cost of \$200 000 or more per employee, for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister as at 30 June 2003; what is the estimate for 30 June 2004; and, between 30 June 2003 and 30 June 2004, will the minister list job title and total employment cost of each position (with a total estimated cost of \$100 000 or more)—(a) which has been abolished and (b) which has been created?

7. What is the difference between consultants and contractors and how many people or services that were previously classed as consultants are now shown as contractors; what is the value of their contracts; and what are the services they provide?

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

Department for Correctional Services, \$125 271 000

Witness:

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

Additional Departmental Advisers:

Mr P. Severin, Chief Executive Officer, Correctional Services.

Mr A. Martin, Director, Financial and Physical Resources.

Mr W. Cossey, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Justice Department.

Mr K. Penniford, Chief, Financial Services.

Mr R. Mathews, Fund Manager, Justice Department.

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I have a ministerial statement that I would like to put on the record.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: The minister has said that he wants to put it on record. Is it possible that it can be simply tabled?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: You must give me the pleasure of reading it. I have been poring over it for months!

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, if you wish to present it in a brief manner, that would be appreciated.

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: According to standing orders, I will deliver it, Mr Chairman, and I remind the honourable member that when he was minister he liked to read his introduction.

Members interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The minister.

The Hon. T. G. ROBERTS: Thank you, sir. I am pleased today to acknowledge the positive efforts made by the Department of Correctional Services in what could easily be described as a very difficult area of public administration. This government committed to significant increased funding in last year's budget for the development and implementation of key initiatives, in particular the introduction of intensive therapeutic intervention programs for high risk sexual and violent offenders.

I am pleased with the progress of this initiative, which will now shortly see the first prison-based treatment program for sexual offenders commence at the Yatala Labour Prison, and a similar program being run for offenders under community correction supervision from the Adelaide Community Corrections Centre. This is a wise investment of public funds into the long-term benefits which flow to the community from a reduction in crime rates.

I note that the Washington State Institute of Public Policy in 2001 released a report on the comparative costs and benefits to reduce crime. This report estimated the effects and economics of cognitive behavioural sex offender treatment programs. The report found that these programs produced a benefit of \$US4.13 to every US dollar spent on the program. In other words, every dollar spent on the introduction and running of these programs resulted in a four times greater benefit to the community as a result of a reduction in reoffending. And this does not take into account the human suffering that is saved with a reduction of this type of crime.

We are fortunate to have secured the introduction of the Canadian sexual offender and violent offenders treatment programs into our state. They represent world's best practice in this area. While we have to establish our own evaluation framework into the effectiveness of the programs in our South Australian study that I quoted, there is clear evidence that this is a wise investment with long-term benefits for the South Australian community.

Again, for 2004-05, the government has made a considerable commitment to the ongoing service improvements and enhancements in correctional services for this state. More than \$15 million will be spent over the next four years to fund additional service and infrastructure improvements and to further augment existing services in accordance with government policy.

To highlight a few features of these initiatives, we have made a considerable commitment to improve the services by the Department of Correctional Services on the APY lands. The new community service model has already received positive feedback from both the communities and other government agencies. We are now making a reliable and ongoing direct community service contribution to all communities during block periods of time and the projects undertaken by offenders under community services are a tangible benefit to communities in the lands.

I might add by way of an anecdote that we also had a person who volunteered to work on one of the programs. We have also increased the general supervision of offenders on parole or probation orders to ensure that these orders are more effectively managed, but more importantly that the offenders receive a better quality of service. For the coming financial year, an additional \$149 000 has been allocated to this service initiative.

As I previously stated, South Australia has experienced a further increase in the requirements of intensive bail supervision through the courts. In order to meet the increased demand and ensure that the level of service is maintained, an additional \$438 000 has been allocated in the coming financial year to the home detention and intensive bail supervision programs.

The government also continues to improve the prison system capacity to deal with an increasingly more complex and difficult prisoner population, both through the provision of additional infrastructure and strategic initiatives for the improvement of the system's processes and prisoner management. An additional \$640 000 has been allocated over the

next four financial years for the development and introduction of a consistent and standardised policy and procedures framework and new operational practices in all South Australian prisons. This is a long-term strategic measure which will not only improve the capacity of staff working within the challenging and demanding environment but also continue to introduce more contemporary management approaches, particularly for difficult-to-manage prisoners.

As we all aware, this government has set clear priorities for the future expenditure of capital funds which, unfortunately (and you will be able to give me a hiding), for the coming financial year resulted in a previous decision to construct a new women's prison being deferred. I make no apologies for this decision, as clearly priorities have to be set within a tight budget framework, and significant demands in other important policy areas have to be met. However, \$700 000 has been allocated to identify the future infrastructure needs for correctional services in this state, and develop a business case to ensure that the most effective and efficient decision for additional infrastructure in the future will be adopted. This is a responsible approach which will no doubt have long-term benefits for the state.

Nevertheless, we are committing additional funds to the expansion of Mobilong Prison. Construction of the \$4 million, 50-bed prison extension is well under way and a further \$1 million will be spent over the next three years to construct additional support facilities, in particular for prisoner programs and education. The extended facility will employ an additional 11 staff, which is of direct benefit to the local community. In summary, the 2004-05 outcome will place the Department for Correctional Services in a better position to safely and effectively manage the prison system and supervise offenders in the community.

In addition to significant ongoing funding which was provided with last year's budget, key strategic initiatives will be supported in the coming and following financial years which are all aimed to increase the safety and security of the correctional system, whilst at the same time ensuring continued improvement of rehabilitation and reparation services.

It is not the end of the introduction of the ministerial statement. I noted that today there has been some interest in prison numbers, and the figures that I have heard bandied about, and the conclusions drawn, are not valid in relation to the drawing together of the figures and conclusions in relation to the government's law and order policy in general. The figures that we have show that the government's law and order policies are working, crime rates are down, the number of sentenced prisoners is increasing, and the number of remand prisoners is decreasing. This in part can be attributed to the successful intensive bail supervision program. So, the figures in the press release which concluded that only two prisoners were projected for the 2004-05 year are not accurate. I think the second press release concluded that there would be something like a 35 prisoner projected increase in the coming year. This is not an accurate reflection of our law and order policy.

Mr BROKESHIRE: I acknowledge the hard work of the public servants working within the Department of Correctional Services. It is interesting because since your government has come to office we see the Premier, primarily, but also other ministers, jumping up and down with the typical plastic facade of this Rann government when they talk about being tough on law and order. But behind all that you actually need to have some substance, and I said in my

introductory comments that since this government was elected it has said that it is taking a tougher stance on law and order. I will just put a couple of examples on the public record. These are quotes from the government:

This means that there will be a greater likelihood of offenders being apprehended and successfully prosecuted.

Another quote is as follows:

Anyone found guilty of these crimes should be put away, not just for the sake of their victims but for the protection of other children that may be at risk.

Yet another quote was the following:

Serious repeat offenders are running out of time when this law comes into effect.

Another quote was:

Last year alone that could have helped to put away 34 criminals for longer or 10 per cent of serious offenders.

Yet another quote was:

One of Labor's key election pledges is that we would be tougher on crime and tougher on law and order. South Australians want to feel safer in their homes and safer on our streets.

In the light of those comments, why has the daily prison population increased by only seven prisoners from 1469 in 2002-03 to 1476 in 2003-04?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: Some of the issues associated with sentencing are justice. Perhaps some of figures that I read in relation to the law and order program show that it is working. In some categories a whole range of offences has decreased markedly. Homicide and related offences are down 2.5 per cent; assault down 3.2 per cent; robbery down 18.6 per cent; unlawful entry with intent down 13 per cent; motor vehicle theft down 9 per cent; and other theft down 6.9 per cent.

Mr Brokenshire interjecting:

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: The more police on the streets, the more apprehensions you will have. But it is a matter of the related categories, and certainly we are trying to make sure that the alternatives to sentencing—which I think is a bipartisan approach to crime—are working in the state.

The number of people going through community corrections and alternative sentencing programs has increased and also increased under previous regimes. So, we are keeping those policies intact. The remand rates are down and the sentencing rates are up. There are some issues associated with the law and order policy and the Correctional Services policy that are fitting. Sometimes the sausage machine gets it wrong but, at the moment, it is working.

Mr BROKESHIRE: I have a supplementary question. In the light of the minister's answers, if you were a criminal reading *Hansard* tomorrow you would reckon, based on that small increase, that you would not be at great risk of being incarcerated. On top of that, I note that the budget papers for next financial year show a projected increase of only two in the number of prisoners. They show 1 508 in 2003-04 and 1 510 in 2004-05.

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: They are targeted figures. They are projected figures.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: Perhaps I will allow Mr Severin to explain the figures from an operational viewpoint.

Mr BROKESHIRE: I am happy for that, because we had more lifers in the prison system when we were in

government than at any other time in the history of the state, so I would love to have an answer.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The minister is asking the CEO to answer.

Mr SEVERIN: The figures quoted on page 4.158 in relation to the targets for daily average prisoner population for 2004-05 are based on the estimated result from 2003-04, namely, 1 476. Based on that figure and the history of our prisoner growth, it is estimated that there will be an increase to 1 510. So there is no direct correlation between the target of 1 508 that was set for 2003-04 because, obviously, in resetting a target for the coming financial year we based it on the actual figures that had gone through the system at that time, which is 1 476.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: In other states, according to your CEO, Mr Peter Severin (for whom the opposition has a lot of time, and we have been assured his is a good appointment), prison populations have increased at a much greater rate—in fact, by as much as 30 per cent. How does the minister explain that our prison population is increasing at a rate much less than the rest of Australia?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I guess you would have to look at the sources and causes of crime within other states. Without having the statistics in front of me, I think if you look at Victoria and New South Wales in particular, you will see that crime is never off the front pages in those states, and they have different problems associated with the movement, sale and use of drugs in particular. Although South Australian prisons and courts, in relative terms taking into account our population, would have similar problems, we do not have the hard core elements that exist in those states. We have a small hard core of tough, hardened criminals associated with those issues but the prisons in Victoria and New South Wales (particularly the prisons that deal with ethnic crime associated with drugs) have large numbers of very hardened criminals.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Can the minister provide a list of the programs delivered under the heading 'rehabilitative services', the subject being rehabilitation programs; and can he inform us of the objectives of such programs and, indeed, any evaluation as to their success?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: Mr Severin will give a general statement about that.

Mr SEVERIN: In general, we run a whole range of rehabilitative programs both in community corrections and prisons. There is a suite of so-called core programs which address the underlying causes of offending behaviour—programs such as anger management, drug and alcohol awareness and treatment—and also programs that basically deal with the ability of offenders to gain some insight into their offending behaviour. The programs are run on a continuous basis, and I have evaluated outcomes on the basis of completion rates. In the longer term, obviously, we will be in a position to draw some further meaningful conclusions in relation to possible reductions in recidivism as a result of prisoners having participated in those programs.

Those intervention programs are further augmented by education programs, and basic literacy and numeracy is one area (provided at departmental expense), right through to tertiary education in which prisoners can enrol at their own expense. I understand that the completion rates of programs are provided in the papers from which you quote. We have revised our targets for next financial year in relation to that in order to broaden—in conjunction with some of the therapeutic intervention programs that are yet to start—the sexual and violent offender programs to continuously

improve the speed of programs that we offer to both offenders in prisons and community corrections.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Could the minister provide a list of all specific programs delivered? Also, when it comes to evaluations, could we have tabled any evaluations done in the past few years on Operation Challenge? Does the minister feel that the department is now hamstrung in addressing repeat offending and being able to offer a world-class program, given the cuts that the minister's government made when doing away with Operation Challenge at Cadell?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: It is true that in our first budget we withdrew support for Operation Challenge. I think funding continued for part of that financial year. The honourable member would be pleased with the program which is running at the moment and which incorporates parts of Operation Challenge and the theories on which it was based, in terms of rehabilitation and training; it also extends that program that has been run through financing by the Drug and Alcohol Foundation. It has been welcomed by the prison officers to whom I have spoken up there and the community generally, because a lot of the work is community-based. If the honourable member wants a list of the other programs, we will get back to him; if he wants more detail on the Drug and Alcohol Foundation's programs, I will get that as well.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: The minister indicated that Operation Challenge—which to my understanding was run out of Cadell Prison—was very successful. I had the pleasure of attending one or two graduations where young first-offender prisoners were given a great opportunity to rehabilitate in order to keep them out of the system. Minister, I understand that when you came into government you stopped this program—God knows why—and set back the whole program. I was most concerned because I saw a program which at limited cost to the taxpayer was doing so much good. For some unknown reason, it was brought to an abrupt end. I know it disappointed the people running it—I know that for a fact. Why was this excellent program suddenly put on hold or curtailed or stopped?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: All government agencies and all ministerial offices had to make savings in that particular budget. My understanding is that Operation Challenge did not finish immediately; it continued until the funding ran out for that financial year. The honourable member is right: it was a successful program which prison officers enjoyed running because they saw that it was getting results.

We have established a new outreach program at Cadell, based on the original program. If the honourable member wants details, further explanation or a description of the program itself, I am able to forward it to him.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I will go to the prison, as I do regularly, and have a discussion and look for myself.

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: We could arrange that.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Can I say that I have never asked. It is in my electorate and I just call in and go there. If there has to be some sort of restriction, I would be surprised. I take the view that it is a democracy, it is in my area and I have the right to go there.

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: There are protocols that prisons require some notice.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I have never done that.

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I was refused under one former minister.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: It would be wrong in my view.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: It wasn't me!

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: No, it was not Mr Brokenshire; it was another minister. I take the point that it is in your electorate and you have the right to drop in to see it. I welcome your meeting the people who are running the program and some of the participants.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: It is a very good facility and the people there do a first-rate job, as they do in the other prisons.

Ms BEDFORD: I refer the minister to the capital investment program, and note that the government has provided an additional \$1 million over three years for support facilities at Mobilong. Will the minister detail the purpose of this expenditure?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: Mobilong Prison continues to play an important part and an expanding role in the South Australian prison system. Mobilong was completed in 1987 and commissioned with a capacity of 160 beds. In 1995-96 its capacity was increased to 240 beds by the construction of 20 additional cells within the existing four living units and by installing double bunks in 60 cells. Work is now in progress on the construction of a new 50-bed independent living unit at a cost of almost \$4 million. This will be completed in December 2004 and will increase the capacity of Mobilong Prison to 290 beds. With the expansion of Mobilong Prison, from originally 160 to 290 beds, there is need to expand prison support facilities, which was not taken into account in the initial expansion. The funding approved by the government in 2004-05 will enable the support facilities to be expanded and upgraded to meet current requirements. Works include:

- extensions to the prisoner property store;
- alterations to Sturt Unit accommodation building to improve prisoner management, additional interview rooms and a programs room;
- modifications to the medical suite for safe and secure methadone distribution;
- additional accommodation for professional services staff accommodation;
- relocation and expansion of the prison canteen; and
- expansion of the education facilities.

There are extra facilities as well as the beds. Detailed documentation and drawings are currently being developed for development approval. During 2004-05, it is intended to:

- finalise documentation and drawings for the prisoner property store, Sturt Unit and the medical suite and consult with staff;
- call selective tenders for these components for construction completion by January 2005;
- finalise staff consultation on the preferred options for the remaining work; and
- obtain development approvals, tender call and complete construction prior to end of financial year.

Mobilong Prison's relative proximity to the metropolitan area was an important part of the decision to locate the new 50-bed unit at that location. This project to expand and upgrade support facilities will ensure that the Mobilong Prison can effectively manage this increase in prisoner numbers. I must say that the units do provide an incentive in terms of prisoners being better behaved and aspiring to go into these units.

Ms BEDFORD: I refer to page 4.153 of the 2004-05 Portfolio Statement as it relates to targets and the Drugs Summit strategy. What is planned to improve the effectiveness and consistency of drug testing services, community corrections and the Drug Court?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: While drug testing has been a common practice for some time in community corrections,

the Drug Court has been limited by both available funding and the lack of suitable staff to assist in the process. This has resulted in testing processes which are infrequent and which can be evaded by offenders with an understanding of how the process works. In this budget the government has provided a further \$356 000 to provide drug services to offenders in community corrections and to the Drug Court, and to regularly test offenders in community corrections centres and those associated with the Drug Court who are being administered by the Department of Correctional Services.

It is intended that a special drug unit be established, and staff will be specifically recruited to carry out these roles. The increased capacity to test offenders randomly or unexpectedly and to schedule regular testing at a major community corrections centre or centres will considerably improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the drug testing of community service offenders. This increased capacity will allow staff more effectively to meet the requirements of both the Parole Board and the courts and to better ensure the safety of the community, and in this respect I am sure that I will be supported by the opposition in a bipartisan way.

Ms BEDFORD: I refer to page 4.159 of the 2004-05 Portfolio Statement, and in particular I refer to home detention and intensive bail supervision in the description 'Objectives of community-based services'. What has been allocated in this budget for home detention and intensive bail supervision?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: There has been an allocation for the next year of \$438 000. I am very pleased to be able to outline how additional funding for home detention will be used, but before I do so I should briefly provide some background. South Australia's home detention model is highly regarded within the corrections industry in Australia. It is not uncommon for senior representatives of correctional agencies and members of parliament from other states and territories to visit South Australia to see first hand the work that is being done in this area.

As members would be aware, in addition to the home detention program that is administered by the Department of Correctional Services other justice home detention alternatives in South Australia have been established by parliament. These include:

- Court ordered home detention. This alternative to imprisonment is ordered by the courts and has been developed for offenders suffering ill-health or who are disabled or frail and for whom any imprisonment would be unduly harsh; and
- Intensive bail supervision. This is basically bail with a home detention condition. It is again ordered by the court and is a more secure alternative to bail but less secure than remanding an offender to prison.

Since the introduction of home detention, home detention numbers have increased significantly. Whilst departmentally approved home detention numbers have remained relatively constant over the past three years (around 260 per year), intensive bail supervision increased from 199 in 1998-99 to 477 in 2002-03 (478 offenders were released to intensive bail supervision to 31 March 2004). Recognising the importance of home detention as an alternative to prison, this government has provided an additional \$156 000 outside of the normal budget process in 2003 to fund the employment of a further two home detention staff and to meet operating costs.

The continued increase in intensive bail supervision numbers has necessitated a need for additional funding in the 2004-05 budget. The department has been provided with

\$438 000 to employ four staff, to meet their operating costs and to lease up to 40 sets of home detention equipment. I take this opportunity to reaffirm the government's commitment to home detention as a cost-effective alternative to prison.

Ms BEDFORD: As a supplementary question—

Members interjecting:

Ms BEDFORD: It is the first one I have had today; just relax. I want to know how home detention is distributed amongst the male and female population of the prisons?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I will refer that question to Mr Severin, as he may have the details of that in an operational sense.

Mr SEVERIN: I do not have any detailed statistics as to how the distribution between males and females is currently happening in relation to the home detention program. However, we will be able to provide those figures. The only comment I would like to make is that home detention is a particularly useful program for female offenders as it allows them to go back to their primary place of residence as the predominant primary care giver to their children rather than staying in prison.

Mr BROKESHIRE: As a supplementary question, will the minister advise the committee whether, in the last six to 12 months, any home detention bailee with an ankle bracelet, or indeed any other home detention bailee with or without an ankle bracelet, has been unable to be located for a period of time?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I will refer that question to Mr Severin.

Mr SEVERIN: I do not have any detailed cases. It would be inappropriate to discuss detailed cases but, certainly, there are breaches of home detention. There are occasions when home detainees who are not on electronic monitoring have been absent. There have been occasions when home detainees on electronic monitoring have been absent. In all cases the breach proceedings are commenced and carried out as soon as it is detected and, obviously, with the electronic monitoring that happens immediately. If a person is not on electronic monitoring, it might happen at the next point of contact, which happens at least on a 24-hour basis. Then, within that period, the relevant warrants are issued for the apprehension of the offender. The answer is, yes, there have been people absent without licence on those programs.

Mr BROKESHIRE: As a further supplementary question, clearly we would not ask for the names of those offenders but I would ask that the minister advise the house when he gets the answer as to how many have been in that situation in the last 12 months. On 5 May this year the minister announced that new programs to treat sexual offenders in the South Australian correctional system would soon be implemented. According to the notes of the Correctional Service Advisory Council, the submission for this program was with the minister in October 2002. Why has it taken more than 16 months to announce and implement that program?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: During the course of the 2003-04 financial year, the following tasks have been undertaken:

- the design and implementation of change management processes to support a new suite of offender rehabilitation programs;
- the reconfiguration and strengthening of existing service delivery strategies;
- the identification and acquisition of relevant program modules; and

· the recruitment of staff for the core rehabilitation team— I must say that I was quite surprised about the time that that took to get the expertise that was required. Quite a number of people around Australia are interested in involving themselves in that program. I continue:

- liaising with other government agencies and community-based service providers;
- the identification, design and implementation of a required information technology and information management infrastructure to enable effective offender management and program evaluation;
- the establishment of an organisational learning and development framework;
- the commissioning of an evaluation process; and
- the establishment of accommodation and resources for core teams.

All those tasks did take time to put in place and set up. I was pleasantly surprised with the cooperation that was given in relation to the sex offenders program by the Canadian correctional services team. Perhaps Mr Severin can elaborate on the way in which those discussions took place and the outcomes.

Mr SEVERIN: The project commenced immediately with the availability of the funds early last financial year in order to make sure that we adopted the best available program to run in our system. A body of research was undertaken and the Canadian program identified as the most established and best evaluated program available for implementation. Now that the team is in place, the program has been sourced and the team is currently in the process of being trained. The first program will start at Yatala Labour Prison early in the next financial year and then also in the Adelaide Community Corrections Centre around that same time. It took us a period of 12 months to get the job done, but I guess that it was an important period to ensure that we do not jump into something and allocate resources then later we find we have made some mistakes in terms of the selection of the program and our evaluation framework.

Mr BROKESHIRE: The Correctional Services Advisory Council was advised that in New South Wales 23 per cent of female inmates and 20.4 per cent of males reported heroin use while in prison. Ms Doreen Rae advised the council that 'a similar finding would be made in South Australian prison populations.' That is an alarming quote. Can the minister confirm that to be the case in South Australia and, if so, what steps has he taken in relation to this high level of heroin use? Is Duracell still being used in Correctional Services or has Duracell run out of batteries?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I will allow Mr Severin to inform members on the use of Duracell. Drugs in prisons are a difficult issue for prison management teams, just as they are in the broad community. There are methods used to detect entry of drugs via visitors, via visiting trades organisations if there are building works going on. There are ways of detecting drugs thrown over fences etc., but there will always be breaches of security. You try to keep them to a minimum. That is part of the job of security. I do not have with me the figures on percentage use, but prescription drugs are another problem. It is always a wrestling match within the management of prison systems to try to keep drugs out of prisons, while acknowledging that there will always be breaches because no system is perfect.

The way in which South Australian prisons have gone about their business is probably no better and no worse than any other prison, but I think that the figure that has been

expressed to me is high. I would be surprised if those figures were the same in South Australia as they would be in that case, but I will try to get those figures and get back to you.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: As a brief supplementary question, do you still run the drug-free cottages in DCS?

Mr SEVERIN: They continue to run at the Adelaide Prerelease Centre, in particular, and in a couple of other prisons where we do have cottages. The Mobilong 50-bed expansion cottages will run along those lines as well, and it is part of the integrated drugs strategy that looks at three major areas—detection, deterrent and treatment. Obviously, we have treatment programs, as we already mentioned, which are also supported through the drug replacement treatment of methadone and buprenorphine.

As far as detection initiatives are concerned, the passive drug dogs are still operating, and we have expanded that program and will continue to do that in the next financial year. This program, entry procedures and visit supervision are all measures aimed at curtailing the introduction of drugs into our facilities. We can provide the random drug testing statistics, but I am not in a position to give you those figures at the moment. We are in a more fortunate position than states such as New South Wales where the introduction of illicit drugs has been a much more significant problem for that system than it has been for ours.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I would like those figures at some stage, if they are available.

Mr CAICA: Earlier, the minister mentioned recidivism. I recall when the Public Works Committee went to Mobilong with Mr Martin, and we had a very good discussion about reoffending. Page 4.155 of the Portfolio Statements refers to reoffending. What is the importance to the community of reducing the rate of reoffending, what is the rate at which prisoners in South Australia are returned to prison, and how does this compare with other states?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I am pleased to be able to respond to this very important question. Recidivism can be a measure of many factors and can be influenced by any number of criminal justice agencies, including police, courts and corrections. It is important to be clear on what we are talking about when we are discussing recidivism. Current recidivism rates measure the return of an ex-prisoner or offender to a person or to a community based sanction within two years of release from prison or completion of a community-based order. I can inform the committee that in South Australia the rate of return to prison of ex-prisoners within a two-year period post-release fell by over 50 per cent from the 1995-96 financial year to the 2001-02 financial year.

In 1995-96 there were 317 ex-prisoners returned to prison within two years post-release, whereas four years later in 2001-02 there were only 152 ex-prisoners returned to prison within two years. In percentage terms this can be described as a 22.13 per cent return to prison rate in 2001-02 compared with a 29.41 per cent return to prison rate in 1995-96. At 22.13 per cent, South Australia had the best performance of all Australian states in respect of the return to prison rate. The Australian average for the 2001-02 period was 37.4 per cent.

In 2002-03 South Australia again ranked first in comparison to other states with respect to prisoners returning to prison with 25.5 per cent compared with the Australian average of 37.2 per cent. It will be seen from these figures that South Australia is performing extremely well in this area. The Department for Correctional Services plays an essential part in the rehabilitation of prisoners. These figures are a credit to both the staff and the rehabilitation programs offered

by the department. At the very least, these figures are an indication that the rehabilitation programs being conducted in the prison environment (such as anger management and substance abuse programs, education and employment, and the re-socialisation programs of the department) are having a positive effect.

There have been similar successes in community corrections where the recidivism rate has fallen substantially with 16.9 per cent of offenders returning to community corrections within two years of completion of an order in 2002-03 compared with 29.61 per cent of offenders in 1995-96. Post-release, prisoners are confronted with many challenges which need to be overcome in order for them to lead productive lives and refrain from reoffending. Accommodation, employment, positive and supportive social networks and constructive use of leisure time are important factors in the rehabilitation process post-release.

Community corrections plays a vital role in the re-socialisation of ex-prisoners and in re-assimilating ex-prisoners back into the community. Post-release support by the skilled staff in community corrections provides ex-prisoners with the resources and guidance needed to meet these daily challenges. Overall, our performance in reducing the recidivism rate in South Australia's ex-prisoners and offenders is very good, and we compare favourably with other states.

I am very happy with the work being done by the staff of the Department for Correctional Services and the results that are being achieved in this important area of recidivism are indicative of their level of skill and commitment. Their efforts are all the more impressive when we consider the often hostile environment in which they work. It is pleasing to be able to report to the committee on positive improvements and performance within this portfolio. I join with Robert who regularly thanks the staff for the difficult job that they do working with prisoners not only on a daily basis but sometimes during home time as well. They do a lot of good work.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: On 10 September 2002, the Correctional Services Advisory Council was advised that bullying was occurring at the Mobilong Prison. What can the minister tell us about this bullying, and what action is being taken to address this problem?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: Bullying occurs in all workplaces. It is true that Mobilong had a particular problem. This was dealt with through the intervention of the department. I will ask the CEO, Mr Peter Severin, to give you the details of how that intervention took place.

Mr SEVERIN: That particular incident in Mobilong precedes my tenure with the department. However, I do have some background information. Bullying is a phenomenon which unfortunately occurs both in relation to people managing people and amongst prisoners themselves. We need to address this problem in the prison population by having very good assessment systems and also by being more observant of the dynamics within the accommodation areas. This is very much what I understand happened at that time. The dynamics were such that some offenders were able to gain the upper hand on another group of offenders and, as a result, there was behaviour that was clearly not acceptable. By being more vigilant and improving the way we case manage offenders, we are able to address these problems in a sustainable way. In essence, it is about staff being observant, being across the dynamics within accommodation areas, and being in a position to isolate from the general population

those who utilise these types of mechanisms or tactics for periods of time.

More importantly, if we are talking about a more serious form of bullying which is violence, our Violence Intervention Program which we will start will hopefully be able to be used in a long term way and it will run at the beginning of a person's sentence, for those offenders who have absolutely no ability to control their violence. I think that will be a key measure which we will employ for years to come.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: On 14 January 2003, it was reported to the council that the department was faced with several sensitive issues that would likely involve disciplinary action against several staff. Can the minister advise the committee what the issues are and what disciplinary action has been taken?

The Hon. T. G. ROBERTS: Is that in relation to Mobilong?

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: Not specifically, no. It was general.

Hon. T. G. ROBERTS: I would like to take that question on notice and get the details of that back to the honourable member as soon as possible.

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

Department of Further Education, Employment, Science
and Technology, \$232 684 000

Witness:

The Hon. S.W. Key, Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr G. Black, Chief Executive, Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology.

Mr I. Procter, Deputy Chief Executive.

Mr L. Hutchinson, Director, Programs.

Mr T. Beeching, Director, Finance.

Ms L. Windsor, Principal Policy Officer.

Membership:

Ms Chapman substituted for Mr Brokenshire.

Mr Scalzi substituted for Mr Goldsworthy.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments open for examination. Does the Minister wish to make a brief opening statement?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: First, I would like to acknowledge that we are on Kaurua land, and acknowledge the traditional owners. I welcome the opportunity to make an introductory statement as the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education. It is pleasing to do so on behalf of a government that has made the reform of the vocational education and training sector a major focus. This process is an important step in meeting the objectives of the State Strategic Plan released earlier this year and supporting the directions of the government's Population Policy.

The 2003-2004 budget provided additional funding to help stabilise TAFE's financial position and implement strategic training initiatives. Further money in this year's budget will substantially improve the ongoing financial viability of the technical and further education sector. Consolidating eight

existing TAFE institutes into three—northern, southern and one large regional institute—will streamline management arrangements and resource sharing. It will create efficiencies in improved quality across the TAFE sector. The establishment of the TAFE Board now also provides the capacity for strategic oversight in this sector's development. I am particularly pleased that there will be extra funding for the Aboriginal TAFE Education Program provided in this year's budget. This will ensure improvements in the delivery of further education services to indigenous people in South Australia.

As the public provider of vocational education and training, the government will maintain its commitment to developing strong TAFE institutes that can provide local responses to community needs. They will work directly with industry clients and individual students to deliver customised training as well as having the capacity to develop innovative learning, material, technology and curricula. This also applies to the state's broader sector. The government wants communities, businesses and individuals to develop skills and knowledge for the Knowledge Economy. For this reason we will have an independent review of traineeships and apprenticeship policy, funding, administration and operations. The review will contribute to the continuous improvement of the state's contract training system and will be completed in early 2005.

With the assistance recently established in the Training and Skills Commission, I believe the government will be able to develop and implement highly relevant initiatives. We have a particularly important role with respect to the development of the state's Workforce Development Strategy that should be completed by the end of 2004. Greater levels of certainty in protection to 30 000 apprentices and trainees is now available through the Office of the Training Advocate. We are one of only two states that have appointed a training advocate to give people in the VET system access to independent advice and an avenue for resolving complaints. Since its establishment last year, it has been an outstanding success and has helped directly over 1 000 South Australians.

The government also works directly with the universities on the Higher Education Council. We place a high priority on improving pathways for students moving between the vocational education and training, and higher education sectors. The Higher Education Council will continue to form a forum to foster collaboration. A number of partnership arrangements have been established between industry and universities to support growth in major manufacturing industries including defence, electronics and automotive. The council also is an important forum in which to discuss strengthening the state's international education role.

The opportunities presented by the Knowledge Economy in our education sectors must benefit all South Australians. We need to reduce the polarisation between unskilled, insecure employment and high-skilled, high paid employment. The government has responded by introducing South Australia Works, a skills for work program designed to develop fragmentation of effort, and improved learning training and employment outcomes for those who are disadvantaged in the Labor market. SA Works gives high priority to boosting skills formation, training, and job opportunities, for key target areas—young people out of school, out of work, and out of training; indigenous people; older workers; those with a disability; and women. It will strengthen connections between TAFE, schools, VET and

industry, to match industry growth with job-ready young people with the right skills.

SA Works also emphasises working with regions to find local solutions for local problems. Nine SA Works coordinators work across the state to develop innovative responses to local employment/unemployment issues. Through this mechanism, 17 Employment and Skills Foundation Networks are developing regional plans for 2004-2005 that will identify regional employment and skills formation issues to be addressed in 2004-2005 and beyond. Regions involved include: the Adelaide Hills, Barossa, Eastern Adelaide, Eyre, the Fleurieu, Kangaroo Island, Mid-North, Murraylands, North Adelaide, Northern Region, Port Pirie, Riverland, South-East, South Adelaide, West Adelaide, Whyalla, and Yorke.

The government will commit up to \$3.3 million over the next year to prepare unemployed people for work opportunities in the northern metropolitan region. This has been one of the state's growing economic centres with an increase in the level of total employment over the past two years. We are not prepared to see the continuation of higher than average rates of unemployment that have persisted in this region for many years. Examples of SA Works initiatives in the north include: the Northern Adelaide Retention Program which is a collaborative effort between Regency TAFE and the region's high schools to encourage young people at risk of leaving school early, so that they will complete year 12; three aged care projects to recruit and train long-term unemployed while at the same time responding to an increased need for personal care workers in the region; a pre-vocational metal fabrication and metal engineering program designed to equip participants to compete for jobs in advanced manufacturing; and a community work bank that will aggregate small parcels of work for long-term unemployed people—local people who gain work through this initiative will receive guidance and training in operating a small business.

Similar projects are being implemented in the southern suburbs: the Youth Employment Alliance Project, which is a partnership between local high schools, business groups and the Onkaparinga Economic Development Forum—this will provide up to 40 apprenticeships and traineeships; the SHED project where socially disadvantaged young people will be offered mentoring and support by experienced, mature-aged people to help them get back into mainstream learning and works pathways; Industry Focus which will allow 36 young people to gain opportunities in metal trades, general engineering, construction industries—all areas in which there is a strong industry demand—and for Indigenous youth, young people will be eligible for either school-based or full-time apprenticeships in the City of Marion or the City of Onkaparinga.

I also emphasise the great challenge faced by this state in light of the recent developments relating to Mitsubishi. You will all be aware of the efforts that are being made to assist affected employees while supporting opportunities for replacement industries. This portfolio has been very active in the constructive agenda that has emerged, including through early placement of appropriate staff on site. Before concluding, I wish to mention briefly the role that this portfolio has played in developing the implementation of crucial social inclusion initiatives with being closely involved with the school retention area—and will have an important role in the emerging Youth Employment Reference. I trust this overview has indicated the nature of the government's

intentions in the areas of further education, employment and training, and I welcome questions from members.

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

Ms CHAPMAN: I do not, but I will read seven omnibus questions and, of course, do not have any expectation that the minister should answer them at this point. I appreciate that the information will have to be obtained.

First, did all departments and agencies reporting to the minister meet all required budget savings targets for the 2003-04 year set in the 2002-03 and 2003-04 budgets; and, if not, what specific proposed projects and programs were cut and not implemented?

Secondly, will the minister provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure on consultants in 2003-04 for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, listing the name of the consultant, cost of work undertaken and method of employment?

The CHAIRMAN: For the sake of consistency, I point out that the Leader of the Opposition agreed that for estimates committees questions about consultancies would be only in regard to those of \$5 000 and above, otherwise you would be getting information about consultancies of \$50.

Ms CHAPMAN: Thank you, Mr Chairman. I am happy for that to be noted.

Thirdly, 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 and the total employment cost (the TEC)?

Fourthly, in the financial year 2002-03, for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what underspending on projects and programs was not approved by cabinet for carryover expenditure in 2003-04?

Fifthly, for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what is the estimated level of under-expenditure for 2003-04, and has cabinet approved any carryover expenditure into 2004-05?

Sixthly, what was the total number of employees with a total employment cost of \$100 000 or more per employee? Also, what is the total number of employees with a total employment cost of \$200 000 or more per employee for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister as at 30 June 2003? What is the estimate for 30 June 2004? For the period 30 June 2003 to 30 June 2004 will the minister list job, title and total employment cost of each position with a total estimated cost of \$100 000 or more? Also, (subparagraph (b)) which has been abolished and (subparagraph (b)), which has been created.

Seventhly, what is the difference between consultants and contractors? How many people or services that are previously classed as consultants are now shown as contractors? What is the value of their contracts and what are the services they provide?

Those questions having been noted, I will proceed with questions to which we seek some response from the minister. I have indicated that I have some questions in relation to higher education, particularly universities and employment, and I will commence in relation to the universities.

In May 2003 the Economic Development Board recommended that the government 'in consultation with the universities assess the feasibility of the systems model of South Australian universities'. I do not know whether or not the minister is familiar with that, but of course it is the American system. The board qualified this by saying that the implementation of any such program would be after such an

evaluation and also such an assessment. Who, if anyone, has been appointed to undertake this feasibility study and, if it has not commenced, has it been abandoned altogether?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: The CEO, Greg Black, will answer that question.

Mr BLACK: The status currently is that the Higher Education Council has approved terms of reference for an independent study on the systems model and, consequent upon that, we have called for expressions of interest from consultants with the appropriate qualifications to undertake the work. We anticipate making a decision about the appropriate consultant in the next month with a view to the work being completed by Christmas. It will then go back to the Higher Education Council for consideration.

Ms CHAPMAN: I have a supplementary question. On that time frame, what funding has been allocated in the 2004-05 budget for the feasibility study and payment to the consultant?

Mr BLACK: \$50 000.

Ms CHAPMAN: In relation to the Higher Education Council, which was established in late November 2002, the EDB in its recommendations in May 2003 suggested that the council be strengthened in a number of ways, including appointing two business leaders and a community leader and the establishment of the higher education unit (which, of course, has since been established). Last year I asked the then minister about the first of those recommendations, and that matter was yet to go before cabinet. Have two business leaders and a community leader been appointed to the council and, if so, who are they?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I am pleased to be able to answer that the community leader was appointed by the previous minister and confirmed by me when I took up the role. We have conducted quite an interesting investigation to come up with the appropriate business leaders. I will have a short list ready soon and will put that up for consideration. I have been looking at the two additions in cooperation with the Higher Education Council. I chaired my first meeting last week, I think it was, at which we had a discussion about the characteristics that we thought would help the Higher Education Council fulfil its responsibility within its terms of reference. So, that short list will be available shortly.

If any honourable members have any suggestions, I am particularly looking for women business leaders to be part of the Higher Education Council and would be very happy to receive CVs from the honourable member if she would like to do so.

Ms CHAPMAN: In relation to the unit, what amount has been allocated for the operation of this unit? I am not sure how many staff or full-time equivalents are in the higher education unit which has been established in the last two years. Also, how often has council met?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I am not entirely sure to what part of the budget you are referring. I suspect it is Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 9.10. The honourable member will notice that the net cost of the program for 2004-05 is \$584 000. I am not sure of the number of staff. We think it is five, but I can confirm that for the honourable member.

Ms CHAPMAN: It is \$584 000 but that is for the provision of advice to you on higher education policy and planning. I have asked the unit cost.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I am happy to supply that information in detail if that would be helpful.

Ms CHAPMAN: How often has the council met since its inception? I heard you say that you had chaired only one

meeting. I think the former minister had done only two or three. If we could have that detail it would be appreciated.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I am happy to provide a briefing to members who are interested on the higher education council and the unit. Certainly, the questions you have asked I am happy to take up.

Ms CHAPMAN: In relation to the higher education council, the EDB has recommended a review of this council two years after its report; so in another 12 months they are expecting a full review of this council. It seems that it is not yet at its full complement. We need to look at that, and I appreciate your invitation on the same.

There were two other things that the EDB specifically recommended, apart from the government's putting money towards outcomes: first, to define the specific higher education outcomes desired by the state. To the best of my knowledge, in the documents produced since its report, they have not yet been defined; and, secondly, to establish and monitor the measurable performance criteria for those outcomes. I appreciate that higher education may still be considering those, but has any funding been allocated in the 2004-05 budget to implement any of this?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: The CEO has reminded me that part of the discussion at the first meeting I chaired was about looking at a strategic plan for the area with aims and goals not only for the unit but also for the council. I am grateful to the Vice Chancellors, in particular, of the three universities for contributing to that. We are following through quite faithfully with the strategic plan and the recommendations that have been made with regard to the higher education area. I am hoping that we will have some news on appropriate staff or tenders to look at the review of that area. As I said, they are all matters I am happy to make available in a briefing to the honourable member.

I can talk about some of the projects. I am not sure whether the honourable member would like that information now, but I can advise that we have some ongoing projects. One of them is the examination of the systems model of a multiuniversity governance. The governance issue is something that has come up at the MCEETYA meetings, the first of which I attended recently.

The whole matter of medical students is a very vexed issue. A working party will be providing an interim report to me shortly. Members would appreciate that the issue of medical students is one that is very much in the ball of the commonwealth, as well as the state. In relation to the higher education network, an audit of activity is nearing completion and we should have some new government initiatives ready for the 2005-06 budget cycle. In relation to the engineering initiative, I am advised that it is being developed from work completed for the automotive, defence and electronic industries.

New projects have been identified for 2004-05, including the development of a model for industry cadetships for university participation. We are also looking at responding to the very important SACE review which my colleague Dr Lomax-Smith has commissioned. There was some discussion about that at the council meeting we have just had. We have also looked at, and will continue to look at, the increase in participation by socioeconomically disadvantaged people in our community, as well as indigenous students. There is a commitment to that participation.

One of the other areas on which we are focussing in 2004-05 is developing systems for rural delivery of university courses and improving access to university for rural students

through greater collaboration with TAFE; and the South-East and Whyalla are the targets for that particular direction.

Ms BREUER: My question relates to the AP lands. I am sure all members are aware of my interest in that particular area and TAFE and my feeling that it is very important for that part of our state, particularly for the young men who have no wish to continue their education in the school education system. I think TAFE has a really important role to play in the lands for those young men and women.

I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 9.10, 'Program: employment and skills'. What employment and training program initiatives are being developed for the APY lands?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I said in my opening address that this government is committed to rebuilding the further education programs on the AP lands. When we came into office we found that the number of staff (and I know that the member for Giles would know this very directly) delivering training to the AP lands had fallen to just two positions. In the past two years, DFEEST has increased the staffing levels to 13 ongoing positions. The positions are spread across the APY lands and include community educators, hourly-paid trainees and support staff. Additional one-off funding was secured in 2003-04 from the commonwealth, which allowed further employment. So, \$0.35 million has been allocated to employ two temporary store worker trainers, as well as \$0.19 million for aged-care traineeships, \$0.10 million for family support training and \$1.60 million for wage subsidy for 50 trainees and mentoring project expenses. That is a big focus for us.

As the honourable member would know, Bob Collins has agreed to chair the APY task force. Together with department staff, Mr Collins is in the process of developing a five year APY training plan. That plan will look at the training needs of all the state and federal programs so that we have that overview and connection. The plan will also look at making sure that we have sufficient security of funds to attract community-based trainees on three to five year contracts. We are also looking at the feasibility of establishing a residential/regional TAFE facility in the area. At present they are the major areas we are looking at.

Ms BEDFORD: I draw the minister's attention to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 9.1, 'Program employment and skills formation' and subprogram 'Vocational education and training'. What changes are being made to Aboriginal education in metropolitan Adelaide?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: It is important to say that, from semester two this year, the Aboriginal programs will be relocated from 221 Wakefield Street to the current ongoing Aboriginal programs in the metropolitan TAFE campuses so that they are more closely aligned to where Aboriginal people live in an urban setting. We believe that this will provide students with a wider choice of study options, better facilities and improved access to further education.

It is important to point out that the proposal to relocate from Wakefield Street is as a result of declining student numbers, high maintenance costs and, most importantly, the need to expand the delivery of education programs to indigenous South Australians. As a result of this process, an additional \$1.5 million has been allocated to the 2004-05 budget, which will be used to support Aboriginal employment and training strategies within TAFE. We see this as an opportunity to increase the participation of Aboriginal people in the wider TAFE system. We believe that this will contribute to the increase in qualification levels achieved by Aboriginal people in South Australia, and I will just give a

couple of examples of how we are going to do that. We will be developing a system to mentor personally and case manage Aboriginal students, supporting their success through the upper secondary school through TAFE and onto employment. This will involve retraining existing staff.

Also, we will be establishing a new facility at Salisbury TAFE campus for distance learning for Aboriginal people throughout the state. This will replace the rather run-down facility previously located at 221 Wakefield Street with a modern purpose-built facility. We will also make sure that this facility will have investment in new computing equipment and training for staff so that they can use the equipment. We will also make sure that the place is accessible to Aboriginal staff with new learning technologies and upgraded information and using the best communication technology we can.

I need to point out that the reason we have made this decision is that the independent analyses into barriers to Aboriginal participation and access, particularly to wider TAFE programs (and also looking at the pathways to higher education employment), have shown that these are the methods we should be adopting. We are also making sure that we have a major staff development program to assist both indigenous and non-indigenous staff. We hope that, in this way, we will be able to overcome some of the barriers that Aboriginal people face in this state.

Also, we will be replacing outdated desktop computers in the Aboriginal TAFE program across the state. Whilst there was some concern (certainly by me) as to what we would do with this building, I think that the benefits really outweigh putting money into maintaining a building which really is not purpose built and which is not delivering in the way that we would like.

Ms CHAPMAN: In relation to the university legislation (and I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 9.12), has the legislation for the amendment of all three university acts to comply with the national protocols been prepared and, if so, is the same available to the committee? We understand that this will be introduced into the parliament in August this year.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I need to say that I attended my first Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) meeting as the employment, further education and higher education minister, and it was apparent to me that the amount of time we spent on higher education was limited and that a lot more negotiations still need to take place. That matter was not resolved at the minico and it is still under discussion. As I have said, I am more than happy to make sure that members, particularly shadow ministers and parliamentary secretaries in my area, are kept up to date with what we are doing in all my portfolio areas.

In the higher education area, as members would appreciate, it is really a delicate negotiation process with the commonwealth. As members know, we have an oversupply of people who want to get into higher education, into the university sector, and we are really dependent on the number of places that the commonwealth deems appropriate for our state. As I say, those negotiations are continuing and I am quite happy to give a commitment to the honourable member that we will keep her up to date as we find out where we are going.

Ms CHAPMAN: Do I take it that the proposed legislation for August or September this year is just not realistic, in relation to that being achieved? It is one of the targets for 2004-05.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: It is one of our targets because it is part of the negotiations, and all the ministers were talking about their commitment to doing that. We are in the same position in that we have given in-principle support to delivering on those areas, but the negotiations are continuing. I really cannot give the honourable member very much more information at this stage.

Ms CHAPMAN: Supplementary to that, given the current state, is there any proposal at this stage to attempt to reintroduce the penalties of fines and imprisonment to university board members in respect of breach of conduct matters? This was raised in the amendment under the Education Act that was rejected, and some consideration at that time was given to making it apply to all universities.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: That was something that was referred to at the minco, but we have not really pursued that matter in any detail at this stage. It has not been something that we have prioritised in the higher education area.

Ms CHAPMAN: I have a couple of questions on Budget Paper No. 4, Volume 3, page 9.14. The employment programs have provided assistance to South Australia facing difficulties in the labour market, and the minister has outlined some of the projects that her government is supervising at this stage. I note that \$29.104 million was spent in 2002-03 and in the 2003-04 budget that was slashed to an estimated result of \$23.785 million, and now the 2004-05 budget proposes a further reduction to \$21.983 million. What is the minister's explanation for such a staggering cut in such an important program?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: It might be better if we get a financial answer for this question. I will ask Mr Beeching to answer.

Mr BEECHING: As the honourable member stated, page 9.14 shows that the current budget is \$21.9 million. That has been varied from the 2003-04 estimated result as a result of carryovers from the previous year not being relevant in the current year.

Ms CHAPMAN: What were they?

Mr BEECHING: These were various program expenditures that were approved for carryover from one year to the next. I do not have the detail of the individual projects, but they were in total \$1.5 million that were carried forward from 2002-03 to 2003-04. They do not apply in 2003-04 when making the comparison to 2004-05. That is the first adjustment.

Ms CHAPMAN: We have gone from \$29.103 million to \$23.785 million down to \$21.983 million. I appreciate that you have just answered about the last period. There are some programs that are no longer carried over to 2003-04, and that explains that smaller decrease.

Mr BEECHING: If you look at the 2002-03 figure, the major variation there was the youth traineeship program being considerably higher in that year than in the subsequent year. That was a policy of government and that reflects the change of the numbers in that program.

Ms CHAPMAN: So, there has simply been a cut in that program of youth trainees; is that right?

Mr BEECHING: Yes, the numbers are reduced. That shows up in the statistics shown for this program area lower in the table on that page.

Membership:

Mr Snelling substituted for the Hon. R.B. Such.

Mr SNELLING: I move:

That the sitting of the committee be extended beyond 6 p.m.

Motion carried.

Ms CHAPMAN: I will now complete my supplementary question. The performance indicators suggest that there is an increased demand for participation particularly in the youth and mature age programs. So, whilst traineeship numbers may have reduced in the previous financial year, according to these numbers there is an increased demand for the forthcoming financial year. Why has the funding gone down, apart from the fact that there is this carryover issue?

Mr BEECHING: There could be a number of reasons not evident in these papers, because the budgets for the previous years are not shown here. Given that many of the programs in the employment area span more than one year, you do get some volatility in when the programs are resolved: that is, when the payments are made. Without further research I cannot determine whether the \$29 million would contain a large lump of carryover from the previous year. What I can tell you is that there has not been a significant reduction across the years. The timing of the payments has been the major variant.

Ms CHAPMAN: But my supplementary question related to the participation rate for this year. Under youth programs and mature age programs on that page there are a number of employment outcomes. At the top of the page, there is the number of participants in youth programs and mature age programs. A major increase in the number of participants has been budgeted for. In the light of that, notwithstanding that there is just over a one million drop in the overall funding for the recent you explained, there is proposed a much greater increase in relation to participants for the forthcoming financial year, yet there is no corresponding extra funding.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: As has already been indicated, one of the issues about traineeship programs—as members would know from having trainees in their own office—is that the traineeship is for a year from the date on which they start. So, quite often we have had trainees working for us over two financial year periods. They have a 12 month traineeship, but it does not necessarily start on 1 January or 1 July. There was a change within the department in working out what employment programs and trainee programs were to do. I think I mentioned in my opening statement that the focus has been to make sure that we adopt a more individual case based management approach not only to deal with school retention but also to make sure that people are either learning or earning.

So, when you look through the programs that we have, you will see that there has been a change of emphasis to more individually based programs with case management as well as giving amounts of money to employers for them to manage these particular programs. So, with traineeships, we have tried to change our emphasis so that we have case management but also so that we follow those young people through their traineeships and connect them with further employment or education, whatever is appropriate in their particular case.

Ms CHAPMAN: You may have answered my next question. The increase from \$2.999 million to \$3.495 million is explained by the answer you just gave, is that right?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: To a certain extent. As has already been said, things do not necessarily fit into the financial year as perfectly as one might like, but we have also expanded the sort of programs that we have and, as I said, we are looking more at a case management approach.

Ms CHAPMAN: The 538 traineeships and apprenticeships provided in 2002-03 were reduced to 480 in 2003-04, and 520 are proposed in 2004-05, which of course is still much lower than the number provided in 2002-03. For the reasons you have just explained, is that the basis upon which this reduction has been made?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: Part of it is to do with the strategy that we have in SA Works, where we are looking at particular groups. We are trying to improve our actions with regard to indigenous employment and traineeships and apprenticeships. We are also looking at young people in particular regions who may not want to do an apprenticeship or a traineeship, but they could fit into some of our young people's programs, whether it be the Youth Conservation Corp or connecting into particular industries.

Ms CHAPMAN: Do these people show up somewhere else other than on this table?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I am advised that we are trying to make sure that the people who do not fit into the traineeship or the apprenticeship mould—as members would realise, there are a number of those young people—would get involved at perhaps a local level, whether it be in a regionally based employment project or some of the other industries that we have, such as the Youth Conservation Corp. We are really trying to case manage people who do not seem to fit into the system, probably do not have very good school results, have not stayed at school, but need to have some one-on-one direction. That is why the numbers may look a bit misleading.

Ms CHAPMAN: I just want to clarify where they are; that is all. I appreciate that they might have moved into another category for the new programs that you have announced. Are they not on this page at all, or are they in some other place?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: If you look down the performance indicators, can I refer you to, for example, the estimated results with regard to youth programs, and also the mature age programs. I mentioned the indigenous programs. We are expanding those areas, and we also have a new focus through our SA Works program, in particular for regional programs.

Ms CHAPMAN: So, the extra numbers would show up there. I can have a look at those.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I would expect so, unless anyone here has any further information. Unfortunately, our employment head is not here today. I do not know whether Lew Hutchinson wants to add something, as one of the people on the ground, or the CE. My understanding is that we are targeting our programs more to individuals than we ever have done before.

Ms CHAPMAN: I appreciate that minister. I think that is an excellent initiative. I am just trying to clarify where they fit. I am just reading that title, 'Number and Percentage of Employment Outcomes Compared to Total Number of Participants'. So, you are treating these people in the new SA Works programs, or the ones you have mentioned of that main program, as being employed people, as distinct from apprentices and trainees. Is that correct?

Mr HUTCHINSON: I will just try to clarify there. As far as apprenticeships and traineeships go, there is the whole separate funding mechanism which takes place on what is referred to as the user choice system. Equally, there are a number of what might be termed centrally administered programs that involve large numbers of young people, mature aged people and indigenous people. With SA Works, we do have the additional facility now of the regional program, so

that you will get a mixture of programs in which young people in particular are participating.

There will be many at the regional level in the regional employment and skills formation programs that are not in apprenticeships and traineeships but who will be undertaking training that will provide them with the same types of competencies and qualifications. So, I think when you look down that table, there will be a mixture of where people are located and the types of programs that they are in.

Ms CHAPMAN: I appreciate the assistance of that advice, because I was struggling to find where they were. There seems to be a major increase in relation to the number of participants, probably for the reasons the minister has explained, but no apparent corresponding funding. To clarify that finally in this area, minister, is there any other budgeted amount for SA Works projects, or is it all under these published four subparagraphs?

Mr HUTCHINSON: The SA Works budget is a combination of allocations. There is certainly under the SA Works strategy, as you would be aware, indigenous works, regions at work, industry at work, public sector at work and experience works. There is also a number of centrally administered programs. For instance, take the Youth Conservation Corp, which is essentially funded through the employment budget, which is an SA Works budget. We were trying to regionalise that program in itself, which has hitherto been a centrally administered program. So, I think part of the apparent confusion also comes from the transition that we are in at the moment, moving to what is hopefully a more decentralised approach to program administration.

Ms CHAPMAN: Thank you, Mr Chairman. I will take up the minister's offer to have a briefing to clarify those portfolio payments, and I thank the minister and the staff.

Membership:

Mr Meier substituted for Ms Chapman.

Mr Koutsantonis substituted for Mr Snelling.

[Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 6.30 p.m.]

Mrs GERAGHTY: I refer to Budget Paper No. 4, Volume 3, pages 9.10 and 9.11, 'Program 2: Employment and skills formation', sub-program 'Vocational education and training'. What arrangements are being put in place for the ongoing provision of industry training advice in South Australia?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: A comprehensive review of the future of industry training arrangements in South Australia was conducted in 2003-04 (and I have a personal interest in this area, having been on an ITAB for a number of years). This review sought to provide recommendations for the formation of new industry training advisory arrangements for all the sectors by the end of this month (30 June) with clear functions to support work force development in South Australia and also to make sure that all the participants had their needs met through the program. I particularly refer to the ongoing and excellent work that has been done by the unions, the employers and the government.

An interim ITAB chairs forum was put in place, and they were contracted to engage industry parties in discussions to determine the most appropriate reconfiguration and also to look at industry skills councils. This process included extensive consultation with the former bodies, the industry training advisory bodies (ITABs), and representatives from the different peak employer groups and employee associa-

tions in particular. A lot of work has been done, and it seems to have taken quite some time to undertake this consultation. However, I am pleased to say that in-principle agreements have been reached with six new industry skills bodies and discussions are taking place with another three about the final details of what their industry skill body will look like.

There is also a real need, the government believes, to make sure that the replacement has the confidence and is credible to industry, and also that we have the most appropriate coverage and links with people in that particular skill body. A lot of work has been done on the promotion and making sure that people feel comfortable with that. In the budget you will notice that for 2004-2005 the funding will be \$660 000, and this will be allocated to industry skill councils once they have formally been established and declared. Also, I am advised, the new industry skills body will be able to access funds through the industry works component of the SA Works package for specific initiatives, and there will be up to \$1 million available in the 2004-2005 budget. So, I think this will make some inroads into re-establishing what I always considered, probably being parochial about this, to be a very good focus for industry and making sure that we deliver in the industries that have set up these bodies.

Mr SCALZI: May I say from the outset that I am privileged to be working in this area, in TAFE and further education, and I would like to acknowledge the minister's graciousness in providing me with briefings, and that of the CEO, Mr Greg Black. That has been very much appreciated. After all, we all have to work together for the good of the parliament and the state.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: Thank you.

Mr SCALZI: I also noted in the minister's opening statement the cooperation that is required between the unis, TAFE, the secondary schools and the private sector providers because, given the challenges that we have, especially with youth employment, I believe it is important that we do so, and I look forward to working in that area to achieve those results. I refer to the portfolio TAFE Training and Further Education, Budget Paper No. 3, page 2.34, heading 'Savings initiatives'. The subject is 'Administrative measures.' A \$1.729 million reduction in operating costs is estimated for the 2004-2005 year and each of the 2006, 2007, and 2008 financial years. What operating costs will be cut to achieve this measure?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I would like at this stage to refer to the Deputy CE, Ian Procter, who has responsibility for this area, along with Mr Beeching, who has the financial responsibility. I will ask him to clarify that matter.

Mr PROCTER: The honourable member is referring to part of the budget for our department this year. We got some additional money and in this particular area we were asked, through general efficiencies, to make the savings required to achieve about a \$1.7 million saving, which will go forward into the forward estimates period over each of the next four years, and we will do that in the general running costs of the department.

Mr SCALZI: I refer again to Budget Paper No. 3, 'Savings Initiatives'. In the 2003-04 budget, savings initiatives for this year were EDS, reduced cost base, \$67 000; employment programs, reduced expenditure, \$1 million; government youth training programs, reduced number of traineeships, \$1 million; Playford Centre, reduction in overheads, \$96 000; telecommunications savings re-revised contract, \$44 000. Are any of these to be achieved? If not, what savings were made?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: Could the member give me the reference again? We have not found it in the budget. I am wondering whether the honourable member is aware that that is part of the omnibus question which we are more than happy to take on board and which the member for Bragg asked at the beginning of the session. I refer to the omnibus question where it says: 'Did all departments and agencies reporting to'—and the Premier was present when it was originally asked—meet all the required budget saving targets for 2003, 2004 set for them in the 2002-03 and 2003-04 budgets? If not, what specific proposed project and program cuts were not implemented?' If the honourable member thinks that covers his question, I am happy to take that on notice.

Mr SCALZI: I have put it on the record now, so can it be answered?

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr Caica): Look at the question in the *Hansard* and, if there is a deviation from the omnibus question, it will be answered.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: We are more than happy to take that on notice.

Mr SCALZI: If that can be answered, I would be quite happy. In the same budget paper, the Flinders Street School of Music was to be sold, receiving \$1.6 million. What is the current sale price and, if it is already under contract, when are the proceeds expected to be received?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I am advised that this was part of last year's budget and that it has been sold. We could probably get that information for the honourable member, but it is not the current period under examination.

Mr SCALZI: A further \$9 000 is to be saved in IT charges. What is proposed to effect this cost saving?

Mr PROCTER: I think the honourable member is referring to a generalised saving across the public sector as a result of EDS charges being reduced. As a result, we would make a saving but, because the EDS charges have gone down, it will have no impact on the operational cost structure of the department.

Mr SCALZI: I refer again to Budget Paper 3, page 2.34, savings initiatives. It is proposed that there will be a \$1 million savings initiative in the 2004-05 year and the same amount in the 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 years, as a result of work force restructure. How many jobs will go?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I will pass this over to Mr Procter to answer and then I will supplement it.

Mr PROCTER: The honourable member is referring to a saving line called 'work force restructure', which is another way of saying the targeted voluntary separation package program. Our department has participated in that program in the past couple of years and there will be people departing the work force very shortly. In fact, tomorrow is the cut-off date, and we will achieve the \$1 million through that saving. The number of people who would be equivalent to \$1 million in savings would depend upon their salary at the time, and it would come down to that kind of calculation to give the honourable member a number on the number of people.

Mr SCALZI: Would it be difficult to provide the number of people?

Mr PROCTER: We could estimate an average.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: This is obviously to be confirmed depending on the salary, as the deputy chief executive has already said, but this is part of our restructuring proposal. The advice which I have and which I received today, although, as I said, it is changeable, is that there is potential for up to 54 separation packages to be available. I am told that this

comprises 25 permanent TAFE Act staff and could also include 21 permanent Public Service Management Act staff. There is some potential for four executive staff to access TVSPs and, although this does not really appear in that figure of 54, there is also some potential for three permanent weekly paid staff to access TVSPs. That is the most recent information I have received, but I qualify that by saying that it will depend on some of the factors that the deputy chief executive has just raised. We think that will make a budget saving of up to \$1 million.

Mr SCALZI: Would there be transfer of employees to any other department?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: At this stage we do not believe there are any planned. They all love our departments.

Mr SCALZI: Under the operating initiatives is the cost of transitional operational support of \$2 million in the 2004-05 year. What is the expense for?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: Could you give me the reference again?

Mr SCALZI: It is still page 2.34.

Mr PROCTER: I think you mentioned transitional operational support?

Mr SCALZI: Yes.

Mr PROCTER: That is additional funding from Treasury to assist us to deal with the financial condition of TAFE institutes generally (they are under financial pressure). That money will help us ensure that the bottom line result for the institutes is okay.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to Budget Paper 3, page 2.34 under the heading 'Operating initiatives'. The subject is additional funding for Aboriginal programs. I am aware that the member for Giles asked a question which touched on this. What Aboriginal programs are intended for the \$1.5 million proposed in the TAFE system as an operating initiative in the 2004-05 year and why are they not recurrent?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I think I partly answered this question in answer to the member for Bragg, but I am more than happy to go through what we are looking at with regard to Aboriginal education. I am not sure whether the honourable member was present, but I explained that one of the decisions we have made is to close the 221 Wakefield Street premises, and I was very keen to ensure that there was reinvestment of the sale proceedings into the TAFE Aboriginal education program. We are looking at spending an additional \$1.5 million in a whole lot of areas. If the honourable member would like, I can go through those again.

Mr SCALZI: I am aware that the minister said that the programs that have been provided on that site will go to other TAFE campuses.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: Yes.

Mr SCALZI: So, my question was partly answered previously. Do you think there will be difficulties for some students in regard to transportation? The city location would have been much easier to access. Are there any programs in place to help with the transition?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I think I might have mentioned before that part of the reason for shifting the programs from Wakefield Street was to ensure that the programs were more available for Aboriginal people who live in an urban setting. In the northern suburbs the Salisbury campus is set up well to provide the courses that were provided at 221 Wakefield Street. The numbers of students at Wakefield Street had diminished quite significantly over the years, so we think that this will make the courses more accessible. I understand the transport issue, and it is an issue for many people in South

Australia, but in this particular case my advice is that we will be providing courses closer to where people live and hopefully making the transport issue less of a problem.

As far as the ongoing budget is concerned, it is an additional \$1.5 million to our already existing indigenous education programs. We see it as a better focus in the area and an additional resource, along with the fact that we are looking at the rural and remote areas of the APY lands. The member for Giles was interested to know what we were doing in that area. Along with what we are doing with SA Works, which has a regional focus, we certainly have an indigenous employment focus that will better connect those services, both for trying to keep young Aborigines at school or, if not at school, making sure alternative training is available and for the rest of the community making sure that there is not only a better system, particularly the IT focus I mentioned earlier, but also by location making TAFE education more available.

Ms BREUER: I am interested in the formation of the new large country institute of TAFE. In recognition of the amount of travel that will be required by staff with the new super country institute, what provisions will be made to alleviate the stress and travel time for these staff members? Having the largest electorate in the state, I am very aware of the amount of travel these lecturers and staff members will have to do and I have concerns. What provisions will be made?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: One of the big challenges for TAFE in restructuring the process has been in trying to come up with a good balance on how many major TAFE areas we need and what sort of regional structure we will have. That is still unfolding. I met with chairs and directors of the different TAFE boards over the past couple of days, and there has been a lot of discussion about the practical considerations we need to look at, including transport, resources and not restructuring into a worse system but rather a better one. It has been on everyone's mind in the TAFE sector for some time.

With the regions, I am keen to ensure we make TAFE staff and students feel that they are included in decision making, so I see transport, particularly for some of the more remote areas (although most of the electorate of the member for Giles is not remote), as being on the agenda and part of the consideration. It will be one of the things I will be asking people who are looking at the repositioning of TAFE to take up seriously.

As in other professions, we want to attract people to the country regions and not just have a metrocentric approach to further education. I will take it up as the minister, but it would be appropriate if I refer the question to Ian Proctor, who is responsible for the TAFE area, and perhaps he can talk about what we may do and about some of the areas for which he will have responsibility.

Mr PROCTER: As the minister said, in going into the TAFE positioning project, moving from eight institutes to three, we have not assumed that all institutes will be the same in the way they operate and certainly we have made the assumption that, in terms of the rather rural area with one institute covering all non-metropolitan South Australia, we will need to be conscious of the particular needs for staff and students in that construct.

The honourable member has raised the question of travel, the stress that goes with it and the cost, and we are certainly taking a good look at that. I make the point also that that is an example. There is a range of things which we need to look at. In the minister's opening statement she referred to an investment we have made this year of an additional \$350 000

in video conferencing equipment, which is designed, in particular, to meet the needs of our regional students and staff. Hopefully, it will enable communication to be easier than perhaps it is at the moment. I just emphasise that point. Certainly, we recognise the point being made by the honourable member, and that needs to be taken into account, but, equally, there are other particular aspects of operations in large regional institutes that we will need to consider when forming the institutes and sorting out the question of allocation of resources to enable the institutes to function.

Mr SCALZI: I acknowledge that the member for Giles has asked that question on behalf of my opposition colleagues from regional areas. I intended to ask a similar question. In relation to Wakefield Street, have the Aboriginal employees in the programs been consulted or given advice about the proposed sale; if so, when?

Mr PROCTER: A process of consultation has been followed by the department in dealing with staff, students and community representatives (in terms of the Aboriginal community). In particular, the present representative for South Australia on ATSIC, Clinton Wanganeen, has been part of our discussions in relation to the decision that has now been made.

Mr SCALZI: What were the maintenance costs? You mentioned in an earlier answer that there were problems with maintenance costs in relation to that building. What are the maintenance costs and how have they been escalating in recent years?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I would be more than happy to answer that for the honourable member. We have not got that information here. Part of the decision we made was to put the money into extending our service rather than propping up a building that was not being used adequately, in our view, and to try to add to the program we already have. I have been reminded that we provide studies and courses through Adelaide TAFE. It is not as though there will not be any attention in the central TAFE area to Aboriginal indigenous studies. The good news that comes from our selling this particular building is that we have some new initiatives with the \$1.5 million. We will have development of a system to personally mentor and case manage Aboriginal students, and that will be connecting up a secondary school through TAFE and looking at higher education or employment. That will be a different, additional initiative. As a result of the relocation of courses, which are delivered from this building to Aboriginal students in the city, we are looking at courses being available on campuses in Currie Street, Salisbury and Noarlunga—and I think that will be a useful focus—and ensuring that the overall facilities are better.

As I mentioned earlier, there will be a new facility or an addition to the Salisbury TAFE campus for distance learning, so we can connect up with people outside the metropolitan area. We will also have a purpose designed facility, and we will be using all the technologies to try to maximise access for Aboriginal students.

I think I mentioned that the work that has been done in the past has talked about some of the barriers to Aboriginal participation both in education and employment because of the very fact that we have not been able to reach people or, if people have accessed courses, there has been a higher drop-out rate than desirable. I am pleased to say that there will be a major upgrade of desktop computer equipment for the Aboriginal TAFE program. That will be a real plus to what we provide.

Mr SCALZI: I am just following up on the concerns that have come to me about the sale: that the one-off sum should be supported in recurrent expenditure in that area.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: It is a bit before my time, but my advice is that originally this building was a boys' home. I am pleased to say that we are gradually getting rid of all these places—the ghosts from the past.

Mr SCALZI: Again I refer to Budget Paper 3, page 2.34, operating initiatives, Aboriginal programs and accommodation. The minister may have partly answered this. The additional staff accommodation in the APY lands is in line with the increasing TAFE program and was funded for one year only. What will happen to this accommodation at the end of the 2004-05 year?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: My advice is that this is an ongoing initiative, so the good news is that it is going to continue.

Mr SCALZI: Again I refer to Budget Paper 3, page 2.34, operating initiatives, electorate offices. The funding for trainees' program is to increase by \$384 000 in the 2004-05 year and in each of the 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 years. Is this funding to cover increased payments to the current number of trainees or will more trainee positions be made available? If so, how many?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I think I have partly answered that in response to the member for Bragg. Something that unites us is the fact that all House of Assembly members appreciate their trainees, and it is certainly an area that I am very keen on. I always argue very strongly on this subject with the Treasurer, as I know my predecessor, Dr Lomax-Smith did, because this is something that we regard as an initiative that must continue. I am pleased to say that it is going to continue, but for more specific details I will ask Mr Hutchinson to contribute.

Mr HUTCHINSON: It is additionally resourced over and above the state public sector traineeship recruitment program. There was a specific allocation in the budget to cater for the electorate office trainees. That will be catered for in the future budget, as well.

Mr SCALZI: That is good news. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 9.6, targets 2004-05, TAFE SA and international education. With the proposal to implement a coordinated whole of TAFE SA international education and training program, who or what entity will administer this program and what role will Education Adelaide have in this program?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: The honourable member is asking about a very important part of the portfolio. Also, I believe that it intercepts with many other areas, not only our economic wellbeing in this state but also the fact that we have international students at all levels of education in South Australia. We have done particularly well, I think, in fighting above our weight as far as attracting international students to South Australia. Our marketing and international unit is working to improve and extend our activities in this area. Education Adelaide's international students statistical collection is based on a student headcount that reflects a snapshot on any one day in terms of how many students we have.

We have vocational education, the VET area, as well as higher education, English language and intensive courses for overseas students. In semester two of 2003, the snapshot figure was 9 650 students, and that is particularly impressive for us. Also in the same snapshot period the public and private vocational education and training institutions provided training for up to 1 257 onshore international students. This

has been an increase of over 20 per cent from the previous semester two in 2002. TAFE accounted for 60.3 per cent of the VET delivery of courses, providing training to 473 international students and also an additional 285 students through private VET subcontractors to TAFE.

Our South Australian institutions, such as the Cordon Bleu and the International College of Hotel Management, are particularly featured. Private VET institutions provided training to the remaining 39.7 per cent, and that was a total of 499 students. It is important to say that the majority of VET students were from Hong Kong, China and Japan. I will talk a little about the university component just to round off the picture. Advice to me is that in 2003 we had 7 007 international students, and that is an increase of 13.3 per cent from the previous year.

It is good news whatever sector we are talking about. There were an additional 7 730 offshore students from South Australian universities, most of them (7 045) from the University of South Australia. The main component of the marketing strategy looks at the inclusion of what we call 'success stories' to position TAFE SA as a valid and highly regarded option for international students, and it looks at promoting career opportunities through vocational education. I think that the honourable member would be aware that TAFE has very good employment outcomes for people who go through the vocational setting of TAFE.

Also, as I said, the success stories have included Yuki Toyoshima, an international student who enrolled in the fashion design course with TAFE SA. During her studies Yuki won the Michell Wool Works Fashion Award 2003 in South Australia. She gained experience with a world-recognised designer, Akira Isogawa, whose design work is particularly recognised in the fashion industry. Yuki is now employed with this designer and doing very well on an international level. That is just one of our stories, and we are very keen to use such examples to attract students not only to the so-called higher education area but also to show the relevance of employment prospects at TAFE.

As I said, Le Cordon Bleu and the International College of Hotel Management are further examples of stunning success, where people have really carried the baton for South Australia on an international level.

Mr SCALZI: Again, I refer to Budget Paper No. 4, Volume 3, page 9.6, targets 2004-05, commercial income, TAFE. In relation to the proposal to 'build national and international partnerships to generate commercial income and internationalise TAFE SA', with whom will those partnerships be? What entity will operate this process? What role will Education Adelaide play?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I am not sure whether I can add much more to what I have already said about our international program. I mentioned the Marketing and International Unit. As I said, there is an overall strategy to ensure that we increase not only our effectiveness but also spread our net wider to attract students to South Australia from all around the world, bearing in mind that we are competing with all the other states and territories in this area. I am advised that we have certainly set targets.

At the moment, we are conducting some market research through Education Adelaide. As you know, there has been a rebranding and market repositioning program, and the next step is to extend the market research. We have also been working with students already here to improve the services, accommodation and education provided, and we have the attitudes of the students to help us with that marketing. In

addition, we have been working with not only tourism but also with other arms of government to ensure that we emphasise that South Australia is the place to come to further your education.

Being a new minister in this area, I found most interesting the feedback that we should try to have stronger relationships with places such as India, Thailand, Malaysia, China and Indonesia. So far, we have a good record, but we want to extend it. In addition, North America is being considered as a potential area for international student education. While talking to students, and bearing in mind their views, I am also keen that we place the same emphasis on our pastoral care responsibility. Sometimes these are very young people coming to South Australia and, in my view, sometimes a number of the exchange programs are not coordinated as well as they could be.

So, this set of portfolios is working very closely with education to make sure that we look at that overall pastoral care/student welfare part of the international student market and that we also enhance our reputation as a student-friendly city. I think that people would understand that it is important that we look at the other part of our responsibilities, because we have these people coming to South Australia to study and we need to have a coordinated approach. So, that is the other thing that is happening along with the marketing and the usual work that we would do to try to get the business here in South Australia.

Mr SCALZI: Again, I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 9.6 under the heading of 'Targets 2004-05' on the subject of TAFE restructuring. As you have clearly outlined, we currently have international students attending TAFE facilities, is it proposed that TAFE will have satellite outlets outside Australia? If so, where? Many members would be aware that the universities have many offshore educational institutions. Is TAFE going to head the same way?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I will ask our CEO to answer that.

Mr BLACK: Currently the offshore strategy for TAFE is a combination of the provision of locally accredited programs in the host countries by our staff in combination with local people in some instances. In others it is the licensing of host country providers to undertake our courses on our behalf where we get a fee for service and do quality assurance. More recently we have been approached in a number of instances to undertake new programs offshore on behalf of an international entity of some description. None of those programs has actually reached fruition yet, but there are three or four at any one time that we consider. What we would do in each of those instances, before we would establish a business case and propose it back to the minister, would be to ensure that we were minimising our risks. So far, that has meant that we have not been considering—as have some other jurisdictions—actually constructing our own property in those other countries but, rather, minimising our exposure by either having the host country or an international provider undertake that work and our expertise being in the delivery of the programs and obtaining recurrent funding as a consequence.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 9.6 under the heading of 'Targets 2004-05' on the subject of TAFE restructuring. There is quite a list on this question, so the minister might want to put this one on the bus, so to speak. In relation to the establishment of three operational institutes functioning as one South Australian TAFE system, where will the head office be? Where will each of the three operational institutes be situated? Have the

three new directorships been advertised? If so, have they been advertised interstate and internationally? What will be the level of each directorship and salary entitlements? Will the eight existing TAFE directors be retained? If so, will the minister identify any change of employment terms? Will the appointments of the new positions be made for the commencement of the 2005 academic year and, if not, when? Will the minister confirm that there will be no closure of any of the current TAFE campuses?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: We are quite happy to try to answer this now, but we might need to be prompted if we miss out any areas. I refer to Ian Procter to answer the general questions, and you may want to supplement anything we miss out.

Mr PROCTER: As to the first question of where the head office will be, the TAFE institutes, as now, will continue to be part of the department. The central office of DFEEST will continue to be the central office for the operations of TAFE across the state. Where will each of the three operational institutes be situated? If, by that, you mean where might the director in each institute sit, one of the things we are trying to do, considering the size of these institutes, is ensure that people who work in them and the students feel as though the director is available at every campus in the institute, so we will be trying to ensure that there is not only one place that the director will be available in. There will be an attempt to have the directors move around their institutes, and often, and they may have more than one office. However, having said that, at the moment being considered in terms of the regional institute—and this comes out of advice from people in our regional reference group—is a site close to Adelaide, because of the need to travel and the convenience of being close to the central office of the department, but removed from the metropolitan area. Examples that have been cited have been Murray Bridge and somewhere in the Barossa Valley.

Mr SCALZI: Is it Nuriootpa?

Mr PROCTER: That might well be in prospect. In the case of the northern metropolitan area, Elizabeth at the moment is being discussed as being the prospective site for the director and in southern Adelaide we are talking about a site or an office at Noarlunga in the first instance.

The three new directorships have been advertised and have been for some time. We are well into the process of selecting from a field of candidates. That process we are hoping will be filled in a matter of weeks, as opposed to months. So, in answer to your last question, will the appointments be made for the commencement of the 2005 academic year, the answer is clearly, yes, well in advance of that. The new directors will then be part of the process of forming and beginning to operate the new institutes.

On the question of each directorship and the salary entitlement, the jobs have been classified at the Executive Level C in the general structure of the public sector. I do not have the particular salary details available, but they would be available publicly, if you like. Will the eight existing TAFE directors be retained? We have already had a number of the existing directors who have elected voluntarily to leave the work force and have been part of the TVSP scheme. There will need to be other people, obviously, within the institutes in senior management positions and the directors who are presently in interim positions and who will remain in those interim positions until the end of this calendar year to assist in the transition process will be part of a process of forming the management structures, and, on the other hand, some may

well be included in the round of initial appointments. All of that is yet to be determined.

Mr SCALZI: And the last question was: will all the campuses remain? There will be no closures?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: On your last questions about the prospective closure of campuses, I am just reminded that the previous minister actually gave that commitment. So it is certainly not my intention to close campuses. I cannot really talk about after 1 January next year, but it is certainly not my intention and it wasn't the minister's intention. That is probably about as far as I can—

Mr SCALZI: So there will be definitely no closures in the foreseeable future?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: Certainly not before 1 January 2005, no.

Mr SCALZI: Again I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 9.6, and to an achievement under Highlights 2003-04, the Workforce Development Fund. Minister, how much money has been raised in the Workforce Development Fund pursuant to the Workforce Development Strategy? Has any funding been contributed from private industry, proposed to contribute half of the \$800 000 fund? If not, why not?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I can confirm that the \$800 000 has been made available for the 2004 calendar year. We anticipate that in this financial year \$200 000 will be expended on seven work force development projects. The Workforce Development Fund has a two-stage application process: stage 1 is a brief expression of interest and stage 2 is a detailed submission and budget. We are currently focusing on the stage 2 submissions so that we do expend this budget item. I am advised that, to date, 20 expressions of interest have been received, eight have been invited to the stage 2 process, five have been put on hold until the next financial year, and the remaining seven did not meet the funding criteria. There have been expressions of interest to cover various industry sectors, including recreation, transport, hospitality and engineering, and I will shortly make an announcement about that.

I will break down the budget for you and then hand over to Mr Hutchinson. There was \$200 000 from the department of further education and employment budget on science/technology and \$200 000 on what was formerly the department of business, manufacturing and trade which is now called DTED. What we are looking at for the next financial year is at least 10 new work force projects. We expect that this money will be expended in the first part of the financial year.

Mr HUTCHINSON: There are a number of live proposals being developed at the moment, and we may well do better than the forecast expenditure. This approach is somewhat new and novel. We have spent a lot of time working with various organisations and industry parties to put it together, but we are hopeful that in 2004-05 we will be able to utilise all of the budget.

Mr SCALZI: I refer again to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 9.6—Highlights 2003-04—Youth Conservation Corp. How many volunteers and/or participants are currently engaged in projects operating through the Youth Conservation Corp, and have any received employment subsequently? I think you might have answered part of this question earlier.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I did. I do not have the specific details, but I am happy to take that question on notice. I will provide you with a briefing on the Youth Conservation Corp.

Mr SCALZI: I again refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 9.19. Employee payments are proposed to increase from

\$214.188 million in 2003-04 to \$226.9 million in 2004-05. Given the work force full-time equivalent summary will be unchanged from 2003-04 to 2004-05, what accounts for this substantial increase in operating expenditure?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I am advised that that item refers to what we are projecting through enterprise bargaining negotiations for salary increases.

I can add some details on the Youth Conservation Corps. I am still happy to give you a briefing, member for Hartley. In the next financial year, the Youth Conservation Corps is expected to place 160 young people into conservation or environment projects with 60 employment outcomes. That is the target that we are looking at. At the moment, my advice is that the Youth Conservation Corps provides opportunities for young people between the ages of 15 and 24. This is to gain skills, training and work experience while contributing to the conservation of South Australia's natural and cultural assets. Currently, there are 23 community projects running, with 313 young people participating.

You will remember that recently I answered a question without notice about that in parliament, and I very much attributed the Youth Conservation Corps to one of my predecessors in the employment, training and further education area, the Premier Mike Rann. It is one of his passions that we have a connection between employment opportunities and conservation. Interestingly, David Suzuki is one of the patrons of this project.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to Budget Paper 5, page 33.1, headed 'Capital Works' on the subject of the Douglas Mawson Institute. This project was announced as a new work of \$17.6 million in the 2003-04 budget to commence in January 2004, and to be completed in June 2007. It is now a work in progress in this year's budget. Has the \$2.8 million proposed expenditure for 2003-04 been spent on this project and, if not, why not?

Mr PROCTER: Yes; that money was spent. The initial stage consisted solely of the purchase of a block of land. That land was purchased in the course of the financial year, and the money was expended.

Mr SCALZI: I have a brief supplementary question. Why has only \$0.6 million been spent in this financial year, and what will actually be done for this redevelopment in the forthcoming financial year?

Mr PROCTER: This is a multi-stage project. We are going over the forward estimates period through the project, and this year the stage will be about (as the wording indicates) alleviating existing site difficulties and assisting with program improvements. The project has a number of stages which we are moving through; we are still on track.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to Budget Paper 5, page 31, 'Capital Works' relating to IT systems. Over \$8 million is the estimated cost of the replacement and upgrading of computer hardware and systems within this institute in the 2003-04 budget, with \$3 million to be spent in that financial year. Has that amount been spent and, if not, why not?

Mr PROCTER: One of the important points made in the Kirby report which the government received at the outset of our moves to change the TAFE system emphasised the importance of dealing with antiquated systems, and one of those was the IT system. We have rearranged our capital works program in the past couple of years to enable us to concentrate more on that kind of infrastructure as opposed to major new capital works. We have now developed a plan to, over time, address the kind of backlog that Kirby identified, and we have accelerated our spending in this area if anything;

and yes, we are on target in terms of the spending that we set for ourselves.

Mr SCALZI: I again refer to Budget Paper No. 4, Volume 3, page 9.11 under the heading 'Vocational Education and Training' on the subject of underspend. The budget for 2003-04 was \$177.668 million but the estimated result will be \$167.512 million. Why has there been an underspend of \$10.156 million in this important area?

Mr PROCTER: On the page I have in front of me the figure is \$176.512 million.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Would the member like to review that? Does he have his papers with him? I understand that the member has only a couple of questions left. We will go on with his next question and get him a booklet to look at. If, indeed, the figure is wrong, the member can ask that question again.

Mr SCALZI: I again refer to Budget Paper No. 4, Volume 3, page 9.11. The Aboriginal participation rate in VET fell from 3.5 per cent in 2002-03 to 3 per cent in 2003-04. The target for 2004-05 is, therefore, revised down to this level despite the announcement of a suite of initiatives to increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in the 2004-05 targets (page 9.6). What funding has been allocated in the 2004-05 budget and what is the suite of initiatives?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I noticed that myself and highlighted it in the budget papers. I think the answer to this question relates partly to what the member for Bragg asked me earlier. We have repositioned a number of programs and are very keen to case manage them, because we were not achieving the results that we had anticipated. So, a bit of soul searching has gone on about what are the most appropriate ways of delivering services. It seems fairly basic, but the individual case work approach is the approach that we are looking at.

As members probably know, the government has done considerable work (which has been quite difficult) in the school retention area. Through the Social Inclusion Unit we have been trying to get at the nub of why school retention rates are so poor and how we can try to engage young people, in particular, either to stay at school, to undertake some sort of training or to have some employment outcomes that will mean they have opportunities into the future. We have gone through a whole repositioning of TAFE, as members well know. We have also looked at the Aboriginal TAFE program and tried to make sure that we have put the resources into staffing.

I mentioned earlier that we have put another 11 positions into the APY lands area for TAFE. Through the Aboriginal Education and Employment Strategy Unit we have also developed a strategy that incorporates the new SA Works. Some of those arrangements look particularly at making sure that there is a connection between the Aboriginal education programs in TAFE and the indigenous programs under TAFE.

We have looked at student pathways. VET in schools is a terrific initiative but it does not suit everyone, so we have really had to look at the other ways in which we can engage young people. Those pathways have been looked at by our staff and, as I said, the new initiatives that I announced today with regard to technology and distance education is our other focus.

So, there is a dedication to career planning and pathways from schooling, post-secondary programs and employment programs. There is a health work force development, and we have been looking at some initiatives which I hope will come

to fruition shortly with regard to Aboriginal housing and the provision of accommodation. There has been a major focus on public sector employment which I might have mentioned earlier. I think certainly Mr Hutchinson mentioned that as one of our programs.

Under 'Indigenous Works', we are anticipating that almost 700 indigenous people will have participated in training or development opportunities through the indigenous works initiatives with upwards of 160 people securing employment. To date we have had 651 indigenous people participating in the programs, with 157 employment programs. There are certainly some figures that I am happy to make available to the honourable member about participants in the State Public Sector Aboriginal Recruitment and Career Development Strategy, the Public Sector Leadership Program, Aboriginal Apprenticeship Program, Aboriginal Private Sector Employment Pathways, the Toundi Aboriginal College (which includes 157 full-time students) and the mainstream programs. I have already mentioned the Youth Conservation Corps, the Transitional Employment Assist program, and the Regions at Work program.

So, again, a bit like I was saying to the member for Bragg, we are trying to reposition courses so that we end up with education or employment outcomes, and one of the things that I have been particularly impressed with, and I have mentioned this in the house, is our Learning Works program, to try to address why people have not been able to get into TAFE courses—so that has been another fairly recent initiative which I think has had some good success but which has also got a case management focus. So, I hope that explains some of the reasons why there would be differences in the targets and outcomes. I say again that I am happy to detail that information through a briefing or further discussion with the honourable member.

Mr SCALZI: Minister, I refer back to that earlier question. I misread \$167 million for \$176 million. I apologise. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, Page 9.14, Employment Development, referring to the budget cuts. Employment programs have provided assistance to South Australians facing difficulty in the labor market, yet \$29.103 million was spent in 2002-2003. The 2003-04 budget has been slashed with an estimated result of \$23.785 million, and now the 2004-05 budget proposes a further reduction to \$21.983 million. What is the minister's explanation for such a staggering cut in such an important program?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: With due respect, through the chair, I think that the member for Bragg asked if not an identical question then a very similar one.

The CHAIRMAN: I know you were not here but would you like the minister to answer it again or can you read it tomorrow?

Mr SCALZI: No, if my colleague has asked that, I am quite happy.

The CHAIRMAN: Would the member for Hartley please read the questions on notice.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: We will check the *Hansard* and if it has been missed we will certainly deal with it.

Mr SCALZI: I will read the next two questions into *Hansard*. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 9.14, under the heading 'Employment Development' in relation to government traineeships and apprenticeships, and I know that the minister has touched on this previously. In 2002-03, 538 traineeships/apprenticeships were provided. This was reduced to 480 in 2003-04, but the proposed 520 for 2004-05 is still far fewer than the 2002-03 year. Would the minister explain why there has been such a reduction?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I think the member for Bragg covered that area. I am happy to look at the honourable member's question in *Hansard* and, if we have not already answered it, we will answer it.

Mr SCALZI: I am quite happy to get the answer from the member for Bragg, if it is the same.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: The member for Bragg will be provided with the answer because she asked the question.

Mr SCALZI: In respect of the proposed review of traineeships and apprenticeships, who is to undertake the review; at what cost; and when is the review to be completed?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: The Training and Skills Commission will be undertaking the review. My understanding is that it is on the agenda at the moment, so I am awaiting advice from it about how we may do that, who will be involved and what the process will be, and I am more than happy and hope to include the honourable member in such an important review.

Mr SCALZI: They are all the questions I have. I thank the minister for her patience in dealing with my new responsibilities.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I, too, thank the minister, the departmental advisers and members of the committee. There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the vote completed.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7.47 p.m. the committee adjourned until Friday 18 June at 9.30 a.m.