

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

Wednesday 23 June 2004

**ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A****Chairman:**

The Hon. R.B. Such

**Members:**

Ms F.E. Bedford  
 The Hon. M.R. Buckby  
 Ms V. Ciccarello  
 The Hon. I.F. Evans  
 Mr R.M. Goldsworthy  
 Mr T. Koutsantonis

*The Committee met at 11 a.m.*


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Department for Environment and Heritage, \$113 196 000  
 Administered Items for the Department for Environment  
 and Heritage, \$3 589 000

**Witness:**

The Hon. J.D. Hill, Minister for Environment and  
 Conservation, Minister for the River Murray, Minister for the  
 Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr A. Holmes, Chief Executive, Department for Environ-  
 ment and Heritage.  
 Mr V. Levitzke, Acting Chief Executive, Zero Waste SA.  
 Mr R. Janssan, Director of Business Services, Department  
 for Environment and Heritage.

**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. I  
 ask the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition  
 whether you have worked out a timetable?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Yes, we have.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Changes to committee membership  
 will be notified as they occur. 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 lead speaker can make a brief opening statement,  
 if they wish. There will be a flexible approach to questions,  
 with three questions per member. Supplementary questions  
 are the exception, although some members have been trying  
 to take a few liberties with that. A member who is not part of  
 the committee may, at the discretion of the chair, ask a  
 question. Questions must be based on lines of expenditure but  
 I do not ask members to state that line of expenditure unless  
 they stray significantly from the purpose of the committee.

Members unable to complete their questions during  
 proceedings may submit them as questions on notice for  
 inclusion in the House of Assembly *Notice Paper*. There is  
 no formal facility for the tabling of documents. However,  
 documents can be supplied to the chair for distribution to the  
 committee. Any material for incorporation into *Hansard* must  
 be purely statistical and no more than one page in length. All

questions are to be directed to the minister, not to advisers.  
 It is up to the minister to refer questions to advisers for a  
 response. There may be television coverage from the northern  
 gallery.

I declare the proposed payments open for examination and  
 ask the minister whether he wishes to make an opening  
 statement.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I will make a brief statement, if I  
 may. The 2004-05 budget supports new initiatives that will  
 consolidate South Australia's leadership and sustainable  
 management of the environment. Many of these initiatives are  
 within the Department for Environment and Heritage which,  
 as an agency, has adopted the following goals:

1. to move South Australia towards a sustainable future;
2. to conserve, value and celebrate South Australia's  
 natural and cultural heritage;
3. to secure the future of South Australia's coastal and  
 marine environments;
4. to foster debate on the environment and engage the  
 community; and
5. to maximise organisational performance.

Before outlining key aspects of the DEH budget for the  
 coming year, I will first mention some of the significant  
 developments and milestones that DEH has achieved in the  
 past year.

In the area of heritage, there has been significant activity.  
 The discussion paper 'Heritage Directions: a future for built  
 heritage in South Australia' was released on 8 August 2003  
 to seek public feedback on what should be done to conserve  
 and celebrate our heritage. Eighty submissions were re-  
 ceived—many from local government, professional associa-  
 tions, groups such as the Property Council of South Australia  
 and concerned individuals. What emerged from the submis-  
 sions was a clear message that local heritage needs better  
 protection. That is why the 2004-05 budget increases funding  
 by \$2.9 million over the next four years for heritage conser-  
 vation and management as part of the heritage direction  
 strategy. It is proposed to introduce legislative change,  
 support councils in setting up local heritage registers, assist  
 with heritage advice and review government-owned heritage  
 buildings.

The area of fire management continues to be a focus for  
 the government. On 23 May 2003 the Premier announced a  
 \$10 million increase in the DEH budget over four years to  
 increase the capacity of the department to plan and implement  
 fire management programs in parks across the state. 2004-05  
 will be the second year of the implementation of this  
 program. During 2003-04 the following actions were taken:

- specific fire management response and community  
 protection plans were developed;
- planning and implementation of prescribed burning  
 programs in high risk areas began;
- fire crews have been involved in on-ground prevention,  
 protection and suppression work in strategic locations; and
- 12 specialist staff have been recruited to enhance the  
 department's knowledge and skills in fire management.

The department continued to develop strong partnerships with  
 the CFS and local communities in the planning and develop-  
 ment of fire management programs.

In the area of sustainability, the Premier's Round Table  
 on Sustainability was established in October 2003. The round  
 table brings together South Australians from a variety of  
 backgrounds, including the environment, social justice,  
 energy, industry, law and finance. Priority issues identified  
 by the round table include biodiversity, energy, sustainable

settlement and sustainable primary production. The round table's focus is on four main tasks:

- providing advice on high level government policies and strategies;
- engaging with the community over sustainability issues;
- providing reports to government recommending policy directions in priority areas annually; and
- participating in the audit of the State Strategic Plan.

The round table will help SA to continue to lead debate on the national sustainability agenda—an agenda that will create economic benefits as well as safeguarding our environment.

In December 2003, the government released for consultation the draft Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary Bill. The bill will be introduced into parliament in the near future. The bill's purpose is to protect the resident dolphins in the Port River and Barker Inlet area and their habitat by integrating management activities of state government agencies operating within an area that is of extreme importance to the state as an economic driver, as a cultural centre, as a marine and estuarine nursery and as a recreational location. A budget of \$250 000 per annum has been allocated for five years starting 2003-04. It is anticipated that private sector sponsorship and community in-kind contributions will provide additional support.

In July 2003, the Premier announced that the government would be increasing protection measures for the most environmentally sensitive wetlands of the Coongie Lakes area within the Innamincka Regional Reserve. The new protection measures announced included a new national park over core wetlands, a permanent no-mining zone over areas of high waterbird habitat and a special management zone where only walk-in geophysical survey and subsurface petroleum mineral exploration access can occur.

Amendments to the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972 to create the no-mining zone were passed by parliament in December 2003. It is anticipated that a notice of motion to establish the new national park will be tabled in parliament shortly and the park proclaimed by the end of the year. Dog and cat management legislation was approved by parliament in May 2004. The legislation which requires that dogs in public streets must be leashed balances the need to protect South Australians from dog attack with the needs of dog owners to exercise their pets.

The legislation ensures that, if a dog owner can currently use a public park to exercise their dog (either off leash but under voice control or unleashed), they will continue to be able to use that park for the purpose, unless the local council decides to change the status of the park. In relation to the information presented in the Portfolio Statement of Financial Performance (page 10.29), a decrease in budget expenditure of approximately \$4.7 million is shown for 2004-05 relative to the 2003-04 estimated result.

However, as stated on page 10.36, a number of one-off transactions during 2003-04, including commonwealth-financed expenditure of \$2.7 million and TVSP payments of \$2 million, has artificially inflated the estimated results relative to the original 2003-04 budget. In 2004-05, the agency will benefit from additional funding to progress a number of key government priorities. These new initiatives include:

- Living Coast Strategy  
\$5 million over four years, including \$500 000 this year for the Living Coast Strategy, which is a package of legislative change, planning, marine reserve creation and

implementation initiatives to address the sustainability of our coastal, marine and estuarine environments.

- Heritage directions  
\$2.9 million over four years for the Heritage Directions initiative of legislative change, training and support for local government and the community to protect our built heritage (\$0.4 million will be allocated in the 2004-05 financial year).
- One Million Trees/Urban Forest  
Extension of the One Million Trees/Urban Forest program, so that three million trees (two for every South Australian) will be planted by 2014.
- Caring for Country  
\$0.7 million via internal allocation for Caring for Country initiatives—a package of programs to support natural resource management commitments, including major links, improved parks management planning, improved biodiversity and conservation, cooperative management of parks and community engagement.

More than \$11 million will be allocated to upgrade environmental facilities across the state, and these include:

- Museum of Economic Botany, \$0.25 million
- Victoria House upgrade, \$1 million
- Western end tram barn (final stage), \$645 000
- Belair National Park visitor facilities upgrade, \$1 million
- Gawler Ranges visitor facilities upgrade, \$0.25 million
- Heysen Trail upgrade and maintenance, \$0.25 million
- Heritage building protection, \$0.2 million
- General infrastructure capital maintenance, \$2.35 million

The area of waste management and waste reduction has been a key area of reform for the government. Zero Waste SA was established by proclamation on 1 July 2003. Its charter is to eliminate waste or reduce waste to landfill and advance the development of resource recovery and recycling as part of an integrated strategy for the state. Zero Waste SA has a budget for 2004-05 of \$7.4 million funded from 50 per cent of the waste levy collected by the EPA. Zero Waste SA has made significant progress on the development of a state waste strategy, and I expect to see a draft later this year.

Development of two regional waste plans (the South-East Local Government Association and Eyre Peninsula Regional Development Board) is well advanced. Zero Waste SA, in collaboration with local councils, has held three household hazardous waste collections. Almost 1 700 householders have taken advantage of the collections at which over 55 tonne of hazardous waste has been received. With a budget of \$970 000 each year for the next three years, Zero Waste SA will carry out collections in regional and rural South Australia as well as metropolitan Adelaide.

Other Zero Waste SA programs include a plastic shopping bags reduction program, a program of waste reduction in industry, government and the community and an investment program to provide infrastructure for the recycling industry. In summary, the DEH budget addresses the sustainability of our coastal, marine and estuarine environments, it protects our built heritage, it enables the planting of two trees for every South Australian by 2014 and it further supports nature links and improves management, biodiversity and conservation planning in our parks.

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

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** No, sir.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The member for Davenport.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Vol. 3, page 10.25, which relates to the coastal protection area of the

budget. We all remember the vivid pictures of then premier Dunstan going down to Glenelg to stop that tidal wave. I am wondering whether the minister intends to undertake the same activity at Ceduna when—

*Mr Hanna interjecting:*

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** No, I am wondering whether the minister intends to do the same activity when the 10-metre tidal wave hits Ceduna. To give some background to the question, the Coastal Protection Board has given a written response to an aquaculture application suggesting that the aquaculture application be refused. In the letter, Rob Tucker writes that the mean sea level may rise by more than 0.3 of a metre, which it assumed in assessing this application. That application was for an aquaculture development on land on a 10-metre cliff adjacent to Ceduna. I am wondering on what basis the Coastal Protection Board is advising that a 10-metre cliff might flood. My only assumption can be that there will be a tidal wave. I am wondering whether the minister will go to Ceduna and hold back the tidal wave so that this aquaculture development can proceed?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** As tempting as it is to replicate the stunts of former premiers—it was a very successful one as I recall. In fact, in the late 1970s, there was real agitation in South Australia when the seer suggested that a tidal wave would consume Adelaide. There was genuine fear in the community, and Dunstan stood on the jetty.

*The Hon. M.R. Buckley interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Well, it was a bit like *The Day after Tomorrow*—a very good movie. Dunstan went to the jetty at Glenelg and held the tides back. I am not aware of the Coastal Protection Board's advice to that council, but I am certainly prepared to have a look at it. I am not sure on what basis the development is being proposed. There is a broader issue about global warming and the impact that that will have on the weather patterns in South Australia. CSIRO produced a report (which has been made available to the public and members of parliament) on climate change and global warming. We had a briefing on it for members of parliament a month or so ago. Predictions are that not only will the temperature rise in South Australia by up to 6° in parts of the state but also the rainfall and weather patterns will change quite dramatically. We will have less rain but it will come more intense, and major storm events are more likely along the coast. I am not sure whether that is what the Coastal Protection Board had in mind, but I am certainly pleased to inquire into it.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Does it not illustrate a problem with the Coastal Protection Board? It is clear that this has been a desktop summary of the application for development. Anyone who had visited the site would have noticed that it was on a 10-metre cliff. They would not have written a letter to say that it might be subject to 0.3 of a metre flooding. Does that not illustrate a problem within the agency; that is, the Coastal Protection Board is not visiting the sites but it is still commenting on these applications?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** All I have is the statement made by the member. I have not had an opportunity to hear what the Coastal Protection Board has had to say or to look at the facts. I said that I would do that. I will not make any comment or express an opinion until I have done that.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Minister, is it your view that the Coastal Protection Board should visit the sites of applications for aquaculture development prior to giving an opinion on the development? Is it your opinion that it should do that?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** As I say, I am not prepared to make a comment until I have had an opportunity to look at it. I am not sure what the standard processes are for assessing these matters. I will have a look into it: if there are deficiencies, we will have them fixed.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** The previous government made an announcement regarding marine protected areas. Again, this is in relation to page 10.24. The marine protected areas under the previous government were to be completed by 2005-06; that is, the MPAs would all be declared. Your budget papers indicate that the marine protected areas will not be completed until 2010. Why has the marine protected areas program been put back five years?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The government's pre-election policies and the Living Coast strategy, as adopted by the government on 29 March this year, provide for the protection of areas of outstanding ecological significance through the establishment of the system of multiple use marine protected areas and marine parks. The State Strategic Plan 'Creating Opportunities' includes Target 3.5: the establishment of 19 marine protected areas (MPAs) by 2010. It does not say that they will not be finished before then; that was the target in the State Strategic Plan. The former government launched the 'Marine Protected Areas: A shared vision for MPAs in South Australia' for public consultation during 2002.

The former government also announced the establishment of a pilot study area—the Encounter pilot MPA—which extends from Carrickalinga Head on the Fleurieu Peninsula to Point Marsden on Kangaroo Island, and from Cape Willoughby on Kangaroo Island to the Murray Mouth. The Department for Environment and Heritage has the lead role in managing and delivering the MPA program under the direction of an interdepartmental steering committee. This year the MPA program has a budget of \$618 000; in addition, the Department of Primary Industries and Resources is expected to provide \$70 000 for marine managers' forums. When I became minister, I sought a face-to-face briefing on where we were at in relation to the marine protection area. I was told that a process of consultation had begun: a series of drafts had been put out, people had been spoken to, and a general time frame was in place.

I said that I did not want to start that process again, even though it was not necessarily the process that I would have undertaken if I had been minister at the time, because people had been consulted. I said, 'Just proceed with the policy framework that you have in place.' It is true that the time that it has taken to implement this program has stretched, which is really because of the complexities involved in the consultations and the areas with which we are trying to deal. It has not stretched by five years. There is a State Strategic Plan deadline, but I would hope that we would achieve those goals before then.

Having been aware of the slippage in the program because of these complexities, I wanted to ensure that we had ample to do these things properly. Every one that we do will require a significant amount of work, consultation and scientific research. I just do not think it would be sensible to say that we will do them within a much shorter period because, based on the time it has taken for the first couple, I would say it will take a significant amount of time. I will ask Mr Holmes whether he has anything to add.

**Mr HOLMES:** No, nothing to add.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** It has just been pointed out to me that we have \$5 million over four years to assist the initiative—\$500 000 in this year's budget paper.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Minister, you say that it is the State Strategic Plan which sets the target, but in your own budget paper on page 10.24, the footnote clearly indicates that your own department's targeting is 19 MPAs by the year 2010. It is your own department's target.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** That comes from the State Strategic Plan, of course, and that is the goal. Perhaps the member does not understand the way in which it works. The State Strategic Plan sets a number of targets and gives a time frame. Basically, they are over a 10-year time frame, but I imagine many of those targets will be met well before that time frame. This is a new area for this state. It is contentious, as the member would know. There is a whole range of stakeholders who have very strong views about this, particularly the fishing industry. It has to be managed in a way which achieves broad community and stakeholder consent. To rush into it artificially without having dotted all the i's and crossed all the t's would be a mistake, in my view. We are doing it in a sensible way. If it takes a little longer, it will take a little longer.

**Ms CICCARELLO:** Minister, I refer to subprogram 2.2, Botanic Gardens, Portfolio Statements, page number 10.20 which refers to a Gardens 150 program which will lead to a significant upgrade of the scientific, cultural and horticultural aspects of the gardens and celebrate 150 years of operation, commencing in 2005. What significant upgrades will be made to the gardens?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The Botanic Gardens will celebrate its 150th anniversary over the next few years: the 150th celebration next year of the establishment of the gardens in 1855 and the 150th anniversary of the opening of the gardens in 1857. The anniversary highlights the significance of the gardens as both an important cultural and scientific institution and as South Australia's premier garden landscape. It is also probably the most important tourism asset we have in South Australia. Members may be interested to know that the Botanic Gardens has about a million visitors each year. Obviously many of them are locals, but I would assume that most people coming from interstate and overseas would visit the gardens. The government recognises the importance of conserving and enhancing the gardens for future generations and supports the board of the Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium in its Garden 150 program.

The board has identified icon projects, including the restoration of Victoria House, which houses the waterlily pavilion. That is a famous iconic plant that the garden has had for some time, but Victoria House pretty well looks like the Virginia tomato glasshouses. It is not an aesthetic building any longer. The intention is to demolish that—

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** It might be successful in growing things.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Yes, the member might be right—  
*The Hon. I.F. Evans interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** No, we will not get into the privatisation of the Botanic Gardens' plantings.

*The Hon. I.F. Evans interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I understand the member's point, but the intention is to replace the old building with a new mini-crystal palace—a modern and beautiful glasshouse. The establishment of a western gateway to the Adelaide Botanic Garden from Frome Road in partnership with the Adelaide City Council and the establishment of a new garden on the site of the Italianate Garden. That is at the rear of the Museum of Economic Botany. At the moment it is an open pond with a row of pines on either side. The intention is to

replace that with a mediterranean style garden which much better reflects the nature of Adelaide's climate. It will also educate people—visitors to the garden—about sustainable landscapes.

The board has also identified enhancement of visitor facilities associated with the Museum of Economic Botany linked to a new garden, which I refer to as Visitor Orientation and Interpretation. The Museum of Economic Botany is an important heritage building. Alterations to that building will be very minimal but intended to make it a more useable building so that exhibitions and events can be held more easily. I think that will be a great addition to the role of the garden. A multipurpose visitor facility is also being considered for Mount Lofty Botanic Gardens. In addition, work will be undertaken to refurbish the western end of the tram barn for use as a lecture and horticultural exhibition facility. I think \$600 000-odd has been put aside for that.

The board is reviewing these icon projects in the context of the first site master plan for the Adelaide Botanic Garden in over 100 years, which will ensure the gardens continue to flourish to the 21st century. A revision of the Mount Lofty Botanic Gardens site master plan will also occur. An independent foundation will be established to support fundraising by the gardens' programs. Altogether we estimate these projects could cost up to around \$10 million, so we are very keen for the foundation to contribute substantially to these programs.

In 2004-05, the Department for Environment and Heritage will invest \$1 million towards the waterlily pavilion; \$645 000 towards a lecture and horticultural exhibition facility; \$440 000 towards the western gateway to the Adelaide Botanic Garden—and that is subject to discussions with the Adelaide City Council—and \$250 000 towards the Museum of Economic Botany and the Italianate Garden adaptation.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I have a supplementary question. Do I take it then, minister, that there is no extra funding for the Wittunga Botanic Gardens, as part of the Botanic Gardens 150th year?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** There is work going on at Wittunga. The member would be interested to know that the intention is to use the house as a centre for the One Million Trees Urban Forest activities. So, that building will be used in a much more productive way, and I guess that will require some additional work. These gardens are not listed as one of the sites for this particular project, but Mr Holmes might have some other information.

**Mr HOLMES:** I think your point that Wittunga is a focus for our urban biodiversity activities is important. As the member will be aware, the focus of Wittunga has changed over the last 10 years from a high maintenance garden to a garden that is more suitable for a Mediterranean landscape.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I am advised that some minor capital works money has been put aside to do some work on the footpaths and roads, etc. in that area.

**Ms CICCARELLO:** I refer to the same program 2.2 on page 10.16. The budget papers state that 400 000 local indigenous plants will be established as part of the 2004 planting program for the One Million Trees initiative. What are the details of these plantings, and will the minister outline the planning and partnerships involved in this program?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The SA Urban Forest One Million Trees program is a major initiative being implemented under the government's broader greening agenda to ensure the sustainable development of Adelaide. It is linked directly

with the existing Urban Forest biodiversity program, to which I have just referred. The headquarters of both of those programs will eventually be at Wittunga. Through the involvement of community groups, employment programs, state and local government and other agencies, the aim is to establish one million trees and associated native understorey on sites around metropolitan Adelaide over a five-year period from 2003 to 2007.

Importantly, the government is now committed to extending the Urban Forest program to achieve a target of three million trees by 2014, as outlined in the State Strategic Plan and the recent budget announcements. The major focus of the program is to undertake plantings throughout Adelaide's metropolitan open space system to recreate vegetation types naturally occurring in the region, thereby contributing to biodiversity conservation through the establishment of a native habitat consistent with NatureLinks principles. This is one of the great benefits of these particular metropolitan based schemes. In the past, a lot of these schemes have not taken into account those broader strategic goals and have really just been tree-planting exercises, not necessarily planting appropriate vegetation or putting in a whole range of types of plants to create an ecology. Rather, they have just been almost ad hoc additions to particular pieces of the landscape. They have been beneficial and worthwhile in their own right but not part of a broader strategic focus.

Improvements to the greenhouse amenity, air and water quality improvements are also expected. I am pleased to advise that in winter 2004 over 400 000 plants will be established at more than 100 sites through 41 major projects. Action plans have been prepared for project sites, and these take into consideration all known opportunities and constraints including public access, safety and bushfire risk assessment. Onground work is guided by these detailed action plans, which cover vegetation types and condition, habitat and other soil types, weed management, fire risk and public access issues. These action plans span a number of years and will provide a basis for further works and the extension of activities to achieve a total of three million trees by 2014.

Overall planning is consistent with NatureLinks principles and aligned with the parklands' 2036 initiative to enhance Adelaide's metropolitan open space system. There are 18 local councils and at least 12 state government agencies involved in this ambitious program which is now implementing projects that range from large-scale revegetation to local amenity and educationally focused sites. Volunteer and community involvement are key components of the program and arrangements have been put in place with Trees for Life, Conservation Volunteers Australia, Greening Australia, Rotary International and catchment boards to provide a coordinated approach to community engagement and involvement in targeting new participants in addition to supporting existing groups. Volunteers are being involved in planting projects and community groups are actively involved in planning and implementing many of the local projects. Approximately 350 Trees for Life volunteers have raised almost 100 000 of the seedlings for 2014. I congratulate those volunteers for that effort.

The One Million Trees program has also supported the involvement of 115 Youth Conservation Corp participants to date and 80 Youth Conservation Corp participants are expected to be involved in the One Million Trees projects in 2004-05. Participants will be involved in site preparation, plant establishment, community involvement and program monitoring activities. More than 60 schools are involved in

projects under the Urban Forest's Grow a Great School Banner in partnership with catchment boards and non-government organisations such as Greening Australia. In addition, planning has commenced to develop strategies to extend the program to achieve a total of three million trees by 2014, as I have already mentioned.

**Ms CICCARELLO:** I refer to page 10.18. I understand that an upgrade of visitor facilities in the Belair National Park has been announced. What progress has occurred to date and what further work is planned for the coming financial year?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I thank the member for this question, and I am sure the member for Davenport will be interested in this answer as well.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** So will the member for Heysen.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** It's in her electorate now, is it? She will be interested as well. The planned upgrade of visitor facilities at Belair will take place over several years and will include renovation or, where necessary, replacement of existing toilet amenities and picnic shelters together with site works and rationalisation of infrastructure within the context of the park's heritage and bushland setting. Fifteen precincts have been identified in the park's recreation and heritage zones and upgrades will take place on a precinct by precinct basis.

The first two areas identified for upgrade are the Karka pavilion heritage precinct and the Pines bushland precinct. A project budget of \$700 000 for 2003-04 was allocated for design and project management in the first stage of construction. To date, the Karka pavilion has been fully restored and construction of new shelters and picnic and car parking facilities is under way. Concept designs for future works are scheduled for completion by December 2004 with construction to proceed during 2004-05 subject to approval. Funding of \$1 million has been allocated to the project for the coming financial year for the balance of construction work at the Pines and Karka precincts, new design work and commencement of construction of the Old Government House, Government Farm and Dianella precincts.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Minister, I refer to 'Coast and Marine Conservation Services', on page 10.24. The performance indicator MPA target is proclaimed as just one MPA this year, with only 13 per cent of state waters being covered by marine plans. These are the same targets as last year. My question is: are we actually making any progress towards a comprehensive system of marine protected areas?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I believe we are. I think I have already answered that question in my previous answer, when I explained the difficulties in reaching this stage. However, I think we are now on the verge of being able to do this. It has been a complex process with both science, community and stakeholder consultation and involvement. I think we have got it pretty right now, so I am optimistic that we will be able to achieve these targets.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Just to elaborate on that, what were the difficulties?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Sorry, what was the question?

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** The minister has hedged around what the difficulties were. Will the minister give us some details about what the difficulties were?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I will ask Mr Holmes to expand on that.

**Mr HOLMES:** By way of clarification, I believe the performance indicator should read 'No. of New Marine Protected Areas', because it is talking about one new marine protected area in 2004-05. Clearly, that relates to the

Encounter marine protected area, which is being worked on at the present time. Because that is a pilot and an opportunity to set the scene for the future marine protected areas, it is important that we get it right. The extensive consultation and the detail of how you might roll out new marine protected areas has been worked up in that pilot, and that is why there is a single target for 2004–05. It is about getting the process right and ensuring that the community is comfortable with what we are doing.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Minister, the CE raised the issue of the Encounter marine protected area. Again, that was promised to be proclaimed last year: in fact, it was promised to be proclaimed within 12 months in 2002. Why has that not been delivered? It is clear to me that the agency has taken its eye off the ball. I can remember that when I was minister I put myself on the Marine Managers Forum to drive this process through because it was wedged between two agencies. It seems clear that this whole marine planning aspect of government has simply stalled. Why is it that the Encounter marine protected area was not proclaimed last year? Why has that one in particular been delayed?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** All I can do is repeat what I have already said. I do not believe that the agency has taken its eye off the ball. I have had a number of briefings with the advisory committee and additional briefings from the officers in charge, and I have asked these questions. It has just been a very complex process. As the CE has said, we want to ensure that we get the first one absolutely right because it will be a model by which all other attempts will be judged. If we do it in a way which alienates or causes consternation in the community, then it will be very difficult to do again in the future. I can only say that there is no devious reason. I would like to have them up and running, but we want to do it in a way which has broad based support.

The issue of displaced effort (which is an issue about which the member would be familiar) is something we have had to address—all the fears, anxieties and concerns expressed by members of the community whenever you do something which looks like interfering with their perceived sense of their rights. That is why we have done it in this way. The Aboriginal community and the local councils have all been involved. It has been a very extensive process, and it has taken a long time.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Page 10.8 of Volume 3 refers to the Spencer Gulf marine plan. Why has the marine planning framework been delayed? The Spencer Gulf marine plan was to be finished last year, but I understand that that is still not complete. We do not have the marine protected areas being announced and we do not have the Spencer Gulf marine plan being completed, either.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Before I answer that question, Mr Holmes has informed me that it took Victoria 15 years before they had their first marine protected area, for the reasons I have been discussing. In relation to the Spencer Gulf pilot marine plan, the draft South Australian marine planning framework and draft Spencer Gulf pilot marine plan are currently being finalised by my department, and it is anticipated that they will be released for public consultation in the next month or so. The final Spencer Gulf pilot marine plan and the South Australian marine planning framework should be available later this year. Data collection has been conducted for the Lower Spencer Gulf and the Gulf St Vincent-Kangaroo Island planning areas, and focus documents

containing background information for both planning areas have been drafted.

The following public consultation for both the plan and the framework will occur during the 2004–05 year. Public information workshops will be held for the Lower Eyre and the Gulf St Vincent-Kangaroo Island planning areas; regional consultative committees will be established for the Lower Eyre and the Gulf St Vincent-Kangaroo Island planning areas; data collection will be conducted for the Lower Eyre and the Gulf St Vincent-Kangaroo Island planning areas; and focus documents will be completed and distributed for the Lower Eyre and the Gulf St Vincent-Kangaroo Island planning areas.

The preliminary budget for all this is \$412 000, which will cover finalisation of the marine planning framework and the Spencer Gulf pilot marine plan, plus the planning and consultation stages of the Gulf St Vincent marine plan and the Lower Spencer Gulf marine plan. As I have said previously, we expect to receive another \$70 000 from Primary Industries. There is no hidden agenda: it is taking a long time because it is complex.

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS:** My question is in relation to the living coast strategy. Today in *The Advertiser* is an article about the erosion of the dunes at West Beach due to a storm, high rainfall and 70 kilometre winds. The article referred to the seawalls being able to take a one in 100-year storm. What is the department doing to ensure that those sand dunes are replenished quickly? I understand that the department is undertaking building a bike path on the dunes along the foreshore. Can the minister assure me that the bike paths which are being built will not in any way degrade the sand dunes which protect local residents?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The living coast strategy is a whole of government initiative setting out the environmental policy directions that the state government will be taking over the next five years to improve the management and protection of South Australia's coastal areas, estuaries and marine ecosystems for their conservation and sustainable use. It will require the support of all levels of government, industry and the community to further the strategy's objectives. The strategy will be publicly released shortly; we are just working on that at the moment. Several major policy and legislative initiatives arise from that strategy. The government has identified the need to develop an integrated framework for the management and protection of the marine environment, coastal areas and estuaries. The government also undertook to review coastal and marine legislation and administrative structures, with a view to establishing a single coast and marine agency, or board, to assist with integrated multi-use management of the coast and marine environment.

The DEH is leading our state's agency project steering committee and a stakeholder reference group to draft a public consultation paper on a new coast and marine act to replace the Coastal Protection Act of 1972. It is anticipated that the public consultation paper will be available for comment in August/September 2004 and will be followed by a draft bill in 2005. This new act will provide for integrated planning to provide for appropriate use of the coast and marine environment consistent with environmentally sustainable principles. The basis for this will be coastal marine planning that gives regional guidance for informed decision making. The Coastal Marine Act will interact with and inform the Development Act of 1993, and the new natural resources management act (which is before the other house), as well as guide other coast and marine-based legislation.

Embedded within this act will be the marine planning framework to guide the management of current and future activities in the marine environment within the assimilative capability of the ecosystem. The framework provides for six marine plans, based on the marine bio regions of the state, to provide for the ecologically sustainable use of the marine environment. The draft marine planning framework and pilot Spencer Gulf marine plan are currently being finalised for public consultation this year. Another major initiative of the living coast strategy (announced in the State Strategic Plan) is the establishment of 19 multiple-use marine protected areas by 2010. The waters around the Fleurieu Peninsula from Encounter Bay through Backstairs Passage to Yankalilla are the location for the first proposal to which I have referred.

All these initiatives, along with the establishment of the Adelaide dolphin sanctuary, form a significant step towards the integration and sustainable use of the South Australian coast and marine environment. In relation to the foreshore to which the member refers, the Coast Protection Board and the government is committed to ensuring that that coast is protected, and that that sand is replenished when it is washed away. We are looking for suitable supplies of sand. As the member probably knows, some four or five years ago, the former government took all the available sand from my electorate and shipped it to his electorate, so there is nothing left in my electorate. We are now looking for alternative supplies. It is a complex thing but we think that we are on to a new source, but it is certainly our intention to replenish that sand.

In relation to the bike track and the footpaths along the coast, that is really part of the Minister for Planning and Urban Development's coast park strategy. Clearly, there is close consultation and collaboration with my department. The idea is not only to protect that important part of the coastal environment but also to ensure that it is accessible to the public, and accessible in a way which does not degrade it. As the member would know, a whole range of activity occurs along that part of the coast which is perhaps not in the best interests of the coast. Indeed, in some areas, some people have almost privatised the public land in front of their places by erecting benches, barbecues, gardens and all the rest of it. There will be some issues with some of those individuals about the public's right to access those pieces of land.

Obviously councils are very much involved as they control the local planning. I know in my electorate, which has around 30 kilometres of coast, there has been quite a lot of community involvement on a number of projects. One was highly contentious and involved much consultation with the community. I think that the council and the community are now close to a reasonable level of reconciliation about how it should proceed. However, I understand the point that the member is making, and I think that it is a valid one.

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS:** Some residents are blaming the groyne at West Beach for degrading the sand dunes and bringing the coastline closer to the seawall. They are concerned about their properties. All but seven of the properties at West Beach have a road and a seawall in front of them; the others have sand dunes. Then there are properties which do not have any coastal protection, road or seawall in front of them. If there is a one in 100-year storm, do we know what damage will be done to those properties? Will the seawall hold up? Has the groyne stopped natural sand flow building up along those beaches or has it caused no impact at all?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** There is a range of impacts on sand movement along the Adelaide beaches. There is a south-north movement, which is the natural movement. The sand tends to move towards the north. A little comes back the other way but it tends to go towards the north. In the past before development, there were probably several hundred metres of sand dunes along the Adelaide coast, and those sand dunes would move in and out, capture the sand and replenish beaches as storms came through. There were also pretty well developed seagrasses which held the sand in place.

We have interfered dramatically with that natural system. We have built houses on the sand dunes so that the sand dunes no longer act in that natural way. The sand that is there is trapped and cannot replenish beaches. Over 170 years or so, we have pumped out a whole lot of treated effluent (not treated very well in the past), stormwater and so on. That has helped to kill off much of the seagrass. That has meant that the sand held by the sea grasses is liberated, and a lot of that is very fine sand, as I understand it. That has changed the dynamics.

In addition, we have put a number of structures along the coast: at Glenelg we have the hotel development with a groyne for a harbour, and at West Beach is the groyne to which the member has referred. The member for Davenport initiated a project when he was minister which aims to study the coastal waters of Adelaide to try to work out all how all these things work—

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Hear, hear!

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I give you credit where credit is due. These things are dynamic—how do they work and how do we get a better understanding of them? If you had your druthers, you would get rid of the houses along the coast, treat all effluent and stormwater on land, and get rid of all the structures. But, it is unlikely we will get rid of the houses. We can move to treat stormwater and effluent on land (and Waterproofing Adelaide is, in part, directed towards achieving that). One of the other things we can do is look at the structures that are there now and see how they can aid the management of sand rather than hinder it.

There is no doubt that the West Beach groyne stops sand movement to the beach. We have just completed or are close to completing building a breakwater off the beach at Semaphore which is aimed at trapping sand, so one theory is that we could have a series of barriers to trap sand and would have to move it back only a little way, so it could be managed in micropods along the beach. But a lot of work needs to be done on that. I am not too sure about the one in 100 year storm, so perhaps Mr Holmes can answer that.

**Mr HOLMES:** I think that the metropolitan beach protection strategy that has been in place for the last 30 years is one of the real success stories of managing beaches in Australia. In fact, over that period, the sand on beaches has increased quite significantly and, in most locations, there is sufficient protection for the one in 100 year storm. The two or three sensitive points are those that have been worked on over the last five or six years and, to take one in particular, there is a point near the Semaphore breakwater that has just been constructed and, already, that is showing signs of accumulating sand and providing additional protection.

At the moment the program is managed on the basis of the pressure points on the coastline and ensuring that there is sufficient sand as a buffer for the one in 100 year storm event. As the minister outlined, a major review of that coastal strategy is under way and it is likely that that study will show that the use of breakwaters and managing the beach as a

series of smaller areas where sand is trapped and moved back down the beach is the likely way that we will proceed.

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS:** I refer to the portfolio statement at page 10.19. This statement makes reference to the progression of a Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative Reserve System. How is this conservation of native biodiversity being improved in the unrepresented north-east pastoral zone?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I thank the member for that question. On 12 May this year the Department for Environment and Heritage purchased at auction the 73 000 hectare Bimbowrie Station in the Olary Ranges, which is about 30 kilometres north of Olary, for \$2.36 million. The purchase of a pastoral lease within this region for inclusion in the reserve system has been a high priority for the department for some time, and is a significant contribution to the Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative Reserve System (CARRS) in South Australia and the national reserve system, offering an opportunity to conserve a number of threatened species and ecosystems.

There are five state-level threatened ecosystems on the property, and the purchase increases by three the number of ecosystems which environmental associations represent in the South Australian reserve system. The property is known to contain habitat for nationally threatened fauna, for example, the yellow-footed rock wallaby, and there were some fantastic stories in the media in the last week about the Bounce Back program which has significantly helped the survival of that wallaby. There is also flora on this station which should be conserved—for example, the purple wood and slender bell fruit.

Also, there are examples of early European pastoral history on the property, including approximately six old shepherd huts and landmarks such as Antro Wool Shed, the Bimbowrie post office, Mawson's Hut, stables and a blacksmith's shop at Old Boolcoomatta. Aboriginal heritage consisting of rock art sites, rock paintings and occupation sites also exist on the property.

The geology of Bimbowrie, and in particular the Willyama Complex, is unusual and interesting, making it popular with educational institutions, prospectors and amateur geologists. The area has a geological setting similar to Broken Hill. Copper, lead, zinc and silver have all been mined in the past, and continue to be the focus of exploration efforts today.

The purchase of this property will contribute to the NatureLinks program and will establish a core protected area at the eastern-most extent of the Flinders Ranges Bounce Back program (to which I have already referred). It will build on the biodiversity gains achieved on neighbouring Plumbago Station, where there has been recovery of yellow-footed rock wallaby populations, and provide a catalyst for further expansion of the program eastwards. The commonwealth has recently advised that it will contribute over \$1 million towards the purchase from the national reserve system program of the Natural Heritage Trust, and we are grateful to the commonwealth for its support of this program.

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS:** My last question again relates to the Portfolio Statement at page 10.15 where it is stated that biological surveys of South Australia will be reviewed to establish further requirements of priorities. What reviews have been undertaken, and what are the next stages?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I thank the member again: this is an important question. The Biological Survey of South Australia is mapping the distribution and relative abundance

of vascular plants, vertebrate and invertebrate fauna across a range of habitats within the state. This data is fundamental to understanding the conservation and management of native species, habitats and ecosystems throughout South Australia. The survey program operates in a five year forward plan to complete mapping of the regions of the state currently not surveyed. The first round of surveys is scheduled for completion in 2015. Priority areas for biological survey in the next five years include the Gawler Bioregion and Nullarbor, Sandy deserts (Great Victoria Desert and Strzelecki Desert), Far Western Eyre Peninsula and the rivers and flood plains of the Lake Eyre Basin in South Australia.

In addition to maintaining the program funded by the state government (\$923 000), funds are also sought from external sources: \$1.396 million has been received from the commonwealth through the NHT2 program and through regional natural resource management arrangements for the rivers and flood plains of the Lake Eyre Basin (Arid Rivers and Cultural Heritage Project), which is expected to be completed in 2007. Funding for the Gawler Bioregion and Nullarbor biological surveys is being sought in association with PIRSA's Mineral Resources Division to identify areas of biological significance in highly prospective areas of the state.

The River Murray corridor and the Mid North York were funded from the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality. The Sandy Desert survey is due for completion in 2007, and the Eyre Peninsula will be completed in 2006. To date these surveys have surveyed 80 Standard Biological Survey of South Australia survey quadrat for both flora and invertebrate fauna. The Murray corridor has been surveyed from the New South Wales and Victorian border to Berri and from Waikerie to Swan Reach. The remainder will be surveyed in spring 2004. The Mid North component of the survey was completed last autumn and a further 60 quadrats will be sampled on the Yorke Peninsula this spring.

A further 75 sites along the Murray River and its wetlands were sampled for aquatic macroinvertebrates in spring 2003. These sites are currently being resampled to enable seasonal comparisons and the impact of salinity on aquatic macroinvertebrates. Perhaps that sounds a little complex and theoretical, but unless we know what we have in South Australia in terms of our biodiversity, it means that we are not able to spend the money we have in our department in the most productive way. The better the science the better the outcomes we can deliver for conservation purposes.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Given that the CE describes the metropolitan coast strategy as one of the great success stories over the last 30 years, why has the department then slipped \$1 million worth of expenditure as a means of savings in this year's budget?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** There are a couple of reasons, which, I think, I have already touched on. We are working on where to find the sand that can be used in future replenishment. The money was available but we did not have anything to spend it on in this year. We think that we are now closer to finding a source. Also, of course, is the time involved in the Semaphore trial. We want to know how that works so that we can spend our money wisely. Coast management, as the CE mentioned, has been a 30 year success story. It has had its ups and downs, I guess, but, basically, it has been a success story.

It is the result of adaptive management techniques. You try it, you see how it works and you try something else, and that is the process we are going through. I think that most South Australians would appreciate that we have pretty good



beaches, and we have given pretty significant protection to property owners who have built along that coastline. From those points of view, I think it is going pretty well. I will get Mr Holmes to correct me if I am wrong here, but I think that the sand that came from my electorate a few years ago is still working its way through the system. It has not disappeared as quickly as might have been expected.

**Mr HOLMES:** That is correct, but, again, it goes back to the point that the government has allocated significant funds to the protection of metropolitan beaches over a long time period. Until we sort out the sand sourcing and until we sort out whether the pilot breakwaters work, it is unwise to proceed in those areas. It is just getting the answers right before you proceed.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I have a supplementary question to Mr Holmes, if the minister allows it. The money for the Semaphore breakwater was allocated in the last year of the Liberal government. Why has it taken 2½ years to get that project completed? It is a series of geotextile bags filled with sand. It is not new technology. They are all down the east coast. Why has it taken two years to get that up and running?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I will give a broader answer to that question and then we can fill in some of the detail at the end. The Semaphore Park foreshore has been eroding steadily since the early 1980s. To date the board has been managing the erosion and protecting coastal development with beach replenishment using Semaphore beach as a sand source. Following a comprehensive review of protection strategy alternatives in 1999/2000, the board selected the current strategy of protecting the Semaphore Park foreshore and breakwaters, and this was endorsed by the then minister for environment and heritage in November 2000.

The construction of a trial breakwater at the boundary of Semaphore Park and Semaphore South is stage 1 of the board's coast protection strategy for the eroding foreshore at Semaphore Park. The trial breakwater will act as a sand trap and be used as a more sustainable and cheaper source of sand for ongoing replenishment of this erosion area. The trial nature of the structure allows modifications to be made to determine the optimum breakwater parameters for the local conditions. Stage 2 proposes to make the trial structure permanent. Stage 3 proposes the construction of more breakwaters to provide direct protection to the eroding area without the need for ongoing replenishment.

Tenders for stage 1 closed in January 2003, and a successful bidder was selected in April 2003 with a bid of \$122 million. The entire budget for the project was carried over into 2003-04 because of the necessary lead time in terms of the supply of construction materials delaying construction until 2003. Poor weather then slowed works until February 2004. Since then the project has progressed well and the breakwater is due for completion by 30 June (this month). Again, that is subject to fine weather conditions. I am not sure what the last few days will have done. Associated sand carting may continue beyond this time frame.

We have allocated \$100 000 to conduct the necessary monitoring for the evaluation of the breakwater's performance as a method of providing sustainable coast protection. During the trial period, an additional sum of \$100 000 is allocated from the Adelaide beach replenishment budget to maintain the unprotected area of Semaphore Park by sand carting from the sand accumulation caused by the breakwater.

So, weather has been part of the problem—you cannot do these things at certain times of the year. The initial process was delayed by me. When I became minister, considerable

anxiety was being expressed by local groups. I met with them; they said that they felt there had not been adequate consultation. This is not a criticism of the former minister or the staff at the time, as there had been quite extensive communication and consultation. I said to those who came to see me that I would undertake some further consultation, which we did, and that delayed the project a little. Since that time the main reason has been the weather.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** When will the government release its contaminated land legislation? This was promised last year and still has not been delivered.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** That is really within the EPA area, and it is intended to be released at some stage this year. When the EPA is before the committee, I will let you know. I do not have the briefing note with me at the moment, so I could not tell you now.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** During my time as minister, the department went to some lengths to secure land on the Waitpinga cliffs for the Heysen Trail to be re-established. They then offsold the balance of the land. I think that the CE might remember the windfall gain. Does the minister support the application to put wind farms on the Waitpinga cliffs?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I do not do either: support it or not support it. It has not been brought to my attention as far as I am aware. Are you talking about wind farms on the land adjacent to the Heysen Trail? I assume you do not mean land owned by the department.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** My understanding is that the minister was written to in February of this year about the wind farm proposal on top of the Waitpinga cliffs.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I could have been; I do not recall. I can check it out. What is the concern—that there is a proposition to put wind towers on government land or adjacent to government land?

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Either/or. My understanding is that it is government land.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** It does not ring a bell, but I will check it. We will try to get a reply to you before we finish today.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** The CE is not aware of a proposal to put wind farms in any of the conservation parks?

**Mr HOLMES:** No, I am not.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** In conservation parks? I cannot recall a conservation park—we certainly would not be supporting that. I will chase it up. We will try to get a response for you after lunch.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** So, no-one knows anything about it? You were written to four months ago not by me, but by a constituent—I am raising it on their behalf.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I get 1 000 letters a month. I cannot recall the detail of all of it, but I will chase it up over the lunch break. We will get one of the officers here to chase it up now and, if we can get a response back quickly for you, we will do it.

**Mr HANNA:** What funds are available in the budget to make progress with wilderness protection area nominations? According to what I have been told, none has been proclaimed in the period of this Labor government. Indeed, there was an election commitment in Labor's 20-point plan for better reserves and habitat to 'expedite assessment of outstanding wilderness protection nominations'. I will give an example in relation to the Hincks and Hambidge wilderness on Central Eyre Peninsula. I am advised that the Wilderness Advisory Committee made its report on these areas in 1996. Nothing was done by the previous government

until December 2001, when proposals went out for public comment. Now, more than two years after the opportunity for public comment has closed, there is still no decision.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I thank the member for his question. I will have to take most of it on notice. I will give some general comment though. Certainly, it is my intention as minister to ensure that all of these applications for wilderness are progressed. We have announced a couple of wilderness parks on the mainland. Whether or not they have been proclaimed at this stage, I am not sure. You have to go through a process in order to get it to happen, but we have agreed to Coffin Bay and Lincoln National Park. I just do not have the briefing notes in front of me. That is at least two; we are working our way through the Yellabinna area, which is a major application. I hope to be able to make some announcements about that in the near future.

There is a series of others, but we are working on the Yellabinna one at the moment. It is my intention to work through all the applications. We have not made a commitment to approving any of them, but we made a commitment to work through them. We have approved one or two of them, as I have said. We are working on the Yellabinna one, so it is in train. I will get a proper briefing for the member in relation to where we are in each stage, because I just do not have that in front of me at the moment.

**Mr HANNA:** That would be appreciated. My second question is in relation to parks and reserves on page 10.21, where there is a reference to the performance indicators for our state's parks and reserves. It is suggested that an additional six parks and reserves will be covered by management plans. The concern I raise with the minister is the rate of progress with the development of management plans, given the addition of new parks into the system. At that rate it would take many years for even half the parks in the system to have management plans. Obviously they are a valuable tool for managing the ecology of those places.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I share the member's concern. It takes a long time to develop these management plans; that is true. It is a matter of balancing the resources that are available. Do you spend money buying new parks, do you spend it employing new staff to look after them, or do you spend money doing the science that is required to work out the management plan? We have to do all of those things and you try and progress all of them a little bit at a time.

The department is currently going through a review of the National Parks and Wildlife Act. I am keen, and I think I have probably told members and this committee before that I am keen, to modernise the act. It is an act that was put through in 1972 and really has not had a lot of work done on it since that time.

We have a kind of historic set of classifications for our reserves and parks in South Australia which do not really make a lot of sense to the casual observer. If you refer to something as a national park or a conservation park they are different. A whole range of things can happen in conservation parks. It does not mean you cannot mine in them, it does not mean you cannot do certain things in them. We need a classification system which is clear and appropriate. So, we are looking at the IUCN, the international classification, to come up with a model which we can apply to South Australia.

I am also hoping through that process that we can advance more rapidly some of the developments of plans. It is a time-consuming process. I will perhaps invite Mr Holmes to comment about the process we have to go through to develop a plan.

**Mr HOLMES:** I think there are three points to make. One is that the National Parks Advisory Council is currently reviewing the management plan process for the very reasons that you have outlined. They are having a look at how that can be made more efficient and can actually produce better management plans. That is under way at the moment. The second point is that even though not all parks have management plans, the National Parks and Wildlife Act does prescribe in a fair amount of detail the management parameters for national parks, so they manage within those parameters.

The point I would make in response to the minister's request is that the management planning process is a slow and tedious one. It involves a great deal of consultation and probably we need to look at the statutory basis for the preparation of those plans. Again, when the Advisory Council advises the minister, it may well be that there is some substantial change made to the way that we approach management plans in terms of improving both their effectiveness and their efficiency.

**Mr HANNA:** As a supplementary question to that, could the minister provide me with news of the outcome of that review of the system for developing management plans, when it becomes available?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Yes, I would be happy to inform the house about that. Commenting on the side here, one of the things that we should perhaps look at is whether we need template plans that we could provide as a stopgap measure while we do more sophisticated plans for some areas. We could look at different parts of the state. We will have the eight NRM regions, and I guess you could say that these are roughly the kinds of things you need to do where it is wetter, and these are the kinds of things you need to do where it is dry, and have a management plan that applies while we work through the sophistication of it. I agree: we need to lift our game in this area, and the process that the legislation imposes upon us at the moment is quite burdensome. But I will happily give you more information.

**Mr HANNA:** In respect of my third question, I acknowledge that the budget papers refer to the preparation of Ramsar Management Plans for the Bool Lagoon and Hacks Lagoon, but I refer to the Coongie Lakes Ramsar Management Plan. It was 11 July last year when the Premier announced the creation of a new national park in a special zone within the Innamincka regional reserve. Obviously, the development of a Ramsar Management Plan for the Coongie Lakes is important, given the contentious proposals for mining in that region. Can the minister advise what resources are being applied to develop that, given that it is nearly a year since the declaration of the park?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I think we announced the formation of the park. I do not think we have proclaimed it yet. We are still going through the legal processes. I hope we will be able to finish that this year. In relation to the resources committed, I will have to take that part on notice, but I will get a response back to you.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Minister, on page 10.28, Animal Welfare Services, does the RSPCA have the power to enter sheds such as poultry sheds without having evidence that there is a problem?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I might take this on notice, because it is really a legal question rather than a budgetary question that is being asked of me. I know that this a matter of contention. In fact, I think I may have asked the member a similar question myself when I was the shadow minister. I

know this is a contentious issue and there are various points of view, so I am happy to get legal advice in relation to this.

The other point I would make is that we are planning to release a discussion paper shortly in relation to a review of the RSPCA Act, and that will give all those who have got issues with the way it operates—animal liberation, the RSPCA, Chris Gallus, Susan Jeanes and others—the opportunity to express their opinion. I will get some proper advice in relation to that. I do not want to just comment without proper legal advice.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Just to follow on, so you can get advice on this as well, Mr Mark Peters, on ABC radio on 9 June, advised the public that under the act they must get a warrant. They have to make sure that poultry farmers comply with property standards, but ‘we do not have the power to go into sheds without having evidence that there is a problem on the farm. So when we are invited to inspect, or certainly when we hear of a problem on a farm, we then have the authority to, on warrant, to go to that property and investigate.’ In your answer back to the house, could you also clarify whether they can enter with or without a warrant?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I will do that. I am aware of not necessarily that quote but of the views that have been expressed by the RSPCA. As we go through the review of the legislation that ultimately comes to the house, it will be up to the parliament to determine what powers the RSPCA ought to have, whether it ought to be able to enter those kinds of properties without warrants and without any particular offence being committed. It seems to me reasonable that some sort of regular inspection process could be undertaken. It might actually be to the benefit of the people operating the premises if they could say that the RSPCA has been through and given them a tick of approval, or whatever. That is something we can perhaps expand on during the review process, but I will get an answer back for the honourable member on that.

**Mr HANNA:** As a supplementary question, will the minister detail when that discussion paper on the role of the RSPCA will be made available and will it address the particular issues that have been raised this week, in particular on the *Four Corners* program earlier this week, suggesting that the RSPCA was failing to enforce animal welfare laws in respect of commercial intensive farming operations?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I would expect the paper to be distributed, subject to cabinet approval and all the normal processes, relatively soon, within the next month or two. What was the second part of your question?

**Mr HANNA:** The second part of the question related to the subject matter of the discussion paper. Apart from the general question of whether we should have an RSPCA as opposed to a government agency looking into animal welfare issues, will it go to the specific point raised on the *Four Corners* program this week, which was whether the RSPCA has been adequately addressing commercial intensive farming operations, such as sow stalls?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I guess it depends on how you look at the review, but the review is looking at how adequate the act is and I guess those issues will come up through the consultation process. I imagine there will be plenty of people making those kinds of claims, and that is something we can look at through the review.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I have a general question in relation to Zero Waste (page 10.8). How does Zero Waste go about considering the question of how much cost it imposes on local council ratepayers when it imposes a waste strategy

on councils, particularly small regional councils such as those on the west coast? I am just wondering how it makes that judgment and what criteria it looks at.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I will ask Mr Levitzke to amplify on this, but the first thing I would say is that Zero Waste is very much a collaboration between state and local government. There are four people from local government on the board of Zero Waste: the CEs of the two largest councils in South Australia, Onkaparinga and Salisbury, although the Salisbury council CE is wearing an EPA hat on that board; a CE from a regional council; and one from Charles Sturt council. That range of people from councils will be very much aware of those issues that the honourable member has raised. Secondly, the Zero Waste board presents a strategy to government and it will be up to government to adopt it. The cabinet process, which will include a whole range of regional impacts, processes and so on, will be able to look at all those issues.

The honourable member is right: you could have zero waste tomorrow if you were prepared to fund at a very high rate how things are collected, treated and so on. We want to get there over time. We have put a 25 per cent reduction by 2014, which will be a very hard target to meet, but we are committed to doing it. In relation to the particular issues, I will ask Mr Levitzke to say a few words.

**Mr LEVITZKE:** We are working with local government in regional areas to prepare regional waste plans and helping to fund those plans. As part of that process, the groups of councils working on those plans are looking at their costs and the implications of implementing that strategy. That process is also helping us to work through the development of the state waste strategy, so we are taking that learning on board as we go and, hopefully, we will not impose great costs on ratepayers, in regional South Australia, in particular.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** As a supplementary question, how does the EPA work with Zero Waste? The EPA has control over waste dumps and landfill sites and Zero Waste over waste strategy. What the EPA does has a direct impact on local councils and their capacity to land fill or manage their waste. Is it possible, for instance, that the EPA could decide to close landfill even though Zero Waste may not have in place yet an appropriate waste management strategy for that area?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Let me try to explain how it works. The EPA is the regulatory arm: Zero Waste is the policy-setting arm, the education arm and the funding body that can assist. Obviously, we want to make sure that there is good coordination between those two roles, so we have made sure that there is cross-membership between Zero Waste and the EPA. The chair of Zero Waste is Allan Holmes, the CE of my department, but Allan is also a member of the EPA board. The EPA also has a seat on the Zero Waste board and currently nominated Mr Stephen Hains, the CE of Salisbury, as the EPA person on that board.

So, there are on the Zero Waste board two people who have an EPA connection and two people, therefore, on the EPA board who have a Zero Waste connection. We are trying to get that connectivity between the two agencies so that they are not doing things that are contradictory. The bottom line, I suppose, is that the EPA has to work out what the standards are and then apply regulations. Zero Waste will in some cases, as Mr Levitzke said, fund programs to help councils achieve those outcomes. I think they work reasonably closely together. Perhaps Mr Holmes can comment.

**Mr HOLMES:** I will add one comment. At our last meeting, which was an informal meeting of the board to workshop the framework for a strategy, one of the major issues of discussion was, in fact, the matter that the member has raised, and it is at the front of our minds in terms of developing this strategy and being realistic about the rate of change and the costs that you impose on the community to move towards zero waste. As I said, those issues are at the front of our minds, and the composition of the board means that they will receive active and proper consideration.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I have a supplementary question. There are councils with which your officers are in discussions about imposing costs that are 20 per cent of the council's annual turnover.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I think the member is referring to EPA regulatory requirements here—I think the member is talking about landfill guidelines that the EPA has developed.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** No, I am talking about transport costs—transporting the waste out of their council area because of the rules that have been applied.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I understand what the member is referring to. That is not a Zero Waste requirement, as I understand it.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** But does that not illustrate the problem?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** No.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Zero Waste is being approached to subsidise the transport cost?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Perhaps Mr Levitzke can answer that question.

**Mr LEVITZKE:** Zero Waste is now working on a transport strategy for regional South Australia for recyclables and waste. We have just let the contract to do that. We are working to try to find the best ways with local government regarding where it can rationalise landfills and where those materials can be consolidated.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** But it is true that the officers are discussing with some councils costs that are up to 20 per cent of the council's rate base. I understand that one council has a rate base of just over \$1 million, and the costs they are talking about are \$200 000 a year. That seems to be an extraordinary imposition on a small rural rate base.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** There is an issue with respect to the standards that are applied in regional councils, and perhaps when Dr Vogel is here this afternoon you can ask questions, and I will get him to address some of those issues. The EPA is working with regional councils with respect to the appropriate standards. We have some very poor practice landfill sites in rural South Australia; that is a given. We need to get them up to a reasonable standard; that is also, I think, a given. The question is: how do you fund it and how do you support councils without bankrupting them? I think that is really the basis of the question that the member is asking.

In its workings with the councils, the EPA has been trying to come up with some processes to help them. Zero Waste really is a body that is encouraging recycling, minimising use, educating the community and doing all those general policy things. If it can help regional councils to achieve those goals and if, at the same time, it is helping them to manage in other ways, I think that is probably a good thing. I am not sure whether the member is suggesting that it is inappropriate for Zero Waste to be supporting councils in those ways. I do not think that he is.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** No. I am saying that I think there is a problem brewing in regional South Australia because the

EPA is doing one thing, Zero Waste is doing another and small regional ratepayers are squeezed in the middle. I have recently been to the South-East, the Riverland and Eyre Peninsula, and this issue is being raised everywhere. I think there is an issue where two agencies have got it out of sync.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I disagree with the member's suggestion about why there is a problem. I agree that there is a problem, and it is because the landfill sites in a lot of regional communities are not up to scratch. Under its charter, the EPA has to ensure that they are up to scratch, and it is working out how to do it. Zero Waste is not contributing to the problem: Zero Waste is likely to be contributing to the solution because it has money and it can subsidise those councils to improve the way in which they do certain things. I do not think Zero Waste will create a problem for the rural communities; I think it is part of the solution. The real problem is that they have landfill sites which are not up to scratch, and the real problem for them is how hard and how fast the EPA will insist that they get up to an appropriate standard. I think the EPA is mindful that rural communities have fewer resources available to them than the bigger city councils. While it is not necessarily allowing lower standards, it is trying to come up with a framework which addresses the EPA's concerns without causing too many financial pressures for the councils. I do not think Zero Waste is part of the problem; I think it is part of the solution.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I refer to page 10.10. Minister, why is the government expending \$10 million less on sustainability this year than it did in 2002-03? In 2002-03, expenses were \$30.8 million and this year expenses are \$20 million.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I am advised that the increase in that expenditure of approximately \$7.9 million between the 2003-04 estimated result and the 2004-05 budget primarily reflects a reduction in sales and other revenue resulting from a transfer of land administration functions to the Department of Administrative and Information Services. As a consequence of the transfer, revenues previously collected will be substituted with appropriation in 2004-05, resulting in a significant increase in net cost of services for this program.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I refer to page 10.15 and 10.16. Can the minister advise how much new funding is being directed to progressing the NatureLinks and No Species Loss strategies, or is this simply a rebadging of existing programs?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** As I think I have said in answer to previous questions during estimates, NatureLinks and No Species Loss is really a philosophy to describe all the programs that the department is operating. There has been some allocation, particularly in relation to the No Species Loss strategy, of I think \$700 000, which is an internal reallocation. It is really about the philosophy. What money we spent through DEH, particularly through the national parks and reserves system, through the Crown lands, through all those other wildlife programs, and so on, should be directed to the overall strategic goals of establishing NatureLinks across our landscape. NatureLinks is very much about maintaining, restoring and recreating habitat so that we reduce the chances of losing species. It is really a guiding philosophy for those existing expenditures.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Yes, but the question was: what new funding? Is there any extra money this year?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I just indicated that there is \$700 000.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** New money this year?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** It is reallocated internally from the department for the no species lost strategy.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Minister, what programs do you have in place, or what programs are you considering to educate the community to understand basic ecological principles and the importance of conservation? Many people are still ignorant—and there are some in this place—and do not understand the basic underlying concepts of ecology, and therefore, through their behaviour, we get unacceptable actions. In my area recently, I have seen people killing two wedged-tailed eagles. In one government area—I will not say exactly where—we had the clubbing to death of 10 wallabies. We see people removing trees, destroying remnant urban native vegetation, and so the list goes on. We see people in rural areas who do not have an understanding of the importance of conservation. What are you trying to do to try to change that mindset and provide a greater understanding amongst those people?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Thank you, Mr Chairman, for your question. There is a range of programs which attempt to do that. I will go through them in general terms, and ask Mr Holmes to perhaps fill in some of the detail. It is really a kind of attitudinal change across the government agency. For example, organisations such as the zoo, which is not a government agency but which is funded by government, has very much recreated itself from being a menagerie with its collection of animals in cages that people gawk at to turning itself into a conservation facility.

*Ms Bedford interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** It is fabulous, as the member for Florey says. She is a keen supporter of the zoo, and she was at the zoo foundation dinner the other night as herself. The zoo, for example, is really casting itself as a conservation institution and it participates in a whole range of conservation initiatives. The educational component is very much part of that. Visitors to the zoo, particularly Monarto, cannot help but understand some of those issues. A very good educational program is run through that institution. I made some announcements today about extra funding for the Botanic Gardens which wants to emphasise its role as a cultural, scientific and educational institution very much focused on biodiversity outcomes.

Our national parks system is really very much about not only giving people a pleasant day's experience if they walk through the parks but also, in the process, educating them about the value of biodiversity. Through the natural resource management legislation—once it is passed (hopefully soon)—we will establish local boards which will be charged with developing integrated natural resource management plans for their areas. Much of this work has already been done, but included in that will be a requirement for them to have a biodiversity plan for their area. Those biodiversity plans will involve active participation in conservation measures. We know through the water boards and soil boards that local people end up owning those programs and becoming their best advocates. I am confident that, through the NRM process, we will have many advocates in place who will also push for biodiversity outcomes.

The member's question is really a key question for an agency such as the Department for Environment and Heritage. We can spend a lot of money protecting bits of our environment which are left over and trying to repair bits which have been damaged, but unless we can affect the hearts and minds of the population so that they are all advocates, it really comes to very little. We spend a lot of time thinking about how we can engage the community. The final general

point I make is that, through the sustainability round table (which we have established), we want to engage with the broader community on those kinds of issues.

The CE has established a 'Stirring the possum' series of lectures designed to engage community debate about a whole range of environmental issues. Of course, through our public relations section in the department, we promote stories in the media which highlight positive biodiversity. Recently, the yellow-footed rock wallaby story, as I mentioned, had a large run. I will ask Mr Holmes specifically to talk about our educational programs.

**Mr HOLMES:** I refer to the five goals in the department's corporate plan. One of the important goals is fostering debate on the environment and engaging the community, which are the very things about which the minister has been talking. Dropping down to the detailed level, we have a small environmental education unit which works with the Department for Education and Children's Services specifically to influence curriculum in schools around the things about which you are talking. It is a small unit but it does extensive work. That unit is supported by two or three other key sites. One is Cleland Wildlife Park which, like the zoo, provides that extension opportunity around nature conservation. The Botanic Gardens has its own education program, again in a partnership with the Department for Education and Children's Services. We have a comprehensive web site linked to our environmental information directorate, which provides considerable information to people about these matters. There is quite a comprehensive program of activity around education and extension and changing people's behaviours, as I have outlined.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I am aware that the Department for Education and Children's Services is rewriting all its curriculum documents at the moment. I do not know whether your department has had any input into the science curriculum that is being rewritten but, if not, I would urge you to do so. We still see people in the community who think that, if they have planted a tree, they have saved the environment without seeing (as you indicated earlier today) the total picture; that is, the need for under-storey shrubs, grasses and so on. People write to my local paper who cannot understand why a creek line restoration project is occurring. They do not understand that not all trees are equal; that you have to get rid of some of the exotics otherwise you will not have any native birdlife left.

I noticed that your department had some advertisements in the Southern Times urging people to be aware that the leaves from cold climate, exotic trees damage riverine systems. I commend you for doing that. However, I urge you to intensify the education program throughout the wider community not only for non-English speaking people but also for the total community because there is still much ignorance in the community.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The chairman is right. I guess it depends on whether you are an optimist or a pessimist; whether you see the glass as being half full or half empty. I also believe that there is much knowledge and understanding in the community. There is a greater understanding about environmental issues now than ever in our history. Twenty years or so ago, the understanding of environmental issues was limited to a few slogans about recycling and car emissions. I think that there is a much more subtle understanding in the general community now about the inter-relationship of all the elements in our environment and ecology and issues

relating to biodiversity and sustainability. However, it is a slow process.

I am very optimistic about the NRM process as the appropriate process to engage the community in working through those issues. Not everyone becomes involved but we do create leaders, advocates and programs which operate at a local level and to which people can point. We now have wetlands in Adelaide at various places, where stormwater is collected and cleaned; and there are reeds, ducks and pleasant places where people can walk their dogs—responsibly of course (on a leash and fully tailed)—or do whatever they want. By going through those processes, people start asking questions: ‘Why did this change?’ and ‘What happened here?’ There will be signs explaining it and saying, ‘Do not get into that water: it is not fit for human contact because it is going through the process of being cleaned.’ I think that, through those measures, we get the message across.

The Premier, of course, is a solar junkie, a strong advocate, and I think that that enthusiasm spills into the community. We are hoping that this building will have solar panels on it and that all the major institutions will have solar panels. That helps get the message across, and kids know about them—they talk to their parents about them. It is a slow process, but (and I know that you are a former educator, Mr Chairman, as was I) while not every student gets an A, we hope that they all improve over the course of time.

**Ms BEDFORD:** I refer to Portfolio Statement page 10.24, which states that the Encounter Marine Protected Area (MPA) will be proclaimed. What actions are under way to meet this target?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I thank the member for her question. This really clarifies the point asked by the member for Davenport earlier on. The government’s pre-election policies and the living coast strategy provide for the protection of areas of outstanding ecological significance through the establishment of a system of multiple use marine protected areas. A statutory framework for the dedication of MPAs and for addressing displacement of marine industries by such dedication is being developed.

In addition, marine and scientific advisory committees are also being established. A pilot study has been undertaken for the establishment of a marine protected area in the waters around the Fleurieu peninsula from Carrickalinga Head on the Fleurieu peninsula to Point Marsden on Kangaroo Island and from Cape Willoughby on Kangaroo Island to the Murray mouth. DEH and PIRSA are working with the consultative committee and have jointly developed a draft proposal for public consultation in the last half of this year.

It is intended that the Encounter Marine Protected Area will be proclaimed under the National Parks and Wildlife Act as an interim measure while the new legislation is developed. The Encounter pilot consultative committee of 12 members drawn from around the Fleurieu peninsula and Kangaroo Island was established in November 2002 because, as I have already said, community consultation is a major focus of the marine protected areas program to establish an understanding and custodianship of the most precious resource, our seas and the unique organisms that inhabit them.

**Ms BEDFORD:** I refer to the same document, page 10.22, which advises of the review of the DEH fire management policies following the Premier’s Bushfire Summit. What activities will be undertaken in improving the planning and implementation of fire management programs in parks across the state?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I thank the member for this question. This is a very important question for us. As members would be aware, the Department for Environment and Heritage is responsible for fire management on land under its control to ensure the protection of life and property and also the maintenance of biodiversity values. So, they have to do two things. On 23 May last year the Premier announced a \$10 million increase in the budget over four years to increase the capacity for the department to plan and implement fire management programs in parks across the state; 2004-05 will be the second year of the implementation of this program. During 2003-04 fire management responses and community protection plans were developed for priority reserves, including a model for community bushfire protection adjacent to national parks and a plan for the housing within Innes National Park. Planning has also been undertaken for fire reserves in the South-East, and the public exhibition of the draft Flinders Chase fire management plan has been completed.

In addition, the fire management plan for the Mount Lofty Ranges is nearing completion. Planning and implementation of prescribed burning programs in high risk areas has also been undertaken. At this point I must say that the collaboration and cooperation between the department and the Country Fire Service is extremely good—I think it is probably better here than anywhere else in Australia—and I acknowledge the positive comments that the head of the CFS had to make about the relationship in the estimates committee the other day. The DEH, in cooperation with the CFS, have conducted 18 prescribed burns totalling 489 hectares during spring last year and autumn this year. The majority of those burns were in the Mount Lofty Ranges with the goal of minimising the risk to life and property while taking into account protection of native wildlife and plants.

Summer fire crews and Correctional Services pre-release crews have been involved in on-ground prevention, protection and suppression work in strategic locations, with priority works being undertaken in the Mount Lofty Ranges. Twelve specialist staff have been recruited to enhance the department’s knowledge and skills in fire management. Research and monitoring is also being enhanced through these staff and research initiatives through the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre and cooperative arrangements with tertiary institutions. The department is also continuing to develop strong partnerships with the CFS and local communities in the planning and development of fire management programs. The successful Bushfire 2004 Conference, held in May this year, was another example of agencies working together to improve their knowledge, skills and capacity to manage fire within the state.

**Ms BEDFORD:** I have a supplementary question. Is any work being done on incorporating indigenous fire management practices in our plans?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** That is certainly a very interesting question, and I guess the member is alluding to the fact that traditional owners used fire as a way of managing the land. It certainly had an impact and changed the nature of the biodiversity on this continent over thousands of years. I will perhaps ask Allan Holmes to comment on that.

**Mr HOLMES:** I think there are three considerations in planning fire management works, or undertaking controlled burns: first, the ecology of the area and understanding the impact that fire has on plant and broader ecosystems; second, the protection of life, property, neighbours and investments in parks; and, third, the cultural activities of traditional

owners (and, generally, of course, they relate to the ecology of the park). The problem is that there are very few places where those cultures are intact and those practices continue to be undertaken. It is continued only in the AP lands, where we have been doing some experimental work with communities to look at ecosystem management and traditional burning, and some really interesting stuff is beginning to emerge in terms of restoring that country not just from an ecological point of view but also from a productivity point of view for people living in fairly traditional ways—that is, managing their production of food from the land. As I said, some really interesting stuff is happening in the AP lands.

**Ms BEDFORD:** My last question relates to page 10.6 where reference is made to a review of the management, use and ownership of state government-owned heritage sites. What is the government doing to manage the Fort Glanville and Marble Hill heritage sites to ensure that they remain accessible to the public and that their heritage values are protected?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I thank the member for that question. There has been some public comment about both those institutions so it is important to get the facts on the table. There will be little impact on fort maintenance and operations, which will be managed with an ongoing annual budget allocation of \$25 000. In regard to access, current statistics show that most visitors to the fort attend on association open days—that is 1 087 people, or 43 per cent of a total of 2 522 visitors annually, and that also includes school tours and self-guided tours. So, relatively few people visit the fort. The fort will remain open for public access on open days on the third Sunday of each month from September to May and for tours, subject to the availability of guides.

In addition, revenue generated on open days through an entry fee of \$5.50 a person or \$2.20 concession is collected by the Fort Glanville Historical Association and retained by the group for the purchase of uniforms and for restoration activities.

Special funding of \$20 000 was also made available to the park in 2003-04 for preparation of the business assessment report, expressions of interest call and site security upgrade. The report recommends future management options for the fort and, in particular, identifies the possibility of working with an external business partner in conjunction with the association to raise the profile of the fort and improve its financial viability. A public call for expressions of interest to select an appropriate business partner has been commissioned and will be completed by the end of the 2003-04 financial year. Arrangements will be implemented in 2004-05.

The Marble Hill site has been managed by the DEH in association with the Friends of Marble Hill since 1992. Current activities focus on protecting the heritage values and associated infrastructure, and \$100 000 worth of repair and maintenance work was completed in 2003-04. In addition, specific projects have been undertaken through the State Heritage Fund, the former National Estate Grants program and DEH grants to the Friends of Marble Hill. A rental income of \$5 000 to \$6 000 a year is also received from the cottage attached to the tearooms, which is used for repair works.

The greater natural area that surrounds the Marble Hill ruin is being managed for nature conservation by the department. To ensure that the site's heritage continues to be protected, a brief for expressions of interest is currently being drafted. The brief seeks proposals that can generate income,

provide for public access and ensure that the site's heritage values are maintained.

*[Sitting suspended from 1.01 to 2 p.m.]*

#### **Membership:**

Mrs Hall substituted for Mr Goldsworthy.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** The budget papers indicate that new crown lands legislation is to be introduced. Does this mean that the deadlock conference on the current bill will not proceed and that you will introduce totally new legislation?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** As a result of the competition policy processes, crown lands legislation had to be reviewed. I think that probably commenced when the member for Davenport was minister. I am not entirely sure of that, but it has been going on for some time. It is the government's intention to bring that legislation before the house at some stage—I hope later this year. Regarding whether or not we proceed with the deadlock conference on the crown lands legislation, I have been turning my mind to that over the last week or so. I think it is probably unnecessary to pursue it as the controversial bits that I added in did not survive. The administrative bits did survive, but there were a number of other bits that were unacceptable to the government. The question in my head is: do I spend time going through that process when we will have to bring a lot of those measures back to the parliament anyway towards the end of the year? I have not finally decided, but my inclination is not to take up the time of members in going through that deadlock conference when we will be coming back with all of those matters again.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** The minister may need to take this question on notice. I have just been given this information by the shadow minister in another place. Apparently, a public meeting was held in Ceduna last week with regard to freeholding perpetual crown lease land. Constituents have contacted the opposition because of their concern at the underlying bullying tactics expressed at the meeting. I understand that perpetual crown lease holders at that meeting were told that freeholding offers will be made to them with a limited time in which to respond. If they do not accept the conditions in that correspondence, the opportunity to freehold at \$2 000 per lease will be removed and \$6 000 per lease will be put into place.

These constituents have told the opposition that they were very firmly told that under no circumstances would they be able to sell the property unless it is freeholded and that the amount of coastal land to be resumed by the Crown has in some cases gone from 50 metres to 150 metres. This is now part of the offer that must be responded to urgently. My questions are: given that the legislation is in abeyance and cannot be reclaimed without the deadlock conference being resolved, why did the department give false information to the public? Does the minister agree that the information given was false? What action does the minister intend to take with regard to this, and will apologies be sent to the constituents involved? Why is the Crown subsuming three times the distance of agreed coastal land?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I assume the question is about coastal and river perpetual crown leases, because all the other perpetual leaseholders, other than rangelands and river and coastal leaseholders, I would have imagined have put in their requests. We gave a longer period of time to those who have

coastal land. As the member would remember, that was to enable greater consideration to be given to the detailed issues associated with coastal protection. As I understand it, the rules that apply refer to a minimum of 50 metres having to be kept under Crown control. It could be greater than 50 metres depending on the form of the land. For instance, if sand dunes go back 150 metres, that would be considered part of the coast and ought to be within the Crown reserve. We are trying to work through these issues at both a scientific and a community level.

I am not aware of any meeting that may have been held last week. I am certainly not aware of any of the issues to which the member refers. I would be very surprised if officers were bullying members of the public. They may have told them that a deadline had been set by the government. That was known to everyone, and there is a policy to increase the cost of freeholding. However, I would be very surprised to hear that people are being bullied. I will have a look at what was said, but we are in the process generally of trying to work through the issues about freeholding coastal properties. There are more complex issues, as the member would know, to do with the Surveyor-General's requirements which could be quite expensive in some circumstances. We are almost having to look at this case by case to work out what has to be done.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Is the koala sterilisation program on Kangaroo Island still in operation? If so, how many koalas were sterilised last year and at what cost, and how many are proposed to be sterilised this year and at what cost?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The koala sterilisation program is still in operation. Since 1925 the profile of koalas has shifted from that of a species introduced to KI for conservation purposes to one of over-population. The koalas' highly selective browsing is damaging to KI's unique vegetation, as members would know. The cost of the program on KI, since its inception in 1997, is \$1.8 million. The project, which operates within a population management framework of sterilisation and translocation, has been funded at \$200 000 per year since 1998. To date, this funding has been used to administer the koala management program; to sterilise approximately 4 000 koalas and translocate approximately 1 500 sterilised koalas to a suitable habitat on the South Australian mainland; and to monitor koala density and tree condition on KI and at release sites.

The management program is based on a course of sterilisation and translocation. It is expected to be funded about \$200 000 for the 2004-05 financial year. This funding will support sterilisation, translocation, monitoring and administration. I am not sure of the exact number of koalas that have been sterilised. It is up to 200 each year, and that has been fairly standard since 1998.

**The CHAIRMAN:** As to that issue of the koalas on Kangaroo Island, some people think in terms of shooting them, which is a fairly crude but effective technique. I would have thought that if you are anaesthetising them to give them an operation (and I assume that that is what you are still doing) I cannot see how people can easily object if they are euthanased totally.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Rather than partially?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Instead of having a sleep for an operation, they have eternal sleep, which is a humane way of putting down other animals. The media portrayal seems to be that someone will go around with a shot gun and blow them out of the trees, but the reality is that you are giving them an anaesthetic, anyway. Why not euthanase them?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Why not indeed! That is the question that has confronted governments of both persuasions for some time. On many issues there are differences of opinion, but on this issue there seems to be bipartisanship in the opinion that governments have been reluctant to embark on that proposal, not so much because of the ethics of that—although that is an issue—but I think it could be done in a humane way, as the member is suggesting. It is probably possible that we could convince the population of South Australia that it was a wise and sensible way of dealing with the issue.

The real issue for us is the impact that has on our reputation: not all parts of the world have South Australia before their eyes on a very regular basis. However, every time this koala issue comes up and a suggestion is made that they may be culled, the international, particularly the Japanese media, goes a bit wild. Recently a number of people suggested culling and, as a consequence of that, I was interviewed by three Japanese media outlets who sent reporters to South Australia. Two of them sent television crews: cameramen, soundmen and an interviewer; and a third sent to K.I. a newspaper reporter, who interviewed me in my office. They went to K. I. and talked to people on the island. There was huge interest internationally.

*The Hon. I.F. Evans interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** It possibly did. I get interview requests from Europe and America, and I know that this issue is covered globally every time it is raised. That is just because a politician from the non-government parties suggested that it ought to happen. If we actually were to do it, I suggest to you that the media interest would be absolutely extraordinary; we would have more camera people on Kangaroo Island than there would be koalas. It would just be a field day for negative publicity. The government is concerned—as was the former government—about the impact on our reputation and the impact that would have on our tourism. Kangaroo Island, of course, relies heavily on tourism—it is one of the prime tourism locations in South Australia and, indeed, Australia. We are very concerned about what the cull might do. I have asked the department to provide me with some thoughts about how we can manage this problem in a more sustainable way, and I guess the bottom line is that we would need to put in considerably more resources. If there are 30 000 or so koalas, you would have to sterilise a significant number to have an impact on the growth of the population. We are certainly looking at all those options.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Minister, the reality is that—and it is not just of this government—a lot of these koalas are going to starve to death, which is a pretty cruel way to treat an animal. If you did it elsewhere, the RSPCA would be onto you. I just think that the weight of evidence from experts is that, somewhere along the line, you are going to have to do something. I reject totally the idea of shooting them, but you are going to have some pretty sick animals that will need to be euthanased. I think that the issue is how you go about what is a very serious problem on what I think should be called Koala Island. What is needed is a sensible, humane approach, which may be quietly putting them to sleep, but certainly not shooting them.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I do not think it would be quietly putting them to sleep—that is the problem. It would be putting them to sleep very noisily. I understand the point that the member is making and, as I have said in a lot of the media interviews, logic is one thing, but you must bear in mind



other things; in this case, it is our reputation and our tourism economy. However, I am aware of what the member is saying.

**Mrs HALL:** I apologise that I was not present during this morning's session; I understand that you made reference (in part) to one of the questions that I have for the minister now. I refer to page 10.27 where, under 'Performance Commentary', a couple of sentences refer to the capacity of local government to administer and manage heritage programs which is going to be increased, and the management, use and ownership of state government-owned heritage sites which are to be reviewed, and improvements to the management of heritage in parks which will also occur.

On page 10.8, under 'Targets for 2004-05', one of the dot points is to establish a South Australian heritage council. Could the minister provide some information specifically—and he knows that I have been interested in this for some time—on the budget arrangements for Marble Hill and the ruins there. I have attended a number of meetings over the last couple of years, and one of the things that is of great concern to the Friends of Marble Hill and other interested people (not the least of whom are those who actually use the facility) is that the budget appears to be now so structured that the very best they can hope for is 'ongoing maintenance'. As the minister would well understand, that will create very significant problems for the site, for public access and for safety issues, so I wonder if the minister can perhaps outline to us what he has in mind with the South Australian Heritage Council and specifically what plans, if any (because I am aware of a long held view within the agency) that sites such as Marble Hill do not have a big future.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I think probably that last comment is not accurate. I think sites like Marble Hill do have a big future, but the question is whether they have a big future with the Department of the Environment. I will get to that in a minute. Generally, the Heritage Directions Framework was released on 8 August 2003 and incorporates key aspects of the government's election policy on heritage. The implementation of Heritage Directions is being pursued through five targets, for improving heritage management in South Australia, as follows:

- Target 1 is Heritage Register, and that is to create a single register of state and local heritage places, regularly reviewed and updated, so that both local and state governments will have their lists on the one site. I think that will be very useful for anybody who is interested in these issues, particularly developers.
- Target 2, legislation to realign the Heritage Act and the Development Act and improve South Australia's heritage management framework. I am hoping to have heritage legislation before the house relatively soon. The Sustainable Development Bill is out for consultation at the moment and that contains new measures which impose a number of requirements for local government.
- Target 3, local government to rationalise local heritage management practices across local councils, improve the protection of local heritage places and increase support to local councils and heritage management. The budget has \$2.9 million, and a significant amount of that is to employ heritage experts who will work with local councils to help them develop a local management plan. That has been one of the problems.
- Target 4, education and interpretation to promote heritage appreciation, tourism opportunities, specialised trade skills and environmental sustainability objectives.

- Target 5, state owned heritage assets to review the best long-term management strategies for heritage assets in government ownership.

In relation to that last point, I should say to the member that we own, as a government, 300 or so buildings which are listed under the State Heritage List. They range from a building such as this. I assume this building is one of those, although I do not know if the government owns it; however, it is owned in the general sense by the government. Marble Hill is one of the places we own, and I guess Government House is one. There are some obvious ones which have practical uses and which provide a useful function for the community.

Then there are other places, such as the Adelaide Gaol and Fort Glanville—a whole range of places—which are owned by the community but held by the government. All of them, if they had a lot of money spent on them, would be fantastic. There is no doubt about that. If you spent \$5 million, \$6 million or \$10 million on the Adelaide Gaol you would have a great institution there. I do not know how much you would want to spend on Fort Glanville, but the more you spend, the better the outcomes, I guess.

We could spend tens of millions of dollars on Marble Hill, redeveloping that site, and trying to restore it to its former glory. You would have to spend tens of millions of dollars. All these buildings compete with each other and against all the other issues that the government has before it, not only in the environment portfolio, but across government, so it is trying to work out how to manage it.

Some of these buildings are held by the Department of Environment, others are held by other government departments. I do not believe that the Department of Environment is the right body, necessarily, to hold and manage these buildings. Its heritage section is really not a building management section: it is really a policy development and advisory section and an education section. The national park section, which manages some of these buildings, is really not about managing buildings: it is about managing the natural estate.

We do have an entity in government, namely, the History Trust, which does have the capacity and skills to manage heritage buildings and interpret them and use them for tourism purposes. I am sure that as the shadow minister you would appreciate that. The History Trust at the moment manages three significant museums: the Migration Museum, South Australian Maritime Museum, and the National Motor Museum. We have also passed the Queen's Theatre onto it to manage, and it has done a very good job there.

We are looking at passing control of Carrick Hill to it, and I imagine that a number of these other sites could be better managed and interpreted by that body. Their ownership may stay with the Department of Environment, but they could have responsibility for ongoing management and developing curatorial skills, marketing skills and so on.

That is my broader plan. We are going to look at all of the 300 buildings which we own to work out if the ownership arrangements and the management arrangements in place at the moment are appropriate. Are the buildings being used in a meaningful way? Can they be used in a more meaningful way to satisfy current public needs, or could they be commercially developed in some way? I would point to the Medina Hotel, which is an example of a heritage building that was a drain on state assets, I guess, but which has now been renovated and has added just so much to that part of the city; it is fantastic. There are some of those possibilities across the state that we already have.

In relation particularly to Marble Hill, I did go through the details of that, and perhaps just rather than go through it all again I will refer you to my answer this morning. The approach we are taking is that a brief for expressions of interest is being drafted, and that brief seeks proposals that can generate income, provide for public access and ensure that the site's heritage values are maintained.

I guess we are possibly looking in relation to Marble Hill for not necessarily a Medina Hotel style development but something that can practically use that site in a way which is of benefit to the state and to our economy. They are the kinds of things we are working on.

**Mrs HALL:** As a supplementary question, one of the issues following from the minister's answers is those heritage building sites, the built heritage that is currently under the responsibility of the Department for the Environment and Heritage. In terms of time lines that we are talking about, I have listened carefully to what the minister has said about future programs and possibilities that the government is looking at but, in the meantime, some of these particularly significant built heritage sites under the care and control of the minister's department are going to need some commitment by the government to ensure that their maintenance and public access issues are at least covered.

My understanding, from those who have been involved particularly with Marble Hill, is that it is of huge concern, because the issues of public liability and occupational health and safety are very real up there. Will the minister give a commitment that the site will not be 'defunded' in the waiting period while the government makes up its mind about what it will do? Can the minister guarantee that the standards will be maintained and that the facility will be maintained?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I think the issue at Marble Hill is not so much the maintenance of ongoing funding. We have been managing that, as I said, since 1992. In 2003-04 an extra \$100 000 for repair and maintenance work was completed, and specific projects have been funded through the State Heritage Fund. There is funding going in there and there has been. I think the frustration for the Friends of Marble Hill is that they would like to see a huge amount of money spent on that site to bring it to something closer to what it was in the past.

**Mrs HALL:** I think it is not so much the money spent: they would like a decision on its future.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** They are not happy with it staying as it is. What you are really asking is for an assurance that it would stay as it is, and I am saying that we keep funding it to be maintained at that kind of current level. I do not disagree that we should be clear about its future. Equally, we should be clear about what we are going to do with the other 299 assets that we have. For example, we have Martindale Hall up in Clare, which is an important tourism facility. I am sure that the honourable member has been there. That is run as a DEH property, but it seems to me that it is not our bag to be running guest houses or B&B places. Also, it is on a large piece of land that does not have a lot of natural heritage value, I would not think, although we can confirm that. But they are important assets to the community and I think potentially have huge tourism potential. Martindale Hall is a very attractive place where people like to go.

We are in the process of establishing a working group across government that will have representatives from my department, from Tourism, Treasury, the DAIS and, I think, Planning, to systematically work through all these buildings and look at what the options are. The History Trust will also

be on it. They will look at the options and the management structures that we may need to put in place for the longer term. This will be the first time that there has been any systematic review of those assets. In addition, we have also agreed to provide the National Trust with an extra \$130 000 a year, which will help increase its capacity, because it also looks after a lot of state-owned heritage buildings, and its activities and those assets are also an important part of our cultural heritage but also important tourism assets.

It seems to me that, if we can develop some better structures and understandings, we can exploit these assets much more effectively and create more income, which we can then use to look after them. I cannot say that we are going to have that done in a matter of weeks: this is a fairly long-term project. In relation to Marble Hill, we are going out to tender, I hope, relatively soon.

**Mrs HALL:** Could the minister define 'relatively soon'? Is that a week, a month, one year, or 10 years?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I am not sure of the time line, but I am advised that we are working on an expression of interest and hope to put out for tender relatively soon. It will not be 10 years but it will not be two weeks, either.

**Mr HANNA:** I have two questions relevant to the Nature Conservation Program. The first is in relation to my electorate. The minister would probably be aware of the Field River catchment in his capacity as Minister for the Southern Suburbs. That area, currently in privately held hands, namely the Sheidow Family Trust, is gradually becoming eroded and damaged in various ways, both the built and natural heritage of the area, and it is of some significance. What plans are afoot to assess and preserve the value of it, and is there any scope at all for taking it into government hands?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The honourable member raises an interesting issue that is common in urban areas. You have remnant bits of a natural system, whether it be native vegetation or a river or whatever, which have been modified so significantly over time that it is hard to see them as having any great environmental benefit. What do we do with those assets and how do we manage them? I am not aware of any particular plans in relation to the Field River, although I will ask the CE to comment in a minute.

It would seem to me that, through the NRM process, we are establishing a mechanism to allow local communities to begin investing in those assets and to use them in a productive way, in an environmental sense, which contributes to re-establishment of biodiversity corridors, parks or whatever in our urban areas. Picking up a point which I know is important to the chair, we need to ensure that, when we plant local indigenous plants, we have appropriate watercourse management and so on. This can all contribute to restoring some of these things if not to what they were in pre-settlement days then at least to something which is adding value to that local community. I will now ask Mr Holmes to comment.

**Mr HOLMES:** I am aware of some discussion between our regional staff and council staff about that complex of public and private land along the Field River, but I am not aware of where that is at in terms of a broader plan of what might happen in the future. The only thing I will add is that ownership by the Crown is not necessarily the solution to the problem. Ownership by council may provide the solution or, alternatively, some control through the development plan, and retaining the land in private ownership might also achieve those ends. It does not have to be something that the state government owns.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** We will get the member some information in relation to that matter.

**Mr HANNA:** Thank you. My remaining question is in relation to a site where there is a proposal for an ecotourism resort or the like on Kangaroo Island. I am sorry that at this point I am not able to provide more detail, but I am told that the development would involve considerable native vegetation clearance. It may be a matter that is simply dealt with by the Native Vegetation Council, but will the minister take that issue on notice to see whether there are any outstanding development applications on K.I. and to see whether there is anything that state government agencies could do to preserve the interests of the native vegetation?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I am aware that there are some propositions, proposals or ideas for various developments on K.I. There have been for years, I guess, coming and going. There has been some discussion about mariners, and so on, to which the member might be referring. There was a proposition a year or so ago to which my department objected and, as a result of those objections (although we were not the only ones objecting), the proposition was cancelled.

We had the advantage that the member mentioned to me before the lunch break that he might ask this question, so we have asked the Native Vegetation Council whether it is aware of any applications. The council has not had any applications, so I think it must be very much at the concept stage and 'wouldn't it be a good idea if we could' stage. The Native Vegetation Council would obviously apply the rules to any proposed development. I guess we would say to people who are contemplating those kinds of developments that it would probably be a good idea to talk to us informally to find out what the rules are and to see whether there are some areas which would have less impact than others. There are parts of K.I. which have been developed or altered so significantly that some additional development would be an improvement rather than a detriment. However, there are other areas, of course, where it is pristine, and it would be an absolute scandal to allow those kind of developments. We would be happy to work with people.

I would also like to add that, earlier in estimates today, the member for Davenport raised the issue of a proposed development near Ceduna that had been forwarded to the Coastal Protection Board for comment, in accordance with the Development Act. I am advised that the Coastal Protection Board objected to the proposal, but on the basis that it is not an appropriate development in the coastal zone. The decision was not taken on the basis of the impact of the mean sea level, which the member rightly noted could be 0.3 metres. I am also advised that, since the comment was made, the local council has decided that the Development Assessment Commission is the appropriate planning authority rather than the council. The applicant then withdrew the application with the intention of lodging a new application with the commission. I am also advised that the commission has not yet received this application.

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

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Environment Protection Authority, \$8 692 000

**Departmental Advisers:**

Dr P. Vogel, Chair and Chief Executive of the Environment Protection Authority.

Mr J. O'Daly, Director, Corporate and Business Support.

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

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Yes, thank you, Mr Chairman. The 2003-04 financial year has been a very important one for the Environment Protection Authority. It has been an opportunity for the EPA Board to consolidate its expanded role and to put its stamp on how the EPA will conduct its business now and into the future. Current actions focusing on an improved legislative mandate for the EPA include:

- the Environment Protection (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2004, which represents a significant strengthening of the EP Act 1993, providing for more effective administration of the act and the introduction of civil offences under the act—I expect to introduce this bill into this place when parliament resumes after the winter recess;
- beverage container provisions of the EP Act 1993, which will provide an expanded framework for regulating the container deposit system and improve its efficacy;
- the Environment Protection (Site Contamination) Amendment Bill and supporting legislation, which will introduce provisions into the Environment Protection Act 1993 to manage site contamination. A final draft bill to government has been prepared by the EPA and consultation will occur shortly (which was part of an answer to the question asked by the member for Davenport);
- a review of the Radiation Protection and Control Act 1982, which will update that legislation;
- the environment protection noise policy to manage the impact of noise emissions on neighbouring communities;
- the environment protection waste policy, which will enable regulation of a wider range of waste types, ensuring consistency in waste management activities in allowing the setting of targets for the diversion of waste to landfill;
- the development of the load-based licensing system, which will provide a more equitable basis for the licensing of activities based upon the pollutant load discharge to the environment; and
- the environment protection air quality policy, which will manage the air environment of South Australia.

Many programs and projects are also being implemented by the EPA. Some examples of these are as follows: accredited licensing, which has introduced an incentive for licensees who demonstrate excellence in environmental management practice; a framework which has been developed to assess and report on industry monitoring programs; and a process has also been developed to analyse and assess emissions data from organisations licensed by the EPA. Approximately 60 licensees' data have been reviewed to support the development of the load-based licensing programs.

In 2003, the EPA state of the environment report was also released. The report covers a five-year period and highlights both the positives and negatives of our collective stewardship of this environment. While there have been significant gains in some areas in the past two years such as the River Murray, improved lead levels in Adelaide, improved land management and the recovery of a number of threatened species, it is clear that more work has to be done in a number of areas which have received little attention in past years. For instance, resource consumption is rising, as is the amount of waste generated. Our energy consumption continues to rise and our water resource usage is unsustainable. Greenhouse gas emissions from Australia and our state continue to rise.

The EPA continues to address environmental sustainability through balanced and strong legislation, and by developing programs and policies which provide the basis for sound decision making, all of which are being used to work with industry and community to achieve the best environmental, social and economic outcomes for this state.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** The minister has mentioned the contaminated land legislation. I understand that it will be introduced shortly—whatever ‘shortly’ means. Will that legislation apply to the Mobil site?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** My understanding is that it will, yes.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Will it also apply to the Mitsubishi site?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I would assume so. It will apply to all public and private land in South Australia. That is the intention. It will cover the field, as I understand it.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Why did the EPA not prosecute SA Water when one million litres of sewage spilled from an outlet south of Hallett Cove Conservation Park?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I will ask Dr Vogel to answer that question. Of course, the EPA, as an independent authority, makes determinations about these kinds of matters. It is not something that the government chooses to do or not to do. The EPA has prosecuted SA Water in relation to other sites and there is also a matter before the courts in relation to Transport SA. If there is some sort of suggestion that they are a bit soft on government agencies, I can assure the committee that that is not the case. However, I will ask Dr Vogel to answer in relation to this particular issue.

**Dr VOGEL:** I think that was the one where there was a power failure and the pump station failed. In our view, that was not a deliberate act: it was as a result of a power failure and the incapacity of that station to deal with the power failure and sewage overflow. We have managed that by talking to SA Water (through the development of a code) about what contingency measures they can practically put in place to deal with those sorts of eventualities, be it back-up power supply, having trucks available, etc. Those negotiations are still under way, but it was our view that, in that instance, and in accordance with our compliance and enforcement policy, prosecution would not have been the best course of action to achieve the outcome.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Are you advising the committee that your prosecution policy is that, if it is not deliberate, then there is no prosecution?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I will invite Dr Vogel to answer.

**Dr VOGEL:** That is not the case. We need to address a whole series of criteria before we would make a decision about prosecution, and that document is now being developed. It is one of the things which we look at. We have to look at the harm that is caused to the environment, plus a whole range of other matters about whether or not they had plans in place, was it an accident, could it have been avoided, etc. You need to go through a whole decision tree.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Is it not true that the site was licensed by the EPA? They licensed it knowing that there was no back-up generator and then, as a result, when the power fails, the sewage spills. In part, is not the EPA at fault for licensing a facility such as that without its having a back-up generator? Why would the EPA license a facility that does not have a back-up power source knowing that, if the power source collapses, the sewage flows into the creek?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I will ask Dr Vogel to answer that.

**Dr VOGEL:** It is my understanding that the pump station itself is not licensed. It is not a licensed facility. It is not an activity that is likely to cause pollution, therefore it is not an environmentally significant activity. It is a pump station: it is not an activity itself.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** But it did cause a pollution incident, did it not?

**Dr VOGEL:** As a result of another incident. My understanding is that it is not a licensed activity, therefore the action that we take would have to be commensurate with that approach.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I ask this through the minister: surely, when you look at SA Water and its facilities, you ask what happens if power is cut? To me, that would be a logical question. What happens if power is cut to this pumping—

*Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:*

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I am not on the EPA board and never have been. Neither is your minister. I am not asking the minister.

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS:** You cannot ask his adviser. You can ask the minister only.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I am going through the minister. Surely, it is logical that the EPA would ask the entity they are licensing—in this case, SA Water—what happens when the power is cut. Is that not a logical question to ask? Then you would make a decision.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** In relation to this issue, I inspected on the day the failure occurred. It was a very hot day and there was stress on the power supplies in the southern suburbs. I am not quite sure why it broke down.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** So, was the department of transport prosecuted for the spill into the Torrens?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Let me finish. I was saying that it was a power failure on the day. I inspected it. Dr Vogel has answered the questions in relation to whether or not SA Water was to be prosecuted. I am advised that there are ongoing discussions with SA Water and the EPA about developments of strategies to avoid this in the future. I would have thought that is appropriate when you learn that there has been a problem: you try to work out ways to avoid it. Whether that involves back-up generators or mobile generators (which is I think one of the suggestions that has been made), I guess they are still working through. I will ask Dr Vogel if he has anything further to say.

**Dr VOGEL:** We are involved in ongoing discussions with SA Water as to the most cost-effective way of dealing with those sorts of events—which are unusual. We are working with them. On my understanding, because it is not a licensed facility, we have to find a sensible way for them to deal with it in a cost-effective way. They have a number of stations around the state so we have to look at the whole state and what happens. There is a lot of scenario planning around what is cost-effective for SA Water, but with a clear intention that they manage those things to avert and minimise risk to the environment.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Was the department of transport penalised for the spill into the Torrens?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** This matter is still, as I understand it, in the judicial system. The Torrens Lake diesel spill occurred on 23 July last year. The DPP has undertaken to prosecute TransAdelaide for the offence of recklessly causing serious environmental harm contrary to section 79(1) of the act. So the matter is still—

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Was that because of a pump failure?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** If you are trying to draw a comparison with the SA Water matter, the difference is that this is a licensed facility.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I see. I think I have it right, now. If an unlicensed facility spills a million litres of sewage in one area, they are not prosecuted; but, if a licensed facility spills something in another area, they are prosecuted. Can someone explain to me why whether it is licensed or unlicensed has anything to do with the level of environmental harm? I do not understand the difference. One is a licensed facility, the pump fails, there is a spill and they are prosecuted. One is an unlicensed facility, the power fails, there is a spill, and there is no penalty. I do not quite understand the difference.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I will ask Dr Vogel to try to explain it.

**Dr VOGEL:** In the case of the TransAdelaide spill (and I have to be careful because it is before the courts), the amount of material that went into the Torrens was deemed by our investigators to have caused environmental harm. As a result of an investigation, we could demonstrate that animals had died and there was a significant change to the environment because of that spill. It was not a result of an unforeseen accident: in our view, there was some foreknowledge of what might have occurred because of management practices. Our investigators had a fairly clear view that there was harm caused and we could demonstrate that through looking at the environment and we could go back and look at what management practices were in place.

In the SA Water case, a power failure that would lead to such a significant event is not a usual event. We were looking at it from an outcome perspective. We have to ask, 'What can we do and what can SA Water do to manage that event so that it does not happen again?' In the case of TransAdelaide, in our view, there was definitely harm to the environment resulting from management practices that could have been averted.

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS:** I refer to the Portfolio Statements at page 10.68. Castalloy is in my electorate at North Plympton. Some local residents have been receiving information from members of an organisation saying that the EPA tried to stop them joining legal action against Castalloy. On my understanding that is not true. Could you explore that, and also tell me what progress is being made to address community concerns about noise and odour emissions at Castalloy?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I thank the member for his question. I acknowledge his ongoing and detailed interest in this issue, which is a problem for his community. I guess Castalloy is an example of general problems, particularly in the western suburbs, where planning decisions of 40, 50, 60 or 70 years ago put industry and housing against each other. The Castalloy foundry is located at North Plympton and has been the subject of ongoing resident scrutiny for many years due to odour and noise emissions. Over the past five years, the EPA has sought to bring Castalloy into compliance with current environmental standards.

Castalloy is subject to stringent monitoring and reporting requirements as conditions of its EPA and environmental authorisation. Between December 2002 and March 2003, the company undertook community consultation regarding its objective to become a no-odour, no-fume and low noise site within three years and to remove all automotive castings to its new foundry at the Wingfield Cast Metals Precinct.

Castalloy prepared and submitted an initial Environment Improvement Program (EIP) in 2003, which outlined the activities and time frames to achieve the required standards. However, on presenting the plan to the EPA board, Castalloy altered its stance and indicated that it would not honour the commitments made. As a consequence, the EPA sought amendments to Castalloy's licence relating to noise and odour standards requiring compliance by 30 June this year (that is, in just a week or so). Castalloy appealed to the ERD court against the conditions imposed by the EPA on its licence, and that matter is currently the subject of conference proceedings.

A representative of the Western Suburbs Residents Environment Association (WSREA) has successfully applied to be joined in defending the proposed conditions represented by the Environmental Defender's Office. Castalloy has recently commenced negotiations with the EPA with a view to finalising a revised EIP that has the full commitment of the company's owners. Correspondence was received from the Managing Director of ION Limited on 22 March 2004 outlining Castalloy's improvement plan and giving a commitment to implementing phase one of the plan, which has a completion date of August 2004.

If predictions are correct, phase one of the plan will achieve significant reductions in odour and noise. Castalloy has stated that further works are proposed after phase one, however, these will be somewhat dependent on the level of improvement achieved in the first phase. A conference was held in the ERD court on 22 March concerning the appeal. The court was advised that Castalloy has submitted an EIP and time was required by both the EPA and the joined third party to evaluate and respond to the document. The EPA is continuing to undertake thorough investigations in preparation for the next conference proceeding involving ION on 26 July this year to ensure that environmental standards set by the EPA and time lines now being proposed by the EPA for achieving these standards are reasonable and practicable.

Without prejudice discussions between the EPA, Castalloy and the WSREA (the resident's group) during conference proceedings confirm general support by all parties for phase one environmental improvements, which, it is expected, will bring about noticeable reductions in odour and noise before the end of the year. The company appears committed to the phase one works as it has recently submitted development applications relating to these works to the City of West Torrens. All parties recognise the need for improvement beyond the level that will be achieved after completion of the phase one works.

However, there appears to be disagreement at this stage on time frames for achieving compliance with EPA standards. The EPA as always will conduct its business in a manner that provides the best opportunity for a balanced outcome that considers the local community, industry and the environment. I think that, at this stage, that is the best we know.

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS:** As a supplementary question, was there ever an attempt by the EPA or the prosecutor's office—whatever it is called—to halt the resident's group from joining the action against Castalloy?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Certainly, I am not aware of it. I will ask Dr Vogel to comment on that.

**Dr VOGEL:** No, to my knowledge there has never been any attempt by any party to deny that access for a third party.

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS:** Further to that, how often is the ongoing testing that occurs around Castalloy carried out, and is that information shared with the resident's group?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I will ask Dr Vogel to answer that question.

**Dr VOGEL:** Are you talking about environmental monitoring?

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS:** Yes; noise and odour.

**Dr VOGEL:** There has been, I guess, an ongoing program of not only the EPA's doing some monitoring but also our requesting Castalloy to do some emissions characterisations. It has been a joint effort, but we must make sure that the information that we get is independent and valid enough for us to make decisions and to provide advice about the human health risk assessment. We therefore also involve DHS in providing that health risk assessment. I think that a very important part of the whole process is to get sound scientific information and risk assessment which can advise our policies and strategies.

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS:** The secretary of the Australian Workers Union, Wayne Hanson, has members who work at the Castalloy site. He called on the government to relocate Castalloy to the Mitsubishi precinct as the factory will be closing down. Is the EPA involved in negotiations about that, or is that just a statement that Mr Hanson made?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Certainly, at this stage, the EPA is not involved in any of those considerations. However, there are possible opportunities, I think, for the Mitsubishi site to be used for a range of other facilities. A metals' precinct was established in the Port Adelaide/Wingfield area and, as I understand it, Castalloy has moved some of its production to that site. I think that is correct. If it could be encouraged to move the rest of its production there, and if all the other foundries could do the same thing, it would be a good thing but, I guess, a cost is involved in that. I think that it would be happy to move if the government were to pay the movement costs, but that would be an expensive operation.

It would then create a precedent in that, I suppose, every other company would want to be paid to move to the site. But in the process of determining what should happen at the Mitsubishi site (the Lonsdale site) there may well be an opportunity for companies, such as Castalloy, to move there. A foundry is there, so it may well be a cheaper option for that company. It depends a little on what happens with that site. The government has initiated a process to work out how to optimise the value from the Lonsdale site with the closure of Mitsubishi in about a year.

I guess that is one of the options that would have to be looked at. If it was to move, the EPA would come in to ensure that the operations at that site were appropriate, appropriately licensed and so on. It would also involve a clean-up, I guess, of the existing site.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Is any procedure in place for the EPA to keep track of the job losses that result from any of their instructions or licensing conditions on business?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** That is an interesting question, which could be turned around to say: is any environmental tally kept on the health impact of businesses which operate outside the environment protection rules? We live in a society which has developed over time from the application of capital to create wealth without necessarily taking into account the environmental or health impacts of those techniques and technologies that have been implemented. As a community, we expect improved standards in a whole range of areas, whether that be the driving of motor cars, education in schools or the environment. The EPA is charged with ensuring that those community standards are applied consistently and appropriately to business. As the member

probably knows, the EPA's charter imposes upon it a duty not only to apply that environmental standard but to take into account the economic consequences of its decisions. It works closely with industry to try to get outcomes which are beneficial for both the environment and (in the long term) industry. For example, in relation to Castalloy, I think the answer I gave to the member for West Torrens indicates the level of cooperation that is offered by the EPA to try to get a good outcome on that site without causing any loss of employment.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I assume you are saying that there is no register kept as such?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** No, there is no register kept.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Has the EPA engaged any consultants or contractors to advise it on its performance in handling some projects?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I will ask Dr Vogel to answer that. I guess the EPA does get consultants in from time to time.

**Dr VOGEL:** I think this goes to the heart of some of the EPA's work. The whole issue around environmental regulation and economic development is something about which we are concerned as an organisation, and we have employed a consultant recently to advise the board about the EPA's role in the transition to sustainability and how it deals with its legislation, which talks about ESD and our decision-making powers. We take those seriously, and we are trying to get good advice so that we can advise the EPA board about how it should go about that.

A fair amount of work has been done nationally and internationally that puts to rest the argument that strong environmental regulation is an impediment to economic development. A paper has been circulating in the EPA, which was written by a former resource economist who worked for the portfolio and is now advising the UK government on sustainability. I think we need to look at the totality of environmental regulation. As a board and as an EPA we are keen to work with all parts of government and the community and industry to ensure that development is sustainable. We will as an EPA play a role in that and make a contribution to ensure that development is ecologically sustainable. As I said, from time to time we will employ consultants to advise the board, and we are embarking upon that right now.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** How much did the EPA receive in 2003-04 from the environment and enhancement levy, and what is the budgeted amount from the levy to be received by the EPA this year? In what budget line is that amount shown, and what is the current rate of the levy? In 2003 it was 11.5 per cent, I understand.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I will get clarification if I do not answer your question correctly, but I take it you are referring to the levy that is collected through SA Water bills?

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Through the sewerage payment.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** SA Water pays a dividend to Treasury. They collect the levy and pay a dividend to Treasury, and then Treasury distributes it. We do not get a particular budget line or an income stream which is particularly tagged in that way, although I am sure there is some process where that is accounted for, but it is not accounted for on our books.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I do not quite understand what you mean by that. There has to be an income line.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** It is an appropriation from Treasury. Probably a better question for the Treasurer or SA Water is: how is that money acquitted for a variety of

projects? It goes into Treasury. We do not get a specific allocation from SA Water. We get a total amount from Treasury as an appropriation.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Based on an agreed percentage?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** That may well be. I am just not aware of that. I will ask Mr O'Daly to answer that.

**Mr O'DALY:** That procedure changed a few years ago. The percentage was originally set at something like 1.4 per cent of the environment and enhancement levy going to the EPA, but the process changed when SA Water agreed to increase their dividend to Treasury, with Treasury then passing an appropriated amount to the EPA equivalent to that amount. Since that first year, obviously the appropriation has been subject to normal indexation. So, there is no direct link any more to the amount of the environment enhancement levy that has been collected.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I will have this checked, but I understand that that happened under the former government.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I am not sure whether you are going to source that information for me. That was not clear from your answer.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Which bit do you want sourced?

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** How much you get; what the current rate is.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I think that was answered. We are not getting the current rate. I will check this, but my advice is that when you were in government the arrangements were changed. We are now getting a direct allocation from Treasury. There is no particular indexed amount, but I can get clarification of that framework for you if you like.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Dr Vogel, in a previous answer to the member for West Torrens, raised the issue of the way they get the environmental health people from the Department of Human Services to work with the EPA on matters. Will the government now engage the environmental health people from the Department of Human Services to come to my electorate and look at the issue of train noise, which is causing people some environmental health concerns. For those who live in certain areas of the electorate, close to the line, the noise is a health issue—not just an environmental issue. Why have they not engaged the environmental health people from the Human Services Department to date and will they now engage them?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I will happily ask Dr Vogel to add to my comments, but I thought I would take this opportunity to give the member a bit of a briefing about where we are with wheel squeal. The government, through the EPA, has been addressing rail noise and the high pitched squeal on some particular curves along rail lines. Extensive research into the root causes of rail noise has implicated a variety of factors including the track profile, rigidity and radius of curvature, the wheel condition and profile, axle geometry, lubrication, weight and speed. Added to these is an element of random occurrence that has made it difficult to identify consistent and, therefore, predictable causes. The recent introduction of ID tags on all rolling stock, sophisticated acoustic monitors, and the corresponding computer software that allows complex analysis of the measured noise signals have provided the opportunity for renewed focus on this issue.

Preliminary data analysis is very encouraging in terms of being able to recommend practicable options to the rail industry sustainably to reduce the occurrence of wheel squeal. Data overwhelmingly indicates that, although there is an element of random occurrence, there is a strong correlation

between particular wheel sets and squealing. The implementation of a working solution based on this information will require more time and intellectual effort, as well as demonstrable cooperation and commitment from each of the sectors involved in the rail transport industry. However, the information has led to a realistic concept of an appropriate monitoring and fault-rectification system.

The EPA will seek to encourage industry to take responsibility to develop the system for the purposes of an industry-led monitoring and response program. Rail operators and the EPA have completed a program of monitoring campaigns to investigate the incidents and characteristics of wheel squeal and the relationship to individual wheel sets. The program is considered leading edge and is being viewed with great interest by interstate rail authorities.

This fundamental research, pursued jointly by the EPA and the rail industry, will focus noise reduction on rectifying the cause of the annoyance. Addressing the cause will lead to a much more practicable cost-effective solution by focusing effort at the source of noise rather than intervening between the noise and the public using trackside mounds or barriers or modifying dwellings to inhibit noise transmission at each and every bend in the track.

In addition to conducting its own research to resolve particular local conflicts, the EPA maintains regular contact with interstate rail organisations and environmental authorities to share information, research results, and develop nationally consistent management strategies. Management strategies will be helped by the recently heralded involvement in rail issues of the Land Transport Environment Committee (LTEC). LTEC is the national advisory group of senior officials from environment and transport agencies, and it reports to the National Transport Council—our national environment protection council. The deliberations of LTEC, which plans to hold a national forum of key stakeholders and environment-related rail issues later this year, are sure to benefit from South Australia's work in addressing rail squeal.

In relation to the issue of the use of health officials, I will ask Dr Vogel to comment.

**Dr VOGEL:** The EPA acknowledges that noise can have a health impact—there is no two ways about that. I am sure that DHS would say the same thing. We are looking at the cause of the problem. It is a complex issue, as I am sure you would appreciate. We have spent significant resources in researching this, and now we have to engage both the owners of the track and rolling stock and the different organisations. It is also a national issue—some of these organisations are national. We have to tackle it from a state and national perspective, but at least we now have some science behind a solution that they can adopt by looking at those particular pieces of rolling stock that are causing the problem. So, we are getting to the cause rather than the symptom. We at least have some sound science that can identify particular wheels rather than trying to build very expensive barriers.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I understand that one type of wheel causes the problem. Is that what the research has found?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** That appears to be the case.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** It is a wheel type—A or B or something that suddenly—

**Dr VOGEL:** Yes, it would appear that they can now ID particular wheel sets on the rolling stock. With sophisticated targeted acoustic monitors you can actually pick out the wheels that are a problem. By doing that, you can go back to the operators and say, 'It is that set of wheels. Why is that

occurring? Why are those particular sets of wheels causing that problem? Go back to the manufacturer or design or whatever it might be.'

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** How does the EPA know that it is not a weight loading issue on the train that has an impact on that one wheel on that particular load?

**Dr VOGEL:** That is all tied up with it, too, but it seems to be a particular set of wheels. Maybe it is the design construction or the weight that both sets of wheels have been bearing as it goes around a particular set of tracks for a long time. At least they can identify the set of wheels that is causing the problem, for whatever the reason. They can go back and say, 'That set of wheels has been on that locomotive and has not been changed for a year. It is showing some signs of wear which, perhaps, are imperceptible under normal circumstances.' At least now we can target where the problem is, so I think we have a much better chance of going to the industry and saying, 'We have done the research. We can target what the problem is and you start implementing some solutions to it.' It becomes their responsibility to solve the problem, but I think we have done a job that has been viewed by other jurisdictions to assist them to deal with exactly the same sorts of issues.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I will get a briefing on that. I am yet to be convinced how it is actually going to solve it. I hope it does for my constituents' sake. However, if you identify one wheel today on one carriage that is behind a train that could come back along the same rail the next time behind a different locomotive with a different weighting ratio and a different length of train, I cannot for the life of me see how you are going to distinguish whether that wheel squeal becomes the issue. I will get a private briefing, because I would be interested.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I will ensure that the honourable member is offered a briefing from the technical expert.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** The level of angst in my electorate is now high. I am having representations made to me about health issues, and I am now concerned that it will be some years before industry responds to this new issue—whatever it is. If the minister could forward me details of that conference, I would be interested in attending to obtain some information.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Sure, we will certainly give the honourable member that detail and we will provide him with an expert briefing so that he can be assured of the work that is being done. As the member says, if it is as simple as identifying the particular wheels and there is something about the wheels that causes them to squeal and then you get rid of those wheels, then that would be a great breakthrough.

**Ms CICCARELLO:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.68. What initiatives will be undertaken in the future to improve the management of contaminated sites in South Australia?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** This question was asked in broad a little earlier, but I can give the honourable member a more detailed answer now. Site contamination is a significant issue that impacts on all new development and a large number of existing developments across South Australia. Continuing significant health and environmental impacts can result when site contamination is not adequately recognised, considered and addressed. The current EP Act does not address site contamination and no other South Australian acts or policies provide an effective means of ensuring the adequate protection of population and environmental health where site contamination has occurred. Recent events have highlighted

the need for amendments to the EP Act to address site contamination adequately.

These events include the mothballing of the Port Stanvac refinery (to which we referred earlier), the West Lakes issue relating to cadmium contamination and the relocation of SAHT tenants at Mead Street, Birkenhead, relating to cyanide, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon contamination associated with a former SAGASCO site. The EPA is finalising the Environment Protection (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill, together with amendments to planning processes under the Development Act, and a series of guidelines and codes of practice to adequately address site contamination throughout South Australia. It is anticipated that the bill will be released for public consultation very soon and tabled in parliament later this year.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** We will put it out for consultation in the next month or so, I hope.

**Ms CICCARELLO:** Thank you, minister. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.63. One of the highlights for 2003-04 refers to the establishment of the local government EPA subcommittee of the EPA board. Can the minister provide more detail about the work being done between the EPA and local government?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I thank the member for this question and acknowledge her great interest in matters local in government spheres. In February 2002, the EPA endorsed in principle the preferred model for sharing environment protection services and responsibilities with local government. Currently, 44 councils in South Australia have officers authorised under the EP Act. The EPA wants these officers to be consistent in how they administer and enforce the act. The local government subcommittee of the EPA board is drafting a formal agreement to outline responsibilities, identify what support the EPA would provide, and what role local government should have in formulating and implementing environment protection programs, information, policies and enforcing legislation.

In particular, elements of the model include: voluntary arrangements for council participation; clarification of roles; and amendments to the act are proposed identifying a participating council as the administering agency for dealing with all environmental matters relating to non-licensed premises. Polluter pays amendments to the act propose to allow agencies administering the act to recover costs associated with issuing environment protection orders, investigating complaints and follow-up investigations. In relation to the support package, a unit has been established within the EPA to coordinate support to councils to ensure consistent compliance and enforcement standards are applied statewide.

The EPA currently funds the cost of training council officers, provides sound level and water quality meters at no cost to councils, and will accompany council officers, where necessary, to investigate and assess environmental matters. The EPA will continue to provide ongoing support for councils, particularly if changes are successful to amending the act via the Environment Protection (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2004 (which I intend to bring to parliament shortly); finalise the formal memorandum of agreement with local government; develop, maintain and deliver training programs to local government; and continue to encourage a shared approach to the provision of environment protection services using the relevant compliance and enforcement provisions in this act.



**Mr HANNA:** I ask the minister a question based on correspondence I have received from the People's Environment Protection Alliance (which forms the neat acronym the People's EPA), under the able chairmanship of Mr Gary Goland. Mr Goland has cited examples such as a sawmill at Kuitpo, a pellet mill at Kapunda, a foundry at Kilburn and a turkey farm at McLaren Vale, where the expanded scale of activity (or plant) at the site has led to existing residents suffering noise and odour pollution.

Two proposals have been suggested to address this problem. First, a more effective mediation process, perhaps a mediation officer or commissioner within the ERD Court, to resolve complaints between residents and the EPA. Secondly, a health officer; that is, someone who will specifically look at the health care impact on individual residents where that is alleged, whether they be based in the EPA or the Department of Human Services. Is there any scope for government to provide either of those positions?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I am familiar with the issues raised by the People's EPA. I have met with Mr Goland on a number of occasions, as have officers from the EPA. It is important that we have groups such as the People's EPA to keep pushing the boundaries in terms of what legislation ought to be doing. I acknowledge the value of that role. I think Mr Goland has hit upon a very important point in relation to creeping development, if you like. He lives close by the Kuitpo Forest sawmill, and when we were in opposition he wrote to me regularly about issues associated with the noise that emanated from the sawmill. When he moved there, I think the sawmill operated one shift a day or thereabouts and then, as it expanded, it operated pretty well round the clock. Because it was already operating as a sawmill, it was easy to have approval given to operate to a greater extent.

That happens elsewhere in the community. 'Existing use' allows much greater development to occur than was originally intended. That occurs without the EPA having much of a role in approving or not approving, and it is an issue that we are aware of. We are trying to work out how you handle it, as there are always two sides to an argument. If you have a piece of capital that is able to do something and you can use it twice as often, that is a more efficient way of using that capital and creating jobs, etc. That is an issue. I do not have a solution, but I acknowledge that it is an issue. In relation to the matter of mediation, there is a capacity to do that through the ERD Court. I have asked the EPA to consider whether or not we ought to have a more formal process put in place that can do some of that stuff.

The honourable member also raises the issue of some sort of health process. That is really outside the province of the EPA, although there is obviously an overlap between health and environmental protection, as the member for Davenport noted in relation to wheel squeal. Obviously, we have to work closely with the health department over these issues, but we would not necessarily want to take over responsibility for them because we would then become the health department, and we are the environment department. We do work closely with them. Those are some general points, but I will ask Dr Vogel to respond more specifically to those issues.

**Dr VOGEL:** This is a complex matter, but we have expanded our community mediation processes and have spoken with the community mediation services to start to talk to them, and there has been success in a number of cases, I understand, to intervene and try to bring the parties together outside the formal ERD Court process, to look at the neighbourhood dispute/noise impact-type issue where they

can, rather than having EPA officers who are dealing with licensed premises. There is also a role for local government in non-licensed premises. So, ERD Court conference proceedings, expanded community mediation and local government involvement is one path.

We will be talking to the Department of Human Services' population and health area about the issue that Mr Goland has raised with me on a number of occasions. It is recognised that there are health issues associated with this. A lot of these are as a result of historical decisions about land use planning and assessment of industrial expansion, so we have a legacy of these sorts of issues and, as an organisation, we spend quite a few resources in trying to manage them. We acknowledge the problems. There are not any easy solutions. It comes back to the same sorts of issues as the foundry issues we were talking about with Castalloy. I acknowledge the problem and will be talking to the DHS on whether there are solutions in which they can become involved in dealing with those sorts of health issues.

It does come back to the point of how you deal with the sources of these sorts of problems. If you have an existing industry and it is operating to what might be deemed world's best practice in terms of the operation but we have people living next door to it, how far can we as an EPA within our legislation push that company to improve its environmental performance? We will be constrained legally, but we still have an environmental health/population health issue. It is something that the EPA and the DHS are aware of, and we are working towards some solution, hopefully, in the near future.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Recommendation 8 of the audit into radioactive waste stated that the government should undertake a rigorous feasibility study of the options for the future management of South Australia's radioactive waste, and that this study should be commenced as soon as possible. Has the study commenced? Who is undertaking the study and when will it be completed?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The EPA completed the audit of radioactive material in South Australia in 2003 with a particular emphasis on materials designated as waste. The audit included registered sealed radioactive sources, unsealed radioactive material, radioactive material from uranium mining and miscellaneous radioactive material under SA legislative control. The results of the audit found that, in general, radioactive material was stored safely and securely in South Australia. In a small number of cases where improvements were required, the EPA did not consider there was a public health issue. The report contained 20 recommendations associated with the findings of the audit and nine key recommendations for future management of radioactive material.

Key recommendation 9 proposes that the government investigate the feasibility of establishing a facility for interim storage of radioactive waste. In terms of what we have done, the EPA is implementing a plan to establish options for disposal of very low level radioactive waste by the end of 2004. That is a particular issue because of the closure of Wingfield. The EPA will engage a contractor during 2004-05 to conduct a study of the feasibility of South Australia establishing a facility for interim storage of radioactive waste, and is to address or require owners to address recommendations associated with the findings of the audit.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** So, the way I understand it, minister, is that, between when the audit was released and 30 June this year, no work has been undertaken on conducting

a feasibility study as to where the waste will be stored. The minister's answer was that during 2004-05 a contractor will be employed to progress that matter. Why was the contractor not employed within a month of the audit being tabled?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** As Dr Vogel was saying to me, it is a complex process to get the tender out. It needed to be designed and done properly. We have not been sitting on our hands in relation to it; we have just been going through the processes in the appropriate way. A tender will be let shortly.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Will that tender be for both a permanent storage facility and an interim storage facility?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** This will be for the interim storage of radioactive waste. We are also having discussions (which I think I mentioned last time), and will continue to have discussions, with Western Mining about the potential of having a permanent facility at its site.

**The Hon. I.P. LEWIS:** I have one question as it relates to the EPA and the framework of values through which it operates which disturbs me. It goes to the nub of existing uses of land. Over very recent times, a number of people have complained to me about the effect which EPA decisions are having on the ability of people who are currently involved in legitimate and lawful pursuits, such as agriculture, and the way in which that is being interfered with by complaints that are being made by others who have come to live in the neighbourhood in more far more recent times. Those complaints have resulted in the EPA lodging 'please explains' in the harshest terms imaginable, completely biased in its view of what is happening and even seeking court orders against existing landowners who have been there for decades, engaged in the same business. I wonder where the balance is coming.

Will the minister advise how many cases the EPA has now on foot in prosecution of people who are involved in agriculture production on the fringes of the metropolitan area? Why does the minister not require under planning law everyone who goes to live in such areas to accept and acknowledge, as a caveat on the title of the land they then seek to buy, that they are going to live in an area where rural enterprise is being undertaken instead of enabling a confrontational situation to develop which results in a waste of taxpayers' money having investigations made of what have been otherwise legitimate activities of the landowners and accepted by their long-term neighbours and, indeed, by the people who work for them?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I thank the member for this important question. In relation to prosecutions, I can give the detail of all the prosecutions currently before the EPA. However, I will make a general point about the EPA charter, which I have previously made in answer to another question. The EPA has an important role as the environmental protector, but it has to balance that role with the economic and social consequences of those acts. It is really about balancing both environment and economic outcomes with the objects of the act. So, the EPA has to manage those things.

In relation to urban cases (and I will get to non-urban directly), in the western suburbs in particular, we have examples of foundries which are operating—and have been operating there for 40, 50 or 60-odd years—right next to housing, using equipment, in some cases, which is 40, 50 or 60 years old. That is a consequence of planning decisions which were made 40, 50 or 60 years ago and which seemed sensible because it meant that workers could get to work easily—they did not have to catch public transport; they could bicycle or walk to work. That was the kind of planning

model they had: you build a factory, you build workers' houses around it so that the workers get to work on time, and everything works sweetly. Over time, of course, we have understood that the pollutants expressed by some of those factories had a detrimental impact on the workers who were working in those factories, the worst cases being cancer and a whole range of heart and lung diseases.

Quite rightly, there is now an expectation that those factories lift their game and comply with particular standards. The EPA goes about assisting them to do that through environmental improvement programs, and they are given time in which to comply. The big complaint I normally have as the Minister for Environment is that the EPA gives them too much time to comply with the appropriate standards. However, the EPA has to do it in such a way that the factories do not close, because we do not want to lose the jobs and, normally, most of the people in the community do not want to see the jobs lost, either. It is a very difficult balancing act.

In relation to agricultural areas (which is the issue the member has raised), I think some appalling planning decisions have been made by not only regional but also fringe metropolitan councils which have allowed development to occur in agricultural areas. I know, for example, that in the McLaren Vale area, which is close to my electorate, the former Willunga council allowed a number of subdivisions in prime viticulture land, with great objections from a lot of people in that area who did not want to see suburbia moved into those areas. The consequence of that is that we now have people living in those areas who object to some of the issues to do with growing grapes; that is, the spray and the guns that are used to control birds.

Often what happens is that farming properties combine, farmers end up with more than one house, and to get some capital return they sell the surplus houses which are situated on small pieces of subdivided land. Consequently, people looking for a rural lifestyle without being involved in rural industry end up sitting in a nice old country house surrounded by acres of agricultural activity, and then they start complaining about the activities. The member raises a very real problem, but I do not think it is the fault of the EPA for then applying whatever the rules are. It is really a planning mistake to allow that kind of subdivision, and it is a bad system that allows councils to make those kinds of decisions.

In relation to my own electorate, there is a section of road (which is a slightly different point)—I think it is Little Street and Adey Street in Aldinga—close to farmland. People have lived in those houses in that street since the 1880s or 1890s—so for a very long time—and the land adjacent to their houses has been farmland which has been used for grazing or crop production. Over the last 10 or so years, more of that land has been used for viticulture purposes, and that development has brought with it sprays and other activity, which has created nuisances for the people living in those houses—and they have been existing users. It can work both ways.

*The Hon. I.F. Evans interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I am just saying—

**The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Ms Bedford):** Order! I draw the minister's attention to the time. We must close off this line shortly, minister.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I will not be long. I am just pointing out the issues. The EPA is not the planning authority. In terms of prosecutions, for the financial year 2003-04, the EPA has undertaken 25 investigations which have resulted in nine prosecutions. Of these prosecutions, seven were under the Environment Protection Act; two matters

through the Environment Resources and Development Court; two matters proceeded in the Magistrates Court under the protection of the marine waters act and the radiation protection act; four matters have been completed in the ERD with fines and costs awarded; one matter was completed in the Magistrates Court with fines; one matter was dismissed; and three matters are before the courts.

In terms of the prosecutions—and I will not go through the details—one involved a dairy farmer who allowed effluent to overflow into the Hindmarsh River; another was an environmental nuisance at Myponga by allowing effluent to escape into a dairy lagoon—in that case the judge found no case to answer; another farmer allowed effluent to go onto a neighbouring property; a veterinarian was prosecuted for not registering an x-ray machine, or operating his machine properly; the SA Water Corporation was fined for letting sewage go from a burst pipe into a marina at Port Lincoln; and a council landfill in the country breached a licence condition by allowing litter to escape.

The Torrens Lake diesel spill is before the courts at the moment. There is an oily bilge water escape from the *Accolade* into the Port River that goes back to 2002. There is a waste depot matter for one of the councils. There is a whole lot of matters on board, but I do not think that any of them would fit into the category to which the member referred. I do not think that any of them involve neighbours complaining about proper agricultural activity.

**The Hon. I.P. LEWIS:** The case I have in mind—indeed I have more than one—concerns the attempted prosecution (which is now on foot) against a farmer, who happens to be my brother, at Mount Compass. The neighbour complaining lives on rural living land and complains that his wife contracted breast cancer within a matter of months of their arrival there and he is now demanding that the farmer be stopped from applying folia fertiliser, which is organic in nature—it comes from seaweed, for God's sake. Even if they were pesticides, they all comply with the law in any case. I do not understand why the EPA is wasting its time doing that when it should be defending the existing rights of those people who are farming responsibly, and those who wish to live amongst them do so accepting the fact that they are living in rural areas. It is a waste of money to be doing that and it is improper to accept the word of the complainant without considering the implications for the accused and the planning law.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** We are not aware of that. I have a list of the investigations in front of me. The one to which the member refers may have been a very recent one. It may have been an officer of a council who is authorised under the EPA. We will certainly look at it. I am not aware of the detail of it. I think that the member has given me enough information to allow me to do that.

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

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Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity  
Conservation, \$65 278 000  
Administered Items for the Department of Water, Land  
and Biodiversity Conservation, \$37 854 000

**Additional Departmental Advisers:**

Mr R. Freeman, Chief Executive, Department of Water,  
Land and Biodiversity Conservation.

Mr P. O'Neill, Executive Director, Corporate Strategy and Business Services.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I declare these proposed payments open for consideration. Minister, do you wish to make a brief opening statement?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The 2004-05 budget provides a significant increase in funding for the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation. The department's budget for 2004-05 of \$145.2 million represents an increase of 23 per cent in real terms, or \$29.6 million, demonstrating the government's ongoing commitment to improving the management of the state's valuable natural resource base.

Over the next three to five years the department will work towards restoring the health of the River Murray, halting the decline in quality and extent of native vegetation, implementing the state natural resource management reforms, protecting and enhancing the natural resources of the Mount Lofty Ranges, and delivering effective reporting on the state and condition of South Australia's natural resources.

Restoring the health of the River Murray remains one of the highest priorities of this government. The commitment has been demonstrated by the continuation of the River Murray rescue package totalling \$283 million over the next four years. The package for 2004-05 is estimated at \$73.7 million and provides for implementation of the Living Murray First Step decision to return 500 gegalitres per annum to the river over the next five years. The initial focus of the First Step decision is on:

- achieving specific ecological objectives and outcomes at six significant assets, including three in South Australia (the Chowilla flood plain, the Murray Mouth-Coorong and Lower Lakes, and the river channel);
- investment in salinity mitigation schemes (including the construction of the lock 4 Bookpurnong salt interception scheme) to provide a 32 EC benefit to the River Murray;
- ongoing work to support the Murray Mouth dredging project to ensure that channels are maintained between the barrages and the sea and that the areas in the vicinity of the river mouth are rehabilitated to help restore the health of the Coorong; and
- works to rehabilitate infrastructure in the Lower Murray reclaimed irrigation areas.

Rehabilitation will achieve improved water use efficiency and water quality. In tandem with this, the government has decided to convert government districts in the Lower Murray reclaimed irrigation areas to private irrigation districts or to corporate structures that achieve devolution of responsibility to irrigators.

During the first half of 2004, the Natural Resource Management Bill 2004 passed the House of Assembly. Subject to the passage of the bill through parliament, the department will facilitate the establishment of administrative arrangements for the proposed natural resource management council and regional boards, and will commence the development of the state natural resources management plan. In addition to developing the NRM institutional arrangements, the department will take an active role in presenting the 2004-05 investment strategies for all NRM regions for funding approval by state and Australian government ministers and assessing NRM plans for the Eyre Peninsula, range lands and Aboriginal lands regions for accreditation by ministers.

In relation to biodiversity and native vegetation, a key goal of the department is to halt the decline in native vegetation

across South Australia with a particular emphasis on the Mount Lofty Ranges and the Upper South-East. Activities for 2004-05 will include:

- investigations into the use of economic instruments to encourage the regeneration, management and rehabilitation of native vegetation;
- improvement in native vegetation monitoring programs; and
- the initiation of a biodiversity training scheme in the Upper South-East.

All land-holders participating in the Upper South-East dry land salinity and flood management program will be offered the option of entering into a biodiversity offset scheme, enabling them to place wetlands and native vegetation areas on private land under a formal agreement in return for a reduction in or exemption from the cash levy obligation.

I turn to the topic of sustainable management of the water resources in the Mount Lofty Ranges. The natural resources of the Mount Lofty Ranges are of vital importance to the state, supplying 60 per cent of Adelaide's water in an average year and contributing about \$720 million to the state's economy from primary production. The region's water resources are facing increasing pressure from urban, industrial and agricultural development. These pressures need to be carefully managed to meet the demands for human consumption, stock, irrigation and other commercial use; and for the environment, including important flows to the River Murray.

Accordingly, the government is introducing proactive measures to strengthen the management of water resources in the region. In October 2003 a notice of intent to prescribe was issued, flagging the government's intention to introduce permanent controls for the taking and use of water resources in the Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges. At the same time, two notices of prohibition were issued to temporarily prohibit the taking of water for new uses from underground sources and from surface and watercourse resources in that area. Public consultation on the notice of intent to prescribe was completed in March 2004. The outcomes of the public consultation will assist me to make a decision whether to proceed with the prescription of the resource.

In recognition of the important role of community participation in natural resource management, the state government will continue to provide insurance for groups such as Land Care, and I will elaborate on that. Today, we announced the continuation of the provision of insurance to natural resource management groups while a national solution is negotiated by the commonwealth, states and territories. This cover will last until 30 June 2005 unless agreement is reached before then on a more suitable arrangement. Volunteers are vital to natural resource management work across Australia, and it is important that the natural resource ministerial council finds a solution to the growing problem of providing insurance to these groups. The government has agreed to continue to provide insurance so that these volunteers can continue their work without being placed at risk.

A report on the issues around insurance for volunteers in the natural resource management area will go to the next natural resource ministerial council meeting on October 2004. This study is expected to provide sufficient information for a decision to be made on the possible development of a nationally available insurance scheme. This cover, as I said, will last until June 2005 unless we can reach an agreement at a national level.

It was always the government's intention that not-for-profit organisations pay the lower rate of \$30 a year for the save the River Murray levy. However, some organisations were not registered with the Australian Tax Office and were therefore not recognised as eligible for the lower rate. The government is responding to concerns raised by a number of organisations and a number of members by ensuring that all not-for-profit organisations, which are incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act 1985 will be charged the lower rate.

The change will be backdated to have effect from 1 October 2003. The department will be progressing a number of other initiatives, including building collaborative partnerships with the community and key stakeholders in natural resource management and release of the draft strategy for Waterproofing Adelaide for community consultation. The draft strategy will detail:

- preferred options for dealing with Adelaide's water supply over the next 20 years;
- implementation of water conservation measures under the Water Resources Act developing a policy framework for managing stormwater in the metropolitan area;
- to protect property from flooding and to gain the best economic, social and environmental outcomes for urban communities; and
- competing construction of the northern catchment drainage system and commencing the central drainage system as part of the Upper South-East dry land salinity and flood management program.

Progressing this program of works during 2004-05 will go a long way to ensuring that the state's natural resources are being managed sustainably.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I have no opening statement.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Does the honourable member have any questions?

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Has the minister's agency prepared or is his agency aware of a report within government that looks at non-productive or non-economic agricultural land in the Adelaide Hills? My understanding is that a report has been prepared within government which indicates that agricultural land within the Adelaide Hills is now deemed to be non-productive.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** My officers advise me that they are not aware of it. I cannot recall having seen such a report. It may well be through another agency, but I am not aware of it.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I just want to talk about the Adelaide Hills. I am wondering where the government is taking the Adelaide Hills in relation to its future. In particular, I want to talk about land which is already cleared of native vegetation, which is outside the water catchment area and the Hills Face Zone but which is deemed non-productive for agricultural purposes. Lots of land within the Adelaide Hills falls into that category. I am talking about land which is non-productive for agricultural purposes, which is cleared of native vegetation (because it was used for agricultural purposes but no more) and which is outside the water catchment zone and the Hills Face Zone.

I am wondering what the agency's or the government's approach is to that land and whether the intention is not to allow that land to be subdivided, or whether the government would allow that land to be subdivided for housing purposes.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** As I said, I am not aware of the particular report to which the honourable member refers. I

cannot recall any debate on this subject. Obviously, a lot of issues relate to the Adelaide Hills. The primary issue relates to water catchment (obviously, that is important to all of us), and there is the aesthetics of the Hills. I do not think South Australians want to see the Hills developed to the extent that they look just like suburbia, and that has been a prominent feature of Adelaide politics for a long time.

The government has recently conducted a report into the Adelaide Hills, and the honourable member referred to that. The question is: what do you do with unproductive land which has been cleared and which no-one else wants to use? I am not sure. That is an issue. As the honourable member would know, through our Department of Environment and Heritage, we have concerns about the loss of vegetation in the Adelaide Hills and the impact that that is having on bird species in particular, and a lot of work is being done to implement recovery programs for birds. There may be a possibility of revegetating some of those areas. I am not aware of the issue, but I am happy to have a closer look at it.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I am pleased that the minister is happy to have a look at it, but why would a private landholder who can do nothing with his land want to revegetate it at their cost?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I did not say that, did I?

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** No, hang on. Essentially, you are asking the private landholder to hold the land forever and have no capacity to do anything with it. Over a period of time environmental organisations and government agencies have come in and said to people in the Adelaide Hills, 'We do not want any more dairies in the Adelaide Hills.' People have packed up and moved out their dairies. They said, 'We do not want any more native vegetation clearance.' That is fine, but this land is already cleared. They want to protect the water source. That is fine. This land is outside the water catchment so that it does not affect the water catchment. It is outside the Hills Face Zone, so it does not affect that. I am just concerned that this government will say, 'You cannot do anything with that land, either.'

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I would not be a minister—

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Your agency would have a big input into that, minister. You are the water agency, the environment agency and the agency that runs dairies out of the Adelaide Hills through the environmental agencies. Your agency has a big input into that decision.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** My agency has a big impact on those decisions, but the honourable member is talking about land that is not part of a water catchment, land that is not part of the Hills Face Zone and land that has no native vegetation on it. If all those things were so, then my agencies would not have a role, would it?

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Unfortunately, it does, and that is the point I raise. Your agencies—all of those here today, not just the agency represented as we speak—do not adequately distinguish that point. They tend to place an umbrella over the Adelaide Hills and say, 'We are concerned about water and we are concerned about native vegetation,' but there is no policy dissection about those issues. I bring it to the minister's attention so that when the matters come before him he can better judge those particular issues.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I understand the point the honourable member is making. I assume that this is part of some sort of planning process that is being worked through. I am just not sure. It is not an issue of which I am aware at the moment. My officers here are not aware of the particular

issues, but from a logical point of view, if there are no issues involving native vegetation, water catchment or the hills face, and if there is no other environmental management issue, then it does raise a question about what you do with the land. There are broader planning issues of course about where you want suburban development and the nature of such development, but it sounds to me like it is something that would be best worked through under a planning strategy rather than through water resources.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** But there is a converse argument to that planning issue, and that is that, by allowing some development in those areas I have described, you actually take pressure off the need for the development of areas that contain native vegetation in the water catchment.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I am not disputing that.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** What I am saying is that I do not think your agencies (plural) have actually realised that yet. They are still administering all of the Adelaide Hills as being caught by water catchment or hills face or the native vegetation argument. I think they need to rethink their strategies (plural). I just raise this with you in a general sense. I think there are some issues which they are not dealing with appropriately.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Perhaps afterwards the member might give me some specific examples about where this has happened. I mean, if something is in the water catchment, it is; if it is not, it is not. It is just a matter of logic. If the Water, Land and Biodiversity Agency is saying that a particular piece of property is part of a catchment, but demonstrably it is not, that is something that can be sorted out by the discovery of fact.

The EPA also has a role in terms of water quality in relation to water catchment, and that is critical to us. I guess it is possible that an activity on a piece of land that is not in the catchment could affect a piece of land that is in the catchment. I am just hypothesising here. I am happy to ask for some thought to be given to (or work to be done on) this issue. I take the point the member makes. If we can take pressure off the more sensitive areas by allowing development in less sensitive areas, obviously that is a good thing.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** If I have brought it to your attention, I have achieved my purpose. The government recently announced that they were going to bring in water restrictions on rainwater tanks, bores and household effluent. I understand that that matter went to cabinet and was approved by cabinet before the public statements were made that rainwater tanks would not be part of that decision. Is that correct?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** It is difficult for me to talk about what cabinet does and does not do; I am bound by the appropriate rules.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I am only asking you whether it went to cabinet; I did not ask you what the cabinet decision was.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Cabinet approved a consultation process. It has not made a decision in relation to what we will do other than to allow me to consult. The first stage of the water conservation measures in October 2003 applied only to the use of water supplied by SA Water. These measures covered the vast majority of households in this state in both metropolitan Adelaide and the many regional centres supplied by SA Water. SA Water supplies approximately 95 per cent of the population. Community concern has been expressed about the wasteful water use practices of those currently not covered by the measures such as shack holders on the River

Murray; excess water directed from the river; some schools and sportsgrounds; accessing water through bores or directly from other water resources.

People who already use water wisely should not be impacted by those measures. The ability to apply such measures to all water resources in this state was provided by the amendment by parliament to the Water Resources Act 1997 in June last year. The proposed water conservation measures that were planned would have been exactly the same as those which apply to SA Water customers and relate to the time and manner of watering private and public gardens, recreational areas, sportsgrounds and nurseries, cleaning of vehicles and boats, paved areas and construction activities. An exemption system would have been in place for special circumstances where it was considered that the enterprise or the industry would have been unnecessarily hurt.

The government acknowledges that in many areas of South Australia good water conservation practices are a normal part of life, and the extension of the existing water conservation measures across the state would have meant simply that we would have had a consistent approach for all South Australians. It would not have affected the irrigation of crops or pastures because they are subject to other provisions. Our intention was to have a general rule. Concern was obviously expressed in relation to rainwater tanks. It was a bit ironic in a sense because I doubt if many rainwater tanks would have been connected to sprinkler systems, so it would not have affected too many individuals.

However, I think people who had rainwater tanks felt that in some way or other they were being treated in a way which did not recognise the contribution they had already made to water conservation. Rather than pursue that regulation in relation to them, I have pulled the water thing at the moment, and I am looking at it again. I think it is important that we apply it particularly to bore water and to people who extract water from rivers and so on because these are limited resources. If you waste water it means someone else is not going to be able to use it for a productive purpose. It is not about stopping people using water; it is about encouraging people to use it wisely.

In relation to rainwater tanks, the real problem is getting people to use the water. They tend to just keep it in their tank and not use it for any purpose other than to make a cup of tea every second weekend. We want to have rainwater tanks plumbed into the house so that they can be the first port of call for water for toilets, laundries and so on. I am working on a measure to do this in a way that takes into account those kinds of concerns.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I want to clarify something; I might have misunderstood you. You said in the middle of that answer that you had withdrawn the whole thing.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** It has not been decided on. I am working on the measure.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Is it only the rainwater tank issue?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The 95 per cent for SA Water is part of the law—those regulations are going ahead. I was going to proceed with a regulation, about which we were consulting the community, as applied to all the other water resources. There was a reaction in relation to the rainwater tanks in particular, but there was concern about some of the other measures, so I have just pulled it. I have said that we will not go ahead with the rainwater tanks, so I am now working through the other issues.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** An article in the *Port Lincoln Times* of 8 June mentioned that the water restrictions were also going to relate to household effluent. Can you explain to me how that was going to work?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Only in the sense that the effluent was captured and used as an alternative water supply, not from effluent that is flushed away. This is another issue that I am having a look at. The measure was to apply to all sources of water other than SA Water sources. Some people water their gardens using water that comes through a sprinkler system attached to a septic tank—a model called Envirocycle or something like that—and I know that a number of people in my electorate have those kinds of systems in place. The measure, theoretically, would have applied to them. I am not too sure about that particular source of water. I know that the issue for some of my constituents is to try to get rid of the water on their property, and getting them to do it in the heat of the day could possibly have a health benefit, because if you do it at night less will be used and less will be evaporated. I am just working through those issues at the moment. The prime focus is really bore water and river water (surface water).

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** With the effluent, is that a nonsense argument, with due respect? What you are saying is that the people who are trying to do the right thing by installing envirocycles and using the water on their gardens or lawns are going to be restricted. However, those who simply connect to the main sewerage system and puts it out through the system will have no restriction on them at all. So, the person who is trying to do the right thing by limiting the amount of water that goes through the main sewerage system or stays in the septic tank and is pumped out and dumped off at the Heathfield treatment works or the Christies Beach treatment works at exorbitant cost is not penalised. It just seems to me to be a bizarre approach.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Perhaps you were not listening or maybe I did not express it clearly. I am saying that I share those concerns, and that is why I have not proceeded with—

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Did you ask the agency why it sent up that advice to that effect? Surely, someone in the agency thought of that.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I understand what the agency's point of view is, and I think the logic of it is perfect, but it is the emotional reaction to it that we had not properly taken into account. The logic is perfect—you should not waste water. The source of the water does not matter. If you are trying to create an attitude to get a cultural change about water use in South Australia, it is sensible to have measures in place where water is not wasted. The measures we have in place now for SA Water users have been pretty well adopted by everybody in South Australia—that is, 95 per cent of people—without many complaints at all. That is 95 per cent of the population agreeing that they should not waste water; and without too many fines being put in place, people have just changed the way they do things, so we do not have sprinklers on in the middle of the day, and in summer we do not have people washing down their driveways with hoses, and so on. People have just changed the way they behave; it has not been a problem.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Or you are just not catching on?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The statistics show that the amount of water used through SA Water has declined much greater than the weather conditions would have suggested, so I think a behaviour change has occurred. There have been some fines—it is true—but not an inordinate number. There has

been this change, and it has created an atmosphere that water should not be wasted. I think that is very helpful in a broad sense, trying to help fix up some of the resource issues we have with the River Murray, and so on; it sends good, positive messages interstate. A small group of people who get water from other sources are allowed to waste water, theoretically. This was really an attempt to try to have one standard in place regardless of the source of water, and I think the logic is very clear in relation to that. However, I found the emotional reaction a bit surprising, particularly from people who have rainwater tanks. When I thought it through, I could understand it. These are people who feel like they have invested in some sort of water conservation measure and feel offended that that has not been recognised. I do not think that—

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** It might be their only source of water.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** If it is their only source of water, they are not going to waste it. It was a redundant measure when it came to those people. We have some concerns in relation to water tanks. If somebody does have a rainwater tank connected to a sprinkler in an urban area, it is theoretically possible to cheat by filling up their tanks with hose water overnight and spraying in the day; but, it is so remote that it is unlikely to happen.

*The Hon. I.F. Evans interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** No; that is true. There is also the issue, from an enforcement or public policy point of view, that if you have two people living in a street, one who has a bore or rainwater tank in place and the next door neighbour who does not, they are told that they cannot water their garden between these hours, but the next door neighbour can. It creates a sort of disease or unhappiness in the community that, 'It is not fair. He can do it but I cannot.' There were those kinds of issues, and that was the logic that was driving it. As I said, we have reviewed it. I pulled it in relation to rainwater tanks, and I am looking at the other measures to be absolutely certain that we do not create the same kind of reaction. I think it is probably a similar situation in relation to locally captured effluent which is then used to water gardens, and so on.

**Ms CICCARELLO:** Minister, I refer you to portfolio statement, page 10.4. What progress has been made in the implementation of a National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality in South Australia?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The South Australian regions have made substantial progress over the past year in advancing the regional delivery of natural resource management through the NAP and Natural Heritage Trust programs. All NAP regions achieved accreditation of their regional integrated natural resource management plans and had their first regional investment strategies assessed for 2003-04 and 2004-05 funding. \$17.3 million of NAP funds were approved for the five NAP regions through the first investment strategy assessment process for documents submitted 30 September last year.

This is a very good achievement by the community based regional INRM groups working with the support of state and Australian government offices. Through the process, South Australia has demonstrated itself to be at the forefront of regional delivery in Australia. The work done is a valuable precursor to future regional planning and delivery of NRM services by the proposed new NRM boards which, once operational, will take over the responsibility for regional implementation of NEP and NAHT.

**Ms CICCARELLO:** Minister, from the same subprogram 1.2 NRM Services, portfolio statement, page 10.40: what extra effort is the government taking to monitor changes in vegetation cover?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I thank the member for her question in relation to native vegetation. Two of my departments, the Environment and Heritage Department and the Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation Department are working with the Native Vegetation Council to improve monitoring in this area. In the past two years, they have initiated two satellite monitoring programs to assess changes in vegetation cover over time.

An initial survey was undertaken on Kangaroo Island, and a subsequent more extensive survey in the Upper South-East. In the case of the Upper South-East, the use of satellite imagery identified changes in vegetation cover between January and November 2002. Initial analysis identified 31 sites where vegetation clearance may have occurred. These sites and a further five sites identified prior to the use of satellite imagery, but still within the study area, have been analysed further. Of these 36 cases, 13 do not appear to involve the unlawful clearance of native vegetation, 19 of the sites have been inspected and assessed, four matters involving five defendants have been heard in the courts and convictions and penalties totalling \$307 500 have been obtained. So I think we have a system in place now which makes it very difficult for people who are going to illegally clear.

**Ms CICCARELLO:** I refer to portfolio statement, page 10.46, Program 1: Natural Resources Management. What is the government doing to ensure that the growth goals of the forest industry do not impair the security of supply of water in the South-East for irrigation, industrial and urban purposes?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I thank the member for this question as well. The government has made regulations prescribing commercial forestry in the Lower South-East as a water affecting activity requiring a permit under the Water Resources Act 1997. A complementary regulation under Schedule 8 of the Development Regulations Act of 1993 facilitates a simple administrative process for commercial forest proponents when applying for development approval with the local planning authority for land use change.

This will allow for the impact of forest development on local ground water resources to be assessed to ensure the resource is managed sustainably. Essentially, the management approach is based on a dedicated minimum area of commercial forestry within each water resources management area. The minimum was calculated to ensure that the impact of that development on reduced recharge to the groundwater system does not affect existing water users while securing sustainable management of the resource.

The system will allow for approximately 59 000 hectares of commercial forest expansion in defined management areas without the need to secure water allocations to offset the impact. The exclusive dedication of a share of the regional water resource to the forest industry provides for an increase in the current estate of approximately 135 000 hectares by 45 per cent before any need to offset further development against water allocations. Currently, the forest estate occupies nearly 14 per cent of the Lower South-East landscape. The dedicated expansion right will allow commercial forestry to expand to about 19 per cent of the region, without a need to secure offsetting water allocations. Once the area set aside for forest development within a particular management area has been

reached, proponents would need to secure an appropriate water allocation to develop within that area.

Similarly, once the 59 000 hectares has been developed within the region, proponents for further development will need to secure an appropriate water allocation. Care has been taken to ensure, as far as possible, that the 59 000 hectare expansion opportunity can occur in water management areas where there is land capability and appropriate water and offsetting opportunities for forestry. Based on industry information and current trends, 59 000 hectares provides for between 10 and 15 years of industry growth. However, actual industry growth will be determined by the plantation industry's ability to secure suitable land, market opportunities and the prevailing investment climate. This management approach protects existing water users, including the environment, while providing significant expansion opportunities for the forest industry.

**The CHAIRMAN:** A topic that I have been interested in for a while is that of natural burial grounds, which is an alternative to the conventional cemetery and which is proving to be very popular, if I can use that phrase, in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. I know that people in your department are doing some work on possible locations. The concept, as you would know, is that, instead of a conventional cemetery, people are buried in a wicker or cardboard coffin or cremated remains are in a cardboard or wooden container and then a forest is created in that area. In the case of the United Kingdom, they have what they call meadow areas. Will your department be making a submission or contributing to the whole-of-government response to the report on the select committee inquiry into cemeteries, which has been noted by this parliament?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The honourable member has raised this with me before, and I have asked the Department for Environment and Heritage to do some work on this issue. I support the idea: I think it is a very good idea from a whole range of points of view. It may be a way of using some of that land in the Adelaide Hills that has no other productive purposes, to which the member for Davenport was referring earlier today. The idea of a natural piece of landscape where a body is buried under a site that will eventually have a tree on it is a great idea because, over time, you end up with a forest of memories, I guess. It would be possible, I suppose, for people who are cremated to have their ashes scattered there and their family to contribute a tree, or whatever.

I think it is a great idea, because it could increase native vegetation. It would provide people with a permanent place where members of their family are laid to rest and it would get over the issue we have at the moment with short-term leases on cemetery plots. My department is certainly doing some work on it and I will ensure that we contribute to the select committee process to which the honourable member referred. I thank him for raising the suggestion with me.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** As a supplementary question, is the minister aware of the problems that the Native Vegetation Council is causing with council cemeteries? In one case that I am aware of, where the cemetery allotment has been proclaimed a cemetery for about 100 years but only about 30 per cent of it has actually been used and they now wish to expand the cemetery, the Native Vegetation Council is making it difficult for the council to expand further because to dig the graves they have to dig up native vegetation. Are you aware of that issue and, if so, how do you intend to resolve it?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I do not know whether it is a general issue, but it is a particular issue for a cemetery in the South-East.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** That's the one.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The Native Vegetation Council has been working with the local council in dealing with the issue and I think they have reached a resolution, which will provide sufficient plots for 10 or 15 years, from memory, although that may be slightly inaccurate. So, there has been a short-term resolution, and over the longer term we can work with the council to try to find a better solution. If you have native vegetation laws that stop broad acre clearance, one of the consequences is that you have to learn to manage other needs around those rules. We just have to work out how we can do that in relation to a whole range of issues. But in relation to the particular cemetery, the matter has been resolved for the short term.

**Mrs HALL:** My question relates to Volume 4, Part 3, and specifically to the Ground Water Information Service. On 3 December last year a question was asked of the then Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (Hon. Paul Holloway) as to whether the Ground Water Information Service would be retained. As part of his answer the minister said that, following a change in departments, these functions are now the responsibility of the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation. In reply to a further question taken on notice and tabled on 17 February this year, minister Holloway informed my colleague the shadow minister (Hon. Caroline Schaefer) that in 2004 ground water information will be available from the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation's web site.

However, in a letter to a constituent dated 1 December, Mr Holloway said in part that he would like to assure the constituent that the PIRSA customer service section would not be closed and will continue to operate. I have been informed very recently that the web site, customerservice@pirsa.sa.gov.au, which supplies the entire state with ground water information, will not be funded by the minister's department and has been refused the option of charging a fee because the information is collated by the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation. The staff work for PIRSA, therefore the only option is to close the customer service department as of 30 June of this year.

I have been assured that the information obtainable on the internet is in summary form only, is not user friendly and will not be used by the average consumer. As the minister would be aware, every drilling contractor is obliged to supply a schedule 8, which must be completed and submitted within 14 days of drilling. Schedule 8 contains all the relevant information which would be available from then on to the public. As the minister would be aware, this decision flies in the face of the regulation of ground water. Therefore, my questions are: first, why has the minister chosen to cancel this information service, given these circumstances? Secondly, why should drilling contractors fill out a schedule 8 if it is not to be used as public information? Thirdly, why has the department chosen to keep this information to itself?

It is also interesting to note, minister, that Professor Peter Cullen, Thinker in Residence, on 21 May, wrote to *The Advertiser* and said as follows:

It is essential that we do not allow trade in ground water licences until we understand the systems we are dealing with. Why has the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation chosen to fly in the face of the generally



accepted expertise by withholding this particularly relevant information? In conclusion, it has also come to my attention that references to the requirement for all collated information to be submitted have been omitted from the last few amendments to the Water Resources Act. Why has this occurred, minister?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The member has asked a very detailed question, showing her extraordinary knowledge of section 8 requirements for drilling purposes. Whilst I am aware of that particular provision, I am very impressed to learn that the member for Morialta is also aware of it. I will ask the head of the department to give you a broad overview of what we are doing in this area and, if necessary, we will come back to the member with a more detailed answer.

**Mr FREEMAN:** In broad terms, the department used to offer a service over the counter through PIRSA for this information. In the 2003-04 budget, there was a budget saving which transferred this service across to a web-based service. So, instead of providing the customer service over the PIRSA counter, it is now a web-based service. The web-based service is an enhanced service, and we operate both services in parallel because there is an issue that, although it is an enhanced service, some people do not know how to access the web. However, the member is correct when she says that the PIRSA over-the-counter service has been discontinued and that it is now a web-based service which people can access. If people have difficulty accessing the information, they should contact the agency and we can teach them how to access the information through the web.

**Mrs HALL:** I find that rather extraordinary, given that the drilling contractors have to have access to this information and it should be available. However, I will pursue this—

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I think the point is that it is available, and drilling contractors are probably more likely than not to have access to a computer, which means they would have easier access. I guess more services will be provided in new ways as technology develops. However, if there is a particular issue with understanding, as the CE has said, then people should contact us. We will have a closer look at the member's quite long and detailed question to see whether there are any outstanding issues. If the information is not as it ought to be, we can have a look at that and try to fix it.

**Mrs HALL:** Thank you, minister. My next question relates to page 10.3. Under highlights for 2003-04, a reference is made to the branched broomrape eradication program. Given that, as part of the compact with the Speaker, this government guaranteed to eradicate branched broomrape, can the department provide us with a report on its progress with this eradication program? Is it not true that under this government branched broomrape has actually spread rather than been reduced, and covers a larger area? There has been a recent announcement of trials spraying with pine oil to eradicate branched broomrape. What is the budget allocation for these trials and what is the total budget allocation for the eradication of branched broomrape?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Branched broomrape is a parasitic weed that poses threats to both marketing and production of agricultural commodities across Australia. The branched broomrape eradication program is a continuing program, with national support through the Primary Industries Ministerial Council of over \$2 million a year until June 2006, provided adequate progress towards eradication can be demonstrated. We are currently into the second year of a 10-year eradication program. Following this program, there will need to be

vigilant monitoring to ensure that it does not reappear, as the seed life is about 12 years. Independent economic analysis of the savings in agricultural production resulting from the program shows this level of investment produces very satisfactory benefits.

The seven major projects in the program aim to contain and eradicate the weed, assisted by top level research. There are also projects that empower and support farmers in the local communities. In relation to the spring survey of 2003, 21 000 hectares in Victoria and 260 000 hectares in South Australia identified an additional area of branched broomrape that is in line with expectations. The weed was found on only 13 new properties. There are now 6 240 hectares of infestation at 548 sites in the quarantine area of 191 000 hectares. The area of branched broomrape being managed will not decrease until properties can be released from quarantine, and that should commence in about 2013.

The seed can last in the ground for 12 years, so before something can be taken out of quarantine, you have to be assured that there has been no outbreak for 12 years. Farmers kept branched broomrape out of around 55 per cent of known infested paddocks last year. This shows that the landholders are putting in the effort required. A project to ensure uniform progress to eradication aimed at compliance by all farmers is under way. The project utilises powers contained in the legislation to ensure that landholders undertake recommended controls. The community supports this approach. The farming systems project integrates with the Mallee sustainable farming systems program in producing best practice farming systems.

This is a large trans-state program aimed at improving the productivity and skills of the mallee farmers and it is funded by the Grains Research and Development Corporation. Together, these projects promote new options for farmers in the quarantine area to raise their productivity and eradicate branched broomrape. We are undertaking a number of initiatives, including farm planning for eradication. Farm planning workshops continue with 127 new farmers attending the latest series. This means that 50 per cent of the quarantine area is covered by farm plans, laying the foundation for eradication of the weed on those properties and making their owners eligible for the \$2.50 a hectare payment to growers.

In relation to fumigation, the season's fumigation program using methyl bromide is under way. If seasonal conditions remain favourable, 78 hectares will be fumigated and the allocated budget of \$1 million fully expended. In terms of research, paddock scale field trials of the pine-oil seed killer (which the member referred to and which was on the Channel 10 *News* last night) identified through research by Dr John Matthews as a potential replacement for methyl bromide fumigation, have begun. The Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation is accelerating the evaluation of this product and its suitability for large scale use as a branched broomrape eradication tool.

The paddock trials are designed to address some practical application issues and test the efficacy of the treatment as a means of killing branched broomrape seed in the soil. If the trial outcomes are positive, it will open the way for faster eradication of the weed over larger areas and at a lower cost. There is a grant scheme in place, and the extension of the herbicide grant scheme to include herbicides for canola and pulse crops is under way. That is what we are doing. In terms of budgets, the budget for 2004-05 is \$4 472 000. That is a contribution at a national level of \$2 080 000, of which South Australia contributes \$176 800. In addition, South Australia

is contributing \$1 993 000, and we are getting income support from the Animal and Plant Pest Control worth about \$220 000. Industry is also contributing \$179 000. It is probably a little disappointing that their contribution is only at that level but nonetheless we are grateful for it.

We are spending just under \$4.5 million per year. We are taking this incredibly seriously. If this weed were to establish itself in the landscape, it could cause devastation to many crops, as well as to some native vegetation. It germinates under particular conditions and it is discovered on different properties as a result of rainfall and the plants grown on those properties. I am reasonably confident. The advice that I have is that we have it pretty well contained now, and we are going through the process of trying to get rid of it in a very systematic and deliberate way. We are getting pretty good support from the local community, which is having to live through this, and they have shown some outstanding leadership at a local level.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Minister, page 10.43 raises the issue of the government's looking at developing a mechanism to consider what impact proposed subdivisions have on native vegetation. The budget papers say that you are developing a mechanism to consider that. Can the minister provide some detail as to what is envisaged? Are we saying that the intention is to say that subdivisions cannot go ahead?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** This matter was raised a couple of years ago when debating the native vegetation legislation. The legislation does not cover subdivision, so as I understand, it is possible for a council to zone an area of pristine native vegetation as a development site and then allow development to occur. Virtually the whole of that land can be cleared, and that is contrary to the principles in the Native Vegetation Act. We obviously do not want to stop development completely, but we do want to ensure that it happens in a way which does not make worse the native vegetation cover that we have left in South Australia. We have been working with Planning SA on how that might be managed at a regulatory level. That is where it is at, but we have been talking with them for a little while now. There is no particular proposal before government because getting the right balance is fairly problematic. It is a matter that we are working on.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** On page 10.48 it raises the issue about native vegetation and house sites. Is it currently possible, or will it be possible under the changes that you propose, for the clearance of native vegetation to stop a home being built?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** We have no particular proposition before us. We are talking about subdivision rather than home construction.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I am sorry; no. Minister, page 10.48 raises the issue of home sites. I will try to find the line, but it has in brackets 'home sites'. That is the example given by the budget papers.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I understand what you are saying. There is no particular proposition at the moment: that is what I am saying. We are working on developing a proposition. At the moment, if you have a piece of land which is a housing block and which has been zoned for housing, you have certain rights about clearance to put the house on that land, and you can clear a certain amount of vegetation for fences, the building block, fire and all the rest of it. The regulations describe what you can do. We are looking at areas where the land is reasonably pristine and subdivision would cause a considerable amount of clearance. I will ask Mr Freeman to expand on that.

**Mr FREEMAN:** Although this is not an area of my expertise, I think the issue is that the vegetation clearance needs to be considered as part of a package of approvals at a one-stop shop, and that is the initiative that is being developed. The current approvals will stay in place and the idea is that you can get all those approvals as part of a housing site approval at one place instead of multiple places. That is what the initiative is.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Then, is it possible, as the act stands, for an application for a housing development (one house on one site) to be stopped or not approved by council because of a native vegetation issue?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Not as the law currently stands. It would depend on how the land was zoned, I would say. There is an example on Eyre Peninsula at the moment where someone has land which is zoned urban and they want to build a number of houses and a health facility. As a result of the zoning, of course, it is not a consent development, so they will be entitled to build a house on that particular block but not the 30 or 40 houses that they currently want to build. But that is more to do with the planning laws than the native vegetation laws.

**The CHAIRMAN:** As I understand it, the powers of the CFS may preclude a house being built in a particular location. That is my understanding from estimates committees of last week. If they do not have the power, they are certainly looking to—

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Because it is too dangerous because it is in a fire prone area?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Yes.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I can understand that would be the case. For example, there would be some sites where, practically, it would be difficult to build a house. While there may be a theoretical right to build a house, the CFS or EPA might have objections in relation to its proximity to a watercourse, for example. So you have a theoretical right but it makes it practically very difficult to build it because of the regulatory framework. But the Native Vegetation Act does not stop building houses on individual housing blocks zoned residential.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I have a point of clarification. If the CFS or the EPA say you cannot build on an allotment—

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** No, I did not say that, necessarily.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** You are saying they have the power to do so.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** No, they have the right to say that you cannot build on a watercourse.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** As defined in the Natural Resource Management Act? You would not be able to build anywhere in the state.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** As defined in other pieces of legislation. But they have a right to protect water quality and they may say you can build on that site but not on these elements of it—such as a flood plain, for instance: it would be difficult to do.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** My understanding is that a report within the EPA identifies about 400 sites (or a number of sites) that the EPA reckons you cannot build on. What does the government intend to do about sites that for decades have been rated as having a building right so they have attained a certain value? If a government agency now says that you cannot build on that land, what does the government intend to do about the valuation of the land? Because it is then valueless.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The EPA has been looking at issues of water quality in the hills and identifying how many potential housing sites might be created. However, the issue as to zoning is ultimately not an issue for the EPA. All it can do is look at what its responsibilities are in protecting the watercourse. You talk about the zoning. The area that the EPA is looking at is not zoned residential, so I do not think there is a right to build houses on those sites. There is possibly an expectation but I do not think there is a right. I think that is the distinction.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Minister, you might want to check whether the Valuer-General has been valuing those sites on the basis that he thinks there is a right, not an expectation, to build a house. The natural resource management levy (which is under this budget line), the emergency services levy, the sewerage rates and everything else is based on the value of the block. If the value of the block, in part at least, is based on whether you can build a home, to a large extent that adds to the value. If they do not have a right to build a home but only an expectation, surely the Valuer-General has to reassess the valuation of all those allotments to reduce the taxation base on those people because they are being falsely charged.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The honourable member is asking me questions that are outside my areas of responsibility.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** You might be collecting the NRM levy illegally, under false pretences.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I am not responsible for the Planning Act, for the Valuer-General or for local government. All I am saying is that the agencies within my responsibility have a duty to ensure that natural resources—and in the case of water resources—are protected, because the community has a right to have its water resources protected. Ultimately, whether an approval is given for a block that is not zoned 'residential' is up to the planning process to determine.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** Minister, you mentioned earlier about water restrictions, bores and possible exemptions. What will the government's approach be to regional golf clubs that have bore water as their only or most economic source for watering their course? I have a letter before me which was written by the hard-working member for Goyder (John Meier) regarding the Balaklava golf club. That club is very concerned that it will now be restricted in its water use because it does have bore water. That community has worked tirelessly over the past 10 years to establish its golf course as one of the best in the Mid North. What will the policy be in relation to regional golf clubs, and the like, that rely on bore water? Will they successfully be given an exemption?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** As I said to the honourable member previously when he asked about other sources of water, I am having a closer look at this proposed regulation. The issue relating to golf courses has been raised with me before. I suppose that it is an issue for all sporting clubs and groups that have greens of various sorts to water. Schools and local councils all have areas they like to water. We are not saying that they cannot water. It is not proposed that they should not water. What is proposed is that they should water at a time when they will minimise water loss so that there is not waste.

That is what local government has managed to do with the regulations that are SA Water based. That is what a number of clubs and organisations have been able to do in relation to water that comes from SA Water. I do not see why it is any more difficult for groups that use water that comes from a bore. In any event, as I said, I have not yet determined how

to proceed with this measure. I am contemplating it, and I will take into account any particular issues that any clubs raise. If it becomes a particular hardship they can seek an exemption and, obviously, we would be fairly sympathetic if they had a good case.

**The Hon. I.P. LEWIS:** I want to ask the minister some questions about water loss along the same lines. How much money is being spent, either by his department or any other government agency, to discover how many hundred megalitres of water are being lost each year through weeping mains underground in the metropolitan area and elsewhere in South Australia? The pipeline network above ground is easily maintained with regular painting and so on, but the older pipes, which were installed throughout the metropolitan area prior to the 1960s, or, indeed, the 1970s more like (they have not yet deteriorated in that decade), are all subject to corrosion and deterioration.

An estimate was made by minister John Klunder about 15 years ago and nothing has been said about it since. It takes on substantial proportions now as many of those leakages are clearly affecting the roadways along which the pipelines travel and which are causing subsidence and so on. But, in the main, they end up just discharging into the surface watertable without ever bursting through to the surface; in the same way—as he and I saw on the occasion that we went to New South Wales—cotton is being irrigated by pipes that simply ooze water all the way along their length. I know from the calculations that were made by minister Klunder, and by the minister's own remarks at another time in this place, that an enormous amount of water enters the secure system of SA Water but it never receives a customer.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I thank the honourable member for his question. I just point out that the responsibility for the SA Water system is that of the Minister for Administrative Services, and I will certainly refer the question to him for a more specific answer. Advice to me is that systems under pressure, such as the SA Water systems, as a matter of practice lose around about 8 per cent of water each year for a variety of reasons. Leakage is one of those reasons, maintenance would be another and use for fires and so on (which, obviously, is not part of anyone's allocation) would be a third reason.

I understand that 8 per cent is kind of standard behaviour. Obviously, it would not be world's best but, generally, it is considered an acceptable standard. To get to 0 per cent would require an extraordinary investment of capital. If one were to invest that capital to get an 8 per cent saving, one would have to consider whether that investment could make better water savings if used in other ways. For example, would it be better to build desalination plants? Would that be a cheaper way of getting an equivalent volume of water? It must be a cost effective consideration.

However, I will seek advice from the Minister for Administrative Services. Certainly through the Waterproofing Adelaide project, a number of these issues are being evaluated to see which are the most cost-effective ways of obtaining potentially additional water supplies. Desal does seem to be the cheapest of the, I guess, novel options. Recycling wastewater and so on are obviously the most likely to add additional flows to our systems in South Australia, but I am happy to get a report for the member.

**The Hon. I.P. LEWIS:** That brings me to my next question. Before asking it, can I make the remark that the efficiency to which the minister refers about whether the

dollar would be better invested on desalinating is no less a question for the Balaclava golf club or anyone else. Is it more efficient to spend the money irrigating on most days when the temperature and humidity are appropriate, even though it is in daylight hours of, say, between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., as opposed to having to pay penalty rates to send their irrigators out? They might consider that they, too, are acting more efficiently. So, in absolute terms the government is not setting a very good example if, on the one hand, it expects them to pay the higher cost of labour just to save the water when the government itself chooses not to save the water but to let it run into the surface aquifer and dissipate in such ways as occurs there.

My next question is about the wastewater to which the minister refers. I wonder whether any money has been spent by the government on researching accurately (instead of the crap that was told to the Public Works Committee three years ago by SA Water) draining the groundwater through the sewerage system from the Queensbury district (the Port Adelaide-Le Fevre Peninsula area) where tile drains are deliberately kept in place below sea level draining seawater (or the equivalent) out of the sandy soils. They are not clay or sandy loams, and the water constantly floods the sewerage pipes. They are always inundated with water that comes in through these terracotta pipes.

This seawater is being mixed up with the sewage and grey water sillage and pumped to Bolivar. On one calculation that I did of that seawater based on 36 000 ppm, that represents several hundred tonnes of salinity. We would be shifting a minimum of about 5 000 tonnes of salt a year onto the irrigated areas at Virginia if we attempted to use all of that water; yet SA Water says that they do not need to replace the mains, they are all okay. I am appalled, because I now know that there is going to be a serious and increasing problem with salinity retention in the horticultural soils onto which that wastewater can be diverted. The salt will not go away; it will hang above the clay layer to the point where it will eventually ruin that soil. That soil is not coming from the water softeners of the greater metropolitan area in any great quantity in comparison with the enormous quantity that is simply flooding all the terracotta mains in the Queensbury drainage system. It used to go to the Port Adelaide sewage treatment works and, after the bacterial digestion, of course, it was discharged to the gulf.

On the one hand, we are concerned quite properly to save the seagrass meadows but, on the other hand, we do not give a damn about the future of the horticultural soils that belong to our citizens at Virginia, who are being asked to use this water instead of over-exploiting the groundwater reserves at Virginia. I want to know what the cost would be of replacing the leaky terracotta sewerage pipes throughout the Queensbury district or anywhere else in the metropolitan area where they occur below the water table and are constantly flooded.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I do not have that detail. Once again, it is an issue for my colleague the Minister for Administrative Services, but I am happy to take it on notice and ensure that the member receives a reply.

**The Hon. I.P. LEWIS:** I do not want the minister to misunderstand me. I am not accusing him of being derelict in his duty.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I understand.

**The Hon. I.P. LEWIS:** I am just saying that I think that SA Water, the new Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity, and the EPA ought to get on the job. It is a big and serious problem that no-one notices because it does not burn

down a house every day, no-one dies on the road, or anything else. But it is clearly an unsustainable practice.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The issue of salinity is obviously of great concern to my department, and we will have a look at it from that point of view. But in terms of costs, and so on, we would have to go to SA Water. We will obtain a reply for the member.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** The department is in receipt of a report entitled 'Report of the catchment management subsidy scheme, June 2002'. The report shows that well over \$120 million worth of stormwater and associated works in the Adelaide metropolitan area is to be undertaken. Is it intended that this amount will be funded out of the natural resource management levy?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** A review of the scheme in 2001-02 identified a large backlog of works, estimated at \$140 million, to resolve flooding and drainage issues. As a consequence of that review the government decided, as part of the 2003-04 budget, to double the funding for the scheme to \$4 million per annum. The increase in funding has allowed the government to take a proactive role, principally in partnership with local government, in the management and use of stormwater in South Australia. Expenditure, including funds from local government catchment water management boards and the commonwealth under the scheme for 2003-04 and 2004-05, is estimated at \$6.6 million and \$10.7 million respectively. A large part of the expenditure is being directed towards stormwater drainage and flood mitigation works and studies, stormwater reuse projects and water quality and catchment health projects. Some expenditure is supporting the urban stormwater initiative established to develop a strategic approach to stormwater management in metropolitan Adelaide that encourages sustainable use of stormwater, improves stormwater quality and encourages sustainable solutions for managing stormwater hazard risk.

The benefits of using the scheme's funds in this way include improved management of stormwater hazards with reduced risk to life and property for those areas targeted; encouragement of greater local government investment in stormwater management; the revitalisation of deteriorating stormwater infrastructure throughout the state; and the promotion of innovation in stormwater management towards improved water quality and harvesting of stormwater as a resource. We will continue to fund on a matching basis stormwater drainage and flood mitigation projects to reduce the backlog of works, and we will continue to progress the urban stormwater initiative with a view to finalising the framework, including establishing a new governance model for managing stormwater into the future.

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS:** If there is stormwater damage to someone's property, whom do they sue if they cannot obtain insurance?

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** As the member said, that is asking me to provide legal advice.

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS:** Who is responsible, then?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** That is asking for legal advice in a different form. The legal advice would be: who is responsible for the act of damage to that particular property? Was it the individual who built the house on a site that was known to be subject to flooding; was it the council that allowed the subdivision; or was it the builder? You could find half a dozen potential subjects to be sued. I do not think there is any simple answer to that question.

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS:** The minister would be aware that in my electorate, if there is a one in 100-year flood, most people will require dinghies and floaties to get around. I am very concerned about the lack of planning over the past 50 years to deal with it. It is not until now that something is being done.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I think this has been an area which has been a bit of a political football between various levels of government. Local government traditionally has had responsibility for stormwater and flooding, and has managed that within its council boundaries. Usually the way they have done it is to pass on the problem to the adjoining council area. If you happen to be in the council area that is at the lowest point (which is kind of where you are), you cop all of it, and that is 50, 70, 80 to 100 years of accumulated decision making. Of course, what makes it worse is that you now have in-fill development occurring, more hard surfaces and, therefore, more run-off. So, there is the potential for even more accumulated water to gather.

Local government has played a very good role in this by working on a collective basis with us across Adelaide. Government and local government are trying to work out a strategy to manage this beyond local government borders. We are looking at how we can increase investment: for example, we put in \$4 million a year and the local government puts in \$4 million a year. Stormwater management is the key issue being considered by the minister's local government forum as a result of the risk implications arising from the backlog of works.

The Local Government Association is project managing the joint state-local government funded metropolitan Adelaide stormwater management study, which will provide up-to-date information on the existing stormwater system in Adelaide: how it can be improved, including reuse options, and how costs can best be apportioned across local government councils where work and multicouncil benefits are involved. KBR was appointed to undertake the study in December 2003, and is expected to provide a final report by the end of July this year. The report will provide an audit of existing information in relation to the adequacy of stormwater infrastructure in metropolitan Adelaide.

Recommended actions include opportunities for reducing stormwater discharges, policy options, information gaps that should be filled, potential projects for reuse of stormwater and apportionment of council costs for stormwater management. The government has set aside \$4 million a year, to which we have just referred, to develop a joint approach to stormwater mitigation with metropolitan local government on a 50:50 basis. The action is intended to work towards providing increased long-term funding for flood mitigation and drainage works, as well as giving the reuse water quality and urban amenity a high priority where feasible.

The urban stormwater initiative to which I referred has a steering committee. With key representatives from state and local government, it is oversighting the foregoing study and developing relevant policy for best practice urban stormwater management. The committee is called the Urban Stormwater Initiative (USI) and involves the two levels of government, with representatives from the chief executives of the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation and the Department of Transport and Urban Planning, as well as the Executive Director of the Local Government Association, the chair of the metropolitan CEOs' association, and the general managers of the Patawalonga and Torrens Catchment water management boards.

The USI has also been progressing policy issues to incorporate multiple objectives of stormwater management into decision making. These include key issues of flood management, reuse, water quality and amenity. In addition, the group is considering procurement options, project delivery, management arrangements, policy development and relationship with other arms of government and also the private sector. The committee will investigate linkages between the various water-related government strategies that impinge on stormwater and the integration of relevant objectives and activities between state and local government, including an exploration of funding, governance and institutional arrangement.

The USI is to examine the remnant legislation relating to the various old drainage schemes with a view to rationalising the legislative framework. The USI committee is also managing the preparation of new models for stormwater management, including the appropriate legislative provisions. So, a considerable amount of work is being done. As the member said, this is work that perhaps should have been done 50 or so years ago.

**The Hon. I.P. LEWIS:** With respect to branched broomrape, if a map were to be drawn, in the first instance, around those points, places, locations—call them what you like—in which an outbreak has been identified, assuming that we put a circle around that and then draw tangents to the outbreak nearest to it, to finally provide us with an enclosed area of land over which broomrape outbreaks have been discovered, spot by spot around the perimeter, what would now be the area enclosed by that multi-sided map of the area, rather than saying that each plant occupies an area of three square metres, and multiply out the number of plants discovered to give the area infested with broomrape, which is a bit ridiculous, or add up those so-called infested areas, it amounts to the same thing.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** We have obviously not done that modelling. The advice I have is that the survey area has identified 21 000 hectares in Victoria and 260 000 in South Australia. But, the areas of infestation are 6 240 hectares at 548 sites in the quarantine area of 191 000 hectares.

**The Hon. I.P. LEWIS:** When was that revealed? When did that occur?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I beg your pardon; my advice is that we have not discovered it in Victoria, we have surveyed in Victoria.

**The Hon. I.P. LEWIS:** My question was about the area that is now embraced by the line around the outside of each of the spots upon which it is situated—like a polygon.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I understand what you are saying.

**The Hon. I.P. LEWIS:** Yes; it is a bit more than 6 000 hectares, minister.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** That is true. The total area in South Australia in which surveys have been conducted is 260 000 hectares; the quarantine area is 191 000 hectares; but the area of infestation is 6 240 hectares within that 191 000 hectare site. So, I guess that within the remainder of those hectares there is a risk of infestation, but there has not been a discovery of infestation.

**The Hon. I.P. LEWIS:** Can the minister—not necessarily today—simply arithmetically add up all the money which it is proposed to spend in this year's budget and, under the program which he thinks he is pursuing to the foreseeable future, the amount that is to be spent from all sources until we get to the point of declaring broomrape eradicated?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I could certainly go through this year's budget. From all sources, the amount spent in South Australia this coming budget year (2004-05) will be \$4 472 000, of which South Australia's share is \$2.389 million.

**The Hon. I.P. LEWIS:** Okay; good, but I am looking for the total sum of money that is proposed to be spent until we achieve eradication in the program which the minister thinks he is pursuing.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Yes; I understand. I can get a calculation for you. We are pursuing this with determination and vigour, as I have said before, and we want to keep maintaining the contribution from the other states. At the moment, they put in \$1.9 million as well. We can get that figure for the member.

**The Hon. I.P. LEWIS:** What is the department doing, may I ask, on another matter, to sort out the anomalies that occur between what is called the Murray Lands Underground Water Resources Committee, as part of the Murray Basin, and the South-East Catchment Water Management Board, the Murray Basin being part of what is known as the River Murray Water Catchment Management Board and the interface area of which I speak between the two on exactly the same underground water resource? As I tried to point out to him and his predecessors in previous governments, this was always a silly policy.

We now have interface between Peake and Geranium where, on one side of the fence, one bunch of policies applies and, on the other side of the fence, there is another. It would have been better to have divided the Murray Basin away from the River Murray Catchment Water Management Board and put it into a board of its own, separate from the South-East and the Murray Catchment Water Management Board. There are anomalies, and they occur in the area just east of Peake where the boundaries are supposed to meet but no-one is quite sure where they are.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The honourable member raises an important issue, which is always going to be the case when you create boundaries. It happens across state boundaries, across local government boundaries (we have just been talking about that in relation to stormwater), and it happens across natural resource boundaries. Under the legislation that is before the upper house at the moment, the NRM arrangements, this matter is addressed. A mechanism is established to allow cross-border management of those issues through the establishment of particular groups. That could potentially occur everywhere there is a boundary, so we have a much more flexible and subtle way of dealing with it and, in effect, coming up with an organising body that will look after that issue, even though it is perhaps within two NRM boards. We understand the issue: it is not the only place where it is an issue, but we think we have a mechanism in place to address it.

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**The CHAIRMAN:** We move now to consideration under the portfolio of Minister for the River Murray.

#### **Membership:**

The Hon. R.G. Kerin substituted for the Hon. I.F. Evans.

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

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** No. I made my comments before in relation to the River Murray. My advisers are the same.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** I have a few issues that I will quickly raise to do with the river. It is a very important issue. I do not think that anyone takes the river lightly: it is a matter of whether or not we can match our rhetoric on the river with action. That is not just here but throughout Australia. The river seems to be a band wagon that everyone wants to jump on, whether that is politicians, the media or whatever. Having been on the ministerial council for about six years and watched a lot of what has happened, it seems to me that with the river we seem to have a popular topic of the time. At the moment that has been about the quantity of water; five years ago it was all about salinity; and 10 years ago it was all about trees. Of course, the problems are far more complex than just jumping from one issue to another, and the solutions need to be extremely holistic.

I have several areas of concern. I have a concern about the government's rhetoric being matched by action. I have some concerns about the levy. I never agreed with the levy: I think it was probably a pretty soft way of raising a tax, because you could always argue that something going to the river is going to be good. It is not an equitable way of raising a levy. Within it there is no disincentive to use water, and the way the levy is used is one thing that I will be questioning. Obviously, we need to move on the 500 gegalitres, and I have a couple of concerns with that. One is that, at the time of agreeing to go down the line and take the first step with the 500 gegalitres, I was somewhat disappointed that the decision was made to save 500 gegalitres but that the 500 was virtually then spent by being allocated to wetlands.

That, of course, reduces the amount that actually comes through most of the river system as environmental flow. I have some concerns about the delays that there have been, to the national action plan in particular but to several other programs as well. Obviously, I have had a long interest in and watched very closely what has happened with the Lower Murray Irrigation Area.

Basically, I suppose the concern is that we need an absolute whole of government approach to issues to do with the Murray, and think that there are some inconsistencies there. I do not think that SA Water's activities are always totally consistent with what would be the Minister for River Murray's agenda. I think that has been the case through successive governments. I do not think that is a new problem. With those few comments, I shall go into the first question. How much money has been raised by the River Murray levy, and how much has been spent, and on what projects?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The first point I would make is that all proceeds from the save the River Murray levy are paid into Consolidated Account, and an amount to the level collected is then appropriated to the Save the River Murray Fund, which is a legislative fund that takes the form of a non-interest bearing special deposit account pursuant to section 8 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1987. The purpose is to receive the proceeds of save the River Murray levy by Consolidated Account and make payments as prescribed by the Waterworks (Save the River Murray Levy) Amendment Act 2003.

The funds are only available for spending on the River Murray improvement program designed to improve the health of this important river system. The Save the River Murray Fund is estimated to have funds totalling \$13.4 million in this current financial year, 2003-04, and \$19 million in 2004-05.

That is \$13.4 million raised this current year and \$19 million to be raised in the next year, so they are cumulative.

Budgeted expenditure against the fund is estimated at \$9.7 million for 2003-04 and \$22.7 million for the following year, \$17.4 million of that being reflected under administered items, and \$5.3 million carryover from 2003-04 that is included in the department's controlled expenditure lines for 2004-05.

Over the two years, 2003-04/2004-05, it is anticipated that the full funding received in the fund will be expended by the end of June 2005. River Murray programs and projects finance from the Save the River Murray Fund include acquisition of water for environmental flows—although none of that has yet happened, as the member would be aware; wetland management; implement the River Murray Water Allocation Plan; contribution towards the Murray/Darling Basin Commission programs; upgrade drainage disposal systems and waste disposal stations; water quality improvement programs; conserving the River Murray's ecology; and scientific research and information. Programs and projects developed in 2003-04 and financed under the fund Building Momentum during 2004-05 will ensure that all moneys will be fully expended by the end of 2005.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** On that very point, is the minister saying that none of the money from the levy is going to replace what Treasury would have previously had to pick up?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I am advised that \$13 million or so a year will go into water acquisition.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** Towards the 500 gegalitres.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Yes, towards the 500 gegalitres. About \$4 million a year will go into the Murray Darling Basin Commission for works which will be in addition to the \$15 million that is already built into our budget base.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** I remember when you went up and had a look at the trial wetting at Chowilla, and again yesterday with the couple of projects down at Tauwitschere, it was mentioned in the media release on both occasions that contributions to those have been made by the levy. Which of the programs that we saw yesterday had money from the levy go towards them?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The Murray-Darling Basin Council at some stage last year, I think, committed itself. Ministers agreed to a \$150 million capital works program which would accompany the 500 gegalitre program called the Living Murray Initiative. So, there are two projects going hand in hand, and the aim of the capital works project is to make sure that the water we save is used in the best possible way.

As a hypothetical example—and nothing to do with any of these projects—one of the things we want to do with water is to put it into wetlands, like at Chowilla, so that we can get a revival. Under normal conditions you might need, perhaps, 100 gegalitres of water to flood a particular area because it is so far away from the river but, if you could put a pipe and a pump in place for a cost of \$2 million and use only five gegalitres of water to have the same benefit, obviously, that is a cost-effective way of doing it. That fund is there to use the capital in that kind of way. The projects that we opened yesterday, the fish passage and the barrage gates, were both out of that. That is part of the \$150 000, which is part of the fund.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** A lot of these works have been programmed for quite a while. My understanding is that most

of these projects are Murray-Darling Basin Commission funded.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Absolutely.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** When we brought the levy in last year, the Treasurer gave an assurance that in 2003-04 none of the levy money would go towards any Murray-Darling basin projects—

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Perhaps I can explain. I think that, when the Treasurer put the legislation in, the second reading explanation actually made it plain—and I certainly remember making it plain at the time that we introduced the levy, because I was out there defending it. I said that about half of it would go into environmental flow and about half would go into projects. Then the Premiers had their meeting and came up with a package which involved South Australia paying \$65 million, so that meant that slightly more than half would go into the environmental flow aspects of it and the rest was there to assist capital works. It was always our intention for that money to be used through the Murray-Darling Basin Commission budget. Mr O'Neill has just explained to me that the legislation is quite specific that the money from the fund can be used to contribute over and above the set amount that was in our base budget, which was \$15 million.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** How much was our contribution to the commission in this last financial year?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** It was \$19.6 million this year and \$20.6 million next year.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** I think you will find that during the debate the Treasurer gave an assurance that none of the money in 2003-04 would go towards the \$19.2 million for the commission.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I can raise it with him, but that certainly was not the government's—

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** He did flag that in future years it would be allowed, but he gave a commitment that—

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I cannot comment on it. I am not aware of exactly what he said, but we will certainly have a look at it. The reality is that we needed extra money to make this work, and we put the levy in place. Not everyone supported it, but the majority seemed to do so. It is in place now, and it is collecting the resources we need. I think the best thing about the levy is that it sent a very strong message, particularly to Canberra and to the eastern states, that we were prepared to take this issue seriously, and it motivated the kind of package we eventually got.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** Do allocations out of the levy require ministerial or cabinet approval? What is the process for deciding what can be paid for out of the levy?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I agreed to the program of works, which are part of the budget papers. It is through an approval process in terms of developing a budget. The majority of the money will be to purchase water. The government will be signing off on any scheme that is agreed upon in terms of funding that 500 gegalitres, and our contribution to that will be signed off at cabinet level. The additional \$150 million for the initiative was signed off by the ministerial council and then I approved it here in South Australia. The budget process, which is ultimately a cabinet process, agreed to that as well.

**Ms CICCARELLO:** I refer to sub-program 1.1, Portfolio Statements, page 10.47: 'River Murray.' Dairy farming in the Lower Murray region between Mannum and Wellington is often criticised by our upstream interstate neighbours as an area that exhibits many of the worst aspects of irrigation. The criticism points to the use of large quantities of water,

inefficient flood irrigation practices, no metering of water use and drainage back into the river as a major source of pollution. Is the criticism warranted and, if so, what is the South Australian government doing to fix the problem?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I thank the member for her question, because it is an important issue. Dairy farming in the Lower Murray region between Mannum and Wellington is often criticised by our upstream interstate neighbours as an area that exhibits many of the worst aspects of irrigation. The criticism points to the use of large quantities of water, inefficient flood irrigation practices, no metering of water use and drainage back into the river as a major source of pollution, as the member has said. The area to which the question refers is comprised of 5 200 hectares of reclaimed flood plain. The reclaimed land is below river level, and this allows for flood irrigation of the land to provide pasture for dairy farming.

The area has been developed over many years, and the economic activity that is generated from the productive use of the reclaimed land is a major contributor to the region's economy through the dairy industry. PIRSA figures estimate that 17 per cent of the state's milk production comes from this region. It is true that irrigation practices that have evolved are no longer acceptable, and there is a need to both improve farm management practices and upgrade infrastructure so that water is used efficiently and the discharge of polluted water back to the river is significantly reduced. This includes installation of meters, because one reason for current excessive water use is that usage is not being measured. The state government has recognised these problems and is committed to assisting the dairy farmers to make the necessary adjustments through a combination of restructuring and rehabilitation works. This will provide an economically and environmentally sustainable basis for the continuation of irrigation in this sensitive region.

The previous government initiated the program of reform, and I am pleased to say that the current government has maintained that commitment. At various times certain parties have questioned my support for the program and have implied that I reduced the government's financial commitment. This is not correct. The current government has maintained the funding arrangements that were initiated by the former government. Public funding of \$22 million is being provided jointly by the state government and the Australian government under the national action plan for salinity and water quality, and it is estimated that irrigators will be required to contribute another \$6 million for works that directly benefit them.

The project also includes conversion of government managed irrigation districts to self-management. These districts comprise almost two-thirds of the region. This reform is consistent with the COAG reform agenda and seeks to put the control and management of irrigation infrastructure into the hands of the irrigators, as has happened in the Riverland. Irrigators generally welcome this change because it provides them with control over irrigation infrastructure central to their business. The current government has continued the strategy of involving the community in the development and implementation of reform and at all times has attempted to place relevant information before the community so that people can make informed decisions about their future.

An options study conducted three years ago showed that the clarification of water rights and the ability to trade water could be expected to result in as many as 40 farms from 120

exiting the industry, with consequent retirement from irrigation of approximately 1 000 hectares of reclaimed land. This led to the decision to implement a strategy that involved:

- issuing new tradeable water allocations specifying the drainage requirements to be met;
- determining the level of public funding contribution to rehabilitation;
- allowing a period of water trading by those wishing to exit; and
- facilitating a period of restructuring to rationalise farms on the best land.

It is recognised that this has involved difficult decisions for individuals, so the government has been patient and allowed time for this restructuring to occur. The government has also been willing to adjust the terms of the financial offer to make it more attractive to irrigators and to facilitate a better outcome. The process is initiated by irrigators, so this has meant a delay in commencement of on-ground rehabilitation works. For this reason, a delay has also occurred in the expenditure of funds allocated to the project. In some quarters, this is seen as the government delaying the works. I do not accept that criticism, because the changes we ask irrigators to make are significant and, in these circumstances, it is necessary to allow them time to consider all their options.

Applications for financial assistance with restructuring closed on 30 April this year. Forty applications have been received for exit assistance, with the likely result being retirement of approximately 1 000 hectares (which is on target) and the consolidation of a further 600 hectares into existing farms to create more viable units. Of the total water allocation of 67.3 gigalitres for LMRIA, 15 gigalitres has been traded out of the area. These results are consistent with the predictions of the options study and provide a high degree of confidence that the rehabilitation of the remaining farms will be economically viable. The government expects the rehabilitation of infrastructure to commence during the next financial year and to be completed in sufficient time to comply with the River Murray water allocation plan and EPA requirements for water use efficiency and drainage discharge of management.

**Ms CICCARELLO:** I refer to subprogram, targets 2004-05, Portfolio Statements, page 10.43. In March 2001, the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council agreed on a vision and 15 high-level objectives for the restoration of the ecological health of the River Murray. One of those objectives is to provide fish passage from the Murray Mouth at Goolwa to the Hume Dam near Albury. What progress is being made to meet this objective?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I thank the member for that question, which has partly been answered before. Through the Living Murray initiative, the commission has approved a five-year \$25 million funding package to provide fish passage from the sea to the Hume Dam. Fish passage already exists past the upstream structures at Yarrowonga and Torrumbarry, so the works are concentrated in the River Murray barrages and the locks and weirs from Blanchetown to Euston. Progress on this initiative has been excellent, with fish passages operating, or about to be commissioned, at three locks and weirs at Tauwitchere Barrage and the Murray Mouth, which is what we did yesterday. Construction is due to commence in the next few months at two additional locks and weirs and at the Goolwa barrage. The remaining structures will be completed over the next three years. The fish passages are considered to be state-of-the-art, and I am advised that their effectiveness has exceeded expectations.



Over 17 000 fish were recorded at the Lock 8 fish ladder during the first six days of trapping.

**Mr HANNA:** Will the minister take this question on notice: can the lists of reports previously provided to me on progress in relation to the recommendations of the select committee into the River Murray be provided to me again?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Yes.

**Mr HANNA:** How much progress has the minister made with creating a national water trading register to facilitate this process?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I would be pleased to get an update on how we are going with the implementations of the recommendations of the select committee report. I would like to see that. Secondly, in relation to water trading, that is the central issue to be discussed at the premiers' and Prime Minister's meeting on Friday in Canberra, as part of the heads of government meeting. It is fair to say that a fair amount of work has been done. I will ask Mr Freeman, who is the Deputy President of the Murray-Darling Basin Commission and who has been intimately involved in a lot of the preparatory work to give us an outline of where we are at in relation to that.

**Mr FREEMAN:** Currently there is a trial, which allows water trade, essentially, from Nyah into South Australia. Temporary water trades vary dynamically and we see a lot of temporary water normally trading upstream, particularly during drier years: it tends to move into Victoria and New South Wales which receive lower water allocation during those drier years. That occurred during this current year, although we were on water restrictions, there was still a net trade to South Australia for temporary trade. Permanent trade is far more difficult. There are physical constraints as to where the water can move up and down the catchment. There are physical things such as the Barmah Choke, which mean that even though you might be able to consummate a paper transfer of water, it physically cannot be delivered between those two places. Similarly, there are environmental concerns about transferring water where it may cause increased salinity etc., so permanent transfers are far more difficult.

For the first time ever during the 2002-03 financial year, there was a net trade of permanent water out of South Australia. South Australia is still a significant net beneficiary of permanent trade. The national water initiative is to extend the trial and essentially allow water trade permanently across the basin. One of the major difficulties at the moment is that several of the irrigation areas have rules which preclude trade out of those areas, and that will be addressed, I understand, if the national water initiative is consummated at COAG.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.61 shows that of the \$30 million in the 2003-04 budget for the national action plan projects, only \$12 million was actually spent. Can the minister detail the projects which were expected to be undertaken this year which have not yet eventuated?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** In November 2000, the Council of Australian Governments agreed to implement a national action plan for salinity and water quality, as the leader would know. South Australia later signed a bilateral agreement for NAP in June 2001, setting out in detail the partnership arrangements. The bilateral required that NAP be implemented through a regional planning and delivery model. Interim integrated natural resource management groups were established administratively across the state for this purpose prior to this establishment of statutory NRM boards under proposed legislation. The member knows the regions. There

have been two rounds of priority project funding, including foundation funding under NAP: NAP 1, \$12 million in 2001-02; and NAP 2, \$20 million in 2002-03. Implementation of NAP 1 and NAP 2 priority projects is now mostly complete, except where there have been special circumstances that have delayed their implementation.

From 1 January 2004, all funding for regional investment activities had to go through the investment strategy process with new funding for the INRM groups applying from 1 July 2004. All five groups have now completed their INRM plan and have achieved accreditation from the state and Australian governments. Each group has also completed an investment strategy derived from the plan as a basis for NAP, as well as NHT extension and national landcare program funding for 2003-04 and 2005-06.

The investment strategies were submitted on 31 October 2003. Total funding of \$17.3 million was approved in February 2004. This provided 18 months of NAP funding for investment activities in the Mount Lofty Ranges-Greater Adelaide, \$3.6 million; Northern and Yorke Agricultural District, \$1.1 million; Kangaroo Island, \$0.63 million; South-East, \$0.44 million; and six months' investment funding in the SA Murray-Darling Basin region, \$11.5 million in total for 2003-04, including \$6 million for the salt interception schemes and \$2.7 million for the rehabilitation of the Lower Murray reclaimed irrigation areas.

The SA Murray-Darling Basin INRM group then submitted a second investment strategy in February 2004 seeking a further \$18.9 million of NAP funds for 2004-05. The joint steering committee has now assessed the investment strategy and intends to recommend funding of \$16.4 million to ministers. This includes further large investments in salt interception schemes (\$6.1 million) and rehabilitation of the Lower Murray reclaimed irrigation area (\$0.55 million). The Centre for Natural Resource Management has responsibility for interfacing with regional NRM groups, assisting them to develop the R&D priorities identified in the NRM planning and to broker access to R&D services from agencies, universities and CSIRO. Some \$10 million of NAP funds were provisionally allocated to CNRM in April 2004 to enable it to further develop its R&D plans and investment portfolio, developed in consultation with the five NAP regions; \$4.4 million of this amount was then allocated to the five highest priority projects in the portfolio for immediate implementation.

The state is committed to the implementation of NAP in South Australia. The commonwealth has put in \$93 million and the state is matching it. Some \$38.3 million of the total NAP funds is allocated to the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation to implement the Upper South-East program; of this \$5 million was paid in 2003-04 with a further \$14 million likely to be paid in 2004-05 for implementation of the program. Some \$17.3 million was approved in February 2004 and a further \$16.4 million will be recommended to state and Australian government ministers in June 2004 for investment activities identified in regional investment strategies (as indicated in a table to which I will refer shortly). It is a combined total of \$33.7 million for 2003-04 and 2004-05. It is anticipated that an additional \$14 million will be drawn down by DWLBC in 2004-05 for the implementation of the Upper South-East program for a total of \$19 million of the overall \$38 million allocation.

I will give a rough outline of what we are planning to do. Actual expenditure in 2003-04 across all programs in South Australia is \$28.04 million. That amount does not include

national projects and administration costs. Funding allocations for this coming year (2004-05) were \$38.4 million. That will be \$14 million for the Upper South-East program; \$4.35 million for the Centre for Natural Resource Management; the Mount Lofty Ranges-Greater Adelaide, \$2.38 million; Northern and Yorke Agricultural District, \$0.65 million; Kangaroo Island, \$0.35 million; South-East, \$0.27 million; Murray-Darling Basin general projects in South Australia, \$9.77 million; SAMDB salt interception scheme, \$6.08 million; and rehabilitation of the Lower Murray Swamps, \$0.55 million. That gives a subtotal of \$20.05 million, with a NAP total generally for South Australia of \$38.4 million. Some of those Murray-Darling schemes have yet to be approved by ministers.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** Which projects did not eventuate?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** NAP estimates were based on implementation of a range of projects, but the NAP bilaterals signed by the previous government committed the state to a regional planning priority setting. The regional planning process required extensive community consultation to identify major investment opportunities. Regional plans and investment strategies have now been accredited and funded for all NAP regions. Most of the projects initially identified in the state's salinity strategy have now commenced but, because of community consultation, the scope has changed to meet a broader range of expectations. If Senator Lees has her way, of course, we will not be putting it anywhere—it will go in a big pipeline to somewhere else.

The Upper South-East project is a good example of where community involvement and requirements have changed the scope of work. As people would be aware, active drainage work is being undertaken in the northern catchment. Comments from Sunlands holders and community groups about sections of the central catchment may require further negotiation to resolve competing expectations. Despite these delays in expenditure, the processes increase community ownership of these vital projects and improves project scope to address a broader range of community expectations, and are now consistent with the expenditure profile of our commonwealth partners. While we have not matched the initial state expenditure profile, we now have an agreed profile between the state, commonwealth and regional community. Despite undertaking this planning and consultation process, South Australia has been able to lead the nation in the roll-out of NAP activities, and regional INRM groups should be congratulated for commencing major projects at the same time as developing regional plans and investment strategies.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** To clarify and ensure that I am reading the budget correctly, because there has been a bit of confusion, is it correct that, of the \$30 million budgeted for NAP last year, only \$12 million was spent?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** No. The actual expenditure for 2003-04 was \$28.04 million across South Australia. Of that, \$5 million was actually spent in the Upper South-East. For NAP priority rounds one and two, \$8 million was spent. I will ask Mr O'Neill to expand on my comments.

**Mr O'NEILL:** I think you are pointing to page 10.61 when you talk about the estimated result of \$12.2 million versus the \$30.6 million for 2004-05. I have the briefing note and I need to take about five minutes to clarify and reconcile the figures.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** If I have made an error, I will fix it. We will come back to it.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** I have a broader question. With the sale of Ports Corp, an amount of money was set aside for the National Action Plan. Can you give us an idea how much of that fund is still salted away?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I am not sure how much we have spent to date. We might have to take that question on notice as well.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** Initially, the National Action Plan sunsetted in, I think, 2008. I notice we have not budgeted to accelerate to catch up if we have fallen a bit behind in some programs. Do we have a set allocation from the commonwealth or does it just stop at 2008? Are we putting any funds at risk if we do not accelerate our programs?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I will leave that to Mr O'Neill but, basically, the answer is no. You know what it is like to deal with the commonwealth in these kinds of programs. There are hurdles and hoops.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** In Western Australia—

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Yes, I think they got approval just last month. Perhaps Mr O'Neill can give some detail.

**Mr O'NEILL:** I think South Australia is performing quite well compared to the other states. As you are well aware, developing regional strategies is a very complex process, and I think the commonwealth recognised this by extending the initial program by one year. As we go further down the track, if the difficulties are still there in finalising the program, from our perspective we will keep our commitment and would expect that the commonwealth would keep it.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** The targets for 2004-05 include the first steps of the Living Murray initiative to return 500 gigalitres of water per annum to the river over the next five years. What, broadly, is the state government's preference for how the water should be sourced or saved and from what part of the Murray-Darling Basin does the government believe the water should come?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** What we prefer and what we will end up with are two different issues, but to speak frankly we would prefer it to come from the most productive use happening. Probably half the water from the Murray is used for pasture. As the honourable member knows, that is probably the least productive way of using it and, if we had a totally free market, which is one of the issues the Premier and Prime Minister are working on, we would want to go into the market and buy \$500 million worth of water at the cheapest price and see how much we got. We think you would come close, if it was a mixture of high security and low security water, to getting the 1 500 gigalitres you wanted. There is a huge reluctance in the other jurisdictions to allowing this to happen, for quite understandable reasons, because they are concerned about wiping out particular communities, having stranded infrastructure and losing wealth from some of those communities. That will have to be moderated.

If money could go into a community that was not using the water very productively and maybe not take out all the water from that community but rather only a proportion of it, if you gave the community the extra resource, would it be able to then invest in different systems to get more value out of the water it kept so that it obtained a net gain? That is the area we need to explore. The way it is heading, the eastern states want to have a reasonable amount of autonomy in terms of finding water, and are arguing that they should be set a

target of, say, 200 gigalitres each and through whatever process to find that water, whether by changing the licensing arrangements, buying it, compensating or whatever. That seems to be where they are heading. That is certainly not my preferred option, but it may be all we can get agreement on.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** Is the minister confident that the decision makers are now well informed as to what are the cost and savings of some of the engineering solutions? When we had the forum in Parliament House early last year we were asking a similar question of the experts there, and they were saying that a lot of the information was not available at that time. Because of the mixture of security of water, particularly in New South Wales, how you get 500 gigalitres a year buying anything other than high security water, which is too expensive, is a complex issue. With that matrix of problems we have there (and engineering solutions are a good way of saving water, but it is a matter of how quickly you can do it and at what cost), is the minister confident that we have got to the stage where we can line up some of the engineering decisions alongside the decisions on high security versus medium or low security water?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I will ask the Deputy President of the commission to answer that question.

**Mr FREEMAN:** The Murray-Darling ministerial council has basically not ruled out any options. In fact, it uses the word that you used about a matrix of options. They will come from water efficiency savings and they will come from infrastructure, as you are suggesting, and marketplace mechanisms. However, it has said that these will be explored ahead of compulsory acquisition. The only issue that has been ruled out is compulsorily taking this water away from people.

As we work through these initiatives, it is clear we are not going to get 500 gigalitres at the \$500 million mark simply through engineering works. However, there are real options and most people are aware that the most attractive option for South Australia to acquire water is to deal with the permanently wet wetlands. We have a lot of wetlands along the river that stay permanently wet. That causes enormous environmental harm because they are meant to wet and dry, they are not meant to stay wet.

More significantly from this perspective is the enormous evaporation losses. The evaporation losses from those permanently wet wetlands are probably of the order of 30 gigalitres a year and, with some engineering works that allowed you to wet and dry those, not dissimilar to the Lower Murray rehab areas, you could save that 30 gigalitres for a lot less than \$30 million. However, those sort of innovative engineering solutions tend to dry up fairly quickly, certainly at the low dollar end. The ministerial council has not ruled out any options. It is clear that there will be a matrix of various things but perhaps we need to lead the community to understand that it will not be easy and they will not all come from these engineering fixes.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** It sounds like a lot more of the work has been done because we could make some real mistakes if we do not have good enough information in front of us. What you are talking about is an area of some concern. Does the minister share my concerns about the allocation of the first 500 gigalitres to wetlands? It is fair enough that we have 180 gigalitres for the Coorong and the mouth, so that is 180 that we have flowing. My understanding is that, because of the net allocations to the wetlands, we will only see 180 gigalitres flow past Renmark. Is the minister concerned that at the end of five years we are still only going to have 180 gigalitres? In addition, do we have a grip on whether or

not we are at some risk of sleeper licences being activated and hence that 180 gigalitres being further eroded?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** There are two issues. How do you use the water? The scientific review panel that Mr Gary Jones chaired gave us some advice in relation to the water. The issue was, if you put 500 gigalitres in the water and let it run down the system, does it create benefits? It would create some benefits but not as much as if that water was well managed for environmental outcomes. Equally, with the 1 500 gigalitres that we have been arguing for, if you left it in the system it would have some benefits but not as many as if it was well managed.

The commission advised the council that we should have a process to manage that water and, in part, to justify future additions of water for environmental flow. It was decided to choose a number of icons or important sites so we could manage that water in a way to get positive outcomes and demonstrate that putting extra water in actually does something, because there is a whole lot of cynicism about all of that. The icons were chosen, some in each state, for obvious reasons. Half of them are in South Australia, the mouth being one of them.

It would depend how you use that water. You have 500 gigalitres but you do not have to use it each year. You could store that water and use it every second or third year, or you could use some of the water. If you have a series of wetlands that you want to wet, you could use some of the water to do one wetland this year and that same water allocation to do another wetland next year. You can manage the way in which you use that water. I think that is a very sensible approach because we will then be able to keep track of the improvements that we are able to obtain by finding this water.

Equally, we could store up this water. You might want to use 1 000 gigalitres one year to get the mouth open, for example. Theoretically, that could be the case. I think that is a pretty sensible way of going. We might even get to the stage where we do not need the water for environmental flows for a period of years, but we would lease it out to cotton growers—God forbid. We might do that and then use that money to buy more water. That does not seem to me to be an unreasonable thing. There is a little trust in New South Wales about which the leader is aware.

It is a wetland trust that trades. When it does not need the water for environmental purposes—which is usually when a drought is on, because you want to keep it in drought—you sell that water or lease it out for a year to irrigators who are desperate for it. They give you a good return and then you buy more water which you use in another year. So, all those things can be used. Other issues relate to sleeper licences, dozer licences. Peter Cullen and others have referred to the extraction of water from underground sources. I mention global warming. What will happen to our water supplies if the temperature increases considerably?

There will be more evaporation, the water will fall at different rates and storage becomes a big issue. They are all considerations. I suppose what I would be looking for in terms of the environmental flow water is for that water to be put into some sort of trust, bank, fund or something, which would be managed on a collective basis by the basin states for environmental purposes. If, after we get 500 or 1 500, we still find that it is not sufficient, we will have to keep going back to the well and draw more out, to mix a metaphor. I agree with the leader that this is not an easy process.

The absolutely essential aspect—and I am very pleased that we have it in South Australia—is that we need to maintain this bipartisanship attitude, because there is no doubt that, after we have left government after how many years we happen to be in it (whether it be 20 years), this issue will still need to be managed. It is important that the alternative government has similar views so that we do not have radically different programs that we want to argue for when we go off to these meetings.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** Is there any sort of prediction in terms of step one over the five-year period about which we are talking? Will any licences which are not currently activated but which become active reduce that figure of 500, or will we have to buy more than 500 or whatever?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I am sure that work has been done on it by the Murray-Darling Basin Commission. I am not exactly aware of it. Certainly, I know that in South Australia there is a potential threat. We have a cap of 720. We use only, I think, 660 or thereabouts. However, we have allocations of about 790. Theoretically, South Australia could have a problem. I have to say that one of the things that will probably help us is the drought that we had last year and this year, which meant a reduction in allocations. It has made the irrigators a little anxious about going to 100 per cent. They are likely to want to hold onto some reserve just in case there is a future reduction, but that is not to say that they will not lease it out in the years when there is not a reduction. That has the same impact, of course, at least in those one-off years.

**Mr FREEMAN:** A bit of work is going on. It was interesting to see South Australia's response last year to the drought. You had two options in the state: one was to pursue a reduction on use and the other was to pursue a reduction on allocation. Quite clearly, the community preferred the reduction on allocation, which meant a reduction on sleeper licences and dozers. There is clear preference in the community to acknowledge them as licences even though they may not have been activated.

With successive years of drought there are effectively no sleepers out there. Sleepers are licences that never get used; dozers are licences that get used from year-to-year—some years they get used, some they don't. What has happened with the drought is that basically anyone who has a licence that was not being activated have seen that as financially attractive to trade at least on the short-term market, and there are effectively very few sleepers. There are quite a few dozers. A lot of people have a conservative approach and use 80 per cent of their licence and leave about 20 per cent of it just in case. They are quite happy to leave it in the river in those years when they do not use it. It has been quite interesting to note that sleepers are basically becoming extinct. The community's expectation is that a licence is a licence. So, that has probably started to influence our thinking. However, we have not put anything in a policy sense to the government.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** I hear what the minister says about the flexible use of water. With the way the agreement is at the moment, do we have a lot of flexibility or, as we get to the 500, will each of these four areas receive that allocation each year?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** At the moment we have agreement in principle to find 500 gigalitres over five years and to allocate \$500 million. We have agreed that that water will come from a matrix of options. We have also agreed on those iconic sites, I think, but we have not agreed in detail about how it would be managed. In my view, we should leave that

to the experienced officers of the Murray-Darling Basin Commission and not let politicians fight about it, but I am not too sure how it will end up.

**Mr FREEMAN:** My advice, which has been accepted by the council to date, has been that you must manage the collective pool as one, because it will be Barmah-Millewa's turn this year and not next year, and you might want to use it all on Chowilla. So, our advice is that it must be managed as a collective pool. The other reason is that one of the ecological assets is the river thread itself. You need to be able to move this water down the system in a way that is actually environmentally friendly. Historically, we have put it down at one steady pool level. It would be more environmentally sound to actually pulse it to get variations in the river level. I guess communities have grown up with a steady pool, and they would find it intriguing if the river level starts varying by half a metre, but it actually helps the environment. You will only achieve that if you look at it as a basin-wide issue rather than the people looking after perhaps Hatta Lakes moving their water down when meanwhile someone is moving theirs. So, it must be used as a collective pool, and that has generally been accepted to date.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** That is heartening to hear. When you put out communiques and announcements, you do not get the opportunity to fully explain things. I applaud that flexibility. Not having been involved in the final round of decisions, you would suspect that Victoria might have said, 'We're in; we want water for this wetland' and New South Wales might say, 'If we're in, we want water for this wetland.' If that sort of interference starts coming in, managing the whole thing becomes a real problem. If it is just about the environmental outcome for those wetlands rather than the river system, that is where I would have some real problems. Regarding Chowilla and the wedding of the bigger wetland area, are we right across what sort of a salinity impact that might have on the river at that point?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** It is a huge issue, as you know, the salinity problems around there. When I was there last summer, I think, I got a pretty good briefing about those issues. Mr Freeman might have more detail. We can arrange a briefing for the leader if he wants information about particular issues. It is a complex issue to manage fresh water in that environment, to make sure that we do not contribute to a greater amount of salt going back into the system. As I understand it, we would wet those wetlands and allow evaporation to get rid of the water. I do not think that, generally, it would be going back into the system. However, I might be wrong. I am advised that some does; I beg your pardon.

**Mr FREEMAN:** We really do not know the answer to that question. We are currently conducting trials. One of the reasons why we are conducting those trials is to observe the response rates of the trees—when is a tree able to recover and when has it basically gone past the point? The other issue that we are looking at is, as you wet these areas, does it insert a lens of fresh water over the top of the saline areas or does it blend and, as the leader has suggested, therefore, you end up mobilising salt? There are some early indications that, in fact, you insert a fresh water lens over the top of the other water and suppress it. If that was the case, it would be less of a problem. It is early days in the trial, but that is what the trial is trying to do.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** I would not be so worried about water flowing back to river; it is more the seepage issue that

would be a possible concern, considering what has happened in some other areas. If, in fact, some of the wetland work we do has a negative salinity impact, we need to be pretty careful about how we manage that water in the longer term. My next question is: what level of savings have we achieved through the domestic water restrictions?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** That is really an issue for my colleague the Minister for Administrative Services. From memory, I understand that it is somewhere between 13 per cent and 17 per cent. That is the figure that sticks in my mind, but I do not want to be held to that. I will obtain a briefing for the leader. As I recall it, it was a reasonably significant figure. Presumably, the leader is talking about SA Water.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** Yes.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** It was a reasonably significant figure. If you took out some of the variables, such as the amount of rain that had fallen over the period of time, so that you could compare it with similar years, there was still a significant change in consumer behaviour. It may not all have been a direct result of the water restrictions; some of it could have been the result of people just being more careful about how they use water generally—having shorter showers or not leaving the tap on when they clean their teeth. There is a higher level of consciousness about water conservation and I think that those restrictions made people think about it a lot more. We will obtain a proper report for the leader.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** With respect to the issue that I alluded to earlier about a whole of government approach to the issue of water and the river, with SA Water being such a big drawer on the river (which we all contribute to) an ongoing issue for me, both in government and in opposition, has been the maintenance levels of SA Water and the fact that we are probably losing more through leaks than we are saving with restrictions. I note with some concern that we are paying a levy to put water into the river—we are putting money towards the river—yet at the same time we see that SA Water is paying bigger dividends and cutting both its work force and its capital expenditure.

Has the minister any real strategy to try to draw together a whole of government approach to this issue? On the one hand, the community has got behind the river, and whatever else, and we are all trying to make savings, to buy more water and to have better infrastructure, good environmental programs and so on. However, it is of some concern that, basically, we have seen the maintenance of the water system cut back, less money spent on capital and, certainly, the loss of a lot of maintenance staff in country areas. The asset is under some pressure at the moment. Maintenance levels are low, and leaks take a long time to fix. It really detracts from a lot of the better work that is done on the minister's side of government. So, is there any strategy to try to bring SA Water to heel?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I am not the minister responsible for SA Water, as the member knows. For good reasons, the minister responsible for water policy and the minister responsible for managing the reticulation system are separate ministries, because we have different interests. That is not to say that the minister responsible for SA Water and I do not speak regularly about water issues: we do. The policy work that has been done in relation to better managing our water resources is really the Waterproofing Adelaide project, which is looking at how we can guarantee Adelaide's future viability given the threats that are occurring. We expect some sort of draft paper to be released very shortly.

I was asked a question before the member arrived about leakages from pipes: I am informed that we are getting a loss of about 8 per cent across the system. That is due to a variety of causes, leakage being one of them, maintenance and firefighting being others, but I guess that leakage would be the highest of those causes. It becomes an issue of cost: is it cheaper to reduce that 8 per cent to, say, 5 per cent or is it cheaper to find water from some other source? If you are going to be really pragmatic about it, they are the kind of issues that we have to consider. I will refer your question to SA Water regarding maintenance and so on and get a response to you. It is a difficult issue for the government. SA Water produces a dividend that the government relies on to provide services. If you reduce that dividend, no matter by what means—whether you introduce water conservation measures which we have done and which presumably have an impact on dividend, or by ensuring that it invests more in maintenance or other things—you do reduce the dividend, so it becomes a cost pressure for government one way or another. I am sure that the leader is only too familiar with those kinds of problems.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** Yes; I remind the minister that Peter Cullen, one of the thinkers in residence, has been asked about alternative sources of water and what the costs are. Peter's first reaction has been that the cheapest option is to reduce wastage, which is currently occurring. I think that that does apply in other areas as well, but certainly within SA Water it just seems that you are trying hard to get one message across, but I think that within government there is another area which is not quite on the same wavelength. Also on the SA Water issue, we are all pretty well aware of what has happened down in the Lower Murray irrigation area where SA Water has purchased significant quantities of water. Once again, to get the integration, we are going the hard yards with the river. As Minister for the River Murray, will you have a significant say in how SA Water actually utilises those allocations?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** SA Water has purchased, as I understand it, 12 gegalitres of water.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** Was it 12 or 17?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** It was 12. It might have cost 17. I was certainly a very strong supporter of their purchasing that water. I thought that for strategic purposes it was very wise for them to do it. It has meant that the water stayed in South Australia. Currently it is going through to the mouth. It is water flow: they have not leased or used or sold it, so it is still there. Cabinet agreed on the basis that cabinet would decide how that water was ultimately used. We have water held in three agencies in government. Primary Industries has 4.5 gegalitres of water, which was industry development water—I think you would remember that from your time there—and my agency has a similar amount from the Loxton irrigation. That is about eight plus 12, so we have about 20 gegalitres of water which is not allocated, although primary industries could be doing something with theirs at the moment—I am not sure. We are not using the 4.5 gegalitres that we have in any productive way; it is just staying in the river for environmental flow. We have been using a little bit of it for some of the wetland trials, and we will use a bit more for them. We have about 20 gegalitres, and the departments are talking about how to strategically manage that.

In my view, we should be a bit flexible about it. We can use it for environmental benefits a lot of the time, I think, but there would be other times when it would be quite sensible to use it for industry development, particularly the water we

are now holding that came from the lower Murray irrigation area. If some new development down there needs water to get it going, we could lease the water to them for a number of years. It is a bit similar to the BAL arrangements. We could, perhaps, lease it to them while they go out and find their own source, and then it comes back to government for whatever purposes. Or, ultimately, it provides a bit of insurance against future demand and supply problems that might come about as a result of the River Murray having less water available to it.

So, I think it was a wise purchase; it gives us an option about how to use it—not only that water but the water that my department has and the water that PIRSA has. It is interesting that the three departments have different wants, but we can satisfy all of those wants over time but, perhaps, at a higher scale than any of us could achieve individually.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** I think the fear that some have had—and I think you have allayed it to some extent—is that SA Water, being basically a commercial business, may well have just been looking to trade that water. But, you are saying that cabinet would have a say.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I do not think SA Water was doing it as a speculator. I think it was hedging against future demand. Just like any other water user, if there are going to be future reductions in water availability, SA Water needs to supply Adelaide and the townships with water. If it cannot get water from anywhere else, it will just go into the market. So, it was sensible to go into the market when it was available in South Australia. SA Water is probably the best equipped to hold onto it while we work out what to do.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** I wish I could share your confidence. In regard to the lower Murray irrigation area, what is the likely fate of the land that the water has come off, now that water has been taken off it? Are we confident that that land can be properly managed and not become a problem for us down there?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** This is an issue we are working through. As I said, it is about 1 000 hectares that is being freed up and no longer needed. On top of that, 600 hectares are going to be rearranged, so we are pretty sure that that land will be working pretty well, but we have 1 000 hectares left. There is ELMA water—the environmental water that is available to look after it. Some people are staying on the land and will look after the land but not use it for dairy purposes; they might do other things on the land—some of it productive. Others might be just using it for lifestyle purposes, to plant vegetation or whatever. I guess the real worry is those who have just sold the water, kept the land and who do not really give a toss. A question I asked my officers the other day was: what do we do about them? Well, if you have a piece of land and you do not care about it, you pretty well do not have to care for it in our current system. We do not impose environmental standards on the land managers. If we were to do that in any huge way, we would start getting objections from land managers.

**Mr FREEMAN:** The only thing I can add is that it is not dissimilar to the permanent wetlands that I was talking about before; that would be the general solution. I cannot imagine that, if you get these recalcitrant people who just do not want to do anything to the land, it would be structured in such a way that it could be managed as a wetland. That is what we are doing; we are making sure all of this land is aggregated together. If we took on that role anyway, I cannot see a big issue because the land is essentially lying there. If we end up basically maintaining it as a viable wetland through the

construction of pumps—and the banks are already there—maybe there is some agreement that you could get from the land-holders. I guess it is one of the problems that we hope will not emerge, but perhaps it will.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** Yesterday, down at Tauwitschere an announcement was made of \$25 million over the next five years as an initiative. Can the minister expand on that? Also, is it in this year's budget already?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** No. I guess that, anticipating that there would be a call on resources, the Premier wanted to go along there indicating that he was prepared to put in extra resources. This is not at all for the River Murray initiative: this is money that we have put on the table for the broader initiative, the National Water Initiative (NWI). I guess we are hopeful that the commonwealth will agree to fund projects that assist that initiative, so we have said that we are prepared to find some money over five years to aid that.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** Will that come out of the levy?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** No, that will have to come from other sources. I need to make a correction to a statement I made. I advised the committee that the allocation for 2004-05 for the Murray Darling Basin Commission was \$20.6 million, but in fact it is \$20.3 million. Also, we will give you the information we said we would get in relation to the NAP underspend.

**Mr O'NEILL:** To clarify the issues, the briefing paper that we have provided to the minister is the latest briefing paper on the expected expenditure for 2003-04 and 2004-05. The figures in the budget papers were structured around April as part of the budget process. As part of actual expenditure at the end of the year, we would expect that the outcomes will reflect what we were talking about in the briefing note that the minister explained to the honourable member. There is not only expenditure for this year of \$12 million but there is carryover that has already been approved by Treasury of \$18 million, which will be provided to us if we spend according to the program of works.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** On top of the \$30 million that is budgeted for this year?

**Mr O'NEILL:** There is another \$18 million.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** So, if everything went wonderfully well, you could—

**Mr O'NEILL:** The reason why it has been held back is based on our experience in past years of getting some of these programs up. So, we have an agreement from Treasury for a further \$18 million, if it is required.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I thank my officers for their assistance today, for briefing me and for all the preparation they have done over the last few weeks and months.

**The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr Koutsantonis):** I declare the examination of the vote completed.

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Offices for Sustainable Social, Environmental  
and Economic Development, \$1 335 000

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr T. O'Loughlin, Chief Executive Officer, Department of Transport and Urban Planning.

Ms S. Ziersch, Manager, Policy, Department of Transport and Urban Planning.

Mr A. Atkinson, Acting Director, Office for the Southern Suburbs, Department of Transport and Urban Planning.

Mr P. Sandeman, Director, Office of the North, Department of Transport and Urban Planning.

#### Membership:

Mr Brokenshire substituted for the Hon. R.G. Kerin.

**The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr Koutsantonis):** I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to appendix C, page C2 in the Budget Statement, Volume 3, part 8 and, in particular, pages 8.10 to 8.22. Does the minister wish to make an opening statement?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I will forgo the pleasure of reading my opening statement but I can assure members it is a worthy document, and if anyone would like to see a copy, I would be happy to supply it to them.

**The ACTING CHAIRMAN:** Does the member for Mawson wish to make an opening statement?

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** No. My first question is: could the minister explain what has happened in relation to the positions held by Ms Fij Miller and Mr Atkinson?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Ms Miller has accepted another job within the Department of Transport and Urban Planning, and Mr Atkinson has been appointed as acting director on a three-month basis while we conduct an interview process.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** Minister, could you advise whether the southern suburbs, through its continuation and involvement with the Southern Social Planning Alliance, has had any discussions with the police minister, the Police Commissioner, or any other members of SAPOL regarding future policing of the Willunga basin?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** That has not been an issue in which I as Minister for the Southern Suburbs have had any direct involvement in the Willunga area. As the member for Kaurna, over the years I have certainly lobbied for extra policing for the Aldinga area. Through the planning process, we have been looking at a whole range of infrastructure needs in that outer southern area which covers both the member's electorate and mine. I imagine that policing has been one of those issues, but I will ask Mr O'Loughlin if he has any further information.

**Mr O'LOUGHLIN:** The office has been participating in the development of strategic crime prevention strategies for the region with the Crime Prevention Policy Unit. The idea is to incorporate crime prevention into the agenda to enhance economic development through crime prevention and environmental design principles, educating and promoting an awareness of those principles to the community (and this is throughout the whole area covered by the office), and identifying hot spots within the southern suburbs that are targeted for criminal activity and applying those principles to those areas as well. So, we are trying to use the planning side of my department to augment the work being done by police.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** I have a supplementary question, and I am happy for Mr O'Loughlin to answer this, minister, if that is easier from the point of view of a carry-on question. Has there been any lobbying by the Office of the Southern Suburbs to reinstate the cut in funding to the crime prevention program which we had in the south and which was very successful? I might add that bipartisan approaches are often taken by the minister, the member for Kaurna and myself, as member for Mawson, including confirmation on a brochure of the success of that program. I am just wondering whether

the Office of the Southern Suburbs has been involved in trying to get some of that money back?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** It is a nice try, I think. This is an issue that was the subject of the budget two years ago, and I know that it is a matter of great passion to the member, but it is certainly not the job of one department to be lobbying to undo a government budget position. The Office of the Southern Suburbs and I as the Minister for the Southern Suburbs have been lobbying for improvements in policing, as Mr O'Loughlin has just said.

In addition to that, of course, we have recently been able to secure a considerable sum of money under this current budget—\$245 000 this year—for graffiti programs, and the member would be aware of the meetings that we have had with the police, council and local members dealing with that issue. I am very pleased that the government has been able to find funding of \$750 000 over three years, with just under a third of that in this coming budget, to support a multifaceted anti-graffiti strategy in the southern suburbs. We will be working with all the interest groups we have set up to ensure that that has a good impact. To give the member an idea of the projects, they are:

- A Clean Slate Blitz, which will be a one off blitz involving coordinating Marion and Onkaparinga council teams, state government organisations, private organisations and the community to systematically remove all graffiti from the southern suburbs. Subsequently, new incidents of graffiti vandalism are more likely to be reported and easier to clean.
- An ongoing graffiti removal program, involving the coordinated removal of graffiti across various assets in the south.
- A graffiti hotline, which will complement the ongoing program.
- An anti-graffiti paint trial, which is an interesting program which involves the trial of the use of a paint that has oil repellent and water repellent molecules that prevent oil-based and water-based graffiti art. It is intended to conduct the trials at five railway stations.
- Strengthening the SAPOL schools graffiti program.
- Adopt an area program.

So, it is a range of initiatives which will demonstrate a very strong commitment by the government to the southern suburbs in terms of community police work.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** Can the minister provide me with a detailed briefing on that matter in due course?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Certainly.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** The minister's answer was reasonably detailed, but a few more facts would be of assistance. Like the minister, I am very keen to see graffiti removed.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I am happy to provide that for the member.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** I note that there has been an increase of approximately \$250 000 in the supplies and services line. Is that for consultancies? Can the minister advise what that increase in supplies and services is for?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** That is for the graffiti program.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** Very good. Has the green business incubator feasibility study commenced, because this study has been discussed for two years now? I note in the budget line on page 8.12 that it talks about completing the green business incubator feasibility study. Can the minister advise what has been done thus far in relation to this study?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** As the member said, this was an issue that was identified a year or so ago. The green business incubator will seek to demonstrate the methods involved in operating a green business by providing a model example of how businesses can incorporate a green business approach to their operations. An amount of \$35 000 is included in the southern suburbs economic development plan for the feasibility study. This will involve a review of previous studies, funding sources, management and tenancy options, a description of green business and green business principles, comparison of costs and options for existing and newly designed buildings, and recommendations based on the current environment.

As the member would know, we have allocated \$800 000-odd as part compensation from the closure of the Mobil refinery to business initiatives in the southern suburbs, and this is one of the options we are looking at. To get this project up, we have to have a very good business case, and be very precise about it. It is a good idea, but how do you actually get it to fly? We need to do some extra work on that project. We also need to be involved in talking to the commonwealth government about possible funding programs. Once we get this advanced further, I will be happy to talk to the member about lobbying his federal colleagues if they are still in Canberra, and I will be lobbying mine if they are there.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I will be very happy to lobby the minister. I am confident that the federal government of the day will be John Howard and his team, if Australia is to continue to grow. I will be very happy to lobby and work with the minister—

*Ms Ciccarello interjecting:*

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** And I will even be happy for the member for Norwood's contribution.

*Ms Ciccarello interjecting:*

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** It is about time the member came south. There is a budget line that talks about consolidating the links across the education sector with Flinders University, Onkaparinga TAFE, Southern Futures and the manufacturing industry education partnership. Immediately thereunder it also talks about supporting the review of the Southern Vocational College. As shadow minister for the southern suburbs, and as a local member for the southern suburbs and rural areas, I am quite happy to see the continuation of the consolidating links that were developed by successive governments. I have strong concerns about the future of the Southern Vocational College; indeed, the minister and I have discussed this matter. I am concerned that some of the thrust may be pulled further to the north of the southern suburbs, namely, to the Marion council area, to the detriment of the areas further south, that is, the City of Onkaparinga.

There are some funding issues. As the minister knows, Robin Thompson, Mr Wilson and Di Garwood, when she was principal of Christies Beach High School, and others put in an enormous effort to achieve some successes. Given that the minister and I lobbied for the college to be in that location when the Liberals were in government, and whilst I appreciate that the review has not yet been completed, if some of the focus and/or financial support for the Christies Beach campus is lost, can I seek the minister's support to assess that review to ensure that nothing detrimental occurs in our area?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** It is true that the honourable member and I worked very closely when his party was in government to achieve this outcome. I thank the member for Light (the former education minister), who is in the chamber, for his support at the time. I think it was the persuasiveness

of the bipartisan support from the south that ensured that we achieved that outcome. I do not think it would have happened otherwise.

The Southern Alliance for Innovation and Learning (SAIL), which incorporates the Southern Vocational College, is a group of eight local high schools working together to provide curricula across school sites—a range of vocational courses and mentoring programs with Flinders University and other projects. It maintains strong links with Onkaparinga TAFE and the City of Onkaparinga. This collaborative model is unique to the south. The schools operate through the SAIL, with shared goals and outcomes rather than an individual competitive structure.

The role of the government in the structure of the SAIL is currently being reviewed, with a focus on expanding and enhancing its functions to take on a broader role within the region. Options to be considered include the expansion of the industry-education partnership model, identifying centres of excellence in schools and the electronic delivery of courses. It is expected that a number of other high schools in the region will become members when the review is completed. Hamilton College and the Australian Science and Mathematics School have already indicated that they wish to join the alliance, and I think they would be very valuable additions. The governance model is yet to be determined. However, it is anticipated that the Director of the Office of the Southern Suburbs will in some way be involved in the structure, and we are maintaining a very active view of it.

As I am sure the member agrees, it is extremely important to get education right in the southern suburbs, as it is in every part of the state. Given the profile of that community and the number of children who currently do not finish senior secondary school, we really have to build structures that ensure a much greater participation and access rate to both vocational and non-vocational education. Much is happening in this area and also through the social justice school retention program, 'I can', and Clever Communities, which I guess describes all these activities. We have to turn the southern suburbs into clever communities linking schools, families, other institutions, such as TAFE and universities, and also the workplace. We must ensure that our communities are not left behind as jobs become smarter and the skill sets required are more complex.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** Thank you, minister. I do not have a problem with that, but what I will be concerned about and watching closely is the definition of 'clever communities', because it not necessarily about everybody or increasing significantly the number of people accessing university: it is about getting people job-ready as soon as possible to enter the work force of their choice, particularly within the work force opportunities of the southern region. It concerns me, and anecdotally I will give you an example: I was speaking to three young lads the other day in years 10 and 11. One of those lads has taken on an apprenticeship as a plumber, which I commend him for; he will probably make more money than you and I as he develops that business.

*The Hon. J.D. Hill interjecting:*

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I lost money when we lost office; you gained. He has been taken on as a plumber, one of them wants to become a police officer, which I am passionate about and commend him for, but none of those three actually wanted to finish SACE and go on to university. Given our viticulture industry and our diverse industry opportunities in Lonsdale, Hackham and now evolving in Seaford, I think it is important that we are comprehensive on that model and



that we do not ignore the opportunities existing there in the future for those who want to take on trade skills.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I think there are two issues in this notion of clever communities. One is to ensure that we have a range of opportunities, structures and possibilities for young people—all people, really, in the south or anywhere—that they can take part in as their needs require it. So, it is not about everybody going to university but it is about everybody being able to access appropriate levels of education and training that satisfy their needs. The second part of it, which is the more complex, more subtle and more important part, in my view, is developing an ambition in the community that people strive for educational standards which are equal to their capacity. What worries me about the south is that a lot of younger people drop out of institutions well before their capacity suggests that they ought. I think that there is a notion that schooling or the training system is not really relevant to them. I am not suggesting that that is because the schools are somehow irrelevant: it is just that they do not see the connection between their lives and education and training.

We really need to build up a culture in the south, as we do in other parts of the state, that values education and training, not just for their own sake—but that certainly is worth building up too—but also because we need to get people to understand that education leads to the satisfaction of a whole lot of life ambitions, including work and feeling good about yourself. I think there is often a lack of that kind of understanding in the community, and I am really focused on trying to achieve that. I do not care whether kids go to universities or colleges or whatever, as long as they are going to the thing which is able to provide them with skills and which is equivalent to their capacity. Ninety per cent of kids who live in the eastern suburbs finish school, and a lot of them go on to university. Probably a lot of those kids would feel better if they did not go on to university and did other things, but their families insist that they do that, whereas in our area it is the reverse. It would be better if fewer kids from the east went to universities and more kids from the south did, so that we could have a happier, better educated community all round.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** In light of the situation tonight, this will be my last question, and it is to do with the Thinkers in Residence. As a highlight of the Office for the Southern Suburbs, it showed an increased involvement with the Thinkers in Residence program by the residency of Charles Landry. What has Charles Landry done to assist us in the south through that program?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** When Charles Landry was in Adelaide he spent a reasonable amount of time in the southern suburbs. He did a tour with Fij Miller from the office and officers from both Onkaparinga and Marion councils. He gave them advice on the future development of the area and the assets that should be promoted. I do not think

there is anything more specific than that. I do not think he spent a huge amount of time in the south, but he was involved and he did speak to local groups to provide input.

**Mr O'LOUGHLIN:** A public servant from another department has been taken off-line to concentrate on implementation of aspects of Charles Landry's report. One of the themes of that report was the need for greater connectivity between the north and the south, something in which the Department for Transport has a strong interest, given where the main rail line is placed. One of the themes of his report was the need for a more cohesive, single metropolitan Adelaide, in particular, greater connectivity between the north and south. As someone from the Department of Transport, I have a strong interest in that because of the department's ambitions for achieving greater use of the rail network and using it as a social inclusion facility, rather than just something for moving people around.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** I have a supplementary question. Did Charles Landry discuss infrastructure development in areas such as Aldinga and Sellicks Beach, where we are seeing quite significant land development—if he was talking about social infrastructure? Further, did he make any comment, or has the minister or the department got any comment, about linkages north to south and the suggestion of tolls on north-south motorways and things such as that?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I do not think Charles Landry comes here as a thinker in residence saying, 'What you really need in South Australia is a tollway.' He is against urban sprawl. He is about having more concentrated cities—more high rise in Norwood and that kind of thing.

*Ms Ciccarello interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Scrub that comment—I did not mean it! I do not think he would have given that kind of advice. He was talking at a much higher level of strategic thinking about what urban design is about and how we should build our cities.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** I wish the minister all the best.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I wish the honourable member all the best, too, and I am happy to give him a thorough briefing on any of these issues should he require it. I thank you, sir, the officers from the departments, all members of the committee, parliamentary counsel, *Hansard* and the ball boys for the joy that has been today.

**The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr Koutsantonis):** There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the vote completed. I lay before the committee a draft report.

**Ms CICCARELLO:** I move:

That the draft report be the report of the committee.

Motion carried.

**The ACTING CHAIRMAN:** That completes the business of Estimates Committee A.

At 7.30 p.m. the committee concluded.