

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 21 June 2005

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A

Chairman:

Mr J.J. Snelling

Members:

Ms F.E. Bedford
 Mr M.K. Brindal
 Mr P. Caica
 Mr I.F. Evans
 Mr R.M. Goldsworthy
 The Hon. P.L. White

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

Department for Environment and Heritage, \$121 759 000
 Administered Items for the Department for Environment
 and Heritage, \$3 587 000

Witness:

The Hon. J.D. Hill, Minister for Environment and
 Conservation.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr A. Holmes, Chief Executive, Department for Environ-
 ment and Heritage.
 Mr R. Janssan, Director, Business Services.

The CHAIRMAN: The estimates committees are a relatively informal procedure and, as such, there is no need to stand to ask or answer questions. The committee will determine an approximate time for consideration of proposed payments to facilitate the changeover of departmental advisers.

The minister and the lead speaker for the opposition have agreed on a timetable for today's proceedings, and I believe we have a copy of that. Changes to committee membership will be notified as they occur. Members should ensure that the chair is provided with a completed request to be discharged form. If the minister undertakes to supply information at a later date, it must be submitted to the committee secretary by no later than Friday 29 July.

I propose to allow both the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition to make opening statements of about 10 minutes each. There will be a flexible approach to giving the call for asking questions, based on about three questions per member, alternating each side. Supplementary questions will be the exception rather than the rule. A member who is not part of the committee may, at the discretion of the chair, ask a question. Questions must be based on lines of expenditure in the budget papers and must be identifiable or referenced. Members unable to complete their questions during the proceedings may submit them as questions on notice for inclusion in the House of Assembly *Notice Paper*.

There is no formal facility for the tabling of documents before the committee. However, documents can be supplied to the chair for distribution to the committee. The incorpora-

tion of material in *Hansard* is permitted on the same basis as applies in the house; that is, that it is purely statistical and limited to one page in length and that it is relevant to the question. All questions have to be directed to the minister, not the minister's advisers. The minister may then refer the question to his advisers for a response. I also advise that for the purposes of the committee there will be some freedom for television coverage by allowing a short period of filming from the northern gallery.

I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to appendix C, page 3, in the Budget Statement and Portfolio Statements Volume 2, part 8, pages 1 to 43. I invite the minister to make an opening statement if he wishes to do so.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The government is committed to conserving and restoring our environment for all generations. The 2005-06 budget brings together this government's four-year program to achieve sustainable management of our environment. Some of the highlights of the past four years have included:

- stopping South Australia becoming the nation's nuclear waste dump;
- creating a special dolphin sanctuary in the Port River and Barker Inlet;
- protecting the sensitive and world-recognised Coongie lakes from mining and pastoral use;
- creating the Office of Sustainability, the Premier's Round Table on Sustainability (chaired by Professor Tim Flannery), and the Greening of Government program;
- establishing the Urban Forests Program, so far planting hundreds of thousands of trees in Adelaide with millions more to come;
- protecting the heritage of our state with integrated legislation, now before the Legislative Council, with extra funding; and
- the creation of Zero Waste SA and our strong campaign to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.

This government has delivered, and is building upon, its election commitments to protect our environment. Significant developments include the following:

- Major capital works have commenced at Belair National Park and the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide, with \$5 million over six years, from 2002-03, allocated to a major upgrade of visitor facilities at Belair National Park, and \$5 million over three years, from 2004-05, towards an estimated \$10 million of capital works for the 150th anniversary of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide, which will be celebrated from 2005 to 2007. A number of key anniversaries will occur in that time.
- The government has also established specific legislation, the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary Act 2005, to protect the resident dolphins and establish a dolphin sanctuary in the Port River and Barker Inlet, and \$250 000 each year, commencing in 2003-04, has been provided for that sanctuary.
- The government also launched a living coast strategy in July last year and allocated \$5 million over four years to this project. The strategy sets out the environmental policy directions for sustainable management of South Australia's coastal, estuarine and marine environments. The strategy supports the development of industries operating within sustainable frameworks and sets out the policy directions that the government will be taking to help protect and manage South Australia's coastal areas, estuaries and marine ecosystems.

- The government has also increased funding for heritage conservation and management by \$2.9 million over four years from 2004-05 as part of its heritage direction strategy. As a result, there has been significant activity in the area of heritage. In March 2005 the Heritage (Heritage Directions) Amendment Bill was introduced into parliament to amend the Heritage Act 1993 to include stronger protection for heritage. The Heritage Advisory Service is being expanded with the appointment of an extra three regionally-based heritage advisers, and work has progressed towards the establishment of a single heritage register.
- Fire management continues to be a focus for the government. In the period from 2002-03 to 2005-06 \$9.9 million has been allocated to increase the capacity of DEH to plan and implement fire management programs in parks throughout the state.

DEH has developed and implemented a fuel management strategy for the Mount Lofty Ranges which identifies areas with significant fuel loads close to priority asset areas—residential and institutional assets such as schools and hospitals—and where life and property are at risk from bushfire. Members would note that the burning off program has ceased now that the rains have come. In addition, work has commenced on a statewide assessment of fuel management on critical DEH managed land, and the department continues to develop strong partnerships with the Country Fire Service (CFS) and local communities in the planning and development of fire management programs. One of the great things has been a fantastic cooperation between DEH and the CFS. As to the Million Trees Program, the government has extended—

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: It is early in the day, member for Unley, and I will not be responding to your witty interjections probably until after lunch. The government has extended the Million Trees Program from one million trees by 2007 to three million trees by 2014. Through the involvement of community groups, employment programs, state and local government and other agencies, the Million Trees Program is establishing plantings across the Metropolitan Open Space System to recreate vegetation types that naturally occurred in the region. This program contributes to biodiversity conservation through the establishment of native habitat consistent with Naturelinks principles. It is also anticipated that these plantings will have benefits for our environment in terms of greenhouse, amenity, air and water quality. We are pleased that we reached the half a million trees milestone in September 2004.

As to Zero Waste, this government has also been active in the area of waste management. South Australia's waste strategy has had comprehensive consultation with community, industry and local government. The strategy will guide the management of waste in the state into the future, and it provides wide ranging waste reduction and recycling targets. We have had great results in recycling and decreasing the amount of waste sent to landfill. Zero Waste's grants program has contributed to the achievement of our waste reduction goals. In 2004-05, Zero Waste approved kerbside performance grants amounting to \$1 992 900 and recycling infrastructure grants amounting to \$672 500. Zero Waste also plays a significant role in appropriately dealing with household hazardous waste. In the past year, 1 562 householders delivered 56.7 tonnes of household hazardous waste to

collections organised and funded through Zero Waste SA. Other highlights of 2004-05 include:

- completing the hand back of the Unnamed Conservation Park to its traditional owners, and that was a fantastic experience and a great ceremony;
- proclaiming Coongie Lakes National Park, and that was a couple of weeks ago—another great ceremony;
- initiating the development of an industry-wide South Australian Greenhouse Strategy;
- progressing the calculation of an ecological footprint for South Australia; and
- releasing *The Blueprint for the South Australian Representative System of Marine Protected Areas*.

I turn to the budget highlights for 2005-06. In 2005-06, the agency will benefit from additional funding to progress a number of key government priorities. These initiatives are sand management at the Glenelg and West Beach harbours and koala management on Kangaroo Island. Additional funding of \$7.5 million over five years (from 2004-05), including \$1.489 million in 2005-06, will be provided to ensure adequate management and integration of the sand bypassing function at Glenelg and West Beach harbours within the overall management of the Metropolitan Adelaide beach system. Commencing in 2005-06, \$1 million per annum over four years has been allocated to implement a sustainable long-term strategy for the management of koala populations on Kangaroo Island. This increase in funding will enable DEH to treat up to 8 000 koalas in high and medium priority habitat, which will reduce koala densities to sustainable levels and improve ecosystem health.

In closing, the 2005-06 DEH budget builds on the department's recent achievements and supports the department's key objectives to:

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

Finally, I thank officers of the Department of Environment and Heritage and the staff of all of my departments and agencies for the preparatory work that they have done for today's hearing. I thank them for the extra efforts they have made.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: On page 8.22 regarding marine parks, why was the Encounter Marine Park Consultative Committee instructed to operate in camera over the period of the past three years and not to liaise with the local community?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I have some general information about that marine protected area. I gave no instruction for that committee to operate in the way that you have described. I imagine that the committee saw itself as a committee advising government, rather than a body to liaise with the community; that is primarily the role of the department and government after it has made decisions about what to do. In fact, over the past couple of months, we have gone through an extensive consultation process with the community, and we are continuing consultation. We have had 450 to 480 submissions from individuals. I have also met separately with each of the peak organisations: SAFIC, the Seafood Council, the Aquaculture Council and some key individuals, including the mayor and the CE of the City of Victor Harbor. I will soon

have a meeting with the mayor of Kangaroo Island. It is plain that some people are trying to undermine the marine protected area process and that they have been using all sorts of ammunition. One of the strangest claims has been that I have somehow or other instructed people not to talk to the community. I am not too sure why individuals on that committee have taken that view; there was no instruction from me. However, in any event, I guess it was not the committee's responsibility to go out and consult. It has been the government's responsibility, and that is what we are doing.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: As a supplementary question, minister, can you guarantee the committee that the instruction did not come from your office? Did your office instruct the Encounter Marine Park Consultative Committee to operate in camera?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The member is making a claim that there was an instruction. I am not aware of it, as I have already said. I will have it checked and, if there was an instruction, I will let the member know. I am not sure what the point is. The committee that was established was an advisory committee to give advice to the department, taking into account the expertise of those who were sitting around it. It is a bit like the select committee process in parliament. Often in these kind of committees, you work on your job to make some recommendations. It is not a public process: it is a process to give advice to the department. Some members of that committee may have taken that role more seriously than others and felt that they were under some obligation not to speak. However, I am not aware of any instructions, but I will I ask the CE to check and see whether or not there are instructions. I will check with my office, but I am not aware of any particular instruction given by anyone in any authority in the department.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Just to clarify that point, will that investigation cover your office and departmental officers?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Yes. However, I am not sure what the point is. If someone did tell them that they were not to consult, I suppose that is what they told them. However, I am not too sure what point the member is making.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: The point I am making is this, minister: it seems ridiculous that the government has been in government for 3½ years. It sets up a consultative committee to establish the first marine park, and it tells that consultative committee that it cannot talk to the public. That is what members of the consultative committee are telling us, and it is an absolute nonsense to have a consultative committee that does not talk to the public. Why would a government set up a consultative committee whose purpose it is not to talk and consult with the public? This is why this process is going off the rails—it has been a closed process.

The Hon. P.L. White interjecting:

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: The minister asked what point I was making, and I am just explaining that to him. The minister is setting up a consultative committee with instructions not to consult.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Hold on! This is old stuff. It has been out in the media—this is old.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The minister has the call.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I know the member for Davenport likes to take these narrow legalistic kinds of points. That is just the way in which his mind operates, and that is fine. The committee was there to be consulted about the process we were going through. It was not its job to consult generally with the community.

I would have thought that, if any of the members had concerns about any instructions, it would have been smart for them to come to the government, rather than the opposition, with their concerns. I am not aware who has spoken to the opposition, and I am also not aware of any complaint having been made to me in my office. But, once again, I will check that and get back to the member. However, I am not sure what point the member is making. This is a body that has been set up, and the department is going through its process to work out where the lines on the map should be prior to going out to the committee for consultation. It has a group of people with expertise with whom they talk and consult about how it should go. I have met with that body on couple of occasions, and it seems to be working quite well. When that process had been gone through, the department put out its best set of maps—lines on maps—and said, 'Well, this is what we think. Tell us what you think.' We have gone through that process, and we have been told by a number of people (450 to 480 odd) what they think. I have also met with the key groups.

One of the things I think the recreational fishers are worried about is limitation in some areas of beach fishing, and we know that in many cases we can fix that. A claim was made in the press yesterday (which I am pleased to see was corrected today) that we were somehow stopping fishing from jetties. That was not true. It had not been suggested at all; it was totally invented by malicious people. I am sorry that some of those people do not like what we are doing, but we are trying to do a good job. It was a job that was started by the member for Davenport. In fact, last year he criticised me for not having gone fast enough. Now the criticism is that we are going too fast, and we are not spending enough time listening to people.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: No, I never said that you were going too quickly, John.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I am referring to the person who has taken over the de facto running of this issue (that is, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition), who has been making public statements about it.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Only his local member!

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: It is good to see the members for Davenport and Unley defending the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Yes, one united broad church.

Mr Goldsworthy interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Unfortunately, Hansard cannot record irony. Perhaps they could use inverted commas around that. We are working through this in the best possible way. We want to get a good outcome. We think that marine parks are important, and we are committed to 19 by 2010. It is obviously problematic for some communities when they think areas where they have always done things are going to be changed. That is always the case. The whole concept of this—and I think it may have been the concept initiated under the former government—was to go through a trial or a pilot exercise in the Encounter Bay marine protected area. It is probably the most difficult of all the potential marine protected areas to get right, but that is why it was chosen. It has complex issues; it has recreational and commercial fishing; Aboriginal and local government issues; and tourism issues; there is an island as well as the mainland; and there are seal colonies. You name it, and it has it. We are working

through all those issues to try to best understand the process we need to go through to get a good outcome. If there has been the odd error along the way, I guess that sometimes happens. However, I think it has been a pretty good process.

Ms BEDFORD: Minister, page 8.20 of the Portfolio Statement refers to reducing risk to life and property, and conserving our natural and cultural heritage on lands managed by the department by developing and implementing fire management policy procedures and programs. Can you please tell us of the progress of the Department for Environment and Heritage's fire management program?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The member for Florey asked me about the fire risk program. I gave a bit of information in my opening remarks, but I am pleased to amplify it. As I have said, this will be the third year of the four-year program. The fire management program has delivered a number of significant achievements over the past two years including:

- DEH's prescribed burning program throughout the state has increased, with priority being directed to the protection of life and property in the Mount Lofty Ranges. Fifty prescribed burns covering 1 334 hectares of land have been successfully implemented in the past two years, and the department has been ramping that up as it has become more experienced and has developed the expertise;
- DEH has been involved in 162 incidents across the state, both on and off DEH managed land, and 78 of these fires started outside of DEH managed lands, which demonstrates the increasing involvement of the department working with the CFS and the community in bushfire suppression. I will just say that those officers deserve our thanks for the work that they put in to firefighting. The Country Fire Service, quite rightly, gets a lot of praise for dealing with fires in rural areas, but departmental officers also put their lives on the line as well;
- DEH staff play critical roles in incident management, working with the Country Fire Service in bushfire suppression. DEH also provides critical mapping support and access to data to assist in incident management;
- increased funding has provided improved plant and equipment that has enhanced the operational capability and professionalism of DEH staff to respond to fires;
- up to 20 seasonal summer fire crew personnel have been employed to further increase operational capabilities. These personnel are trained, equipped and available for response to incidents across the state. There is an increasing demand on these crew as a first response resource for both on and off park fires; and
- DEH has worked very closely with the Country Fire Service, and also with Forestry SA and SA Water, to enable a coordinated and whole of government approach to fire prevention management and suppression activities.

Ms BEDFORD: Minister, on page 8.11 of the Portfolio Statement, it refers to the development of a state greenhouse strategy. Is this strategy likely to recommend developing nuclear power in South Australia?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the member for her question. It is important that we address the issue of nuclear power. Various members of the federal government have raised the issue, as have others, about whether or not we should have a debate about nuclear power.

Members interjecting:

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

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Climate change, as I think many would agree, is the number one challenge of our time. As the

Premier has warned, the threat of climate change to our way of life is even greater than the threat of global terrorism. It is interesting to note that today I heard on the radio—and I assume it is correct, the ABC always tells the truth—that this is the wettest June that we have ever had. If you think back—

Mr BRINDAL: The Bureau of Meteorology told the ABC.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Correct, but they reported it. Over the last six to 12 months we have had a number of records. I think we had the driest autumn that we have ever had, the hottest autumn that we have had in 80 years, or the reverse of those, and I think we had the coolest summer that we have had for a long time, and that clearly points, in my view, to climate change. For some commentators, nuclear power is the panacea because it emits far less CO₂ than coal powered electricity, so it needs to be treated seriously as an alternative fuel. However, the facts do not support such a radical and risky proposition for our state, in my view.

To build a nuclear reactor would cost billions of dollars. Commissioning a plant could take between 10 and 20 years. The capital cost of building a sizeable plant (around 1 500 megawatts—and that is about half of Adelaide's peak demand) is estimated at about \$2 billion, although cost estimates can prove unreliable. For example, in Canada, a larger, 3 500 megawatt plant at Darlington was estimated to cost \$4.1 billion—

Mr BRINDAL: At Darlington?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: In Canada. It was estimated to cost \$4.1 billion but was completed 12 years later for a cost of \$15 billion Australian. By comparison, the gas-powered Pelican Point Power Station in South Australia cost approximately \$400 million to build, and produces 480 megawatts of power—that is, 14 per cent of the power for 3 per cent of the cost. In many countries, nuclear plants have required government subsidies to be economically viable. For example, the United States has spent \$145 billion on subsidies for nuclear power in the past 53 years. In comparison, it has spent only \$5 billion on solar power. Just imagine where we would be if the reverse had been the case.

Also, a nuclear power plant needs to be decommissioned within 20 to 40 years of its construction, and the cost of that would be likely to be in the order of \$400 to \$500 million, and then we would have the waste from that, and the site which we would have to look after for thousands of years. So, if we were to do it, it would cost about \$2 billion; it would cost \$0.5 billion to close it down; it would take 10 to 20 years to construct it; 20 to 40 years later we would have to deconstruct it, and then we would have all the costs associated with it. Apart from that, nuclear power has inherent risks and side effects.

A nuclear reactor can create 30 tonnes of high-level nuclear waste each year that needs to be secured for tens of thousands of years. We have no high-level nuclear waste of that order in South Australia to be protected. The impacts of a nuclear accident could be immeasurable. We know about Chernobyl and the tragic loss of life there, and the birth defects and the ongoing health problems involved. However, the cost of constructing a protective measure for that was \$US1 billion for a sarcophagus to confine the radioactive substances for the next 100 years.

Nuclear reactors are only suitable to provide baseload electricity because they take days to start up. Adelaide's peak electricity load is 3 000 megawatts, but our baseload is a relatively small 1 700 megawatts. A nuclear reactor in

Adelaide would be uneconomic unless it supplied the entire baseload generation for the state.

That means that we would have to get rid of all our other systems. Relying on just one power plant is a significant risk to the security of our supplies, as we have seen in the past. The use of nuclear power cannot be a long-term solution to climate change. At current rates of consumption, known supplies of uranium are expected to last for only 65 years. This could drop to only 15 years of supply if the demand for nuclear energy was significantly increased. Over the entirety of supply, high-grade uranium is in shorter supply than low-grade uranium. The use of low-grade uranium is likely to emit greater quantities of greenhouse gasses in the mining, milling and enrichment stages.

Using that poorer grade ore could even emit more greenhouse gasses than the gas-fired power plant if the mining process were to burn fossil fuels. Less than 17 per cent of the world's electricity needs are met by nuclear power. In contrast, 21 per cent comes from renewable sources, mainly hydro-electricity. Energy efficiency is the cheapest method of greenhouse gas reduction, and it largely targets reduction of base-load demand. South Australia has a great potential to reduce its energy use by at least 20 per cent.

Australia should be looking at emerging technologies, such as the hot rock geothermal energy trial currently under way in the Cooper Basin. South Australia has the hottest rocks in the world, and there is great potential from that technology. Developments in solar, such as the Slivercell photovoltaic solar cells being produced in Adelaide by Origin Energy; and, of course, there are the wind turbines that are being developed right across our coastlines.

For South Australia turning nuclear is not the solution. Our greenhouse strategy needs to go beyond thinking about nuclear. We need a comprehensive long-term plan that deals not only with power production but also the majority of greenhouse emissions that do not come from producing electricity.

Ms BEDFORD: Page 8.22 of the Portfolio Statement makes reference to coastal protection. Will the minister please explain how development pressures on the coast are being addressed by the Department for Environment and Heritage?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: This is a very important question. The whole sea change movement, of course, is putting enormous pressure on our coastal areas. The Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH) collaborates with Planning SA and coastal local councils in addressing coast and marine issues through the three tiers of the South Australian planning system, that is, the planning strategy, development plans and the development assessment process. The Department for Environment and Heritage is providing input to the current review of the metropolitan and outer metropolitan volumes of the planning strategy.

This input seeks to protect coastal estuarine and marine resources, establish the marine planning framework, establish the representative system of marine protected areas and protect scenic amenity. DEH provides input to council development plan reviews and the various plan amendment reports proposed by councils and the Minister for Planning. This input aims to:

- ensure that council-wide provisions are in accordance with the intent of the Coast Protection Board policy;
- establish relevant coastal zones over land which contain sensitive coastal features, such as sand dunes and salt

marshes, as well as land subject to coastal erosion or flooding; and

- ensure that coastal zone provisions are appropriate in relation to sensitive coastal features, including the appropriate listing of non-complying development.

The advice provided by DEH is supported by the Coastal Vision project, including the coastal viewscales, coastal hazard mapping, coastal vegetation mapping and coastal planning package sub-projects. As a result of these projects specific information will be provided to the various planning authorities involved in development plan review and amendment. In addition, DEH has provided drafting advice to Planning SA's Better Development Plans Project, including detailed input to the coastal modules of the project. DEH is also contributing to the review of the Coastal Marina Strategy and Guidelines of the development of the Eyre Peninsula Regional Coastal development Strategy, which are projects being led by Planning SA.

All applications for development on coastal land, which includes land in coastal zones, are referred to the Coast Protection Board for advice or direction. DEH provides support and advice to the Coast Protection Board in development assessment and conducts an ongoing audit of the compliance of planning authority decisions. These avenues for expert input, advice and direction address the increasing pressure from development on South Australia's coastal zones.

Mr BRINDAL: As a supplementary question, how far back is the coastal zone? Is it measured from the high-water mark or the low-water mark, and how far back? Is it 500 metres or five kilometres? What happens if you have a house in the coastal zone that is part of the scenic attraction, but it might be two kilometres back, as down in the Willunga area where you come from.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: That is a good question. I will get a fuller technical response for the honourable member. The Coast Protection Board, I think, has a different definition to the planning authority; I think that is a broader definition. It probably goes up to one kilometre, which is probably what the honourable member is suggesting. I mentioned 50 metres, but I think there is a general provision where we try to get 50 metres of protection for no development along the coast and along the river systems. I will get a fuller explanation for you, hopefully today, if I can.

Mr BRINDAL: As a further supplementary question, if you come back 50 metres on the metropolitan coastline, the member for Schubert might have his house controlled by your department. Is this what you intend?

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr BRINDAL: And the member for Morphet, as well.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The measure has changed over time. I am glad that so many members of the Liberal opposition have coastal properties. It used to be a smaller amount and, over time, it has been increased. It is now 50 metres. For example, when we are freeholding perpetual lease properties, which are coastal or riverine, we insist on a 50 metre buffer, which stays within the Crown land system. That can vary depending on the circumstances. If there were sand dunes, an estuary or something like that it can be considerably further back. It is not as sharply distinguished as, perhaps, I was suggesting in my throw-away answer to the honourable member. I will get a more comprehensive answer.

Mr BRINDAL: For example, the last remnant sandhills, I think, on the Adelaide plains at Minda Home will now be

protected, because I am fairly sure they would be less than 50 metres from the high-water mark.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I am sure that is right, but there are other measures of protection, too, of course. The Native Vegetation Act can apply in those circumstances, too.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: When will the legislation to establish marine parks be put out for the public consultation process?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Of course, that is ultimately a matter for cabinet to decide, but I hope we will have that legislation in the public domain relatively soon, within the next month or so: it is in the process of being finalised. I can give you the formal word and a little bit of the background.

On 28 November last year we released the policy document Blueprint for South Australian Representative System and Marine Protected Areas, and that articulated the government's commitment to the MPAs, including the creation of legislation, social and economic considerations, community involvement and the means to address displaced commercial fishing and aquacultural effort. Marine parks will be zoned for multiple use, and our state strategic plan of course commits to 19 parks. Legislation will be required for the dedication, zoning and management of marine parks: work has commenced on developing a draft bill for the dedication, zoning and management of marine parks. A two month public consultation period on the draft bill is planned to provide key stakeholders and members of the community an opportunity to comment on the proposed legislative framework. It is anticipated the bill will be introduced during the spring session this year. So it will be in the next two or three months, I would hope.

In relation to the Encounter Bay marine protected areas pilot zone, I have made it clear that we will not be proclaiming that and making any final decisions until the legislation has gone through. I have also made it clear that we will talk particularly to the stakeholder groups (SAFIC, the Seafood Council, the aquaculture industry and so on) about that legislation. I anticipate that the legislation will clarify many of the concerns that have been raised and, after that legislation is through, we will be able to finalise the first of the marine protected areas. I hope that once we have gone through this complex process the development of the 18 remaining parks will be relatively straightforward.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I have a supplementary question. Given that you have received, I think you said earlier in your opening address, over 400 submissions on the draft Encounter Bay marine park and you will not bring in legislation until later in the year after an eight week consultation process, will you then do another consultation for the Encounter Bay marine park so that those people who have made submissions can make submissions based on the legislation? At this stage you have received over 400 submissions based on no legislation, so it is just a best guess as to what is included. So, will there be a second round of consultation for the Encounter Bay marine park—a full public second round of consultation?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: As the member would probably know, the pilot was set up to try to work out what the issues are that will need to be addressed, in part, by the legislation and to get a feel for how it goes. The legislation will set up a process of consultation and, once that legislation is through, of course, the first of those marine protected areas, that is, Encounter Bay, will have to follow the process set up in the legislation. I cannot pre-empt what the parliament will do to the legislation, but that will have a consultation—

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: We will debate it, John.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Well, we sometimes bring in things and they do not look exactly the same when they come out. Assuming it is roughly the same as when it comes in, that will set out a consultation process that we will be required to go through. So, I think the message needs to get out—which I have been attempting to do but it is a bit hard when people make things up—and we have some steps to go through in the consultation process with the people in that area; and, in particular, before we put out another draft, I have given an undertaking to the stakeholder groups that I will consult directly with them, and I can announce today, I guess, that I will establish a body which will have the—

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: You announced that yesterday in a press release.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: No, I did not. I will establish a body, which I will chair and which will contain the stakeholder representatives, and I will ensure we consult closely with all of them through this process. My view about this is that it is like all things in my portfolio: it is best to try to get a consensus. There is no point in trying to put in something which has—

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: This is the same stakeholder agreement you announced yesterday.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Well, it is similar.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: So it is a different one?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: No, it is more detailed than I announced yesterday. But we will meet with—

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: No, I want to announce it today. We will meet—

Members interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: We will meet with the stakeholder groups, and I will chair—

Members interjecting:

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

Members interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: The minister is answering the question. I will allow the minister to answer the question.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I will meet with the stakeholder groups on a regular basis and I will chair that meeting.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: So, is the minister saying that the public consultation process will be for two months?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: On the legislation.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: You said previously that you are preparing another draft of the legislation, the first draft. So it will be that draft that the two month public consultation will relate to?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Yes.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: Can the minister advise the committee whether the legislation to establish these parks will include a compensation scheme for the fishing industry?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Yes, it will be what we have called a displaced effort scheme, and we are working through that with the fishing section of primary industries, primarily. We will come up with a displaced effort scheme so that compensation will be provided, either by way of another area to fish or financial compensation. The details of that will be in the legislation, but I have given that undertaking in the past to the fishing industry. In fact, at the most recent Seafood Council I was praised by the chair of that event. I have forgotten who was in the chair at the time but it was the person chairing the annual event. The government was praised for announcing

that we would have a scheme that would provide compensation.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: As a supplementary question, what sectors of the fishing industry has the minister consulted already in coming to his decision?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I think that the earliest time I spoke to the Seafood Council was when I was in opposition and was talking to it about marine protection. It put to me that it was happy about it as long as it had some displaced effort mechanism in it. I was there with the then Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Annette Hurley (about to be Senator Hurley), and we talked about it then. The department has been going through a process of talking to all the sectors, but I personally have recently had conversations with the Seafood Council and SAFIC, the other fishing industry council, about the scheme and assured them that there would be a scheme. I do not think that is a particular issue for them, but I guess they want to see it in black and white before they commit.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: As a further supplementary, has the minister based this scheme on any model from another state?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I would rather wait until we put this out for public consultation rather than going into the details now, but we have looked at the systems in use in Western Australia and Victoria and we think we have come up with something which is superior and which will be better preferred by the fishing industry. We have been working with the fishing section in Primary Industries, so that whatever scheme is developed will be equivalent to the schemes that might be used within the fishing portfolio.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: Does the minister think it is ridiculous that commercial photography, surfing competitions and yacht races will need a permit from his department across wide areas of the Fleurieu Peninsula and Kangaroo Island under the draft zoning plan?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I could put back to the member for Kavel: does he think it ridiculous that those same activities require licensing or permitting in the national parks system, because that is where the measure comes from. They have been in that legislation for a long time and have not been changed by either the Liberal or Labor Party.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Which national park has surfing competitions?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I said 'commercial activities'. I am informed by the head of my department that there are surfing events at Innes and they do require approval. It is not necessarily in every case that money would be sought for the activity, and there are examples in national parks where we do not charge for people doing it, but they do need to gain approval.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Referring to page 8.11 and the sustainability strategies that the government is adopting, recently the minister and the Premier announced a new standard for domestic hot water systems. How will the new standard be applied?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: On 2 June 2005, the Premier and I announced that a new performance standard will be applied to domestic water heaters. The standard will limit the level of greenhouse emissions produced by domestic water heaters in future. It will apply to water heaters installed in new homes or in renovations or extensions where the water heating capacity of the home is increased, in areas of the state where reticulated gas supply is available. In cases where an electric water heater in an existing home is to be replaced and there are no increases in hot water capacity, the standard will not

apply. The new standard will reduce future installations of high greenhouse-emitting systems while still leaving a sufficient range of water heating technologies to provide consumers with viable options for heating water.

Numerous studies have shown that electric water heaters emit significantly higher greenhouse emissions than other available technology such as gas, solar or heat pump. The exact standard has not yet been fixed, although the aim is for a figure in the region of emissions of about 1.5 tonne of CO₂ equivalent per year for small systems and something more for larger systems. A number of issues are still being examined, including the appropriate standard to be fixed for different sizes of water heater, ranging from small to full family size. Planning SA and Energy SA are working together in consultation with stakeholders to determine the appropriate requirements.

The exact standards will soon be incorporated in the Building Code and will take effect from 1 July 2006. This is an example where, relatively easily, without any great cost to consumers, a change can be made that will have a positive impact. There is a range of ways in which we can do that and we keep working and finding them, and we will do that in the future. This is a very good bit of leadership that this state can provide. I think we are the first state to mandate this. Some excellent work was done within the department on this measure, particularly by Robert Fletcher, who has now retired, and I thank him for it.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: In relation to the greenhouse strategy that is being developed under the oversight of the Office of Sustainability, I see that the opposition has been speculating that emissions trading could put electricity prices up by 27 per cent. Do they know what they are talking about, or should I say is there any truth in what they claim?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The honourable member might be referring to comments by the shadow minister (the member for Davenport) on 3 June on the Matthew Abraham and David Bevan morning program about the COAG meeting to be held that day. The Premier was discussing his plan to ask COAG to establish a group to look at a national policy on greenhouse gas emissions. I congratulate the Premier on his success on that occasion. The member for Davenport phoned in with an assertion that a greenhouse gas emissions trading scheme, something which all the states and territories support as the most efficient way to encourage reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, could put electricity prices up by 27 per cent. His authority was a report by Allens Consulting commissioned by the Victorian government.

The Allens report was published in 2004 and is freely available on the web at www.greenhouse.vic.gov.au. It contains advice to the Victorian government on how different models of emissions trading schemes would affect electricity prices. None of the scenarios examined give rise to anything like a 27 per cent increase in price. The Allens modelling shows that, while electricity prices could rise by 1.6 per cent in 2008 to a peak of 4.2 per cent in 2012, from 2012 to 2025 about 3 200 new jobs will be created each year and the impact on electricity prices will be marginal with an estimated increase of .6 per cent per annum.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: On page 14 of chapter 8 of the Portfolio Statement there is reference to the continuance of the Million Trees program. Will the minister please inform the house of the progress of the Million Trees program, whether it is achieving its targets and what is planned for the next financial year?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the member for Taylor for her question. I think she's enjoying not being a minister at the moment. Certainly her children and her husband are.

Mr Goldsworthy interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: She is smiling a lot more, isn't she. The government has built on its commitment to develop urban forests in our metropolitan area. The Premier's Million Trees program is a major initiative that is being implemented to ensure that Adelaide is developed sustainably. Through the involvement of community groups, employment programs, state and local government and other agencies, the program is establishing trees and associated native understorey on sites throughout metropolitan Adelaide. A key initiative of the South Australian strategic plan is to extend the program to three million trees by 2014.

The Premier launched the program in June 2003. Over 110 000 plants were established in 2003 and over 400 000 in 2004. The half a million plant milestone was reached in September 2004. Over 350 000 local native plants will be established during winter 2005 at Million Trees program sites across metropolitan Adelaide. The government anticipates that the original target of one million plants by 2007 will be reached well ahead of schedule. The program's main focus is to establish plantings across the metropolitan open space system to recreate vegetation types that naturally occurred. This will establish native habitat consistent with nature links principles. Greenhouse gas, amenity, air and water quality improvements are also expected as a result of plantings.

Projects being undertaken under the auspices of the Million Trees program include: educational and amenity sites, transport corridor projects, and local biodiversity projects. To date, the Million Trees program has supported the involvement of about 4 000 people including 220 Youth Conservation Corps participants and over 100 schools in the program's Grow a Great School initiative. Twenty local councils and 12 state agencies are involved. Strong partnerships have been formed with local government, community and industry groups, and in 2005-06 we will build on their success by providing opportunities for participation by South Australians who have not been previously involved in an environmental project.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I refer to page 8.7. Why did the government set a population target without receiving any advice or recommendation from the Roundtable on Sustainability?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The targets were set at about the time the roundtable was being established, perhaps just a little after that. The roundtable had an opportunity to provide advice generally in relation to the targets, but that was really at the very beginning of its operations. Since that time of course the roundtable has been working very much on climate change as an issue and has produced a document entitled 'Three, Four, Five' (three challenges; four principles; and five actions) which is giving us advice on how we can deliver our state's strategic plan sustainably. We are working through those recommendations.

Issues of climate change, population and sustainability are interesting and worth discussing, because there is an apparent contradiction, but if you look at them more closely they can go hand-in-hand. Through the Waterproofing Adelaide project we have been looking at our water resources for the state, including how we can access treated effluent and stormwater and so on and how much more water we need to have in order to maintain sustainability principles when

population goes up and when climate change comes in. So, I think we can manage without any particular water problem.

More general issues about energy use and so on can be addressed as well. If you look at the average amount of CO₂ produced by an Adelaide person compared to a Londoner, you will find that a Londoner produces about half the volume of an average Adelaide person. That is because you can invest in much more intense housing and better public transport systems and so on to move people around. If you have a more compact, highly populated city, you can in fact reduce the average CO₂ use. So the goal I guess would be to reduce both the average use of resources and also the total, and I believe that it can be done. In fact, population growth can be a spur to the investment which is required and which will achieve some of those outcomes.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Just to make it clear, you are saying to the committee that the Premier's Round Table on Sustainability gave advice to the government prior to the setting of the population target?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: As I recall it—and I can check explicitly—the round table was appointed at around about the time that we were going through the Strategic Plan. I think it had a look at one of the drafts. I cannot recall the detail and I will get some further advice if the member wants. The round table was convened in November 2003: I think that was when it first had its meeting. I will get some advice about what references went to the round table. From memory, I think one of the drafts of the report went to the round table, but I will get some formal advice for the member on that.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Again on page 8.7, given that the Economic Development Board, the Social Inclusion Board and the Sustainability Round Table are meant to be three equal pillars underpinning the government's advice (and the minister nods in agreement), why was a representative of the Sustainability Round Table not appointed to the Cabinet Senior Executive Committee?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: This of course is a decision made by the Premier. The principal reason is because the chair of the Sustainability Round Table is a government employee; and the two other persons are independent individuals who are not part of the government system. However, when the Executive Committee of Cabinet meets and considers the South Australian Strategic Plan and when it comes to issues that have a sustainability or environmental focus, the chair of the Sustainability Round Table will be invited to attend in his capacity as chair to provide advice.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: But it does downplay Tim Flannery's role, does it not? The other members of the committee are there at every meeting, they see all the agenda papers and they can bring up ideas that come to mind during the discussion. Flannery is only going to be brought in for a set piece of advice. It does undermine the role. If it is going to be an equal player, surely it should be an equal player.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I think you are wrong. The fact is that the Premier has appointed two persons—Robert Champion de Crespigny and Monsignor David Cappel—as members of the executive committee. Apart from anything else, they chair particular bodies, but they are not government public servants—they are not in the employ of the government. The decision was made, I think properly, by the Premier that it is not appropriate to have a government officer in that position.

As I have said, when those matters that are relevant to the areas are being considered in the state's Strategic Plan, Professor Flannery will be in attendance and will have an

opportunity to comment. I think that is a reasonable way of dealing with what could have been a difficult matter. I assume that, if Tim Flannery had not worked for the government but had worked in some other field, it would not have been an issue.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: As a final supplementary question, can the minister get for me the detail of all the public servants who are currently members of cabinet subcommittees? You can take that on notice.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: It is not for me to answer that: I will refer that to the Premier.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Putting it another way, can the government provide to the opposition a list of the membership of all the cabinet subcommittees and identify public servants who are current members of cabinet subcommittees?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: As I say, I am not responsible for those matters; it is not contained within the budget papers. I am happy to put the honourable member's request to the Premier.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: On the ecological footprint, can you advise the committee what is the current ecological footprint in South Australia?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The South Australian Strategic Plan identifies as a key action the need to determine South Australia's ecological footprint and develop a strategy aimed at reducing the number of hectares occupied per person in order to reduce the impact of human settlements and activities within 10 years (that is target 3.10). An ecological footprint is a measure of human use of nature, comparing the available supply of natural resources or biocapacity with human demand at the local, regional, national or global scale.

Ecological footprint accounts in essence are balance sheets to keep track of human demands on nature and nature's supply of ecological resources. A steering committee with representatives from key government agencies has been established to oversee the ecological footprint project and to facilitate the dissemination of information about the project into agencies. The state government has enlisted the services of the University of South Australia's Centre for Industrial and Applied Mathematics to assist in calculating South Australia's ecological footprint.

The calculations will be completed by the end of this month, I understand. The cost of developing these calculations is just over \$30 000. The ecological footprint calculations will be checked and validated by two independent experts. A preliminary report on South Australia's ecological footprint and its major components is anticipated to be published in 2005-06. The state government is currently progressing work on a cross-agency initiative to develop an ecological footprint reduction strategy in line with South Australia's Strategic Plan. In the course of developing the strategy, further footprint calculations may be required.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Do I understand it that currently no-one knows what the current ecological footprint is in South Australia? There is not a measure as of today's date?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: There are measures of various components of it. For example, we know the average amount of CO₂ produced by South Australia; we know the average amount of waste that we produce; and we could go through those measures. However, we are trying to get the science right, and we have asked the university to help us do that. In broad terms, the view was expressed by Herbert Giradet, our first Thinker in Residence (I think it was Giradet but it could have been one of the other earlier thinkers), who made the point that if everybody on the planet had the same lifestyle

as the average South Australian we would need I think four or five planets to support us. I think it is clear that we are using in excess of what might be seen as our share of the world's resources and, if we continue consuming those resources at the same rate, we will run out of the resources to sustain us.

I read something recently about Easter Island as an example of a community that ran out of resources a long time ago. It was an island of great bounty but they over-exploited it, cut down all the trees, lost all their biodiversity and eventually ended up eating each other. As a civilisation they just died out. That really is the future we have on a much more massive scale if we do not act more prudently in the way we use our resources—water, energy and biodiversity.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: What unit of measure is used for ecological footprinting? Power is measured in watts, and waste is measured in tonnes; what is the unit of measure for ecological footprinting?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I will ask Mr Holmes to talk about this.

Mr HOLMES: It is important to understand that there is no precise, accepted methodology for ecological footprinting; it is still a developing form of measurement. You will hear it expressed a number of ways, sometimes as the number of hectares of land that is used to support a person and sometimes it is extrapolated to say that if everyone else lived like, say, South Australians they would consume X number of planets. So it is presented in a number of ways.

At the moment some work is being done by the university that will look at those measures and present a number of ways of looking at ecological footprinting. However, there is not yet an accepted, universally-used measure, although I think that is the way it will go.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: The way I understand it then is that no-one knows what the current ecological footprint is in South Australia, and we do not know how we are going to measure it (the advice is that we are still deciding what that measure is going to be), yet we have set a target of reducing it by 20 per cent by the year 2020. We do not know how it is constructed, made up or measured yet we have come up with a figure of 20 per cent. How do you come to that target?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I think you are listening to the bits of the answer that you want to hear and not to all the answer. The general point I made is that we are living well beyond our means, and I think the clear evidence of that is there. Whether that is four planets or three planets or two, we are living beyond our means. We want to get a precise hold on it, and we have committed ourselves to reducing our impact on the planet. We can break that down into energy or into the impact we have on our land or our native animals; and we can break it down into the amount of waste that goes to landfill—there is a whole range of ways. I would imagine that a detailed analysis—which is what we have asked for—will provide us with guidance.

Of course, the 20 per cent is a first target. I think the British government has just recently said that by the year 2050 they will reduce the amount of energy they use, or the amount of CO₂ they are producing, by something like 60 per cent. I think all governments and communities have to start doing this, and this is an initial step. We do not have the precise details, but so what? Are you not going to do anything until you know exactly everything that needs to be known? I believe we are working towards it in an appropriate way.

Mr CAICA: Page 8.18 of the Portfolio Statement refers to the development of the Botanic Gardens 150 Program to

celebrate 150 years of operation and to lead to a significant upgrade of the scientific, cultural and horticultural aspects of the Botanic Gardens. Could the minister please advise the committee on the current progress of this program and on what projects are intended for 2005-06?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the honourable member for that; it is a good opportunity to update the house on where we are at. As I have said before, the 150th anniversary celebrates the establishment of the gardens in 1855 and the public opening of the gardens in 1857, and highlights the significance of the gardens as both an important cultural and scientific institution and as South Australia's premier garden landscape.

In 2004-05 we allocated \$5 million over three years towards an estimated \$10 million of capital works—including the upgrade of ageing infrastructure and visitor facilities—for the 150th anniversary of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide from 2005 to 2007. Two significant developments are expected to be completed during the next financial year, and work has commenced on a new \$3 million glass-covered visitor terrace to the rear of the Museum of Economic Botany to provide a central focus for information, tours, educational activities, visitor facilities and disability access to the museum. It will be known as the Schomburgk Pavilion after the second director of the gardens, one of the great directors we have had in South Australia—of whom, incidentally, there have only been eight in 150 years. If you look at the number of environment ministers we have had since the appointment of the first in 1970 you will see that there have been 13 in 35 years, yet in the Botanic Gardens there have only been seven in 150 years.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: It says something about career paths.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I think so, absolutely. The Italianate Garden is also being redeveloped into a garden featuring plants from Mediterranean regions around the world, which will provide an example of sustainable horticulture for visitors. We also anticipate that design and construction will begin within 12 months on a new western entrance precinct for the Adelaide Botanic Gardens. This new entrance will integrate with works being undertaken by Adelaide City Council on the new Frome Road parklands site, and that is also a great achievement.

Work has also been initiated on the development of proposals for a new Amazon waterlily pavilion, re-invigoration of the Museum of Economic Botany and its collections, Mount Lofty multi-purpose visitor facilities and the development of a new flood control and storm water reuse wetland for First Creek. Only last week I opened the Noel Lothian Hall. Noel Lothian, who died late last year or early this year, was the sixth director of the gardens and the longest serving director. I think he served for 32 or 33 years. It was a great pleasure to open that hall in his name in the presence of his wife and two sons, one of whom, Andrew Lothian, worked in the agency. I recommend members to visit it, if they get a chance. It is at the back of the herbarium and, at the moment, it is showing an exhibition of fantastic art by a Sydney artist called Jeanie Baker.

Mr CAICA: Page 8.15 of the Portfolio Statement refers to managing public lands in an ecologically sustainable manner by undertaking on-ground work on reserves and engaging the community. Minister, please inform the committee of any action taken to address community concern about residential development adjacent to Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the member for this question. Of course, this is in my own electorate, and I am very familiar with the issues. It highlights the issues that occur when old planning systems are still there to be used. In response to community demand for additional housing, residential development is increasing in metropolitan Adelaide, including at Aldinga Beach, and it is part of the sea change mentality. The government recognises the importance of open space and remnant natural habitat in urban areas. The government has taken measures to ensure that any possible impacts of development near the Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park are minimised in relation to the Sunday development, adjacent to the northern boundary of the parks.

The government has worked with the City of Onkaparinga Council and the developer to get the best outcome and ensure the least disturbance to the park. We have negotiated an increase in the width of the buffer zone and development site along the boundary with the conservation park and secured an agreement for this area to be landscaped with locally indigenous plant species.

The government has also purchased 18 hectares of land to ensure the prominence known as the knoll is retained as open space on the development site. This will allow that part of the area allocated within the development for storm water treatment to be transferred to that area. Under the care and control of the City of Onkaparinga, the newly acquired site will be developed as a wetland to manage and purify stormwater from the Sunday development. I want to clarify that. We have protected the knoll and we have also bought some land from SA Water which will be used as a wetland. That is to the east of the Sunday development.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: How much did it cost?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: It was basically a land swap between the development and SA Water for the land. The open space was moved from the SA Water land to another parcel of land known as the knoll. Land management practices over many years have resulted in the diversion of water away from the Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park. The new wetland will be designed to benefit the conservation park by helping to reinstate surface and groundwater flows to improve its water dependent ecosystems. The government has established the Aldinga Scrub Reference Group to advise DEH on a package of protection works for the conservation park, using \$200 000 allocated by the developer for that purpose.

An investment strategy for these works has been prepared and will commence in July 2005 for a three-year period. Proposed works include fencing, fauna management, revegetation, pathways and signage. The government is also working cooperatively with the City of Onkaparinga, the Onkaparinga Catchment Water Management Board and very active community groups to progress the rehabilitation of the washpool area south of Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park. This is an initiative of the local community to establish a conservation zone in that area. The area will be reinstated as a semi-permanent wetland, adding significantly to the area of nature conservation and assisting the protection and enhancement of Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park.

Mr CAICA: My final question refers to page 8.16 of the Portfolio Statement where reference is made to promoting public enjoyment in the conservation of the state's natural and cultural heritage through the development of environmentally sensitive, economically viable and socially responsible visitor experiences. Minister, please inform the commit-

tee of the progress of the visitor facilities upgrade in the Belair National Park.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the member for the question. The park contains approximately 840 hectares of valuable remnant bush land, formal recreation facilities, and buildings and facilities of significant heritage value. As members would know, this is the second oldest national park in Australia. It was originally characterised as a pleasure resort. I think it is a great shame that that terminology has gone. It has a great deal of heritage value as well as biodiversity value and, as we know, the park is very popular; it receives more than 300 000 visitors annually. Master planning for the Belair facilities and services project was completed in September 2002, and received broad community endorsement.

Urgent works were required to protect the state heritage listed Karka Pavilion, and these works were completed in September 2003. The restoration of Karka Pavilion received a Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) commendation in the heritage category; it has also received an Edmund Wright Heritage Award. In 2004-05, upgrade works were completed for the Pines and Karka precincts. Works included the construction of new—and, in some cases, the modifying of existing—sustainable visitor facilities, including picnic and barbecue shelters, arbours and toilets. I had a look earlier this year and the job that is being done is fantastic. Construction work has commenced for upgrading the Government Farm/Old Government House Precinct, which is due for completion by July 2005. Concept planning and concept design has been completed for the Dianella Precinct with construction scheduled to commence in September this year and to be completed by February next year.

This ongoing works program is delivering the key aims of the Belair Facilities and Services Master Plan, which are to showcase Belair National Park's traditional role in providing quality recreation opportunities for South Australians; maintain and protect Belair National Park's significant heritage fabric and many heritage listed buildings and facilities; also to encourage positive visitor experiences, through the provision of well-designed and maintained facilities which promote a consistent theme of heritage and bush picnics; and continue to ensure the protection and enhancement of Belair National Park's environmental values and its significant role in biodiversity conservation in the Adelaide region.

The thing about Belair National Park is that it is probably one national park that most Adelaide people have visited and know very well. So, it is important for us to look after it and to show it as an example of a national park in order to encourage people to explore more broadly the national parks system of South Australia.

Mr BRINDAL: I want to revisit Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, at page 8.7, the theme you previously explored, minister, of marine parks. I would like to know how many officers are employed in your department to implement your marine parks program and in which section of the agency they are employed.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: It is within the Natural Cultural Heritage Directorate. I cannot tell the member exactly how many we have there. We will have to take that on notice.

Mr BRINDAL: I am intrigued. Surely, the minister has that budget breakdown. Surely, when you are counting FTEs, you count so many from here and so many from there, or do they have a diverse range of jobs? Are they not predicated to the one job?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: In the preparation of estimates, we attempt to anticipate questions by members of parliament, but that is one question we had not anticipated. I am happy to get the information for the member.

Mr BRINDAL: The minister has anticipated his government members' questions brilliantly.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I have done better in anticipation of government members' questions, I grant you that.

Mr BRINDAL: I hope the minister can answer my next question, because it is more straightforward from estimates. What is the total cost to the agency thus far of implementing your marine parks strategy and/or the annual budget for the section—not whether you spent \$5 326.45. The annual budget for that section would be fine—not necessarily how much you have spent to the dollar.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Under program 4, within the Agency Coast and Marine Conservation, the budget for 2005-06 is \$14.669 million, and the budget for the previous year was \$9.468 million. That picks up a number of sub-programs. For example, 'Sub-program: 4.1—Coast and Marine Conservation' states:

Ensuring the conservation and sustained productivity of the State's coastal estuarine and marine environments by implementing planning and legislative initiatives from the Living Coast Strategy.

I suppose this is the main area from which this coming. The net cost of that sub-program is \$3 032 000.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I have a supplementary question, minister, in order to clarify the member for Unley's question. You obviously have a dedicated number of officers implementing the marine park process. The purpose of the member for Unley's question was to establish how many officers are in that dedicated unit and the annual budget of that unit.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I understand the question, but, as I have said, I do not have the detail of that. But, generally, within that area there is about \$3 million under that sub-program, which is practically where all that work occurs. Of course, in any agency not everything occurs within a particular unit; they require advice from other sections. I guess they go out and get information from other parts of the department—people who know about mapping, legislation and all those kinds of things. However, we will get the member some advice in relation to those who are actually dedicated to this project on a more or less permanent basis.

Mr BRINDAL: I will be intrigued with the answer to my next question, because, prima facie, it seems like a lot of money to be just designating. You are designating, presumably, areas of water largely, or areas of coast and water. I am just interested. It is something new which I admit we have not done before. But it seems a lot of money when you are going to designate a piece of sea. You can map it, but you cannot fence or do those sort of things.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Virtual fences, I suppose. We have in South Australia at the moment a series of sanctuaries—effectively, fishing sanctuaries—which are really under the primary industries legislation. I know there are a couple off my electorate. One of them was marked by buoys, for example. There is an expense with sticking a buoy in place, particularly when some of the fishers regularly go by and release the buoys from their moorings, which becomes a bit of an issue. There are those kind of things you can do. Signage and appropriate maps are required.

We are committed to setting in place a series of marine protected areas, and I understand that the member's party is as well. So, largely, this is a bipartisan approach. What we are trying to do is establish along the coast representative

examples of our state's biodiversity. We have one of the richest coastal and marine biodiversities in the world. There are more species along the coast of South Australia than you will find in Queensland, along the Great Barrier Reef—many times more unique species—and it is something that is worth preserving. We are going through the exercise of identifying representative examples of the bio-regions, as they are called, along South Australia's coast. We have identified 19 areas and, over time, we will roll out that process. Compensation will be required in various areas as we go through it, and we need experts to go out and consult. If you do these things and you do them well, it takes resources.

Mr BRINDAL: You will not get any argument from this side. We are just concerned with proper use of money. I remind the house that John Grey Gorton, who was a Liberal Prime Minister, basically was the first to proclaim parts of the Great Barrier Reef, over the strong objection of the then Queensland government. One could almost contend that the Liberal Party invented the word 'green' and it has been stolen off us by others.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I think he said his name was John Grey Gorton, not John Green Gorton! Having said that, I have just read his biography. He was a great centralist, a bit like Whitlam, and now Howard, and he wanted to exert the powers of the commonwealth over the states. The argument was really over where the national boundaries should be. Hitherto, the states had a stronger role in offshore issues, and I think that issue was over drilling in the Queensland coast. He had a concern for the natural environment, although he advocated strongly for nuclear power as a fuel source, and a few other things, which perhaps—

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Are you saying, member for Unley, that you are also an advocate for nuclear fuel in South Australia?

Mr BRINDAL: I am saying that I am an advocate for the least desecration that we can cause to our bio-mass, yes, and we will move on. Just to show what a great Catholic church this Liberal Party is, I ask the minister why there has been no social and economic impact assessments conducted as part of the process of developing and designing a plan for the Encounter Marine Park, which is in the member for Finniss's electorate, as you would know?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: On what basis are you saying that we have not done any?

Mr BRINDAL: On the basis that I have a question that says it has not. We have not read one, I am quite sure.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I did not say that it had been released, but some work has been done and there will be, as I understand it, a release of a regional impact statement, as I recall the notes that I read.

Mr BRINDAL: As a supplementary question, I know that your department did exactly the right thing over this, but the damming of a lot of the waters in the Hindmarsh Tiers area will directly impact on the Encounter Bay area. Has the impact of the big new dams being erected through the Hindmarsh Tiers area been factored into account when you did your social and economic impact assessment?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I am not aware of that particular matter. We are trying to find a representative area to which we can provide protection. It is a multiple use zone. I do not think it is necessarily part of its brief to consider on-land activities that are remote. That would more properly fall with the NRM arrangements, I would have thought.

Mr BRINDAL: A supplementary question, minister: you made a very intelligent point, I thought, on radio this morning.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Just one?

Mr BRINDAL: I thought a particularly good point that you made is that while we are harvesting all the water that we can from the Adelaide Plains, we cannot ignore the need of the estuarine environment. So, if we took all the water off the Adelaide Plains, and allowed none to go into the gulf, we would probably impact on Gulf St Vincent. I am asking you, from the point of view that if you create this park, and the park is predicated on an outflow of water from the Inman and Hindmarsh Rivers, surely that is a factor?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I am not saying that that is not a valid point, but I do not think the park has extra-territorial capacity. If we set up a park, it is a bit like a national park. Can we stop somebody upstream building a dam which will have an impact on the park? But once the park is established, if a new dam was to be constructed, National Parks, as an organisation that might be affected, would be able to put in a statement to the planning authority, and I assume that it would be that kind of relationship between the marine park and any activity that happened on land. I do not think the consideration of where the marine park will be is about determining what activities may or may not happen on land. I guess that is the point that I was trying to make.

Ms BEDFORD: Minister, the Premier's Round Table On Sustainability report notes that South Australia is facing a species extinction crisis over the next 50 years, and suggests that without significant intervention South Australia is likely to lose up to 30 to 50 per cent of its terrestrial biodiversity by 2050 due to the combined effects of pest plants and animals, habitat loss and fragmentation, land degradation and climate change. Could the minister please inform the house how this potential crisis is being addressed?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the member for her question. As stated in our strategic plan, target T3.8, the government is committed to losing no species. I am pleased to say that the government is addressing this issue on many fronts. The most direct action is focused on reversing the decline of the species at greatest risk of extinction. This is being addressed through the implementation of species recovery plans. Currently, at least 197 threatened species are the subject of recovery plans and actions in South Australia. This is significantly more than the 2004-05 target of 133 species.

The actions now under way include: intensive site management activities, including weed removal and grazing control to aid the recovery of over 20 threatened species across the agricultural regions; protection and planting of vital feeding habitat for glossy black cockatoos on Kangaroo Island; reduction in levels of predation by foxes on yellow-footed and black-flanked rock wallabies in the north of the state; protection of critical habitat from fire for a wide range of species that include mallee fowls, red-tailed black cockatoos, and emu wrens; and the reintroduction of locally extinct species including bilbies and tammar wallabies.

These initiatives are making steady and positive progress, although it often takes decades to see the complete ecological recovery rates. Response times can also be set back by drought conditions, such as those we have experienced in this state so far this year. In 2005-06 a new total of 138 recovery plans or related action plans will be developed. The government also has several initiatives in place to protect habitats and review the conservation of flora and fauna

species. The state is continuing to establish a conservation reserve system that is comprehensive and amongst the best in the world.

The NatureLinks strategy, as exemplified by the very successful Bounceback program in the Flinders, Gawler and Olary Ranges, is just one of many innovative approaches being implemented to improve on the way we manage the reserve system and the species, habitats and ecosystems that occur within them and across the broader landscape. This government is also monitoring the changing status of our native flora and fauna through the ongoing review of species distributions, abundances and population trends. As well, the government is currently preparing the first biodiversity conservation strategy for this state. It will be called No Species Lost—A Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for South Australia.

Mr HANNA: I have been allocated two questions on this budget line. I have picked out two areas of concern. The first relates to coast protection (sub-program 4.2). I note that the target for planning authority decisions on development applications in accord with Coast Protection Board advice was 100 per cent for this financial year that we are just finishing. It is noted at page 8.23 that the estimated result for this current year is 80 per cent. On its face it is appalling if 20 per cent of planning authority decisions are going against Coast Protection Board advice. Can the minister provide details of those decisions which go against Coast Protection Board advice, and how this will be remedied?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The member for Mitchell raises an important question, which is one that—

Mr BRINDAL: He is very good at asking questions.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: He is very good at asking questions. You are very good at interrupting answers.

Mr BRINDAL: Would you like me to go to lunch?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Please!

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: We all agree with that. There is bipartisan unanimity. The honourable member raises an important issue. The Coast Protection Board gives advice on planning proposals in certain coastal circumstances. Under some circumstances its advice is binding—I think when a certain volume of soil is being moved. I cannot remember exactly the volume. It can say yea or nae. At other times it is just advice, and it is up to the planning authority to make a decision. The planning authority in most cases, of course, is the local council.

I am not too sure whether any of that percentage would be the DAC; I cannot answer that. Some of it, of course, could be appealed through the ERD court, so I cannot answer that, either. In most cases I imagine that it is the local council. Sadly, in some local council areas, there is this kind of an attitude: 'We have to develop our community. People want to buy land on the coast. They want to invest in our community. We want these things to happen.' One can understand that. In the case of small regions, where there is not a very big rating base, they tend to be pro development at any cost. I will not name any councils, but I am sure that the honourable member is aware of them.

There were some concerns recently—a year or so ago—about coastal planning issues in the western part of the state. From memory, the planning minister established—I am sorry that the member for Taylor is not here because I think that she may have been the minister who did it—a regional process to deal with that issue. Under the sustainable development legislation new planning arrangements are

proposed which would take some of these decisions out of the hands of individual councils and establish regional planning authorities that would be expert based.

It is my view that this would deal with many of these issues in an appropriate way. Unfortunately, there is, I guess, some debate in the community about this. There is advocacy for the existing basis because of some sort of notion of democracy, that is, 'We want local councillors to make these decisions; we do not want experts to make them.' I put to the member for Mitchell and other members of the committee that if experts were making the decisions we would probably get better outcomes, particularly in relation to coastal development. I think that the weight is on the shoulders of those who argue for local councils to continue having that power and to demonstrate how they will exercise it in a way which sees that figure not at 80 per cent but rather at 100 per cent.

Mr HANNA: As a supplementary question, how will you get to 100 per cent without giving greater powers to the Coast Protection Board?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: There are legislative changes to which I have referred, but also by improving the way in which the department operates in terms of the power of its arguments, the relationships it develops with the planning authorities and being proactive about landscape. Recently, the department initiated a coastal landscapes program—I have forgotten exactly the name of it. Many images of the coast were put on an internet site, and the public was invited to view these and give them some sort of rating.

The department will be able to use that tool (once it has been completed) to be able to argue to local authorities and other authorities about what is valued by our broader South Australian community. That is an example, I guess, of the tools that the department will use to try to achieve that outcome.

Mr HANNA: So it comes down to cajolery?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Well, no, but the sustainable development act is attempting to change the planning process to give authority to people with expertise, so I think it is both legislative and educative.

Mr HANNA: My second question is in relation to the government's climate change strategy. I am concerned that not enough funding has been allocated to enable a decent public consultation process. This is against the background that many members of the public to whom I have spoken do not accept climate change as a serious risk to their way of life, and it may be that it is not until we are in a crisis and facing greater water restrictions, more extreme fire and flood events, etc. that people will have the will to change. So, in that context, I think the education process and the consultation process about climate change are particularly important. I ask the minister to detail how much money is allocated for this type of education.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the member. I agree with him, and there would be a few of us, the Premier included, who understand this issue very well and are most concerned about it.

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I am glad the opposition is of a similar view.

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: You are not united with us in our commitment to tackling climate change. The South Australian Strategic Plan permits the government to develop an industry-wide greenhouse strategy by 2006, and the Office of Sustain-

ability in the Department for Environment and Heritage is responsible for coordinating the development of the greenhouse strategy through a process that engages government, industry and the community, and in December last year government approved the governance framework for the development of the greenhouse strategy, that is, Tackling Climate Change: South Australia's Greenhouse Strategy.

The governance framework includes an executive steering group comprising senior representatives from the lead agencies and two members of the Premier's Round Table on Sustainability. Six sectoral working groups comprising members from government, industry, the community and the Premier's Round Table on Sustainability have been established to develop the content for the greenhouse strategy along the following themes: reducing greenhouse gases, adapting to climate change, and innovating to make the most of opportunities. The six groups (on energy, industry, community, transport and planning, buildings and natural resources) each produced a paper, as the member knows, and I released those documents a little while ago. Each group developed an issues paper describing the greenhouse gas emissions produced by the sector, the challenge the sector faces in adapting to climate change and the potential for innovation. Sectoral stakeholders will be consulted on the issues raised in the issues papers and will be asked to identify priority strategies and actions that can be taken by sectors to reduce emissions, adapt to climate change and harness opportunities to innovate, and this consultation process should be completed next month.

A stakeholders' summit is planned for October 2005 to bring all sectors together to review proposed strategies and actions, and a final greenhouse strategy is anticipated for public release early next year. A communication and media plan is being implemented to ensure that the government maintains a consistent message and encourages positive attitudes and recognition of opportunities, as well as threats posed by climate change.

We also are in the process, as I said before, of responding to the Sustainability Round Table's 345 document, and I expect that will go to cabinet fairly shortly. In this next year's budget we have allocated \$400 000 within the agency to deal with some of these issues. I think, over time, we have to ramp up the expenditure significantly, and we do need to get the message out. At the moment we are concentrating on understanding what the message is, and the work we are doing with the sectoral groups is helping us get a very clear understanding of that. We are working with industry and across government with the key decision-makers to articulate and clarify what we are trying to do. Once we have that worked out, it will be time to start getting out into the community on a broader scale. Tim Flannery has done a superb job as an advocate in speaking about these issues, and he has a book coming out shortly. I know there will be a huge debate about this issue in the years to come.

Mr HANNA: I have a supplementary question. I am heartened to hear the figure of \$400 000 mentioned as being budgeted, and the minister mentioned that as covering these matters. Is that for the consultation process or for all of the things he mentioned?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: It is for a range of issues, but we need to work through this part of the process and that is, in part, to consult within the sectors, as I have described it. Then we will have the conference in October this year which will be part of the consultation process, and we will work with the

Round Table to help them with resources to get the message out.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: At page 8.16, why has visitor management been reduced by approximately \$4 million from \$27.168 million in 2004-05 to \$23.476 million in 2005-06, when the number of visits to our national parks are to be the same at 2.115 million?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Can I clarify which year the member for Davenport was referring to?

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I am referring to this year compared to last year.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: So 2004-05 compared to 2003-04?

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: No.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: It is 2005-06 compared to 2004-05?

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Yes.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I will try to explain it and, if I cannot get it right, I will ask Mr Janssan to go through it in more detail. The following information relates to the net cost of services for each sub-program as presented in pages 8.9 to 8.29 of the Portfolio Statement. The net cost of services reported for each sub-program is an indicative calculation and includes a broad overhead allocation for organisational support costs, depreciation expense and indirect organisational revenues such as interest and sundry recoveries.

At the time of the publication of the portfolio statements, the 2005-06 internal budget allocation for the department was still being finalised. Consequently, the net cost of services reported in the portfolio statement is indicative. In particular, decisions surrounding the achievement of the savings targets were not finalised. The reduction in expenditure as a result of savings has been apportioned across all subprograms for presentation in the portfolio statements. In particular, in relation to the line the honourable member referred to, the increase in net operating expenditure of \$1.2 million in 2005-06 primarily reflects inflationary growth and expenditure of about \$800 000 and a share of the expected decrease in agency interest revenue of about \$500 000, offset by about \$200 000 as a contribution to the department's savings target.

The decrease of \$5 million in net expenditure is primarily the result of a review of the methodology to allocate depreciation charged to subprograms, adopted by the reporting of the 2003-04 actual results. This has resulted in a decrease in the amount of depreciation expense allocated to this subprogram of \$4.7 million and a review of the allocation of expenditure between the subprogram and the Land Management subprogram, resulting in a reduction of approximately \$800 000.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: So, the visitor management line has had a \$4 million reduction?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Primarily it is due to \$4.7 million, the amount of depreciation expense allocated to this subprogram. There is some increase for inflation, some decrease because of agency interest revenue, and a little bit for savings. However, the bulk of it has been because of depreciation, which is a non-cash expense. If you look at the comparison between budget and estimated result, that is where you get the true figures. The estimated result for 2004-05 is \$22.199 million and for the budget it is \$23.476 million.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: So, when you take the change in depreciation, you are actually spending less, based on the minister's answer?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: No.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: The estimated result was \$22 million, the budget was \$23 million and the depreciation alteration was \$4.7 million. Take the \$4.7 million off the

budget and you are going to spend less than the actual last year.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Not at all. The budget of 2004-05 had \$4.7 million in it, so if you take that off, plus the \$800 000 that is the allocation of expenditure between this subprogram and the Land Management subprogram, that is \$5.5 million. If you take that off, you get \$22-odd million, so if you compare apples with apples it is a small increase.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Referring to page 8.12, the Nature Conservation program has had a funding cut of around \$2.5 million. What subprograms have suffered or will suffer cutbacks to make up for the shortfall?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: It is really the same story, but I will read it again. The budget for 2004-05 was \$6.354 million. The estimated result is \$5.622 million and the budget for this coming year is \$5.824 million. If the honourable member compares the estimated result with the budget, there is a small increase. The increase in net operating expenditure of \$200 000 in 2005-06 reflects expenditure incurred in 2004-05 carried over from the previous year and inflationary growth of \$200 000, and a share of the expected decrease in agency interest revenue of about \$100 000.

So, the expenditure incurred of about \$200 000 had been carried over, inflationary growth was about \$200 000 and a share of decreased agency interest revenue was about \$100 000. In addition, the 2004-05 estimated result is different from the original budget because the decrease of \$700 000 in net expenditure is primarily the result of a review of the methodology to allocate depreciation charged to subprograms, adopted for the reporting of the actuals. This resulted in a decrease in the amount of depreciation expense allocated this subprogram of \$800 000 and the expected carry-over expenditure into 2005-06 of \$100 000.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: What subprogram was that for?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: That is Scientific Services, 2.1.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I did not ask about that one. I asked about page 8.12, Nature Conservation.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I am sorry.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: The total expenditure last year was \$27.8 million, so it is a cut of over \$2.5 million.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The advice I have is that they are basically the same issues. You have to take into account a whole range of things: the change in the way depreciation has been calculated; some carry-over that was brought into the 2004-05 year from 2003-04; some inflation is added in; and there is a small allocation of savings that occurs across all agencies.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Referring to page 8.14, how will the Nature Links project be developed when no dedicated funding is allocated to it in the coming financial year?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: It is not true to say there is no dedicated funding for it. Nature Links is the theme that applies across the whole agency and, indeed, across my two agencies—Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation and the Department for Environment and Heritage—and it is the guiding principle for the establishment of parks and the purchase of new land into the system through the biodiversity elements of the new NRM boards. The three major projects that are being developed are:

- East Meets West, across land and sea from Eyre Peninsula through the Great Victorian Desert and Nullarbor Plain to Western Australia;
- Cape Borda to Barossa, linking KI across Backstairs Passage and the Mount Lofty Ranges to the Barossa;

- and the Flinders/Olary Ranges, which is an expansion of the successful Bounce Back ecological restoration project in the Northern Flinders and Gammon Ranges, to provide linkages to the southern Flinders Ranges and Olary Ranges.

There are two additional projects in an early concept development stage: a large-scale corridor connecting wetlands of the Upper South-East Coorong and the River Murray and a further corridor connecting key areas of South Australia's arid lands. Strategic directions in a communication strategy for NatureLinks have been developed. Ecological restoration work conducted as part of the Bounce Back is continuing. Strategic action plans have been developed by Flinders/Olary Ranges and East Meets West and will be circulated for public comment early in 2005-06.

Preparation of the action plans for Cape Borda to Barossa will commence in July 2006. Project teams will be established to consult with the wider community on (and to implement) the strategic action plan for the Flinders/Olary Ranges, East Meets West and Cape Borda to Barossa. Strategic action plans for the remaining three corridors will be developed. NatureLinks elements, principles and corridors will be incorporated into state and regional strategies and NRM programs and plans. An additional \$250 000 has been applied in the 2005-06 year compared with 2004-05.

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

Ms BEDFORD: I note from the Portfolio Statement (page 8.89) that Zero Waste SA provided grant funding of \$222 000 for plastic bag reduction projects. I recall the Premier and the minister announcing on World Environment Day that this government would move to ban single use plastic shopping bags. How will this move be managed?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The ban will not take place until the end of 2008. This will allow over three years for retailers to phase out single use plastic bags and find alternatives. This is consistent with the national approach. I think on the last day of this month and the first day of next month the Environment Protection and Heritage Council (EPHC) will be considering a recommendation that we go ahead with a national ban. Zero Waste SA is already assisting by providing funding to approved applicants, including groups of small businesses such as those in the Adelaide Central Market and the Market Arcade, and I imagine that other groups of small retailers might also be given assistance.

This will enable a smooth transition. To ensure minimal disruption to retailers, employees and the community the South Australian government has decided to form a plastic bags phase-out task force. I have written to various bodies in the last day or two in relation to that, and they will help us in our efforts to phase out plastic bags. The task force will advise the government of the steps that might need to be taken during the transitional period towards the banning of lightweight single use plastic bags by the end of 2008.

A couple of issues have been raised. One is the occupational health and safety issues associated with people who work with bags that may not be very clean or may be heavy, and then there is the issue of how you get your garbage from the kitchen into the garbage bin, which seems to be of some importance to a number of people. The task force will comprise members from the Environment Protection Authority, the Small Business Development Council, KESAB, Environmental Solutions, the Local Government Association of South Australia, the Conservation Council, the

Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Union, the Consumer Association of South Australia, and both the Australian and state retailers associations. The group will be chaired by Zero Waste, and I am currently seeking nominations from these groups. I welcome to the table Mr Vaughan Levitzke, the Chief Executive of Zero Waste.

Additional Departmental Adviser:

Mr V. Levitzke, Chief Executive, Zero Waste SA.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I have some answers to a couple of questions asked earlier. There was a question about the role of the Encounter Pilot Consultative Committee and whether it was instructed not to talk to people. I am advised of the following. The Encounter Pilot Consultative Committee operated under terms of reference in which the main function was to provide advice to the steering committee on the development of MPAs. As part of this process, the committee had access to significant information, some of which was commercial in confidence. The committee was asked by DEH officers to respect this confidence. In addition, the committee had access to preliminary working papers on the proposed marine park, and they were requested not to distribute these while the process was being undertaken. However, in line with the terms of reference, the committee members were expected to discuss broad concepts and ideas to be able to provide meaningful input and advice to the government.

In relation to coastal zones, the term 'coastal zone' is defined under the Development Act in the following ways:

1. Land situated in a zone or an area defined in the relevant development plan. The name of the zoned area includes the words 'coast' or 'coastal' which indicates or suggests in some way that the zoned area is situated on the coast.

2. Land situated in an area that, in the opinion of the relevant authority (for example, the council), comprises a township or urban area and that is within 100 metres of the high water mark.

3. Land situated in an area that, in the opinion of the relevant authority (that is, the council), comprises rural land that is within 500 metres of the high water mark.

The Coastal Protection Board has certain powers in respect of development applications involving specific developments on coastal land. It has the power of direction in relation to specified matters within 100 metres of the high water mark.

There was a third issue to do with funding, and I will ask Mr Holmes to give you the information on that.

Mr HOLMES: The question was about the allocation of funding to marine parks. To elaborate on the number of people employed in the marine conservation area in marine protected areas, there are six people who work on that project, four people work on marine planning, three people who work in the marine policy and support area, two officers who are working on geographic information systems, and two people who are working on the estuaries policy, which was released recently. In addition, there are three people employed in relation to the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary and one person working on the Great Australian Bight Marine Park. The specific allocation for marine protected areas, which excludes overheads, is \$567 000.

Ms BEDFORD: I note recent media reports that state that South Australia does not match the Eastern States in litter behaviour. I would have thought that with the enviable

performance of our container deposit system our littering behaviour would be up there with the best. Can the minister explain this anomaly?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I believe the media report to which the honourable member refers was about a survey that we believe was carried out by the Beverage Industry Environment Council, which is a lobby group very much opposed to the container deposit legislation. The member for Davenport would have had conversations with them over the years. They spend an enormous amount of money lobbying against CDL. If they had actually put the money into something useful, it would be a good thing. BIEC publishes an annual survey of littering behaviour based on observations of people's litter disposal. Whilst I do not question their methodology, the BIEC research is about watching people dispose of litter rather than the measurement of actual litter. Based on such observations, BIEC makes assertions about littering behaviour and claims that more littering is occurring in South Australia than in some other states.

South Australia through KESAB is the only state in Australia that comprehensively counts litter regularly and independently. Whilst there is nothing to compare KESAB data with the data of other states, it is likely that our data is indicative of other state's littering behaviour, except for beverage containers. We know from other states' beverage container collection rates that there is likely to be more beverage litter in those states, and these items are a minor part of the South Australian litter stream due to CDL.

The BIEC data is based on observed behaviour. It does not tell us what is in the litter stream or where it is; it is simply a behavioural observation on litter disposal. Although it may be of some value in determining educational strategies to improve littering behaviour, it is not an objective evaluation of litter in the environment. I have talked to KESAB—and I imagine the member for Davenport has also—about different styles of littering: people who do it sneakily and put things in tiny spaces because they do not think anybody will see it, and others who just throw things away willy-nilly.

Although the May 2005 litter survey carried out for KESAB found a slight decrease in litter over the February 2005 survey, it was nevertheless the second highest count since the survey began in 1998. It is of concern that there seems to be a trend of increasing litter, particularly of cigarette butts and packets. Zero Waste SA and KESAB will continue to make litter reduction a priority. Litter composed of deposit bearing beverage containers is showing a decreasing trend since extension of the scheme to a wider range of containers.

Ms BEDFORD: As a supplementary question, speaking of the willy-nilly, throw-away approach, what is the latest on cigarette butt disposals? We see them being flicked all over the place as we walk backwards and forwards during our lunch hour.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I do not have any direct information in front of me about that issue. I know that KESAB has been working quite strongly on it for some time. The disposal of cigarette butts has been a problem for us, especially since we moved to ban smoking inside buildings. People now smoke outside buildings and dispose of cigarette butts outside, and the habit of disposing of them properly has not caught on. I guess most people think a cigarette butt is not very big, so it does not matter.

I have seen the statistics and I cannot remember what they are, but hundred of millions, if not billions, of cigarette butts are disposed of every year into the environment. They take

a very long time to break down and get into our water systems. There are quite significant fines for littering in South Australia, and that would include cigarette butts. A number of portable cigarette ashtrays have been developed for people to use. Does Mr Levitzke have anything to add?

Mr LEVITZKE: We have been working with KESAB and the Butt Littering Trust on a campaign amongst six councils that have beachfront council areas. We find that after we have a campaign on cigarette butt littering the number of cigarette butts drop significantly, and after a while they rise back up again. So the question remains of how we maintain that reduction over a period of time.

Ms BEDFORD: Is there any advancement on the edible cigarette butt yet?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: No.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: How many full-time equivalents are there in Zero Waste?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The budgeted estimate for the coming financial year is 16.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Is that more or less than last year?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: There were 10 in 2003-04 and 12 in 2004-05, and we plan to increase it to 16. As you would appreciate, Zero Waste has been ramping up its activities over the last couple of years.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Why was only \$1.795 million given out in grants and subsidies when \$3.96 million was budgeted for in 2004-05?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: While we are looking for the explanation, I point out to the member that the Zero Waste Fund is a statutory fund and whatever money is not spent in one year gets carried over into the next year. The Zero Waste SA Regional Infrastructure Grants Scheme is designed to assist rural councils, the community and the private sector to deliver a significant diversion of waste from landfill. The scheme provides financial assistance for the establishment and/or upgrade of resource recovery facilities and infrastructure in rural areas.

The program was launched in November last year, with an eight week call for applications closing on 14 January this year. Thirty-eight applications were received, with requested funding totalling \$3.4 million. An amount of \$550 000 was allocated to the scheme this financial year. The budget over three years is \$2.05 million. A range of councils—Karoonda East, Murray, Ceduna, Southern Mallee, Kangaroo Island, Green Triangle Recyclers and Mount Gambier—received \$423 000. Zero Waste is following up a number of other applications and is likely to award further grants in the coming year.

Perhaps a better answer is that 2004-05 estimated expenditure is less than budget, mainly due to timing of grant payments to local government for kerbside performance incentives and the timing of grants to business enterprises and local government for regional and recycling infrastructure grants. The point is that the money has not been lost: it is still there and it will be applied.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Does it not concern you that you have about two-thirds of the grants and subsidies moneys still sitting in the statutory fund not being put to use? You have a \$2 million underspend out of, basically, a \$3 million fund—which is essentially the grant line. It just seems that there has not been enough focus by Zero Waste SA in delivering their grant outcomes.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: It is easy to make those kinds of claims, but we are in relationships with a range of councils

and other bodies, and we are not going to just give out funds without good applications. All the funds are committed and they will be applied, but we have to get the appropriate programs and commitments in place from the regional authorities. It is not that Zero Waste is deliberately trying to avoid putting these funds out; they will do it as the appropriate applications come in.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: So, as of today, all the funds are committed?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: That is the advice I have.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: They have been allocated to applications—not just committed, as in grant lines?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I will ask Mr Levitzke to explain.

Mr LEVITZKE: In terms of the grants, we have run a number of grants programs. All those allocations have now been approved by the board to various applicants and we are in the process of signing off agreements with the applicants as we speak. In some instances we will need to wait for development approvals to come through before we can hand over the money for certain infrastructure. It is no good handing the money over without proper approvals in place. If we did, we would have to go and get the money back again.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: How many cases are waiting on development approval?

Mr LEVITZKE: I would have to check that.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: If the member likes we will get him a summary of what has been approved and what stages the various applications are at in the approval process.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: With reference to page 8.9, why does the net cost of services in Zero Waste have an estimated result of \$219 000 against a budget of \$1.8 million?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: If the honourable member looks under expenses from ordinary activities he will see that employee expenses are roughly on track with estimated results, ramping up to the budget level of this year. Supplies and services are in the same sort of field; depreciation has not occurred, but 'Other', which is the grants program, is under for the reasons we have just explained. Fees and charges are on track and there is some other revenue as well. The difference is explained, I think, by those grants programs.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Given that the federal Labor Party was to abolish plastic bags by 2007, why have you changed that policy and made it 2008?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: You may have noticed that the federal Labor Party did not form government at the last election. State and federal governments reached an agreement a couple of years ago to phase out plastic bags by 2008. My personal preference was to do that much more rapidly, but I took the view that it was better to get an Australian approach rather than just a South Australian approach, and we reached agreement to phase them out by 2008. We also said that we would explore regulatory means if the voluntary phase-out did not occur. I have indicated publicly that the South Australian government will support that regulatory measure, and I have also indicated that if it does not happen on a national level we will go it alone. I think the indications are that it will happen at a national level, and I think it is better to get a total ban in place by 2008 rather than having different states doing different things.

It is interesting to compare it with the container deposit legislation which we have had in place now for 30 years. South Australia elected to go on its own, and that was a good thing, but we have never been able to get the other states to join into that process. The strategy we have adopted on this was to show leadership and, at the same time, cooperation,

and it has meant, I think, that we will get a national ban on plastic bags. That is a better outcome for the environment than South Australia just doing it on its own.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: But, if it was promised in 2007 by the federal Labor Party, is there any reason why it could not be introduced in 2007?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: As I said, the reason is that there was agreement across all the states and the commonwealth to go ahead in 2008.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: There is no reason other than seeking national cooperation?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: No.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Given the government's interest in banning plastic bags because of the length of time that they take to decay, does Zero Waste have a strategy for the discarding of disposable nappies which, I understand, have a similar breakdown time to plastic bags?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I have sought advice from Zero Waste in relation to this, and it is quite an interesting issue in terms of the energy use associated with other methods. I think some work is being done that suggests that as much energy is used in cloth nappies as in plastic nappies. I also read something today—I am not quite sure whether it was a briefing note or in the media—about work being done on a disposable nappy which is totally biodegradable and which provides an alternative to plastic to provide the moisture barrier.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Are they reusable?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: No, they are definitely not. Cloth nappies are reusable, of course, and that is what your mum and my mum—

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: And my wife.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: And your wife; I think my wife used them, too.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Sorry; I am not sure what your answer is.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The answer is that I have done some preliminary work on it; I have not advanced beyond that. In relation to nappies, the hope is in having an alternative available to the plastic that is used in the current disposable nappy, which is completely biodegradable; so, it would not be such a bad thing to have them in landfill. I was contemplating whether or not there could be a way of disposing of them other than through landfill, but the energy costs associated with it were quite great. I do not have the briefing note with me, but I can give you a more detailed answer, if you would like.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Some countries have energy generation through the burning of waste. I am wondering, as a way of significantly and quickly reducing the amount of rubbish going to landfill, whether the government has done any work on looking at bringing in some of those plants into South Australia.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: We have looked at it, and there is some energy creation by incineration. I think that Adelaide Brighton Cement was using certain wood and plastic waste for power generation—in fact, I think it is still doing it—at Port Adelaide, and that has been licensed under the EPA. I think that is a good thing.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: What are they burning?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Wood and some plastics; it is construction waste. A few years ago, I had a look at the waste plant in Wollongong, which was the next great thing. It was a pilot plan, established and funded by the federal and state governments, which was taking all of the waste from

Wollongong, putting it through an autoclave to take the bugs out of it, sorting out as much of the metal as possible, and then firing the material through a gasification process. The gas then heated water, the water created steam, the steam created power, and electricity was fed into the grid. It was a great scheme—and I am not sure if the member for Davenport is aware of the scheme—and the proponents were pretty actively promoting it in South Australia for a while. However, it just did not work—it was not economical. I think the technology was a bit complicated, too.

The problem we have in South Australia for the use of this scheme is that the methods of disposal of waste are so much cheaper in our environment than, say, somewhere like London or Tokyo where the opportunities for landfill are limited and, therefore, the cost of disposing waste, because of the cost of transfer and land, and so on, is just so high that it makes the technology associated with incineration cheaper. It is probably not a very economical option now, unless it could be heavily subsidised. In any event, the goal of Zero Waste is to get to zero waste. We need to work out how to get the organic material out of our waste stream. A lot of work is being done on it at the moment. We have seen Jeffries in the north and Peats in the south, and many councils now have a green waste collection. If we can then get the putrescible waste properly dealt with, we will go a long way to reducing the amount of waste going to landfill. I am not opposed to incineration for energy-creating purposes, provided that the technology is such that you do not put dioxins and so on into the atmosphere.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Is the government looking at expanding the container deposit legislation and, if so, to cover what sort of products?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I am very interested in seeing the container deposit legislation expanded. The member for Davenport knows well that the legislation was expanded by him in his term as minister, and it was implemented in 2003. I have asked the EPA and Zero Waste to look at options for the expansion of the scheme. It seems to me that what started off as a scheme primarily to avoid litter in the landscape has really become a scheme for management of material which can be recycled. It is an artificial constraint to have it just apply to the beverage industry.

It seems to me that a whole range of products could easily be captured by the scheme. For example, we capture bottles and cans which contain soft drink, milk or fruit juice, so why not olive oil or other products that you use around the house? Why is it just limited to drinks? I can see the expansion of the scheme across the same kind of objects, but using containers which have different contents. I can also see the expansion of the scheme into other products.

The minister for the environment in Victoria, for example, is very keen to have a scheme in place in relation to mobile phones. He wants to have a deposit introduced on mobile phones. It has become a bit of a problem. What do you do with mobile phones? People just keep them or throw them away. It would be interesting if the other states adopted a CDL type of scheme for products which are not containers; it would be a foot in the door at least. We can look at a whole range of products. I have asked the agencies to consider it.

There is also the matter of digestion, though. As the member knows, when the scheme was expanded by him—and I do not know how many hundreds of extra products had to be processed and agreed to—the recycling businesses had to get used to it. So, if we do expand it, we have to do it in a way that is capable of being digested by the industry. We will

talk to them about how that might happen. Incidentally, I was approached recently by one of the super collectors about new technology which they are interested in introducing and which is being introduced in the north of Europe (Norway, from memory). It is a reverse vending machine, which is available at supermarket chains, where you put your cans—

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: You put your can in and get your two bucks back.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Yes; you put your cans and bottles in. It is capable of being programmed to virtually take every form of product which is CDL now, except that they have trouble with the Yakult bottles, which are just a bit too small. The item goes in—you just put it in the one hole, whatever it is—and it reads the code on the bottle. It counts what kinds of products they are—whether it is Coca Cola, Schweppes or whatever; it takes it through some sort of process; it compresses the can so that a minimum amount of space is being used; and they are ready for collection. So, we would not have to go through what is a bit of a nonsense at the moment, where the companies deal with only one type of product; they only want to collect their own products. If that were to be introduced, it would be a significant advance. It would make it a lot easier for consumers because, every time you went shopping, you would take your half a dozen or dozen bottles and cans along and put them in there. You would get a voucher which gives you the credit, which you can then use in the shop for the purchase of goods. They do not actually give cash, but they give a cash equivalent.

I think there will be some very interesting technological changes in CDL. If that change does occur, I think it would make it easier to grab a whole lot of products. It would then be a matter of linking the code on the container to the machine, and it then kind of happens happily. Of course, if these machines come in, it almost inevitably means that we will get a national system. I think it is only a matter of time before the jurisdictions pick up on CDL.

The CHAIRMAN: That concludes the time allocated to that line.

Environment Protection Authority, \$7 074 000

Departmental Advisers:

Dr P. Vogel, Chief Executive Officer, Environment Protection Agency.

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

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments open for examination. I refer members to Appendix C, page 3 in the Budget Statement and Portfolio Statements, Volume 2, part 8, pages 71 to 86.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the officers from DEH, and I now welcome Dr Paul Vogel, the CE and Chairman of the EPA, and John O'Daly, the Director of Corporate and Business Support. I have a brief opening statement. The government has delivered on its commitment to revamp the EPA as an independent authority responsible to an independent EPA board. We have passed two sets of legislation now through this parliament which strengthens the independence and power of the EPA and implements polluter-pay principles.

The many highlights for 2004-05 have been listed in the Portfolio Statement, but I wish briefly to explain some

achievements of particular note. The Environmental Protection (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2004 has been passed by the parliament. The legislation extends the powers available to the EPA and improves the administrative efficiency of the act, including the establishment of a civil penalty system, the first in relation to environmental protection in Australia.

Further, the act establishes a system to encourage local government involvement in the enforcement of environmental protection legislation. The EPA's compliance and enforcement policy was implemented, and the policy was posted on the web site and communicated to stakeholders. The policy will provide a clearer understanding of what the EPA expects from the community and industry and how it will enforce breaches of the act.

The year 2004-05 has also seen a change in the membership of the EPA board. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Mr Simon Stone for his contributions to the board over the past two years. I also congratulate Mr Andrew Fletcher, who is also a member of the Economic Development Board, on his appointment, and I look forward to his input into the board.

It is expected that 2005-06 will see the completion of a number of long-term projects and studies that will provide the knowledge bases for improved environmental health and sustainable management of the state's resources. These include the Adelaide Coastal Water Study, the Water Quality Improvement Plan for Port Waterways and the River Murray Water Quality Risk Assessment, and the implementation of the findings. The EPA continues to effectively carry out its challenging role as South Australia's primary environment regulator.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Why has the net cost of services in the EPA dropped from \$11.57 million to \$7.614 million?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The primary reason for the decrease in the net appropriations of the EPA is the 100 per cent increase in the solid waste levy, which was necessary to fund the newly created Zero Waste SA. The EPA receives 50 per cent of this levy. In addition, a 100 per cent increase in environment licence fees has been phased in over four years, based on cost recovery principles. Both these revenue initiatives are economic instruments aimed at influencing behaviour to reduce pollution and are in line with the polluter-pays principle.

The government has clearly committed increased funding to the EPA which is not linked to any revenue collected by it, such as licensee monitoring data assessment, \$1.35 million over three years, with \$600 000 ongoing; EPA budget sustainability programs, \$10 million over four years, with \$3 million ongoing; site contamination package, \$5 million over four years, with \$2 million ongoing; and the Water Shed Protection Office, \$1.3 million ongoing from 2005-06.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: On that point, minister, does that not indicate what the government has really done is simply transfer the cost out of the government appropriation to the business community? Essentially, what the government has done is increase fees and charges from a budget figure of some \$12.347 million in 2004-05. It is now \$20.721 million in the 2005-06 budget, yet, essentially, the government actual expenditure from general appropriation has, in fact, decreased. All the government has done is transfer the cost from the government sector to the non-government sector.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I would prefer to characterise it differently. Under the former regime, the taxpayers were subsidising pollution that was created by a variety of

organisations. What we have done is make the polluter pay for that. That seems to me a good principle, and the aim of it is to use that instrument as a way of encouraging people to produce less pollution, and that is what the EPA really is on about.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: You are not actually spending more on environmental programs through this agency. All you have done is said that we will transfer a \$3 million cost from the taxpayer to the licensed businesses, but we are not actually going to spend more. So, despite all the rhetoric, all you have done is transfer the cost from the taxpayer to the business community.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: You can characterise it in that way if you choose. As I say, for good policy reasons we believe that polluters ought to pay. The advice I have, to put it into perspective, is that we have adopted the notion of polluter pays, which I think is appropriate. It is anti-competitive to have some businesses being supported by subsidies for their polluting activities by the taxpayer, so we have sorted that out. The difference between the 2004-05 budget and the 2005-06 budget is the net difference after adjusting for not only increased revenue but also for other specific funding. For example, revenue from fees, fines and charges, as you have mentioned, went up by \$8.374 million, but government appropriation decreased by \$1.618 million, meaning other funding increased by \$6.756 million. So, additional money is going in.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Sorry, government funding increased by how much?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: There has been an increase in funding of about 6.756, so the government appropriation has not decreased by the same rate that the fees and charges have come into the organisation. So, there has been extra funding for the organisation. But, certainly, that has been driven by increased revenue based on the polluter-pays principle.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: In relation to OneSteel and its new agreement that the Premier announced recently, which minister is negotiating the environmental outcomes with OneSteel?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Let me put into perspective the issues in relation to OneSteel. The activities of OneSteel have been subject to EPA concern for some time, and certainly community concern for some time. The local red dust action group has been advocating for greater licence control over OneSteel for some time. The EPA introduced a new set of licence conditions which were contested by OneSteel through the courts. At the same time, OneSteel was contemplating an expansion of its economic activity up in Whyalla, and it was planning to introduce a new project called Project Magnet. Project Magnet involves a different quality of ore, and a crushing plant off site—a different way of organising their operations.

The advice from the EPA, and from others, is that this will go a significant way to reducing the dust pollution effect within the township, thus helping the residents. OneSteel was of the view, and put the view to the government strongly, that unless it had what it described as regulatory certainty in relation to EPA licence conditions its commitment to the project was equivocal, and it sought greater regulatory certainty from the government. The government has agreed to give OneSteel an indenture which will provide it with that regulatory certainty.

The details of what will be in that licence for Project Magnet, as I understand it, will be negotiated by the EPA with OneSteel. The EPA has negotiated licence conditions for

Project Magnet, as I understand it, with OneSteel and those conditions will be incorporated in the indenture. Until the indenture comes before the parliament, the EPA still has the same regulatory role in relation to OneSteel that it currently has.

There is an issue about the interim licence conditions. They are currently contested through the courts and, as I understand it, part of the indenture which is being negotiated by the head of primary industries, and some of the elements of the proposed licence conditions will be included in the indenture.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Following that through, are the licence conditions that have now become part of the indenture agreement being negotiated by the EPA and your ministry, or are they now being negotiated by, I think you said, primary industries?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: There are two sets of licence conditions, and I was trying to characterise them separately. There are two. The main ones are the licence conditions in relation to the expansion of the Project Magnet site. They have already been negotiated via the EPA with the company and, as I understand it, there is agreement in relation to them. There might be one or two things still to be negotiated. In relation to the dust emissions from the site, previously the EPA attempted to negotiate new conditions with the company. The company went to court, and the matter is still before the court, so I have to be a little careful about how we describe all this. So, those matters are before the courts. The indenture legislation, as I understand it (and I am not responsible for the indenture), will cover off on the short-term needs until Project Magnet proceeds.

One must understand the background to this. There was an indenture on the site in the year 2000. When OneSteel took over the site the indenture was largely replaced by an agreed set of conditions at that time, which were believed by OneSteel to be all embracing. That is where there is a dispute between the EPA and OneSteel. The EPA's view is that the 2000 agreements did not cover the field. That is before the courts. I think that PIRSA (and therefore the Minister for Economic Development, the Hon. Paul Holloway) plans to reach agreement with the company about how the interim arrangements (until Project Magnet is up) will apply. My understanding is that there will be something in there in addition to the year 2000 conditions. In other words, the decision will be taken out of the court process and put into the parliamentary process.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Now that your EPA officers are here, minister, I turn to page 71, chapter 8, Volume 2 of the Portfolio Statements where mention is made that the EPA intends to develop and implement an environmental improvement plan for the Gepps Cross/Kilburn area. Can the minister provide details as to what that will entail?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the member for Taylor for her question, and I am pleased to see her enthusiasm. As members will know, the areas of Kilburn and Gepps Cross contain a mix of industrial, commercial and residential land in close proximity with each other. The EPA continues to receive a substantial number of complaints from residents about noise, odour, smoke and dust pollution that is experienced in this area. I looked around the site late last year with the local member, the member for Enfield. Air quality in the Kilburn/Gepps Cross area is likely to be degraded when compared to other residential areas in Adelaide due to the combined emissions of local industry and diffuse sources, such as motor vehicles on major transport corridors.

The EPA has responded to concerns from the local community and strong representations from the member for Enfield on behalf of his constituents. The agency has developed a project that will undertake a broad review of the environmental performance of local industry, monitoring of ambient air and other pollution issues that arise in the Kilburn Gepps/Cross area. This project will be conducted in cooperation with the Department of Health. The project will conduct:

- audits to monitor the compliance of licensed premises;
- undertake a local ambient air monitoring program;
- conduct a series of eco-efficiency workshops to identify and develop with local industry future opportunities for environmental improvements and cost savings; and
- ensure that local stakeholders are kept up-to-date on the results of the project.

The expected outcomes of the project are:

- a detailed report on the measured pollutants in ambient air in the Kilburn area;
- a review of potential health issues of concern in this area;
- an understanding of the pollutant levels generated by local industry and the major traffic corridors in the area;
- a review of the performance of local industry in managing their processes to control emissions to the environment; and
- a community awareness program to provide updates on issues of concern for this area.

I must say that, in relation to this area and so many areas of the older parts of our community, these kinds of issues are highly problematic and very awkward to resolve. The Whyalla/OneSteel issue is another example of that where, in days gone by, industry was allowed to establish in areas and then housing was put close to it because it was convenient for workers to get to work. Over time you start monitoring and counting pollutant effects. You become aware of those things. What was a bad smell in the past is now pollution.

People start asking questions. The older residents leave, new people come in and you get conflict. They are very difficult situations to manage. We must manage them in a way that addresses both the environmental issues and the economic and social issues, because, if we were to close down all the businesses which create those problems, our economy would suffer and the people would suffer.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Page 74 of chapter 8 states that the EPA board is continuing its broad range of consultation, which will contribute to ensuring that the operations of the EPA are efficient, effective and further reinforce the continuous improvement philosophy being embraced by the EPA. I am aware that the board of the EPA met with members of parliament on 1 March this year. Can the minister provide details of the outcomes of that meeting, and how that meeting has contributed to the commitment about which I just referred?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I am pleased that the honourable member asked this question. I offered members of parliament an opportunity to meet with the EPA and its Chairman and board during discussions of the Environment Protection (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill to discuss its operations. The meeting took place two weeks following that offer at parliament house. It is fair to say that the meeting was spirited and fruitful. The board of the EPA has taken on board a number of actions as a result of comments and suggestions made by members of parliament who chose to participate on the day.

I think that the board found it very useful to get the range of opinions. Some of the key concerns raised by MPs included matters of water quality, waste management and residential and industrial zoning with regard to separation distances and site contamination. MPs also identified communications with the EPA as an area for improvement, and the EPA has now put a number of processes in place to enhance its service further. All correspondence now from MPs to the EPA, including letters forwarded to the EPA through me, are now tabled at the monthly EPA board meeting. I think that was a suggestion made by the member for Davenport.

Staff communication/relationships with clients was also identified as an area where improvements could be made. The EPA recognises the need for consistency and positive respect for relations with its clients, and is undertaking a number of programs to ensure that all staff have an understanding of these values and have the skills to put them into practice. Programs included the development of an engagement strategy for the EPA, training provided to operational officers in risk communications, conflict resolution and customer service and the recent finalisation of compliance and enforcement guidelines to promote greater consistency in regulatory decision making within the organisation.

A consultation program has been planned again for 2005 to further enhance the board's relationship and engagement with all the main stakeholders built through successful community consultation in 2003-04. This program incorporates two regional community consultation sessions and networking meetings with key stakeholder groups. A letter from Dr Vogel will be sent to all members of parliament providing them with a summary of outcomes from the meeting and advising them of the preferred method of communication with the EPA to ensure that appropriate and timely advice is provided to their queries. A full pack of information regarding the matters raised will be forwarded to MPs once it is complete (it is near completion now), and we will invite members to another meeting in October this year.

I have to say generally that the EPA board is to be commended for being positive about it. It would have been easy to see it as just another annoying thing, but they responded positively in trying to work through how they deal more effectively, particularly with members of parliament. The EPA is a small organisation and has high demands on it and huge expectations, particularly from people who have small neighbourhood issues. Hopefully that will now be addressed over time by the amendments to the EPA act which allow local councils to take on a lot of these issues, and that will take some of those issues which the EPA really does not have the capacity to address and put them into a framework where they can be addressed; and that will deal with some of the frustrations, I think.

Mr CAICA: I noted on page 8.74 of Budget Paper 4, Volume 2 of the Portfolio Statement that one of the performance criteria for environment protection is promoting industry eco-efficiency training programs. Can the minister provide the committee with an example of what this entails, and the successes that any projects have achieved?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the member for Colton for the question. This is an interesting area. The greening of the supply chain program promotes the benefits of eco-efficiencies in businesses, with a particular focus on efficiencies in supply chain management. The key objectives of the project are to: improve the environmental performance along the

supply chain; reduce the environmental impact of a company and its suppliers through a focus on supply chain management; increase the capability of participants to initiate environmental improvements; assist participating suppliers to pass on the benefits of the knowledge gained; increase industry competitiveness through those cost savings and attention to environment, resource and energy-related business drivers; and promote the benefits of knowledge gained through the project to South Australian business and the community in general. Eco-efficiency is, essentially, doing more with less. It is a combination of the efficient use of resources and inputs, for example, water and energy; a reduction in waste and pollution; a reduction in costs; and a reduction of adverse effects on the environment.

Following assessment of applications for assistance, the Yalumba Wine Company, for example, was selected as a central company, and 10 suppliers to Yalumba were selected for the term of the project. The project involved the EPA and Yalumba variously interviewing suppliers and undertaking site eco-efficiency audits, conducting a supply chain workshop and assisting the suppliers in developing eco-efficiency action plans. The project has demonstrated the benefits of implementing eco-efficiency in business and business supply chains. The project benefits include: strengthening relationships between the mentor companies and the suppliers; an increased awareness of environmental management; and a demonstration of the educational function of the EPA. Financial benefits were also a welcomed result of the project, with suppliers collectively realising cost savings of over \$85 000 each year at the conclusion of the project, and with the potential for this to increase.

The success of this project has led to other agreements being established between industry and the EPA. One currently in progress is a partnership with the Motor Traders Association. The preparation for this partnership has already led to some changes being made in an effort to realise better results for the environment and business. Fifteen businesses in the collision repair and automotive repair industries, including some dealerships and service stations, have already agreed to undergo an environmental audit to assess their environmental management systems. As well, the Motor Traders Association booklet on environmental management systems was modified and developed so as to apply to all these sectors. During the time of the project, assessing improvements is expected to occur not only in terms of environmental impacts and how they are addressed but also in interviewing relevant staff to see that they understand their responsibilities. The project as a whole will provide systematic environmental auditing, training, follow-up and evaluation in key sectors of the motor trade to assist with long-term environmental improvements.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Coming back to OneSteel, I want to ensure that I have this right. Can the minister confirm that no environmental outcomes will be negotiated as part of the indenture agreement that will not be negotiated by the EPA? In other words, will PIRSA now negotiate environmental outcomes as part of the indenture agreement and not the EPA?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thought I covered that fairly explicitly before, and I will say it again. There is currently an EPA licence in place—that is 2000, and that will not change, as I understand it. There are three matters. First, there is the 2000. The EPA has been in the process of negotiating what it has called the 2005 additions, and that is really to deal with the dust issues. Then there is, let us call it, the 2006 additions,

to give it a slightly different flavour, and they will be the conditions which relate to Project Magnet. So there are three lots of conditions.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: And is any of the conditions not being negotiated by the EPA?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I am just about to explain this to you. The 2006 has already been negotiated—the Project Magnet conditions have been negotiated. The year 2000 ones I guess were negotiated or established some time ago. They were amendments to the 2000 indenture. The 2005 ones, the short-term ones relating to the dust issue, the EPA has attempted to negotiate with the company. The company disputes them, basically on two grounds, I suppose. One is a jurisdictional thing: the company is disputing whether the EPA has jurisdiction to put those amendments in place. Secondly, it is saying, ‘Even if you do have the jurisdiction, we are disputing them.’ The government has decided to take that out of the legal system and say that we will resolve this through the indenture. Those matters that will be in the indenture will be determined by the minister responsible for the indenture bill, that is the Minister for Economic Development, Hon. Paul Holloway, and that is something that he will put to the cabinet and then to the parliament.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: The way that I understand that answer is that PIRSA is negotiating the environmental outcomes in that final set of conditions and the EPA is now being overlooked.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: It has not been overlooked.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: If PIRSA and the EPA disagree on the environmental outcomes required on that last set of conditions or on the last set of 2005, I think it was the minister used, the set that PIRSA is negotiating; if the EPA and PIRSA disagree, who has the final say—PIRSA or the EPA?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Neither. Cabinet. What we are doing is taking it out of the legal system and putting it into the parliamentary system.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: The minister has spent three years telling everyone that the EPA is now more fiercely independent, even though it is no more independent than it ever was, and yet as soon as we get a difficult issue at OneSteel the government is essentially taking the negotiations out of the EPA’s hands and putting them into PIRSA’s hands. That is really what you are telling the committee. That is what happened, is it not?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I know the member for Davenport wants to characterise it in this way.

The Hon. I.F. Evans interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Davenport has asked his question. Let the minister answer it.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Governments of various persuasion over time have established indentures that provide a lot of conditions in relation to various companies and their activities and, because it is by legislation, the matters are ultimately determined by the cabinet and then by the parliament. In this case, resolution could not be worked out between the two parties. It had broken down, and the matter is before the courts. I have gone through that process, and I have to be careful about what I say about the court process. But the government has determined that it will resolve the issue itself and it will go through the political rather than the legal process, and that is to be preferred. One does not know how a court would ultimately resolve it, whether it would find in favour of the EPA or in favour of the company, but the

process has not been able to produce a licence that deals with the red dust issue.

The EPA has been working on it for at least the three years that I have been minister and we have not been able to resolve it. The government has decided to step in and say that we are going to resolve it and in a particular way, by indenture, and the cabinet will sign off on that indenture and will seek input from all parties. But the agency dealing with the legislation is the Minister for Economic Development, and advice will be sought from across government and ultimately it will be a government decision. I do not believe that is taking away the independence or anything else from the EPA.

Whatever power the EPA has has been established by the parliament. So, we are going back to the parliament to put these measures in place. That is perfectly proper. I can imagine that in future there will be other indentures. Big projects are complex and sometimes require that kind of support. There have been lots of indenture bills in South Australia in the past. In fact, OneSteel itself had an indenture bill from, I think, the 1950s, the original act.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Has the minister or the EPA done an estimate of what would be the extra cost to OneSteel if the conditions that the EPA requested were fulfilled? If so, what was the cost?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The EPA has done that estimate and it is a relatively insignificant amount, \$400 000 to \$500 000. In relation to the issue of the red dust in Whyalla, there are possibly a hundred or so residents in the area that is most affected, and I have inspected the site on a number of occasions. I have climbed on the roof of one of the houses to look at it, and there are no doubt environmental issues associated with it and there are no doubt health issues, but the primary concern from the residents is one of amenity. They do not want to live in an environment that is continually covered with red dust. It makes it difficult for them to live, to do their washing, to wash their car, their cat goes pink, and all those kinds of things happen.

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: No, I have seen a pink cat up there. It was not Paddington: it was Whyalla.

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Yes, but we are not talking about Unley, we are talking about Whyalla. So, I understand it is an amenity issue. I suggested to OneSteel on a number of occasions that it should offer a regular clean-up service to the households to fix the problem. I thought that if it did that it would fix up most of the issues, and I still think that is right. But OneSteel, for whatever reason, has determined that it does not want to do that. Perhaps it might be concerned that to do that would be some sort of admission of liability on a broader scale, and it has probably had legal advice to that effect. Nonetheless, it objects to that and will not do it.

I think it is a pity: it would have been better to have a negotiated arrangement with the community in the way that some other companies have been able to do, which has created a less litigious or hostile environment. But it is its call as to how it does business. The government wants to ensure that this Project Magnet proceeds. There will be a benefit for the local economy, a strong benefit for the state economy but also a benefit from Project Magnet to the local environment, and it should reduce to a fairly large extent the dust problems that those people are experiencing. The government has decided to get on with it and make sure that that goes ahead.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: How many licensed businesses have had their licence fees decreased by the government? The

government increased fees during its first year in government, but it promised to reduce fees as a reward for good performance.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: We are introducing what we call load-based licensing at the moment. The traditional way of providing a licence was based on the amount of emissions. If you put 1 000 litres of liquid out from your company, you would pay 1 000 times X (or the litre rate). If you put 999 litres of water out and one litre of pollution, you would still pay 1 000 times X. We are moving towards a system where the pollution is the bit that is multiplied by X. So, if you put out 999 litres of water plus one litre of pollution, you would pay one times X. If you put out 1 000 litres of pollution, you would pay 1 000 times X, even if it was the same quantum. That is in a very broad sense; it will not be exactly like that. That is the direction in which we are moving. This work is being done at the moment, and Dr Vogel tells me that we will expect to have it finalised by the end of this year or early next year. We have 2 000-odd licensed companies, not all of which are in this category, but it is a fairly time-consuming process.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: In what year will the EPA be in a position to formally offer reduced licence fees for better environmental performance, as promised?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I am advised that it will come into effect some time in the next calendar year; probably in the next financial year—mid-2006.

Mr BRINDAL: I refer to Budget Paper 4 Volume 2 (page 8.74). The EPA conducted an audit of businesses along the Torrens recently following a spill. All the businesses audited had, previous to the audit, been licensed by the EPA. The audit found that 41 of 47 licence sites had adequate spill management procedures in place but that many sites were not prepared to contain a spill and that at some sites wastewater was allowed to discharge into the river via the stormwater, as the minister will know. As the minister has direct responsibility for the EPA through the parliament, my question is: why did the EPA license these businesses, and could a business licensed with these faults then be fined by the EPA?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: So, your question is in two parts. The first part is why were these businesses licensed? What is the second part?

Mr BRINDAL: If Port Stanvac had a licence and there was a spill, would we be able to fine them?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: If they are in breach of their licence and an offence is detected, they are subject to a fine. I ask Dr Vogel to explain.

Dr VOGEL: They are all licensed but, in conducting an audit of this intensity, we are also looking for things that perhaps have not been included in the licence. In this case, there were water quality issues involved. So, the focus was very much on water quality. It was an audit to ensure that we had imposed sufficient conditions and that the conditions were right. We found that a lot of the issues that companies faced were more to do with an understanding of their obligations under the act and what policies and codes might apply, and what level of training staff had and whether or not that training included how to deal with a spill.

So, it was a very intensive look at, in particular, water quality issues. That does not necessarily mean that they were not in compliance with their licence conditions, but I guess we thought they could do a better job of understanding what their obligations and requirements were under the licence. We issued no environment protection orders to require compliance but suggested on a number of occasions that they needed

to do a better job of bunding chemicals, etc. They are required to be licensed under the act because they perform scheduled activities, but like all organisations and companies there is always room for improvement. That is what we are about: we are trying to help them improve their performance.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I think there have been three or four audits since I became minister. There was an audit of Upper Spencer Gulf, the wine industry, and Port Adelaide, I think, or we might be doing that at the moment. It is a good process, because it means that you are not using the tool at the end where you come in and clobber them with a fine or prosecution; you are trying to work with the companies. The good thing is that of the 40 or so companies audited in the Torrens, the 40 or so that had things to be done did them readily without any requirement of obligation.

Mr BRINDAL: What I am hearing from you, minister, is that these prescribed activities have to have a licence. I presume that a company applies for a licence in accordance with the law and is issued with one by the EPA. At the time of issuing the original licence, does the EPA make some sort of site inspection to see not what Dr Vogel talked about, because that is getting into the detail afterwards—the training of personnel and that—but to see what conditions would be required on a licence? Presumably you put conditions on a licence, do you not?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Yes. As I said before, there are 2 000 or so licences. The licences have been issued over the last 12 or 13 years. Standards, behaviours and all the rest of it have changed over time. I know that Dr Vogel is looking at ways of having a more efficient and interactive approach to the licensing process. I understand that in most cases the site is inspected. I ask Dr Vogel to amplify that.

Dr VOGEL: What the EPA is trying to do is to become a smarter regulator, and by that I mean using the least cost intervention to achieve environmental outcomes. In cases where a licence is applied for, which may have been through a development assessment process, we would have been to the site. In almost every circumstance we would know something about the activity and the operators and we would ensure—and we have been through this process progressively looking at all the licences—that the conditions address the significant risks of that facility, and that they are clear, transparent and enforceable conditions, so that we end up only worrying about those industries that have significant risks.

We are going through a process now in a tiered way of identifying risk in the 2 000 licensees, so on a risk-based approach, if they are a low risk company, for example, an abrasive blaster, they will not get the same regulatory attention from the EPA. It makes sense that we will have codes and we might audit them on an infrequent basis every two or three years. We would have much greater detail about how companies which pose a significant risk operate—what sort of systems they have in place, the conditions that we set on them, the inspections, the audit and the relationship that we have with the company. So we have had a tiered, risk-based approach to environmental licensing.

Mr BRINDAL: I understand what you are saying and the progressive nature of it. Even before you came, did the EPA inspect sites initially or not? Are you saying that even now you might not inspect all sites and that if they are very low risk there is no particular problem, but that you would initially inspect, say, a cyanide plant next to the River Torrens for instance.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I think that is unlikely.

Mr BRINDAL: No, but I just want to know whether you always made an initial inspection, or never did, and now you will for priority cases, in which case where does it start to cut in that you go and look?

Dr VOGEL: I will need to get the information back to you as to when that exactly started. Since I have been CE, for higher risk activities we would always be looking at that company, at the site and at their operations, either through the development assessment process but particularly through the licensing process. I can find out when and if that policy changed.

Mr CAICA: On page 8.74, Paper 4, Volume 2 of the Portfolio Statements, mention is made in the performance commentary that the EPA Board will continue its broad program to engage and collaborate with stakeholders in metropolitan and regional areas of South Australia. Can you explain to the committee how this will be implemented?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The strategic plan for the EPA was finalised and endorsed by the board in 2004. The board sought to consult extensively with key stakeholders in industry, government and environmental advocacy groups in preparing the strategy and in formulating priority actions. Improvements in refining the plan are under way. The board has embarked on a consultation program that so far has included: a meeting with representatives of heavy industry and with the chair of the Premier's Sustainability Round Table; community forums at Mount Gambier and in the Riverland; and forums with the local government environmental groups. Further regional and metropolitan consultative forums are planned.

Board members recently held their annual community round table for 2005. This focused on the EPA's role in sustainability and considered the EPA's role in balancing environmental, social and economic outcomes. Out of the round table came a list of priority issues that required support and reinforced the EPA's policy and strategic directions. The outcomes of the annual EPA round table will be reported later this year. Significantly, the board is providing the government with expert independent advice, that is, providing support to our strong legislative program. The advice will lead to legislation and will focus on site contamination issues, a review of the Radiation Protection and Control Act, and an improvement in the administration arrangements for the container deposit legislation.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: Can you advise what the latest developments are in regard to flood mitigation work at the South Verdun area?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: There are a number of agencies involved in dealing with this issue. The Minister for Planning has key responsibility for resolving this issue and I am giving him very helpful advice when it comes to water pollution. At least two of my agencies—I am not sure whether DEH is involved—the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation and the EPA are involved, as are other government agencies. It is a difficult issue to resolve because bad planning decisions were made over time. This is a flood plain and you wonder why local authorities approved developments of this nature on a flood plain. There is a service station there, and a brewery.

Mr Goldsworthy interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I am not saying that state governments were not involved either. This is just another one of these legacy issues that bedevil us when it comes to environmental protection and management. The question is whether you say that the development is fine and that any future

development in that area can continue, and then have the taxpayers build some great big wall around it to make it waterproof and suffer the environmental consequences that may ensue if there is an accident.

On the other hand, do you say that everyone should move and that there should be compensation to pay out the proponents? They are complex issues. I know that the Minister for Urban Development and Planning is working through them and I am happy to refer your question to him to get a more particular response, but it is something that needs to be resolved reasonably quickly. I think common-sense tells us that some sort of structure will have to be in place to protect most of the infrastructure, if not all of it. There may need to be a buy out of some of it. I think it would be something in that range.

It does raise questions, and I think the most significant issue is the service station. Even if you were to put in a whole range of protective devices, would it be sustainable to have a petrol station on a flood plain? If a one-in-100-year event occurred would the levy bank system, no matter how big it was, protect the environment from that kind of flood?

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Can the minister update the house on when the government will be announcing where it is going to store its radioactive waste?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I think we have made our views plain in relation to the low level radioactive waste we have in South Australia. We said that if the commonwealth dump were not to go ahead we would work out how to store that in South Australia. It would be fair to say that the government's preferred position is that it should be stored at Olympic Dam—we have had fruitful negotiations with Western Mining about that and we have a consultancy working through those issues at the moment. Of course, ownership of Western Mining has changed in recent times (as I am sure the member for Davenport has noticed), and we will need to re-engage the management of that new company once they have settled themselves down. However, the consultancy on that is proceeding, and I am hoping to get a report at some stage in the next couple of months. I am reluctant to give specific dates because every time I say, 'I am hoping to do it,' it becomes, 'You promised you were going to do it then.' It will be in the next two or three months.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: August 9, or something?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: In the next two or three months.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I understand: a firm commitment. Minister, I cannot possibly have the EPA before me and not ask a question about train noise—my electorate would not be happy.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I think I may have anticipated this question; I may well have a briefing note on this.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Will the minister join with me and ARTC in publicly announcing the very good news that new technology has been developed with an Adelaide company that allows squealing wheels to be identified, and that that information can be downloaded to the EPA on a monthly basis so that it can then fine the owners of the noisy carriages? Will the minister join with me and the ARTC in announcing that in due course, and would he like to update the house on where we are?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: If the honourable member has information about that I would be happy to join him, if ARTC is able and willing to do that. I do know that the EPA has been addressing noise and the high pitched squeal that occurs on some particular curves along rail lines for some time now. Extensive research into root causes of rail noise has implicat-

ed 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.

Noise level monitoring has occurred at a range of locations in the Adelaide Hills and for different periods of time. From these results, and from research into the causes of wheel squeal, it is apparent that a large range of variables results in the presence and intensity of wheel squeal. The only way to establish a trend for a phenomenon that is dependent upon such a wide range of variables is a long-term monitoring station. The recent introduction of ID tags on all rolling stock, as well as sophisticated acoustic monitors and the corresponding computer software that allows complex analysis of the measured noise signals, has provided the opportunity for renewed focus on the issue.

A cost effective method to mitigate the impact of wheel squeal remain elusive in all jurisdictions. Various attempts to reduce noise impact, including regrinding of the tracks and installation of track-side lubricators, have been extensively investigated without success. A pilot noise monitoring study recently undertaken in South Australia by the EPA, using world-first technology, was able to identify individual wheel sets that generated squeal, and in late 2004 the EPA met with all rolling stock operators and the track owner, the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC), to discuss the results of that study. As a result of this discussion, ARTC is investigating the establishment of a permanent monitoring station in the Adelaide Hills based on that pilot.

In addition, in November 2004 the EPA was given an opportunity to give a presentation to the Rail Environment Forum established by the National Transport Commission (NTC), the NTC having expanded their role to include rail environmental impacts in 2004. The presentation recommended that the issue of rail noise impact be placed on the national agenda for consideration by the Land Transport Environmental Committee (LTEC), and this proposal was well received by the range of people present. A decision from NTC regarding their rail agenda has not been provided but is expected in due course. Indications are that the monitoring station currently being investigated by the ARTC has received in-principle support from all stakeholders, and will be implemented and functioning by August 2005. The EPA is developing licence conditions that will require maintenance on the wheel sets identified as exhibiting squeal by the monitoring station.

I hope the member and his constituents can take some heart in those measures. As he knows, this is not a simple thing, but I think it is fair to say that the EPA has made a significant effort to deal with this issue. I guess if they are successful, they will have done something that no other jurisdiction has ever been able to do.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: Just following on from a previous question and your answer to it, minister, you spoke about the fact that some of the businesses in south Verdun may need to be relocated or bought out and some compensation be paid to them. Where do you think those funds would come from?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: It is not a matter of where I think they would come from: I am talking about what a sensible resolution of it may be. I am not the responsible minister; I am just speculating on how it might be approached. We would need to do some sort of risk assessment of each of those organisations, involving their location in relation to the

river, the nature of their activities and how risky they are. I am not saying that this is going to happen—I do not want to give a false impression. I am just speculating about the range of things that might happen.

On one extreme you would get rid of all the businesses and, on the other extreme, you would not get rid of any. However, I do not think we will be getting rid of all the businesses; so, we will have to have some sort of structure to protect them. There may be a requirement to get rid of one or two; I do not know. Some sort of compensation would have to be provided. They would have to be bought out. That might be done by offering them another site nearby to which they could move. It might be something owned by a government or a council, and there might just be some relatively straightforward cost to help them do that. I am just speculating. I do not have a precise answer because, as I say, I am not the responsible minister, but it seems to me that, if you think it through, they are the kind of options that are available. They have always been the options available, and I guess that is why nobody has ever done anything about it because they are all a bit difficult and they all require funds. The state government, local councils and the businesses have all got an interest in trying to get this resolved. We just need to work it through.

The CHAIRMAN: That concludes the time allocated to this line. I declare the examination completed.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the EPA officers for their assistance, not only the ones who are sitting with me but also those who have helped prepare the papers.

Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity
Conservation, \$83 859 000

Administered Items for the Department of Water, Land
and Biodiversity Conservation, \$28 719 000

Departmental Advisers:

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

Mr P. O'Neill, Executive Director, Corporate Services.

Mr R. Wickes, Executive Director, NRM Services.

Mr N. Nosworthy, Chief Finance Officer.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments reopened for examination. I refer members to Appendix C, page 3 in the Budget Statement and Portfolio Statements, Volume 2, Part 8, pages 44 to 68. Does the minister wish to make an opening statement?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: More than three years ago, our government committed to combining the responsibilities for water resources and land management from across government to form the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation. We committed to a system of integrated natural resource management based on water catchment areas and promised a full consultation process involving all stakeholders to alleviate land use conflicts, maintain the ecological sustainability of each of our state's bioregions and provide certainty of access to all resource users.

As this is the final estimates committee meeting before the election, we can now reflect upon the achievements that the government has made. Since coming to office, the government has:

- established the new department;

- developed new natural resources management legislation to combine the efforts of more than 70 councils, boards and committees across the state to improve and integrate natural resources management;
- begun to secure the future of Adelaide's water supply by developing the Water Proofing Adelaide strategy; and
- agreed a policy with local government to ensure storm water issues are addressed in a coordinated and comprehensive way into the future.

In addition, the department has made huge progress in the Saving the Murray strategy, which is now looked after by my colleague the member for Chaffey.

The 2005-06 budget for the DWLBC consolidates and builds on these achievements to facilitate the sustainable management of our natural resources. With a budget of \$173.3 million for 2005-06, the department will be in a position to progress ongoing initiatives that are critical to the maintenance of the natural resource base. In 2005-06, the department's budget continues to finance and support the following projects, including the implementation of the natural resource management reforms.

During 2004-05, the administrative arrangements for the NRM Council and eight regional boards were established; they will become operational from 1 July 2005. In 2005-06, extra funding has been provided to support the development of best practice business and governance frameworks necessary for the boards to meet public sector accountability requirements. In addition to developing these frameworks, the department will assist the NRM Council in finalising the draft state Natural Resources Management Plan for presentation to the government for adoption and to facilitate the accreditation of regional investment strategies for NRM funding in 2005-06. I refer also to the following programs:

- **Branched Broomrape Eradication Program.**
This program will continue to deliver direct support to landowners in the quarantined area. In 2005-06, the program will be expanded, with eradication of branched broomrape in pastures on 205 currently invested properties and treatment of over 300 hectares with fumigants being planned.
- **Urban Stormwater Management.**
On 9 May 2005, the government approved the Urban Stormwater Management Policy for South Australia that contains multiple objectives for stormwater management, including flood management, reuse, water quality improvement and amenity incorporated into planning and decision making. During 2005-06, further elements of the policy will be developed in relation to funding, governance and possibly legislation to support the intent of the approved policy statement.
- **Improved Water Management in the Eastern and Western Mount Lofty Ranges.**
The government is considering the prescription of both the Eastern and Western Mount Lofty Ranges, and it has been discussing these proposals with the community. These projects seek to implement formal water allocation arrangements, water quality and pollution risk management programs, improved production and resource management practices, as well as establishing clear water access entitlements and a resource management plan integrating ecological, social and economic objectives. Extensive community and industry group consultation and engagement has been an essential element in progressing these projects.
- **Progressing the National Water Initiative.**

This initiative aims to meet the needs of rural and urban communities while ensuring that the health of river and groundwater systems is returned to environmentally sustainable levels of extraction. In 2005-06, the focus will be on completing these necessary reforms and submitting additional projects to the National Water Commission for funding consideration.

Upper South-East Dryland Salinity and Flood Mitigation (USE) program.

This program was established to address the significant impact of dryland salinity and periodic flooding in that part of the state. In 2004-05, the northern catchment drainage system was completed and negotiations commenced on aspects of the central catchment drainage system. During 2005-06, the central catchment drains are to be constructive and management agreements for biodiversity conservation will be implemented.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr Caica): Does the member for Davenport wish to make an opening statement?

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: No, sir. Minister, did any of the water catchment boards help provide funding to support the roll-out of NRM?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: If the member is asking whether any sums of money were sent from the catchments boards to the department for use in NRM, I am advised that the answer is no. If it is a broader question, that is, whether the catchment boards were doing things which assist the NRM process, the answer would be yes. The catchment boards were actively involved in establishing the transition arrangements and giving advice about what needed to be done and, presumably, in some instances, providing office space, secretarial assistance and all those kinds of assistance. I am not aware of any cash transfer.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I have a supplementary question. What I am really asking is: do water catchment boards help fund consultancies into rolling out the NRM process or anything like that?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Not that we are aware of. If the member has something in particular he is quizzical about. I am advised that in relation to the Mount Lofty options paper the catchment board there contributed some funds to having that paper written up. That is an option to look at the regional structures.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Given that answer, minister, I am wondering why your department advised the Economic and Finance Committee that 'no catchment water management board had been requested to provide funding support for the roll-out of the NRM,' and when the Onkaparinga Management Catchment Board paid \$10 000 towards a consultation about which you have been advised. I specifically asked a question in the Economics and Finance Committee, as follows:

In each board's case, how much has been requested in the year 2004-05 for the natural resource management implementation process? Has this amount been paid? If any amount has been paid, how much and for what purpose?

The department's formal advice back to the Economic and Finance Committee, which is now part of the record and, indeed, has been sent and signed off to you as minister, stated:

No catchment water management board has been requested to provide funding support for the roll-out of NRM.

The indication was that no money was provided, and clearly money was provided.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: As I understand it, last year, in each region we are proposing, the catchment boards, the animal, plant and soil boards and so on, were asked to bring forth options about how the NRM process should work, and they were asked to think it through. In the case of the board to which we have referred, it was its decision to do it via a consultancy, but I understand that that was not a request by the department. I am not aware of the details of the investigation the committee made, but I will look at the answer provided to your committee. We will get a more complete answer if a mistake has been made.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I find it frustrating that this was not even a question put to the officer one on one. This was a question sent to the officer in writing, and the officer had some weeks to bring back the answer. I find it amazing that they could get it so wrong.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I am not sure they did get it wrong. What was the question again? Could the member repeat the question?

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: The question was clear. I asked whether any amount has been paid and, if so, how much and for what purpose. The answer was as follows:

No water catchment board has been requested to provide funding support for the roll-out of the NRM.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: That is a correct answer. They were not requested; they chose to.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: No, but it is misleading is it not? Clearly, the officers should have said—

The Hon. J.D. HILL: What was the member's full question, though?

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: My full question was as follows:

In each board's case, how much has been requested in the year 2004-05 for the natural resource management implementation process? Has this amount been paid; if any amount has been paid, how much and for what purpose?.

Given that there was no budget in place for the above expenditure, what expenditure was cut to fund the cost? If nothing was cut, how was it funded, and why did the board not advise the committee that this expenditure was requested?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I guess we are splitting hairs. The question was how much was requested? The advice that I have is that nothing was requested. It may well have been sensible if they had said, however, of their own volition, that they chose to put in \$10 000, or whatever it was. I will go through that transcript—I have not seen it—and give you a better answer. We will check to ensure that there are not any other voluntary amounts that we can find, but the advice is that that is the only one that we are aware of. I am not quite sure of the point. We should always provide appropriate answers to members of parliament, but it was not an attempt to push the costs from the agency onto the boards. I assume that was the point of your question.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: In relation to page 8.45, is it true that the new natural resource management boards cannot yet employ people because the human resource issues are not yet resolved?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: There are some issues with human relations. The existing employees of the various boards are employed under a whole range of different conditions and, in some cases, they want to preserve those conditions and, in others, they want to move across to the new employment arrangements. Effectively, we will be able to work through a way of preserving existing conditions, and then the new boards which we put in place will establish their own employment conditions for the new employees. I will just

give you some detail of what I have. The NRM HR transition is developing and implementing the principal structures and processes to transition approximately 230 employees from 72 existing boards and groups to eight NRM boards. The HR transition is a complex human resource and industrial relations process and will not be completed prior to 1 July 2005.

The transition provisions of the Natural Resource Management Act provide for existing boards to continue post 30 June, undertaking specific functions including staff management but under the direction of the NRM boards. Where there are no longer any members of an existing board, this function will be undertaken by the chief officer, established under the NRM Act. Operational administrative arrangements for NRM boards to direct existing boards from 1 July 2005 are being developed. Consultation with relevant unions about the HR transition principles and arrangements are continuing, and the employment conditions of individual staff members are being assessed to allow for an orderly change in employment to the NRM boards. As of 1 July, after they come into effect, the NRM boards themselves can begin employing people.

Ms BEDFORD: Minister, my question relates to Portfolio Statement, page 8.48. What progress has been made in implementing the government's commitment to integrate natural resources management in South Australia?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the member for her question, and it follows on from the question asked by the member for Davenport where progress is being made in relation to the human relations aspect. This is a new system and it is probably the most progressive system in Australia, and I know a lot of the other states are looking at how we are doing it. The existing councils, boards and committees have been separately managing water, soil and pest plant and animal control for many years now, and they have all been brought together. Since the legislation has been going through, we have been working to bring the act into full operation on 1 July. Seven of the eight natural resources management boards were appointed on 14 April, and I think we have just signed off on the eighth board, which is for the Aboriginal lands. The boards will work with their local communities to develop, budget for, and coordinate, regional NRM plans and activities, including support for the activities of more than 70 000 volunteers working through programs such as Landcare, Bushcare, Coastcare, WaterWatch and Friends of Parks.

The skills-based Natural Resources Management Council was appointed on 29 April, replacing the interim council that had worked with me over the last three years to bring about this reform. A highly successful induction program for the board and council members was held on the 30 and 31 May. The council's chair, Dennis Mutton, and I, released a consultation document towards the development of the state NRM plan on the second day of the event. Once adopted, the plan will guide coordinated effort across the state to take better care of our precious soil, water, landscapes, native vegetation and animals and delicate ecosystems. The new NRM boards are already working with existing boards to achieve an orderly transition to the new arrangements. One of the important tasks of the NRM boards will be the development of regional NRM plans to address natural resource management issues through a combination of state funding, Natural Heritage Trust, National Action Plan and National Landcare Program funding and a NRM levy.

The levy replaces existing levies and is based on the current catchment levy, used to fund catchment water

management boards. Similarly, the NRM levy will be based on the NRM plan, and will be used in conjunction with the other funding sources to address natural resource management issues on the basis of agreed priorities in each region. I certainly look forward to working with our new NRM council and board members to help deliver the very best natural resource management for South Australia. Clearly, over the next six months, as the old boards phase out and the new boards phase in there will obviously be a few teething problems, but with the goodwill that has been exhibited I am expecting this to work very well.

Ms BEDFORD: Can the minister please inform the committee of the progress of recovery plans and actions involving his agencies following the 2005 Eyre Peninsula fires?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the member for the question. The bushfire on 11 January on Eyre Peninsula burnt approximately 83 000 hectares. Tragically, as we know, nine lives were lost and more than 70 houses were destroyed. In addition, five small government reserves were burnt, and 18 areas covered by heritage agreements. Approximately 1 900 hectares of protected areas were burnt, and approximately 100 kilometres of fencing was destroyed. My agencies have made a considerable contribution to the Eyre Peninsula bushfire recovery effort, and this includes staff time for damage assessment, recovery planning, on ground works and monitoring regeneration, use of plant and equipment, provision of materials, and management of volunteers.

In response to an immediate need, guidelines and advice were offered to land-holders to assist compliance with the Native Vegetation Act, while rebuilding boundary fences. The District Soil Conservation Board, in partnership with the Eyre Peninsula INRM group, has supported clay spreading on suitable soils to reduce the erosion risk on sandy paddocks, and the local animal and plant control board has coordinated the mapping of rabbit warrens as part of the major control program to reduce the threat posed by surviving rabbits to regenerating native vegetation.

A series of 'getting started' workshops has helped farmers prepare for the immediate needs of the upcoming agricultural season. A survey of the amount of habitat on a number of endangered species was undertaken, and work is planned to revive that habitat and protect these species. The state government has committed \$2.6 million for a long-term recovery program to assist land-holders to re-establish their farm businesses, with effective property management plans that take into account nature conservation issues and sustainable natural resource management. That has been matched with \$2.68 million funding from the Australian government.

I travelled to the West Coast two or three weeks ago to look at how the recovery was going. It is just extraordinary not only to get a sense of the size of the devastation but also to see the regeneration of certain species, which is quite amazing. Some species of trees will have died completely, but others thrive on fire, and the regeneration already is just amazing. It was also quite extraordinary to see the bird life that is around, and it was quite inspiring to talk to some of the people responsible for repairing the landscape. There is a long way to go, but I think it is a community that has got the guts to get back on top.

Ms BEDFORD: Minister, is the branched broomrape eradication program on track?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Yes, I am very pleased to inform the committee about our strong commitment to eradication of branched broomrape from the Murray-Mallee.

Ms BEDFORD: It is hard to say.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: It is very hard to say that.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: That is true: the former speaker had a particular interest in this. I have developed an interest in it as well. It is paying dividends, according to the findings of an independent national review of the program. The review, headed by Emeritus Professor John Lovett, recommends that the program be extended until at least 2012 and that eradication remain its objective. Our government has also committed to supporting the program to that year. The Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation is the lead agency in the national eradication initiative that was implemented to protect agriculture and export trade worth tens of millions of dollars.

The branched broomrape is a parasitic weed that attacks a wide range of broadleaved agricultural and horticultural crops and weeds, and it has the potential to be a serious weed in native vegetation. It reduces the yield of plants it infects and can make root crops, such as carrots, unsaleable. Left unchecked, it can result in paddocks being useless for canola or bean-type crops. Branched broomrape is feared worldwide, and many countries, including several of Australia's major trading partners, will not accept produce that might contain broomrape seed. The review concludes that the benefits of eradicating branched broomrape substantially exceed the short-term cost of eradication.

Independent studies estimate the cost to agriculture across Australia at \$243 million. Land-holders in the Mallee and along the River Murray near Mannum are subject to quarantine provisions restricting movement of stock, implements and vehicles to prevent spread of the weed. Annual paddock surveys indicate that many of the 370 farmers in the quarantine area are successfully preventing emergence of the weed—the first step towards eradication. These land-holders are to be commended for their efforts and their commitment to the eradication objective. The program is currently using fumigants to treat about 300 hectares, and it is expected that a similar area will be treated in 2005-06.

Weeds scientist Dane Panetta, a principal scientist with the Queensland Department of Natural Resources and CRC Weeds, also agrees with the review finding that the branched broomrape eradication program is on the right track and heading in the right direction. His assessment tools for weed eradication programs show that the program is progressing favourably compared to similar weed eradication programs. The program is on track to the target for declared eradication by the year 2020. This is a good result for a program at such an early stage and puts the broomrape initiative on an upward trend.

A national funding proposal for the three years beginning in June 2006 is currently being developed to ensure that the program continues as the twin threats that branched broomrape poses (that is, of loss of production and damage to South Australia's reputation for clean green produce and commodities) still remain.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: The new NRM boards take effect from 1 July this year. Is it true that the government still has not worked out how to transfer the existing employment contracts to the new board?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I think that I answered that question in response to a question from the member for Davenport. One undertaking I gave to the employees was that their existing employment rights would be preserved. People from various boards have been employed under a huge

variety of contracts—superannuation provisions, long service provisions, a range of things, and we are working with them on how to do that. Effectively, it will be managed in the same way, I think, 30 years ago, when the Hospitals Department was turned into a commission.

When the new arrangements were put in place, those who wished their conditions to be preserved (which were established under the Hospitals Department) were able to do that. I think that the odd one or two people are still employed by the Hospitals Department after 30 years. Effectively, what happens is that you get the commission employing all new staff; those staff who want to stay with the Hospitals Department stay; but the entity in all but name of the Hospital's Department disappears, and the name, I guess, is held by the CE of that department. That is how we will manage this, effectively. The entities of all the other boards will disappear. However, the legal relationship will be maintained with that theoretical entity which will be held by the CE. As new employees come on, they will be employed by the new entity, and the other entities will be shells which provide that kind of legal protection for the individuals who want to preserve those rights. So, it is kind of a legal fiction that has developed.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: Thank you for the explanation, minister. Continuing with the questions about NRM boards and related issues, can you tell the committee why the NRM boards will have to keep two sets of books and run dual administration until the end of this year?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: We will not be keeping two sets of books: we cannot do that. The NRM boards will have a set of books and the existing entities, which will be phased out over the next six months, will have to maintain their accounts as well. But, over that period, they will be subject to the direction of the NRM board, but they will have to maintain their own books because they exist as legal entities. They are just transition arrangements. I suppose, theoretically, you could have stopped everything on one day and started everything on the next day, but it makes more sense to have those entities phasing in and other entities phasing out.

Mr BRINDAL: My question is from Budget Paper 4, Volume 2 at page 8.45. The natural resources management boards take effect from 1 July 2005. You said that in the introduction. Why have the budgets yet to be released for the boards, and when can we anticipate that we will see the boards' budgets?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The advice I have is that the budgets are being drawn up at the moment by the new presiding officers and with departmental officers.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I have a supplementary question. Will they be advised of their budgets by 1 July? We are nine days out and they do not know their budgets.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Essentially, the process will be worked out in this way: the boards will be provided with a sum of money for their own purposes and then they take over responsibility for the budgets that are already managed by the existing authorities—the catchment boards, the soil boards, the animal, plant and pest control boards and the INRM groups (the commonwealth funded bodies). So, all those bodies have their budgets: they also have their management plans and their programs of work. They continue, and the NRM boards come into place. They are given some money to allow them to operate, and then the budgets, the work programs and the plans become owned by those new boards and, over time, all those things will be integrated. It just takes time.

Mr BRINDAL: I have a supplementary question. Does that mean that the budget of the boards will consist of money flowing from the old NRM groups, money flowing from such other parts as the plant, pest and soil control boards, plus the catchment management board levies? That being the case, when they develop their boards I think lawfully and legally parts of the acts require that money collected for the catchment management boards is spent on catchment management unless the act makes it lawful to do something else therewith. How will the boards manage their money in a way which ensures that catchment management board money, legislated to be collected for a purpose, is actually used for that purpose and not—

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Unley, you have gone past a supplementary question, I think.

Mr BRINDAL: I am just explaining the question to the minister. He is very competent to answer it.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: You are trying to create legal fine points. As I said, the new boards will be responsible from 1 July for the plans, the budgets, the procedures and all the things that are currently in place for the existing boards. Over time, the levies will be struck taking into account the new arrangements; the plans will be developed taking into account the new arrangements; and this will flow out. I do not believe there are any legal problems. I am happy to have a closer look at that but I do not believe that is a particular issue. A lot of these funds are programmed well in advance, anyway. The only different one I guess is the Aboriginal NRM because there are no existing boards other than the INRM board, and we will have to provide support for it. Indeed, funding has been provided for that particular board.

Mr BRINDAL: On the same budget line, have the NRM boards received final policy and procedures on how the finance is to be handed out to the boards?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The advice I have is that a package has been put together based on advice from the Crown Solicitor which goes through all the procedural matters that are required for the boards, including delegations and so on.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: When is it being sent out?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: They are working on a draft at the moment.

Ms BEDFORD: What progress has been made in securing funds from the Australian Water Fund to assist the implementation of the national water initiative?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Before I answer that, I have just received advice about the question asked by the honourable member on the documents that are being worked on in the Crown Solicitor's Office. They have not been sent to the boards: they are still with the Crown Solicitor.

On 3 March 2005, the Premier publicly reaffirmed South Australia's commitment to the National Water Initiative. This commitment, together with similar commitments from other jurisdictions, led to the Prime Minister announcing on 10 March 2005 that funding under the Australian Water Fund (AWF), as well as the \$500 million for the Living Murray Initiative, were now available. The Prime Minister has made a commitment to provide South Australia with \$200 million over five years from the AWF, subject to the provision of matching funding and viable business plans. As a result, South Australia has submitted six project proposals to the National Water Commission for consideration.

These projects are the Mount Lofty Ranges sustainability project; the metropolitan Adelaide major irrigators storm water reuse project; the Virginia pipeline extension; the Glenelg to Adelaide parklands waste water reuse scheme;

ground water sustainability; and implementation of the NWI. The cost of these initiatives totals approximately \$135 million, and we are seeking about \$55 million of this from the AWF. Discussions are well advanced with the NWC regarding the first three of these projects. In addition to this, the NWC made a national call for funding under the \$1.6 billion Water Smart Australia component of the AWF on 19 April 2005. Submissions for funding under this initiative close on 30 June 2005.

The South Australian government has been actively involved with local governments, industry and community groups, offering assistance and advice in the preparation of their Water Smart Australia funding proposals. Funding is also available under the community water grants component of the AWF, which provides for community grants of up to \$50 000. The Australian government has yet to make a national call for submissions under this component. In the meantime, a number of demonstration projects have been funded in South Australia to a total of \$175 000. These are recycling of town and farm effluent for reed irrigation at Roseworthy; rehabilitation of Saint Peter's billabong; rainwater reuse and flood mitigation at Clarence Gardens; recycling grey water to green a school oval in the Yalata Aboriginal community; and Stradbroke school's Saving Water In a Flush.

South Australia is currently developing its NWI implementation plan and is on track to submit it to the NWC for accreditation in the near future. A major initiative of the NWI is to progressively remove barriers to trade in water entitlements, and one of the first steps in this initiative is to establish an interim limit on permanent trade out of water irrigation areas of 4 per cent per annum by June 2005. Through constructive discussions with the major South Australian irrigation trusts, South Australia will be compliant with this first major implementation step for the NWI. In addition, in the northern and southern Adelaide areas, projects called Waterproofing the North and Waterproofing the South are being developed, both of which will be seeking support from the NWI.

Mr CAICA: How does the department contribute to research and innovation to improve natural resources management?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Members would understand that science is an important part of what the portfolio that I am responsible for does. In fact, I feel that I am the minister responsible for a whole lot of scientists, which is kind of ironic given my arts background, but science underpins natural resources management strategies and consequently the department maintains a research investment portfolio to meet the emerging needs of natural resources management. The department is currently a participant in five cooperative research centres (CRCs) and a further two research and education bodies.

They are the CRC for plant-based management of dry land salinity; the CRC for irrigation futures; the CRC for Australian weed management; the desert knowledge CRC; the CRC for fresh water ecology; the Centre for Ground Water Studies; and WaterEd Australia. The department's annual investment in CRCs and the research and education bodies is \$520 000 in cash and five full-time equivalents in kind. The department is in the process of joining two new CRCs, invasive animals and e-water, from 1 July this year. The CRC for e-water will take over the principal water research role from the CRC for fresh water ecology, which terminates on 30 June this year. In addition, the department

supports the Centre for Natural Resources Management (CNRM) based at the Waite Institute.

The CNRM brokers research partnerships in South Australia between NRM boards, natural resources agencies, universities and research institutions such as SARDI and CSIRO. Research partnerships enable the department to leverage its investment in research and so develop new and innovative solutions to natural resources management problems. There are also benefits to researchers and their organisations through involvement in solving natural resources problems relevant to South Australia. There is a wide range of projects in these research partnerships. Examples include projects to develop decision-support tools for assessing land suitability for plant species in dry land salinity areas; salinity impact on Lower Murray horticulture; advancing weed risk management capabilities; and floodplain health on the River Murray.

The department, through the Animal and Pest Plant Control Commission, received an Excellence in Innovation award in 2004 from the CRC Association for the Weed Warriors weed management program, which educates school children in weed management by involving them in producing biological control agents for specific weeds and taking responsibility for eradicating these weeds in their local areas. The department will develop a revised research and innovation strategy during 2005-06 to ensure that the resources committed to research clearly link to state priorities in the natural resource management area.

Mr CAICA: I refer to page 8.5 of the Portfolio Statement. The minister advised the committee throughout the afternoon of the range of research work being undertaken by the department. Will he provide the committee with some further information about the value of this work in tackling dryland salinity?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Dryland salinity occurs to some extent in all the major agricultural regions of South Australia with serious impacts on our land, water, biodiversity and, of course, our built infrastructure. One barrier to the management of dryland salinity is the lack of commercial options to tackle the problem. The Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation has partnered with 10 other organisations to perform the CRC for plant-based management of dryland salinity. The aim of this CRC is to develop new farming options based on perennial plants to tackle the causes of dryland salinity and lessen its economic, environmental and social impacts.

The DWLBC is leading the groundbreaking CRC project, FloraSearch, to identify and develop native perennial species for large-scale crop development in the wheat/sheep belt of South Australia. Key commercial prospects identified to date in the FloraSearch project are: fodder production, wood products, and biomass energy. FloraSearch has identified several native species which have outstanding crop potential, and these are being established on trial sites. Early evaluations are showing that new crops based on tree and shrub species can be economic in South Australian agricultural systems as well as providing environmental benefits for salinity, carbon sequestration and greater resilience in the face of climate change. The annual partnership contribution of the CRC is \$100 000 funded from the unmatched state NAP funds with an in-kind contribution of \$180 000 from state funds. These CRCs, as the leader would know, provide a valuable source of information and advice to the department. We get huge benefits from relatively small contribu-

tions. This means that we can act with the best advice available right across Australia.

Membership:

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

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: Many land-holders in the Mallee area around Peake are very upset about the drawdown of their wells. These people have historically been able to rely on groundwater for domestic and stock usage. There has been a major irrigation development in the area (with, it is believed, the necessary approvals from the department) which has resulted in the dramatic drawdown of the groundwater resource. As members would know, the locals are blaming the minister and the department for the fact that they signalled prescribing this water resource but, rather than having a moratorium, they allowed a massive irrigation development to destroy this historic (and, in many cases, the only) source of domestic and stock water. Many have also incurred costs with, in some cases, hard-to-afford upgrades of pumps and bores. Will the minister explain to the committee how this happened and what he is doing to rectify the situation for the local farmers?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the leader for his question, and I welcome him to the committee. Notices of intent to prescribe wells currently apply in an area covering 12 hundreds (including Peake) adjoining the Mallee Prescribed Wells Area (MPWA) (gazetted on 11 March 2004) and in an area south of the MPWA (Area A) (gazetted on 22 July 2004). The notices were introduced in recognition of the need for long-term sustainable management of water use, particularly the effect of increasing irrigation and prospective mineral sand mining. Public consultation about the proposals for prescription (under the Notices of Intent to Prescribe) was completed on 18 June 2004 and 22 October 2004, respectively.

Notices of prohibition were not issued at the time as there was no evidence to suggest that the rate at which water was being taken at that time was such that the quantity of water available would be insufficient to meet demand. Indeed, I am not sure that I would have had the power to issue a notice of prohibition without that evidence. I believe the legislation is such that I can only issue a notice of prohibition if there is evidence that it is required. In a couple of other cases where I have issued notices of prohibition I have received complaints from members on the leader's side of the chamber that it was stifling development. There is that legitimate criticism when you do issue a notice of prohibition where it is not necessary. In each of the cases where I have issued a notice of prohibition of course I have believed it has been necessary.

Subsequently, due to the impacts of new water extraction for irrigation, two notices of prohibition have been issued. The notices will restrict new water use development while a decision is made on prescription. A notice covering the Hundred of Peake was gazetted on 3 February 2005. The notice covering the other areas of concern was gazetted on 3 March 2005. Irrigation developments in the Hundred of Peake, which post-date the notice of intent but pre-date the notice of prohibition, have locally affected the ability of landowners to access stock and domestic water supplies. These developments, however, are within the sustainable yield of the aquifer.

The department is monitoring the use of the resource in accordance with the notices of prohibition. The public is

supportive of prescribing most of the new areas. If prescribed, the aquifer systems over most of the two new areas are closely linked to those in the Mallee Prescribed Wells Area and should be managed as a whole. However, aquifers in the hundreds of Peake, Roby and Sherlock are an extension of those in the Tintinara-Coonalpyn prescribed wells area and could be managed as a stand-alone area. The River Murray Catchment Water Management Board supports the stand-alone prescription of the wells in the hundreds of Peake, Roby and Sherlock.

The government is considering the stand-alone prescription of the wells in the area of the hundreds of Peake, Roby and Sherlock, and also the prescription of the wells in the remaining area of concern and to include this latter area within the MPWA. In the specific case of the Peake developments, evidence suggests that the current levels are sustainable and that it is an issue of access around the area of draw-down rather than the overall sustainability of supply. Hence, it is not appropriate for the minister to take further action under the Water Resources Act in this case as many of the landowners in that area wanted me to do.

However, affected land-holders could take third party action under the act. Should prescription proceed, then naturally a water allocation plan would be developed in that area which I assume would protect the stock and domestic users' rights, and that ultimately I believe will fix the problems. As the honourable member may know, I have been to the Peake community and have met with some of the local landowners. I have inspected the irrigation property and talked to them about their concerns. I enjoyed a very pleasant cup of tea and some country cooked product in the local community hall, as did the head of the department, Mr Freeman. So, I understand their concerns. It was just an unfortunate set of circumstances. The appropriate process was gone through but unfortunately between the Notice of Intention to Prescribe and the ultimate moratorium somebody came in and took a lot of water for an irrigation project, and that was not foreseen at the time that the notice of intention was brought in.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I hear what the minister has said, but I have been down there and I talked to the local land-holders about the drop in the levels in their wells and I do not know where this will finish up. Is the minister saying that if they had access before, or reasonable access to stock and domestic, it will be reinstated? My understanding is that some of them are up for quite a bit of expense to pump from deeper in the well, and they have concerns about stock water where the draw-down is such that some days their pumps are not pumping water, which is very dangerous when you have stock particularly in the hotter months.

Ultimately, where will this finish up? Quite frankly, after listening to the growers—unless the department has some very different information—if the irrigation is to continue at anywhere near its current level then it is hard to understand how the surrounding land-holders are going to be able to have access for their stock and domestic. Can the minister explain where he thinks the situation in the Peake area will finish up?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I will try to repeat the basics as I know them and ask Mr Freeman to give some more technical information. As I understand it, if we were to prescribe the area then a water allocation plan would have to be developed for that area which would take into account the rights of the existing users and would make allocations appropriately. In relation to the irrigation, there has been a local effect because of the size of the irrigation activity, which has created a well

of depression of some sort, and that is clearly having an impact on the local users. While that has created a local impact it has not affected the overall sustainability of the resource because it is not taking out that much water across the whole of the zone. I understand that a water allocation plan can deal with that issue. I would ask Mr Freeman to give you a bit more detail.

Mr FREEMAN: I guess there are two issues here which, unfortunately, people are confusing. The minister has an obligation to make sure that the extraction from a water resource is sustainable. The best hydrogeological advice to us is that the current extraction, while it is significant, is sustainable. So the recharge in that total well of water under the ground is greater than the total extraction.

The second issue is that there is no doubt that the major irrigation development has cut off people's access in that the cone depression has gone down and is getting close to 20 metres at the centre of the cone, but it is stabilising. However, if that development continued at its current rate of extraction you would find that that cone depression would oscillate over the irrigation season. But it is not spiralling down. However, there is a problem that people can no longer access water that they historically accessed either through a stock and domestic, or there are two other irrigators down there. That is a separate issue and under the Water Resources Act—shortly to be the Natural Resources Management Act—those people who are affected have civil rights to be able to get their access addressed.

Unfortunately those two issues are getting blended and people are seeing that the minister has an obligation to ensure that people are not adversely affected as far as access goes. In addition to the meeting that the minister talked about that we attended in the local hall, we have been to another meeting of over 100 land-holders to try to explain the hydrogeology of the area, because it is quite complex. We believe that it has not exceeded the sustainability of the resource. However, it is occurring in one place and hence you have this enormous cone. If there is a water allocation plan then that will be able to address the issue of what a water extractor must do in regard to the neighbours, in addition to the current civil action that is available to those people—and I understand that they are current pursuing that civil action.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I partly understand that, so it looks as though it will be fought out in the courts.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: That is the option before the water allocation plan comes in. The water allocation plan should address the issue one way or another. I was interested in helping the people go through the courts but I sought legal advice about whether I ought to do that, and the advice to me was that I ought not to do that. I took the Crown Solicitor's advice, but I sympathise with those people. They do have a short-term problem, but they have a remedy through the courts, and it is not that complicated a process to go through. If they can demonstrate that they are affected then they have a right to compensation, and that compensation may be relatively simple—giving them a deeper well, or something, and some pumping so that they can get access to that water, because that access is really all they need. In fact, that could be the outcome through the water allocation plan as well.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: Just to flesh that out then, my understanding of that particular situation (and, obviously, I do not have the technical background of some people in the department) is that we are caught in a position where either we will have to close down a fair bit of the irrigation or there will still be very significant impact on the locals. At the end

of the day, if the locals take some form of action so that their right to pump from a reasonable depth is found to be the overriding right, does that leave the government at risk of having to pay compensation to the irrigator?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: As you would know through the water allocation plan, volumes of water taken out by irrigators can be reduced. In fact, you were in government when the McLaren Vale wells plan was introduced and the allocation was reduced substantially—and I think there was general agreement amongst the irrigators that that was necessary. So that can be done without compensation.

The other issue, as I understand it, is not that the stock and domestic water users cannot get access to the water: it is just that it is at a deeper level than the one they currently access. It is not hard to imagine that if sustainability principles were worked out and we knew how deep the aquifer would go, if they had deeper bores with appropriate pumping, and if we could work out how much that would cost and they were given that support, they would be in no worse position than they are now. I guess that is one of the outcomes they could get through a court process and, presumably (as I understand it), the water allocation plan could develop a scheme to provide the same kind of outcome. It might be that part of the levy arrangements would be subsidising those affected by the depression to better access the water resources, and that would mean that everyone would be okay.

I do not think this is an insoluble problem. Having met those involved, I know that they are genuine people, and I know that they are getting pretty anxious about it. However, I do not think it is all that difficult to resolve—we just have to wait through the prescription process to give us the tools with which to do it. In the meantime, they have access to the court system, if they wish, to try to achieve the same outcome.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: It is unfortunate that they have just been down there farming and suddenly they are having to go to the courts to keep what has been a given for all their lives.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: That is always the case, though, is it not? I agree with you that it is unfortunate, but we do have laws that allow them to defend their rights if they are breached. There are lots of cases where riparian rights have been breached and where people have had to use the court system before legislation was around, before we tried to codify these. What we are doing—bit by bit across the state—is codify the water arrangements, and every time we do so it is difficult. We saw it with the River Murray, we saw it in South-East, and we are seeing it up in Clare. It is a difficult process.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I refer to page 48 of chapter 8, subprogram 1.1, which is about the NRM. Can the minister advise the committee of the range of skills and attributes of the new NRM board members?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Calls for nomination for membership of the skills-based Natural Resources Management Boards was advertised on 4 October last year and nominations closed on 15 October. Over 314 nominations were received and considered by the Natural Resources Management Council, which provided me with advice on this matter. Eight presiding members were appointed on 16 December, 56 board members were appointed on 14 April and I have just appointed a further eight members to the Aboriginal lands NRM (it took a little bit longer to make those decisions).

The board membership has a wide range of skills, and I would like to go through them for the benefit of the committee, because there has been some comment on this:

- community affairs at the regional level—34 people;
- primary production or pastoral land management—38;
- soil conservation and land management—40;
- conservation and biodiversity management—19;
- water resources management—25;
- business administration—32;
- local government or local government administration—13;
- urban or regional planning—11;
- Aboriginal interests in the land and water or Aboriginal heritage—eight;
- pest, animal and plant control—18;
- natural and social science—11; and
- coast, estuarine and marine management, fisheries or agriculture—four.

In addition, 57 reside in the region for which they have been appointed and 47 have land management skills. That list does not include the eight members of the Aboriginal lands NRM board.

Representatives of the Australian government, state government and local government will support those boards in a non-voting capacity, and the boards will be supported in establishing their NRM groups and committees over the coming months. These groups will further add to the skills and attributes of the new regional NRM system.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: On that same page, can the minister inform the committee of any information available regarding the condition of land in South Australia?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: That is a curly one. I thank the member for this interrogation. The first report on the condition of agricultural land in South Australia has recently been released by the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation. I have a report here, if anyone would like to see it, that summarises data collected, collated and analysed over the first four years of the Land Condition Monitoring Program. The main land management issues covered in the report are wind and water erosion, soil acidity, soil salinity and loss of soil fertility and productivity.

The current information generally shows that soil resources used for agriculture are not being managed sustainably, but a longer period of data collection is required to establish any significant positive or negative trends. The report shows that very large improvements in management of wind and water erosion and soil acidity could be achieved through the broad adoption of well-established technologies like direct drill tillage and liming. The first report effectively establishes a base line for long-term monitoring of land condition across the state, and it will inform decisions about priority actions into the future.

Mr CAICA: I have a supplementary question. Could the minister explain what direct drill tillage is?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I could, but I think I would prefer to ask somebody who has a better knowledge. It is a way of putting seed into the ground without disturbing the surface.

Mr CAICA: So, instead of ploughing, it would—

The Hon. J.D. HILL: It is a way of putting seed into the soil without breaking up the surface and turning it over. They are very interesting machines where you pour the seeds in and they create small holes where the seed goes in. I have seen them.

The Hon. R.G. Kerin interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The Leader of the Opposition might like to continue the answer.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I refer again to page 8.48 of chapter 8, sub-program 1.1. Can the minister provide information on what progress has been made towards rehabilitating leaking wells in the South-East region?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the honourable member for that question. Over 64 per cent of wells have been completed to date, eliminating outflows from the confined aquifer and monitoring results indicating a recovering trend in both water level and head pressure, with several sites showing large increases in water level of above half a metre per year and some of the other wells almost returning to levels recorded in the early 1960s. Well owners are also reporting significant improvements in head pressures. The South-East Confined Aquifer Well Rehabilitation Scheme has completed 77 of the 120 wells to be rehabilitated in just four years, and the scheme is due for completion by June 2010. Six new wells were drilled this year, and 21 backfills were undertaken for a total investment in subsidies of \$203 000, and loans to the value of \$51 000 were granted.

The 2006 program is budgeted for 12 new replacement wells and 20 backfills with a total investment of \$342 000 in subsidies and potential loans in the vicinity of half a million dollars. Well owner investment has been significant over the program, not only with a 70 per cent cost of a new well at an average of \$40 000, but also significant investment is being made in remediation work on irrigation bays and renovation of pastures, not only improving irrigation efficiencies, but also increasing productivity.

The South-East Confined Aquifer Wells Rehabilitation Scheme has contributed to improving irrigation practices and productivity by running four demonstration trial sites with the support of and significant sponsorship from trade representatives. Over 400 participants from across the region have attended each of the annual field days over the past three years. It is quite extraordinary when you think about the activity in the South-East in terms of better water management, the prescription process, this wells project, the metering and the Upper South-East Drainage Scheme. There has been a lot of activity to try to get it right in the South-East.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: Small businesses in the Clare Valley, including bed and breakfasts, have been told by some departmental officials that they are not allowed to use the rainwater which they have captured in their tanks. They have been told that this rain off their roof cannot be used without a licence. In some cases people have been told that they should let the water already in their tanks run away and purchase water to fill their tanks. Can the minister inform the committee as to how this is in any way consistent with the state's need to conserve water or with the water restrictions imposed on other South Australians and if he is in agreement with this policy?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the member for the second time he has asked this question.

The Hon. R.G. Kerin interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: You would not have had to wait too long—I have the answer here. I will give it to you directly. The Water Resources Act 1997 defines surface water as, amongst other things, water flowing over land (except in a water course) after having fallen as rain or hail or having precipitated in any other manner. Land is defined as including any buildings or structures attached to the land, therefore, any rain that falls on a roof, theoretically, is surface water for the purposes of the act. This act was introduced by the Liberal government of 1997. Where surface water is a prescribed resource, as it is in the Clare Valley, water licences are

required for any water captured and used, other than for domestic purposes or drinking water for grazing stock, as stock and domestic use is not prescribed in the Clare area. This means that as the act currently stands, roof run-off cannot be used for commercial enterprises.

Clearly, this situation is problematic for many smaller enterprises desiring to use rainwater and surface water prescribed areas; however, it is important that there are adequate controls over the capture of large quantities. In some instances, commercial buildings have sought to capture upwards of 50 megalitres. I recall early on in my term as minister, there was an issue in the Barossa where a huge building captured an enormous amount of water.

A number of options for resolving this issue are being considered, and it has been determined that, in the interim, the most efficient way of resolving the matter for smaller enterprises without compromising effective water resource management is through a temporary statewide exemption applying to roofs below a certain size within surface water prescribed areas. The details are currently being examined and I expect that advice will be shortly available on what an appropriate threshold is.

The temporary exemption will allow small users to continue operating while this issue is being resolved more fully by local communities through the water allocation plan review process. With regard to the other matter raised as supplementary information to the question, namely, the advice of officers to business operators regarding what to do with water already captured with tanks, I can provide the following information. I understand that the relevant office has advised existing operators of the law as it is. Operators have not been advised that they need to do anything about water already collected in tanks. However, they have been advised that, when no other source of water is available, imported water (such as water imported through SA Water or private infrastructure carted water) can be used. I will ask Mr Freeman to provide some additional advice.

Mr FREEMAN: There is no doubt that, when a water resource is prescribed and, subsequently, a water allocation plan is produced—and that plan normally has a five-year life, although the National Water Initiative will increase some of those up to a 10-year life—issues that were not foreseen at the start of the plan (in this case, B&Bs) emerge during the life of the plan. We have two options for dealing with those. As the minister has outlined, one is for small issues, which can be dealt with through policies. We are currently producing a draft policy for the minister to consider, which will look at how you exempt those B&Bs. Certainly, there was no intent to capture those small enterprises.

In regard to bigger enterprises, the minister has a mechanism he can use, namely, section 11 of the current Water Resources Act. That allows the minister to issue a licence which may be over and above the current allocated water resources of the area. Providing that does not impact on the sustainability of the resource, the minister can use it. So, where someone has built a new shed, for instance, which is much bigger than a B&B, the minister can issue a section 11 licence, providing the run-off from that shed was still the same as what would have occurred on the natural ground. So, there is the opportunity to capture some of the water to release environmental flows. That is the mechanism we will be working through with the minister to deal with these small issues that often arise with a water allocation plan.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: There are probably two issues with it, one of which is whether it has been taken into account

whether or not people have access to other water supplies. Some of my constituents are in a position where, once told are they cannot use their tank water, because they cannot put down a bore, they are obviously caught in a situation where they have to purchase and cart water, which makes it very expensive. Can the minister give us some idea of how quickly this issue will be resolved? We have people catching a hell of a lot of water now and, under instruction, they cannot use it.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I heard what the member said. I am sorry for seeking advice while he was asking his question. I was asking whether or not we could generally say to B&Bs, 'Look, don't worry about it at the moment. We are working through the details.' I would be prepared to say that we will not prosecute any B&Bs for using the available water for the purposes of running their B&B. It is an anomaly which was not contemplated when the legislation was drawn up. We are having to work around it, in policy terms, of how to ensure that they are not caught. It only becomes an issue where we are talking about large volumes, and I think I mentioned the 50 megalitre level. I think the leader can tell his constituents that they are okay, and we are not going to prosecute them. We will work out a set of arrangements so that that is clarified. So, that is an ongoing protection for them.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: The various budget papers this year are confusing in some ways. But, in particular, I would like the minister to explain the budget treatment of moneys from the National Action Plan. In the 2004-05 budget, the capital investment program listed the National Action Plan as a \$12 million program for the financial year. Budget Paper 3 then lists expenditure on this line as zero, and I have seen a mention elsewhere that it had shifted from being capital to operating. Page 8.63 then highlights that this year there will be a reduction of \$7.2 million in National Action Plan funded projects. Can the minister please clarify how much money was actually spent on National Action Plan projects in 2004-05 and what moneys are budgeted for 2005-06?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I will go through some of it, and then I will ask Mr O'Neil to give the leader a more technical explanation. As the leader would know, in 2000 COAG agreed to implement the NAP for salinity and water quality. A bilateral agreement setting up the partnerships was signed in June 2001. The NAP includes \$93 million in commonwealth funding (which is matched by the state) which runs on until 2007-08. NAP also supports major state investments in salt interception schemes, rehabilitation of the Lower Murray reclaimed irrigation areas, the Upper South-East Salinity and Flood Management Program, and the Centre for NRM.

The NAP is implemented through a regional planning and delivery model, based on accredited regional NRM plans and associated investment strategies and, from 1 July 2005, the NRM boards will have responsibility for these. A total of \$30.6 million of joint NAP funds was allocated in 2004-05, and they comprise \$6.1 million for the salt interception schemes, \$0.7 million for rehabilitation of the Lower River Murray reclaimed irrigation areas, \$6.1 million for the Upper South-East Salinity and Flood Management Program, \$2.5 million for the Centre of Natural Resource Management, \$15.2 million for regional investment strategy investments, and \$34.4 million funding is expected to be allocated in 2005-06. I will ask Mr O'Neil to give some further clarification.

Mr O'NEIL: What the leader mentioned is the \$12 million that appears on page 8.46, under investment payments. There is no expenditure under 'Estimated Result' because an

accounting change was made during the course of the year, in conjunction with discussions with the Auditor-General, where assets under the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality are not considered to be owned by the department. So, they do not appear on our balance sheets and, therefore, this is now treated as operating expenditure. The leader will note that, on the same page, under 'Program net cost of services summary', it has increased from \$54 million to \$77.2 million, which includes the \$12 million. It has been shifted from investing to operating.

In relation to how much has been spent on the National Action Plan for 2004-05, it is true that it is rather confusing, and I have had to undertake a reconciliation. For 2004-05, we estimate that we will receive \$9.8 million from the commonwealth. The state is to contribute \$15.3 million. The reason why the state is contributing more this financial year is because the commonwealth has been contributing a larger share in earlier years, and the expenditure for this financial year is expected to be \$30.6 million. I am happy to provide you with greater detail if you would like.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: Following a similar line concerning NRM boards, with the new boards are there any regions facing financial shortfalls?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I am not sure exactly what you mean by financial shortfalls.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: It is Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.45.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I am not entirely sure but I will refer you to chapter 2 of Volume 3, Budget Paper 3 2.9. For the eight boards there is an additional sum of \$1 million for additional support for regional boards, to give them the funds that they require to set themselves up. There are the aboriginal boards, the Yorke and Northern Peninsula board, and Eyre Peninsula and Kangaroo Island require additional support, and the budget gives them that additional support.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: Minister, I attended a meeting yesterday afternoon held at the Lenswood Horticultural Centre, where some government officers outlined a particular initiative that the government is looking to take in terms of creating different priority zones in the Western Mount Lofty watershed area. In doing that, if that policy is implemented, it will inhibit development in some of these zones. They are looking to create three different priority zones: in priority zone 1 very little new development can take place, if any; in priority zone 2 there is a limited amount of new development; and priority zone 3 is pretty well status quo. There was considerable concern raised at that meeting about—if this policy initiative is rolled out—what effect it would have in terms of the State Strategic Plan in improving and growing the prosperity of this state and, in particular, one of the most highly productive, primary producing areas in the state.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: As I understand it, this is not a matter which the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity is responsible for. We think it is a PIRSA issue, and there will be some planning issues. The advice that I have is that this approach is designed to protect agriculture in the Mount Lofty Ranges, not inhibit it. All I can do is take your question on notice and refer it to the minister responsible, the honourable member for Mount Gambier, and seek a response from him. If I am wrong, and it is not a PIRSA issue, but a planning issue, we will get the advice from the appropriate minister.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: Going on from that, minister, does your department specifically look at, and have responsi-

bility for, water quality coming from the Mount Lofty Ranges water catchment area?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: DWLBC has some responsibility for water quality, but the prime responsibility for water quality measurement and so on is with the EPA. That is reflected in the fact that DWLBC and EPA have a joint office—a Mount Lofty watershed protection office—which was a good initiative established by your government. They work together with local government and farmers, and everybody else, trying to maintain the responsibility of the catchment, put in protection around creeks and so on, keep cattle and stock out, and so on. If there is a particular issue, I can refer it to the EPA. It depends on what your concerns are. This department may have some information, which we can help you with.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: I think that I stated my concerns in my first question—that if this policy is implemented then I think it will have a pretty serious effect on your government's strategic plan in terms of, basically, locking up one fifth—and these were percentages quoted—that 22 per cent of the water catchment area will be in this priority zone 1, and that very little new development—and it is not an issue concerning the preservation of primary production pursuits, it is to do with water quality, and that was made very clear at the meeting last night. It is to do with the water quality that then flows into the reservoirs and the like, that is treated for the use of water, and it comes back to the issue of the catchment providing water to meet the needs of metropolitan Adelaide.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: All I can do is repeat and say that this is something that is being developed by PIRSA, but it is about agricultural lands. I am not quite sure what the member's concerns are. Are you concerned that development is being prohibited in certain areas because of the need to protect the catchment, or are you saying that we should ignore the needs of the catchment to allow unfettered development in the Mount Lofty Ranges? I am trying to establish your concern.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: No, I am not purporting to support unfettered development in the water catchment area at all. I am saying that, if it is implemented, the policy will severely restrict how landowners can use their land therefore potentially devaluing their properties. If it is open grazing country and they find that pursuit not viable for whatever reason and they apply for a change of land use to plant an orchard, a vineyard or whatever, under this proposed set of guidelines they will not be able to do that. That was made quite clear at the meeting last night.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: That is really a PIRSA matter. I will get some further advice. The other issue, I suppose, that is within my portfolio responsibilities is the process of water prescription, which we are going through in relation to the western Mount Lofty Ranges.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: That is a separate issue.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Certainly, that will deal with how much water people can use and whether or not they can move from pasture to some other kind of development that uses more water. All I can do is refer the question to the primary industries minister. I will have a closer look at it to see whether there are any issues within my areas of responsibility and provide a more informed answer.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: That would be a good idea, because, certainly, it will have an impact within this department.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I will have a look at it.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I want to put the following omnibus questions on the record:

1. Did all departments and agencies reporting to the minister meet all required budget savings targets for 2003-04 and 2004-05 set for them in the 2002-03, 2003-04, and 2004-05 budgets and, if not, what specific proposed project and program cuts were not implemented?

2. Will the minister provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure on consultants in 2004-05 for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister listing the name of the consultant, cost, work undertaken and method of appointment?

3. For each department or agency reporting to the minister, how many surplus employees are there as at 30 June 2005, and for each surplus employee what is the title or classification of the employee and the total employment cost of the employee?

4. In the financial year 2003-04 for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what underspending on projects and programs was not approved by cabinet for carryover expenditure in 2004-05?

5. For all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what is the estimated level of under-expenditure for 2004-05, and has cabinet already approved any carryover expenditure into 2005-06 and, if so, how much?

6. What was the total number of employees with a total employment cost of \$100 000 or more per employee, and as a subcategory what is the total number of employees with a total employment cost of \$200 000 or more per employee for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister as at 30 June 2004 and what is the estimate for 30 June 2005? Between 30 June 2004 and 30 June 2005 will the minister list job title and total employment cost of each position with the total estimated cost of \$100 000 or more, first, which has been abolished, or, secondly, which has been created?

7. Will the minister provide a detailed breakdown for each of the forward estimate years of the specific administration measures that will lead to a reduction in operating costs in the portfolio?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I have the answers to all those questions now!

The CHAIRMAN: I presume that the minister was joking about having the answers to those questions?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: He was.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: This question relates to sub-program 1.3 and the dryland salinity scheme in the South-East. Given the large number of concerned land owners in zones C and D regarding the increase of the second round of the Upper South-East dryland salinity levies, will the minister impose late payment levies as per the act, or will he come back to the table with the land-holders?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The legislation says what happens to people who do not pay their properly constituted bills. This issue has arisen, I guess, over recent months, but years ago it was something that was negotiated under your government (and then by the current government) about how we pay for the costs of the private contributions to the Upper South-East Dryland Salinity Scheme. It is a \$38 million initiative. A condition of that initiative was an \$11 million contribution from the region. A formula was worked out about how that should be allocated.

There were four zones (A, B, C and D) where people were to pay. The first round of payments occurred under your government. When the program was restarted, it was decided that the zone D people had paid sufficient to cover the costs

of their contribution to the problems, and others still need to participate. That was worked out, and now, at the final moment, I suppose, some of the people in zone C are saying they should not pay. The interesting thing is that, when we were looking at it in relation to zone D, it was argued that zone D should not be expected to contribute further because of the significant changes in land management practice that had evolved in that zone in recent years, and it was agreed that there would not be a levy for zone D. No similar argument was presented in relation to zone C, and it was considered that there was still a significantly distinguishing surface water contribution to be expected from this zone other than during drought periods such as had been experienced in recent years.

The details of zone C are as follows. There are 920 individual levy-paying land-holders (68.9 per cent of total); and 429 land-holders (46 per cent of the total) are paying less than \$1 000 in the total levy, and that is \$125 in eight annual instalments. As someone pointed out to me, that is approximately the going price of one prime lamb. Also, 879 land-holders (95.5 per cent of the total) are paying less than \$5 000 in the total levy, and that is \$625 in eight annual instalments. That is the maximum that they are paying. So they are not paying an exceptionally high amount. They did not object to it when they paid the first round and they are now saying they should not pay it. If they thought they should not pay it, one thinks they would have objected in the first round. So it is okay to pay it when a Liberal government asks for it, but when it is a Labor government you do not want to pay it. I find that a bit strange.

The difficulty we have is that the arrangements have been put in place and signed off by the commonwealth and us. If the zone C landowners do not pay, someone else has to pay, and that would mean people in zone A or zone B, because this is about the locals contributing, not about the government tipping in more funds. The commonwealth has signed off on that basis, as have we. I think it would be a hard call to get the zone A and zone B people, who are paying the most amount of money per head, to pay more. A number of zone C land-holders have written to the program, and to me, expressing their dissatisfaction at having to pay. The argument is, essentially, that they do not have a salt problem themselves (that is true); they will not benefit from the drainage scheme (that is perhaps true); and they do not contribute to the problem. That is where the debate is: the advice I have is that they do contribute to the problem.

In many cases they do not have significant biodiversity assets to offset, or do not wish to enter into an agreement with the government to protect these assets—at least, that is what they say. Well, we are prepared to work with them in doing that. The potential implications of changing the current levy arrangements are an additional contribution from other landowners or the program being unable to be completed, and I think neither of those outcomes would be good. The zone A landowners pay \$29.07 per hectare, zone B landowners pay \$13 a hectare and in zone C they pay \$6.51. So they are paying the smallest amount, and I think it is unreasonable for them to say they should not pay. The zone A people, in total, contribute \$8.4 million, zone B people contribute \$1.1 million and zone C people contribute \$1.489 million. So, the burden is not heavily placed on them. There are 920 of them sharing that amount so they are not paying a great deal of money.

While I have the chance—and I appreciate the member's asking this question—I want to mention that an advertisement in the recent *Stock Journal* reflected on this issue and, in fact,

criticised me, claiming that I had walked out of a meeting with the zone C representatives. In fact, on the request of the member for MacKillop I had a meeting in parliament a couple of weeks ago, while the house was sitting, with representatives of zone C—I think four or five people were present. The meeting was scheduled for half an hour and I met with them for 40 minutes. I had to leave because I had another meeting with the Premier and the Lord Mayor about the capital city project. I apologised and left the head of the department, Rob Freeman, and one of my personal staff in the meeting, and they spent another 40 or 45 minutes with them.

So, for them to address me and ask, 'Why did you walk out of a meeting with a delegation which travelled 350 kilometres and which was sent to discuss this matter with you?' makes me exceptionally angry, because I did not walk out on them. If this is how they distort facts when arguing their case, in my opinion they have no credibility at all. This advertisement unfortunately is not signed so I do not know who put it in. I do not know whether it was the people who attended or someone else who spitefully is misusing information they may have received from those who attended. However, I can tell members that I am pretty cranky about it.

I do not believe the claims have credibility, and my inclination to be supportive of them through this process is diminished considerably as a result of this advertisement in the paper. We invited them at the meeting to bring forward any material or scientific evidence they had to support their claims, and we said we would look at it. We will still look at it, but I have to say that, if their claims are as substantial as the claims made in this advertisement, they will not be coming forward with very much.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: Staying on the topic of the South-East drainage, what level of uptake has there been of the biodiversity offset scheme?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the member for the question. The Upper South-East drainage scheme is conditional, as I mentioned before, upon a regional land-holder contribution of \$11 million, which could be paid through a levy. Through consultation with land-holders, the department has implemented what is known as the use project levy biodiversity conservation offset scheme. In other words, instead of paying a levy, the scheme encourages land-holders to place their biodiversity assets under management agreements and provides an opportunity for land-holders to meet the required contribution of the use program in kind rather than in cash.

DWLBC and the Farmers Federation are working together to develop trading arrangements to implement the scheme. In October 2004, 1 340 levy assessment notices were sent out, along with invitations, to submit an expression of interest in biodiversity offset. Levy invoices were sent in late May and early June to those who did not submit an expression of interest for the biodiversity offset scheme. The levy invoices have to be paid over eight years. The invoices represent \$7.5 million in total levy obligations, or \$938 000 in annual instalments.

Approximately \$3.5 million in levy obligation invoices are currently suspended pending the outcome of biodiversity offset assessments and agreements and approximately six management agreements are being finalised to test operational arrangements for the scheme. That gives an indication of the size of the scheme: \$3.5 million over \$7.5 million, multiplied by 100 means that 40 per cent of the levies could be covered by the biodiversity offset scheme, which is a good strike rate. We are prepared to work with landowners to

increase that if they can come up with new ways of doing it. Subsequent payments can still be defrayed. I thank the officers in all of my departments who have worked with me today and have done a lot of work in the background preparing all the briefing notes. I appreciate their support.

The CHAIRMAN: That ends the time allocated for questioning on this line, so I declare the examination completed.

Membership:

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

Additional Departmental Adviser:

Mr A. Atkinson, Director, Office for the Southern Suburbs.

The CHAIRMAN: We are dealing with the portfolio for primary industry and resources, the ministerial responsibility of Minister for the Southern Suburbs. I declare the examination open and refer members to Portfolio Statement Volume 2, part 5, in particular pages 15 and 16.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The government is committed to enhancing economic development, preserving the environment and supporting community needs in the southern suburbs, and the Office for the Southern Suburbs has been active in these areas. The Office for the Southern Suburbs, in collaboration with the cities of Marion and Onkaparinga, Invest Australia, DTED, DFEEST, Flinders University and several business representatives, initiated the formation of a southern regional economic blueprint.

The objective of the economic blueprint for the south is to create long-term sustainable growth in the local economy. For example, a group of export ready firms are being assisted under the regional export and investment extension scheme. A regional food enterprise centre is being established to develop and promote the regional and tourism aspects of the southern food industry.

The services of the business enterprise centres and exporters club are being expanded to support small and medium sized business, new start-ups and evolving exporters. The Youth Employment Alliance has been established with local business associations to develop apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities for young people in the region, and funding totalling \$814 000 has been made available for key economic projects, including: the southern suburbs youth employment, \$200 000 over two years; business immigration, \$25 000; energy infrastructure review, \$25 000; community telco southern suburbs feasibility study, \$25 000; regional export and investment extension services, \$474 000 over two years; and, Fleurieu Peninsula food feasibility study, \$30 000. This is in addition to the \$45 million Structural Adjustment Fund. The Office for the Southern Suburbs is working with local councils, the federal government and the community to lift the national and international profile of the southern region as a place to do business.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I appreciate the staff of the Office of the Southern Suburbs, who I see directly and indirectly in the area. I appreciate the work they are doing in their budgets and within their confines. However, from the point of view of the south I am concerned that, whilst the office is doing what it can within its terms of reference, significant matters need to be addressed in the way of infrastructure and further job growth and opportunity, particularly under the restructure fund, which is primarily federal but partly state. I will be doing what I can to ensure that most of that money goes to

the south and not the north. I was delighted to see Fibrelogic receive its share of the money, but that is one of the only structural fund assistance grants we have seen yet, since the loss of the Mitsubishi foundry plant. My first question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 5.15, and is to do with the office. It shows an estimated result of \$250 000 in 2004-05 under 'Other expenses'. Will the minister advise what the 'other expenses' are?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: That is the graffiti program that we announced a year or two ago. The Office for the Southern Suburbs has been involved in important local projects that will improve local safety. For example, the office is a partner with the Attorney-General's Crime Prevention Units that target Ramsay Place and Noarlunga Centre for crime prevention through the environmental design assessment and safety audit. Additionally, the government has implemented its \$750 000 anti-graffiti initiative in the southern suburbs. This year, \$250 000 has been spent to date on the following strategies and projects: ongoing rapid removal programs; anti-graffiti paint trials; surveillance operations; juvenile offender programs; and crime prevention through environmental design projects, including plant screenings and Adopt an Area programs.

These initiatives have been supported with the announcement of a 24-hour police station at Aldinga and an additional 17 police officers assigned to the southern suburbs. I have to say that this project, which is a multifaceted anti-graffiti strategy in partnership with the Onkaparinga and Marion councils, has been working very well. Most people would acknowledge that the incidence of graffiti in the southern suburbs has declined quite dramatically over the last year or so since the occurrence of the outbreak that resulted in some fairly negative headlines. The member for Mawson, the member for Reynell and I met with the councils and other officers in the Onkaparinga Council chambers, and the government responded to that with this allocation of \$750 000.

Working with all those agencies, I think that we have had a really strong impact. The police, in particular, have been successful. I cannot recall the number of arrests they have made, but they are using a lot of intelligence-based policing to follow up on graffiti offenders.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I noted with interest the statement by the minister or his office earlier this year that it was going to start to buy advertising space in the Messenger and other publications to promote 'good news stories' about the south. I note that the Office for the Southern Suburbs was there for nearly 2½ years before that occurred and it seems to be able to do its work without the good news stories. How much money has been spent in all the advertising in print media and other forms, like internet sites or any other written material, through the area of the Office for the Southern Suburbs?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: It is a fairly modest amount, and I can give the honourable member some of the figures and we can check the details of it all. The Director of the office put to me that he should have more interactive communication with the local community to let them know what was going on, and I agreed to that. The director places a column in three papers that cover the area (the *Southern Times*, *Hills and Valley Messenger* and *The Guardian*) on a monthly basis, and that comes to about \$423 plus GST for each of those papers. In addition, we supported the Road Ahead Messenger feature which appeared in *The Guardian*, *Southern Times* and *The Hills and Valley Messenger* newspapers in December 2004. That was a 12-page feature which incorporated advertising

space and which was supporting the local community, the federal government, the state government and the office; and I think local councils were involved in the program and advertising as well. I think that is a relatively modest amount. We do not put out a newsletter, as many government departments do. It is really the only way we have of communicating with the local community.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I have a supplementary question. I will watch this with a very keen and close interest, particularly in the lead-up to the election, but I think it is fair to say that, from a political point of view, so far the Office for the Southern Suburbs has been clinical in the fact that it has not been a de facto political office, and for that I acknowledge and congratulate the minister—unlike offices operating at Port Augusta and places such as that, which are not the responsibility of the Minister for the Southern Suburbs. I am pleased to see that, because the intention of that office should be for the betterment and welfare of the south: it should not be a de facto political office. Is the minister happy for me and other Liberal members to appear in some of the photographs and comments in that paper? We have seen all the Labor members in the southern suburbs in that particular monthly edition from time to time. I am offering the services of the Liberal members as well, and I am wondering whether the minister might like some photographs of us at certain openings.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the member for Mawson for his general comment about being scrupulous about ensuring that the office is not political. That is the position I have taken, and I have discussed it with Mr Atkinson, who is a public servant and would not do it any other way, anyway. That is the way I want it to be. I do not want it to be political. It was a bit low profile, I have to say, and that is why I agreed to the public face. It is not supposed to be a major public relations exercise: it is supposed to be doing its job. However, it becomes part of the problem for the office in that it gets criticised because it is not seen to be doing enough, and then, when you start telling people what you are doing, you are criticised because you are spending money on advertising. It is a back room kind of agency which tries to connect people.

Mr Atkinson spends enormous amounts of his time on the telephone and meeting with people from councils, government agencies and business, trying to get them to talk to each other and make connections. When it works, someone else floats in and does the opening or the announcement or says, 'That is a great deal.' Of course, when it does not work, we are the ones who are criticised. It is a very difficult job, and the director does it very well indeed. I appreciate the confidence that the member for Mawson has placed in him. I think my photograph has appeared in that column on one occasion.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Mine is zero so far.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The honourable member's is zero. We will try to match the honourable member at some appropriate time, maybe April next year or something—we will have a valedictory. I seem to recall that when he was the minister for one of his portfolios in the former government his photograph used to appear fairly regularly in a whole range of newspapers in support of whatever his department was doing. I have not done that; I have not put myself in the column. However, one photograph was put in the column and I think that was a photograph supplied by the community when I presented a cheque, members will be pleased to know, to the head of the Aldinga Bay Residents Association (if I let

my own caucus know, I will get into strife), George Apap, for the establishment of the Bendigo Bank feasibility study which is desperately needed in that lower southern area. The cheque was for \$15 400. I know that feasibility study is going well. In fact, the response, to date, is well ahead of where they wanted to be. That is just part of the officer's job: to try to provide infrastructure for the local community. So, I apologise. You would have had to have used a magnifying glass to see that it was me; it was a very small photograph.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Thank you for that answer and for your bipartisanship. I look forward to seeing a photograph in there in about January next year. I refer to page 5.15. The budget lines for the Office for the Southern Suburbs show revenue from other sources for 2003-04, 2004-05, and 2005-06 of \$33 000, \$64 000 and \$107 000, respectively. Will you explain what that revenue is for?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I will take that question on notice and bring back a proper response.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: The budget papers indicate that the Office for the Southern Suburbs expenses seem to have increased by \$68 000 against last year's budget. Will the minister explain what happened there?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Substantially, that represents salaries. We have managed to secure a young person from within the Department of Transport and Urban Planning who is on secondment to the office, and she is working on an arts strategy for the area. The goal of the office is not just economic activity; we also want to create some cultural activity in the area. For example, we have been doing a lot of work in relation to the Noarlunga Theatre, and I have been able to get a couple of performances through Country Arts to show down there.

In March 2005 an initial Young Filmmakers Forum was held with Adelaide thinker, Mr Peter Wintonick, and two Flinders graduates, Rachael Thompson and Bryan Mason, also spoke at the workshop about their personal journeys in the South Australian film industry. The focus of the workshop was to provide young people aged 16 to 25 with information on documentary filmmaking as a professional career. A whole range of other things were done through this workshop, which about 30 people attended, and a planning group was formed to develop a series of young filmmaker events in the south. So, we are trying to work across the arts in the south, and that is what that resource is meant for.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Is the minister prepared to join with me (and any other members who want to, as this affects the southern suburbs) in trying to get a firm and final bipartisanship on the Christies Beach west campus? When I was the minister and you were the shadow minister you were keen to see the land not sold at all but for it to be left as open space. This is something that I have come to see as being very important given that, apart from where the markets are on Beach Road at Christies Beach, it is the last significant open space available on Beach Road.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: What a lot of baloney.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: The minister is on the public record as saying that; I paraphrased what he said, but it is there. Secondly, there is the shortage of building accommodation for a lot of volunteer groups (and I cite as just one example the Onkaparinga Concert Band). I know that in the *Messenger* last week it was stated that some people were calling for that facility to be demolished, but I still believe that structurally there is an opportunity to turn it into a real benefit. I advise the minister that I have written to minister Lomax-Smith, after not having received a satisfactory answer

during question time, asking for a bipartisan meeting with the minister, the member for Reynell, the council and anyone else in the southern suburbs to see what we can do to try to save that facility and be innovative so as to get it up to a standard where it can be used for the community.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the member for his question, and I am delighted by his great interest in a site in my electorate. I think it is a bit—

Mr BROKENSIRE: It is in Gay's electorate.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: No, it is not. They are western campuses.

Mr BROKENSIRE: Yes, it is in Gay's. You come to Dyson Road.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: No. I know my electorate.

Mr BROKENSIRE: Do you come to the railway line?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Yes, I do.

Mr BROKENSIRE: It is in yours, then.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Thank you.

Mr BROKENSIRE: It is across the road from mine.

Ms BEDFORD: We've got a commission to redraw the boundaries; we don't need—

Mr BROKENSIRE: I know my boundaries; do not worry about that.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I know my electorate. It was in the member for Reynell's electorate: it is now in mine. I have taken a strong interest in this matter, as the member knows. In fact, when he was in government a public meeting was held there and I had a meeting at the time when the school was vacated (it was either 1998 or 1999; I cannot now recall which of those years). I consulted with members of my community and they said that their preference would be for open space but that if that were not to occur they would like to see accommodation for aged persons, I suppose because of the amount of noise they are likely to make (or the lack of it) and also because they saw it as a need. I have been trying to pursue those outcomes.

There is also the need for a new facility for the shed, which operates in the member for Mawson's electorate. Sadly for the member for Mawson, it is to move into my electorate. I have given an undertaking on behalf of the Minister for Education to Jack Ellis, that great hero of the shed, that there is a site (I think it is the old home economics building) that will be available for the shed. The site is about 8.5 hectares in total, and six hectares of that is currently owned by the Housing Trust. The land was transferred to the Housing Trust, which has plans for its development, largely for aged care. The remaining 2½ hectares is owned by the Department of Education and Children's Services, and it wishes to keep some of that land for educational purposes. I guess the shed site is part of that, and I assume that it would stay within the DECS title.

There is also the special education facilities that are on the site of the Bowden Brompton school and the other facility, the name of which I cannot now recall. The remaining elements are the three old school buildings. Sadly, since they were vacated in the late 1990s under the former government, they have been significantly vandalised. All the services have been destroyed. The informal advice I have is that it would cost millions of dollars to clean up those buildings, and I understand that an assessment was undertaken about the best use of the site. I think it is probably clear that demolishing the buildings and rebuilding on the site is probably the cheapest option available to us, and I say that with no great pleasure.

The Minister for Education and Children's Services had planned to demolish the buildings in January this year. She

held off, in part, I think, because of lobbying from me on behalf of members of the community, who had said that there was a proposition to go to the federal government to establish a technical college under the new commonwealth government's technical colleges scheme in the south, and the proponents were arguing that one of those buildings could be used for that proposal. We are not yet sure what the commonwealth's plans are.

I understand that the original thinking was that north from Port Augusta would be the site, but there has been some lobbying going on in relation to that. I understand that, in the next month or so, a decision will be made. As I understand it, if the decision is that the college will not go ahead, then the buildings will be razed. If the college is to go ahead, then I guess the funding will need to be sufficient to take on one of those buildings. I think it is unlikely to be of that nature. I am not sure exactly how much money the commonwealth is prepared to put in but, anyway, we will have to do some sort of feasibility study depending on whether or not it goes ahead and how much money is available. That is basically where it is at.

In addition to that, the Minister for Education informs me that a work team was due to go on the site today to do a clean-up. The team is going to remove broken glass in the windows, and board them up, and move all the glass and debris off the site. An industrial sweep will then be used to thoroughly clean the area. Personnel will be on the ground to monitor the site to ensure that no one enters, and the area will be fenced off with industrial fencing. I think that it is fairly tragic that site was allowed to be vacated and not properly looked after in the late 1990s but, unfortunately, that is what happened. We are working as best we can to manage it until we know what the commonwealth government's deliberations are. When we know that, we can make a decision.

Mr BROKENSIRE: I acknowledge that it has only been in the last two years that the building has been trashed, and probably less than two years. I have photographs of its history of trashing. I do not have any problem with the minister's answer from the point of view that I would be delighted to see a southern technical high school going in there. But, I cannot quite understand how it is possible to hold it now pending a decision from the federal government, and that, structurally, with refurbishment, and so on, it is okay for that but it is structurally not okay to be refurbished in an innovative way for dozens of volunteer organisations that require a permanent property to obviously continue to provide for the southern community.

I would again ask the minister whether he would join with me, in a totally bipartisan way, with other leadership people to explore and discuss those options, and to ensure that we are personally well aware of the structural reports, and the like, so that we have covered every option before demolition, the only proviso on that being that the minister can assure me that, if it is knocked over, there will be purpose built accommodation for volunteer groups put in its place. I believe that, innovatively, we can do a lot to refurbish that through work for the dole, and through some of the other support from within our community. We saw it with Morphett Vale High School, with the Southside Christian Centre, which is superb. I am just asking whether the minister would agree to meet with me and some leadership people to at least explore it, because, in fairness, we have not really had that meeting with the community, and I would appreciate his support in the meeting.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Let me just say something about the building. The reason that the minister did not pull it down in January is because members of the community approached us and said, 'Don't pull it down until this has been decided by the commonwealth.' We undertook not to pull it down, because if it had been pulled down and the commonwealth did not go ahead the finger would have been pointed and they would have said, 'Well, that's because you pulled the building down.' I think it is highly unlikely that the building will be suitable for such a college, but we would have to do a feasibility study, and we would have to look at the resources that the commonwealth is prepared to pay. That is fine; we can wait and see what it is prepared to put in, if it is prepared to put in anything. If there is no commonwealth project, what else can you do with the building? The advice I have is that we should be working on what is the highest and best use of the site. At present the site does not meet the Building Code of Australia requirements. There is no disabled access, for example. I know that the member is somehow suggesting that this building only fell into disrepair when the current government came in. That is plainly not true.

Mr Brokenshire interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: We have to be honest about this. This building was vacated and left to rot well before we came into government; it was trashed and plundered by people taking out copper piping and wiring and all the rest of it

when I was in opposition. It has been seriously damaged, and to put it back into any serviceable state, even at the existing level (that is, without all the current BCA requirements), would be expensive. I am advised that to actually modernise it to the state where it would be BCA-compliant would be enormously expensive. I do not think it is a feasible outcome, but we have to wait to see what the commonwealth is doing. I am more than happy to meet with the member about his views, but I am not prepared to get into some sort of political stunt with him.

Mr BROKENSHERE: I would never do that; it is not my nature.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: It is your nature, member for Mawson. I am more than happy to meet with the member, to sit down with him and go through his ideas, and I invite him to call my office to set up a time.

Before we finish I would like to thank the Office for the Southern Suburbs for its preparation for today and for the ongoing support they give me and the south.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 6.02 p.m. the committee adjourned until Wednesday 22 June at 11 a.m.