

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Monday 2 July 2007

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A

Chair

Ms M.G. Thompson

Members:

Ms V. Ciccarello
 Mr M.R. Goldsworthy
 Dr D. McFetridge
 Mr M. Pengilly
 Mr T. Piccolo
 Ms L.A. Simmons

The committee met at 11 a.m.

Department of the Premier and Cabinet, \$152 701 000
 Administered Items for the Department of the Premier
 and Cabinet, \$31 964 000

Witness:

The Hon. J.W. Weatherill, Minister for Families and Communities, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, Minister for Housing, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability, Minister Assisting the Premier in Cabinet Business and Public Sector Management.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr W. McCann, Chief Executive, Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Ms J. Mazel, Executive Director, Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division.

Mr L. Morgan, Manager, Special Infrastructure Services.

Mr R. Starkie, Manager, Strategic Services.

Ms M. Griffiths, Senior Financial Consultant.

Mr J. Formston, Senior Financial Consultant.

The CHAIR: 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 the consideration of proposed payments to facilitate the changeover of departmental advisers. The information I have is that the timetable is as follows: 11 a.m. to 12 noon, Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation; 12 noon to 1 p.m., Minister for Ageing; 2 to 3 p.m., Disability Services; 3 to 4 p.m., South Australian Housing Trust, Aboriginal Housing Authority, South Australian Community Housing Authority, and Home Start; and 4 to 5 p.m., Child, Youth and Family Services; and Community Services, etc. Is that your understanding, minister?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: No, Madam Chair. There is a small change in relation to the ageing portfolio. I understand those estimates are to be dealt with this afternoon, and I will provide you with the precise details about that before the morning session closes.

The CHAIR: So, are we swapping ageing and disability?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: No. I think there is to be some truncation of the Disability time and then the Ageing time is to be put in. However, I will make sure that someone

provides you with those details before we complete the session.

The CHAIR: I have the timetable now, so I will check with the lead speaker for the opposition to see whether he has the same timetable. The timetable will now be 11 a.m. to 12 noon, Aboriginal Affairs; 12 noon to 2 p.m., lunch break; 2 to 2.30 p.m., Ageing; 2.30 to 3 p.m., Disability Services; 3 to 4 p.m., Housing; and 4 to 5 p.m., Housing and Communities. Is that your understanding, member for Morphett?

Dr McFETRIDGE: That is my understanding, Madam Chair.

The CHAIR: Thank you. 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 7 September. 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's *Notice Paper*. There is no formal facility for the tabling of documents before the committee. However, documents can be supplied to the chair for distribution to the committee. The incorporation of material in *Hansard* is permitted on the same basis as applies in the house, that is, that it is purely statistical and limited to one page in length. All questions are to be directed to the minister, not to the minister's advisers. The minister may refer questions to advisers for a response. I also advise that for the purposes of the committee some freedom will be allowed for television coverage which initially has been by allowing a short period of filming from the northern gallery, but I understand there is a variation today and we are experimenting with allowing television cameras in the northern gallery for the whole time.

I declare the proposed payments open for examination, and refer members to the Portfolio Statement, Volume 1, part 1. Does the minister want to make an opening statement?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I do, Madam Chair. This is my first full financial year as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, and I am pleased to say that a number of very important achievements have been made throughout the course of this year. As I am sure members would be aware, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet is now the home for the Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division. This reflects the fact that many of the challenges that exist for Aboriginal Affairs span almost every government agency, and so we lead a whole-of-government effort throughout the state government in relation to these issues. It would also be obvious that the question of Aboriginal Affairs has received considerable focus during the course of this year; not only is it the 40th anniversary of the 1967 referendum but there is also a range of other important commemorations this year—the 50th year of NAIDOC, the 10th year since the release of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's report, *Bringing Them Home*, and the 15th anniversary of the historic Mabo decision. Just

recently, we have seen a rather dramatic shift in commonwealth policy in relation to the question of Aboriginal Affairs.

One of the points I want to make at the outset is that, while many grand statements are made about what has happened over the last 40 years or so since the 1967 referendum, what needs to be understood is that the referendum only created possibilities; it did not necessarily provide for outcomes to change immediately. While there have been many faltering steps forward and, in some cases, steps backwards, I think it is important that we do not lose sight of some of the critical issues that informed that decision in 1967, which was, at its heart, an act of inclusion. It was about ensuring that Aboriginal people were able to participate in the affairs of the nation—not in the way they had formerly been allowed to participate (that is, by being like white people), but on their own terms: being able to participate but maintain their culture and have their heritage respected.

The words 'crisis' and 'national emergency' can be thrown around pretty loosely, especially when one is in a heightened political environment. I think what we need to remember is that we do not sacrifice those values as we try to seek answers to some of the difficult questions in Aboriginal Affairs. One thing we do understand from our observations of successful indigenous communities anywhere in the world is this single truth: people will only prosper if they have control over their own lives. People have to find the solutions within their own communities. Simply suggesting that Aboriginal people will be successful and prosper if they become more like us, in terms of a white Anglo-Saxon culture, is unlikely to succeed. In any event, it is an odd solution, because what we tell migrants when they take citizenship is that they can keep everything about their old culture and to that they can add Australian citizenship. I do not understand why we think it should be any different for Aboriginal people.

Those are certainly the values that inform our approach, and everything we have done in Aboriginal Affairs reflects that our ultimate aim is to build up the strength of Aboriginal communities to find their own solutions. An enormous amount has been achieved. In this recent national debate, a lot has been said about the crisis that exists within remote Aboriginal communities. We in South Australia had our moment of awakening in 2002 and 2003 with the publication of two quite damning Coroner's reports in relation to petrol sniffing on the APY lands. You will recall a spate of suicides and attempted suicides at that time, and the Coroner's report pointed out a very sorry state of affairs in relation to those remote Aboriginal communities—a breakdown in law and order and dysfunction at a very fundamental level.

These things are all related. The question of child sexual abuse, the abuse of alcohol, the abuse of substances, and the breakdown in social norms are all interconnected. When we commenced our work in relation to our remote Aboriginal communities, we responded by sending in police resources and administrators. What we quickly understood was that it required much more than that: many more resources; a much longer commitment; and, fundamentally, a commitment to working in partnership with communities if there was to be any sustained change in those communities, and that is what we have been doing for three years. Our intensive effort commenced in 2004, and there have been three years of very sustained detailed work led by the Chief Executive of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Warren McCann, and, importantly, by Jos Mazel, who has taken a number of

practical measures at a local level to ensure that these changes have occurred.

It has been difficult work. We have been the subject of some criticism from time to time because we have had to be assertive about some of the issues at stake, but we have taken enormous steps forward—to cite a very practical example, in 2006, a 20 per cent reduction in petrol sniffing on the lands, as measured by the independently audited organisation, Nganampa Health; in 2005, a 20 per cent reduction; and, in 2006, a 60 per cent reduction on top of the 20 per cent reduction. Anecdotally, we now hear that in 2007 many communities are reporting a complete eradication of petrol sniffing on the APY lands. If you had said that that was capable of being achieved three years ago, people would have laughed at you. It has been an extraordinary co-ordinated effort around almost every sphere of government activity. There has not been one element of what the government does in relation to service provision that has not been reviewed in relation to the APY lands, and that is a substantial step forward.

One of the essential elements of achieving anything in remote communities is building up trust between the government and local leadership, ensuring that local leadership can take the next step. What became obvious to us was that, in any attempt to take the next step and deal with some of the issues that were holding back these communities, it was necessary to grapple with the question of child sexual abuse in remote communities. It was our initiative at the summit on 26 June 2006—the summit that was called by the commonwealth, and that we in South Australia quickly endorsed and were one of the first states to welcome. We were at the summit, and our approach in relation to the commonwealth's intervention has not been to criticise the commonwealth but to welcome the commonwealth's focus in relation to remote Aboriginal communities.

As I said, our focus has been steadily on those communities since we were confronted with our own failures in relation to our remote communities some years ago and, while criticisms can be made of the federal government in relation to the speed with which it has developed this focus in relation to remote Aboriginal communities, we have not focused on that. We have looked for points of agreement with the commonwealth, not points of difference, because what is at stake is too important. So we went to the summit on 26 June 2006 and proposed the extension of the Mullighan inquiry into the APY lands. As the parliament would know, we were successful over that period in negotiating commonwealth support for that, and it is now running in the APY lands at our most remote Aboriginal community.

There are many other important elements to the role of the Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, and I want to focus on a few of them. We now have nine Aboriginal specific targets, up from two in relation to the inaugural South Australian Strategic Plan, which will also be supervised by relevant departments and, in some cases, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Those targets focus on creating employment opportunities, improving health outcomes, resolution of native title claims, developing strong community leadership, improving overall wellbeing, improving reading standards and generating public sector job opportunities.

While a number of those things focus on what are potentially deficits in relation to the experience of Aboriginal people compared with the broader community, we also

wanted to focus on some things which were not about disadvantage, that is, the way in which Aboriginal people can enrich the broader community through their own culture. So, we have included a target which recognises the strength and value of Aboriginal culture and history by including a goal of adding Aboriginal cultural studies to the curriculum of all South Australian schools by 2014. That is a very important measure, not only to respect Aboriginal culture and heritage but also to enrich the broader Australian and South Australian communities.

We also have been consulting during the course of this year with the Aboriginal Advisory Council around the state to grapple with ways in which we will receive our advice and information in an environment in which the commonwealth government has abolished ATSIC. There is no organised voice for Aboriginal people, so we have been consulting with the community about what should take the place of ATSIC, given that there is a national dimension to this debate as well.

We also have focused our attention in other regional Aboriginal communities. I have taken steps to visit as many communities as I can. We visited Yalata, Gerard, Raukkan, Davenport and Umooa, and other communities will be visited during the course of this year. In relation to the community at Yalata, we are attempting to grapple with some of the issues that arise there, in particular, creating economic opportunities through an establishment of boardwalks, viewing platforms and a tourist centre at Head of Bight to support whale-watching activities. These developments will have clear economic benefits for local Aboriginal people and provide an opportunity for a successful partnership between Yalata, Indigenous Business Australia and the South Australian government to move forward.

We also have taken the question of protecting Aboriginal heritage seriously. After an initial injection of funds in 2004-05 for the administration of the Aboriginal Heritage Act, an associated increase in site recording in 2005-06 and 2006-07 has seen further gains. Over the past year, an additional 350 sites were recorded in the central archives, at an almost unparalleled rate of around 300 per month, bringing the total number of protected sites to 7 183.

I also want to comment on Reconciliation SA's activities this year celebrating the important 40th anniversary since the passing of the federal referendum in relation to Aboriginal affairs. We contributed \$200 000 to that effort, and the efforts in relation to promoting reconciliation and educating the broader community about some of the important historical measures were particularly well presented this year and, in particular, Professor Peter Buckskin and Ms Jan Chorley, co-chairs of Reconciliation SA, need to be congratulated on their work.

Dr McFETRIDGE: At 21 minutes past 11 in an hour session I will not be making an opening statement. I will go straight to questions in this case. My first question is in relation to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 1.43, program 13. When will a safe house for Aboriginal women and children escaping family violence begin operating in Ceduna, and what additional funding has the state government allocated for this purpose in 2007-08?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I might come back to that matter because I have a briefing on that in relation to the housing portfolio. If we can leave that to the end I should be able to retrieve that briefing and provide you with the answer.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 1.45, program 13, 'Facilitation of community development'. What is the current estimated cost of construc-

tion of the multipurpose community learning and cultural centre at Yalata, of which the pool is one part? What is the time line for the construction of the centre, and what funding has the state government committed in 2007-08 for the development and operation of programs at Yalata to reduce violence?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The pool is expected to be completed in December of this year. The capital expenditure for the pool comes from the commonwealth (so, that matter needs to be directed to the commonwealth), and we are picking up the recurrent costs. Of the bundle of money that the commonwealth made available in relation to capital facilities, a choice had to be made about which happened first; the pool or the community centre. The community wanted the pool first, so that is what has happened. In relation to the multifunction centre to which the member referred, the additional funds that are available from the commonwealth will need to be sought if that is to go ahead. So, that is something about which we are in negotiation with the commonwealth.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I have a supplementary question. In June 2005, the Premier and the then federal minister announced \$3.45 million over three years to tackle family violence and child abuse at Yalata and, so far, we have a swimming pool under construction. Is there any time line for the multipurpose community learning centre?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I think there has been a misunderstanding. This is a separate set of negotiations. The money that was announced for domestic violence is a much broader program than the capital equipment that is made available for the pool and the community centre. Those other funds are directed towards policing, domestic violence shelters and those sorts of arrangements. That is not the bucket of funding that is available for the multifunction centre. As I said previously, in relation to the multifunction centre, the community made a choice, and it wanted the pool first. It is getting the pool in December, and further negotiations will need to be undertaken with the commonwealth about a community centre of the sort that is contemplated.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 1.46. How much of the \$25 million over five years for the Aboriginal lands task force was expended in 2006-07, and what was the specific expenditure for individual projects? How much of the \$25 million over five years will be expended in 2007-08, and what are the projects? How many of the original 22 priority projects have been completed on time and within budget?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Since the establishment of the APY lands task force in 2003-04, the state has contributed \$15.4 million to the fund. The fund delivers on a range of targeted programs, which have been mentioned. The 2007-08 state funded allocation is \$6.2 million. In fact, in 2005-06, the funding was \$4.7 million, it increased to \$5.1 million in 2006-07 and there was a further increase to \$6.2 million in 2007-08. This includes the additional recurrent funding for the maintenance of a new swimming pool in Pipalyatjara.

It is also appropriate, I think, to take the opportunity here to correct something that the honourable member has said in relation to the claim that there has been an \$11 million reduction with respect to the APY task force. That is simply untrue: in fact, the money each year has increased. The opposition has misread the Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation income statement on page 1.45 of the program and wrongly assumed a link to the APY task force program. The

2006-07 budget for grants and subsidies in the published income statement on page 1.45 includes \$11.15 million for the APY central power station stage 3 electrical distribution system. However, during the course of the year it was decided that the 'supplies and services' budget description better describes the infrastructure works. Consequently, the budget has been reclassified from 'grants and subsidies' to 'supplies and services'. Some \$8.57 million of the \$11.15 million is now included in the 2006-07 estimated result in the supplies and services lines in the income statement, with a reduction in grants and subsidies.

As there have been delays in the project, the balance (\$2.58 million) of the \$11.15 million originally in 2006-07 is now in the 2007-08 supplies and services line to cover expenditure on the project in that financial year. So, there has been no reduction in the budget, as has been suggested by the honourable member, just a reclassification of the budget to a more appropriate description. What has, in fact, occurred is that the funding for the APY task force has increased every year in line with the promises that have been made.

In relation to the additional incremental programs that are covered with respect to the 2006-07 financial year (so, there are already the costs of the existing programs), 2006-07 included a budget of \$3.2 million for delivering petrol misuse, family and youth support and environmental health programs, providing rehabilitation services; operating a positive behaviours unit, training of Aboriginal health workers; and support services training in communities. Funding also covered the employment of a dedicated APY lands, health and family and community services coordinator. A budget of \$265 000 has been set aside to contribute to the new Amata rehabilitation facility and staff housing, and \$388 000 to support the Mimili and Amata swimming pool projects. The sum of \$835 000 has also been allocated to improving capacity building in the communities and creating economic development and employment opportunities, particularly in art-based tourism, land management and growing and sale of bush tucker. We are also preparing detailed community plans, and providing training for transaction services in communities.

Ms CICCARELLO: My question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 1.46, program 13, Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation. In 2006-07 the Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division continued to oversee the implementation of programs and services on the APY lands. Minister, you have given some indication with regard to the task force, but can you confirm whether reports that the state budget has cut funding to the APY task force program by \$11 million are accurate?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: They are not, and I have really dealt with that, in answer to the previous proposition that was put by the honourable member.

Mr Pisoni interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: You might have found something that troubled you, but the way to clarify it is to come in here and ask questions, not to just go off and suggest, publicly, that there has been a funding cut. That is what estimates are for.

Ms SIMMONS: Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 1.46, program 13, and it is also referred to on page 1.9. The commonwealth and South Australia are planning a substantial housing program on the APY lands, which you have previously referred to this morning. Can the minister outline how the state is progressing in discussions with the commonwealth regarding this housing initiative?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Thank you, and that is a very important question. There is a severe housing shortage in the APY lands, leading to significant overcrowding. This has been known for some time. We have been making representations to the commonwealth about that for over a year. Overcrowding in Aboriginal communities contributes to other social problems. Obviously there is poor health, low school attendance, and, as we have heard most recently, child sexual abuse. So, addressing the housing shortage must be a key element in relation to making these remote Aboriginal communities thrive.

We have been in negotiations with the commonwealth for over 12 months now in an effort to grapple with this housing shortage. \$25 million in funds has been identified for Aboriginal housing on the APY lands. This funding should provide about 65 new houses and 30 upgrades to existing houses. Since last year's summit, where I took a number of representatives from the APY communities to personally meet minister Brough and put this question of the housing shortage on the table, we have been involved in extensive negotiations. I have had face-to-face meetings with minister Brough. My officers have met with his bureaucrats on numerous occasions. I have had telephone calls with Mr Brough, and I have made it clear to him that I will meet him at any time and in any place to grapple with this question of overcrowding in relation to the APY lands.

Unfortunately, the commonwealth is putting two pre-conditions in relation to its grant of funding to grapple with this crisis of overcrowding, and basically they both relate to land rights reform. First, they want substantial changes to the permit system, and they also want substantial changes to lease arrangements in favour of non-Aboriginal people. To the credit of the Aboriginal communities, they have said, 'We will try and work with you to meet some of your concerns about those things.' They have said, 'We will try and make the permit system more flexible, and we will try and look at freeing up the lease arrangements so other people can potentially get involved in relation to those lands.' But they have consistently said that they will not sacrifice land rights for human rights, that they will not sacrifice hard-won land rights to get something that they should be entitled to, namely, a basic level of shelter and housing. We have 19 people to a house in some places. If that is not an environment in which sexual abuse and other forms of social dysfunction thrive, I do not know what is.

If this is a national emergency, as it has been suggested, then let the commonwealth act with urgency. We have been ready for 12 months to say yes to these propositions. We have put compromise after compromise. We are even prepared to talk about some of these changes, which are very threatening to Aboriginal people. They knew how long it took for them to gain land rights. They already have the capacity to give long-term leases to Aboriginal people, so the commonwealth's agenda about home ownership is one that they are prepared to cooperate in, but they are wary about changes to the permit system. In remote Aboriginal communities, having everybody wandering through those communities could potentially exacerbate the issues of drug running and grog running into those communities, and pornography coming into those communities. So they naturally have concerns. They also have concerns about leasing because their experience with leasing has not necessarily been a good one. They lease in relation to mining at Mintabie, and they have grave fears about that being used as a route for drugs, alcohol and pornography coming into the lands.

So these are not concerns which are ill-founded. They are well-founded concerns, and they cannot understand why a commonwealth government that identifies these issues as being a question of national emergency is putting what are quite highly ideological conditions upon the housing dollars. Just to indicate the sorts of things we are talking about: we are saying you can already provide long-term leases for a range of Aboriginal interests and, indeed, non-Aboriginal interests, but one of the sticking points is long-term commercial leases, the notion that somehow long-term commercial leases in the very remote Aboriginal communities will be the long-term economic salvation of these communities. That is a very highly ideological agenda. We are not suggesting that there are not some elements of it that are worthy of consideration, but the suggestion that somehow in the middle of the desert we are going to have a flood of commercial activities which will immediately turn around these communities is, I think, on one view of it, a very ambitious and ideological agenda, which I think could also have some unintended consequences.

So, the community says, 'We want to take our time about considering some of those massive changes,' which also runs the risk of undermining their land rights. We have put to the commonwealth that it should invest in housing. It should do that first, gain the goodwill of the community, grapple with this undoubted crisis that exists in our communities and do not put what we would say are deeply ideological conditions on the payment of moneys which address basic human rights. We will be raising this again with the commonwealth. We have always acknowledged the degree of urgency that is necessary in relation to the lands.

We do not understand why we have reached a stalemate over the provision of funding for housing. Just to be clear, the commonwealth suggests that somehow it needs some greater control over these communities to ensure the housing actually gets built. We stand ready to build these houses. The town planning has been organised, we have acknowledged the commonwealth's condition that this has to be done through mainstream housing organisations—we agree with that. We are standing there ready to build these facilities; all we need is the release of the dollars. The communities are even prepared to talk about some of the commonwealth's conditions, but they want the money released first and they want to be able to consult in detail with these communities.

If we were to rush through this parliament some changes to the land rights legislation without carefully consulting with the communities, we saw what happened when we put through very modest changes to the governance arrangements in those communities last year or the year before. There were grave concerns that that was a threat to the land rights of those communities, and I think we need to pay them the proper respect of consulting carefully with them about something that could have a dramatic effect on how they live their lives in these communities.

I might now be able to answer the member for Morphett's question in relation to the Ceduna safe house initiative. There has been an ongoing request for a long period of time for family violence accommodation services in Ceduna. The preferred model for building a safe house was not successful in gaining funding, so an alternative model has been developed which includes the purchase and refitting of two properties. Government, non-government and local Ceduna communities were successful in establishing this funding for this service. This model was discussed by the local federal government agency, Indigenous Coordination Centres (ICC),

with the Ceduna Council and SAPOL, and it received support. I understand that the Ceduna Council's position has since changed and that has expressed concern for the safe houses being in a residential area. The council's preference is for them to be located elsewhere. There has been extensive lobbying from the Ceduna Aboriginal Family Services at recent community meetings which provides support for utilising this alternative site for a safe house initiative. My staff have met with Ceduna Council's mayor and CEO to discuss these concerns and an alternative proposed location.

From the discussions with local and state government stakeholders, the use of an alternative location is not supported as a permanent site for the safe house; however, a hold on renovations and fit out has been placed on the current purchased site until further guidance is provided through a consultation strategy. As an interim measure, the units at the alternative location will be made available for temporary safe housing for a maximum of six months up to December 2007. Some modifications to the location will be required, and it is anticipated the units will be operational by August this year. Families SA has established a safe house service reference group, which met on 21 May, to develop a consultation strategy to work with local stakeholders regarding the best options and the placement of a safe house within the local area. Further to this, senior officers from Families SA (the auspice agency) will work with the reference group, community and local council to discuss and resolve local concerns, safe house design and site concerns.

In essence, there are two projects in this community. There is an urgent need for transitional accommodation out of the town camp in Ceduna and there is also a need for safe houses. Safe houses (domestic violence houses) sometimes can create community concerns especially given that there might be concerns about whether they might attract some of the violent perpetrators to those houses. So, it is always important to consult with the communities to make sure that the appropriate location is chosen.

Dr McFETRIDGE: That is what you said about Kuhlmann Street.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Kuhlmann Street was identified for another important project, which was the transitional accommodation, and it will be used in the interim until we are able to come to a proper solution with the community. I must say that the mayor has welcomed the consultative approach that we have taken in relation to this matter, and we hope that the opposition will take a similarly constructive approach.

Dr McFETRIDGE: That was my original question, and I will ask some supplementaries. Minister, why is it that the Sturt Street units, which have been operating for 12 months now, are considered an example of how well a cluster development can be used for safe units? Are you aware that the ICC in Ceduna said that the commonwealth has no objection to a change in use of the Kuhlmann Street units to safe houses—not two of the five units for six months, but all of the five units on a permanent basis? With repeated calls by the police, the council and local communities for the Kuhlmann Street units to be used, why is your department being so recalcitrant and intransigent on this issue?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We are not.

Dr McFETRIDGE: You obviously are, because there is an example in Sturt Street of how cluster housing development is working so well. We have a federally funded group of units over there which are ideal—and that is on advice from people who know much more about it than I do—yet,

for some reason, you refuse to accept this ideal situation to solve a situation where two new cases of severe domestic violence are presented every week, and it can only be described as atrocious. I have read into this house before. The atrocious cases of domestic violence on the West Coast need attention today—not in six months, not for six months in two out of five units. This is something I am very passionate about, and I will not go away on it, minister.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It is being done; you just misunderstand. I have now I mentioned this to you informally, formally and through the Aboriginal Lands Parliamentary Standing Committee—

Dr McFETRIDGE: Two out of five units for six months—it is not what is required over there. You know that, I know that, the community knows that.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will take you through it again. A much larger model of commonwealth funding was sought for that. You also need to realise that, in terms of the supported accommodation assistance program, which is the funding program that supports domestic violence, the commonwealth had an opportunity at the last renegotiation of that agreement to put in extra money. It did not put in any extra money at all, so we have a shrinking pool of resources in relation to domestic violence funding. In relation to this particular project, a grander model was proposed, but the commonwealth was not prepared to fund it. A smaller model was then designed. Council, police and local federal agencies supported it.

Then there was a bit of community uproar about the location of these houses, so we listened to what the community said and we have, in the interim, placed these two safe houses in another housing complex which was for another purpose—transitional accommodation—while we consult about that. Here is a great opportunity. The commonwealth has declared Aboriginal affairs a national emergency. I suggest that you prevail upon your commonwealth colleagues to back up that rhetoric with some extra dollars for South Australia for Ceduna, where we can do some wonderful things. We are trying to manage within the envelope of resources the commonwealth provides for us.

Dr McFETRIDGE: In January this year \$1.16 million was put into the Aboriginal family violence issue in Ceduna—\$1.16 million. That is apart from the CHIP funding that built the units over there. The feds are putting in; it is the state that is not putting in. For some reason you do not seem to accept the fact that there is a serious issue there that is not going to go away. There are two serious new cases every week; it will not go away. The Sturt Street units demonstrate how valuable the cluster design is. To say it is for six months, and then you are going to buy two other houses, is not good enough, because when you and I are tucked up in our beds tonight, it will be going on over there.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Well, you do not seem to be listening to what I am saying.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I have been listening; I have been listening to this for a long time and so has the community, and they are very frustrated about it.

The CHAIR: Member for Morphett, I will remind you that you are well out of line, but you are normally very in-line, so I interpreted your recent debate as your opening statement.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr PICCOLO: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, program 13, page 1.46—Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation. I refer to the 2007-08 target to complete the electrical

distribution lines to connect the majority of communities to the central power station on the APY lands. The new central power station and electrical distribution network project on the APY lands will have a significant impact on improving the sufficiency and reliability of electricity services to the majority of Aboriginal communities on the lands. Can the minister provide a status report on the project and an indication of the planned completion date of the works?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I thank the honourable member for his question. The APY central power station project consists of three stages that will provide an upgraded power supply and distribution system for the majority of communities in the APY lands. The total approved expenditure of the project is \$23.672 million, comprising funding of \$17.025 million from the state and \$6.647 million from the commonwealth. Stage 1, the installation of a prototype solar farm comprising 10 solar concentrated dishes and producing 300 kilowatts to supplement the new power station, was completed in August 2003. Stage 2, the construction of the new diesel power station, became operational in October 2005. Stage 3 involves the provision of electrical distribution network that connects the Mimili, Fregon, Indulkana and Amata communities and the Watinuma homeland to the new power station.

Mimili and Fregon have now been connected to the central power station. The Mimili to Indulkana section of the powerline is scheduled for completion in September 2007, and the construction of the Watinuma to Amata section to the west of Umuwa, which is the final phase of the project, is scheduled for completion in December 2007. The ETSA contract has been extended to complete this final phase of the works, which will cost an additional \$2.675 million, including contingency provisions and DTEI project management fees. This amount is included in the 2007-08 state budget. The buoyant construction market, highlighted by trade resource shortages, labour and material price increases has—

Ms CICCARELLO: Point of order, Madam Chair: I think that you should remind the camera operators that they may only film the people who are speaking.

The CHAIR: The normal rule is that they are to film people who are speaking, yes, and that is the rule that applies during this experimental period. I am sure the camera operators are mindful of the normal orders.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The higher costs, the logistical issues associated with the remoteness of the lands and Environment Protection Authority compliance costs and delays in obtaining anthropological and APY clearances have been some of the causes of the delay. However, it should be recognised that the central power station, at completion, will provide a number of cost, environmental and social benefits including the replacement of four smaller community power stations, which will reduce diesel consumption by up to 20 per cent and be augmented with solar energy; improved reliability of supply to Aboriginal communities; and enhanced commercial and community development activities.

I found out when I was up there that people all move to one community for various social events, and that puts enormous pressure on the generators in those communities, whereas the central power station enables the load to be allocated between the communities. That is a particular benefit—something that does not normally happen the same way in other communities. That is a real advantage.

Mr HANNA: Of course, my question relates to program 13, Targets, on page 1.9 of Volume 1 of the budget papers. I query the minister on how some of the disturbing

facts in the 'Progress in the APY Lands' report, dated February 2007, actually compare with those targets. Maybe the report should be called 'going backwards on the APY lands'. It makes no mention of the night patrols of police, which were originally funded for five years and which I understand stopped after two years. The report makes no mention of the Fregon Bicycle Program, which I believe has been stopped. The report indicates that the number of community constables has fallen to four out of 10 positions and that the new holding cells at Amata and Ernabella have not been built despite Bob Collins listing them as urgent priority items in April 2004.

The CHAIR: Is your reference about what is not in the budget rather than what is?

Mr HANNA: How does that measure up against the targets which I specified?

The CHAIR: On which page?

Mr HANNA: I specified page 1.9 of Volume 1. The minister knows what I am talking about.

The CHAIR: I think your question is more about what is not there rather than what is, but the minister may be able to provide some information.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I am very happy to answer this question. It is true, sadly, that some people revel in bad news about the APY lands. I don't know why they do, but the truth—

Dr McFetridge interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Well, we don't. That is why we report and why you are able to read from a report that was posted on the internet, because we tell the whole truth. I might contrast that with your government which would not even allow the Aboriginal Lands Parliamentary Standing Committee to meet.

Mr HANNA: It is certainly not my government that the minister is talking about. I want to know why those things have not been done.

The CHAIR: Order! The honourable member has the indulgence of the committee. I ask him to please be quiet.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will come to your question, Kris—that remark was not directed at you; it was directed at the interjection. Let us be clear, the reason you are able to frame that question is because we publish regular updates about what is or is not happening on the APY lands. The overwhelming evidence, statistically and anecdotally at every level, is that the APY lands are undergoing a dramatic improvement. I will give you two unsolicited eye witness accounts from when we were visiting the APY lands.

One gentleman who is assisting the Mullighan inquiry who was formerly a police officer at Amata said that he has never seen the lands looking as good in terms of the health and wellbeing of the community and its pride and attitude in general. A number of social workers who were posted there in the 90s also said that they have never seen the current level of pride and wellbeing in the community. We are seeing a lift in the school retention rate and at just about every level a revamp of every service. As part of that, if the member for Mitchell would care to listen to my answer—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I am trying to communicate with the member for Mitchell. As part of that, we have also had to look at some of the things that have not worked. We have to be honest about the fact that night patrols were not working. We are now trialing a new model of night patrols in Indulkana, and we are hopeful that that will address the issues there. Night patrols are, of course, just one element

of policing. There has been a dramatic lift in the number of police on the lands with eight sworn officers, and a further four will be added to the lands.

An important part of this is the role that the community plays in relation to policing. People actually feel that there is now a point in trying to address conduct and stop misbehaviour by reporting it to the police, because they now feel that there is hope for the future. That was something that we did not have a few years ago. There was hopelessness. That is why people would not say anything if there was a kid walking past with a can on their nose. They now think there is a point in doing something about that—and that has been a dramatic change.

In relation to the number of community constables, there is no doubt that this has been a challenge. There are at present only four of the 10 who have been funded, and we are grappling with issues around that. Recruitment is difficult because the reality is that some of the people whom you would target for those sorts of roles unfortunately have criminal convictions. They might be minor criminal convictions, but the police have strict recruiting guidelines around the sorts of people they are prepared to allow into their constable ranks, and we are trying to work through that at the moment with the police. There might be some other ways in which we can grapple with that issue, but it is proving to be a difficulty for us in relation to recruitment.

There is also a difficulty around people who are in a policing role in communities where they have family members. We are also rethinking whether the community constable model is the correct one. That is not to say that we do not have some successful community constables. The four who are there play a tremendous role, but it may be that we will have to reconfigure that service model. It is true that those two elements of what have been promised have not been delivered on, but we are reshaping what we are doing in this area.

In relation to the hard infrastructure in Amata and Ernabella, we have just concluded a package of measures with the commonwealth which will involve the building of an additional four police houses and two police stations. This will free up some resources for the state government which had been proposing to build a police station or an administration block to assist in that area. We are continuing to work on those issues. The other point that needs to be made is that the building of facilities on the lands is an extraordinarily lengthy task. We are beginning to see the conclusion of the drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility at Amata. I have some images of the Amata facility if any member would be interested in looking at them. This facility is beginning to shape, and we thought that was an urgent first step given the issues confronting us on the lands. We are building something that will help rather than it being somewhere for people to be detained.

Mr HANNA: I have a supplementary question in response to that.

The CHAIR: I am not confident that I will allow that supplementary. The member can ask it and I will then see if I will allow it.

Mr HANNA: There is a lot of evidence that a significant proportion of offending on the lands occurs in the evening. So how can the minister say that night patrols were not working?

The CHAIR: Order! That question is not in order. The member for Morphett, do you have a question?

Mr HANNA: Madam Chair, my question was related to what the minister said in his answer. How can the minister say that night patrols were not working?

The CHAIR: Yes, I know. It is debate. The member for Morphett, do you have any questions?

Mr HANNA: The question is: how can he say that night patrols were not working?

The CHAIR: Order! Member for Mitchell, you are here with the indulgence of the chair. You have already tried to take a point of order, which you did not have the right to do. Please allow the member for Morphett to ask his question.

Mr HANNA: It is a shameful thing that that question was not answered. You have done it again, Madam Chair. You did it last year, and you are doing it again this year: you are protecting the minister from the most difficult questions.

The CHAIR: Order! The member for Mitchell will cease interjecting.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 1.46, performance commentary. What steps has the government taken to backfill the two police officer positions at Yalata, because both officers are currently on leave?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I think the arrangement in relation to officers on leave is that they are backfilled, but I will have to find that out from the Minister for Police.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, pages 1.45 and 1.57, the second paragraph, grants and subsidies. What APY task force projects and programs on the APY lands that receive once-off funding under the social inclusion initiative 'Alcohol education and rehabilitation foundation-related programs' have been discontinued and why (that is, the \$11 million cut)?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Well, there is no \$11 million cut and, it does not matter how many times you say it, it is not going to make it true. The reference to page 1.57, the second dot point from the top, regarding the decrease in intragovernment transfers between 2006-07 estimated result and the 2007-08 budget reflects one-off funding received in 2006-07 from the APY task force for delivery of various projects and programs on the APY lands. The DPC-controlled income statement shows that intragovernment transfers between the 2006-07 estimated result of \$10.186 million and the 2007-08 budget of \$5.07 million decreased by \$5.11 million. The reference to once-off funding received in 2006-07 for the APY lands task force for delivery of various projects and programs in the APY lands contributing to these decreases is extremely misleading.

The once-off funding received in 2006-07 relating to the APY task force was commonwealth funding for the land service coordinators (\$378 000) carried forward from 2005-06, which was administered through the task force in 2006-07. This is not really a once-off initiative as the commonwealth has since released a further \$1.5 million to ensure the continuation of the service coordinator provisions over three years and it has released \$800 000 for its housing on the lands. So, it is really more a function of how the commonwealth funds us than it is about any other proposition.

The CHAIR: The time set aside for examination of this line having concluded, I declare consideration of the proposed payments completed. I thank the minister and his advisers.

[Sitting suspended from 12.04 to 2 p.m.]

Department for Families and Communities, \$714 702 000
Administered Items for the Department for Families and Communities, \$125 949 000

Departmental Advisers:

Ms S. Vardon, Chief Executive, Department for Families and Communities.

Mr J. Ullianich, Chief Finance Officer.

Ms A. Gale, Director, Office for the Ageing.

Membership:

Mrs Redmond substituted for Dr McFetridge.

Mr Venning substituted for Mr Pengilly.

The CHAIR: We have experienced committee members in terms of knowing the rules. We have experienced advisers, in general. I remind the advisers about the issue of questions being directed to the minister, not to the minister's advisers. If some of the recalcitrant members try to engage you in debate, please resist. Minister, I am sure no member present here would try to engage the advisers in debate. The minister may refer questions to advisers for a response. I declare the proposed payment open for examination and I refer members to the Portfolio Statements, Volume 3, part 11.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I do not propose to make an opening statement and I do not anticipate any questions from the government side. I understand that my friend the member for Heysen has some questions.

The CHAIR: Do you wish to make an opening statement, the member for Heysen?

Mrs REDMOND: No, thank you, Madam Chair, other than to thank the minister for changing this timetable to allow me to attend a funeral this morning. If I could get straight on with the questions, that would be most appreciated. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 11.30, subprogram 3.4: Office for the Ageing. I note that the budget for the year 2006-07 was \$48.637 million and that that was overspent by more than \$2.75 million. Minister, could you explain what caused the blow-out and what was the additional money spent on?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: This is a common misconception. The estimated result is not, in fact, the actual spending for the financial year: it is the estimated final budget. It involves a revision of the budget upwards, rather than the final result. Because we have not reached the end of the financial year, we do not have the actual spending recorded in the budget papers. That is what it amounts to.

Mrs REDMOND: I appreciate that, and it relates to my next question as well. It still seems to me to be a big discrepancy, given that we have now passed the end of the financial year. The figure of \$2.75 million seems to me to be a large discrepancy between the target and the estimated result. Is there any explanation other than that?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes, there is. That is just by way of broad background. It involves a revision of the budget upwards, and the reason for that is that there is a \$2.7 million increase between the 2006-07 budget and the 2006-07 estimated result. The reason for that is the \$2.9 million increase in the 2006-07 for HACC and ACAP carryovers from 2005-06 and a \$0.2 million decrease for the transfer of both the community care innovation fund and the improving with age programs to other subprograms. It basically is a carryover issue associated with HACC and ACAP funding, and the reason that tends to happen is because commonwealth funds tend to come in towards the

end of the financial year. They always catch you out in terms of a financial year, so there are often carryovers associated with those federal programs. This affects everyone and we are trying to bring those back into greater alignment, but it is largely a consequence of the commonwealth and state budgetary processes being a little out of line.

Mrs REDMOND: Perhaps you can make that clearer because it is still like mud to me in a way. I note that a similar discrepancy appeared in last year's budget papers and this year's budget papers. Last year's budget papers (page 11.32 of the same volume) showed an estimated result for 2005-06 of \$45.728 million, but the actual in this year's papers is \$3 million less. Given that we got our budget papers in September last year, well and truly past the end of the financial year, why is there a discrepancy in that and why is it \$3 million less for this year?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: When it talks about the estimated result, even though it is beyond the end of the financial year, it still is an estimated budget result, not an estimated actual result or an actual result when the close of the financial year occurred. It is just the way budget papers have been designed for a long time. You will have to ask the person who started this. I asked exactly the same question, because it seems that estimated result implies actual result, whereas, in fact, it is the estimated budgeted result. It is the estimated budget for that year, and it becomes even more curious if you go beyond the end of the financial year, but it is certainly the way that all budgets have been framed.

Mrs REDMOND: Curiouser and curiouser.

The CHAIR: Member for Heysen, the minister may be getting more information that will attempt to make it clearer.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will ask my chief financial officer to explain it. He has run it by me 10 times, and I still have the same bewildered look.

Mr ULLIANICH: I think the minister has covered it fairly well. Essentially, the estimated result really reflects a revised budget at a point in time to take into account any decisions taken by cabinet since the original budget went to print. So, you have cabinet decisions during the course of the year whereby additional funding might be allowed for a particular program or carryover decisions are actually put into effect. Once that decision is made, there is a change to the budget to reflect it. By and large, that is what the estimated result reflects.

Mrs REDMOND: Can I just pursue that? Why is the revised budget in this year's figures more than \$3 million less than the estimated result in the previous year's?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Just take me through that piece by piece.

Mrs REDMOND: If you look at last year's budget papers—same volume on page 11.32—the estimated result then was \$45 728 000, but the actual in this year's budget for that same year (2005-06) is \$42 657 000, which is more than \$3 million less. So, where did the \$3 million go?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: That equals the carryover for the next financial year. It then matches up with the previous explanation that I received. Because the estimated budget result is \$3 million higher than what we spent, that creates a carryover issue, and that is echoed in this budget.

Mrs REDMOND: On the same page, minister, I am again a bit puzzled by an explanation that is given in footnote (a) under the performance indicators. My understanding from the explanation is that, until now, HACC grants have been made to Metropolitan Domiciliary Care, which was administered

by the health department, and they will now be moved to Families and Communities. In moving from Health to Families and Communities it then appears as a new program on the next page, so it is separate. If that is the case, if it has come from outside the department and is now in a separate line as subprogram 3.5, why has the budget for the Office for the Ageing been reduced by about 43 per cent from about \$48 million to \$27 million?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I know that you have identified the next page where there has been a corresponding increase under subprogram 3.5, but that is where the money—

Mrs REDMOND: But that has come from Health, as I understand the explanation.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I see. What you need to know is that we would send HACC money to health and then out to Metropolitan Domiciliary Care. That is what the status quo was prior to the change. Now HACC refunds directly to Metropolitan Domiciliary Care rather than going through the Office for the Ageing. There are some health contributions that go directly to Metropolitan Domiciliary Care.

Mrs REDMOND: Can I just seek further clarification on that? I am curious as to whether the HACC grants are made just to metro dom care or whether there are other aspects of HACC grants funding that go elsewhere.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: There are. HACC is a very large program. I think that Metropolitan Domiciliary Care represents about \$23 million of the funding, so total HACC funding is \$128 million; \$23 million of \$128 million makes it the largest single HACC funding line.

Mrs REDMOND: In regard to the number of people receiving HACC services under 'performance indicators', I notice that is not higher than the previous year's result; in fact, again—and maybe I am misreading these—the estimated result seems to be higher than what was in the budget for last year. This year's target is, again, about \$5 000 higher than last year's. Have any demographic studies been done in anticipation of where these figures are likely to go? We all know that they are going to go up with our ageing population, but do we know by how much and what is the anticipated increase?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: One of the things that you will note from the budget papers is that there has been (and continues to be) quite dramatic growth in our HACC program. The HACC program is informed by those demographic trends. When we get the commonwealth funding (we put in about one-third and they put in two-thirds), it then becomes a question of trying to maximise the number of people we can help with that funding. There is a related issue, which is the question of the community care reform process, which is really about ensuring that HACC does not get diverted into more intense services which should be the province of the commonwealth.

HACC was always designed to be a low-level care organisation, but we are finding that a small number of people are actually receiving a large proportion of the funding, as funding goes into dealing with people who otherwise are not able to be cared for in residential care settings or more intensive care settings. That is one of the debates at the moment with the commonwealth. That affects the number of people who can be assisted, because we do not need too many people with very high needs for it to drain a lot of funds away from the low-care system.

Mrs REDMOND: Am I correct in my understanding that HACC funding, via metropolitan domiciliary care, is still predominantly helping people largely in their own homes and helping them to maintain independence in their own homes, rather than in institutional settings?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes, that is correct. I was just trying to see whether it was entirely in their own home. Some people who are in non-home-based care, but not commonwealth-funded residential care, are entitled to receive HACC services. By and large, it is people in their own homes.

Mrs REDMOND: My understanding is that HACC funding also encompasses things such as elder daycare in certain settings.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes, there are centre-based care programs, as well as services on an individual basis.

Mrs REDMOND: I appreciate it might be a result of when the budget papers were printed, but footnote (b) states that the 2007-08 target for HACC funding will depend on the level of commonwealth HACC funding, and I know that there is a specific ratio. However, given that the federal budget was brought down some time ago, do we yet know what that level of HACC funding will be?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We received the offer just last week and we can provide those details for you. The recurrent expenditure will increase by an additional 8.2 per cent from \$128.1 million to \$138.6 million, of which the state contribution will be \$53.2 million.

Mrs REDMOND: I refer again to page 11.30. I want to ask some questions about the Retirement Villages Act, and it is referred to in the top of sub-program 3.4 and also on page 11.14. I commence with page 11.14, which sets out the targets for the next year. The second dot point at the top states, 'Establish a register of South Australian retirement villages and advance investigations of breaches of the Retirement Villages Act 1987.' The first part of the question is: how many villages are now registered?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: There are approximately 450 retirement villages, and I am advised that that process is not yet quite complete, although it is nearing completion. That is obviously one of the targets for this financial year. In relation to the process of pursuing matters against retirement villages, we have taken a fairly unprecedented step in indemnifying the residents' legal costs in relation to Hillsvie Retirement Village—their appeal against the residential tenancies order—and the matter has been set for a full hearing on 12 July. I also understand that another dispute is occurring in relation to that proprietor. We decided to indemnify those costs because the individuals in question did not feel as though they had the capacity to resist or to meet the legal fees, and they were concerned about the risks to them. We wanted to send a message to the industry that as a government we were standing behind residents in certain disputes in relation to retirement villages.

Mrs REDMOND: A couple of further questions arise from that. First, I note your answer that 450 villages are currently registered. I am curious as to how we identify the villages. How do we know who is running a retirement village and how do we identify someone who perhaps is running one that has not been registered?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will ask Anne Gale to explain the process that has been undertaken to gather that material.

Ms GALE: In order to identify the retirement villages, we undertook a number of processes, including writing to local government, writing to those villages we were aware of, and, in addition, phoning every local community, local government, any particular provider—caravan parks—where we thought there might be a retirement village in place, and we have identified approximately 450—about 100 more than expected—through significant rummaging around the state of all resources.

Mrs REDMOND: I have an endless number of questions about retirement villages, so forgive me. As to breaches, you mentioned the one involving Hillsvie, and you mentioned there might be other proceedings afoot. Did those proceedings finish last week? Were they the assault proceedings that I heard reported involving a resident and a proprietor?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: No, they are additional ones. On 15 June the tribunal heard another matter regarding a dispute about the imposition of increased recurrent charge on residents, which is not in accordance with the act. The administering authority is seeking a resolution and agreed to a compromise with the residents in question. If no objections are submitted to that compromise, we expect that the tribunal will make an order seeking to restore the position of the residents. A dispute has been effectively resolved. An assault charge was heard, and the person in question pleaded guilty to two charges of assault against residents. As a result of that plea, the person was fined \$500 plus court costs, but no conviction was recorded. I must say that was a very alarming development in relation to that retirement village, and it has been dealt with through the courts.

Mrs REDMOND: Is there a process for anyone to be declared not to be fit and proper to be running a retirement village and, if so, would an assault against residents classify as such?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Section 37 of the Retirement Villages Act prevents a person who is an insolvent and who has during the previous five years been convicted of an offence to the person or an offence involving fraud or dishonesty, or has served a sentence of imprisonment for an offence to the person or an offence involving fraud or dishonesty, being a sentence that ended during the previous five years, from being concerned in the administration or management of a retirement village. That is the fit and proper person test. My advice is that no conviction has been recorded. I am also advised that, apparently, that means the administering authority, or at least the person associated with this administering authority, can continue to be involved in the administration of a retirement village.

Mrs REDMOND: As the minister would appreciate, I have had a longstanding interest in this piece of legislation. My view of the way in which the act is worded is that the retirement village administering authority must nominate a person to be the 'nominated person', but there does not appear to be necessarily anything in the legislation that makes that clear enough. It appears that a company, for instance, could be the nominated person. Is the minister aware of a problem in that regard?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: What I am told here (and it is not in quotations; I presume that it is an accurate paraphrasing of the act) is that it is directed at a person concerned in the administration or management of a retirement village. So, I would have thought that is broad enough to cover someone who plays an important role within a company who was concerned in the administration or management of a retirement village. However, I do not have

any legal advice about that and I could probably take that question on notice.

Mrs REDMOND: Thank you, minister. I would appreciate that because it is a question that has arisen, as most of them do, by way of complaint from a resident. I note the minister's comments about funding a particular case at the moment, and I appreciate that. My understanding is that that has been in the legislation for some considerable time, that is, the capacity to do that. I wonder whether any consideration has been given to changing the mechanism by which these matters are currently heard. When this act was introduced it was considered that the Residential Tenancies Tribunal would be an appropriate forum, but, of course, it is designed for very brief hearings, with no representation. I know, having been involved directly in a five-day trial with barristers and solicitors, that that tribunal is inadequate—not necessarily in the capacity of the person to hear it but the capacity of the tribunal in terms of taking notes and transcript dealing with questions of law that arise and so on. It just seems to me that there might be a capacity to change the way in which we deal with problems under the legislation. Has any thought been given to that?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I am happy to take those ideas on board. I suppose the things that occur to me are that, because there is usually an ongoing relationship between the administering authority and the resident, there is a pretty large premium associated with achieving a negotiated outcome. I think that a body which has a degree of informality about it and which is heavily laden with process which promotes conciliation is a good thing. However, I take your point that, if it is muskets at 20 paces, sometimes those informal tribunals are not necessarily set up for those sorts of disputes. I think it is true to say that disputes of that sort are relatively rare, but I appreciate what has been said and I am happy to take that on notice. It may be that some thought could be given to some exception in some circumstances. I know that the supervising body is the District Court. It may be, then, that in proper cases some direct recourse could be had to it. However, I would be anxious not to raise the level of costs, which would then make the jurisdiction out of reach for the average citizen.

Mrs REDMOND: This is my last question on retirement villages. Minister, are you aware of people who are setting themselves up and telling their residents they are going into a retirement village when, in fact, they are operating what is called a 'lifestyle village', and they behave more like a hostel, where they supply not just the accommodation but often food as well? Because people are not actually purchasing a licence to occupy permanently, they seem to fall between the cracks in that they are neither a hostel licensed by the federal government nor a retirement village registered under our legislation? Potentially, these people may indeed be more vulnerable simply because they are not financially able to purchase a permanent place in a retirement village registered under this act. Is the minister aware of that problem and what is being done to address the problem of those people who clearly believe they have moved into a retirement village but, in fact, have nothing more than a contractual relationship with lifestyle village providers?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Partly as a consequence of discussions we had in this forum on a previous occasion, I think that, in considering the legislation, we realised that this new form of organisation may be something that will have to be grappled with within the Retirement Villages Act or some other form of legislation. It will also benefit from

your communication with us on 25 June inquiring about whether a particular village is covered under the Retirement Villages Act. It is correct that they do not fit within the definition in the Retirement Villages Act 1987. We are obviously giving some thought to whether the appropriate regulation should be in the Supported Residential Facilities Act or the Residential Tenancies Act. In her second reading speech on the Residential Parks Bill, minister Rankine announced that the Residential Tenancies Act would be amended in due course to include organisations such as those you are concerned about to bring them within the province of that legislation. That would give residents (who would then be private rental tenants for the purposes of the act) access to a range of services, including the Tenant Information and Advice Advocacy Service, which has recently been established.

Mrs REDMOND: Of course, one of the problems that is coming up is the provision of food, which is really outside the normal jurisdiction of the Residential Tenancies Tribunal. Is there any thought to broadening the Retirement Villages Act to encompass organisations such as lifestyle villages?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Where we are at the moment is that we think that broadening the scope of the Residential Tenancies Act will be the first step. In a sense, we are really closing in on these different sorts of organisations. We have the Residential Parks Bill and the Residential Tenancies Act, which will be expanded in its scope. We have already expanded the scope of the Retirement Villages Act. We are reviewing the Supported Residential Facilities Act and, although there is no boarding houses act, we are reviewing those two forms of organisations for the purposes of considering an accommodation bill to focus on vulnerable people in more vulnerable tenancies. So, between all those forms of regulation, we hope to close all the gaps.

The CHAIR: Are you ready to proceed to disability now?

Mrs REDMOND: Yes. I still have lots of questions, but I will move on to disability.

The CHAIR: The time agreed for the examination of matters relating to ageing having expired, I advise that the proposed payments for the Department for Families and Communities and Administered Items for the Department for Families and Communities remain open. I call the Minister for Disability to the table.

Additional Departmental Advisers:

Mr P. Smith, Deputy Chief Executive, Department for Families and Communities.

Mr D. Caudrey, Director, Office for Disability and Client Services.

Ms L. Young, Executive Director, Disability SA.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I do not propose to make an opening statement, nor do I anticipate any questions from the government side.

Mrs REDMOND: It will come as no surprise to the minister that I refer to Budget Paper 3, page 2.20, savings measures, which states:

Savings measures in the portfolio include reducing the level of support for disability advocacy and information referral services and a reduction in corporate overheads.

My first question is: if those things are included but not exhaustive, what else is involved in savings measures in the portfolio?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: That language is used because there are also savings initiatives in Families SA.

Mrs REDMOND: So not relevant to disability.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Not relevant to disability.

Mrs REDMOND: Can the minister provide a breakdown of the amounts to be taken from each of the organisations named as involved: the Down Syndrome Society of SA, the Disability Information Resource Centre, Arthritis SA, the Brain Injury Network, Family Advocacy, Paraquad SA, Deaf SA, Our Voice, the Muscular Dystrophy Association, Anglican Community Care, and the Physical and Neurological Council of SA?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I think it might be easier if I provide you with a table. Unless you really want the information today, I can provide you with a table of all those numbers.

Mrs REDMOND: I would like to have them on the record, minister.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Certainly. I will make sure that it is supplied as an answer to the parliament on the record.

Mrs REDMOND: Does the minister recognise that there will be a significant loss of specialist knowledge resulting from these changes. In particular, I refer the minister to some letters I have received from people in various organisations, but mostly in relation to Down syndrome. I have had a number of letters from parents about the fact that after the withdrawal of funding advocacy and information services will simply not be able to be provided by the intended state government agencies. A lady wrote:

I was a first time mum in country Queensland at the time and was provided with no information on Down syndrome when I was discharged from hospital. . . Had my son been born in South Australia, the DSSSA [the Down Syndrome Society of SA] would have made contact with me while I was still in hospital and assumed their role of providing me with information, support and advocacy, enabling me to hope for great things for my son's future and to start getting in touch with the various intervention services available. Disability SA does not have the expertise, the resources or any new funding to bring their ability to respond to these new parents up to scratch. All new parents will end up with are professionals in therapy giving them opinions and generalist information on the disability and its effects. What new parents need is advice from people who have years and years of experience with Down syndrome and not disabilities in general.

She goes on to detail a whole range of things that the advocates within DSSSA have helped with. Similarly, I have a letter from another couple talking about their child and a lady and her grand-daughter. The letter states:

The Down Syndrome Society recently sent someone to explain to every class in her school what Down syndrome is and why Emily is so different, why she speaks different and is slow, why she needs help.

I have received letters from many people, all involved with these organisations, all of which will lose the ability to continue to provide the advocacy. I would like to hear from the minister how he thinks Disability SA can possibly replace the expertise and knowledge of all those organisations which has been gained over many years and which is so specialised.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I thank the member for her question. I think the first thing to say is that the savings that have been made in this area form only a proportion of the budget in relation to non-government organisations. So there is a \$1.3 million budget for these advocacy information services, and the savings that are redirected into front-line services amount to \$750 000. So that is the first thing to say: the funding has not been totally cut; a proportion of it has been redirected. The second thing is that a range of these

organisations—almost all—are funded for not just advocacy and information services. They have a much broader funding base, from not only the state and the commonwealth but also their own resources, so it represents, in some cases, quite a small proportion of their total budget.

The other thing to be borne in mind is that, as we move towards the Disability SA model, \$1 million per annum is allocated to Disability SA for information and advocacy services. Disability SA directly provides a number of important services to people in these categories, including people with Down syndrome and a range of other disabilities, so there is expertise within Disability SA. But, even where expertise has been developed within non-government organisations, it needs to be borne in mind that we are working closely with those non-government organisations to find ways in which we can make the transition from what is currently happening to the new model that we are proposing.

One of the central elements of Disability SA is to make sure that we have a one-stop-shop for disability services so that we can provide accurate and adequate information and advice at an entry level for people with disabilities. We believe that it is a responsibility of government that should not be outsourced. We believe that, if one is to create a service system that has any sense of coherence, we need to have the ability to provide information and advice to every citizen who wants to know what is going on. We cannot outsource that to advocacy services or non-government organisations.

That is not to say that non-government organisations will not play a crucial role into the future. They continue to be the largest provider of disability services and, indeed, in this budget an extraordinary amount of additional money goes into disability services. Total funding to NGOs has increased from \$140.6 million in 2005-06 to \$145 million in 2006-07, and this represents 55.5 per cent of total disability funding compared to 54.1 per cent in 2006-07. So, what we are basically seeing is a continuing commitment to disability services funding in this state, and we will continue to work closely with these providers.

In relation to their continuing roles in the advocacy and information area, we are meeting with a number of these service providers to see ways in which we can assist them to continue to play that role. There might be some economies that can be achieved and some information that can be shared so that we do not lose any of the valuable elements that formerly have been provided by these organisations.

Mrs REDMOND: Given that these cuts were brought in with no consultation—in fact, it appears from one letter I received that they were contrary to the Disability Act in South Australia—and none of the agencies affected was provided with any feedback that the services they had been providing were inadequate or inefficient, it seems to me incomprehensible that the government is prepared to throw out the expertise—and that is what has happened, effectively. The government is throwing out expertise garnered over many years, predominantly from what I know the minister thinks of as parent groups, but these groups have gathered, over a period of generations, expertise specific to the disability. As the parent pointed out in the letter, they need help and understanding just as much as a doorstep to go to with the public servant who will direct them to where they might apply for various things. Does the minister not understand that often their advocacy needs to be against the very department that he is now saying they will get their advocacy from?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: You slip between advocacy and information and advice, and they are two very different propositions. I think that there is a strong argument that people would be more concerned about getting services than having us pay people to ask for those services, and that is one of the reasons we have moved down this path. It is true that the information and advice services that we are setting up are part and parcel of our reform package. They were services that were essentially outsourced into a range of non-government organisations that we believe need to be provided centrally. That does not mean that additional advocacy and advice services will not continue to be performed by non-government organisations. The commonwealth has already gone down this approach of reviewing the amount of money that is going into advocacy. I think governments of all persuasions and at all levels over the years have been content to send more and more money to information and advocacy in a bid, I suppose, to placate organisations that were complaining about a lack of services. However, the truth is that now the critical need is to put money directly into those services, and those are the choices that we have had to make.

I do not accept this dichotomy that people in the non-government sector are caring people who are in touch with the needs of people with disabilities and that, somehow, bureaucrats are faceless, cold people who do not understand disability services. The truth is that the people are identical. They often move between the two sectors and, in some circumstances, they are providing indistinguishable services, except that historically some have been provided within a government framework and some have been provided within a non-government framework. A classic example of that is Julia Farr. It was a non-government organisation and then was incorporated as a health unit and it has now floated back out as a non-government organisation. The character of the people did not change: it was simply the means by which we organised disability services.

The other thing that needs to be borne in mind is that we are also beefing up the minister's Disability Advisory Council to ensure that it can play a much more assertive role in providing direct advice to me, independent of the agency. That also is an important source of advice. In a perfect world, if we had unlimited resources, we would like to be able to continue to fund all these organisations to provide information and advocacy in addition to what we provide within government, but we have to make choices about scarce resources.

Mrs REDMOND: One of the groups that have lost funding under this \$753 000 reduction is Our Voice, which provides self-advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities. Its website had two training programs for people with intellectual disabilities: a consumer rep program and peer mentoring training. However, it will now have to be dismantled, because it was on the EnableNet website, which has just been defunded. It was funded through a grant from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet last year, and it was finalised only last October. Can the minister advise how much that little exercise cost us?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Our Voice was not part of this savings initiative; that was a separate issue. It was the subject of some one-off funding, which came to an end. The needs that the people behind that organisation were seeking to promote are now dealt with in the consumer advisory groups that have been set up in each of the various disability areas. So, intellectual disability has a dedicated consumer advisory group.

Mrs REDMOND: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 11.13. In the targets for 2007-08 there is no mention of disability equipment waiting lists, yet last month the minister announced his intention to clear the disability waiting lists. That announcement closely reflected the announcement made by the minister in 2004, and I wonder whether the minister has any more intention of clearing the waiting lists this time than he did in 2004. Clearly, not much happened, if we went from \$5.9 million to clear the disability waiting list of 750 in 2004 to \$5.7 million to clear the disability waiting list for what is now 1 000 people in 2007.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I think the difference is that we have now included the adult equipment waiting list: it is a broader list that we are clearing this time. Also, the reason why it does not appear in the highlights for 2007-08 is that it was a one-off payment of money allocated out of the 2006-07 budget. When it became obvious towards the end of the financial year that there was capacity in the budget to make that payment, the Treasurer provided the funding to do that. The extra \$5.69 million comprises \$3.02 million for adult equipment items, \$1.47 million for children's equipment items and \$1.2 million for communication devices.

I do not know what the answer is as to why that is a much higher amount for adult equipment than it was in the previous budget, but sometimes when you clear a waiting list it provides a basis for people to join it, because it becomes a much shorter queue. Certainly, on the basis of the information we have, that will clear the waiting lists in relation to all items of equipment for adults. The other difference is the addition of \$1.2 million for communication devices.

Mrs REDMOND: Is the minister asserting that, in fact, he did spend the \$5.9 million and that it did clear the waiting lists?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: No. I think what has happened is that that money has been paid out in the 2006-07 financial year to non-government organisations, and will be held as a non-recourse grant for those purposes.

Mrs REDMOND: I am referring to the 2004 announcement.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I think it is just the question of a continually growing waiting list. Obviously, as at 30 June, that was the waiting list; it was identified at a certain point. Over the period of time between now and then, the waiting list has simply grown to the level that exists at the present time.

Mr HANNA: I am looking at the accommodation figures on pages 11.26 and 11.28 of Volume 3 of Budget Paper 4. I am advised from the Dignity for Disabled group that in the next 12 months it is planned for 79 people to be removed from aggregate living and for 83 people to be accommodated in group homes. At the same time the AIHW report that was released in June 2007 shows that SA has 1 678 awaiting disability supported accommodation, and 688 awaiting disability group supported accommodation. So, can the minister confirm that, in fact, there are only four additional places and a waiting list in aggregate of over 2 000 people?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I think what needs to be understood about the expansion of accommodation places, and this was made clear at the time when we made the relevant announcements in the budget, is that we are part way through some negotiations with the commonwealth in relation to the next commonwealth-state disability agreement. So what is represented in the budget papers at the moment reflects, I suppose, the position before we have concluded what is essentially the most important agreement that affects

this area, that is the five-year commonwealth-state disability agreement. Both commonwealth and state have put accommodation on the agenda as the critical next steps, if you like.

To make any inroads into this population growth of something like 2.2 per cent per annum, or indeed to deal with the indexation of costs, which also grows at a much greater rate than we have been getting at the moment from the commonwealth, we will have to achieve a substantial offer from the commonwealth in relation to these matters. That will have to occur if we are going to make any real headway in relation to supported accommodation. Just this week a letter has been sent to the commonwealth minister about that matter and there are bilateral negotiations occurring with the commonwealth minister, essentially as we speak. So I suppose right at the moment it is an unresolved question.

In relation to the actual waiting list, an audit of unmet need for supported accommodation has been taking place, and all individuals who were previously on an urgent waiting list for supported accommodation are being reassessed. This is currently being completed. At the end of June, 90 per cent of those have been completed, and that amounts to 480 people who fit within that category. So that is the present detail that we have about the number of people who are on the urgent waiting list for supported accommodation.

Mr HANNA: Again, from program 3, as a whole, and covering disability: I understand the disability budget is \$217 million. Can the minister confirm that figure, and does that mean that we will continue to rank last nationally for disability support and, in fact, slip further behind?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The number, I think \$217 million, combined with commonwealth funding ranks us about halfway through the chain of states. It is lower if you consider just state funding alone, but we can take commonwealth and state funding together, because historically there is a formula that favours South Australia in relation to its higher level of people with disabilities. We spend \$155 per capita in relation to people with disabilities; compared with Western Australia, which is beneath us at \$149; Northern Territory, \$147; Queensland, \$125; and the average is \$169. So, it is true that we have a way to catch up to the national average, but nevertheless we are not last.

Mrs REDMOND: These are the omnibus questions that I want to place on the record for the minister's response, for each of the portfolios of the minister:

1. Will the minister provide a detailed breakdown of the baseline data that was provided to the Shared Services Reform Office by each department or agency reporting to the minister, including the current total cost of the provision of payroll, finance, human resources, procurement, records management and information technology services, in each department or agency reporting to the minister, as well as the full-time equivalent staffing numbers involved?

2. Will the minister provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure on consultants and contractors in 2006-07 for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, listing the name of the consultant and contractor, 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 2007, 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 2005-06 for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what underspending on

projects and programs was not approved by cabinet for carryover expenditure in 2006-07?

5. For all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what is the estimated or actual level of under-expenditure for 2006-07, and has cabinet already approved any carryover expenditure into 2007-08 and, if so, how much?

6. (i) What was the total number of employees with a total employment cost of \$100 000 or more per employee, and also, as a sub-category, 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 2007?

(ii) Between 30 June 2006 and 30 June 2007, will the minister list the job title and total employment cost of each position with a total estimated cost of \$100 000 or more which has been (a) abolished and (b) created?

7. For the years 2005-06 and 2006-07, will the minister provide a breakdown of expenditure on all grants administered by all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, listing the name of the grant recipient, the amount of the grant and the purpose of the grants and whether the grant was subject to a grant agreement as required by Treasurer's Instruction 15?

8. For all capital works projects listed in Budget Paper 5 that are the responsibility of the minister, list the total amount spent to date on each project.

The CHAIR: Minister, are you able to provide that information?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Not on me, no. Can I take them on notice?

The CHAIR: In due course; before 7 September. I thank the advisers. The time allotted for questions relating to the Minister for Disability has expired. The proposed payments for the Department for Families and Communities and Administered Items for the Department for Families and Communities remain open. I call the Minister for Housing to the table.

Additional Departmental Advisers:

Ms H. Fulcher, General Manager, Housing Services, Housing SA.

Mr P. Fagan-Schmidt, General Manager, South Australian Affordable Housing Trust.

Membership:

Ms Chapman substituted for Mrs Redmond.

The CHAIR: Minister, do you have an opening statement?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I do. I want to start with an issue which is of growing concern, not only to this state but also the nation, and that is the affordable housing crisis. While South Australia remains one of the most affordable places in the nation to purchase a house, we continue to see a growing sense of concern around the inability of young families to be able to purchase their first house and a large number of people who are spending an extraordinary proportion of their income to manage their mortgage repayments or their rental payments. We have grappled with this question in a range of ways. First, we have taken the step of coming up with a comprehensive state housing plan. That state housing plan has now been in place

for two years and its ambitions were to take South Australia's housing policy effort beyond what passed for the slow demise of our social housing agencies and to take it into a new era of innovation in relation to affordable housing.

Until that plan was promulgated, the Housing Trust was slowly being eaten away by the sale of houses to meet the shortfall that arose from the 36 per cent reduction in commonwealth-state housing agreement moneys, an increase in complexity and expense associated with dealing with a more highly targeted set of tenants and a falling rent revenue as those higher needs housing tenants were unable to pay market rents. So, confronted with that sad state of affairs, we undertook a very detailed exercise of what would be necessary to stabilise the viability of the Housing Trust. We found, to our concern, that if we kept going the way we were we would lose a further 6 000 to 7 000 homes through the process of simply meeting the shortfall of revenues in expenditure. It became necessary for us to take urgent steps. Instead of just doing what the previous government did, which was to sell off 10 000 Housing Trust homes to the market in a way which was uncontrolled and unplanned and which has led to a range of social problems we are now trying to deal with, we sought to create an affordable homes program which sells slightly more houses over a shorter period of time to stabilise the housing debt and, therefore, the viability of the social housing system but also to drive a new industry—an affordable housing industry.

One of the things that we have in South Australia that we are seeking to take advantage of is a range of important institutions: HomeStart Finance, the Housing Trust, a community housing sector and, crucially, a good planning system with a good relationship with local government, a strong history of tradition and a good relationship with the private sector. We are looking at all those tools in our toolkit to drive forward an increase in supply and affordable housing. We have set up an Affordable Housing Trust. We have established an affordable housing fund to drive new initiatives.

The next step in this exercise was the passing of legislation which now gives us the legislative tools to drive forward. We have established the Housing Summit for 14 August this year, and the purpose of that summit is to drive practical measures to increase the supply of affordable housing. We have been pleased with the cooperation of the development industry, local government and the broader state government departments. We are missing, in our affordable housing efforts, a willing commonwealth partner. It is pleasing to see that Kevin Rudd, potentially the next Prime Minister of Australia, is prepared to put affordable housing on the national agenda, and that is something we simply have not seen in this country for 11 years. We do not have—

Ms CHAPMAN: All talk and no action.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Give him a crack and you might see some action. What we have had is an empty seat at the table in relation to affordable housing. We have begged the commonwealth to become a partner with us in affordable housing, but it has simply been unprepared to take up that offer. The commonwealth's rhetoric was that we keep interest rates low and we run a strong economy, and that is all you need to know; the rest of it is down to the states. A few interest rates increases later, that rhetoric is wearing thin. I think that people are now beginning to realise that we need a federal government that takes an interest in affordable housing. There is almost no national government you can point to anywhere in the world that does not run a national

affordable housing policy and does not have a national housing minister. We are one of the few countries in the world in that situation, so we simply need a greater commonwealth effort.

We need a new national affordable housing agreement negotiated between the commonwealth, the states, the territories and local government. This week in Darwin I will lead a national push to get such an agreement from the commonwealth. It does seem unlikely, though, that the commonwealth will agree to that, given that minister Brough has decided that he is too busy to come to our national housing ministers meeting. That is the state of play at the moment. We are not waiting around; we are moving forward, but it would be useful if we had a willing commonwealth partner.

The CHAIR: Deputy leader, do you want to make an opening statement?

Ms CHAPMAN: No, Madam Chair.

The CHAIR: Proceed to questions then.

Ms CHAPMAN: The minister has received a number of omnibus questions from the previous member of the committee which relate to all of his portfolios, so the committee will mercifully be spared my having to reread those eight questions. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 11.3, relating to capital works and, in particular, affordable housing. At last year's budget estimates the minister took on notice particulars of an \$18.8 million underspend on capital works. When the minister provided this answer—and I have a second copy of it here if it is not easily located—he explained that \$18.2 million had been reallocated for budget expenditure on affordable housing initiatives to future years to reflect project approvals. Over how many years is that, and what amounts have been pushed out to future years?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will have to look at that previous answer.

The CHAIR: Minister, it seems that the question could be asked more directly in relation to this budget, so if you are not able to respond that is fine.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will take that on notice. It refers to an element of the answer that we gave last year.

Ms CHAPMAN: The minister also described a \$5 million land swap with the Land Management Corporation to consolidate landholdings at Seaford Meadows. Can the minister state what land was swapped with the Land Management Corporation, the value of that land, and, similarly, the value of land exchanged and its location?

The CHAIR: Again, does that relate to last year's estimates payments, or do you have a more specific reference for these estimates?

Ms CHAPMAN: Page 11.3 refers to capital works and they are in forward estimates. This was an answer that was given to last year's question to cover what is to be spent and what the land swap was.

The CHAIR: Minister, you may or may not be prepared for that; it would not be directly anticipated.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: There is a detailed answer to it. Broadly, the Housing Trust held some land which was next to the Land Management Corporation's land at Seaford Meadows. In relation to the land release, it was deemed appropriate that the Housing Trust's land be part of the first parcel to be released. Because the Housing Trust was content to, if you like, leave its landholdings in place, it had no difficulty in accepting a swap of that land. What also needs to be remembered is that, in relation to the Seaford

Meadows site, there is a requirement which will be fulfilled in the 15 per cent affordable housing component. I will take the details of the honourable member's question on notice.

Ms CHAPMAN: I again refer to page 11.3 in relation to affordable housing. Is there any provision in these funds for the development of the heritage orchard adjacent to the Glenside Hospital Housing Trust proposed development? If so, how much; and, if not, is that project proceeding?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The whole Glenside site and the surrounding area is still the subject of some government decision-making that has not yet been made. I think that is the most effective way of answering that question. I do not want to answer it in a way which suggests that there might not be some imminent decisions in relation to those matters, but I also do not want to give you the impression that that will have a bearing on the subject land that you just mentioned. There will be further announcements about what will occur in relation to that whole parcel of land.

Ms CHAPMAN: I am not referring to the land which is part of the Royal Adelaide Hospital's Glenside site. I am sure the minister would be aware that, given the Supreme Court proceedings in relation to this property, it is land held under title by the Land Management Corporation and has already been the subject of announcements by the minister for a proposed Housing Trust development on the site. Whilst it is adjacent to the Glenside Hospital site, it is not owned by the health department; it is held by the Land Management Corporation and the minister has already made announcements about it. I am simply asking whether any provision in this capital works budget for the development of that site has been identified for the next four years.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I need to say that all the parcels of land in relation to the Glenside site will be the subject of some government decision-making and announcements hereafter.

Ms CICCARELLO: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 11.13. Will the minister please advise of progress made on the provision of housing for homeless people through the Common Ground Community model following the visit of Thinker in Residence Rosanne Haggerty?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The Common Ground site has been the subject of quite a lot of work over a period of time. It was launched as a key strategy in achieving South Australia's Strategic Plan objectives to half the number of rough sleepers by 2010, maintain that number thereafter, and then increase affordable housing home purchase and rental opportunities by five points by 2014. The housing mix will establish socially-inclusive rental housing for a tenant mix comprising previously homeless people as well as other low income groups seeking affordable housing. The aim is to provide an attractive, sustainable living environment that encourages diversity and social integration and a sense of community amongst its residents. On-site services which will ensure the formerly homeless residents are assisted to re-establish themselves will be in place.

Monsignor David Cappo and I hosted a dinner with 70 members of the South Australian business community during a Thinker in Residence second visit in July last year. At the time we extended an invitation to the corporate sector to join forces with the government to solve homelessness. At this event, a business leaders group was formed to lead the Common Ground event to the next stage, including the establishment of a legal structure to receive gifts and donations with full tax deductibility. The business leaders

group has met almost weekly and has committed resources using their networks to negotiate pro bono work.

Common Ground Adelaide Ltd has now been established as a public company limited by guarantee operating under the Corporations Act. This model of corporate governance brings with it a high level of accountability and transparency which is crucial in attracting philanthropic contributions. Its constitution covers the requirement to utilise funds for the purpose for which is intended: namely, housing for the homeless and other low-income households. In the event of dissolution, transfer of assets would go to a like organisation. DFC has made a non-recourse grant of \$5 million to the project, and recurrent funds of up to \$500 000 to support the project.

Building on the momentum established by Rosanne's visit, we have now established operational and funding elements of the Common Ground supportive housing model and identified transferable strategies from the City of New York. John Olsen, the Consul General to New York, co-hosted a lunch to engender philanthropic support for Common Ground Adelaide where we attracted major corporate sponsors and key contacts in relation to homelessness and philanthropy. At the lunch, interest was generated in establishing an Australians in America for Common Ground Foundation, to enable those residing in the United States to donate to South Australia but reap the benefits of United States tax credits for their donation.

In the interim, Rosanne Haggerty has established a designated section on her website promoting the Adelaide project. In February, Common Ground entered into a contract to purchase Light Square with a settlement date of 15 May. Initial plans have been drawn up for a 60-unit proposition, and we are looking forward to moving forward, with the financial model being designed as we speak.

The CHAIR: Thank you, minister. That was most interesting.

Ms SIMMONS: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 11.99. Can the minister please outline projects that the Affordable Housing Innovations Fund has helped to establish?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Up to March 2007 commitments from the Affordable Housing Innovations Fund have been made to 14 capital projects. These 14 projects involve partner organisations committed to constructing 205 houses in metropolitan regional areas, in addition to a 14-bed residential facility for disabled people, at a total cost for all those projects of \$51.23 million. The financial performance of the Affordable Housing Innovations Fund to date indicates that a house can be built, and an affordable rental outcome achieved, for less than 50 per cent of the cost of a traditional public housing investment. That is, by partnering with other sectors, two houses can be built for the previous cost to government of one, and the projected cost to government across the Affordable Housing Innovations Group is expected to be in the order of \$115 000 per unit. The respective investment profile for the 14 projects (209 housing equivalents) is \$23.87 million, or 46.6 per cent of total estimated project costs in the fund; \$20.74 million, or 40.5 per cent of total estimated project costs from partner contributions; and \$6.6 million, or 12.9 per cent of total estimated project costs from partner borrowings. In general, these commitments are distributed between affordable and high-needs housing outcomes in a ratio of 55 per cent affordable and 45 per cent high-needs, and most of the

projects funded to date will cost greater than \$1 million to build.

Partnerships include: 50 or so units with Bedford Industries in its Homes For 100 project; 40 units with Common Ground for the project I just mentioned; 28 units with Adelaide Workmen's Homes for retiree accommodation at Richmond; 26 units with Laura and Alfred West Cottage Homes for Campbelltown; 16 units with the multi-agency Housing Association for 12 low-income earners and previously homeless people; four on Logan Street in the city; and a 14-bedroom residential facility with the Harrow Trust for the accommodation of people with physical disabilities in Glenside. The total cost of these partnerships is \$3.113 million.

Mr PICCOLO: I wish to further explore some of the comments made by the minister regarding affordable housing. I refer the minister to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 11.13. Can the minister explain how the Affordable Homes Program will ensure that affordable housing continues to be available for those most in need in our community?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I thank the member for his question. The purpose of the Affordable Homes Program is twofold: it will release for purchase homes that are affordable to people on low to moderate incomes and the revenue raised will be directed to the repayment of debt to ensure the ongoing viability of our social housing system. As I said before, the large increase in the number of high-needs clients paying a maximum of 25 per cent of their assessable income in rent, regardless of market rents, has led to a dramatic increase in the unfunded community service obligation carried by Housing SA. Today, 84 per cent of tenants are in receipt of social security benefits, and only one in 10 tenants pays full rent; whereas 30 years ago, four out of every five tenants paid full rent.

The government will continue to focus on providing social housing to those in greatest need. This commitment was made in the housing plan. There is a divestment response necessary to create a sustainable housing portfolio but, as we do that, we have to find a way of driving a new affordable housing industry partnering with the private sector and the community housing sector, and attracting into South Australia the commonwealth rent allowance that is otherwise not available to us. Even with all this, the divestment strategy will reduce the concentration of our social housing stock to 6 per cent of total households in South Australia. This compares favourably to the national average of 4 to 5 per cent.

Ms CHAPMAN: I was interested to read about the new accommodation to which the government's fund has made a contribution. According to Budget Paper 1, the government intends to sell 460 public housing dwellings in 2007-08. Will the minister advise how many public housing dwellings were sold in 2006-07 and how many of those dwelling were sold to the occupying tenants?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We will supply the answer to those questions.

Ms CHAPMAN: If the minister does not have the answer to the following question, he can take it on notice. In relation to the community housing not-for-profit growth program, will the minister advise how many dwellings are proposed to be built and available for occupation in 2007-08?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: What has been happening—and will continue to happen—in relation to our social housing assets is that, as you have just heard, we are reconfiguring our stock so that the urban regeneration programs are better suited to the needs of our current tenants.

There will also be a process of divestment to existing tenants, as well as other methods of holding the stock that still yields affordable housing options. We are really moving away from the direct provision of community and public housing through the state government's directly financing those programs to a process of increasing the supply through the process of partnerships.

Through our 15 per cent affordable housing target, we already have a pipeline of new affordable houses in the order of 1 000 dwellings—and that is what is projected into the future as a consequence of the 15 per cent affordable housing targets that we are driving through land releases and through partnerships with community and private sectors. We expect that to accelerate because we now have the benefit of the legislation, which will enable us to drive those issues further in relation to private sector land releases. There is very clearly a shift away from increasing the supply of affordable housing through direct public provision and a shift towards the provision of affordable housing through the partnerships I mentioned earlier.

Ms CHAPMAN: I thank the minister for that information. Perhaps I did not make my question clear enough. I did not ask for a repeat of why the government is doing it: I asked how many dwellings are proposed to be built and available for occupation in 2007-08. If the minister does not have that information available—that is, the number of dwellings in the pipeline maybe, hopefully or whatever for the year we are now in, that is, 2007-08—can he take that question on notice?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will take that question on notice. However, what I can say is that we expect to have 435 placements, targeting mainly categories 1 and 2 tenants, in the financial year 2007-08.

Ms CHAPMAN: Is there any housing stock increase anticipated in 2007-08 arising out of any land development by the Land Management Corporation and, if so, how many blocks?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The 1 000 affordable housing homes include those at Andrews Farm; Noarlunga Centre; Blakeview; the Balfours development; Ingle Farm transport site; Lochiel Park; Seaford Meadows; Northgate Retirement Village; Northgate, stage 3; and other projects that are potentially on the horizon. They are the various developments. Whether they will be completed within the financial year is not necessarily entirely within the control of the government because, while some are partnerships, a number of them are private sector developments. We fully expect that a number of these will be completed during the course of the financial year.

Ms CICCARELLO: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 11.98. Will the minister outline what Housing SA is doing to manage and reduce its customer debt?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: In October 2005, Housing SA implemented a number of policy, procedural and system changes to improve the management of customer debt. These changes have an increased focus on early intervention, including a strong focus on personal contact and a more proactive and timely debt follow-up process. This early intervention strategy is supported by visiting tenants as soon as possible after the rent payment is missed, a charge becomes overdue or a repayment arrangement is broken to ensure that customer debt does not rise to an unmanageable level. Changes include the development of specific time frames to follow up action, improved management reporting, affordable repayment schedules and reinforcement of broken arrangement provisions. The conditions of tenancy also

include a new clause requiring all new tenants on a Centrelink income to make rent and other payments through direct deduction from their Centrelink payments. Since the implementation of the revised policy, the individual debt level of customers has reduced substantially. Housing SA customer debt has reduced to \$10.6 million as at April 2007, which is a reduction of \$3.6 million, or 25 per cent of the overall customer debt since September 2005.

Ms SIMMONS: I also refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 11.83. Can the minister please explain what kind of strategies Housing SA is putting in place to deal with disruptive tenants?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: As you would be aware, we conducted a thorough process of consultation around a new disruptive behaviour strategy, which was released for public comment on 14 March 2007. The strategy aims to improve the management of tenant responsibilities under their conditions of tenancy and includes the introduction of a 'three strikes' process, designed to provide a clearer process for tenants to address disruptive behaviour. Consultation ran until mid-May. The new strategy also includes the introduction of acceptable behaviour contracts and a 12-month probationary period for all new tenants.

In addition, a disruptive behaviour response team has been formed to manage tenants with significant disruptive behaviour and to investigate complaints of disruption. Legislative amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act have also been proposed (and, indeed, passed) to include Housing SA tenancies under section 87. This will allow an improved capacity to respond to issues of significant property damage and physical assault. Amendments to the act are also being considered to increase the power of the Residential Tenancies Tribunal to demote periodic agreements to fixed-term agreements where there has been significant and substantiated disruption.

Housing SA addressed the Statutory Authorities Review Committee on 23 April 2007 to discuss progress on the 33 recommendations made by the committee. I am pleased to advise that 28 of the recommendations have now been finalised, two are in progress and three have not been supported. A memorandum of understanding with SAPOL has also been implemented, and staff are now able accurately to record, report and take action on a range of concerns, issues and complaints that affect the wider community, including disruptive behaviour. In addition, an MOU with the mental health service is currently being implemented across the state, and this will promote greater coordination of services to tenants with mental health issues. I thank the member for Morialta, the member for Light and, indeed, the member for Norwood for their contribution in helping me shape this new policy.

The ACTING CHAIR (Ms Ciccarello): Does the member for Light have a question?

Mr Venning interjecting:

Mr PICCOLO: Especially on your front bench. I would like to build upon some comments made earlier by the minister, particularly those regarding the EquityStart Loan program in this state and the federal government's lack of interest in providing affordable housing. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 11.95. Will the minister outline how successful the EquityStart Loan program has been?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It has been very successful. Announced in March 2005 as part of the Housing Plan, we launched it formally on 27 April 2005. The EquityStart Loan is a product of HomeStart Finance and aims to

make home ownership more affordable for social housing tenants by increasing their borrowing capacity by up to \$50 000 towards the purchase of their dwelling. Through EquityStart, social housing tenants have the option of purchasing either their current rental property or an alternative property that has been made available for sale, including newly constructed properties or those available for sale on the private market.

The revenue raised from the sale of social housing assets is creating a funding pool, the Affordable Housing Innovations Fund, which operates in parallel with the existing general house sales program to facilitate additional social housing outcomes. Since the announcement of the EquityStart Loan, 8 479 social housing tenants have registered their interest and received an information pack. Of the 4 632 people who returned the application form, 3 803 have been successful in meeting the first criterion for finance and proceeding with their finance application. To date, 194 people have purchased a social housing property through EquityStart, while 422 have purchased or built in the private sector. It has been a very successful program.

Ms CHAPMAN: On page 11.19, the explanatory notes reveal that the Office for Community Housing deferred some capital projects in 2006-07 'to ensure it maintains an adequate working capital reserve in future years'. How much in area of land is in this category, where and what is the value of such capital projects?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We will have to take on notice at least the detailed questions about the land-holdings, so I will take whole question on notice.

Ms CHAPMAN: I refer to page 11.22, the high need housing area. As the minister would be aware, last week the 2006 census was published. In 2001, 897 homeless people were sleeping rough in South Australia, and in 2006 (five years later) that number has been reduced by 45 in 2006; that is nine a year. Has the minister put in a submission to alter the government's Strategic Plan target to halve the homeless by 2010 (to which he referred in answer to other questions this morning), given that, on that direction, it will take 50 years to achieve the government's target to halve the homeless in this state?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: There is no doubt that we have set ourselves a very ambitious target. I think that a couple of factors need to be borne in mind; one is that we fully expected that the number of people sleeping rough could, in fact, have increased in South Australia given the new and more detailed methods of counting and the affordable housing crisis, which has ramped up between 2001 and 2006. Remarkably, South Australia demonstrated a drop by 5 per cent of people sleeping rough against a national trend of a 19 per cent increase in those states we are usually compared with in terms of people who sleep rough. New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT recorded a massive increase. Nationally, I think there was a 19 per cent increase in people sleeping rough. In those states we are usually compared with, there has been a 37 per cent increase, whereas there has been a fall of 5 per cent in South Australia. So, we are confident that we have the right approach, although this is a chastening reminder of how much further we have to go to essentially meet our obligations in relation to halving the number of rough sleepers.

We are also taking much more detailed counts of the homeless population, seeking to understand the way in which those populations are comprised in more detail. The question of duration is important. People sleeping rough for 12 months

is a much more substantial issue than someone sleeping rough for one night and, obviously, repeat episodes of rough sleeping are a concern. So, we are continuing to improve our database. We are confident that tackling the tough end of the homelessness problem is the right approach. While there are far too many people sleeping rough, I think there is reason to be quietly pleased with the fact that South Australia has dramatically resisted the national trend.

Ms CHAPMAN: I have a supplementary question, Madam Chair. Minister, you indicated that one of the factors was a more detailed method of counting. It is the Australian Bureau of Statistics that does this, not your department, not Monsignor Cappo, nor Rosie Haggerty (who, I know, when she visited, counted about 40 homeless in South Australia, but I am not sure what her method was). In any event, are you suggesting that the Australian Bureau of Statistics has a more detailed method of counting rough sleepers than it did in 2001? On the information provided to us, the breakdown of primary, secondary and tertiary remain the same and, whilst the definition in relation to those at risk (which is another category) has been changed, we are informed that they are the same. So, if you have some further information, I would appreciate your advising the committee.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: No, we are not suggesting that the ABS has changed its methodology. We are suggesting that the way in which it has gone about counting means that it is likely that it would have achieved a higher count. That was our great fear, I suppose, in relation to this year's counting approach. When one is counting homeless people, the lengths to which people go and the sophistication of the process obviously has a bearing on the count. We understand the ABS's methodology, because we speak to the ABS and are copying its methodology for our own counts. Some of our more recent counts have demonstrated further falls in these figures in the inner city area.

This number that Rosanne Haggerty was counting (and, indeed, we are now counting in the inner city area) is not the 852 figure, which is for the whole of the state. In relation to the inner city area, heavy reliance is placed upon homeless agencies, and the people who present to those agencies are asked questions. Some people do not necessarily report their circumstances, but choices need to be made about extrapolating that data. What we are saying is that we believe that this year's count is more accurate, and it is likely that a more accurate count will show more people rather than fewer. So, we were relieved to some extent to see that there has been at least a reduction (albeit small) in the number of homeless people in South Australia.

Ms CHAPMAN: I have a further supplementary question. What did you mean when you said that there were more detailed methods of counting when you were asked: what do you say the ABS is doing differently that has had the effect, according to you, of actually capturing more in its figure?

The CHAIR: The member is veering into areas that are suitable for House of Assembly question time but, if the minister is able to provide any information to assist the committee, that would be welcome.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I have not spoken to the ABS people, but I am advised that they have improved counting methods this year. That is one of the reasons why we fully expected the numbers would go up but, in fact, they went down.

Ms CHAPMAN: At page 11.3, the underspend for the South Australian Housing Trust from the 2006-07 budget to the 2006-07 estimated result is \$15.5 million. Will the

minister explain why, and will he confirm that all of this will be spent in the 2007-08 budget?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: In relation to the \$15.5 million decrease between the 2006-07 budget and the 2006-07 estimated result, bearing in mind that the estimated result is actually a revised budget, there was a \$12.3 million decrease in public housing capital maintenance due to a transfer of \$9.4 million from capital to recurrent maintenance to enable the funding of those particular needs. A further \$4.1 million was transferred to construction and redevelopment to meet needs in that area, and a carryover of \$1.2 million from 2005-06 offset those transfers. There was a \$3.7 million decrease in public housing and construction redevelopment due to a combination of factors, including: a \$5.6 million reduction in 2006-07 due to an overspend in 2005-06; a \$5 million reclassification of Affordable Housing Innovation Fund capital budget to intra-government transfer funds for the Common Ground initiative; a \$5.4 million carryover into 2007-08, mostly relating to affordable housing fund expenditure, offset by a \$12.4 million annual increase in annual building and redevelopment programs; and a \$1 million increase in South Australian Housing Trust management assets, due to a carryover from 2005-06 for the development and enhancement of information systems.

Ms CHAPMAN: I have a supplementary question. I appreciate the detail just given but, where there has been an underspend (and I appreciate the minister has indicated that some of that has been carried over), will that be spent in the 2007-08 year?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It is not all explicable in terms of an underspend.

Ms CHAPMAN: That is right. I appreciate that.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: A number of the sums have simply been transferred to other forms of expenditure; they are not necessarily an underspend. I think I mentioned before a transfer from capital recurrent maintenance as well as funding that has been transferred to construction and redevelopment. That was a 'further expenditure' item. The moneys that were sent to the Common Ground initiative were obviously committed for expenditure. I can identify what part of that may fall within the category of an underspend—

Ms CHAPMAN: That is what I am seeking. For example, you explain that \$12.2 million (it is disclosed in the notes at page 11.84) is apparently a reduction in public housing capital maintenance. I suppose the extension of that is: if you are not going to maintain these houses, will there be some provision somewhere else in the budget to give people some allocation or support to maintain the properties that they are living in, because you have taken it out of the budget?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We will take that question on notice. However, to the extent that there have been delays in the expenditure, the sorts of factors that bear on that include construction delays associated with a very buoyant construction market. We will provide a more detailed answer.

Ms CICCARELLO: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 11.71. Will the minister outline the strategies that are being pursued to increase access to affordable housing for indigenous people in South Australia?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The transfer of Aboriginal Housing Authority rental tenancies to Housing SA in October 2006 was part of a portfolio-wide process to strengthen coordination and governance. The transfer has enabled Aboriginal housing services to be delivered through 18 regional locations across the state. Related initiatives in

South Australia include the affordable housing and high-needs housing objectives within planning frameworks and the formation of the South Australian Affordable Housing Trust. Preliminary scoping work on the establishment of an Aboriginal housing entity that can deliver a suite of housing options was undertaken in the latter part of 2006-07.

The key resources to underpin the viability of the new entity include the transfer of a proportion of land and housing stock developed by AHA. The former AHA stock was generated through the sustained application of grant funds, including some funds sourced through the Aboriginal Rental Housing Program. So, we are working with HomeStart Finance and the South Australian Affordable Housing Trust to progress financial modelling and alternative governance structures.

Ms SIMMONS: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 11.83. Will the minister outline the main benefits achieved by the Housing Improvement (Standards) Regulations, the housing it relates to, and the focus of the changes that have been made to the regulations?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The Housing Improvement Act 1940 is about improving housing standards and controlling rents for substandard houses. It was first introduced in 1940 to address the major issue of substandard housing in South Australia, and the regulations were established to define the minimum requirements to make a house fit for human habitation. Over the last 60 years, the quality of housing in South Australia has significantly improved. The application of the standards has been a major contributor to this improvement, with the number of houses in South Australia currently classified as unfit or unsuitable for human habitation being less than in previous decades. The standards are still a very effective mechanism that underpins the minimum quality of housing in this state. Additionally, this process is widely recognised and understood within the residential real estate market.

Since 1997-98, the South Australian Housing Trust (now Housing SA) has inspected an average of 250 reported properties a year, of which about 60 per year are declared as substandard. In 1990, 4 162 properties were under Housing Improvement Act control. At April 2007, there were 2 005 properties, with another 39 under investigation.

The Housing Improvement Act defines the scope of the act as applicable to housing within the metropolitan area and to housing in all municipalities and council districts of the state. The act defines a house as any building, including a tent, edifice, structure or erection, whether temporary or permanent, or any part thereof, which is used or intended to be used as a dwelling. Regarding the focus of the review of the regulations over the last decade, the community has become much more aware and sensitive to health, safety and, in particular, personal security. The review of the regulations now reflects requirements that have been introduced via other legislation over the last 15 years in relation to smoke detectors, balustrades, handrails and swimming pool fencing.

In addition to this, other specific requirements not previously included in the regulations include: a house, its grounds and its fixtures not presenting a health hazard (of particular concern is the presence of friable or broken asbestos building materials); flywire screens being fitted on all windows that can be opened; safe pedestrian access from a public road to the house; the ability of occupants to safely screen visitors at the main entry door, which could be achieved by the installation of a peephole or security chain; and external doors being fitted with locks and windows with

latches. I expect the majority of these items would apply to most houses, anyway.

Mr PICCOLO: I draw the minister's attention to the investment that this state is making in indigenous community housing. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 11.49. Will the minister please advise the committee of the investment that South Australia is making in the 2007-08 financial year to the indigenous community housing program?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The Office of Aboriginal Housing is responsible for the delivery of the indigenous community housing program to remote and rural areas across the state. The indigenous housing program delivers housing solutions to 54 indigenous communities throughout South Australia. The funding of the program is directed to the construction of new housing, major upgrades on houses, and grants to indigenous housing organisations for repairs, maintenance, insurance and community administration assistance. The program seeks to build capacity by working to ensure effective organisation and administration. There are currently 6 387 indigenous South Australians residing in 974 community houses, with an average occupancy of 6.6 people per house. Housing investment aims to address overcrowding and homelessness in indigenous communities and thereby contribute to improving health and wellbeing in indigenous households.

In 2007-08, \$5.9 million has been targeted to capital projects. That will result in 26 major housing upgrades, at a cost of \$2.6 million, and nine new houses and three replacement houses, at a cost of \$3.3 million. Earlier, I addressed in the Aboriginal affairs estimates process the efforts we are making with the commonwealth to deal with a range of needs there. But, ahead of that, we are still pressing ahead. Four major communities will receive 14 of the total 26 upgrades in relation to housing improvements, and a further \$4.1 million is in the form of a grant to indigenous housing organisations for repairs, maintenance, house insurance and administration. I might just add that one of these indigenous housing organisations at Umoona is particularly successful and is very well managed, but is now under serious threat because of the commonwealth's review of the community indigenous housing program. I think this one size fits all across the whole of Australia is going to cause quite dramatic consequences in South Australia.

Ms CHAPMAN: I refer to page 11.83. The Affordable Housing Program includes targeted sales to 'social landlords'. Is there a definition of such a person and, if so, what is it?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The Social Landlords Scheme is something that we are developing. In essence, it is somebody who is an investor in housing, but is prepared to offer that housing for a rental at a concessional rent. The model that we are seeking to have in place is one which perhaps offers rent at something in the order of 75 per cent of market rent. As we divest some of these 8 000 public housing properties, obviously our first target is to ensure that the tenants get the first crack at being able to buy them, but we also want to try and drive a new industry, an industry of social housing tenants.

The truth is that many small investors are already, in a sense, social housing providers. A number of them do provide pegged rents, largely because of the relationships they form with tenants over the years. We want to really grow that industry. What we find in South Australia, and this is the case in other states, but certainly in South Australia, is that a very large proportion of the private rental market is made up of very small investors. So there is not a lot of institutional

investment in affordable housing. So we want to grow that. But we also want to support social landlords, the small private investors, to grow the number of housing stock, to be leased back for affordable housing rental outcomes. There may be some cases where they are leased not directly to market but back to the social housing agencies who, in turn, lease them to the market, in much the same way as occurs under defence housing.

Ms CHAPMAN: So, minister, if one is a landlord and offers to rent out a property that is owned to a tenant in need at 75 per of the market value, for some undefined period, is there anything that the government proposes to do to assist that landlord, such as not having to pay land tax or relief of stamp duty on the lease, or anything of that nature?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: There is a package of incentives that we are presently working up. It could include a range of measures. One of the things we have found in our consultations with be landlords is that they are particularly concerned about the reliability of tenants, their ability to maintain a fully occupied house. So guaranteeing an income stream is important. Ensuring there is no damage to property is an important matter for a small investor. The transaction costs of continually re-leasing or negotiating disputes with tenants is also a factor which can discourage small investors. And it may be that there are other advantages and benefits that can be negotiated concerning insurance, and also the effective maintenance of properties. But in relation to all of those, the package of incentives has not been settled on yet, but we are presently working on those proposals.

Ms CHAPMAN: Referring to page 11.13, I wrote to Commissioner Cappo on 28 March this year, minister, inviting him to put his board's view as to your sell-off of 8 000 Housing Trust homes. I am not sure, minister, whether you are aware of that letter or not, but my question to you is: have you or any members of your department given any advice or instruction to Monsignor Cappo in relation to the response to that letter, particularly as I have had no acknowledgment or response to date?

The CHAIR: I do not think that is an estimates question. Minister, if you are able to provide any information you are welcome to.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I don't know anything about the letter.

The CHAIR: That brings to a conclusion the section of estimates relating to the Minister for Housing. Thank you to the housing advisers. The proposed payments for the Department for Families and Communities and Administered Items for the Department for Families and Communities remain open.

Additional Departmental Advisers:

Ms B. Dunning, Executive Director, Families SA.

Mr G. Lamshed, Director, Corporate Services.

Ms L. Pugh, Acting Director, Community Connect.

Mr J. Young, Manager, Community Funding and Information Support Unit.

The CHAIR: Minister, do you have an opening statement?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will make a brief opening statement. There has been an extraordinary amount of activity in the Department for Families and Communities this year. The Keeping Them Safe initiative continues to be rolled out. The latest element in that reform package, Keeping Them Safe in Our Care, was released on 4 June. The

amendments and changes to the child protection act are now complete, and they are being implemented. Just to remind members of the committee what has been achieved and what continues to be financed through these portfolio arrangements, I refer to the following:

- the implementation of a high risk infants program targeting families with vulnerable babies for intervention;
- the establishment of the Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People to promote the best interests of children under the guardianship of the minister to act as a voice for those children;
- moving children under my guardianship to the front of every queue when it comes to accessing government services. This rapid response framework is a whole of government initiative and it is about ensuring that all government services understand that children in care are a priority;
- the implementation of early preschool enrolment for children under guardianship, acknowledging the particular developmental issues that can exist for guardianship children;
- establishing the Child Death and Serious Injury Review Committee which we draw upon to learn from the tragic deaths and serious injuries of children in order to prevent and ensure that those things do not happen again;
- establishing the Council for the Care of Children to provide broad advice, not only from the government but also from the non-government sector, to promote the interests of children in all we do in government;
- provide additional funding for more social workers, carer support workers, emergency care staff and support staff for children and young people;
- set up youth support teams for intensive services for young people aged between 15 and 25 to prepare them for leaving care and beyond;
- providing access to care leavers for post guardianship services; and
- the development of a framework for dealing with some of the very complex young people who come into our care.

The next substantial restructuring of our child and alternative care systems comes with the Keeping Them Safe in Our Care initiative, which will include the following:

- an emphasis on prevention, early intervention and specialist family support services as priority areas for action, and we have to stem the tide of young people coming into care and find ways of supporting families;
- improving our assessment processes and care planning, especially in relation to family preservation and reunification;
- implementing 'wrap around' care packages tailored to each child;
- developing models of connected care that promote better integrated care teams built around the needs of children;
- expanding therapeutic foster care placements to children with complex needs;
- changing the children's payment system to support efficiency and equity;
- increasing placement supports for carers; and
- developing a comprehensive foster care strategy including training, remuneration, 24/7 foster carer support, recruitment, expeditious assessment and registration processes for prospective carers and recognition of foster carers.

We continue to build our non-government sector through our service excellence program and, importantly, we have recognised a key demand of the non-government sector, and

that is \$11 million over and above our normal funding to meet the wages needs of workers in the non-government sector.

The CHAIR: Member for Bragg, do you have an opening statement?

Ms CHAPMAN: No, Madam chair.

The CHAIR: Proceed with questions then.

Ms CHAPMAN: Minister, \$38 million is the overdrawn amount that the Treasurer told us last week he has allocated to pick up the tab for your department in the 2006-07 year. On page 11.52, the budget paper identifies \$26.2 million worth of overspends, with a provision earlier on that page where you will see that you have had to kick back in just over \$6 million to arrest some of the debt level in what has been accumulated. None of these items, as listed on page 11.52, say anything about child protection programs or extra hotel bills, which have been used principally as the explanation by the Treasurer last week as to why you had overdrawn the budget and needed extra money. My question is: where has the other \$12 million been spent?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The first thing is that it is misunderstood. If you asked the question of the Treasurer in relation to the portfolio, there are more portfolio elements than just families and communities. We also have the disability portfolio where there are substantial additional demands for services. You might describe this as an additional expenditure or somehow a cost blow-out; I prefer to see it as providing services to people in need—that is what we are doing. That is why we are spending this additional money. There are children who need to be removed from unsafe situations and they are brought into our care. That is why we are spending this money. We are providing it directly in relation to caring for our most vulnerable children. I do not find that—

Ms CHAPMAN: A point of order, Madam Chair: my question is not to ask the minister to give some explanation as to why he has gone over budget, yet we may come to that. My question is: what has the other \$12 million been spent on?

The CHAIR: There is no point of order.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: You cannot misrepresent the position in the course of the question and not expect me to respond to it. What is happening here is that there is an extraordinary increase in the number of children coming into our alternative care system. These are children who are unsafe in their present circumstances. They are unsafe in their present circumstances because their families are unable or unwilling to care for them, so the institutions of the state have had to step in and take them from those circumstances and place them into care. That is the reason why this additional expenditure exists. That is only part of the position. The other part of the position is that, in the disability budget, there are also demands in relation to this portfolio. The disability budget is under extraordinary pressures.

As I have said before, the way in which at least some of our agencies have dealt with that in the past is by simply meeting those needs as they have presented, and that has exceeded the budget that was allocated. We have taken steps to draw in that expenditure, but that is the cause of it—it is basically spending money on people with needs. It is simply wrong to characterise it as solely an issue of Families SA, and it is wrong to characterise it as anything other than expenditure on people with needs that must be met.

Ms CHAPMAN: Page 11.52 lists why there are major expenditure variations, and the cost of alternative care in hotels, disability or anything else is not mentioned in that list.

If they are somewhere else in the budget, can you identify where they are?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It is because you do not know how to read the budget papers. The estimated result is the estimated—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Well, it is the estimated average budget. It is the estimated adjusted budget. The sooner you work that out, the sooner you will understand the budget papers. What happens is that each year—

Ms CHAPMAN: Point of order, Madam Chair.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: No. Look it is fundamental to your understanding—

The CHAIR: Order!

Ms CHAPMAN: On a point of order, it is one thing for the minister to make a gratuitous statement—

The CHAIR: That is not a point of order.

Ms CHAPMAN:—but the Treasurer has made allowance of \$38 million—

The CHAIR: There is no point of order.

Ms CHAPMAN:—provision in the budget and—

The CHAIR: There is no point of order.

Ms CHAPMAN:—and, if it is somewhere else we want to know where it is.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I can help the member.

The CHAIR: Order! There is no point of order, member for Bragg, so please allow the minister to answer.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I can help the member. Next year when she gets the budget papers she will see the actual result, and that will include where the portfolio landed, in total, in relation to its budget. That is what will happen. There will be the actual result for the year, which will be what is spent. What is reflected in these budget papers is the budgeted result, and, then, when you come to the column 'estimated result', that is the estimated updated budget. In other words, all the budget decisions taken during the year give you a revised budget as a snapshot when the budget papers are prepared. You cannot find it in here. You cannot find in these budget papers where we landed at 30 June, partly because they are prepared before 30 June. The Treasurer was talking about the actual result for the year. What you are seeing here in the explanation about the variation between the budgeted result and the estimated result is really a summary of all the budget decisions that were taken during the course of the year to effect the change in the budget.

Ms CHAPMAN: Thank you, minister. I absolutely agree with that, so I look forward to seeing that information next year. Minister, can you explain to the committee how much money your department has spent on motel accommodation for the alternative care of children in the 2006-07 year?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We have spent very little on motel accommodation. Most of the accommodation is contained within other various forms of accommodation. To understand the picture in relation to emergency accommodation, you need to understand that it has always been part of our service system. We have 10 transitional accommodation houses, which are made available for emergency accommodation. We also have a series of other Housing SA houses, which are made available for that purpose. In addition, a number of other houses are made available through the non-government sector. Finally, the other proportion are houses that fit into the category of special forms of accommodation such as homestays and bed and breakfasts. So, very little accommodation is based in motels.

As at June 2006, we had something like 34 children and young people in interim emergency accommodation. During 2006-07, the number of children in that type of accommodation peaked at 84, and is now reducing. Presently, there are 59 children in interim emergency accommodation, in a number of those different categories, but only two in motels, 20 in apartments, 36 in bed and breakfasts and like accommodation, and one in a caravan park. So, there are 59 down from a peak of 84 during the course of the year.

Ms CHAPMAN: Can you take on notice how much you have actually spent on motel and temporary accommodation as distinct from the other areas in which you place children—the transitional accommodation, the 10 units that you have, and so on, which is the normal placement? When you overload, you put them in a hotel, a motel or an apartment with an employed person, and there is an amount. You gave us that amount last year, and I am asking for the amount that you spent in 2006-07, even if you think it is a small amount.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will make sure that we are comparing apples with apples. We will supply you with the corresponding amount.

Ms CHAPMAN: I refer to Budget Paper 3, page 2.21. Will the minister identify how many full-time equivalent employees this corporate overhead amount accounts for and identify the nature of other expenses relating to the savings initiative, particularly what service or program they relate to?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: In relation to corporate overheads?

Ms CHAPMAN: Yes.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Categories include library, staff development and associated goods and services, as well as assets management in relation to tenancies. What I do not have is the actual numbers of full-time equivalents implicated, but we will take that on notice and provide details.

Ms SIMMONS: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 11.34. Can the minister advise what the government is doing to address the significant growth in children needing alternative care, which follows on from one of the points that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was making but on a different tack?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Fundamentally, we are providing \$103.9 million over four years. This is the largest single investment in alternative care that has ever been undertaken. As I said, one element of the reform is additional support for struggling families. That is the best option. If we can keep a child with their birth parents, that is the best possible way of moving forward. We acknowledge that some families get into difficulty and that it is necessary to provide them with additional support that will strengthen those families and make sure they can safely care for a child. We do know, however, that that is not always possible.

The second element of the reform is to provide greater support for foster parents and relative carers for children. There is a number of important initiatives. First, from 1 July we will be increasing all carer payments by 5 per cent, and restructuring carer payments to make it easier for carers to live their day-to-day lives. We will be implementing more flexible processes in cutting through red tape to make becoming and remaining a carer easier. It is important they do not have to go through difficult and lengthy processes to get small amounts of reimbursement. We are also providing funding for regional carer groups in each Families SA district office and increasing funding to bodies such as Connecting Foster Carers, which is the non-government organisation that

supports foster carers in their work. We are providing a high level of support, including respite, to carers of more challenging children. We also know that not all children can be placed in family-based care so, for a small cohort of children, we will expand our specialist care options in a range of innovative ways, including treatment care options for children with high and complex needs.

This reform will address the significant increase in the numbers of children requiring alternative care placements and the lack of suitable placements for them. Projected figures indicate an additional 275 children will be placed under my guardianship to the age of 18 during 2006-07. On 30 April 2007, there were 1 273 children and young people under my guardianship to 18 years, representing a 10 per cent increase in the previous financial year—20 per cent of the number under my guardianship to 18 years are Aboriginal.

South Australia is not alone; this is part of a national trend. Many families are now affected by substance abuse, domestic violence and poor mental health, which greatly affects their capacity to provide adequate care for their children. We need to find a way of moving forward in a way which not only protects children but also manages this extraordinary growth in the foster care population.

Ms CICCARELLO: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 11.29. Can the minister outline how the government has improved the range of services available to support people with gambling problems?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: A number of key initiatives have been introduced to improve the effectiveness of gambling help services and to increase their access to treatment options. Initially, all service agreements for agencies funded through the GRF have been renegotiated to provide greater accountability for client outcomes and requiring key performance indicators to be recorded quarterly. We were concerned that some funding was just simply being used and reported against to show activity levels and not outcomes. Additional funding of \$2 million allocated to GRF increased the government's overall contribution to \$3.845 million, and includes the following service enhancements:

- The Intensive Therapy Service for problem gambling, which has been established jointly by the Flinders Medical Centre and Flinders University, has been extended to a statewide service with an annual budget of \$1.34 million.
- The expanded services currently being implemented will operate in metropolitan and regional areas to provide clinical interventions for problem gamblers, including comprehensive assessment, treatment, support, information and referral to other services.
- The service will have sites in northern, southern and western metropolitan areas and will provide a regular visiting service to eight regional areas.
- A new service to help problem gamblers who are in contact with the criminal justice system has been established by OARS—\$100 000 has been funded for this initiative.
- An increase in the number of financial counsellors across the state, with four additional positions in Families SA offices and three positions with existing NGOs.
- A new indigenous gambling help service for the northern country region of Coober Pedy and Port Augusta has been established by the Aboriginal Family Support Service.
- A review of the current services is to be carried out, which will look at the effectiveness of the services in reaching

problem gamblers, treating them and preventing them from relapsing.

Mr PICCOLO: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 11.29, subprogram 3.3, Community Connect, in relation to the accountability of the community sector for delivering high quality services. Can the minister outline how the government is ensuring that the community sector is delivering high quality services and providing value for money for the community?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The accountability of the community sector in the past 12 months has been improved with a number of policy and program initiatives being implemented by DFC, including:

- new streamlined contractual arrangements with NGOs;
- reducing red tape with revised performance management processes in place;
- improvements to the Service Excellence Program which works with community sector organisations to improve their capacity to deliver better outcomes for customers and the community. The standards provide specific requirements that incorporate well-established management standards with stronger customer focus;
- The service excellence standards require that funded organisations are aligned to the strategic directions of DFC and the South Australian Strategic Plan;
- new reporting processes and controls initiated for government organisations funded by DFC;
- greater accountability established to minimise risk should service agreement requirements not be met (for instance, the provision of insurance information), and also the implementation of delivering community value governance framework for 2006-07;
- a good practice guide for distributing funding to the community sector. This framework was developed to support the legislative changes regarding DFC funding to the community sector being exempt from the State Procurement Act, which allows more cooperation and collaboration with the community sector;
- the development of a performance management system for use through the grant-funded community services sector. This has included developing a performance management policy for DFC defining the roles and functions of various areas and contractual obligations when managing grant funding.

DFC will continue to develop the performance management system and plans to develop a comprehensive performance framework for grants to the community services sector.

Ms CHAPMAN: I refer to pages 11.37 to 11.39 regarding effective business practice, which largely relates to \$78.58 million for 2007-08 that the minister has budgeted to basically run all the strategic support and policy development, etc. Notwithstanding that you have restructured and reformed (for example, Housing SA and Disability SA) and centralised offices and have transferred out of leased accommodation and into your own accommodation, why is this part of the budget continuing to increase at a time when you continue to cut programs such as disability advocacy and migration programs?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Basically, all of the agencies that once comprised the various units within DFC have now been consolidated, so a lot of the cost centres have been brought into the centre of government, and they are reflected in the budget for this central program, whereas they would have been embedded in the various agencies, for instance, within the housing portfolios within the various

disability organisations that now form part of the department. Having said all of that, we have been making substantial contributions to the savings effort not only in the last budget but also once again in this budget, as we redirect savings from corporate overheads to direct services. Also, some particular functions have been taken back into the centre, and an example of this is the DFC learning college. We have invested in learning and development in the agency, and some of those funds have been consolidated from funds that were once found within the accounts of the various disability organisations that comprise the DFC effort.

The other thing you need to be aware of is that it is not all overhead within that central proposition in that budget line, because it also includes the concessions line of the budget, the recovery effort; in other words, recovery from natural disasters. That has now been consolidated into the Department for Families and Communities, as well as the licensing and screening function. So, they are not simply corporate overheads in that subprogram.

Ms CHAPMAN: By way of clarification, minister, you mentioned the training. I thought that was under a separate entity altogether.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It may be under a separate entity, but it is through the College of Learning and Development, which is a name, but it is comprised within that program that includes the \$78 million.

Ms CHAPMAN: The Premier has now appointed Mr Hieu Van Le as the Lieutenant-Governor and we have just celebrated Refugee Week, and the minister has cancelled the \$82 000 program for family support for the Vietnamese community. I ask the minister whether he will agree to reinstate this program, which is an important program which has been identified by the people involved as being critical.

The CHAIR: Deputy leader, can you point to the relevant budget reference? It sounds like a policy question, not an estimates question. Can the deputy leader refer to an estimates line, please?

Ms CHAPMAN: I refer to page 11.7 to 11.39, relating to the expenditure being made under 'effective business practices'.

The CHAIR: That does not necessarily mean that that question is in order. It sounds very much like a policy decision, which is not the subject of estimates.

Ms CHAPMAN: Will the minister reinstate the \$82 000 project?

The CHAIR: Order! This is not the appropriate place for that question. If the minister wishes to provide any information, he can. If he does not wish to do so, the deputy leader can ask the question in the House of Assembly.

Ms CHAPMAN: The Vietnamese community will ask.

The CHAIR: Deputy leader, there are many opportunities for questions to be asked during parliamentary processes. The estimates committees are for specific questions—

Mr VENNING: On a point of order, Madam Chair, I do not like the tone of your chairmanship. The minister has the opportunity to say yes or no to these things. You are here to chair; not to be an umpire.

The CHAIR: There is no point of order.

Members interjecting:

The CHAIR: Order! I am here to ensure that standing orders are supported, and that is what I am doing.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I am happy to answer the question; I think it is proper that I give an explanation. I am sure the honourable member could ask me the question during question time, but I am happy to answer it here. The

fundamental issue is that, if you want to put \$304-odd million over four years into alternative care, which is about the direct care of the most vulnerable children in our community, you have to find that money from somewhere. The lion's share of it was found from the budget—\$96 million of the funding was found through the budget process. However, we also needed to find additional money, and the way we had to do that was to reallocate funding from some services. As I said before, there are no unworthy programs in government; there are just some that are of higher priority than others. I think it is worth going through this particular funding. I point out that we are meeting with the Vietnamese Community in Australia, the South Australian chapter, with whom I enjoy a good relationship, and I hope to continue to do so, when we will seek to find alternative funding sources for it.

The DFC provides \$322 000 in funding for a range of multicultural focus services. The funding was distributed to six multicultural family support projects. Four of these programs specifically targeted the Vietnamese community, which received 48 per cent of the multicultural funding. Vietnamese-specific services were provided in Enfield, Charles Sturt and Salisbury. The demographics of multicultural groups requiring financial support from the community sector are now changing, with small numbers of Vietnamese arrivals in South Australia within the combined Australian migrant and humanitarian and immigration program categories. New and emerging communities from Burundi, Liberia, Siberia, Sierra Leone, the Congo, the Republic of Rwanda, and Ethiopia are not well established and may be unable to provide high levels of support to other new entrants to their communities.

We have also noticed that, over the last 12 months, there has been a 45 per cent reduction in child protection notifications within the Vietnamese community. Generally speaking, members of the Vietnamese community are becoming less in need in relation to community services and government funded assistance, so we are looking to target our resources to some of the small and emerging multicultural communities. As I said, we are meeting with the Vietnamese association, and we are encouraging it to submit an application to the next grant round for Community Benefit SA grants. However, this represents only part of the funding the Vietnamese community receives from the South Australian government, and we will continue to work with it.

Ms CHAPMAN: Page 11.33, child protection. This section reports a 20 per cent increase in the number of screened notifications in 2006-07. Due to the increase in categories of persons required to report suspicions of abuse or neglect, and increased community awareness (which are identified as the factors), of the estimated 26 per cent that were confirmed child protection notifications for Aboriginal children and families, how many were resident in the APY lands (out of a total of 18 120), and how many of those children included a claim of child sexual abuse?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I do not have those numbers and will take that question on notice.

Ms CHAPMAN: Of the estimated \$60 million proposed to be spent in 2007-08 for child protection services, how much of the increase of some \$5 million from the estimated 2006-07 will be spent on investigating the assessment of allegations of child sexual abuse in the APY lands?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will find the answer to that question. One of the reasons we are having an inquiry at the moment in relation to the APY lands is that people do not come forward and report allegations of child sexual

abuse. It is the very nature of child sexual abuse that it tends to be underreported and hidden, and that is why we are taking the extraordinary steps we are to get to the bottom of these issues. I will certainly provide details of the number of notifications in those areas.

Ms CHAPMAN: On the same issue, how many children on the APY lands, who were confirmed victims of child abuse or neglect, are now under your guardianship?

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

Ms CICCARELLO: I refer to Budget Paper 3, Volume 3, page 11.33. Minister, will you outline the agreement that has been established between Families SA and Drug and Alcohol Services SA and how this process benefits children?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: In 2006-07, an agreement was established between Families SA and DASSA as a result of the amendments to the Child Protection Act, which enable Families SA to apply to the Youth Court for an order requiring assessment of parents with drug and alcohol concerns. Families SA already voluntarily engages a number of parents and caregivers to participate in drug and alcohol assessment and treatment where a child is at risk as a result of the effect of drug and alcohol use on their ability to care for or protect a child. This occurs through negotiation over the concerns for the child.

Joint guidelines were developed between DASSA and Families SA, and this process has been in operation since October 2006. The agreement outlines a referral pathway for Families SA to refer parents and caregivers for comprehensive drug and alcohol assessments. To date, there have been 13 court ordered referrals in 2006-07. For comparison, in the seven months from October 2006 to April 2007, Families SA referred over 60 clients voluntarily to Drug and Alcohol Services pathways for workers to work collaboratively to ensure that children remain the primary focus of all interventions, ongoing review, monitoring and development of the introduced system. This system benefits children by providing opportunities for their parents to access treatment for their drug and/or alcohol problems. The agreement ensures a consistent approach across all agencies that promote a collaborative approach to working across drug and alcohol and child protection issues with families. The assessments conducted will also extend the information provided to both Families SA and, in turn, the Youth Court.

Ms SIMMONS: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 11.14. Will the minister outline how the new Connected Client and Case Management System for Families SA will improve services to families?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: This is a very important initiative. We are very fortunate to have access to a system that was developed in Victoria. Quite a lot of intellectual property has been handed over for nothing, really, to South Australia. Obviously, we have to spend a lot of money customising it for South Australia, but the Connected Client and Case Management System will provide Families SA workers with one place to find all the critical up-to-date information known to the department about children and families who are clients of the agency. It will assist workers in referring families to support services and provide other agencies with key information. It will also assist planning and service delivery, child protection and alternative care, and youth justice. It will enable us to monitor services provided to families and young children. Implementation will be staged to support effective case management. A sum of \$9.7 million has been provided from 2006-07 to 2008-09 to fund the

implementation of the system, which we expect to be completed towards the end of 2008. One of the critical issues for child protection is interagency collaboration, both within Families and Communities and also across government, and it is one of the key recommendations of the Layton reforms.

Mr PICCOLO: Building on the answer you provided, minister, in relation to the interagency protocol between Families SA and the Department of Health to share information between those two agencies, I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 11.14. Can the minister inform the committee about the new cooperative information-sharing protocol between Families SA and the Department of Health that assists in protecting children at risk?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Under the government's Keeping Them Safe policy reform agenda, the Department of Health and Families SA have prepared a child protection information-sharing protocol. It is an initiative which evolved from the child protection memorandum of understanding signed between the Department for Families and Communities and the Department of Health when the Hon. Lea Stevens was minister for health in December 2004. On 5 February 2007, I officially launched the protocol at the joint Department of Health/Families SA gathering, and it is now being implemented in both departments. The protocol provides a framework for information-sharing between health units and Families SA in situations where children and young people are considered to be at risk of abuse or neglect. Therefore, they do not have to be harmed for information sharing to occur. The protocol allows for the release of information in relation to children or young people considered to be at risk, their siblings, family members, or others who have been in close proximity to the child or young person. It also allows the release of information in relation to unborn children where it is believed that the unborn child would be at risk once born.

Ms CHAPMAN: At page 11.11, relating to metropolitan domiciliary care, I think known as Domiciliary Care SA as of today, the Minister for Health told the committee relating to his portfolio that 570 full-time equivalents have left his department in domiciliary care and are coming to you, if they have not already started as of today. My question is: are you employing the 570 full-time equivalents and, if not all of them, how many will you be employing?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I am not sure how this comes within the estimates process.

Ms CHAPMAN: Under 'Workforce' on page 11.11, Madam Chair, it identifies the workforce that the minister claims in his department. I am asking a question specifically about how many of those who have come from domiciliary care he will employ as full-time equivalents?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Each of the domiciliary care staff is transferring to DFC, so it is a complete transfer of all staff to DFC.

Ms CHAPMAN: At page 11.5, this is an organisation which has had a cut in revenue of \$5 million from 2005-06 to 2006-07. We know that there was some restructure before it got to your department. My question is in regard to the reference at page 11.31 that the occasions of service are to be maintained (that is, the number of clients to be looked after by the service, which provides a service to shower people and clean their house, etc.), and that the client visits are to decrease by 13 per cent. These are to be transferred to a telephone service. Is it the government's policy to continue to expand the telephone service and reduce the personal visits?

The CHAIR: Deputy leader, policy questions are out of order.

Ms CHAPMAN: It is in the question. It is written in the document. It is there: I have quoted it.

The CHAIR: That does not matter.

Ms CHAPMAN: Yes, it matters.

The CHAIR: If you refer to the rulings of Chair Gunn, you will find that policy questions are totally out of order. It is about expenditure. I know it is hard to understand the difference.

Ms CHAPMAN: This is expenditure. It is \$5 million less. Listen to all those questions—policy, policy, policy. Drivel, drivel, drivel! We ask a decent, important question about an important service for South Australians, and you come up with some nonsense about it being policy. This is a budget item. I have quoted the budget, and I expect an answer from the minister.

The CHAIR: Deputy leader, please refer to the rulings about this.

Ms CHAPMAN: I have—page 11.11.

The CHAIR: You asked specifically about policy. The minister may care to provide information. It is simply my duty to point out whether or not this falls within the estimates arrangements. The minister has been generous in providing additional information, and may choose to do so.

Ms CHAPMAN: He has taken just about everything on notice, so far.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I thank the member for her question. I think she has answered her own question. The change is due to a change in work practice, to undertake more case coordination work by telephone which is not recorded as a visit. This is independent of anything that may flow from the restructured arrangements—in other words, metropolitan domiciliary care coming in and now becoming Domiciliary Care SA within the Department for Families and Communities. So, there is no connection between the provision of the new service within the Department for Families and Communities in this change. It is a change in work practice, which has been noted within the performance commentary. So, I do not quite understand the gist of the question.

Ms CHAPMAN: My next question about domiciliary care and the change of service, responsibility for which you have taken over as of today, is in relation to the Chief Executive Officer, whose contract has been extended for five years under the new statewide Domiciliary Care SA. My question is: how much is being paid to the CEO, and why was her job not advertised?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: If it is Jane Pickering we are talking about, I would not advertise her position because I think she is doing a first-class job—

Ms CHAPMAN: So do I, but why was her job not advertised?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Because she can stay in it. We like her. We want to keep her in the job. That is what you do when you have someone you like. We are desperately worried about losing her. She is doing a fantastic job. I think it is natural enough, when the service is expected to continue, that she be retained in that role.

Ms CHAPMAN: Why is it necessary for other members of Domiciliary Care SA to go through a partnership protocol between the minister's department and the Department of Health for their reappointment and not the CEO?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: All I can say is that it is important that we make it very clear that the leadership is in place. I think this is a very important first step, especially

in relation to staff who are coming into a new organisation, and we have sought to assure everyone that there will be no direct changes to people on 1 July when they come across to the new system. I have spoken to the board and communicated with the staff about those issues. We do not want to create any impression at all that there are to be any deleterious changes for the staff of Domiciliary Care SA.

Ms CICCARELLO: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 11.33. Can the minister please outline the progress of the implementation of the changes to the Children's Protection Act 1993, which was assented to on 8 December 2005?

Ms CHAPMAN: I have a point of order, Madam Chair. That is a policy question. There is legislation in place.

The CHAIR: Member for Bragg, I was hoping that you would pay attention to that question, because it in fact demonstrates the difference between questions that are in order and questions that are not in order.

Ms CHAPMAN: Yes—government questions and opposition questions; that is the difference.

The CHAIR: The deputy leader demeans herself by making those comments.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I am happy to truncate my answers and have the deputy leader ask as many questions as she likes.

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It is available. I was able to reach an accommodation with every other shadow minister.

Ms CHAPMAN: You didn't ask me.

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I have a telephone.

Ms CHAPMAN: Oh, I have to mind read now. I want that on the record. The minister thought—

The CHAIR: Order!

Ms CHAPMAN:—that I might ring him up and ask him for something that he thought he might offer me. I mean, really!

The CHAIR: The member for Bragg is out of order.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I am a very agreeable chap: the deputy leader should ask my colleagues. In relation to this matter, I think I have mentioned some of the more important changes in my previous answers.

Ms SIMMONS: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 11.34. Can the minister please outline how the rapid response framework is making a difference for children and young people under his guardianship?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I just want to take a brief moment to talk about this, because over 50 per cent of children and young people under my guardianship now have individual education plans to ensure that coordinated planning occurs between school and Families SA staff. We also have 41 young people, who were under the guardianship of the minister up to 26 years of age, who are now enrolling in TAFE SA and have had their fees waived. The South Australian Dental Service continues to provide a rapid response to dental clinic and orthodontic appointments and, as at 1 December 2006, Families SA and SA Ambulance have agreed to provide centralised blanket cover for all children in the alternative care system.

The Public Trustee has agreed to waive an income commission of 5.5 per cent on the return of funds managed on behalf of children under the guardianship of the minister. In addition, the initial capital commission of 4.4 per cent of the award will be spread over the life of the trust. That is just a range of ways—including the transitioning and post care

support services that we launched the other day—where government services are putting guardianship kids at the front of every queue.

Mr PICCOLO: I would like to ask a question about one of the important programs in the department. I know the department relies heavily on volunteers to deliver a number of its programs. I refer the minister to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 11.31, subprogram 3.6: volunteers. Can the minister outline the initiatives that the Department for Families and Communities has undertaken in support of South Australia's Strategic Plan target for 2005-06 of maintaining volunteer levels at 50 per cent or greater?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Volunteers are a critical part of the department's work. In December 2005, we set up a DFC volunteers unit to tackle this issue, but it is also an incredibly important core business for us. We used the Volunteer Emergency Recovery Information System (VERIS) and applied it to a real event. That was developed in response to the Eyre Peninsula bushfires and has now been applied and used, I think, in the Riverland disaster. The volunteers unit also actively provides support and seeks to develop new volunteers but also, importantly, it recognises volunteers. We have had five recognition ceremonies at which volunteers who worked for staff at Families SA, Disability SA and Housing SA were acknowledged for their tremendous efforts, which allow us to meet the growing demand for a range of our services.

Ms CHAPMAN: Of the extra money in alternative care that is budgeted (I think it totals \$72 million) over the next four years, specifically guardianship and alternative care (which is detailed at page 11.34), how much will be paid to foster carers?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We have \$103.9 million over the course of the four years: \$94.3 million is from the budget and \$9.6 million from redirection of savings. So, that is the total. I think what needs to be understood is that, if we could find foster parents for every one of our children in our care system, we would be directing every spare dollar that we had to those foster parents. The reality is that we are unable to recruit foster parents at the rate at which we need them, so we are forced to pay more professional staff to care for some of these children.

Certainly, there is no shortage of ambition on our part to pay more money to more foster parents. We have increased foster carer payments by 5 per cent, starting from today. This is an important additional sum of money that has been tipped into the foster care system. There will also be a new carer payment system, which will effectively mean that foster parents will be given much more autonomy over the money with which they are provided. At the moment, they have to jump through a lot of hoops to receive relatively small amounts of money. We will be looking at restructuring that system so that a better carer payment system will be in place to offset some of the costs of caring. The other expenditure, which may not directly go to foster parents but which will certainly be welcomed by them, will be on additional services to support the children in their care. So, the children will have money spent on services and support, which is important

Direct payments to foster parents will increase by up to \$65 a fortnight, starting this week. This will mean that a carer looking after a child with the highest level of need, who is currently receiving \$1 285 a fortnight, will receive an extra \$65 a fortnight (\$1 350). A carer looking after a 16 year old, who currently receives \$321 a fortnight, will receive an extra

\$16 a fortnight. A carer looking after a baby, who is currently receiving \$187 a fortnight, will receive an extra \$10 a fortnight.

Foster parents, of course, have welcomed the fact that the state government has reintroduced indexation. Foster carer payments languished under the previous government, and we have now reintroduced those payments so that the real value of those dollars will be maintained. Of course, a lot of foster parents (in fact, I dare say almost all) do not get into foster caring for the money, but these additional payments and support will take a lot of pressure off them.

Ms CHAPMAN: Will the minister answer the question as to how much of the \$103.9 million will be paid to foster carers direct? If the minister does not have that information, does he agree to take the question on notice?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It will depend. It will vary over the course of the year as to how many people were able to get into foster care as opposed to some of these more expensive—

Ms CHAPMAN: Minister, you have budgeted \$103.9 million to spend over four years. You have told us that.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes.

Ms CHAPMAN: There must be a budget item stating how much you expect to pay foster carers. Of course, I accept that there may be some variation to that year by year—it might be more or less—but there must be a budgeted item for the next four years for how much you will pay foster carers. That is all I am asking.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The rate at which we can get children out of these motels and reduce the higher cost options to the lower cost options will have a direct effect on the amount of payments that will go to foster carers. I hope—but frankly I do not expect—this rate of increase of kids coming into care will slow. So, over this period, we will be moving from higher cost models to lower cost models. However, we will also be dealing with more kids, so it will be balanced out: the number of children in care will be offset by hopefully the lower cost model associated with placing children in foster care, and that is what all of our reforms are directed at. If we are not successful, we will face additional cost pressures. That is what is happening. Families are getting into trouble, kids are flowing into care at an extraordinary rate, growing by 10 per cent per annum over the past few years, and increasing payments to foster parents and seeking new foster carers is the way in which we will seek to manage this.

Ms CHAPMAN: Notwithstanding all those factors which affect the estimate, how much has been budgeted in the next four years for expenditure on foster care payments?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: You do not seem to be listening to my answer. We are budgeting—

Ms CHAPMAN: You haven't got one. Is that what you are saying?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We are budgeting \$103.9 million over four years in relation to our foster care system. The precise configuration of that in terms of foster care and other forms of care (such as care by non-government organisations or, in the worst case, professional carers whom we have to pay to manage people in emergency accommodation) will depend on the rate at which we can recruit foster parents and the rate at which kids come into care. So, I cannot give you a firm answer on that question.

Ms CHAPMAN: Can you provide any breakdown of the \$103.9 million in terms of what will be allocated to payments

in the categories of alternate care, or has the \$103.9 million just been plucked out as an amount that you will keep in reserve just in case you need it?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We have projected forward what we have seen in relation to the current growth of our care population. We know what happened in the last financial year and we have objectives around reducing the number of children in the very expensive models of care. However, a myriad of factors will bear on how we carve up that money between the various categories. Our objective is to have more lower cost care and more children kept in families so that they do not go into foster care in the first place. Some of the money—

Ms CHAPMAN: Is there no breakdown?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: As we are able to get—

Ms CHAPMAN: Don't worry. I will FOI it. I can't be bothered listening to this drivel.

The CHAIR: Order!

Ms CHAPMAN: I have one more question at page 11.35. When the budget papers were prepared to provide an estimated result for 2006-07, 460 youth justice clients had one or more admissions to secure care and a reduced target of 440 was anticipated for 2007-08. Did that take into account any assumptions in relation to the Gang of 49 and, in particular, whether they would be caught, convicted or admitted to secure care; and, if not, why not?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We have taken into account a range of information that we have concerning the pattern of juvenile justice offending and the role of the courts in that process. The Gang of 49 is a shortened term that has been used to describe a particular phenomenon in relation to juvenile justice. They are a small number of repeat offenders who fit within a certain category. The truth is that they are not all under 18 years of age and they do not necessarily associate in a gang in the way that has been presented. The reality is that we have drawn on the material available to us in the system to come up with these estimates which include what is colloquially described as the Gang of 49.

Mr HANNA: I refer to page 11.50, community services—additional support for non-government organisations. Does the minister really believe that the extra \$1 million and the extra 1 per cent per annum increase for the non government community sector will respond to workforce attraction issues (as it states in the budget papers) given that the 1 per cent will further weaken the relativity between the non-government community sector and other sectors?

The CHAIR: That question is not in order. Do you have any comment to make, minister?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I do, because it is very important. This is a very important first step in addressing what has been a longstanding inequity in relation to the non-government sector. The previous government did not allow indexation to be passed on to a range of non-government organisations, which has led to an ongoing gap widening between that sector and the broader sector. The other thing that we get is paltry amounts of indexation from the commonwealth in certain sectors. The commonwealth indexes 1.9 per cent, for example, in the disability sector. You can imagine it: each year we go backwards by a considerable amount. We index 3 per cent plus 1 per cent now.

There should be no reason to go backwards; indeed, we think that there are good prospects of going forward in relation to these issues. It would be assisted greatly if the commonwealth jumped on board. What it means for ordinary people is that, in the NGO sector, over four years, \$20 million

extra will be in the pockets of workers in the NGO sector than before we made this decision—that is the four-year effect. It is not just my portfolio. Every other portfolio that has NGOs—health and DFEEST—is doing a similar thing to index their NGO payments—\$20 million extra into the pockets of workers in non-government organisations.

The CHAIR: Thank you minister, and thank you to the advisers. There being no further questions I declare the consideration of the proposed payments for the Department for Families and Communities completed.

ADJOURNMENT

At 5.02 p.m. the committee adjourned until Tuesday 3 July at 11 a.m.