

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**  
**Monday 25 June 2012**  
**ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A**

**Chair:**

Mr T. Piccolo

**Members:**

Ms F.E. Bedford  
Mr J.A.W. Gardner  
Mr L.K. Odenwalder  
Ms R. Sanderson  
Ms M.G. Thompson  
Mr P.A. Treloar

*The committee met at 09:00*

**DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION, \$961,839,000**  
**ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL**  
**INCLUSION, \$164,327,000**

**Witness:**

Hon. I.K. Hunter, Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for Disabilities, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Ms J. Mazel, Chief Executive, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Mr J. Ullianich, Executive Director, Financial Services, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Mr P. Bull, Executive Director, Youth Justice, Community Engagement and Organisational Support, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms S. Barr, Director, Business Affairs, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms E. Lyster, Senior Parliamentary and Policy Coordinator, Business Affairs, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms J. Bray, Director, Youth Justice Directorate.

Ms S. Schedlich-Day, Chief of Staff.

**The CHAIR:** I declare open for examination the portfolio areas of Department for Communities and Social Inclusion. Before I call on the minister, I remind members that, because of the temporary nature of the room we are using, all microphones are on at all times, so if you do say something it will be recorded.

The estimates committees are a relatively informal procedure. Changes to committee membership will be notified as they occur via a request to be discharged form. There is no need to stand to ask or answer a question. 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 referenced prior to the question being asked.

All questions are to be directed to the minister and not their advisers. The minister is free to refer questions to the advisers, if he wishes to do so. Members unable to complete their questions during the proceedings may submit them as questions on notice for inclusion in the House of Assembly *Notice Paper*. All answers to questions taken on notice must be submitted to the committee secretary no later than Friday 21 September 2012. There is no formal facility for the

tabling of documents; however, documents can be supplied to the Chair for distribution to committee members.

I wish to also advise that for the purposes of the committee there may be television coverage from the designated area. I understand that the minister and the lead speaker of the opposition have agreed on the proceedings for this morning's session.

**Mr GARDNER:** As published.

**The CHAIR:** As published. I propose to allow both the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition to make opening statements, should they desire, for up to 10 minutes. Minister, would you like to make an opening statement?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I would, thank you, Mr Chair. I would like to make a brief statement about the creation of the department. Upon Premier Weatherill being sworn in as Premier he outlined a number of machinery and government reforms, including the creation of the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI). This is because his government places social inclusion and helping people who may be disadvantaged, marginalised and vulnerable as a high priority.

My department at its heart has policy, programs and service delivery functions that make a practical contribution to securing a socially inclusive South Australia. Social housing, disability, youth justice, the offices for women, multicultural affairs, youth, volunteers, the north, the south, and carers are all now within the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion. These areas contain many public servants and resources that make a real difference and improvements in the quality of life of people who may be vulnerable, marginalised and disadvantaged.

Bringing these areas together into one agency and under one chief executive provides for the social inclusion agenda of this government to be driven in a united and strategic way. An inclusive society is one where all people feel valued, their differences are respected and their basic needs are met. We want everyone to feel empowered, to participate and to contribute because inclusion is fundamental for individuals and critical for a healthy, productive and happy community. Our determination to reform disability services to generate a service delivery system that empowers people with a disability with more choice, freedom and control is just one example of this agenda at work.

But I want to take this opportunity to focus on how we as an agency have reviewed the department's activities on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) lands and acted to strengthen the coordination of services and to help staff to work together. The Chief Executive of DCSI, Ms Joslene Mazel, has endorsed a new service delivery model to improve service coordination and reporting while retaining the existing line management structures. This new service model comes at a good time as the development of three new family wellbeing centres at Amata, Pukatja and Mimili require integrated service delivery.

There are two main changes: a stronger role for the DCSI APY Lands Coordinating Committee will ensure that decisions are made that will increase integrated service delivery on the lands; and staff working on the lands will be encouraged to provide their advice and recommendations to the committee on how to address gaps in services and to work better together.

A new position, the DCSI APY Lands Service Manager, has been created to strengthen the department's ability to monitor and report on the effectiveness of DCSI policies and practices on the lands. The manager will identify trends and issues which impact on the operation and effectiveness of DCSI services on the lands and provide advice to the executive leadership team on improvement to services.

There is still much more to be done, but, by addressing these issues in a strategic way and in a way that addresses disadvantage, combined with a single department that takes responsibility for these factors, we can work towards this vision of a socially inclusive South Australia.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Morialta, you are the lead opposition spokesperson?

**Mr GARDNER:** I will go straight to questions if that is acceptable to the committee?

**The CHAIR:** Yes, it is.

**Mr GARDNER:** I will start with Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 116, in relation to community support services and the activity indicators and concessions, and in particular the medical heating and cooling concession. On Wednesday 11 April, the minister released figures

identifying that of 1,894 applications for the new concession 280 had been approved, of which 130 had been paid, 766 had been declined and 338 were awaiting determination. Can the minister provide the committee with updated figures broken down in the same way?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** The data I have available is current as of 31 May 2012. Of the 2,397 applications that have been received 1,196 have been approved, with 678 concessions paid, and 1,017 applicants assessed as not currently eligible for the concession. Also, 184 applications are being validated or followed up with either the applicant or their medical practitioner for further details to support their application.

**Mr GARDNER:** Last year, when this initiative was announced in the budget, \$613,000 was budgeted for the 2011-12 year, including the concessions as well as establishment costs, and there was \$407,000 for the 2012-13 year and then indexed after that. Can you tell us what the estimated result for the 2011-12 year is and what the revised budget figure for the 2012-13 year is for this concession?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I am advised that the amount for 2011-12 has not changed: it is still \$316,000. For 2012-13, the budget for medical heating and cooling concession is \$348,000, which includes an additional amount of \$18,000.

**Mr GARDNER:** When you say an additional amount, that is \$59,000 less than was in last year's budget papers, so how do you get that additional \$18,000, where it appears to be a \$60,000 cut?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Mr Chairman, I am at a loss to understand the question. The amount for 2011 is \$316,000—that has not changed. The amount for 2012-13, I am advised, is \$348,000, with an extra \$18,000, which I am advised is for CPI.

**Mr GARDNER:** Well, the budget papers from last year speak for themselves, but I will let the member for Adelaide ask the next question on this issue.

**Ms SANDERSON:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 116. I have had a number of constituents approach me about the heating and cooling concessions also, but one of them in particular is happy for me to use her example to explain some of her concerns with this matter. Mel Leckie of Collinswood received a letter from the department in April advising that, as her 'treating doctor has not listed you as suffering a condition recognised as having a verified medical need for close control of environmental temperature', her application for the medical heating and cooling concession was unsuccessful. Mel is a paraplegic and as such she cannot move the lower half of her body to keep herself warm through movement. She is also prone to chilblains, which in the extreme can also lead to amputation.

Is there a range of conditions that guarantees eligibility? If an applicant has a condition that is not on the list but they have medical advice that they require close control of their environmental temperature, are the eligibility criteria flexible enough to take their individual circumstances into account? If so, what is the process that is undertaken? If not, on what basis can the list be challenged or reviewed?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** For the purpose of eligibility assessment, it is important to distinguish between medical conditions aggravated by exposure to hot or cold and those with a verified medical need for close control of environmental temperature. Only applicants verifying the latter are eligible for the medical heating and cooling concession. Qualifying medical conditions for the concession include multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, fibromyalgia, lymphoedema, post polio syndrome, poliomyelitis, systemic lupus erythematosus and tetraplegia.

A strong response to the introduction of the concession meant that initial assessment of applications has taken several weeks. In some cases, this was due to the need to follow up incomplete applications with either the applicant or the medical practitioner. This is a new program that still has teething issues to deal with. Doctors still do not fully understand the eligibility status. We are, as I understand it, setting up a medical panel to give advice to the departments on these matters.

**Mr GARDNER:** Following on from the member for Adelaide's question, you read a list of conditions that guarantee eligibility, I suppose. Is that list exclusive or are there others on the list? Is your medical panel going to suggest new conditions?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** That list is certainly exclusive for the moment. What the medical panel might advise the government, I cannot speculate on.

**Mr GARDNER:** Is there any flexibility within individual applications if somebody has a range of other conditions that have not been considered or do not fit into the categories that you already have, but fit the criteria as described in last year's budget? Would somebody be eligible under those circumstances, or is there no flexibility at all?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** They have to have one of the qualifying conditions and they also have to have a medical specialist certify that they have a distinct medical need to control their body temperature.

**Mr GARDNER:** Can you explain the process by which the list of conditions was reached?

**The CHAIR:** I remind committee members that questions are through the Chair, and also that, basically, there are three questions, following which I will give the other side a chance to ask questions so do not start a dialogue with the minister please. This is your fifth question, so the next question will go to the other side.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I am advised that the department conducted research across Australia for similar schemes. I am advised, also, that our scheme most closely resembles the Queensland scheme of concessions. I am also advised that stakeholders in South Australia were consulted.

**Ms BEDFORD:** I refer to Budget Paper 1, page 15, and ask you to outline the budget measures being implemented to support households experiencing hardship due to utility costs, which follows on from some questions from the other side.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I thank the member for the question. The government has allocated \$4.2 million over four years to help lower income households reduce financial hardship associated with rising utility costs pressures. In 2012-13, two initiatives will be introduced to support low-income households with utility costs. Firstly, a utility literacy program that will improve coordination and client referral to support programs for reducing energy and water usage, provide community workshops and individual counselling and support to improve household financial management and reduce utility debt to foster intensive cooperation between energy retailers, the water industry entities and consumers on existing support programs, to educate consumers about retail contestability and negotiating effective contracts with energy providers and support consumers to replace and upgrade inefficient appliances and retrofit households for improved efficiency with help from existing no-interest and low-interest loan schemes.

Secondly, emergency electricity payment schemes will be improved to further help those experiencing chronic hardship to become free from utility debt. The government has also introduced a rebate scheme to the value of \$45.7 million to assist all South Australian households with rising water charges. The payment of water security rebates will be offered to residential customers based on the amount of water used at their property. Where less than 120 kilolitres has been billed in the previous year, the property will receive an automatic rebate of \$45. Where more than 120 kilolitres of water has been billed, the automatic rebate will be \$75. Properties such as retirement villages and blocks of flats that have multiple residents on a single title will automatically receive a minimum rebate of \$45 and an additional \$45 for each 120 kilolitres billed above 120 kilolitres.

**Ms BEDFORD:** Following on at page 114, would you outline the level of funding allocated through Community Benefit SA and how this program assists disadvantaged individuals, families and the community in general?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Community Benefit SA distributes about \$4 million from gaming machine taxes to non-government organisations for one-off community service projects that benefit disadvantaged individuals, families and communities. Community Benefit SA has been pivotal in supporting the community sector since 1996 by making small grants available for essential equipment, facility upgrades, short-term programs and strategic improvements to the operations of community service providers.

The maximum amount of a grant is \$45,000. Two-thirds of projects approved in 2011-12 were less than the average grant of \$10,000. An extensive review of the program's operations was conducted in 2011-12 and a simplified equipment grant was offered to the community organisations to ensure continued access to the program. CBSA received 264 applications and 120 grants were awarded, totalling \$664,000. In 2012-13, up to \$6 million will be available for distribution to organisations. This includes the residual \$3.2 million carried over from 2011-12.

The review has resulted in approved access to the program, reduced red tape, and increased responsiveness for applicants. The program will now be continually open to applicants. Some of the recently funded projects include:

- \$3,000 to purchase educational toys to expand the playgroup and toy library a Kadina, to improve family functioning and engagement of 2,000 rural people, including young children up to five years old, through the early development of language, numeracy, social and emotional skills;
- \$5,000 to purchase computers to provide training, vocational rehabilitation and employment for 2,550 disadvantaged people per year from the Alexandrina, Victor Harbor and Yankalilla regions, increasing community participation and improving wellbeing at the community centre;
- \$8,780 for the purchase of furniture and equipment to improve community education programs for 1,000 people per week at Hackham West Community Centre, including volunteers, staff and disadvantaged clients, who access over 45 regular programs to increase community participation and improve wellbeing; and
- a contribution of \$10,000 to a project for warehouse equipment to assist with the safe and effective handling requirements of materials at the Riverland Foodbank Food Warehouse. Riverland Foodbank provides food to 8,000 people per year through community service providers, improving wellbeing and quality of life.

**Mr GARDNER:** I refer to Sub-program 5.4—Social inclusion, Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 118. In relation to the highlights, in last year's budget, the targets for social inclusion included the Strong Voices report, and work on the Premier's mining round table, which are identified as highlights here.

In last year's budget paper, there were also several other targets listed, including: commencing work in a new social inclusion reference—Adult offending; undertaking the evaluation of the Building Family Opportunities program; and developing and integrating the community protection panel multi-agency assertive case management model. Can the minister confirm whether any work was done on these areas, or where they abandoned when the social inclusion unit was incorporated into the department?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** In the 2009-10 state budget, the government committed \$9.6 million to implement the Building Family Opportunities Program (BFO), as a social inclusion demonstration project. Building Family Opportunities is a program that aims to break the cycle of intergenerational joblessness by working with families through intensive case management support, provide the necessary support required to secure sustainable employment for at least one member of the family, or education and training outcomes.

Social Inclusion funds the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology to run the BFO program. BFO contributes to South Australia's Strategic Plan target 16—to increase the share of total household income earned by low-income South Australians by 2 per cent employment by 2020, because it focuses on assisting people to work, or to undertake educational training that then helps them to work.

In August 2010, the South Australian government entered into a \$1.5 million funding agreement over three years with the commonwealth government to pilot this Family Centred Employment Program (FCEP) as a sub-program of the BFO program. DFEEST is responsible for the administration of the combined programs.

In 2011-12, funding for the BFO and the FCEP was provided to DFEEST through Social Inclusion on the basis of milestone reporting on the implementation of the programs. As at February 2012, there were 255 families actively participating in the program, which is a total of 863 individual family members, including children and other dependents.

The intensive case management approach allows the program to fit the family and be delivered flexibly, that is, working with the family to build on the existing strength on removing barriers in employment. Since the commencement of the program in June 2010, 97 participants have undertaken accredited training and 102 participants have gained employment.

In relation to the question about the adult offending, the former premier (Hon. Mike Rann) requested a new social inclusion reference in adult offending be undertaken, examining the marked increase in offending by women. As part of the Adelaide University Arts Internship, the former social inclusion unit hosted a student to undertake high-level research in the area of female

offending. The arts internship is a subject that is studied by students of high merit and in the final semester of their degree. The internship is an important partnership between South Australian government and Adelaide University.

The research of the intern was strongly supported by the Department for Correctional Services which provided access to data, senior staff and clinicians involved with women in correctional facilities. The final report, 'Rehabilitation or recidivism: best practice for female offenders', was presented jointly to social inclusion and DCS in October 2011. It is publicly available from South Australia and policy online at Adelaide University.

In relation to the Community Protection Panel, in June 2007, the former commissioner for social inclusion handed down his To Break the Cycle (TBTC) report. The report provided 46 recommendations to reduce offending among young recidivist offenders. In August 2007, the government endorsed all recommendations and approved its staged implementation.

The Community Protection Panel (CPP) responds to TBTC recommendation 1. The CPP comprises relevant agencies involved in youth justice and a member from each South Australian Aboriginal and wider community. The aims of the CPP are to reduce the seriousness and frequency of reoffending by young recidivist offenders to enhance community safety.

The community protection panel case management model provides a multi-agency assertive case-management process and service to young people and their families, to reduce reoffending and promote integration, functionality and participation with their communities. The CPP assertive case-management team consists of four senior case managers and a supervisor.

As at 31 May 2012, 24 cases are being assertively case managed and effective operational partnerships have been developed with agencies across government to deliver coordinated and targeted services for young people in the program. In the 2008-09 state budget, \$11.5 million was allocated over four years to implement the TBTC recommendations, and \$4 million was allocated over four years to establish a CPP assertive case-management team. I am advised that those programs and initiatives are ongoing in the department.

**Mr GARDNER:** In reference to the incorporation of the social inclusion units into the department last year, which I note from the Mid-Year Budget Review was \$1 million—

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Sorry, what line you referring to, member for Morialta?

**Mr GARDNER:** We will go to page 117, if you like. If you look at the 2011-12 budget, it is \$5.497 million. In the 2012-13 budget, it is \$4.534 million, so that is a saving of just under \$1 million. Staff numbers have been cut in half from 17.3 to 8.6, so the program has been cut from \$5.5 million to \$4.5 million and we are left with fewer than nine staff. Can the minister explain how a program with nine staff is spending \$4.5 million? Perhaps a breakdown of how that \$4.5 million is spent would be appropriate.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I thank the honourable member for his question. The Social Inclusion Division is part of the department which has at its heart policy, program and service delivery functions that make a practical contribution to securing a socially-inclusive South Australia. Social housing, disability, youth justice, the offices for women and multicultural affairs, youth, volunteers, the north and south, and carers—these are areas that make a real difference to people who may be vulnerable, marginalised and disadvantaged within our wider South Australian community. Right now, social inclusion is focusing on the following practical issues:

- youth justice—

**Mr GARDNER:** Isn't this just what you read in your opening statement? How is the money broken down?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** It is an elaboration on that, Mr Chairman—

- youth justice—progressions of To Break the Cycle recommendations—including the Community Protection Panel;
- development of diversionary strategies, step-down options for young people—

**Mr GARDNER:** Mr Chairman, I asked how the money is broken down into salaries and so forth. This is just the same as what was in the opening statement.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Mr Chairman, I do not think the honourable member for Morialta did actually ask that. He actually gave me those figures and then asked me how we are carrying out the functions—

**Mr GARDNER:** I asked how it was broken down.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Well, you might want to ask your question again when I have finished, Mr Gardner—

- the oversight of the implementation of the successful Building Family Opportunities run by the Department of Further Education, Employment Science and Technology;
- development of the Social Inclusion Framework for South Australia;
- development and implementation of access and inclusion plans across government; and
- development of initiatives to support the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, intersex and queer communities, commencing with a community survey to identify issues.

Clearly, savings were made when the unit was brought into my department. We will be mainstreaming the work of the social inclusion unit across all of government.

**Mr GARDNER:** Thank you for all of that generic stuff.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** You are welcome.

**Mr GARDNER:** Apart from Monsignor Cappo's highly-publicised departure, and the premier made a good deal of media about the closure—

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Sorry, what line are you referring to?

**Mr GARDNER:** The same line.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Page 117?

**Mr GARDNER:** Page 117, the net cost of the sub-program within social inclusion, the savings and the current net cost of \$4.534 million. Let me ask very specifically: how is that \$4.534 million in the 2012-13 budget to be broken down into salaries and other expenses?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I am advised that we do not have the detail of that breakdown. It obviously comprises salaries, administration, goods and services, and grants. The honourable member could do a rough calculation in terms of salaries if he wished to on the 8.6 FTEs, multiplied by an average rate of about \$80,000, with on-costs per staff member.

**Mr GARDNER:** Is that average rate the average rate within the social inclusion unit, or is that the average rate within the entire Department for Communities and Social Inclusion? Can I ask the minister that if he cannot—

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** One question at a time if you can, Mr Gardner. I am advised that that is the average cost across the whole department.

**Mr GARDNER:** With that in mind, given that the answer the minister has provided means that I (or anyone) is unable to determine the amount of salary costs within this sub-program, can I suggest that the minister takes the question on notice and gets back to the estimates committee in the formal procedure with the amount of funds spent on salaries, how much each salary is and how much expenditure is on other expenses within this sub-program?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I am advised that we can take that on notice and come back to the committee with a response.

**Mr GARDNER:** Thank you very much. Can the minister also identify, with the 8.7 roles that have been removed since the 2011-12 budget—we know one of them is Monsignor Cappo's role—what the nature of those other positions are and the responsibilities that have been abolished? Have those other responsibilities been abolished or absorbed into other areas of government?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I am advised that I cannot give a precise answer to that question. This was an operation that was carried out in another department, not my department, and we are trying to integrate the remainder of staff that have come across with the machinery of government changes.

**Mr GARDNER:** I have another point on the same page, looking at youth justice activity indicators. In the 2010-11 budget papers these performance indicators included a category described as 'percentage of sentences that are the second or subsequent sentences in the young person's youth justice contact with Families SA', and there was a second similar category for

Aboriginal young people. In last year's budget papers the category was still there but there was a footnote that advised:

Families SA is in transition with its client information system. The phased implementation of the connected client case management system—

which I understand is known as C3MS—

results in youth justice data on two platforms. It is currently not possible to track young people across the full spectrum of data and years that this indicator requires.

According to the report that you released earlier this year about the Cavan escape, the C3MS system went live on 13 September last year, all staff were trained in that late last year, and other functionality came online in February this year. So, I am interested in this issue of what was previously a performance indicator and what, in that transition period, was not able to be calculated of how many people in our juvenile justice facilities are reoffenders. With C3MS now fully functioning, is the department now again able to track how many young people in our juvenile justice facilities are reoffenders?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I am advised that, due to some of the issues that have been raised by the member for Morialta, youth justice is unable to report accurately on the percentage of sentences that are second or subsequent sentences of young persons, youth justice contact with the department as a result of the implementation of the Connected Client Case Management System (C3MS) and discontinuing the use of the Justice Information System. Data is recorded on both systems and is not easily matched. There is a need to establish new accounting rules to be applied to the data, and this work has been progressing for the past six months. It is estimated that this will be completed in August and September of this year.

**Mr GARDNER:** Can I just clarify: as of August and September, we expect that the department will again be able to calculate that data. I wonder whether the minister might perhaps see clear in next year's budget papers to reintroduce the performance indicator that was removed for this year.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** That is my advice. I am not sure that I can give you an absolute guarantee on the second question; I will have to take it up with Treasury.

**Mr GARDNER:** Perhaps in August and September, when the information is available—given that that is prior to the date on which I understand questions taken on notice in this committee can be returned—would it be possible for me to then ask a question that you could take on notice: for the 2011-12 year, how many young people in our juvenile justice facilities are experiencing their second or subsequent contact in sentencing?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I am advised that that would require a considerable amount of work to be undertaken manually. We will take that on notice, but I advise the committee that it will not be a quick response.

**Mr GARDNER:** I understand that. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 117, again on activity indicators. Can the minister advise what is the average ratio of detainees sentenced as compared with unsentenced over the 2011-12 year?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** My advice is that about 18 per cent of the population have been sentenced, 36 per cent are on remand and the remainder are in police custody.

**Mr GARDNER:** I refer to Budget Paper 5, page 14. The upgrade of the existing Cavan youth training centre at Jonal Drive is listed for completion in the June quarter of 2013 with a total estimated cost of \$2.207 million. Last year's budget papers identified that the upgrade of the centre was due to be completed in the December quarter of 2011 with a total estimated cost to be \$2.309 million. Can the minister explain the 18-month delay and the \$100,000 reduction in expenditure on this upgrade?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** My advice is that, in fact it was not an 18-month delay as calculated by Mr Gardner, it was a nine-month delay to initial timetabling. There was an extra \$3.5 million cost to the program.

**Mr GARDNER:** Could you repeat that? From December 2011 to June 2013 is a nine-month delay?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** My advice is that the initial completion date as projected was December 2011 and we have been advised that we will be moving in as of September 2012. That adds up to nine months.



**Mr GARDNER:** But it is listed in the budget as June 2013. This is the upgrade of the existing centre, not the completion of the new centre. The minister may have been looking at the wrong thing.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Sorry, we are just a little confused because I think you started off talking about the new centre but now you are talking about the existing site at Jonal Drive, is that right?

**Mr GARDNER:** I am talking about the existing Cavan youth training centre at Jonal Drive, listed for completion in the June quarter of 2013 with a total estimated cost of \$2.2 million. Last year's budget papers identified that the upgrade of the centre was due to be completed in the December quarter of 2011 and that the total estimated cost was to be \$2.309 million. Can the minister explain the 18-month delay and the \$100,000 reduction in expenditure?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Reduction?

**Mr GARDNER:** Call it a saving if you like.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** My advice is that there has been no delay in these programs. They are ongoing works which have been prioritised for security reasons, and my further advice is that there has been no reduction in expenditure.

**Mr GARDNER:** How do you explain the difference between last year's budget figures on this line and this year's budget figures on this line, one of which said the end of 2011 and \$2.3 million and one of which said June 2013 and \$2.2 million?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** My advice is that this is an ongoing program of works. Whilst some of them have not been completed on time, others have been reprioritised for security purposes. As I said, I am advised that there has been no reduction in cost and we are continuing with the programs.

**Mr GARDNER:** Mr Chair, I think he should have his next Dixer. He may be more comfortable.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I have no idea what that means, Mr Chair, but I am happy to move on.

**Mr GARDNER:** You are just giving the same answer to the question when there is no explanation for the discrepancy. You are just giving the same prepared—

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Mr Gardner, I am giving you the best advice that I can give you. If you are not happy to accept it, that is entirely up to you.

**Mr GARDNER:** There has been no explanation for the difference in the budget lines.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Well, I beg to differ. I have given you an explanation. There is an ongoing series of works—some have been completed, others are still being worked on.

**The CHAIR:** It is almost time for the next part, but I will allow one question from the right, if they wish to ask one.

**Mr ODENWALDER:** I have a brief question referring to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 114. Minister, can you provide an update on the reinstatement of funding to the Family and Community Development Program and the current status of the program's reform, please?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I thank the member for his most important question. In December 2011 in response to community concerns the government reinstated a proposed \$2 million cut to the Family and Community Development (F&CD) Program, thus reversing the 2010-11 state budget decision to reduce funding to the program by \$1 million in 2012-13 and a further \$1 million in 2013-14.

With no significant changes to the program since the early 1990s, allocations had become historically based and it was recognised that the F&CD Program needed to be reformed and realigned to ensure that service delivery is appropriate for today's community needs and those anticipated in the future. In May 2010, DCSI commenced the reform of the F&CD Program. This included the allocation methodology for funding. The reform aims to move to a model that is evidence based using demographic and socioeconomic data and targeting funded programs to the areas of most need in the community through innovative, high-quality service delivery models.

Work to date has included statistical data collection and five community consultation forums across the state. It is imperative to gain a perspective from the local community. An

Information and Data Report comprising of evidence, material and consultation comments collected by DCSI during the reform was released for comment to the community services sector. The report informed the policy and guidelines for the program, which will also be distributed to the community services sector for comment.

Planning for round tables in each of the 12 state government regions has commenced seeking regional responses to issues at a local level with local service providers to address need. These round tables aim to identify the approach and to provide a framework for service provision in each region. The start date of the newly-reformed program has been extended to 1 January 2013 due to the machinery of government changes. To accommodate this adjustment I have approved a six-month variation to service agreements to eligible organisations.

In 2012-13 DCSI intends to trial a place-based funding framework following the extensive consultation across the state government regions to determine the allocation of appropriate program budgets from 2013 to the areas of greatest need.

**The CHAIR:** We now move to the examination of the Office for Volunteers. I will give the minister an opportunity to change advisers should he wish to do so.

#### **Membership:**

Dr McFetridge substituted for Mr Gardner.

#### **Departmental Advisers:**

Mr A. Hamilton, General Manager, Office for Volunteers.

Ms S. Wallace, Director, Policy and Community Development, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms J. Mazel, Chief Executive, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Mr J. Ullianich, Executive Director, Financial Services, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms S. Barr, Director, Business Affairs, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms S. Schedlich-Day, Chief of Staff.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I will be brief, but I want to take this opportunity to touch on where we are headed in the volunteering portfolio. My appointment as the Minister for Volunteers in November 2011 coincided with a very exciting time for volunteering, not just in South Australia but around the world. This is because the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Year of the Volunteer was being celebrated. Our first major event was International Volunteers Day, which was held on 5 December and, together with the Premier, I had the pleasure of attending.

For the South Australian government this represented the delivery of the largest State Volunteer Congress ever. Working in partnership with Volunteering SA&NT enabled the 2011 congress program to be expanded from the traditional one-day event to a five-day affair. Record numbers of attendees participated in many information, education and training sessions, and many of these were led by some of Australia's leading experts in a variety of fields. They ranged from health to social media, to video production and risk management. Significantly, this event also saw the Premier launch a revitalised landmark agreement between the state government and the volunteer community. This is known as the Advancing the Community Together Partnership.

The revitalisation of this partnership, first signed a decade ago, complete with renewed commitment from the original signatories, serves as an important confirmation of the state government's continuing commitment to the longevity and value of volunteering in South Australia. I recommend that if anyone in this chamber has not read the partnership they should do so. It outlines our approach and direction as a government. I am told that we often receive contact from other jurisdictions around the globe about this piece of policy work. It is also up on our website.

I was also pleased this year to implement a renewed membership of the Ministerial Advisory Group on Volunteering. This 15 member group is made up of people from the business and community sectors that bring a broad range of experience and expertise to support the advancement of volunteering in South Australia.

We know that so many South Australian's volunteer their time and skills. We also know that this giving results in a significant contribution to our community, valued at nearly \$5 billion per annum. Whilst volunteering will always be an activity that people do through the goodness of their hearts, it is important that all of us contribute to ensuring we manage an environment that allows this to occur both now and into the future.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Morphett, do you wish to make any introductory comments or just go straight to questions? It is up to you.

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** Just very briefly, I would like to thank the minister for his truly bipartisan approach at volunteers' functions. It is rare in the adversarial form of parliament we have to see such bipartisanship. Minister Hunter, thank you very much for that, and I know the volunteers certainly appreciate it from the feedback I get.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Thank you, member for Morphett.

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** With that, I will start to give you a grilling on the \$1.383 million.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** What page?

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** It is Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 120. The net cost of the sub-program is \$1.383 million, with FTEs of 6.1. In terms of the FTEs, I was told—and I hope you can deny or alleviate my concerns; and Mr Hamilton did not give me this question—that Mr Hamilton's position is going to be made redundant in the next short period. Is that correct?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** My advice is that, as a result of machinery of government changes, the Office for Volunteers and other agencies that have been brought into my department are being embedded into the department. There will be no loss of non-executive positions, but my advice is that the position currently occupied by Mr Hamilton will be made redundant.

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** I should put on the record that Mr Hamilton has done an excellent job and I am disappointed his position is not going to be there. Will the savings from Mr Hamilton's wages be then put into frontline services for volunteers? My big concern—and you have just confirmed it then—it is that the embedding (an interesting term) of the various staff from the Office for Volunteers going to the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion is a dilution of the effort that is going to be put into volunteers. We need as many dollars as we can get. It is a very small budget. When we consider the return on investment for volunteers, it is a very small budget and it needs to be maintained.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I thank the member for his important question. Indeed, I concur with him that Mr Hamilton has done an excellent job and I thank him for his time. As with agencies that have been brought across from other departments, they bring with them budget savings that we must find. However, I take issue with the member in terms of the term 'embedding'. What this basically means is that when an agency or a department comes across there may well be duplications in the processes and activities of the department which are already being carried out by other parts of my department and it would be foolish to continue duplicating those activities, so what we are doing is strengthening and meshing what the office does with the activities that are already carried out by other parts of my department. Outside viewers should see no net change whatsoever in terms of the activities run by the office; the office will still exist and the community will see no great change.

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** So the office will still exist but the staff are going to be embedded, so the media people will go into bigger units of the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion and the people who organise the contracts to do with volunteers will go across into the larger department. How does the Office for Volunteers really exist, then? Is it a virtual office?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** No; let me put the member straight. What we will use, in fact, is the other facilities of our department which already do a lot of this work to strengthen the continuing and ongoing work of the office. For example, communications or grants allocations: we already do that for many other programs in our department and they will be able to assist the office to carry out its functions.

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** At the same reference, will the good work that the congress does and the terrific day that Volunteers Day represents for volunteers, as a sign of appreciation, be affected in any way by this change in arrangements?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** My advice is that they will not.

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** Will there be any cuts in the budget to, particularly, Volunteers Day and the work the congress is doing?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** My advice is that we are doing everything we can, in terms of administrative functions, to rationalise those to protect front-line services.

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** The last one on this particular issue: can you assure the committee that the expertise that is in the Office for Volunteers is not going to be diluted or lost in any way; it needs to be reinforced? I am sure you share my enthusiasm for volunteering.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I do, indeed, and that is not my intention at all.

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** On the same budget reference—this issue was raised in the emergency services portfolio but crosses over into Volunteers—I notice that under Targets 2012-13, on page 121, there is mention of the ambulance volunteer training pilot program at other geographic locations in South Australia. Can you tell us a little bit about that program at the moment?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** The job seeker ambulance volunteer training pilot program was established in July 2011 through a unique partnership between the Office for Volunteers, South Australia Works, the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST), Regional Development Australia Yorke and Mid North, the SA Ambulance Service and Job Services Australia provider Employment Directions. This program combined pre-employment training from Employment Directions for a Certificate II in Emergency Medical Service First Response training delivered by the SA Ambulance Service. A total of \$12,700 plus GST was provided by South Australia Works to fund the project, while other project partners provided in-kind support, such as the SA Ambulance Service, by delivering emergency medical first response training free of charge to participants.

The Office for Volunteers evaluated the pilot at its conclusion in November 2011, revealing that the pilot was successful. Of the 12 who started the course, five participants completed all assessments and were awarded the certificate of attainment. Certificates were presented at a graduation ceremony on 28 November 2011. Four of these individuals enrolled to become volunteer ambulance officers—three at Peterborough and Booleroo, and one at Crystal Brook—after gaining full-time employment in Port Pirie. The participants indicated that they benefited from the program in many ways, ranging from a boost in confidence and skills to a new enthusiasm for learning and community participation.

Given the success of the pilot, the outcomes of the initiative have been shared with relevant South Australian and Australian ministers who have responsibility for employment and/or emergency management, inviting them to consider its applicability to other geographical areas and emergency services.

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** Thank you, minister. With relation to volunteer emergency service workers, was there any discussion with your department and Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure over the removal of the Cadell ferry and the effect on volunteers and their ability to do their job?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Mr Chairman, I will say to the honourable member, good try, but I refer him to minister Conlon for a response to questions about the Cadell ferry.

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** So you or your office did not have any discussions with minister Conlon?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** My advice is not.

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** Thank you, minister. Continuing on that same theme of emergency service volunteers, there is a particular issue which I raised with the Minister for Emergency Services in estimates last week; I will raise it here and hope that you may be able to give me some advice. Under targets 2012-13, dot point 3, it talks about small and not-for-profit organisations accessing insurance. I was alarmed when I found out that the SES Volunteers Association do not have an insurance policy to cover their volunteers in case of a WorkCover-type incident.

The example I use is that of an SES volunteer—a lady at Port Pirie. Her job was looking after her children and her household, and her husband was the sole breadwinner. She was injured and was unable to work. Her husband had to leave work to look after her and there was no income for that family. There was some offer of help from Home and Community Support, but there was no monetary income for her.

The CFS apparently has a volunteer insurance program, but the SES does not. Can you let the committee know whether you have had any discussions with the SES, or what assistance you can give the SES Volunteers Association to avoid this sort of circumstance happening again?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Mr Chairman, I could riff very widely and for some time about insurance for community groups, but I think the honourable member's question specifically goes to the SES, and should be directed to the Minister for Emergency Services.

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** The committee should know that I did direct the questions to the Minister for Emergency Services and her answer was underwhelming, to say the least. The same thing, then, with emergency services volunteers—I think we need to share the responsibility between Emergency Services and the Office for Volunteers and your department, minister, in relation to looking after our volunteers and recruiting volunteers.

Volunteer recruitment is obviously more and more difficult nowadays. Within the South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM), the volunteer support officers have been reduced from six down to two, they do not work in the regions any more; they provide a vital source for volunteers. Have you had any discussions with the Minister for Emergency Services about providing volunteer support? As you know, that is a vital issue for all volunteers.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Mr Chairman, I advise that SAFECOM, which the honourable member has been mentioning, is the responsibility of another minister (the Minister for Emergency Services) and I cannot comment on that area at all.

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** So, minister, where does the demarcation line between the Office for Volunteers and emergency services volunteers start and stop?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Obviously there are a range of organisations across the state that utilise volunteers. Those organisations are responsible for organising their employees and all their on-costs, and they are also responsible for organising their volunteer base. The Office for Volunteers works at a much broader strategic level, conducts research into volunteering, and goes give some auspicing to Volunteering SA&NT to carry out its duties to its volunteer community.

I can say, sir, that the revised South Australian Strategic Plan released in September 2011 includes target 24, which seeks to maintain a high level of formal and informal volunteering in South Australia at a participation rate 70 per cent or higher. Informal volunteering is very important in our community. I am advised that in May 2012, a total of 1,502 South Australians aged 15 years and over were surveyed by Harrison Research. The survey, designed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, revealed that volunteer participation in South Australia remains high, recording a combined participation rate of 71 per cent of the population, equating to more than 900,000 people aged 15 to 84 years old. That is the sort of level the office has been working at. In terms of specific organisations, they will develop their own volunteering policy, and we are happy to assist them in those processes.

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** Thank you, minister. On the same issue of insurance and the worries that volunteers are expressing to me at the moment—and I am referring to Highlights: 'Continued to promote and recognise volunteering through a range of initiatives'—the Work Health and Safety Bill is still being raised with me as a significant issue, a deterrent to volunteering. Can you tell the committee what discussions you have had, so that we can assure volunteers in South Australia that they are not all of a sudden going to become liable for some horrendous legal bill if they are in some way tied up with an incident or an accident involving their volunteering?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I should say at the outset that this is an area of responsibility under minister Wortley. He has worked very closely with Volunteering SA&NT to consult the sector. Volunteering SA&NT, as a peak representative body of volunteering in South Australia, has issued a media release in 2012 indicating support for the proposed changes. The media release states that:

... [the] adoption of the new work health and safety laws in South Australia will enable consistency in work health and safety legislation across States and Territories in Australia and provide clarity for volunteers and volunteer involving organisations.

In South Australia, SafeWork SA is assisting volunteer-based organisations to understand their obligations by publishing fact sheets, frequently asked questions and guidance material on the SafeWork SA website.

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** Thank you, minister, for that. On the same budget reference, there is another concern for a very valuable volunteering group in South Australia and that is for the organisation Meals on Wheels. They are going through an issue at the moment with local

government where, under the Local Government Act, council can only lease land for 21 years to organisations such as Meals on Wheels without going through a very convoluted process of trying to extend the leases. I think even the legislation needs to be changed.

I understand from Meals on Wheels that a number of their kitchens on council land are going to be resumed by the councils, so that Meals on Wheels suffers a significant loss. You are talking half a million dollars in the case of one of the kitchens in the eastern suburbs. I cannot remember which one it was, but I can confirm that, if the committee wants me to. There is a real worry here that the volunteers are having their future threatened because of red tape, for want of a better description, with local government.

**The CHAIR:** Just on that, member for Morphett, the question you have put is actually in the hands of local government and individual local councils. If you wish the minister to answer any questions about which state legislation prevents any further leases, that is fine, but I do not think the minister is responsible for individual council decisions. Could you perhaps clarify your question?

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** I understand, Mr Chairman, but what I am asking is: has the minister or any of his officers had discussions with the Local Government Association or with Meals on Wheels about this particular issue? Supporting the volunteers who work in Meals on Wheels and provide a fabulous service all over—and I am sure every member can be proud of their Meals on Wheels in their electorates—we need to make sure we are guarding their future.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I am happy to attempt an answer, Mr Chairman, as best I can. As you noted, this is an area for minister Wortley again under the Local Government Act. My understanding is that we have consulted with the various organisations, particularly Volunteering SA&NT about red tape issues. This is not an issue that has specifically been raised with the officers, I am advised, but I am also cognisant of the fact that at least one council has said publicly that they are not about resuming their land. They are undergoing negotiations with various volunteer organisations about that land. I am again reflecting on a council in the eastern suburbs, and it might be the same one that the member for Morphett alluded to. I understand negotiations are underway and Meals on Wheels, through its peak body of Volunteering SA&NT, will be conducting negotiations with local government over these issues.

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** I thank the minister for his answers, because there is a blurring of the line between the need for the Office for Volunteers to support volunteers and these other bureaucrats and various departments that seem to want to make their life as hard as possible. On that point, can you give the committee a bit of information on how you are reducing red tape for volunteers?

**Mr HAMILTON:** During 2011, as part of the review of the Advancing the Community Together partnership, we undertook a range of statewide consultations. As part of that consultation, community members identified a range of issues that might be categorised as red tape. Police checks and training were the two predominant issues identified as red tape or barriers to participation. Most recently, a discussion paper outlining those particular issues was presented to the minister's advisory group for their consideration and advice.

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** I think the member for Flinders has a question, but before that can I thank the minister for answering all the questions today without Dorothy Dixers, which has been a bane of contention over the last estimates, and I wish Mr Hamilton well in his future.

**Mr TRELOAR:** Has the government had any discussions around removing volunteers from the preparation of food in the Meals on Wheels program and perhaps having that food prepared in commercial kitchens?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Not to my knowledge. That is one that seems strange to me, but would you like to elaborate on where that information has come from?

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** I think the Victorians are either doing it or looking at it, and certainly in some areas of New South Wales it has been commercial kitchens, and it has put the price of food up considerably for the recipients.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Given that context, I can advise that, no, there have been no discussions between the community sector and me or my department about that issue.

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** After that grilling, we will let the minister off for a few minutes.

**Ms BEDFORD:** Before we go, Chair, I would ask that you put on the record that, while I understand some people do not like government questions, government members still have

legitimate questions to ask and are often overruled to give the opposition extra time, so please do not dismiss all our questions as being irrelevant.

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** Do you write your own?

**Ms BEDFORD:** We do.

*Members interjecting:*

**The CHAIR:** Order, member for Florey and members on my left!

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Mr Chairman, can I say that some of the most searching questions I get come from government members and I am always happy to entertain their questions as well.

*Members interjecting:*

**The CHAIR:** Members on both my left and my right, I said order! Minister, do you wish to thank your advisers before we break?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I should, indeed, thank all my advisers, some of whom have left us and some who will be coming back. I would like to thank very much Andrew Hamilton and Sue Wallace for attending the committee today.

**The CHAIR:** In accordance with the agreed timetable, I advise that the committee stands suspended until 10.30am.

*[Sitting suspended from 10:14 to 10:30]*

**The CHAIR:** We will now go to the examination of the Minister for Disabilities.

#### **Membership:**

Mr Gardner substituted for Dr McFetridge.

#### **Departmental Advisers:**

Mr D. Caudrey, Executive Director, Disability, Ageing and Carers.

Ms L. Young, Executive Director, Disability and Domiciliary Care Services.

Ms J. Mazel, Chief Executive, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Mr J. Ullianich, Executive Director, Financial Services, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms S. Barr, Director, Business Affairs, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms E. Lyster, Senior Parliamentary and Policy Coordinator, Business Affairs, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms S. Schedlich-Day, Chief of Staff.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** This past year has seen some historic shifts in the way disability services are provided in this state. In October 2011, the former premier released the Strong Voices report, aptly called a 'blueprint to enhance life and claim the rights of people with disability in South Australia'. I would like to put on record the valuable work undertaken by the former Social Inclusion Board, in particular, the subgroup led by Dr Lorna Hallahan.

The state government commissioned this report to provide a strong and clear way forward that will support all South Australians with disability to live with dignity and participate fully in our community. We are delivering on this ambition.

In December 2011, the Premier and I announced that the state government would radically reform the provision of support for people with disabilities. The most significant reform is the implementation of individualised funding and the option of receiving direct payments. Under these changes, people with disability will be able to choose services that best meet their needs and aspirations and will be given the option of receiving direct payments to manage their supports.

Individualised funding and personal budget options will be offered to people with disability in three stages. Stage 1 of implementing the individualised funding model is already underway. Over 2,000 people have received a letter advising them that they will have their own personal budget and that they can choose their service provider or choose a direct payment option. The same offer will be made to a further 7,000 individuals over the next two stages, with all participants having the option of managing their personal budget through direct payments by January 2014.

This reform builds on the individualised and self-managed funding trial that has seen more than 70 people this year managing their funds and support arrangements. Feedback from the trial has shown that direct payments have led to increased choice and control and improved wellbeing for participants. The feedback from these participants has been overwhelmingly positive. I have no doubt that individualised funding is what people with disability want and that direct payment provides very real and practical benefits for those who choose to take this up.

Individualised funding (or personalised budgets) is a fundamental component of the proposed national disability insurance scheme, and South Australia's reforms in this area will align the state in readiness for the implementation of this proposed scheme. We have committed \$1 million over two years to help both our service providers and consumers prepare for these changes.

Over the past year, the South Australian government has worked constructively with other state and territory governments and the commonwealth government in planning the foundational reforms necessary for the introduction of a national disability insurance scheme. The recent announcement by the commonwealth government of funding for launch sites for 20,000 people is welcomed and the state government is committing \$20 million over four years for the NDIS launch in South Australia.

In tandem with the reform of disability support services is our commitment to more inclusive and accessible communities. Over the past year we have again worked constructively with other state and territory governments and the commonwealth government on an implementation plan for the National Disability Strategy.

Many of the Strong Voices measures supported by this government will deliver on our commitments under the National Disability Strategy. One of these key measures is the creation of a new disability act to replace the existing Disability Services Act 1993. Amongst other benefits, new legislation will enable us to enshrine the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in our own legislation. It will also embed in legislation the requirement for agencies providing universal services to people with disability to report on how they tailor their services to be responsive to the needs of people with disability.

A review of the Disability Services Act commenced in November 2010. The draft review report makes several important proposals for new legislation. A final consultation paper has been developed to gain the views of people with a lived experience of disability on the proposed provisions for a new act. The timing of this review enables the incorporation of appropriate recommendations from the Strong Voices report and decisions that will flow in relation to the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The state budget has delivered on other important recommendations of the Strong Voices report. We have provided \$2.3 million over four years to establish a community visitors scheme for people with disability. In addition, \$21.6 million has been provided to assist the remaining residents at Strathmont Centre to move into community accommodation. Therefore, this enables the closure of the centre as a residential site for people with disability. An additional \$106.1 million over five years will be directed to providing essential support for people with critical needs, including accommodation support and respite services.

I believe that in years to come we will look back on the past year as a watershed in the state government's recognition of and commitment to people with disability in this state and the beginning of the new era for the way in which we provide support and care for people with disability.

**Mr GARDNER:** I will break with tradition and make a brief opening statement on this occasion. The new funding in this year's budget has been welcomed by the opposition, and I personally congratulate the minister who I am sure used every skill that he developed as state secretary of the ALP to wrangle that money out of the Treasurer on this occasion. The opposition had been calling for a boost such as has been delivered and, while we look forward to investigating some more of the detail to ensure that it is being spent in the most effective and appropriate



manner and to see whether it will deliver the goals we hope that it will, I do not want to shy away from the fact that we are pleased that the government has delivered this funding.

I note that in the 2002 to 2012 period the share of budget revenue committed towards this sector had declined and the new funding redresses that decline. The opposition also supports, as we have for a number of years and through a number of election campaigns, the move towards individualised funding. In Canberra and in South Australia the opposition continues to support the move towards the National Disability Insurance Scheme. I hope that in Canberra the debate about how that will be implemented will be developed in a properly bipartisan fashion and we are certainly continuing to call on the federal government to include the whole parliament in the way that that scheme is structured and how it will be delivered and ensure that over the course of several elections and several governments that scheme can be delivered in a way that will give those to whom it is supposed to help the support that they are expecting, given the bipartisan nature of support for the services in question.

With those comments said, I want to go into the detail of some of the measures and some of the other activities of the department. We will go to questions now, starting with Budget Paper 6, page 22. It is the new measure to do with the removal of the remaining clients at Strathmont. With the closure of the Strathmont Centre provision is made for 'transition and supported accommodation construction costs to transition all remaining residents currently accommodated at the Strathmont Centre into community living arrangements'. It says that construction will be managed by the Housing Trust through a \$13.5 million capital grant, and then there is a \$3 million per year ongoing operating funding. First, can the minister clarify: how many clients are currently remaining at Strathmont?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** My advice is 26.

**Mr GARDNER:** Is that the group that will be assisted by this measure exclusively or are there any individuals who may benefit—for example, individuals who have previously left Strathmont and may still be in transition or any other individual, or is it just those 26?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I am advised that this amount is purely for those remaining at Strathmont.

**Mr GARDNER:** How is the \$3 million in ongoing funding intended to be spent? Does the government anticipate delivering specialist and care services or will NGOs such as Minda be utilised?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** My advice is that it will be a combination of both.

**Mr GARDNER:** Will there be flexibility for clients to determine the nature of that support, or will it be determined for them whether the government services or Minda or other NGO services would be more appropriate? Will there be flexibility if their families want something different to what is on offer?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** The approach that is taken by the department is a person-centred one. We sit down with the person affected and their families and we work out with them what their hopes and aspirations are into the future. It is a very flexible response.

Mr Chairman, at this point could I make a couple of rebuttal points to Mr Gardner's opening statement. I thank him very much for his kind words about my efforts in this budget but I have to tell him that the great success—for this portfolio, anyway—is down basically to the Premier and to the Treasurer. They have both been long committed to the area of disability; and I have to say that, as a novice minister coming into this portfolio, without their support we would not have such a situation as we have now.

**Mr GARDNER:** I was trying to be so kind to you.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I am pleased with that, Mr Gardner. Thank you very much, but I have to be honest. A wiser person might have told me to shut up and take the compliment, but I need to let you know where the support came from. In terms of cabinet, having the Premier and the Treasurer on side in this regard is very useful. I think that Mr Gardner also made a comment about the share of budget expenditure having declined over recent years. That is just not correct, is my advice. It has more than doubled since 2002, I think.

I know that Mr Gardner has used a calculation of spend in this area against state revenue, but that is an odd one for me because state revenue goes up and down in cycles and depending on the current economic climate. I imagine that, if you calculated on the current state's revenue

versus the disability spend, the ratio would go through the roof. I am not quite sure that it is actually a valid statistic to be using.

**Mr GARDNER:** I think that sometimes that is the difference between our parties, because we tend to take a view that it is best to spend along the lines that you earn, but we will not need to spend the whole of the time allocated to us to argue over those semantics. The share, nevertheless, has improved, and from the figures that we have identified it has improved to around the level that it was in 2002, and we are pleased with that.

I would like to get back to the budget lines, opening statements having been dealt with. Remaining on the same budget line relating to Strathmont, can the minister advise how many clients, if any, at Strathmont are subject to community detention orders?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** My advice is that there are four people currently at Strathmont under section 32 orders and one who is on licence from the court.

**Mr GARDNER:** How does the government propose to accommodate those clients who, as I understand it, have very high-support needs and are obviously on community detention orders or on licence for a reason?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** My advice, again, is that they work with the individuals and their families—and the carers in some cases—to find individualised outcomes. This is a person-centred planning approach, which I mentioned earlier, and it will provide appropriate accommodation for them so that they can be safe and the communities around them can also feel safe.

**Mr GARDNER:** We have \$3 million per year in ongoing operating funding, will a similar amount be given to each individual or will these clients with high needs and with community safety issues attached to them get extra funding to meet the community safety expectations if they need it?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** My advice is that that \$3 million is additional to what has already been spent on the clients, and that is to take into account the additional cost in terms of putting clients into community care.

**Mr GARDNER:** I am advised that, despite the many problems that have been well publicised with the current Strathmont facility and identified in Strong Voices and elsewhere, one of the advantages of the existing campus is that it is quite a large campus. There is a good deal of open space where some high needs clients enjoy the opportunity to exercise and relax and to do so safely. As I am informed that a number of these clients lack community and road safety skills, for example, is the minister able to advise whether the level of staffing support that will be made available to these clients will ensure that they have the same amount of assisted recreation as they are currently able to enjoy at Strathmont—the same amount of time to walk, have open space and air, and those things?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Can I just ask the member to restate his question? Was he asking about sustainment costs at the current site or about what happens when clients are moved off-site?

**Mr GARDNER:** When clients are moved off-site will they have similar recreational opportunities and fresh air as the safe environment that Strathmont allows them to have currently?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Again, it will come down to the individual client and how we address that through our flexible planning. The sites that they will be moving into look, for all purposes, to you and I walking down the street, just like an ordinary house. They have their own gardens, secure driveways usually, and they may be situated close to parks. I know that some clients in the community houses up in Blackwood/Belair walk down the street to their local coffee shop and have their morning coffee and bun out in the community and have become a regular part of the local community life. So, they will have the opportunity to use the amenities that we take for granted, which they currently do not get access to at Strathmont.

**Mr GARDNER:** Indeed. The minister may or may not have further information on this, but the point is that the clients we are talking about, whom you and I have met and who go down to the shop and get involved with the neighbours, which is the goal in many ways of the community housing model, do not necessarily have the same high level of needs and lack of road safety skills and community safety skills that this client base has in order to enjoy those parks or walking down to get a coffee. Their staffing requirements will be extra on what is available in most of the community houses at the moment. Does the budget measure here take that into account in providing these services and support?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** My advice is, yes, of course. Again, it comes down to the individualised planning for each client, and they will get the support they require.

**Mr GARDNER:** Are there any clients who have moved from Strathmont into community housing over the past seven years, since this program has been underway, who have moved back into Strathmont, and if so, how many and why?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Yes, I am aware of two. My advice is that there have been five or six over the last few years, but only two have not returned to the community at this stage. In one of those cases I understand it is because of a mental health deterioration in the individual and the other was a breakdown between the clients sharing the accommodation and, if you like, property rights, mainly about the remote control.

**Ms THOMPSON:** My question refers to Budget Paper 3, page 22: Community Visitor Scheme. Will the minister please advise how the state government is addressing recommendation 18 of the disability blueprint Strong Voices that a Community Visitor Scheme be established under a new disability act to ensure the quality of care for people with a disability?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I thank the member for her very important question. The release of the Strong Voices report has provided the state government with the blueprint it needs for reform, and we are actively addressing the recommendations contained within that report. In terms of the new act, I am very pleased to report that the review of the act is well underway. We are committed to strengthening the rights, protection, advocacy and safeguards for people with disability.

In terms of the Community Visitor Scheme, the 2012-13 budget provides \$2.3 million over four years for the establishment of an expanded and integrated independent mental health and disability Community Visitor Scheme to visit clients in over 400 disability accommodation settings managed or subsidised by the state government. The scheme will be managed by the Principal Community Visitor, who will monitor standards of accommodation and support for people with disability, their families and carers in disability accommodation settings.

The scheme will cover a potential target population of approximately 2½ thousand individuals. This is based on 682 people in disability institutions, 1,040 in group homes and the current supported residential facilities population of approximately 830 people. This initiative will provide people with disabilities with visiting, advocacy and inspection services, in order to promote and protect their rights and wellbeing.

**Ms THOMPSON:** I refer to the National Disability Insurance Scheme on Budget Paper 1, page 16. Could the minister provide details of South Australian government support for the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** The National Disability Insurance Scheme represents a transformative reform that will fundamentally change the nature of disability care and support in this state and this country. The Productivity Commission has reported that the current system for providing long-term care and support for people with disability is unfair, fragmented and underfunded. We recognise that the need for change is long overdue. The South Australian government supports a nationally-funded disability system. We recognise the substantial benefits that will arise from a new scheme which ensures that an appropriate level of funding is available for disability support services in a fair and equitable way. We also recognise the benefits of a system that enables people to make choices about how their support is provided.

The South Australian government, along with all other governments in Australia, have agreed to work together on the foundational reforms to deliver a National Disability Insurance Scheme. In May this year, the Prime Minister announced the first stage of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which will launch the NDIS for approximately 20,000 people across four launch sites, commencing 1 July 2013 and also 1 July 2014.

The commonwealth government has committed \$1 billion over four years for this first stage of the NDIS, and has invited state and territory governments to indicate interest in hosting a launch site. In the 2012-13 budget, the state government committed over \$20 million over three years (commencing 2013-14) for a National Disability Insurance Scheme launch in South Australia. This is tangible evidence of our willingness to host and launch sites. We have proposed to the commonwealth government that the South Australian site will focus on children with disabilities in line with our strategic priority of 'Every chance for every child'.

South Australia is keen to commence early with an NDIS launch, as we recognise the substantial benefits that will flow for children with disabilities and their families. The details of the

launch are still subject to discussion with the commonwealth, but at this stage there are positive indications that our proposal will be viewed favourably.

**Mr GARDNER:** Budget Paper 6, page 19, continuing on from the member for Reynell's questions about the Community Visitor Program, the minister identified in his answer that the Community Visitor Program will have, at its head, a principal community visitor. Will they report to the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion or the Office of the Public Advocate, as suggested in the Strong Voices report?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** My advice is that they will report administratively to the Attorney-General's Department, but in all matters involving disability they will report to me, and in all matters in regards to mental health they will report to the Minister for Mental Health.

**Mr GARDNER:** The minister would be aware that provision for a program such as this was identified prior to the budget in a bill introduced by the Hon. Kelly Vincent that is currently before the Legislative Council. Has the government given any consideration to supporting that bill and, if so, would this budget measure be compatible with the proposed measures in that bill?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** No.

**Mr GARDNER:** No, it would not be compatible; or, no, you haven't been—

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** No to both.

**Mr GARDNER:** I think we get where you are coming from. Whose responsibility will it be to ensure that action will be taken if people with disabilities are found to be treated inappropriately? Will existing reporting and action mechanisms, police abuse hotlines and so forth, be given extra resources to manage extra demands, or is another avenue being anticipated?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Well there are, of course, the increased budgeted amounts, which will fund this program. It will be reported to me, of course, but there are avenues for investigation, including the Public Advocate, and the public health and complaints commissioner.

**Mr GARDNER:** I apologise if I missed this when the minister was answering the member for Reynell's question in relation to the facilities that the community visitors will be able to visit; specifically, I am interested to know if the Community Visitors Program will include access to supported residential facilities (SRFs).

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** The intention is yes.

**Mr TRELOAR:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 109, sub-program 4.2: Disability services. The minister would be aware of the issues around Stanhope, which is the service provider at Adam House in Port Lincoln. Minister, are you able to provide an update on where the performance review of that provider is currently at?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I appreciate the honourable member's concern. We have had correspondence and discussions about this in the past. I am not sure that this is an appropriate place to take questions on Stanhope; if he likes, I will take the question on notice and get back to him about where we are up to with that investigation.

**Mr TRELOAR:** Okay, thank you, minister. Leading on from that, is there any expenditure associated with that performance review that would appear in the budget papers?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** No; my understanding is that will come out of our usual departmental allocations for investigations into such organisations.

**Mr GARDNER:** I will move back to the Strathmont issue, if that is okay. I refer to Budget Paper 6, page 22. In relation to those former clients of Strathmont who have moved into community housing and are still there—so, the ones who were not dealt with before—has the minister or the department received any complaints about a lack of access to specialised medical services or physiotherapy?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** We might seek a little more clarity from the member for Morialta about exactly what he is asking in terms of specialised medical—

**Mr GARDNER:** It has been alleged to me—and I am just seeking information; I am not making an accusation—that a number of people are concerned—and, again, I am not sure what number that would be—that they had better access to physiotherapy and specialised medical services, such as Botox to release spasticity in limbs, when they were in Strathmont than they are

receiving now. What I am seeking to find out is whether that is a concern that has been relayed to you as the minister, or to the department, in the form of complaints or requests.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** My advice is that we have not heard of such complaints, but if you would like to be more specific and put them on notice to me, or write to me, we will try to get to the bottom of those for you.

**Mr GARDNER:** I now move to the Strong Voices report, Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 107, Highlights 2011-12, which reports, 'Received the Social Inclusion Board's Strong Voices report and agreed to all recommendations in principle'. How many of the 34 recommendations has the government now committed to delivering in full within the frame of the forward estimates, with funding allocated?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Thirty-two.

**Mr GARDNER:** In full?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** In full, is my advice. Let me give some further information to the committee: it is 24 in full, implemented or in the process of being implemented; eight indicates partially approved, and work is currently in progress (which I think comes to 32); and two not to be addressed through the budgetary process.

**Mr GARDNER:** I am happy for the minister to take this on notice if he likes, but can he identify which 24 recommendations have been accepted in full, which eight partially and which two are not to be addressed?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** The two not to be addressed, I think, go to the innovation scheme and moving people out of Highgate. In response to the other questions, regarding the 32, we will get back to you with further detail.

**Mr GARDNER:** Again, I am happy for the minister to take this on notice in line with his previous answer: can he identify the funding that has been allocated to fulfilling those recommendations that the government will be delivering in full or in part?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I can refer the member to Budget Paper 6, page 18, under 'Budget initiatives'.

**Mr ODENWALDER:** I refer the minister to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 107. Will the minister advise how the state government is implementing the findings of the review of the Disability Services Act 1993 to achieve a modern legislative framework for disability services?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Recommendation 1 of the Strong Voices disability blueprint calls for a new disability act. A review of the Disability Services Act 1993 commenced in November 2010 and two review reports have been produced to date. I have asked the department to undertake a final round of consultation specifically focused on people with a lived experience of disability.

I want to be sure that the very people who are so central to the legislation have had a strong voice in the process. The consultation period will finish on 6 July 2012. The final consultation papers include a plain English version, an easy-read version and arrangements for people with sensory disabilities. The papers are accessible through the [sa.gov.au](http://sa.gov.au) website. There is also a link from the [www.dcsi.sa.gov.au](http://www.dcsi.sa.gov.au) website.

Once the final consultation is completed, the responses will be analysed and the results considered in terms of the drafting instructions. It is anticipated that the drafting instructions will be ready for cabinet by early August 2012. Parliamentary counsel will then receive the drafting instructions and prepare the bill, which will create a new disability act and repeal the Disability Services Act 1993. The time line for the review was two years, and I believe that we are on track to meet that commitment.

The release of the Strong Voices report has provided the state government with the blueprint it needs for reform. The Premier has outlined his vision for a radically-reformed service system where people with disability can take control of their own lives and make decisions, just as any other South Australian can.

The Premier has announced major changes to disability services and funding arrangements. Everyone who receives six or more hours a week of disability services will receive a personalised budget and will be given the option of receiving direct payments. This supports the clear message from Strong Voices that the most authoritative voice in making these decisions should be the person living with a disability.

In terms of the new act, I am very pleased that South Australia will reference the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities as the defining principle. People with a disability, their families and carers see the UN Convention as fundamental to the shift from a health and welfare focus to a rights and inclusion agenda. The National Disability Strategy (NDS) is the implementation plan for the UN Convention. It has a national focus and an across-government agenda. There are differing views as to whether the NDS should be included or not included in state legislation and that will be resolved in the drafting instructions stage.

Keeping vulnerable people safe has emerged as an important topic that requires very strong provisions in the legislation. The restrictive practices of detention, seclusion and physical, mechanical and chemical restraint are a key focus. There is a fine line between keeping vulnerable people protected and compromising the person's quality of life. The legislation will need to find that line by creating the appropriate provisions for protection that support a person's quality of life.

The state government has an independent Minister's Disability Advisory Council (MDAC) whose members have a lived experience of disability. The council advises me on a range of matters that I have referred to them. The MDAC is not referenced in legislation. There are a range of good reasons for including the MDAC in legislation. It gives the MDAC a statutory role in its reporting. There is also a potential role for the MDAC in monitoring disability reform and service standards and reporting their findings to parliament.

**Mr ODENWALDER:** I refer the minister now to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, pages 106 to 108. Can the minister please expand on what action is being taken to implement the next phases of self-managed funding, incorporating learning from the evaluation of Phase One: Self-managed Funding initiative and consultation with the disability community?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** The self-managed funding trial has enabled South Australians living with disability and their carers acting on their behalf to receive funds directly so they can purchase the support they require. As at May 2012, 71 individuals are actively working towards self-management. Sixty of these have self-managed funding agreements in place and are managing their funds and support arrangements. This opportunity will now be expanded to more people with disability through the implementation of individualised funding and the option of receiving direct payments.

In December 2011, I announced that the state government would radically reform the provision of support for people with disabilities following the release of the disability blueprint Strong Voices. This includes the implementation of recommendation 11, which relates to individualised funding. Under the changes, people with disability will be able to choose services that best meet their needs and aspirations and will be given the option of receiving direct payments to manage their support. People will be able to choose the arrangement that suits them. Some will receive direct payments to enable them to arrange and purchase services they require. Some will be supported with their arrangements by a carer or an agency.

The aim is to develop a system where people who receive six or more hours a week of disability services are able to control and make choices related to their funded support arrangements. I plan to implement this model in three stages, with all participants having the option of managing their personal budgets through direct payments by January 2014. It is acknowledged that this model may not suit all people living with disability, and those wishing to leave things as they are can certainly do so, but they will be notified of their personal budget, that is, the quantum of dollars allocated for their specialist disability services.

Choice and control are central to improving the lives of people with disability and they are central to the proposed National Disability Insurance Scheme. These proposed changes will not only potentially improve people's lives significantly but also align South Australia with the commonwealth government changes.

**Mr GARDNER:** Following on from the minister's answer, I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 109, Activity Indicators. It identifies the number of people advised of their personal budget and offered direct payment options as 7,000, which is the target for 2012-13. This is also in line with the Strong Voices recommendation 10 and, as I said earlier, it is a policy that the Liberal Party has pursued and supported for a number of years. Does this 7,000 include those who have already been written to or is that the number who will be advised in the 2012-13 year?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** It is inclusive of those that have already been written to, which I think was 2,250, from memory.

**Mr GARDNER:** I appreciate that they were only contacted in February or March, but can the minister advise how many of those so far have taken it up or advised that they do not intend to?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** My advice is that about 10 per cent of those have written back and want to take the process further—or contacted us, I should say.

**Mr GARDNER:** I think the minister said in his previous answer that the phased implementation would mean that all those who are going to be contacted will be contacted by 2014. Given that 7,000 is by the end of the 2012-13 year, can we take it that that is not the full number of existing clients who will be offered the opportunity to access self-managed funding? Will there be more in further years and, if so, how many in total?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Approximately 2,000 are in stage 3.

**Mr GARDNER:** So 9,000 in total?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Yes.

**Mr GARDNER:** Going back to the Strong Voices report, which is Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 107, Highlights, recommendation 2 of Strong Voices was for the government to increase funding to a level that will remove all critical and evident risk clients from the unmet demand waiting list within one budget cycle. What modelling has the government undertaken as to how the new funding in this year's budget will address the level of critical and evident risk on the unmet needs list? Perhaps the minister could comment on whether he is satisfied that category 1 of that unmet needs list is appropriate or whether it needs to be audited?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I think the honourable member might have heard me say this before, but our budget allocations will not, of course, address the entire critical and evident risk unmet needs list. No state in Australia can actually do that on its own, and that is why we are so supportive of the NDIS program. However, it does put us on a very strong trajectory to meeting the commonwealth government quite a bit along the way. From memory, the states currently spend about \$7 billion a year in terms of disability services, and the projection is that we need to come up with about \$8 billion a year to clear those lists and to fully fund those in the disability sector who need that support.

**Mr GARDNER:** Is there an expectation of how many clients the additional funding being provided is going to help?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** It is very difficult to say. My advice is that, over the forward estimates, we could be assisting over 800 clients, but the problem we have is, of course, growth and churn. Unmet needs is a very flexible phrase; you will find that individual people are on several unmet needs lists, so you cannot just total them all up.

**Ms BEDFORD:** Minister, my question is about disability services on the APY lands, and I refer to page 110. How is your department providing for the specific needs of people with a disability on the APY lands?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I thank the member for Florey for her question. My department delivers services to people with disability living on the APY lands, as you know. The service is aimed to address individual needs to assist in maintaining an independent lifestyle and functional independence in the person's own environment.

We provide a range of assistance, from intensive care for a high-needs client to more general social support for other clients, such as support with shopping, washing clothes and providing recreational activities. Approximately 40 people with disability living on the lands receive this service. The department's APY Lands Allied Health Service, staffed by physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech pathologists, visits communities six times a year. Specialist staff also give advice and support to aged care, disability and health workers in those communities.

We have community support officers based in each of the major communities and four dedicated support workers who work across communities. In addition, Disability Services has a visiting service which works closely with the APY Lands Community Programs team to provide disability equipment and minor home modifications to Anangu clients. In 2010-11, 102 items of equipment were provided to people on the APY lands.

The Disability Services team works closely with clinicians at the Alice Springs Hospital and the Alice Springs Wheelchair and Seating Clinic to share information about equipment that is most suited to people living in the remote areas of central Australia.

My department also funds the NPY Women's Council to provide case management to clients on the APY lands. Disability Services (including the allied health team), NPY Women's Council and APY Lands Community Programs staff work closely together to ensure that the best outcomes are achieved for Anangu who have a disability.

**The CHAIR:** I will let you have an opportunity for one last question.

**Mr GARDNER:** Okay. I will continue on the unmet needs list, which was a recommendation of the Strong Voices report, page 107. The unmet needs handbook distributed in January 2009 states that all clients registered as a category 1 for supported accommodation must also be referred to the Accommodation Placement Panel. Can the minister advise: how many new referrals has the APP assessed and denied in the past 12 months and how many has it accepted?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** We cannot give you an answer right now. We will take that on notice.

**The CHAIR:** I understand we are now moving on to the Minister for Youth.

#### **Departmental Advisers:**

Ms T. Downing, Director, Office for Youth, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms S. Wallace, Director, Policy and Community Development, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms J. Mazel, Chief Executive, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Mr J. Ullianich, Executive Director, Financial Services, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms S. Barr, Director, Business Affairs, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms S. Schedlich-Day, Chief of Staff.

**The CHAIR:** Do you wish to make any opening remarks?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I will begin by saying that, as Minister for Youth, I am pleased that in the last year this government has continued to bring the needs of young people front and centre in our delivery of government services. In particular, we have continued to encourage young people who are disadvantaged to take up developmental and leadership opportunities that we make available through the Office for Youth.

We have also continued to progress the wide ranging strategies covered under our *youthconnect* South Australia's Youth Strategy 2010-2014 and have recently engaged with young people across regional and metropolitan South Australia to obtain their views on how government can best assist them with information and support to act on it.

During 2011-12 the South Australian government has built on its relationship with the SANFL by using sport as an engagement tool. Four community football clubs—Port Noarlunga, Aldinga, Christies Beach and Hackham—have signed up to participate in the *South Connect* pilot program to address drug and alcohol abuse, driver safety and awareness, cultural awareness and diversity, domestic violence, party safe behaviours and, lastly, respect and responsibility within their football clubs. The SANFL was successful in securing funding through the latest round of *youthconnect* grants which will be used to expand participation from the four pilot clubs to all 15 clubs in the Southern Football League in 2012-13.

This year, 2012, also marked the fifth anniversary of the Aboriginal Power Cup program which engages young Aboriginal people at risk through sporting activities and encourages them to continue with their education and make positive life choices.

The South Australian government also recognised that the road laws requiring learner drivers to complete 75 hours of supervised driving presents a barrier for some young people to participate in education and employment opportunities and to access accommodation and support services. In response to this, \$40,000 was provided to the Service to Youth Council to support their pilot learner driver training initiative Geared 2 Drive. Under the funding, 42 disadvantaged young people will be supported to obtain their provisional driver's licence by receiving instruction from qualified instructors and being partnered with a community mentor supervisor.



Another key partnership the South Australian government has established is with the Cooperative Research Centre for Young People, Technology and Wellbeing. Under the partnership, the South Australian government is providing the CRC with \$100,000 over four years to respond to a range of key priorities including developing online tools and resources in partnership with young people to address issues around body image.

The fact is that young people in South Australia make an enormous contribution to our community despite what we may read or hear in the media. The South Australian government recognises this and is clearly committed to ensuring young people are provided with the skills and opportunities to make a tangible difference. As Minister for Youth, I will ensure that the government continues to deliver on *youthconnect* targets and works together to achieve better outcomes for young people.

**Mr GARDNER:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 119, about youth services and the initiatives to promote young people in our community. I believe one of the functions of the Office for Youth supports the Youth Parliament that is run by the YMCA. Obviously we are in this room as everyone knows because the House of Assembly chamber is laced with asbestos and consequently the House of Assembly is now sitting from 10 to 12 July, which is when the Youth Parliament was due to sit in this building. Can the minister advise what arrangements have been put in place to facilitate the Youth Parliament's progress in 2012, and what consultation the government has had with the YMCA and those aspiring parliamentarians who have been, in some cases, a bit upset with the circumstances we find ourselves in?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I can well understand why aspiring youth parliamentarians would be upset with parliament insisting on its prerogative of sitting at a time when the chamber is being refurbished and having fragments of asbestos removed from the ceiling. It is in the best interests of the members of the lower house, I think, that that be done, and it is certainly in the best interests of the youth parliamentarians that they do not have their function in that chamber until that has been addressed.

I have not had formal discussions with the YMCA about this at this stage. I have had an informal discussion with some of the participants, and the best suggestion to them is that either they consider alternative arrangements or, perhaps, they consider postponing their schedule for the year, which I understand could be difficult for them. I am advised that this morning they were advised that they may be able to use the Legislative Council for opening and closing ceremonies but might have to conduct other parts of their weekly activities in another premise.

**Mr GARDNER:** Basically the two alternatives open to them, as you have just indicated, are the Legislative Council for their opening and closing ceremonies and finding other premises or postponing the event to later in the year?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I think they are the only alternatives open to them. We are in continual discussion with the YMCA about this process.

**Mr GARDNER:** How much funding does the Youth Parliament receive from the government to enable it to do this activity?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I am advised it is \$50,000 for this year.

**Mr GARDNER:** Is the minister open to an application from the YMCA should the parliament's obvious need to use the parliament necessitate that they hire additional facilities and incur additional costs? Is the minister open to considering those requests, should they come in, to enable the Youth Parliament to proceed?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** As I said, we are in contact with the YMCA and we will negotiate with it about that process.

**Mr GARDNER:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 119—Highlights, and 'Continued to support the *youthconnect* grants program.' What level of reporting on previous years grant funding takes place?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I am advised that grant organisations need to do an acquittal of their grant in a final report to the office, and those reports are due one month after their final program, which will be, I think, July.

**Mr GARDNER:** Is any analysis done at the Office for Youth level or elsewhere in the department on the efficacy of the grants that have been made after that acquittal and report is delivered?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I cannot speak to what happened in the past when the agency was in another portfolio area, but, as we are integrating the office into our ongoing departmental processes, part of our expectation is that some sort of analysis will be done of the grants program and the efficacy.

**Mr GARDNER:** Further on the *youthconnect* grants, can the minister advise what the process is for how these applications are dealt with and how funding decisions are made? I seem to remember from last year that there was a much more substantial number of grants applications received than were able to be made within the funding envelope. If we could have a simple explanation that would be terrific.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** It would be terrific, but I cannot give it to you, but I will ask Tiffany to do so on my behalf.

**Ms DOWNING:** Yes, there is an assessment panel formed that includes expert representatives for the particular priorities. So, we have someone from SA Health come in and assess the health and well being ones, and someone from Education come in and assess the education and employment ones. All the applications that come in are assessed first by eligibility to make sure they have met all of the criteria, and then the panel looks and identifies which ones best meet the priority. We then look at the spread across the state and also target that representation.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** So, the director makes all the hard decisions and I sign the letters.

**Mr GARDNER:** I think the minister has probably answered my next question, but he can just clarify. All of the grant recommendations that come from the Office for Youth have been, in the occasion of the 2011-12 year, those that were on the minister's press release when they come out? There are no changes on the way?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Not to my knowledge. Again, I cannot speak to what happened in previous departments but, certainly, for those that come to me from the office, that is the way it works.

**Mr GARDNER:** There was a very well written press release from the minister, I noted a few of weeks ago, so that is pleasing to hear. I think the member for Flinders has a couple of questions on this program area, and now might be a good time to ask them.

**Mr TRELOAR:** I refer the minister to Budget Paper 4, page 118—Youth Services. Does the Office for Youth perform any function related to youth employment in regional South Australia? If so, can you identify any programs or initiatives related to youth employment opportunities in the regions and the expenditure associated with such programs?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** My advice is that those programs would be certainly oversighted by DFEEST. We may fund some of those programs, but the responsibility lies with another agency.

**Mr TRELOAR:** Is there any data on the number of young people from regional South Australia included in any or all of the performance indicator figures? Are we able to have a breakdown of regional youth that are involved in such programs?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I am advised that we can do that. It will take some time, so I will have to take that on notice and get back to you.

**Mr GARDNER:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 118—FTEs. I note that Office for Youth grew last year from 15.1 staff to 17.9 and is now to be cut back in line with, I think, the 2010-11 budget savings announced to 13.4. Can the minister advise on the nature of this boom and bust, the expansion and the nature of the cuts that are now taking place?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** In many respects, my answer will be the same as I gave in an earlier session about the Office for Volunteers. These savings that came with the agency, I suppose, when it transferred over from the Attorney-General's, have to be applied, obviously, but we will be working very assiduously to minimise any impact on service delivery and we will be absorbing those impacts over the whole department.

**Mr GARDNER:** So the intent is that at this stage there will be no service reductions or reductions in the deliverables from the staff, that the functions of the staff who will be lost will be absorbed by other staff either in the office or else around the department?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** What we will be doing is integrating the ongoing work of the agency to strengthen the work of the office, so there should be no visible changes in terms of service delivery.

**Mr GARDNER:** With that in mind, I remember being in a previous estimates of the Attorney-General's Department when the Office for Youth, along with multicultural affairs and, I think probably Volunteers, were brought together in Building Communities (I do not have it in front of me; I think that was the name of the sub-program then). They were brought together apparently to achieve efficiencies, and that has now been moved to the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion. Can the minister advise whether the nature of those three agencies, or three offices being brought together, remains within the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion? Do they still have one office with presumably back-office functions there together, or has that been changed again?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I cannot speak for the part of the agency that does not report to me, that being multicultural affairs, but the work of the agency, the Office of Youth, will be integrated into the department's activities and, as I said, those ongoing activities that the department already does, which are similar to those that the office has been doing for some time, they will be assisting the office in those duties by strengthening their ongoing practices.

**Mr GARDNER:** I notice that the net cost of the sub-program has been reduced from \$3.5 million to \$3.1 million and, clearly, there is a staff component in that saving with the reduction of FTEs. Is that all the cost saving or is there any reduction in grant funding in this area in that savings measure?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** The savings that the member mentioned are those savings that have been inherited in transition from the other department. We must abide by those savings, obviously, but there is no intention to reduce any grant funding through that process at all.

**Mr GARDNER:** The expectation is that that is basically the staff component and, probably, not too much else.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Other efficiencies, yes.

**Mr GARDNER:** At Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 119, under Performance indicators, we have 'young people involved in government and community decision-making processes'. This is one of the issues that the member for Flinders was interested in: the ratio of regional and rural contributors. Can the minister advise on the level of involvement that this indicator measures? How much involvement in government and community decision-making processes does a young person have to have to be counted on this list? Is a survey response or an email sufficient, or do they need to go to a meeting or be involved in a program?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I will advise the committee of some of the outcomes we have achieved as to the involvement of people in this way. During 2011-12, a range of opportunities were provided for an estimated 5,539 young people to get involved in government and community decision-making.

These include: the Child and Youth Friendly City consultations (56 participants at no cost), consultations through Multicultural Youth South Australia (178 participants at a cost of \$10,000), my ministerial youth council (19 participants at a cost of \$48,000), National Youth Week (1,014 participants attracting over 12,000 young people to events at a cost of \$180,000), the Speak Out annual youth survey (2,601 participants at a cost of \$4,000), the Youth Advisory Committee (900 participants at a cost of about \$180,000), the Youth Affairs Council of South Australia (371 participants) and Youth Engagement Consultations (300 participants at a cost of \$10,000). That is an indication of the sort of participation that young people have in our programs.

**Mr GARDNER:** One of those listed is National Youth Week, and I think we enjoyed the opportunity to go to a number of events (together and separately) during that week; that was \$180,000. I am happy for this to be taken on notice or the answer provided now, as is convenient, but what is the break-up of that funding? I am aware that the Office for Youth did a number of coordination and publicity roles but were there specific grants within those two individual National Youth Week events? If so, could the minister identify those and what the process was for councils, or whoever else was running an event, to get access to some of that funding?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Following an advertised selection process, a total of 69 organisations received a share of \$173,000 to host Youth Week events. An estimated 154 events were held in 2012, with two-thirds of events being held in regional areas. A wide range of events were undertaken across the state as part of National Youth Week, including a Movies Under the Stars event in Murray Bridge which attracted approximately 250 people. Photography workshops were conducted, through the Create Foundation, for young people in out-of-home care. This comprised a series of workshops being held over five days, which provided participants with

the opportunity to express themselves and their experience of the out-of-home care system via photographic and narrative media.

The HIVE youth centre conducted a series of skills development workshops in barista training and personal finances. Job-seekers also gained new skills in self-marketing, undertaking job interviews and resume writing. It is estimated that 1,000 young people were involved in planning and implementing the events in their local areas, attracting an estimated 12,000 young people. A total of \$180,000 in grant funding, as I have said, was allocated towards National Youth Week. Funding comprised of state government funding of \$110,000, commonwealth funding of approximately \$30,000, and funding of \$40,000 from the major sponsor, Youthbeyondblue.

**Mr GARDNER:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 119—Performance indicators, and I refer specifically to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. As part of the government's Youth strategy, the government made a commitment to double the number of new participants in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award by 2014-15. Last year's budget papers showed that in the 2009-10 year, the actual number of participants was 1,552.

This year's papers show that the 2010-11 actual figure is 1,473, which is obviously about 80 fewer, and it is also down from the 1,500 estimated result shown in last year's papers. Although our goal is to double the number of participants in the program from, I think, 2008, we are actually going backwards over the last two years. I note that the estimated result for this year matches our new ambitious target for an increase to 1,650. Do we have any indication of whether or not we are going to reach this figure at 30 June?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I guess the answer to this question is, 'It's complicated.' We are looking to work towards our targets, particularly—which is something we have not done to the best that we could have in the past—by engaging heavily with department for education. I am not sure whether the members of the committee are aware, but there are significant issues at a national level with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which we are working through with them.

We, I think, are only one of two states that are actually involved at a government level with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award; there is otherwise private sector engagement, and that brings about certain issues with which they are grappling, in terms of national organisations and the resourcing of the program in South Australia. So, yes, it is an ambitious target, and we have plans in place to try and meet that target. I will not say that I am confident, but we will aspire to do so.

**Mr GARDNER:** I want to commend the government for having this target. I think it is a terrific initiative and, in terms of the outcomes that the Office for Youth exists to try and achieve, I think the Duke of Edinburgh's Award is an excellent private initiative—well, it is not private when it is managed by the Crown, but it is the sort of thing that I think government does a good job to leverage. The minister suggests that it may be difficult. Just for the sake of accountability, so that we can measure these things, I am afraid that the initial target predates my being in the parliament—

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** And mine.

**Mr GARDNER:** Are we able to identify what that final target for the 2014-15 year was supposed to be, acknowledging the fact that it may be difficult for the government to reach that target?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** My understanding is that it is 3,000. It is ambitious, I hasten to add, but best to aim up high and get as far as you can.

**Mr GARDNER:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 120, and the performance indicator in the number of young people volunteering in their local communities through youth programs. Do we have any details—I note that these figures include Duke of Edinburgh's Award—do we have some sort of breakdown on the basis on which these figures are compiled? Do we have a list of volunteer organisations, for example?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** We only have data on volunteers participating in state government-auspiced programs such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Active8, National Youth Week and youth advisory committees, for example. I can give you an estimated result in terms of the number of participants, but only for those programs that the government auspices.

**Mr GARDNER:** Are you able to give us that for the individual programs—Active8 and so forth?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Yes; for 2011-12, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award was 3,630; for Active8, the Premier's Youth Challenge, 645; for National Youth Week, 1,014; youth advisory committees, 900; and then a number of volunteer participants.

**Mr GARDNER:** Just going back a page then—and I think we are still within the performance indicators—for the Office for Youth, under grant funding provided two initiatives which engaged disadvantaged young people, the target was 35 per cent and the estimated result is 70 per cent. The note suggests that there was a request that funding from mainstream programs be specifically targeted towards disadvantaged young people, particularly the Youth Advisory Council, National Youth Week and Active8 Premier's Youth Challenge. In the nature of how that was delivered, were there any programs that were discontinued or any grants that were discontinued in order to achieve the new focus on disadvantaged youth, or was all of this extra focus within the existing programs?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** The easy answer is that it was all within existing programs; that is my advice.

**Mr GARDNER:** Bravo! Now might be a good time to read the omnibus questions for the minister, to be taken on notice:

1. Will the minister provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure on consultants and contractors above \$10,000 in 2011-12 for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister—listing the name of the consultant, contractor or service supplier, cost, work undertaken and method of appointment?

2. For each department or agency reporting to the minister in 2011-12, please provide the number of public servants that are (1) tenured and (2) on contract, and for each category provide a breakdown of the number of (1) executives and (2) non-executives.

3. For each department or agency reporting to the minister, how many surplus employees will there be at 30 June 2012, and for each surplus employee what is the title or classification of the employee and the Total Employment Cost (TEC) of the employee?

4. In financial year 2011-12 for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what underspending on projects and programs was not approved by cabinet for carryover expenditure in 2012-13, and how much was approved by cabinet?

5. Between 30 June 2011 and 30 June 2012, will the minister list the job title and total employment cost of each position (with a total estimated cost of \$100,000 or more)—(a) which has been abolished and (b) which has been created?

6. For 2011-12, 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 No. 15?

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

8. For each department or agency reporting to the minister, how many Targeted Voluntary Separation Packages (TVSPs) were or will be offered in total for the financial years 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16?

You might like to take those on notice, unless you want to answer them now.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I understand that that is the usual practice and while I have asked my department to be exemplary and bring those answers forward, unfortunately we have not met the timetable, so we will take those on notice.

**The CHAIR:** There being no further questions for the Minister for Youth, I call the Minister for Social Housing to the table.

*[Sitting suspended from 11:45 to 11:47]*

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr P. Fagan-Schmidt, Executive Director, Housing SA.

Mr G. Myers, Coordinator, Strategic Projects, Business Affairs, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms J. Mazel, Chief Executive, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Mr J. Ullianich, Executive Director, Financial Services, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms S. Barr, Director, Business Affairs, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms S. Schedlich-Day, Chief of Staff.

**The CHAIR:** Do you wish to make an introductory remark, minister?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I do. I would like to take this opportunity to talk about the challenges we face within the social housing portfolio in South Australia. This past financial year has seen a number of significant changes to the housing sector within our state, most notably with the recent formation of the Urban Renewal Authority (URA). The relevant minister, the Minister for Housing and Urban Development, would be best placed to take any questions about the URA.

Whilst the creation of South Australia's URA marks an exciting time for housing development of all kinds right across South Australia, social housing within our state still faces a number of challenges. We carry a higher proportion of social housing stock per capita than other states and as a result receive less funding per annum per dwelling compared to the national average. We also have the oldest housing stock in the nation, requiring major modifications to bring properties to a level required for tenants, particularly for the elderly and persons with disability.

It is well known that the number of vacant Housing SA properties available for re-letting is declining. These housing resources are scarce and it is for this reason that we need to be very mindful that we target our highest subsidised products to those members of our community most in need. For those customers on low incomes but without high needs, we can offer access to other affordable housing products, including private rental, the National Rental Affordability Scheme, and some community housing and affordable home ownership options.

Helping customers obtain affordable private rental accommodation has become one of the major forms of housing assistance for low-income South Australians, due to declining social housing vacancies. From 1 July 2011 to 30 April 2012, Housing SA has assisted nearly 15,000 customers with bond assistance. This is over seven times the number of allocations into public and Aboriginal housing programs for the same period during 2011-12.

Through the National Rental Affordability Scheme, over 3,790 affordable rental properties will be available for the community. These properties will be available to eligible tenants at a minimum of 20 per cent below market rent. The aim of the National Rental Affordability Scheme is to increase the supply of affordable rental dwellings, to reduce rental costs for low to moderate income households and to encourage large-scale investment and innovative delivery of affordable housing. As at 30 April 2012, 1,090 properties were completed and available for rent.

My department has supported the growth of the community housing sector within our state through the transfer of properties built through the Nation Building—Economic Stimulus Plan and we have also recognised those high capacity, high quality social-housing providers (known as preferred growth providers) that are able to maximise housing outcomes as opportunities arise.

As at 30 April 2012, a total of 624 properties, including 617 built through the Nation Building—Economic Stimulus Plan, have been allocated for transfer to the preferred growth providers not-for-profit housing sector. As at 30 April 2012, 596 properties had been transferred to preferred growth providers for the provision of housing to high-needs clients. The remaining properties are scheduled to be transferred by 30 June 2012.

Over the past couple of years, we have been working hard to deliver suitable housing options for Aboriginal people in remote communities to address issues of overcrowding and housing standards. Since capital works began in remote areas in 2009-10, we have built 73 new houses and refurbished 143 existing houses, a significant effort given the remote locations.

Specialist homelessness services in South Australia have also been substantially restructured and retendered. A new contract performance management framework ensures that all homelessness preferred support providers awarded funding are monitored against key performance indicators, such as financial performance and other contract requirements.

A new statewide housing strategy for South Australia has also been developed to outline the vision and direction for housing provision in South Australia over the next 30 years. The public release of the housing strategy for South Australia green paper in 2011-12 marked the commencement of a three-month consultation period, from 4 September 2011 to 9 December 2011, to seek public and stakeholder input into the development of the strategy.

I am anticipating releasing the final housing strategy for South Australia in late 2012. Work will then commence to implement the details of the strategy, which will cover a range of government agencies, with major responsibility shared between Housing SA and the URA.

I take this opportunity to remind the committee that housing is the backbone of a healthy, safe and educated community. Providing someone with the resources they require to secure housing, be it social housing, affordable rental or affordable home ownership, enables them to create a stable environment for themselves and their families, and doing so is a key priority of this government.

**Mr GARDNER:** I will go back to something we were talking about earlier, if I may. The minister may need to take this question on notice or, hopefully, the Housing SA people will be able to help the minister answer it. I refer to Budget Paper 6, page 22, in relation to Strathmont. There is a \$13.5 million capital grant for construction that will be managed by Housing SA. Will these new group homes, after they have been built, be included in the numbers as Housing Trust stock?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I am advised that it is intended that they will remain in the Housing Trust to take advantage of the Housing Trust's expertise in home maintenance.

**Mr GARDNER:** In relation to the construction of these houses, many of the families of the clients at Strathmont live in the inner north-eastern suburbs near the existing centre. Can the minister give the families of these clients an assurance that the new group homes will, where possible, be built in that area and not spread far and wide across Adelaide so that those clients with elderly family members who are unable to drive, for example, will still be able to spend time with those clients?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** When we work with the clients and their families in our person-centred approach, part of the aim is to ensure that the clients can spend more time with their family and, in some cases, reconnect with family who have not spent a lot of time with the clients. So, we will be working with the clients in particular to ascertain their preferences and, where possible, we will be delivering on that, because that is a key part of going into community housing and reconnecting with the community and families.

**Mr GARDNER:** So would it be fair to describe that as an aspiration of the spend in terms of where the houses will be located?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** It is better to describe it as a key focus.

**Mr GARDNER:** Focus. Going to Budget Paper 3, page 99, table 5.9, which deals with public non-financial corporations and public financial corporations employment numbers, South Australian Housing Trust is listed at 972.9 for 2012 and it is a similar number going forward. Last year's annual report identified that there were 958.7 FTEs in the Housing Trust. So, last year it was 958; this also identifies that 82.6 FTEs have been transferred from the Housing Trust to the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) at subparagraph (c).

In estimates last week, minister Conlon suggested that those 82.6 FTEs are reflected in the number for the Urban Renewal Authority, not the Housing Trust. As far as I can see, and please correct me if I am wrong, last year we had 958 and 82 of those have moved to the URA which would bring us down to 876.1, but the estimates here for the next five years are that we have a growth of nearly 100 FTEs to 972.9. Can the minister explain this significant increase in staff at the Housing Trust?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I am advised I can, so let me attempt it. The two figures quoted by the opposition cannot be directly compared as one is effectively a budget figure (972.9) and one is an actual figure (958.7) at a point in time, being 30 June 2011, taken from the annual report. The actual figure will generally be less than the estimated or budgeted FTE cap due to vacancies. The reason the 972.9 budget figure does not appear to have decreased as a result of the transfer of 82.6 FTEs to the URA is that there was a moderate increase in temporary positions. I am advised that was 36 during 2011-12 and the 2010-11 actual figure reflects vacancies in the order of 60 at that point in time.

**Mr GARDNER:** So basically that wraps it up. I do not have the calculations in my head; I neglected to bring a calculator with me, but I am pleased that the minister is able to provide that answer.

**The CHAIR:** Would you like the committee to get one for you?

**Mr GARDNER:** I will take the minister's word for it at this point.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I think the key point is you cannot directly compare the two figures.

**Mr GARDNER:** I appreciate that. I refer to Budget Paper 3, page 95, table 5.6. There is an increase in grant funding from state grants over the 2011-12 and 2012-13 years. I am wondering whether the minister can clarify something. Does that reflect the extra funding for specialist disability housing?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Can you point out where you are referring to on the page?

**Mr GARDNER:** Page 95, under South Australian Housing Trust, state grants: 2011-12 is 333 (or 332 under the estimated results) and next year's budget has it increased by about \$24 million which is roughly the same as the budget measure for the disability housing. So that we can get our figures straight in our reconciliations, is this increase of \$24 million that is on page 95 the new disability housing or is that something else?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** My advice is that this is a Treasury document and we cannot confirm that number, but I think the intention is that that amount will be paid to the Housing Trust. We are paying that money to the Housing Trust as well as the money for Strathmont for the builds.

**Ms THOMPSON:** Minister, my question relates to the Ladder St Vincent Street project in Port Adelaide. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 102. Will you advise how Housing SA is assisting young people at risk of homelessness through the Ladder St Vincent Street project?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Beautifully enunciated, member for Reynell. Thank you very much. Ladder St Vincent Street, Port Adelaide, involves a partnership with an initiative of the AFL Players' Association and the AFL Foundation named 'Ladder'. I think that a netball club, too, is involved; I think it is the Thunderbirds—they are mentors, as well.

Renovations to the historical Port Adelaide building were completed in December 2010, supplying 23 self-contained apartments and associated training spaces. The facility provides a stable residential environment and support facilities to assist young people in their realisation of education and employment opportunities without the risk of impending homelessness. I can advise that 24/7 on-site support is provided along with case management and access to a number of life skills programs. Support services are provided by St John's Youth Services.

Staff commenced occupying the building in January 2011, with an official launch of Ladder St Vincent Street occurring on 4 February 2011. The first resident moved into the building on 25 February 2011. Since commencement of operations to 30 April 2012, Ladder St Vincent Street has housed and supported 32 young people and has facilitated a number of successful outcomes for our young residents.

Residents have engaged in 77 education and training opportunities made available via case management and support. Five young residents have taken on work experience programs and 16 residents have gained employment since their involvement with the service. In addition, eight young people have successfully transitioned from Ladder St Vincent Street into long-term housing options. Housing SA, Ladder and St John's Youth Services continue to work together to enhance service delivery and create better outcomes for young homeless people.

**Ms THOMPSON:** My next question relates to another project in which I have been deeply interested, that is, the UNO project in Waymouth Street, and I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 103. Can the minister provide an update on the construction of the UNO inner city youth crisis accommodation in Waymouth Street?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** The UNO inner city youth crisis accommodation is being constructed as part of the UNO Apartments project located at 102 Waymouth Street, which will provide a mixture of social, affordable and general market housing outcomes within a single, multi-unit building, as well as a new 30-bed dedicated youth service facility.

Funding of \$50.9 million has been provided for the development, including \$48.9 million by the commonwealth government through the Nation Building—Economic Stimulus Plan, and a



further \$2 million in funding from existing uncommitted Crisis Accommodation Program funds as a contribution to the construction of the youth crisis accommodation.

When completed the project will contain 146 apartments in total, as well as ground floor retail and parking for 36 cars. Four of the social housing units will be reserved for disabled customers, and the properties are fully adaptable for people using wheelchairs. The youth crisis accommodation will comprise 30 self-contained bedsit apartments in total over four levels located in the front podium section of the building. This will have its own dedicated lift and stair access, as well as support office accommodation, washing facilities, meeting rooms, high-level security and provision for 24-hour staffing.

Construction activities associated with the youth crisis accommodation are nearing completion. As at 30 April 2012 fit-out works to the interiors of all apartments have been completed, as well as painting to external balconies and installation of balustrades. Defect rectification and final cleaning is now underway. Remaining works in progress include testing of services and security systems, tiling to lift faces, ground floor foyer entrance and the installation of floor coverings to corridors and delivery of loose furniture items.

The office accommodation on the mezzanine level is approximately 80 per cent complete, with joinery, final painting and the installation of floor coverings to be completed, plus delivery of office furniture. The 30 apartments are scheduled for completion by 30 June 2012.

**Mr GARDNER:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 102, which relates to the program area of social housing. One of the programs run under this measure is the Private Rental Liaison Officer Program. In October 2010 my predecessor in this role, the member for Bragg, asked the minister's predecessor how many tenants were housed during 2009-10 by each regional office as part of the Private Rental Liaison Officer Program, and how many FTEs were allocated to each Housing SA regional office for the Private Rental Liaison Officer Program. An answer was finally forthcoming and published in the *Hansard* on 15 May this year, which provided figures that are now of course three years out of date. Therefore, I seek the same details for the 2010-11 year and the estimated result, if it is available now, otherwise, if you take it on notice, the final result for the 2011-12 year.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** The Private Rental Liaison Officer program assists people who are unable to find secure private rental accommodation. Participants are generally people who have no previous rental experience or history, poor English and literacy skills, difficulty in understanding forms and dealing with agencies, and a lack of confidence in approaching landlords, real estate agents and property managers.

The PRLO program commenced in May 2004 in Salisbury, Elizabeth and Berri, and expanded to operate from eight metropolitan Housing SA regional offices located at Eastern Adelaide, Northern Adelaide (Modbury, including Salisbury and Elizabeth), Southern Adelaide (Marion and Noarlunga), and Western Adelaide. The program is delivered from five country Housing SA regions located at Barossa, York and Mid North, Far North, South-East, Fleurieu, Murray and Hills.

The ongoing success of the program is largely due to the relationships the PRLOs have developed with local real estate agents, private landlords and their clients. I am scanning down the page to see if I do have the breakdown for every regional office, and have to inform you that I don't, so that aspect of your question, in relation to regional office, private rental liaison officers and—what was the second part of the question, the number of placements, was it?

**Mr GARDNER:** Yes, the numbers of FTEs in each of the offices and how many placements they achieved in each of those years.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I think we will have to take that on notice. We fund 12.4 full-time equivalent PRLO positions on an ongoing basis. I think the anticipated expenditure for the program is in the order of about \$1 million, but in terms of the details of the question, we will come back to you with that.

**Mr GARDNER:** Excellent. In answer to the member for Bragg's question that came in a couple of weeks ago, as the minister has just indicated, the program is supported by 12.4 FTEs, and in that year it had 664 tenants overall. But it seemed, within the detail, that some of those officers were much more successful than others. I note that at Elizabeth one FTE was able to arrange 123 housing solutions, at Port Augusta we had a 0.8 of an FTE who got 78, and Noarlunga one FTE arranged 78, so they were at the higher end, but other officers had much lower success rates. At Marion there was one FTE who arranged 35 over the course of the year, at Salisbury one

FTE who arranged 31, and at Modbury one FTE arranged 38. Can the minister explain the disparity between the achievements of these officers?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I do not have that information, but I can only imagine that such disparity would go to various market conditions, different situations existing in the regions, availability of housing stock in the regions, the turnover of that stock and, of course, the difficulty in getting certain clients into housing who may have problematic records in past rental history. I imagine you could not say that every FTE in every region is going to have exactly the same average outcome. It will depend on the situation in the region.

**Mr GARDNER:** I can appreciate that. Can the minister perhaps suggest how much money the program costs in each of those three officers who averaged about one rental opportunity per fortnight?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Do you want to lend me your calculator, or should we get back to you with an answer?

**Mr GARDNER:** I am happy for you to get back to me when you get back to me with the other information.

**Mr ODENWALDER:** I refer the minister to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 103. Can the minister provide an update on the Westwood Urban Renewal Project?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I thank the member for Little Para for his most important question. The Westwood Urban Renewal Project is one of the largest urban renewal projects in Australia. Over the 12-year life of the project 2,325 old, outdated houses, some of which are more than 50 years old, were redeveloped. The majority of these properties were demolished and replaced by 2,345 residential allotments. A further 478 houses were substantially refurbished. Housing SA has retained half of the refurbished houses and continues a new build program on 20 per cent of newly created allotments. Westwood is a joint-venture project between the South Australian Housing Trust and Urban Pacific Limited, in conjunction with the Port Adelaide Enfield Council and the City of Charles Sturt.

Every one of the eight stages of the project has won state or national industry awards. The project is highly regarded and considered throughout Australia as an excellent example of urban renewal. The Westwood Urban Renewal Project is in its final stages. All allotments are sold, and the joint-venture team are working through the final details to facilitate closing out the joint-venture agreement and resolution of all outstanding obligations.

The majority of parks and reserves were upgraded, and open space in the project area increased with the provision of an additional 3.2 hectares (net) of newly landscaped parks and reserves. Four themed reserves were developed through community consultation to mark periods of time, from Aboriginal use through to early settlers, returned soldiers, and Vietnamese and Cambodian immigration.

The project also delivered significant infrastructure upgrades to the local area through a joint infrastructure program of the City of Port Adelaide Enfield, the City of Charles Sturt, and the private developer Urban Pacific Limited. Works included major stormwater retention, road and reserve upgrades, and local road and reserve networks were reviewed as part of the redevelopment. Major public works and road consolidation along the Ely and Gateshead roads corridor at Mansfield Park and Athol Park have resulted in a first-class linear reserve and stormwater retention system spanning precincts 5 and 6 of the project.

**Mr ODENWALDER:** I refer to the same budget line. Would the minister advise how many social housing dwellings have been constructed through the Nation Building—Economic Stimulus Plan?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Excellent question, member for Little Para. On 5 February 2009, the Council of Australian Governments agreed to the Nation Building—Economic Stimulus Plan national partnership agreement. The social housing component of the agreement provides \$5.6 billion of funds nationally over four years. South Australia's share of this funding is \$434.3 million. This comprises \$404.3 million for the construction of at least 1,360 dwellings and \$30 million for upgrades to over 400 social housing dwellings.

The upgrade component of the program was completed in June 2010 and achieved 503 upgrades. As the program progressed, South Australia committed to constructing 1,377 dwellings from the original 1,360, and as further savings and opportunities were realised South Australia revised its target to 1,470 new dwellings. At 30 April 2012, South Australia has

achieved practical completion of 1,112 dwellings. Three hundred and fifty eight dwellings remain under construction, including complex projects such as the UNO Apartments development that we spoke of earlier and the Woodville West Urban Renewal Project. South Australia expects to achieve practical completion of the required 1,360 dwellings by 30 June 2012 and will complete the additional 110 dwellings by 30 September 2012.

The average total development cost to date, including land, is \$275,000 per outcome. I am pleased to advise that this is below the commonwealth government's requirement of \$300,000, on average, per outcome. Of the total 1,470 dwellings to be completed, 617 will be transferred to preferred growth providers within the community housing sector by 30 June 2012; 634 will be retained as public housing stock; and 219 properties have been identified for sale to eligible buyers through the National Rental Affordability Scheme via Property Locator or the general market. The sales proceeds will then be reinvested to achieve additional housing outcomes in subsequent years. I am very pleased that South Australia will be able to deliver 1,470 dwellings against the social housing targets of the Nation Building—Economic Stimulus Plan which will bring direct benefits to some of South Australia's most vulnerable people.

**Mr GARDNER:** At Budget Paper 3, page 95, South Australian Housing Trust again, could the minister provide details on the total estimated number of rental properties owned by the Housing Trust as at 30 June 2012?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** It is approximately 44,000.

**Mr GARDNER:** Are you able to get a precise figure on that?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** That depends on the definition of 'precision'. We can give you a more accurate figure than 44,000, if you like, but as properties are sold and put on the market, the figures change from day to day.

**Mr GARDNER:** Obviously we are a week away from that, so I will await a precise figure.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I will give you a more accurate figure than 44,000.

**Mr GARDNER:** Is there an estimate of how many of those properties are proposed to be transferred or sold from the Housing Trust in the 2012-13 year? If the minister wants to take that on notice I would also be interested, if possible, to get the information by suburb if it is available.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Transferred to PGPs and sold on the market?

**Mr GARDNER:** In each category.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** We will have to take that on notice as well, then.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 103, under the highlights, the master plan for the inner-city precinct project has been completed and the Playford district, I believe, will be the first to be redeveloped. How many dwellings are set to be built and how many will be for Housing SA use?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** This matter has not been settled as yet; I will refer the member to the URA for a more detailed response. My understanding, though, is that there are 12 properties there at the moment, and we will be negotiating to try and retain around about 12 or 13.

**Mr TRELOAR:** Minister, this question relates to Budget Paper 4, page 102—Social housing, and relates, once again, to my electorate. The transitional accommodation centre at Ceduna is administered by Housing SA. This facility has had its fair share of issues in terms of the conditions of the accommodation units, and it is my understanding that there has been money spent to make improvements and repairs to what has been described as a neglected facility. Minister, are you able to provide a breakdown of any expenditure on this facility, and is there going to be any ongoing maintenance costs, etc., in the upcoming budget?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** The honourable member can expect that those accommodation units will be maintained as per our normal policy for our existing assets. We do not have a breakdown on expenditure, but we will take that on notice and see what we can bring back for you.

**Ms BEDFORD:** Minister, I would like to ask for some more detail about remote Indigenous housing, and refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 103. How many dwellings have been constructed and how many dwellings have been refurbished during the financial year through the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I thank the member for Florey. During 2011-12, South Australia has invested significant effort toward housing funded under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing. As at 31 May 2012, South Australia has constructed 29 new houses towards a target of 54 new builds on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara lands at Amata, Mimili, Pukatja and Fregon, and West Coast communities of Yalata and Koonibba. A further 29 new houses have commenced construction. South Australia is therefore on track to exceed its new build target by four, which will result in 58 new properties being constructed in 2011-12.

As at 31 May 2012, 38 upgrades have been completed, with one remaining refurbishment currently underway, to complete the 2011-12 refurbishment target of 39 properties. Upgraded properties are located across the seven remote Aboriginal communities of Amata, Mimili, Pukatja, Pipalyatjara, Fregon, Yalata and Koonibba. On completion of the 2011-12 capital works program, South Australia will have delivered 119 new properties and 158 refurbished properties under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing.

**Ms BEDFORD:** I would like to follow up with a question on the Case Work Support Initiative, and refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 102. Could the minister advise what support services Housing SA provides to assist and manage complex tenancies?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** An excellent question, member for Florey, and one that I get asked a lot in the upper house. The role of public housing as the traditional housing provider or landlord has changed over many years to one of increasingly providing accommodation options for high-needs customers. I think, in about 1984, high-needs customers made up something like 12.4 per cent of our mix, something of that order, and in recent times it is more like 94 per cent.

Customers with complex needs ranging from poverty, child protection matters, mental health, domestic violence, drug and alcohol issues and homelessness now need significant assistance with housing. Providing a house is only part of the overall solution, as these tenants also often require extra support in order for them to sustain their tenancy.

Housing SA commenced a trial of a Case Work Support Initiative at the Modbury office in October 2009. The aim of the initiative is to enable the early identification of tenancies which have a high risk of failing, and providing suitable supports for those tenants. In May 2011, a formal evaluation of the initiative was undertaken by the Centre for Housing, Urban and Regional Planning of the University of Adelaide and the Flinders Institute for Public Policy and Management

Completed in June 2011, the qualitative evaluation concluded that the Case Work Support Initiative is an accepted, welcomed and valued initiative which is having a considerable impact on the availability of tenants to manage and sustain their tenancies. The evaluation indicated that the initiative should be continued, and it enabled Housing SA to have the confidence to continue to expand that program.

The initiative was incorporated into mainstream housing business from 30 September 2011, when the Social Work Team was formed. The Social Work Team comprises seven social workers based in each metropolitan Housing SA regional office (except at The Parks), one social worker based in Whyalla and one supervisor.

Social workers are responsible for providing support to customers with complex needs which gives them the independence to build upon their individual strengths. From 1 July 2011 to 30 April 2012, 725 clients had been supported by the Social Work Team. My department will continue to work with households who are at risk of failing, to ensure that affordable housing is maintained for those most in need of the service.

**Mr GARDNER:** Going back to page 102 and the general social housing program, I have a series of questions that are numbers-related. I am happy for the minister to either give the most recent available figures or, if he takes them on notice, the 30 June figures—whichever he prefers. How many South Australian Housing Trust properties are currently not tenanted—both tenanted and untenanted ones?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** We do not have that figure for 30 June. We will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** How many people are currently on the Housing SA waiting list in each category?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Between 1 July 2011 and 31 May 2012, there were a total of 2,329 allocations to households from the public and Aboriginal housing waiting list, including category 1, 1,981; category 2, 235; and category 3, 110. On the waiting list by category, as at

31 May 2012, there were 2,806 applications for category 1 of the waiting list; category 2, 6,374 applications; and category 3, 13,352 applications.

**Mr GARDNER:** Is the minister able to advise on the total amount owed to the South Australian Housing Trust by public housing tenants or former tenants?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** As at 31 May 2012, Housing SA client debt totalled \$19.1 million.

**Mr GARDNER:** How many strikes, in line with Housing SA's disruptive tenants policy, were recorded in 2010-11 and 2011-12, and how many tenants were evicted for disruptive behaviour in each of those years? Related to that, how many tenants agreed to vacate their properties following the commencement of proceedings in each of those years without a formal eviction process?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Whilst my advisers are looking for the number of strikes, I might just give you some other important information. The vast majority of our tenancies—greater than 95 per cent—have no substantiated complaints recorded against them. Between 1 July 2011 and 31 May 2012, Housing SA was contacted on 6,708 occasions—on average, about 600 complaints a month—regarding disruptive behaviour by tenants. This number includes multiple contacts regarding the same matter—it is not individual contacts; it is regarding the same issue—resulting in the actual number of households being lower than complaints.

The most common complaints relate to noise and general nuisance which make up to about 53 per cent of complaints. At any point in time, Housing SA is dealing with approximately 250 to 350 outstanding complaints regarding disruptive tenancies. Normally about 10 per cent of those are considered serious and require urgent intervention.

Regarding the number of strikes, between 1 July 2011 and 31 May 2012, Housing SA has completed the management of 162 cases of severe and repeated disruption with 59 tenancies being terminated by 18 evicted and/or leases not renewed, 36 voluntary termination of tenancy by the tenant and five transfers to an alternative property, and 103 cases were intensively managed for a minimum of six months and then returned to the respective region once their behaviour had been significantly modified.

**Mr GARDNER:** I will now turn to another matter that has troubled me in the last few days.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Unburden yourself.

**The CHAIR:** I imagine you have others as well you would like to share with us.

**Mr GARDNER:** This one I think is particularly troubling, and I am sure other members of the committee and the minister have found it so as well. I refer to an incident that has received some media attention involving a Housing Trust tenant who died last week after a house fire in which it was found that the smoke detector was not functioning, according to reports. It was reported also that it is believed he may have deactivated his smoke alarm, which had recently been installed with a 10-year lithium battery. It is further suggested that the fire may have been caused by cigarettes or smoking products. Can the minister advise whether those statements of report have been accurate and can he update the committee with any other information relating to the circumstances of this tragic case?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I can give some advice, but it is limited. On the morning of 21 June 2012, the tenant of the Housing SA property at Edwardstown died as a result of a fire at that property. There are unconfirmed reports that the smoke alarm at the property was not operating. SAPOL has removed the smoke alarm for further investigation. I think that is all I can effectively say. I imagine the Coroner will report on the situation and we will await the findings of the Coroner.

**Mr GARDNER:** With that in mind, I might wait until that comes through before pursuing the matter any further. Turning to something perhaps a little more cheerful, in Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 103, under Highlights it says: 'reforms to the way customers access and receive information about housing assistance provided, funded or regulated through Housing SA'. I have noted that one method customers receive information is through the delightful, glossy, colour newsletter *Customer Chat*, which includes information about good tenants. There is a letter from the executive director. There is a very pleasant message from the minister included. There is a recipe about a sugary Christmas treat: how to make a white Christmas with 1½ cups of sugar. How many copies of *Customer Chat* are produced? How is it distributed? What is the total annual cost of this publication, including production, distribution and editorial content, and any other associated costs?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I was seeking some advice from my very effective and efficient public servants who do not have this information on hand because I think it is the first time we have ever been asked it. I imagine the number of copies would be equal to the number of tenancies that we have. In terms of costs, whilst I think it would be relatively low, we will have to take that on notice and come back with a response.

**Mr GARDNER:** I have another question where you may not have the information; the answer is just a number, so if you want to take it on notice that is fine. How many Housing SA rental properties are currently operating on individual water meters and how many are on shared water meters?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** My staff are assisting me with some numbers but, from memory, I think about 18,000 properties are on shared water meters. I am pretty sure that I have actually given that figure in parliament, in terms of discussion around shared water meters.

**Mr GARDNER:** I think I have seen the figure given in parliament, but sometimes these figures can fluctuate and change. You may have sold off houses.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** To the best of my memory, it is about 18,000 properties, but I think we will have to come back with a more precise number.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Reynell, your burning question?

**Ms THOMPSON:** Thank you. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 103. Can the minister please outline how the state government intends to improve access to social and affordable housing services and products in South Australia?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I thank the member for Reynell for her most important and pressing question. It was a page I was just thinking about. The South Australian government has commenced an important reform project to integrate the public and community housing waiting lists.

At present, South Australians are required to apply separately for the various housing services and products on offer; that is, one application for public housing, another one for community housing, and yet another process to register for affordable home ownership or private rental services. The Access Project has been introduced to make it easier for clients to access a range of social and affordable housing services through a single entry and registration process.

The Department for Communities and Social Inclusion has been working with a range of stakeholders in the community housing, affordable housing, community services, homelessness and non-government sectors to design a service system that streamlines the process for accessing housing for clients. In the coming year, the department will start to implement some of the changes that will allow us to achieve these goals.

The South Australian government also believes that scarce social housing resources need to be targeted to those most in need. Through the Access Project, only clients with high and complex needs will be eligible to register for priority access to highly subsidised social housing. Clients with only affordability needs will be able to register for affordable housing products, including private rental assistance, the National Rental Affordability Scheme, some community housing and affordable home ownership.

The government also believes that it is important to be upfront with South Australians about accessing social housing. Through these reforms we will be able to make it clearer who is eligible for social housing but, most importantly, we will also provide alternative affordable housing options to people on low to moderate incomes. The key outcomes of the Access Project are to:

- introduce a harmonised service network of agencies which have access to consistent information that can be used to provide advice to clients about available housing options;
- introduce an initial inquiry tool for clients to provide them with information about housing options and eligibility for programs;
- provide clients who have identified support needs with appropriate information and referrals at the point of initial contact;
- introduce a single housing register for clients to access multiple housing programs, including Housing SA public and Aboriginal rental, community housing associations, national rental affordability schemes, and other affordable housing programs;

- develop a robust and consistent points-based, needs-assessment tool and process to be undertaken consistently by a range of housing providers; and
- promote improved client choice by expanding modes and channels of accessing services, expanding the choice of products and through introducing a choice-based letting model for housing products.

Through this important reform project, the government intends to make it easier for South Australians to access the housing option that is appropriate for their needs.

**The CHAIR:** There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the proposed payments concluded. I would like to thank the minister and members of the committee for their courteous and constructive questions.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** I would sincerely like to thank my advisers for the huge amount of work that goes into the preparation of estimates and advising me. It is a particularly onerous job to advise me, as you would understand, Mr Chair, from our past experience. I also thank members of the committee for being gentle with me, as it is my first time in the job.

At 12:34 the committee adjourned until Tuesday 26 June 2012 at 09:00.